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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



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NEWS

8 containers of trash missing

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Exactly how many containers of garbage from Canada will the Philippines ship back on or before May 15? As that deadline imposed by Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III on the Bureau of Customs after President Duterte threatened war on Canada over the garbage approaches, a discrepancy has surfaced: Eight containers are missing.

—STORY BY TONETTE OREJAS

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'THE PEOPLE HAVE A RIGHT TO KNOW'

8 CONTAINERS OF CANADIAN TRASH MISSING, ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP SAYS

By **Tonette Orejas**
@ttorejasINQ

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO— Exactly how many containers of garbage from Canada will the Philippines ship back on or before May 15?

As that deadline imposed by Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III on the Bureau of Customs after President Duterte threatened war on Canada over the garbage approaches, a discrepancy has surfaced: Eight containers are missing.

Aileen Lucero, national coordinator of EcoWaste Coalition, e-mailed the information to the Inquirer on Monday, saying she raised the matter based on the customs bureau's count.

The Ontario-based Chronic Inc. exported 103 containers of garbage to Manila in 2013 and 2014, according to Customs Collector Erastus Sandino Austria.

Of the number, at least 55 were consigned to Chronic Plastics and 48 to Live Green Enterprises, Austria said in reply to EcoWaste's letter of inquiry on the remaining containers in the Philippines. What remained intact are 69 containers, he said in the same letter.

Austria said 67 containers were being held at Subic Bay International Terminal Corp. (SBITC) and two were impounded at Manila International Container Terminal (MICT).

There was no information on the condition of the containers or who had been paying SBITC and MICT for the space these occupied.

'Locally disposed of'

Austria said without elaborating that 34 containers had been "locally disposed of."

But only 26 containers were emptied into the landfill of



CANADA TRASH This 12-meter container contains mixed household trash misdeclared as plastic and was disposed of by the Bureau of Customs on a private landfill in Capas town, Tarlac province, in 2015. —METRO CLARK WASTE MANAGEMENT CORP.

Metro Clark Waste Management Corp. (MCWMC) at Barangay Kalangitan in Capas, Tarlac, in July 2015, its president, Rufo Colayco, said on Monday.

EcoWaste is "keen to know what happened to the Canadian waste from the eight containers," Lucero said.

"The authorities need to tell the public when, where and how the waste [was] disposed of. We, the people, have the right to know," she said.

Colayco said the customs bureau had brought eight more containers but that these were padlocked by then Tarlac Gov. Victor Yap.

He said he could not remember if it was then Customs Commissioner Alberto Lina who took back the sealed containers.

It was Lina, he said, who asked him to accept 50 of 103 containers after their owner obtained a court order instructing the customs official to "dispose of the contents in a proper disposal site and return the containers to their owners."

"I was extremely reluctant to agree, but Lina had been given by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) an official finding that

the trash was recycled plastic that qualified for legal international trade under the Basel Convention," Colayco said.

But the DENR said 64 percent of the intercepted shipments were "baled municipal solid waste, or garbage destined for immediate local disposal and cannot be recycled."

Illegal traffic of waste

Last month, the Pacific Center for Environmental Law and Litigation issued a legal opinion finding illegal traffic of waste and that Canada had violated the Basel Convention.

"Almost immediately after the first 26 containers were unloaded at the MCWMC disposal site in Tarlac, the provincial government stopped any further disposal," Colayco said.

He added: "MCWMC promptly complied and immediately thereafter, returned eight containers that arrived in the midst of unloading the first 26. In contradiction of the official DENR report which cleared the garbage for disposal, environmentalists declared the garbage toxic. MCWMC has had absolutely no further involvement in the matter." INQ



editorial

Let's learn proper garbage disposal

WHILE the government is boosting efforts to rid the Manila Bay, the Pasig River and our other bodies of water of garbage, it cannot do the job on its own. Our people have to do their part.

In recent years, the reckless manner in which garbage is being disposed of in this country has come under close scrutiny, especially after causing massive flooding.

We have to learn lessons from past tragedies. Citizens must stop illegally dumping garbage and government authorities must strictly enforce anti-littering laws. Our garbage and littering problems have become unbearable. This is why flooding in our cities has gone from bad to worse.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and other government agencies conduct regular cleanups of creeks, waterways and drainage systems in flood-prone areas in Metro Manila, but citizens who keep dumping garbage around negate all these efforts.

The national government and local governments are spending billions to fight floods in Metro Manila, but no amount of dredging or drainage engineering will be enough to fight floods if citizens don't help or cooperate.

Our people should stop their indiscriminate and irresponsible dumping of garbage along streets, esteros and other waterways.

Local governments should team up with the police and the MMDA to ensure that all the laws on littering and garbage disposal are enforced. They should have more anti-littering enforcers and develop a ticketing system both for individuals and businesses. Violators should be made to pay heavy fines, spend jail time or be made to do a reasonably lengthy period of community service. The Judiciary should have special environmental courts to toughen up the enforcement of anti-littering laws.

Also essential is a successful recycling industry. The Philippines generates about 35,000 tons of garbage daily, more than 8,600 tons per day in Metro Manila alone, according to an Asian Development Bank expert, Aldrin Plaza of the Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department.

Only about 70 percent of these tons of garbage are collected. Those that are collected end up in open dumps and makeshift landfills, with only a small percentage of it getting recycled.

In contrast, our neighbor Taiwan has one of the highest recycling rates in the world, where more than 1,600 recycling companies in operation are able to recycle 55 percent of the trash collected from households and business establishments, as well as 77 percent of industrial waste, according to official studies. The recycling companies in Taiwan are able to generate at least \$2 billion in annual revenues, proving yet again there is money in recycling garbage.

Taiwan's largest charity group, the Tzu Chi Foundation, has hundreds of volunteers who sort and recycle plastic waste along with used glass bottles and electronic appliances.

Used plastic bottles, for instance, are treated and processed and through modern technology are made into textiles such as blankets, clothes and even shoes, bags and dolls.

Tzu Chi runs 5,400 recycling stations across Taiwan with the help of more than 76,000 volunteers and has distributed hundreds of thousands of blankets made from plastic bottles for relief use in Taiwan and other countries, including the Philippines.

It has been almost two decades since the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act was enacted in this country. By this time, all our cities and municipalities should have their own garbage control, waste handling and recycling programs. We should be able to reduce our trash through proper recycling, which is also important in conserving resources.

These are only a few ways to arrest and reverse the undisciplined manner in which garbage is disposed of in this country. But the No. 1 concern should be discipline. Every decent-minded and patriotic citizen should appreciate and practice proper garbage disposal. A cleanliness campaign must simultaneously take place in our homes, schools, communities and workplaces.

We should realize that solving our pollution and flooding problems require the efforts of the entire society. It cannot be left only to the government.

We should also realize that tourists and investors also judge a country based on how clean it is, and that cleanliness is a reflection of the quality of a country's citizens.



BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business

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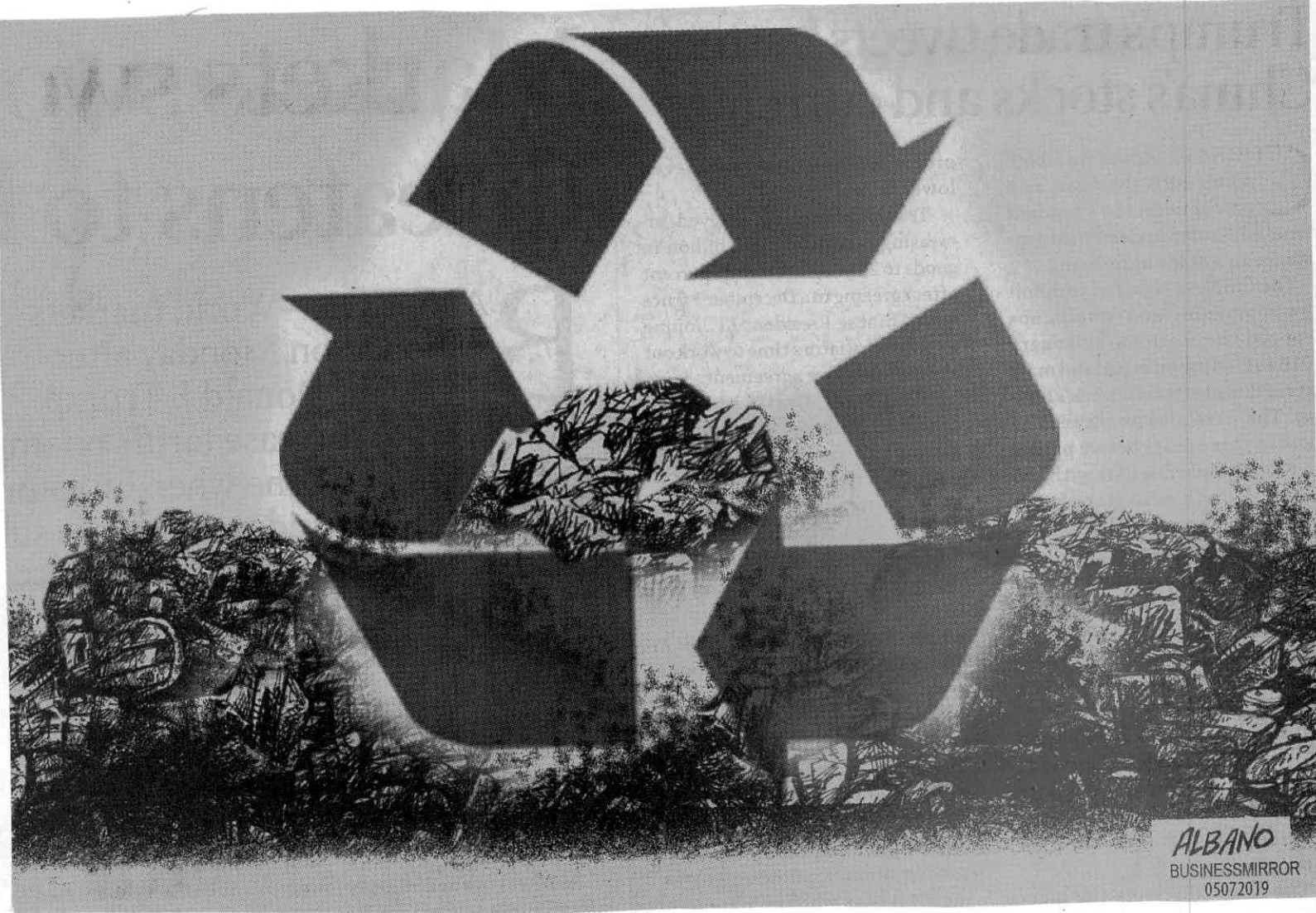
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Ensuring a meaningful, continuing sustainability efforts impact

By MAGESVARAN SURANJAN

It's a fact - our planet is not in its best shape. Our excessive consumption and our pattern of using and disposing is taking its toll on the environment, overloading landfills and increasing our dependence on scarce resources.

But it is not all doom and gloom. In recent times, we have seen a tremendous surge in environmental awareness. A growing number of people are shifting to more eco-friendly habits, many cities are introducing plans to ban single-use

plastics and there is in general, greater awareness in reducing one's personal patterns of consumption to minimize waste.

However, to make a meaningful impact, everyone should play an even more active role in driving sustainability at scale.

It is imperative for large corporations everywhere to be even more focused on sustainability efforts and responsible consumption in their businesses. It is no longer enough to merely sell a product

or a service. Today's socially aware consumers want brands that are unafraid to take a stand: to lead the way in influencing behaviours and offering solutions to pressing issues.

At P&G, we have long been committed to environmental sustainability. Last April, we were proud to announce that we have achieved many of our 2020 sustainability goals, two years ahead of schedule. This year, to commemorate World Earth Week, we are boldly moving forward with Ambition 2030 to inspire and create even more positive impact on the world. Link to P&G Ambition 2030 Infographic

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Ensuring... From page 7

For corporations that are seeking ways to inspire and lead environmental sustainability efforts that will have a lasting impact, here are three ways to get started.

1. Make responsible consumption mainstream for households

When companies create innovative, environmentally friendly products, customers will want to use them because the product aligns with their personal earth-friendly consumption principles. Many brands are beginning to innovate to have as minimal an environmental impact as possible. Importantly, we must do our part to inspire consumers to make the educated switch by offering them superior products that help to save the world's resources at the same time.

Across P&G's brands, we are constantly striving to enable responsible consumption. For example, WATERLESS is a new retail haircare brand we co-created with women in Cape Town, South Africa, that allows users to wash and condition their hair without needing water. This is one of our responses for personal care products in the face of the growing water crisis.

2. Innovation is only innovative if it can be executed end to end

Civic infrastructure must support innovation for sustainability efforts to be effective. The term "circular economy" is more than an industry buzzword. To make a meaningful and sustainable impact on a large scale, this is what all parties should strive to achieve through the entire supply chain from production to consumption.

In the production process, this requires thinking differently

about the type of materials used and how they are sourced, the manufacturing work process - such as waste-management and water use - and the distribution and transport of products.

At P&G's 25 manufacturing sites across Asia Pacific, India, Middle East and Africa, 92 percent of these sites are qualified as sending Zero Manufacturing Waste to Landfill (ZMWTL) and we will be 100 percent by 2020.

During consumption, circularity requires an integrated waste management system including a new civic infrastructure which allow the transformation of the current consumption patterns of "consume and dispose" to "consume, collect, recycle and reuse."

3. Forge multiple partnerships

Global sustainability is a goal that no single company can achieve alone. It is essential to collaborate closely and form strategic alliances and partnerships with other innovators, suppliers, retailers, governments, NGOs and businesses to achieve a multiplier, scalable effect. For instance, P&G is one of the founding members of the global cross-value chain, 'Alliance to End Plastic Waste' which our CEO David S. Taylor chairs. Its main goal is to eliminate plastic waste in the environment, particularly in the ocean, with a focus on South East Asia where the challenge is the greatest.

The world is facing its moment of reckoning now but, together, we have a fighting chance to be a bigger and better part of the solutions. With my peers and colleagues in large corporations all around the world, we stand in support of this and assume leadership to drive sustainability at scale in any and every way possible.

(The writer is president, P&G Asia Pacific, India Subcontinent, Middle East & Africa)



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Metro employees join cleanup drive

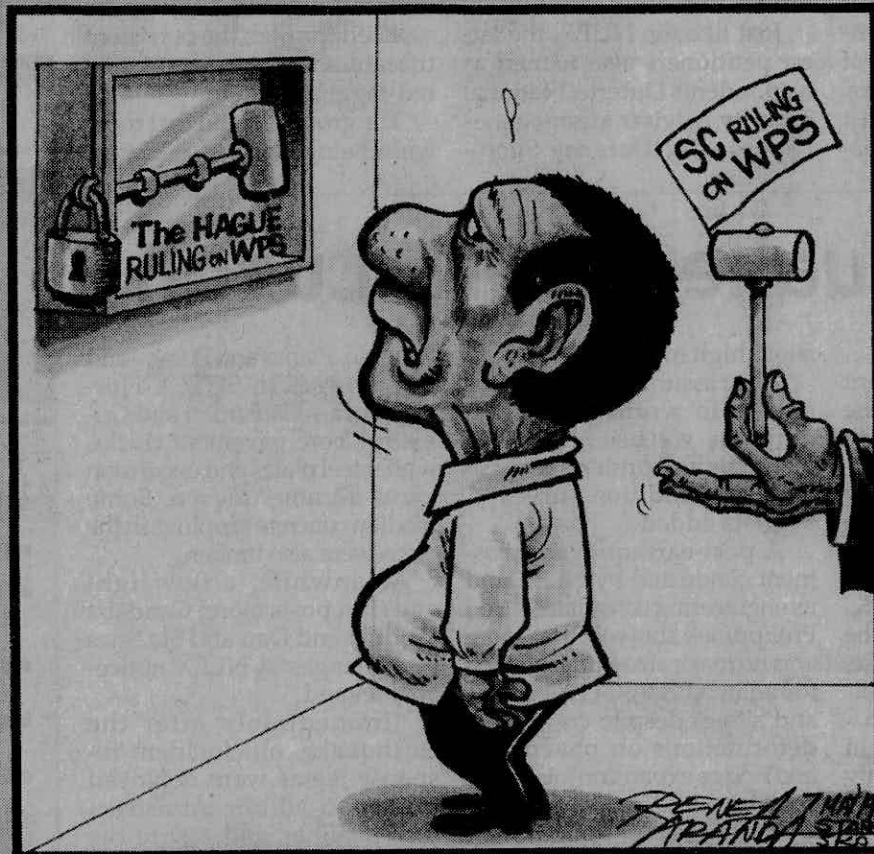
In keeping with the thrust of Metro Retail Stores Group Inc. to reach out to communities where they are present, employees from Metro Feliz Department Store and Supermarket recently supported the city government of Pasig City as it joined the Oplan Simultaneous River/Estero/Creek Clean-up led by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The project is part of the program to rehabilitate and restore the coastal and marine ecosystem of the Manila Bay, thus the clean-up drive of esteros across Metro Manila that

drain to Manila Bay.

In Pasig, five esteros and creeks were identified as tributaries to Pasig River and these are located in the Barangays of Rosario, Maybunga, San Miguel, Pineda, Sta. Lucia, Pinagbuhatan, San Joaquin and Kalawaan.

During the clean-up, Metro Feliz Department Store and Supermarket employees worked with leaders and representatives from the Pasig local government, Solid Waste Management Board, Community Development Committee of Barangay Maybunga, as well as residents and other community volunteers.



A writ for the marine environment

The Supreme Court has had a mixed record in its orders related to protecting the environment. In April 2012, it issued a writ of *kalikasan*, stopping a multibillion-peso project to reclaim Manila Bay. The area covered by the special order has since been declared as a protected wetland — the last of its kind in Metro Manila. It is now a thriving marine ecopark and bird sanctuary along the Las Piñas-Parañaque coastline.

On the other hand, it took a decade before the government enforced a Supreme Court order for several agencies to clean up Manila Bay. This could be because the SC order was seen as an encroachment upon the powers and functions of the executive agencies led by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority.

Following the cleanup of Boracay, however, President Duterte turned his attention to Manila Bay and ordered the agencies to finally implement the SC order, in line with his policy of eliminating marine pollution. The cleanup is a work in progress.

Now the SC has issued another writ, directing the government to protect the marine environment in Ayungin (Second Thomas) Shoal, Panganiban (Mischief) Reef off Palawan and Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal off Zambales in the West Philippine Sea. Will the national government comply with the SC order this time?

EDITORIAL

The three areas happen to be covered by the petition filed by the Philippine government before the United Nations-backed Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, which sought a definition of the country's maritime entitlements in the South China Sea.

China had ignored the deliberations of the arbitral court. In 2016, the court awarded the Philippines sovereign rights over Panganiban, Ayungin and Recto (Reed) Bank. The ruling declared Panatag a common fishing area over which no country has controlling rights. It also invalidated Beijing's nine-dash-line claim over nearly the entire South China Sea.

The latest SC order was issued in response to a petition filed by fisherfolk from Palawan and Zambales, amid reports that groups of Chinese believed to be maritime militias were harvesting endangered giant clams in Panatag. The SC order gives the national government a legal basis to send teams to protect the marine environment in the three areas.

With the goodwill generated by President Duterte in his policy toward Beijing compliance with the SC order should not prove to be daunting even in Panganiban Reef, where the Chinese have built an artificial island housing a multistory structure that looks like a military garrison. Implementing the SC writ is an opportunity to test whether the Philippine government's rapprochement with China is bearing fruit.



EDITORIAL

A member of the



The National Association of Philippine Newspapers

Writ of Kalikasan

THE Supreme Court's Writ of Kalikasan is a relatively new item in the judiciary's arsenal of weapons, along with the Writ of Amparo. This writ or court order is seldom used, and most of the time the Supreme Court issues this to compel the executive branch to do its mandate to clean up the environment and enforce ecological conservation.

One of the most popular Writs of Kalikasan, the one that remains in the public's consciousness, is the 2008 SC directive to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to rehabilitate Manila Bay in 10 years. Because this order was ignored, the SC issued another order on Feb. 15, 2011 mandating the completion of the cleanup by June 30, 2011. Still, nothing happened, save for the drafting in 2014 by the Aquino administration of a revised plan called "Operational Plan for the Manila Bay Coastal Strategy." Its high-sounding title notwithstanding, nothing was achieved by this plan in terms of really cleaning up Manila Bay.

'If the Writ of Kalikasan covering Manila Bay, which is clearly within Luzon and thus inside Philippine territory, took 12 years and a change of administration to be followed, this one on the South China Sea seems to be harder to implement.'

It took President Duterte and DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, in 2018 and after a similar operation was done on Boracay Island, to rehabilitate the waters of Manila Bay, now an ongoing activity.

The latest Writ of Kalikasan issued by the High Tribunal concerns the areas of the South China Sea where the Philippines exercises sovereign rights and jurisdiction. The SC instructs

the government to "protect, preserve, rehabilitate and to restore the marine environment" in the Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal, Ayungin (Second Thomas) Shoal and Panganiban (Mischief) Reef.

The decision stemmed from a petition filed by the Integrated Bar of the Philippines and by fishermen from Palawan and Zambales who argued that Philippine environmental laws should be enforced in the three areas.

This case is not confined to marine environmental issues, as the petitioners noted that Ayungin and Panganiban, areas off the province of Palawan, and Panatag, a traditional fishing ground off Zambales, form part of the Philippines' exclusive economic zone (EEZ) or Philippine waters over which the country has sovereignty or jurisdiction.

The petitioners contended that the government failed to enforce a 2016 arbitral ruling, resulting in China's island-building activities and their concomitant "severe environmental damage."

If the Writ of Kalikasan covering Manila Bay, which is clearly within Luzon and thus inside Philippine territory, took 12 years and a change of administration to be followed, this one on the South China Sea seems to be harder to implement.

It is reassuring that Malacanang Palace said it respects the Supreme Court's order, and shall comply, even as it took exception to the contention that there has been inaction on the part of the administration with regard to the environmental concerns brought about by Chinese activities in the contested areas.



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EDITORIAL

Judicial statesmanship

WHEN all else fails, the people can always count on the highest court in the land to do right by them.

Once again, the SC proved to be the last bulwark of freedom, democracy, and justice as it majestically asserted judicial authority over the country's sovereign territories.

The High Court could not be more specific in its order to concern government agencies to exercise their respective mandates to safeguard, manage, and maintain the natural terrestrial and marine resources of islands within the country's sovereign jurisdiction.

This is the clearest and strongest expression by a major branch of the government to assert and uphold national territorial integrity.

And so, take a bow ladies and gentlemen of a truly Supreme Court. A grateful people salute you.

The SC has issued a writ of kalikasan directing concerned government agencies to protect, preserve, rehabilitate, and to restore the marine environment in Scarborough Shoal (also known as Panatag Shoal), Ayungin Shoal, and Panganiban Reef (also known as Mischief Reef).

In a statement, the SC Public Information Office said the Court granted the petition for a writ filed by the members of the Kalayaan Palawan Farmers and Fisherfolk Association and the Integrated Bar of the Philippines.

Named as respondents are the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Department of Agriculture, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, the Philippine Navy, the Philippine Coast Guard, the Philippine National Police, the PNP Maritime Group, and the Department of Justice.

Panatag Shoal is located in the municipality of Masinloc, Province of Zambales, while Ayungin Shoal and Panganiban Reef are located in the municipality of Kalayaan, province of Palawan.

In their petition, the groups cited as basis the documents submitted by the Philippine government in the inter-state arbitration proceedings under Annex VII to the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea as well as the 2016 award by the tribunal in the South China Sea Arbitration, which established that foreign poachers, foreign construction and land reclamation entities have caused massive environmental damage in Philippine waters and the Philippine Exclusive Economic Zone.

But Malacañang insists it has not been remiss in its duty to defend, protect, and uphold the country's territory, both marine and terrestrial.

Meanwhile, Malacañang said the protection of the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea) is already a "top concern" of the government, denying that they were lax in responding to Chinese activities in the contested waters.

Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo, also the Chief Presidential Legal Counsel, made this remark after the Supreme Court issued a writ of Kalikasan for the protection and preservation of three shoals within the country's territory in the WPS.



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A reticulated python lies on top of a Bluetooth speaker in which it was concealed after the package was intercepted at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport on Sunday. **RUDY SANTOS**

Python found in Bluetooth speaker

Customs officers at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) intercepted last Sunday a live reticulated python concealed in a Bluetooth speaker that was bound for Malaysia.

The 20-inch python was seen when the package went through the X-ray machine, prompting customs officers to check the package's contents.

The reticulated python, which can grow up to 32 feet and can swallow a human being or large animal, was turned over to the Department of En-

vironment and Natural Resources for proper handling and care.

Bureau of Customs-NAIA district collector Mimel Talusan said the trade in wildlife without necessary permits violates Republic Act 9147, the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act in relation to RA 10863, the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act.

Violators may be imprisoned for one year to two years and fined P2,000 to P200,000, she said.

- Rudy Santos



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'BUTANDING' SEASON IN SORSOGON

TOURISTS HAPPY AS MORE WHALE SHARKS RETURN TO DONSOL

By **Rey Anthony Ostria**
@RAOstriaINQ

when 46 whale sharks were documented for the entire year.

DONSOL, SORSOGON—For Isabelle Tessier and her boyfriend, Alexandre Bergeron, who came all the way from Canada, their recent visit to Donsol town in Sorsogon province was more than worth the travel expense.

They were supposed to stay in this town for only two days, expecting to see a few whale sharks (*Rhincodon typus*), Donsol's major tourist draw, but they were in for a treat when they saw four of the largest fish species on their first day and then eight on their second. That prompted them to cancel their hotel reservation in Legazpi City and stay for two more days.

On their third day, they saw 12 whale sharks, locally known as "butanding."

The Donsol field office of World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Philippines recorded 87 whale sharks in the town's waters since January, 56 of which were "re-sighted" whale sharks (meaning they had been identified and documented through photographs) while 31 were new individuals.

That number is already twice as many as the sightings in 2018,

Whale shark ID

WWF identifies sighted whale sharks through photographs, which has been practice in Donsol since 2007. Photo identification is a catalogue method that recognizes the patterns behind the gills of whale sharks and other marks, like scars.

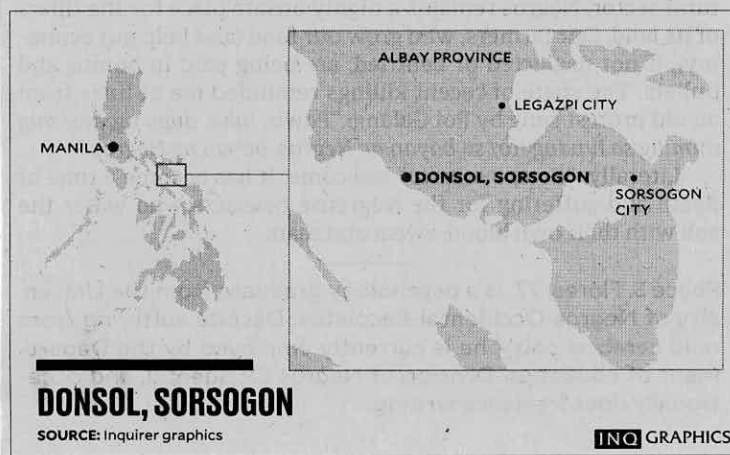
According to Desiree Abitria, Donsol tourism officer, April and May are the peak months for whale shark interaction in the town.

"Unlike last year, tourist arrival this season is better ... sightings have been high almost every day since February," she said.

According to WWF, the increase in the number of whale sharks in Donsol this season can be attributed to the rains during the last quarter of 2018.

"Perhaps the rain during the last quarter of last year helped. Since Donsol has two major rivers, Donsol and Ogod rivers, and there's enough freshwater input and nutrients that planktons need," Manuel Narvadez Jr., WWF project manager, told the Inquirer.

Planktons are the main food sources for whale sharks. INQ





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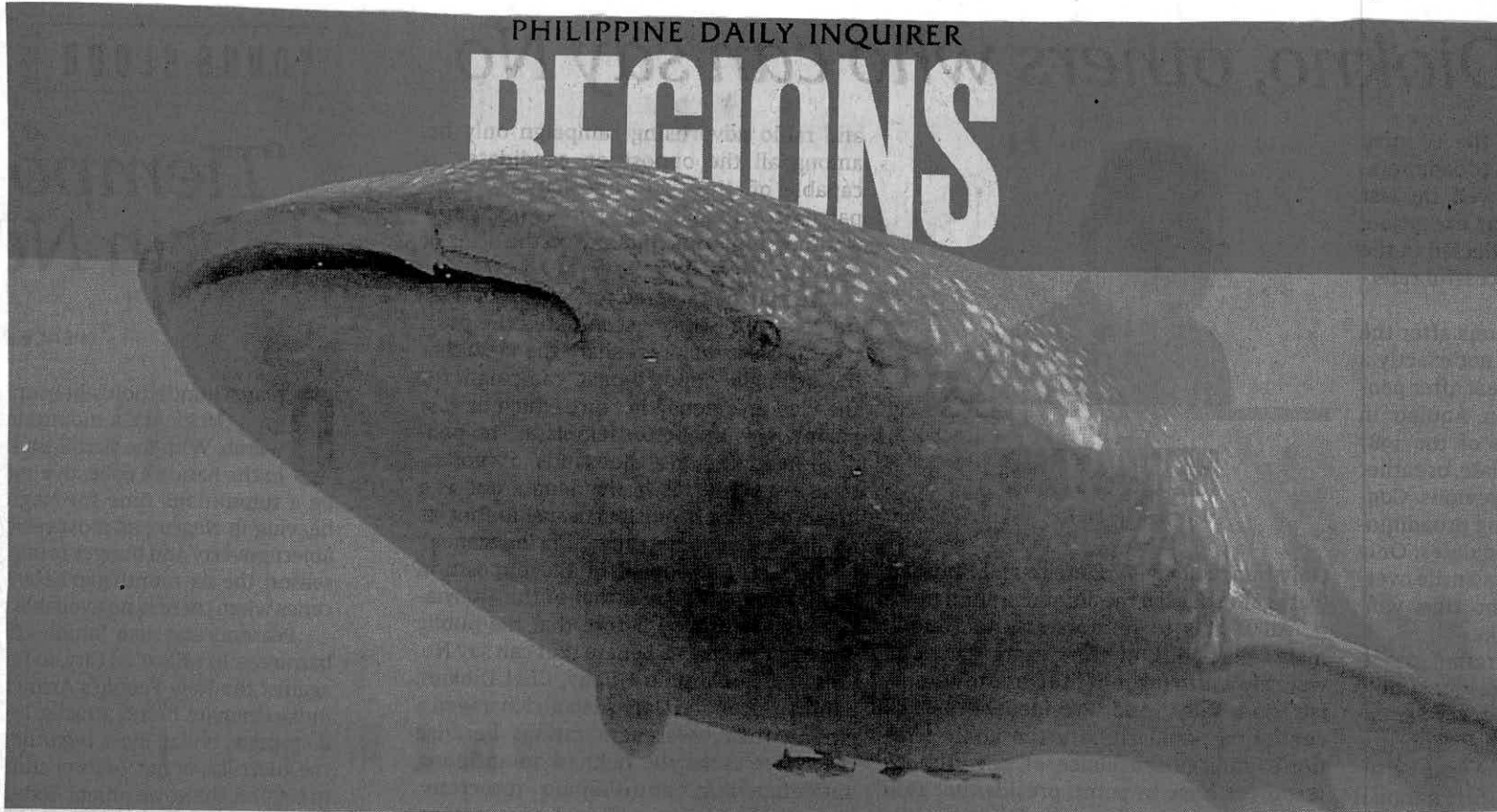
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GENTLE GIANT More whale sharks are seen in the waters off Donsol, Sorsogon province, as the local government anticipates an influx of tourists who want to see pods of these gentle giants, known locally as "butanding." —PHOTO COURTESY OF WORLD WILDLIFE FUND PHILIPPINES



PMRB approves first small scale mining contract in Benguet

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet —The Provincial Mining Regulatory Board (PMRB) of Benguet has finally approved the small scale mining contract for the first Minahang Bayan (MB) in the province and in the Cordillera region.

"This is a historic triumphant day," said Mines and Geoscience Bureau-Cordillera Regional Director and PMRB Chairperson Faye Apil following the PMRB meeting at the Benguet Provincial Capitol, recently.

Apil said that the PMRB Benguet passed a resolution for the approval of the mining contract between the Loacan Itogon Pocket Miners Association (LIPMA) and the government of the Philippines.

The MB site applied is

located within the patented mineral claims of Benguet Corporation Inc. which earlier made an endorsement. It was issued a certificate of non-overlap by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples-Cordillera.

The Benguet PMRB in January this year declared an area in Loacan, Itogon as a minahang bayan applied by the LIPMA. The PMRB made the declaration after the clearance coming from the office of the DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu.

The area applied for by the LIPMA covers 64.6486 hectares, however, only 15 hectares will be used for the mining area and centralized processing center of the association, Apil said.



Partner in nation building

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CEMEX COMMENCES

CONSTRUCTION OF NEW

\$235M CEMENT LINE

By Amy R. Remo

CEMEX Holdings Philippines (CHP) kicked off the construction of its \$235-million cement production line in Rizal, as part of its steadfast commitment to nation building.

With the theme "Solidifying the Nation's Future," the groundbreaking ceremony held last April 25 did not only highlight the company's expansion and continued confidence in the Philippine market, but also underscored CEMEX's contributions to the government's aggressive, P8-trillion infrastructure initiative.

"The continuous investment and expansion of CEMEX in the Philippines is reflective of its profound commitment to help the Philippine government in its quest to build a stronger nation. With the expansion of our operations, we will be able to support the current administration's "Build, Build, Build" infrastructure program," CEMEX Philippines president and CEO Ignacio Mijares said in his speech during the ceremony.

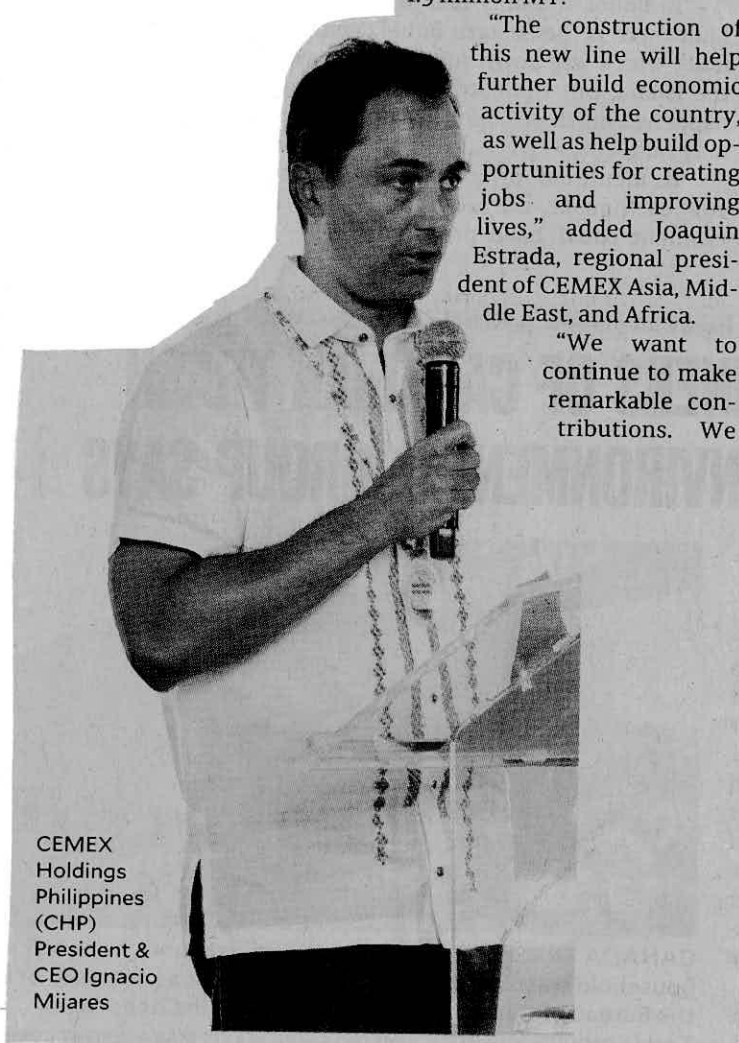
Gracing the groundbreaking rites were some of CEMEX's partners, including representatives from the Embassy of Mexico to the Philippines, Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Public Works and Highways, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Provincial Government of Rizal, and City Government of Antipolo.

Increasing capacity

Upon completion, the new production line is expected to increase the total capacity of the company's Solid Cement Plant in San Jose, Antipolo City, Rizal to 3.4 million metric tons per year from the current 1.9 million MT.

"The construction of this new line will help further build economic activity of the country, as well as help build opportunities for creating jobs and improving lives," added Joaquin Estrada, regional president of CEMEX Asia, Middle East, and Africa.

"We want to continue to make remarkable contributions. We



CEMEX
Holdings
Philippines
(CHP)
President &
CEO Ignacio
Mijares



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The symbolic shovel and capsule-laying ceremony was led by CEMEX Philippines president and CEO Ignacio Mijares. With him were (from left) San Jose Barangay Chairman Ito Garcia; Antipolo City Councilor Loni Leyva; Environment Assistant Secretary Nonita Caguioa; Trade Assistant Secretary Anne Claire Cabochan; Environment Undersecretary Rodolfo Garcia; Mexican Ambassador Gerardo Lozano Arredondo; Sinoma-CBMI chair and general manager Tong Laigou; CEMEX Asia, Middle East & Africa regional president Joaquin Estrada; Rizal Vice Governor Reynaldo San Juan; Public Works Director Reynaldo Tagudando; CHP VP for operations and technical Arturo Manrique; CHP Solid Line Expansion project head Alonso Lopez; and CHP Solid Plant director Normandy Chan.

want to maintain our active role in supporting the development of this nation. We have been able to do that in the Philippines for the last 22 years and I'm confident that we will be able to continue to do so through collaboration and partnership," Estrada said.

Environment-friendly

CEMEX has partnered with one of China's leading construction firms, Sinoma CBMI Construction Ltd., to build this new cement production line, which will feature environment-friendly technologies.

"This is a rewarding out-

come for the long-term efforts by the CEMEX Team and the Sinoma CBMI team," said Tong Laigou, chairman of the board and general manager of Sinoma.

"I am aware of the profound responsibility for CBMI as the engineering, procurement, and construction contractor of CEMEX's new cement line. Rest assured that CBMI will keep in close operations with the CEMEX team for the local health and environmental requirements. We will help CEMEX Philippines in delivering a brand new, environment-friendly, beautiful, and newly-expanded Solid Cement Plant," Laigou explained.

Some of the new cement line's features include the use of less energy as it is designed

to reuse waste hot gases from drying raw materials. A high efficiency bag filter technology will be also utilized to significantly improve dust emission control far below the actual regulation.

CEMEX has likewise committed to put utmost priority in ensuring environmentally responsible operations through its proprietary technology called low temperature clinker, that will help reduce the facility's carbon dioxide emissions.

"Truly, the inauguration of our new cement line here in the Solid Cement Plant is a testament to the years of dedication and hard work of all the employees," said Arturo Manrique, vice president of operations and technical of CEMEX Philippines.

"The road towards this moment is not easy, but today, we celebrate and share our success with our dear stakeholders. More importantly, we honor and express our deep gratitude to all of you who have contributed in helping us reach this milestone," Manrique added.

A unit of Mexico-based CEMEX SAB, CEMEX operates two of the biggest cement plants in the country namely the Solid Cement plant in Rizal and APO Cement plant in Naga City, Cebu. Its brands include "APO," "Island" and "Rizal."

Since 1997, the company has been operating in the Philippines as a distributor of high-quality and reliable construction products and services. The CEMEX Group is a pioneer in more than 50 countries worldwide to serve innovative building solutions, efficiency advancements, and efforts to promote a sustainable future.



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CEMEX Asia, Middle East & Africa
Regional President Joaquin Estrada



DENR Undersecretary Rodolfo
Garcia



Mexican Ambassador Gerardo
Lozano Arredondo



DTI Assistant Secretary Anne
Claire Cabochan



DPWH Director Reynaldo
Tagudando



Rizal Vice Governor Reynaldo
San Juan



Joaquin Estrada (front row, right) Regional President of CEMEX Asia, Middle East, and Africa, offers a toast for the success of the Solid New Cement Line Expansion Project



Antipolo City Councilor Loni Leyva



CHP VP for Operations &
Technical Arturo Manrique



SINOMA-CBMI Chairman &
General Manager Tong Laigou



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CEMEX officials and employees graced the groundbreaking ceremony for the new cement line.



New tourism campaign #MoreFunForever pivots on sustainable tourism

By MAY DEDICATORIA

Not all that happens in Boracay, stays in Boracay. Such is the case of the island's ongoing rehabilitation, which has already caused a ripple effect and set off efforts in Manila Bay, El Nido, Panglao, Siargao, Sagada and Baguio.

A few days after the anniversary of Boracay's closure, the Department of Tourism (DOT) launched here the #MoreFunForever campaign. It envisions the country's statement for sustainable tourism to keep the country's destinations for future generations, hoping to incorporate sustainability into tourism practices, business operations and general lifestyle.

Through DOT's proactive initiatives to save the beauty of the country's most beautiful destinations, it has grown to become a mission for all Filipinos, businesses, and communities alike, to be part of sustainable fun — urging everyone to join the fun, mindfully.

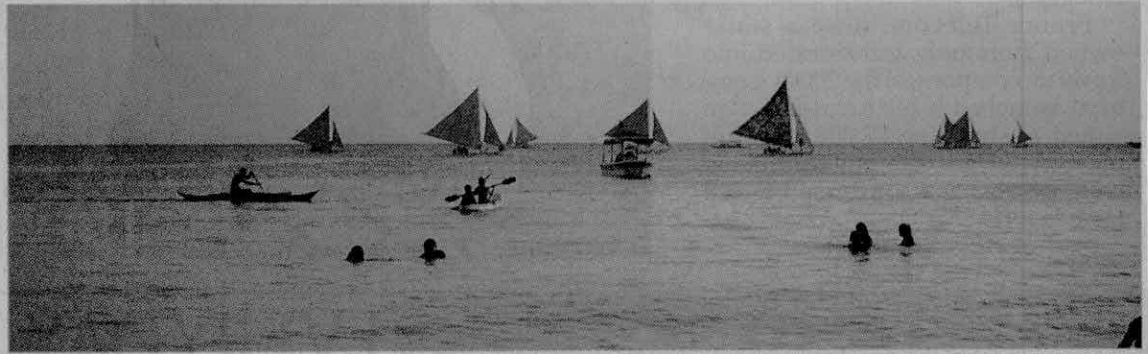
During the event, Noa Macavinta, a Boracay resident, gave an emotional testimony on behalf of the locals.

"Having been born here and grown up on the island, I had the luxury to experience an untouched Boracay. But I've also seen how the island had developed over the years, and seen firsthand the issues that we have faced, such as the pace of development, lack of infrastructure investment, and the disruption of the habitat of one of the most critically endangered species, the golden-crowned flying fox," says Macavinta.

"These have been issues that many of us have been fighting for many years. And so we are very grateful and thankful when Boracay and all these issues finally received the attention they deserved from the national government. The rehabilitation is, of course, not without its issues, but we hope that by working together, we'll be able to create a culture of sustainable tourism," he adds.

On the other hand, Virgilio Sacdalan, owner of Happy Planet in Boracay, spoke about how the six-month closure made the stakeholders reflect and realize what they have done to the island.

"On Day 1, it was like a ghost town. But as you'd start walking, see your friends, the locals, and you'd get reunited. Rebuilding Boracay was really a struggle to the stakeholders and residents, but it prepared us to become stronger and better stakeholders. During the closure, as a resident, I had to adjust. And during that adjustment, I saw the beauty of Boracay. As the days and weeks passed, I had more time to reflect and realize about what



The #MoreFunForever campaign envisions the country's statement for sustainable tourism to keep the country's destinations for future generations, hoping to incorporate sustainability into tourism practices, business operations and general lifestyle.

has happened to the island. Boracay needed intervention. It needed to be taken care of and loved again," he shares, adding that businesses in the island have now recovered and are back on track.

"I, as a businessman, have forgotten what the island had given me. I understood and now accepted what needed to be done. I needed to sacrifice for the good of the island. I needed to follow what the BIATF was tasked to do. Now, six months after the opening, the water is cleaner, there's no more algae, no trash on the beach. We have a brand-new road and brand-new sewer lines... The purpose of the island closure and rehabilitation was to prepare us to become better stakeholders and better Filipinos."

Seven key result areas backed the closure of the island — (1) Providing social safety nets through training, livelihood and employment assistance; (2) ensuring the health and sanitation of Boracay Island; (3) Decongesting Boracay Island; (4) Easing traffic flow; (5) Enforcing the rule of law in Boracay Island; (6) Engaging the stakeholders and the public through an effective domestic and global communications strategy; and (7) Boracay Action Plan.

After the reopening in October, the Boracay Inter-Agency Rehabilitation Management Group (BIARMG) clustered the key areas into different thematic groups, which meant shifting to actual management of the rehabilitation.

"The major challenges now include decongestion and opening of major areas for reconstruction — because you are moving people," says Tourism Undersecretary Art Boncato, Jr. "It has to do with everything that's happening on the ground, now that we have reopened. We have to look at the welfare of the tourists, how the local government units are functioning together with the national government agencies, and how the communities are joining the mix of Boracay life."

BIARMG deputy commander Al Orofio adds, "With the help of the community, we're also asking the tourists to be partners. When they



Representatives from the Ati tribe

come here, we keep telling them that while they enjoy Boracay, they should be partners."

Today, around 346 hotels and resorts — over 12,000 rooms — have been accredited. The number is sufficient for the current need and the island is far from reaching its carrying capacity of 19,215 individuals.

Boncato shares, "During the Holy Week, we only had around 8,600 guests. But we have to make sure we don't breach the limit. Before the reopening, Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat also talked to the Civil Aeronautics Board and the airlines, and engaged them to understand that there's a need to limit the number of flights to Boracay."

Because sustainability is also hinged on inclusive growth for local communities, who are essentially sharing their paradise to the greater public, the campaign promises to source products, supplies and materials locally, and encourage businesses in the island to prioritize hiring the locals.

To support this cause, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) has offered free skills trainings to workers and residents of Boracay.

The #MoreFunForever launch also gave the spotlight to soaps crafted by the Boracay Ati Tribal Organization (BATO).

"We're looking forward to having hotels in Boracay committed to stocking their bathrooms with these

soaps. That's thousands of rooms to be refilled every day, benefiting the local community. Through initiatives like this, we are making sure the economic benefits of tourism spread across the island. It's great for the environment, too, as it lessens plastic waste and minimizes our carbon footprint," shares Secretary Puyat in her video message shown during the event.

Moving forward, Filipinos can expect a sub-campaign under the #MoreFunForever brand.

"Towards the end of the quarter, we will focus on responsible tourism as we intend to change the tourists' behavior. It's a marketing effort that will use communication as a tool to educate the audience," caps Tourism Assistant Secretary Howard Uyking.

To engage more stakeholders in the movement and further the cause of sustainability, DOT has partnered with various government agencies, companies and organizations, including Mactan-Cebu International Airport Authority (MCIAA) (http://tourism.gov.ph/news_features/MCIAAExpressesSupporttoDOT.aspx), GRAT Center for Appropriate Technology (http://www.tourism.gov.ph/news_features/green_hotels.aspx) and Cebu Pacific (<https://wayto.cebupacificair.com/juan-effect/>).

While the #MoreFunForever launch ended with the breathtaking Boracay sunset as a backdrop, it did not symbolize a finale, but rather a new beginning for the country's beloved destinations and the whole tourism sector.



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Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat brought to light the need to limit the number of flights to Boracay.



BIATF officials comprising of representatives from the DOT and DENR



Among the items exhibited in the event booths are local soaps made by Boracay's Ati tribe



BUSINESS INTERESTS

HUGPONG POLS' ENVIRONMENTAL RECORD BARED

By Jhesset O. Enano
@JhessetEnanoINQ

Almost half of the senatorial candidates in the Hugpong ng Pagbabago (HNP) slate have business interests that are destructive to the environment, according to a matrix released by a group that looked into their environmental track records.

The Ecological Challenge for Change Coalition (Eco-Challenge) cited Makabayan senatorial candidate Neri Colmenares as having the best track record among 24 candidates, getting "green marks" across seven identified environmental concerns.

Former special assistant to the President Christopher "Bong" Go fared poorest, taking the bottom spot in the study released on Friday.

Eco-Challenge said 6 of the 13 senatorial candidates under HNP were highly involved in land reclamation, plantation and mining companies.

Go's involvement in reclamation approvals under the Office of the President and the "onerous" dam deals with China were among the basis for his poor rating.

"Political clans of current and former Senators Jinggoy Estrada, JV Ejercito and Bong Revilla shared between them 2,344 hectares of reclamation projects on Manila Bay," the group said.

Sen. Cynthia Villar's family is affiliated with mining companies TVI Resources and Development Philippines Inc. and St. Augustine Gold and Copper Ltd., the study said. INQ



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Logistics firm plants mangrove seedlings in Batangas

FEDEX Express, together with environmental non-profit organization Pusod Foundation, Inc., recently planted 3,000 mangrove seedlings in Barangay Papaya in Nasugbu, Batangas.

The mangrove-planting activity was part of the company's global giving program FedEx Cares.

"We are excited to be part of this six-month mangrove-planting project as mangroves are essential in conserving the rich biodiversity of Nasugbu and protecting the coastline of Barangay Papaya," said John Peterson, managing director at FedEx Express Philippines.

He added, "This is also our way of bringing possibilities to the local community by providing employment as they care for the seedlings planted."

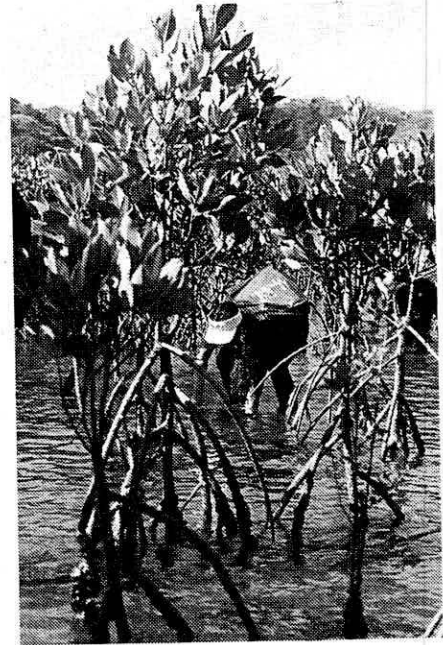
Barangay Papaya is one of six coastal communities in Nasugbu and home to almost 3,000 families. Mangroves help protect coastal areas from storm surges,



FedEx Express employees join the mangrove-planting in Barangay Papaya.

prevent soil erosion, and shelter an array of wildlife and marine species.

The event is part of the FedEx Cares initiative global charitable giving program, where FedEx team members from around the world volunteer their time and talents to support local communities. FedEx is investing \$200 million in more than 200 communities by 2020 to create opportunities and deliver positive change around the world.



Mangroves help protect coastal areas from storm surges.



DILG's Año backs DOT proposal for govt takeover of tourism sites

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA
@jonlmayuga

DISMAYED by noncooperation of some business establishments in El Nido, Palawan, Secretary Eduardo M. Año of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) has expressed support behind the recommendation of Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo Puyat for a government takeover of tourism sites across the country similar to what was implemented in the world-renowned Boracay Island last year.

"We support the proposal of DOT [Department of Tourism]. The campaign to restore, rehabilitate and preserve our natural wonders, as well as the effort to ensure compliance with existing laws is always a team effort by all government agencies particularly the DOT, DENR [Department of Environment and Natural Resources] and the DILG," Año said in a news statement.

Individual beaches or resorts in El Nido, Palawan, that fail to comply with governmental regulations by the end of the six-month deadline on May 30 will have to be closed, he added.

"We have given them enough time to comply. We [have] explained to them why and how they can comply with regulations. So far, they have failed to do so. They still have a whole month to shape up, after that they will face closure," he said.

Some resorts in El Nido, the DILG chief said, are fully compliant while others are partially compliant.

But he lamented that some establishments have zero-compliance.

"The local government unit (LGU) has to impose the regulations and revoke the permits of noncompliant establishments, otherwise the national government will take over," he said.

In case the national government comes in, an inter-agency manage-



"We have given them enough time to comply. We [have] explained to them why and how they can comply with regulations. So far, they have failed to do so. They still have a whole month to shape up, after that they will face closure," —Año

ment team will be created similar to what was done in Boracay.

"We already have existing protocols and best practices in place. All we need to do is determine if this action needs to be done," Año said.

The DILG will also investigate reports that some local government officials are blocking efforts of the Duterte administration to clean up the known beach destinations of the country.

Año has given instructions to DILG field offices to immediately investigate such reports from the DOT and the DENR.

"The DILG will commence appropriate legal action based on the results of the investigation. We will not hesitate to exercise our power of general supervision over LGUs should they be found to be blocking or opposing the directives of the President to clean up and rehabilitate our top tourist spots," Interior Undersecretary and Spokesman Jonathan Malaya said for his part.

The DILG spokesman urged all LGUs to be proactive and take the lead in cleaning up their respective jurisdictions without prodding from the DILG since it's their responsibility under the law in the first place. Taking the cue from the DOT's #MoreFunForever campaign, he said that LGUs have the serious task to be responsible stewards of our natural wonderful destinations. "It's our job to ensure all our natural wonders stay more fun, forever."