

## Cops arrest 3 for dumping toxic waste in Bulacan

Tuesday, 31 January 2012 19:47 Ramon Efren Lazaro



MARILAO, Bulacan—The Bulacan Philippine National Police (PNP) on Thursday stopped three persons, two of whom are minors, from contaminating with hazardous industrial waste the Marilao River in Barangay Santa Rosa II in this town.

Bulacan police director Senior Supt. Fernando Mendez Jr., said arrested were Rogelio Gayondato Jr., 28, resident of Malambing St. Pangarap Village, Caloocan City; Edimar Pantino Balsco, 17, helper, of Barangay Tungko Mangga, San Jose del Monte City, Bulacan; and Miguel Labong Tamayo 17, helper, of Barangay San Roque Street, Tala, Caloocan City.

The three are reportedly employed at GLO Siphoning Poza Negro and Declogging Pipeline Services.

They were arrested while discharging from a closed van the suspected hazardous industrial waste.

Mendez said joint operatives of the Marilao police station under Supt. Gerry Andaya, the Provincial Intelligence Branch, led by Supt. Edwin Quilates, and village chief Val de los Reyes conducted a stakeout after receiving a tip that a creek in the barangay that eventually flows towards the Marilao River is being used as dumping ground for toxic and hazardous industrial waste.

Officer on case Senior Insp. Restituto Granil said the site was inside the Westmont Industrial Subdivision. One Mitsubishi Canter closed van with plate WEB 680 was recovered from the suspects.

Upon learning of the incident, Bulacan Gov. Wilhelmino Sy-Alvarado immediately sent a team from the Bulacan Environment and Natural Resources, headed by lawyer Rustico “Teddy” de Belen, to investigate and file appropriate charges against the culprits

He said the provincial government will not allow Bulacan to become a dumping ground of hazardous chemical waste, especially in Marilao River, where a massive cleanup drive is going on, in a collective effort to erase its image as one of the dirtiest rivers in the world as listed by the New York-based environmental watchdog Blacksmith Institute.

De Belen said the suspects could be held liable for violation of Republic Act 6969, the law on the proper disposal of toxic substances and hazardous industrial waste.

A resident told the BusinessMirror that several years back, then-Health Secretary Francisco Duque personally went to Marilao to inspect the dumping of hazardous waste in a creek in the own that causes several residents to be hospitalized after inhaling the foul smell it emits.

(Ramon Efren R. Lazaro)

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