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Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



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Department of Environment and Natural Resources
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DPWH eyes full cleanup of Manila Bay by July

BY WILLIAM B. DEPASUPIL

THE Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) has deployed additional equipment to speed up the cleanup of the 1.5-kilometer stretch of Manila Bay along Roxas Boulevard.

"We are targeting a full clean-up by July 2019," Undersecretary Emil Sadain said.

The DPWH official said two units of the multipurpose amphibious dredger Watermaster Classic 5 were added to the existing dredging and excavator machines

in place along the bay.

The machines, he added, would help fast-track the cleanup of the stretch of the bay between the US Embassy and Manila Yacht Club ahead of the rainy season.

On March 5, 2019, Public Works Secretary Mark Villar

officially launched desilting operations in Manila Bay by deploying a fleet of equipment consisting of amphibious excavators, dumping scows, dump trucks, a debris segregator, street sweepers and vacuum sewer jet cleaners.

The cleanup operations at the Manila Bay area was divided by the DPWH into five areas measuring 200 to 300 meters.

To date, the total volume of muck and silt removed from a 20-meter distance from shore to bay, and thickness or depth of 2 meters, is estimated at 18,000 cubic meters.

The DPWH's Bureau of Equipment, with the assistance of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority and Philippine Coast Guard, has been conducting water quality monitoring and bathymetric surveying of the desilting sites to monitor progress.

The average amount of dissolved oxygen level, one of the main parameters of water quality, has improved from 4.7 milligrams per liter (mg/L) prior to the cleanup to 6mg/L, a level said to be necessary for sustaining aquatic life.



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Water safety training pushed in Cordillera

WEAK internet connection and lack of required training on water safety and sanitation for water sanitary personnel continue to be primary concerns in the Mountain Province.

The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)-Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) said these concerns were raised during a recent Regional Development Council (RDC) and Regional Peace and Order Council meeting in Bontoc, the provincial capital.

"The weak internet connectivity has been a recurring concern not only in Mountain

Province but in the whole region. The RDC cites the region's mountainous terrain as a limitation to the existing telecommunication towers for wireless internet," NEDA-CAR added.

"Also, market demand for internet connectivity is low in the Cordillera due to its sparse population. However, connectivity is crucial in the region, especially in times of disaster where roads may become inaccessible due to landslides" it said.

According to NEDA-CAR, the RDC infrastructure committee was tasked to identify potential cells sites with the Department

of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)-CAR, in coordination with the two major telecommunication companies to improve connectivity.

It said there had been a lack of required training on water safety and sanitation because of unavailability of required trainers accredited by the Department of Health (DoH).

NEDA-CAR said a resolution was passed requesting Health Secretary Francisco Duque 3rd to coordinate with DoH-accredited trainers based in Manila to train sanitary personnel for all local government units (LGUs) in the region.

Meanwhile, other concerns of the province include high cost of registration with the Food and Drug Administration registration for home-based food processors, lack of access to tourism sites, lack of police officers in the province, prominence of the province as a transit point for marijuana-related products and role of LGUs in the marijuana legalization bill.

NEDA-CAR said the RDC vowed to address these concerns throughout the second quarter of the year until the next meeting in June.

ANNA LEAH E. GONZALES



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Protecting the Philippine seas

IPRESENTED a paper on Strategy Execution Amidst Change and Uncertainty at the recent Philippine Navy (PN) Sail Plan Boot Camp.

The boot camp is designed to provide officers and men of the PN with the right skills and knowledge as they manage the implementation of their developmental initiatives.

These objectives are embodied in the PN Strategic Sail Plan 2020. This transformation journey started in 2008. Since then, the PN has continuously implemented the systems and processes covering the perspectives of Personnel, Organization, Resources, Capability and Accomplishment – all towards achieving its vision of becoming a strong and credible navy that our maritime nation can be proud of by 2020.

The PN has successfully covered several points in its developmental strategy. To sustain its momentum for transformation, the PN held its fifth Sail Plan Boot Camp. This particular boot camp will increase the capability of Navy front line personnel in managing the execution of the sail plan and strengthen their commitment to transformation and good governance.

My paper delved on the challenges of developing and implementing strategy amid change and uncertainty in a volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity



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(VUCA) environment.

We discussed the classic definition of strategy, which is the determination of the basic long term goals of an enterprise and the adoption of courses of action and allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals. We also discussed planned and emergent strategies and the ensuing debate between these two approaches.

Strategy has changed because of uncertainty, complexity and change. The traditional resourced based view of inside out, building on ones strengths, accepting path dependency and creating uniqueness are becoming a challenge in a VUCA world.

According to a thesis by Grant in 2013, "Strategy is not a detailed plan or program of instructions. It is a unifying theme that gives coherence and directions to the actions and decisions of an individual or an organization."

This contemporary definition highlights the importance of continuous learning and adaptation. We discussed that VUCA was first used in 1987 from the leadership theories of Warren Bennis and

was further developed for military application by the US Army War College. We pointed out that VUCA leads to both systems and behavioral failures. This could lead to organizational failure.

To address VUCA, we covered some possible approaches as well as some tools:

To start with, we need to have a clear view of the vision or the goal. We need to understand the consequences of issues and our actions. Second we need to coordinate with all stakeholders on a regular basis. Finally, we have to address relevant opportunities and alternatives, then act decisively.

The basic tools to create a clearer vision include brainstorming, using expert panels or the Delphi method, scenario planning and the dependable SWOT. We now have mathematical models as well as algorithms, assessment of deviations and decision trees. Quantitative approaches are usually formal and explicit with fixed functions though. The advent of artificial intelligence using wider data points allow us to consider various scenarios including our personal intuitions.

It is always important to remember that a primary role of any organization is the integration of knowledge. This integration of dispersed, heterogenous and sometimes complementary knowledge bases into a greater whole will

provide leverage and an advantage to organizations.

We wrapped up by reviewing an old and tested tool for implementing strategy – the combat order. The combat order is a tool we all learned in basic training and has gained traction in civilian practice because of its simplicity and effectiveness.

The combat order is known by its acronym SMEAC:

Situation – explain what is happening on the ground

Mission – define the task and purpose for the action or the strategic intent

Execution – describe how you intend to accomplish the mission

Administration – identify the logistics, resources, both material and manpower required by the mission

Command – detail the plan for command, control, signal and communication

This reliable tool has been tested in battle and in board rooms. It has proven to be an excellent execution tool to accomplish the mission.

We are confident that the PN is dedicated to its mission. We also believe that the PN is up to the task of protecting our Philippine seas and is well underway to accomplishing its sail plan for 2020.

Ronald Goseco is a trustee of the Finex Foundation



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Ban on single-use plastic products pushed

By **CHARISSA M. LUCI-ATIENZA**

Bacolod City Rep. Greg Gasataya wants to regulate the manufacturing, importation, and use of single-use plastic products.

“With our dependence on agriculture, plastic pollution also poses a grave threat to our food security. Disaster risks and hazards arising from plastic pollution may put farms at risk of flooding, resulting in wastage of agricultural products along with its threats to a balanced ecology. Microplastics leaked in our bodies of water may also put public health at risk as it gets into our food chain,” Gasataya said.

He recalled that in 2018, flooding occurred in Bacolod despite the city-wide flood control project.

He said that when made an in-

vestigation, he found plastic garbage clogged in the sewers and waterways from years of improper disposal.

Gasataya filed House Bill (HB) 8853 which provides that all business enterprises must prohibit single-use plastics.

Under HB 8853, retailers will charge consumers a minimum of ₱5 for each piece of single-use plastics they use.

The amount collected by retailers shall be reflected in the official receipt. Twenty percent of the amount will be kept by the business enterprise to cover the cost of the single-use plastics, and 80 percent will be remitted quarterly to the Special Fund created under the proposed act.

A discount of ₱5 shall be given to consumers who bring their own containers for take-outs and purchase of food and beverages.

HB 8853 also bans the importation of single-use plastics and provides that all used single-use plastics be recycled.

For VAT-registered enterprises, establishments, and stores found violating the proposed Act, the following are the penalties: first offense – a fine of ₱10,000; second offense – ₱250,000 fine and suspension of business permit for six months; third offense – ₱500,000 fine and suspension of its business permit for one year; and fourth offense – ₱1-million fine and revocation of business permit and ineligibility for application of business permit for a period of five years.

The bill calls for the creation of a Special Fund for Single-Use Plastic Regulation, which shall be used for the establishment of recycling centers and capacity-building of LGUs and local law enforcement agencies.