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DENR

IN THE NEWS

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THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER

Malaya

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Lapu-Lapu in Cebu to get 2nd Canadian garbage shipment

BY ANGELA LOPEZ DE LEON

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said the remaining 21 containers of the first batch of Canadian trash intercepted by Bureau of Customs (BOC) more than two years ago will likely be disposed at a waste disposal facility in the Central Visayas this year.

In a press briefing at the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Center in Quezon City on Friday, DENR assistant secretary and concurrent Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) director Juan Miguel Cuna said the disposal of the illegal shipment may be held in April at a waste disposal facility in Lapu-Lapu City in Cebu.

Cuna noted that a Canadian firm owns the said facility that is currently being built and is expected to become operational in the first quarter of the year.

"The plan to dispose it (mixed waste) at a Canadian waste disposal facility in Region 7 (Central Visayas) was suggested by the Canadian Embassy," Cuna said.

Between June and August 2013, 50 container vans from Canada were found by the BOC to contain mixed garbage that was "misdeclared" as plastic scraps for recycling.

The BOC has filed 14 cases against the Philippines-based importer Chronic Plastics. But so far, no action has been taken against the Canadian exporter Chronic

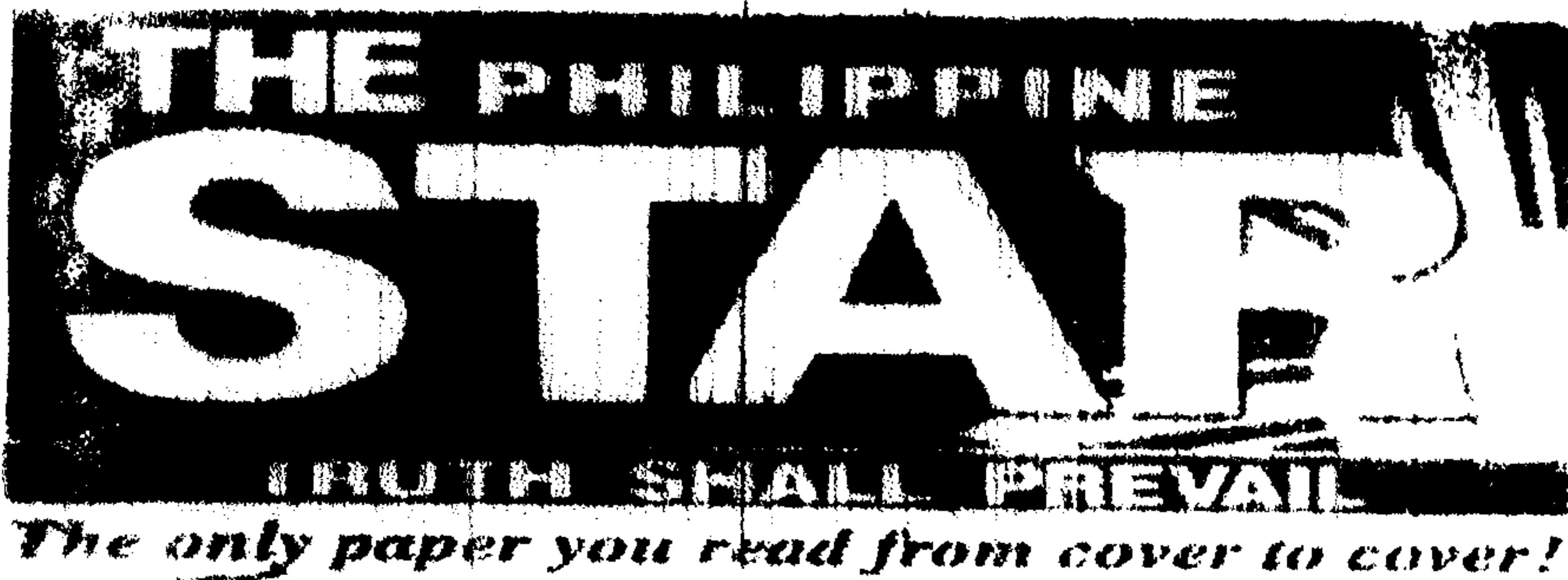
Inc.

Environmental groups have clamored for the return of the shipping containers to Canada.

Custom authorities discovered another 48 container vans from the same exporter last May, bringing the total number of the shipping containers of illegal trash imports from Canada to 98.

Cuna said 29 of these garbage-filled containers have already been emptied in a private landfill in Capas, Tarlac from June to July last year.

"Based on the rules, it's up to the BOC to decide whether they would return it to Canada or not since wala itong importation clearance. But the DENR we wants it returned," he added.



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Aurora resorts without ECCs – DENR exec

BALER, Aurora – More than 90 percent of the beach resorts in this province are operating without Environmental Compliance Certificates (ECCs), an official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said on Friday.

The lack of ECC poses a risk to the province's tourism industry, according to the regional director of the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB), which is

By MANNY GALVEZ

tasked to issue the certificate for a proposed project.

The EMB issues the ECC after reviewing a project's specifications.

The permit certifies that a proposed project will have no negative impact on the environment.

Cyril Coliflores, DENR provincial officer, said except for a few resorts and hotels in the capital, a majority failed to secure the ECCs.

Coliflores said most of the resorts were found accommodating tourists beyond their capacities.

He said the EMB in Central Luzon is training pollution control officers to address the emerging urban blight brought by tourist migration.

Lormelyn Claudio, EMB regional director, said the tourism surge has resulted in the mushrooming of souvenir

shops.

She said the EMB has been conducting seminars for local government units and resort operators to help them cope with the tourism boom.

Vice Gov. Rommel Rico Teh Angara said they have called the attention of the municipal planning officers and engineers, particularly in the capital to compel resort owners and operators to comply with the ECC requirement.



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Most resorts in Aurora operate without ECC permit -- DENR

BALER, Aurora -- The Department of Environment and Natural Resources yesterday announced that over 90 percent -- or nine out of 10 resorts -- in this province are operating without the required Environmental Compliance Certificates (ECCs).

"The lack of the requisite ECCs is posing a risk to the province's tourism potentials just like the problems now hounding Boracay," stressed DENR's Environmental Management Bureau regional director, the officer in charge of issuing the permit.

An ECC is required to be secured from the EMB for any project in the Philippines that poses a potential environmental risk or impact (such as mining, agriculture projects, and construction).

The EMB issues the ECC but only after a thorough and positive review of the project's application.

The certificate indicates that the proposed project or undertaking will not cause a significantly negative impact on the environment.

The ECC contains specific measures and conditions that must be met by the project proponent before and during the operation of the project.

In some cases, conditions are listed to be performed during the project's abandonment phase to lessen identified potential environmental impacts.

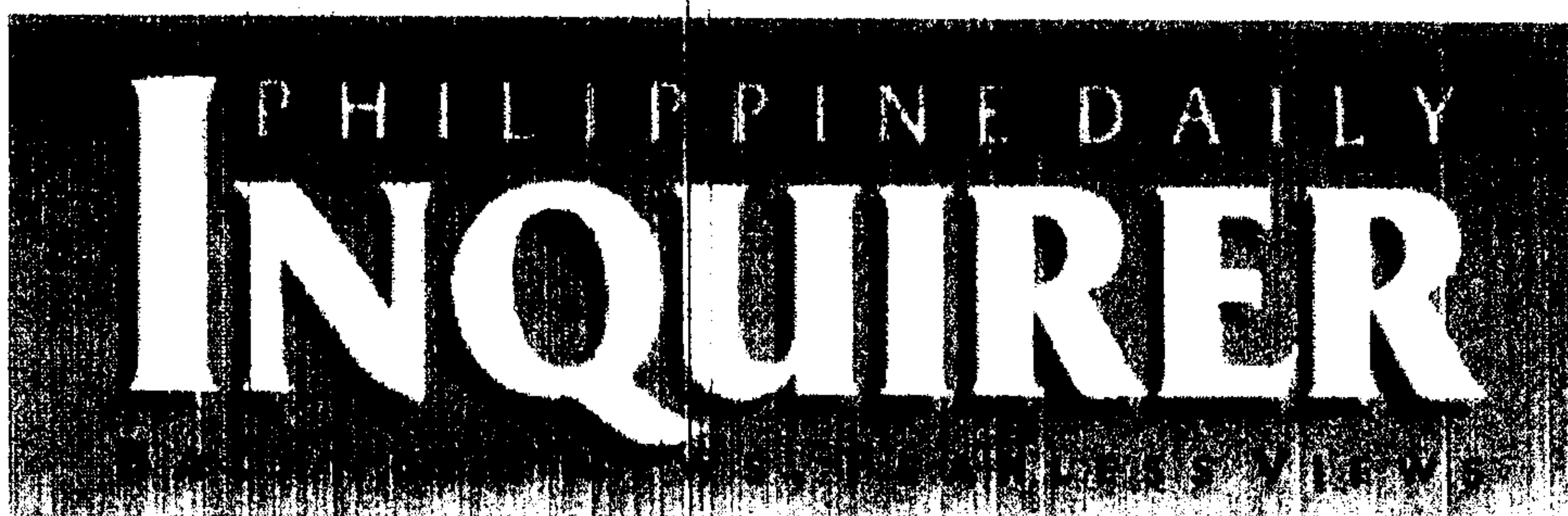
An ECC also certifies that the proponent has complied with all the requirements of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) System and has committed to implement its approved environmental management plan.

The DENR officials here said except from some few resorts and hotels in this town, majority of those operating in the province have failed to secure ECCs which provide for mitigating measures and pollution control.

They said the holding capacities of resorts to accommodate the influx of tourists are going beyond the normal, adding Aurora is threatening to become another Boracay -- in being unable to absorb the tourism boom.

Mamer Bañez

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

SBMA, Olongapo execs fight over custody of logs

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—Officials of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) and the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (Cenro) in Olongapo City are fighting over the custody of 50 logs cut from the project site of a solar and wind power plant here.

Jobin-SQM Inc., the company that will build a \$200-million renewable energy facility here, obtained permits to cut the trees and transport the logs out of the free port from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Central Luzon office in Pampanga province.

But personnel from the SBMA Law Enforcement Department (LED) seized the logs on Dec. 28 when these were being transported out of the free port.

An LED incident report said the logs were confiscated because the contracted truck company failed to show a transport permit. An SBMA official, who refused to be identified for lack of authority to speak on the matter, said the logs were confiscated because there was no coordination between SBMA's Ecology Center and LED.

The source added that Jobin-SQM Inc. obtained a transport permit from the DENR but it was not relayed to the LED personnel.

In a letter to the SBMA Ecology Center, Cenro officer Marife Castillo asked the Subic office to release the logs to the DENR instead for safekeeping.

Castillo said the cutting permit it issued to the solar firm indicated that the DENR would have custody of the logs.

But SBMA officials insisted that the logs should be under their safekeeping and these should be turned over to the Aeta community where the solar plant is located.

On Wednesday, SBMA Chair Roberto Garcia directed Orlando Maddela, LED chief, to release the dump trucks containing the logs but said the seized logs kept inside the LED compound should be transferred to the free port's Pamulaklakin Forest Trail.

Lawyer Ruel John Kabigting, officer in charge of SBMA Ecology Center, said his office would work things out with the Cenro. He said the Aetas should benefit from the cut logs based on a memorandum of agreement that SBMA signed with the leaders of the Pastolan Aeta community.

Officials of Jobin-SQM Inc. declined to comment on the seized logs but Kabigting said the company had secured the permit to cut the trees.

Jobin-SQM Inc.'s facility inside the 800-hectare Aeta ancestral domain here will produce 150 megawatts of combined solar and wind energy. *Allan Macatuno, Inquirer Central Luzon*



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DENR eyes other livelihood for IPs in Mindanao to curb illegal logging

ENVIRONMENT and Natural Resources Secretary Ramon Paje said although the government is trying to weed out the dependency of indigenous peoples, particularly those in Surigao and Agusan del Sur, on the country's forests for livelihood, it will also implement an alternative livelihood and social project programs for them.

Paje said the IPs in Surigao, Agusan and some parts of Davao are those doing logging in at least 23 forest areas in which the DENR considered as hotspots.

He reported that since 2010, the DENR was able to reduce the hotspots from 197 to 23 in view of the total log ban implemented by the government.

"We have successfully implemented the total logging ban in the Philippines. We closed all logging concessions that's why there was a significant reduc-

tion of hotspots," Paje said.

Paje stressed that the DENR is trying to do something with the remaining 23 hotspots to make sure that these will be eliminated or eradicated although these are very, very related to poverty or social concerns.

"Ito ay ang areas na karamihan ay may mga indigenous peoples especially Agusan, Surigao and parts of Davao. Sa mga lugar na iyan, ang pagtingin ng mga IP sa mga gubat ay kanilang pag-aari. They own the forests and they can harvest at their own will. Napakahirap pong pigilan, pero dyan lang sa mga lugar na yan," he added.

"What we need are livelihood projects, social projects that we can weed them out of the dependency sa ating kagubatan. If we can remove their dependence sa forests, then we can give them liveli-

hood projects," Paje explained.

The DENR chief also reported that their illegal logging campaign has also resulted to the confiscation of 30,709,507 board feet of illegally cut and processed logs and forest products nationwide and the filing of a total of 1,549 cases against violators with 202 persons convicted.

Paje disclosed that they donated the confiscated logs to the Department of Education which 146,471 school armchairs and furnitures were made while 388 school buildings were repaired using confiscated logs and lumber.

He added that the other confiscated forest products were also donated to other government institutions which were converted into 1,820 chairs, 105 double-deck beds, 102 core shelters and 18 office buildings.

Cory Martinez

The Manila Times

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

MGB sees metals output value up 40% in 3 yrs

BY JAMES KONSTANTIN GALVEZ
REPORTER

THE value of mined metals in the Philippines is expected to go up by 40 percent over the next three years with the big ticket projects approved late last year, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) said over the weekend.

Boosting the metallic minerals sector are the King-king copper-gold and Silangan projects, MGB Director Leo Jasareno told reporters in a press conference.

In a press conference, MGB Director Leo Jasareno announced that He said the Natural Resources Secretary Ramon Paje has approved the King-king and Silangan mines to operate, he said. "These are world class projects that were added to our existing mines," Jasareno noted.

The King-king mine was given the green light to operate in the last week of December, while Silangan was approved in the third quarter of 2015.

"With these new operating mines, we are expecting about a 40-percent increase in the total value of metallic minerals output within the next three years," the MGB official said.

The value of metals out-

put declined by 20 percent to P85.78 billion last year, compared with P107.24 billion in 2014, as metals prices in the world market remained depressed.

Gold was selling at \$1,180.13 per troy ounce (oz.) on average in the first nine months of 2015, down 8.43 percent. Silver was at \$16.03 per troy oz., down 19.64 percent.

Nickel was down 26.64 percent to \$5.70 per pound (lb.), and copper was down 17.89 percent to \$2.57 per lb.

Low metals prices were a result of a listless global

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The Manila Times

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

MGB sees metals output value up 40% in 3 yrs.

economic growth and a slowing China economy.

Mine shutdowns also helped depress the value of metals output, particularly at the Lutopan site of Carmen Copper Corporation in Toledo City, Cebu starting March 2015.

However, Paje said the King-king and Silangan projects helped lift mining investment to \$750 million last year.

"Part of the project costs of King-King and Silangan were al-

ready recorded last year... That's why mining investment increased last year," Paje said.

The \$2.2-billion King-king is a joint venture of Nationwide Development Corporation and the Villar-led St. Augustine Gold and Copper Ltd. in Compostela Valley Province. The \$850-million Silangan in Surigao Province is owned by Philex Mining Corporation.

King-king is expected to produce 3.16 billion pounds of cop-

per and 5.43 million ounces of gold over its 25-year mine life.

Once King-king starts operating, it is expected to create 5,000 direct jobs and 20,000 indirect employment during its construction phase. Another 1,700 workers are also coming in once it starts commercial production in 2017.

Silangan is projected to produce 5 billion lbs. of copper and 9 million ozs. of gold in its 25-year mine life. It is supposed to start

commercial production in 2018.

Last October, Philex said it was evaluating several techniques on waste materials handling and refining its mine design to enable the company to develop the Silangan project into an efficient and environment-friendly operation.

"These initiatives will extend the completion of the project's definitive feasibility study to the first quarter of 2016 from our original projection this year," the company said.

3 mining projects to jump-start gold, copper production

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THREE mining projects worth a total of \$3.8 billion are expected to start within this year, revving up investment inflows into the Philippines and ramping up domestic metals output.

Based on data from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), investment in mining reached only \$693.1 million in 2014.

MGB director Leo L. Jasareno told reporters the biggest item to jump-start 2016 was the Kingking gold and copper project in Compostela Valley.

Last December 29, the MGB approved the declaration of mining project feasibility (DMPF) for the Kingking project that costs \$2.29 billion. This was the last major regulatory hurdle for the planned mine.

Jasareno said the other two major items were the Silangan project of Philex Mining Corp. in Surigao del Norte and the Runruno gold-molybdenum project of FCF Minerals Corp. in Nueva Vizcaya.

He added Silangan costs \$850 million while Runruno is tagged at \$700 million.

Regarding the Kingking project, Jasareno told the INQUIRER that the approval of the DMPF was conditional. "They have to secure a mineral processing permit first,"

the MGB chief said.

"Before mine development can proceed, the proponents also need to secure an amendment of the MPSA (mineral production sharing agreement) to include an adjacent area where some of the processing facilities shall be located," he added.

Kingking proponents St. Augustine Gold and Copper Ltd. and Nationwide Development Corp. expect to extract from the mining site 3.16 billion pounds of copper and 5.43 million ounces of gold over 25 years.

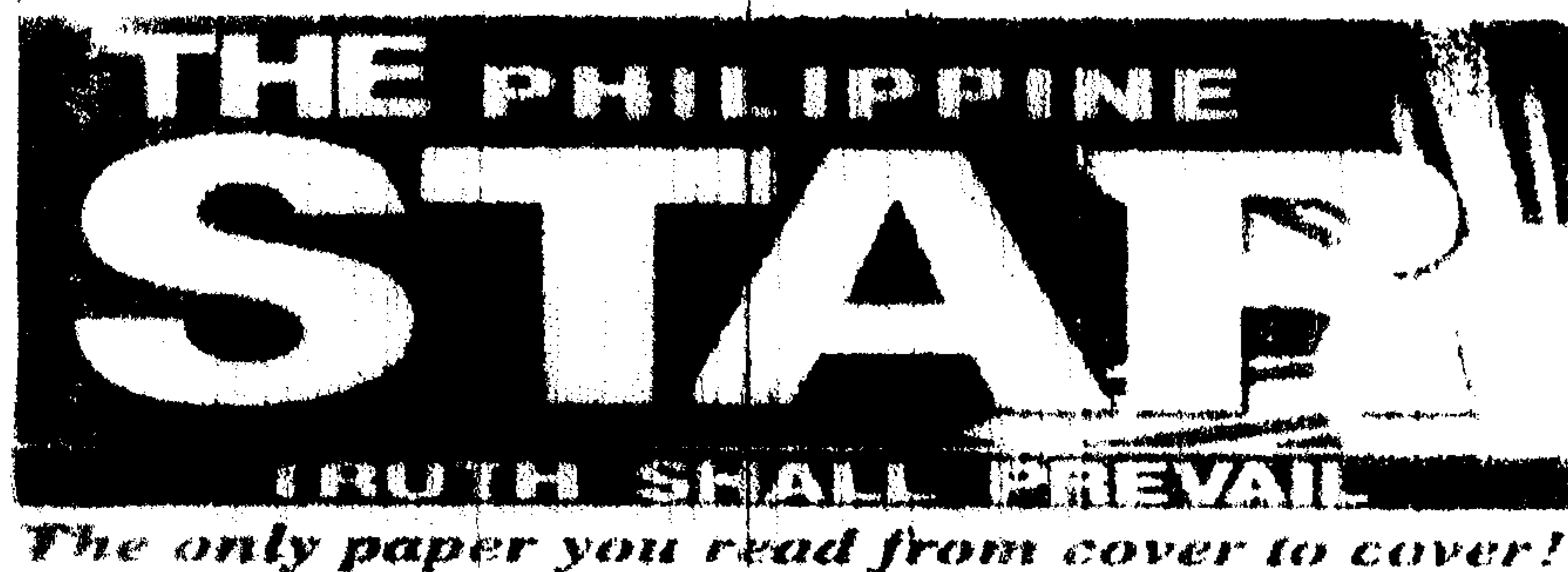
In August 2015, St. Augustine said the start of mine construction was planned for this year.

On the other hand, Silangan is believed to contain five billion pounds of copper and nine million ounces of gold while Runruno is expected to churn out one million ounces of gold in 10 years or 100,000 ounces yearly.

MGB records showed that gold output in January to September of 2015 jumped by 19 percent year-on-year to 15,485 kilograms.

During that period, the major drivers of growth were from the Didipio copper-gold project of Oceanagold Philippines Inc., the Masbate gold project of Filminera Resources Inc., and the Maco gold operation of Apex Mining Co. Inc.

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St. Augustine secures final permit for King-king copper-gold project

St. Augustine Gold and Copper Ltd. has announced that the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) has approved the Declaration of Mining Project Feasibility (DMPF) for the King-king copper-gold project in Mindanao.

The permit approval, which was awarded to St. Augustine's joint venture partner, Nationwide Development Corp. (Nadecor), is the last major permit required to initiate development, construction and operation of the King-king mine.

Through the order dated Dec. 29, 2015, Nadecor has been authorized to proceed to the development and operating stages of its mineral production sharing agreement (MPSA) which includes the extraction and sale of copper, gold and associated minerals within the 1,548-hectare area. St. Augustine is the exclusive technical services provider of Nadecor.

Receipt of the DMPF is a significant milestone, and coupled with the environmental compliance certificate (ECC) issued in February 2015, enables St. Augustine and Nadecor to jointly begin development, construction and operation of the King-king mine per approved plans and strategies.

The DMPF approval was achieved subsequent to the receipt of the ECC. The DMPF approval represents five years of comprehensive technical, environmental, social and community engagement efforts completed by Nadecor and St Augustine and related advisors.

Nadecor president Conrado T. Calalang said he

is "exceptionally proud of this achievement and the diligent efforts made by the project team and the MGB representatives, who reviewed and approved the project designed to international best practice and standards."

St. Augustine president and CEO Paolo A. Villar added receipt of the DMPF "removes the last significant hurdle to move forward with the development of the King-king project and represents our most significant milestone to date.

"We look forward to working with Nadecor and all local stakeholders to take King-king to the next stage of development."

With the approval of the DMPF, Nadecor and St. Augustine will work cooperatively to advance the project to construction followed by operation of the mine. Development of the King-king project is expected to have positive impact for all project stakeholders and the community at large, and has been designed to minimize any environmental impact.

The King-king copper-gold project is located in Compostela Valley and is expected to recover 3.16 billion pounds of copper and 5.43 million ounces of gold over its 25-year mine and process life. According to the preliminary feasibility study released on Sept. 18, 2013, the project has a pre-tax NPV of \$2 billion with an IRR of 24.8 percent. The estimated mineral reserves amount to 617.9 million tons at 0.300 percent total copper and 0.395 g/t gold.

THE EXPONENTIAL GROWTH OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS SINCE 1900

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICES

Calls for trash-less 'Traslacion' fell on deaf ears — EcoWaste

By CHITO A. CHAVEZ

A pro-environment group has chided the millions of faithful, vendors, and the public in general for the pervasive littering as truckloads of garbage were collected after the observance of the Feast of the Black Nazarene in Manila last Saturday.

EcoWaste Coalition had campaigned yearly for a "trash-less" Traslacion, which commemorates the transfer of the revered image of the Black Nazarene from Luneta to Quiapo.

Trash galore

When the crowd left the Quirino Grandstand for the seven-kilometer procession, the group's Basura Patrollers found the sprawling grounds littered with assorted trash, including cigarette butts, styrofoam containers, snack wrappers, plastic bags and bottles and newspapers and carton boxes used as sitting or sleeping materials, in brazen disregard of Rizal Park's "no smoking, no littering" policy.

"From Quirino Grandstand to Quiapo Church, waste workers and volunteers uncomplainingly removed the litter left by some devotees and vendors with broomsticks and dustpans," observed Aileen Lucero, Coordinator, EcoWaste Coalition.

"Piles of rubbish dotted Quiapo streets, particularly polystyrene containers for free lunch given by good-hearted residents and dumped on street corners and gutters. Food containers and plastic bags were strewn everywhere. Also, portions of Evangelista and Raon Sts. were also littered with firecracker waste," she added.

Reckless behavior

The group also noted the damage to some of the portable toilets at Katigbak St. where some devotees stood to get a better view of the procession unmindful that the roof could collapse and injure people.

Despite the availability of portalets, the group also found some plastic bottles filled with urine.

Devoted sweepers

On the other hand, the EcoWaste Coalition commended the "army of street sweepers" deployed by the City Government of Manila and the Metro Manila Development Authority and the hundreds of volunteers from a number of parishes and schools, as well as the numerous waste pickers who worked hard to manage the massive fiesta trash.

While grateful for the valuable role played by waste workers and volunteers, the EcoWaste Coalition lamented the lack of environmental concern by some of the devotees who simply abandoned their discards for others to pick up.

Making amends

While disappointed with the omnipresent litter that again defiled the Traslacion, the EcoWaste Coalition expressed optimism that all Black Nazarene devotees would sooner or later make amends for the environment.

Through his widely-acclaimed encyclical letter on environment, Pope Francis warned that "the earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth" as he condemned throw-away culture and pleaded for ecological solutions.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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'Trash-lacion' gets worse; garbage to be sent to Navotas

THIS year's grand procession of the Black Nazarene generated 35 truckloads or 367 tons of garbage along the route, or 157 tons more than what was collected last year, according to the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA).

The increase can be attributed to the massive religious gathering being held on a weekend, said MMDA Parkway Clearing Group chief Francis Martinez.

MMDA General Manager Cora Jimenez put it more frankly: "The people are still not used to disposing of their own trash during the procession."

The immensity of the street litter emerged as the Jan. 9 ritual also known as "traslacion," which drew an estimated 1.5 million devotees at its peak on Saturday, ended after 20 hours with the image reaching Quiapo Church around 2 a.m. on Sunday.

Most of the garbage were plastic bags and bottles, carton and Styro-

foam packs, and leftovers. MMDA street sweepers went to work at the tail-end of the procession which covered a 7-kilometer route, starting at Quirino Grandstand.

In an interview, Martinez said the collected trash would be brought to Pier 18 in Manila and then shipped to a landfill in Tanza, Navotas City. He initially said that the final destination was Bataan province but later made a correction after calling a member of his staff.

Meanwhile, the environmental watchdog EcoWaste said the "pervasive littering" once again revealed the ugly side of what can be considered the single biggest Catholic event in the country.

"When will we learn to pick up after ourselves?" said EcoWaste coordinator Aileen Lucero.

Aside from leaving their trash anywhere, she said, some devotees damaged the portable toilets set up on Katigbak Street in Manila when they climbed over them to have a better view of the procession. "Despite the availability of portalets, we also found some plastic bottles filled with urine."

According to the National Solid Waste Commission, about 9,000 tons of solid waste are generated in Metro Manila daily.

Maricar B. Brizuela



WORSHIPPERS' WASTE Barefoot devotees leave a trail of litter along the 7-kilometer "traslacion" route.

LYN RILLON

Abad: Spending package could 'neutralize' impact of El Niño

By Melissa Luz T. Lopez
Reporter

PREPARATIONS made ahead of the "severe" El Niño are expected to provide a boost to the economy, even with the dry spell posing a downside risk to growth, the Budget secretary said.

Budget and Management Secretary Florencio B. Abad said in a recent interview that efforts of the national government to mitigate the impact of the El Niño — which is expected to peak during the dry season and linger into June — could even "neutralize" the risks it poses to economic growth.

"While it will have certainly an adverse impact, the preparation to deal with the El Niño effects will generate... for example, importing rice, you have to make up for the slack. The president approved a package of El Niño measures ranging from job generation projects. That will perk up further the economy," Mr. Abad said.

On Dec. 11, President Benigno S. C. Aquino III approved a P19-billion budget to implement the Roadmap to Address the Impact of El Niño, as led by the National Economic and Development Authority. Among the programs to be funded include alternative livelihood sources for farmers affected by the drought and systems to ramp up rice production in lesser-hit areas.

Mr. Aquino also gave the green light for the importation of an additional 300,000 metric tons (MT) to 400,000 MT of rice to come in during the second quarter to make up for diminished palay production, on top of the 500,000 MT already ordered for the first three months of the year.

As of the third quarter of 2015, farm output growth stood flat at 0.04% largely attributed to the "severe" El Niño, which started in September.

Analysts have also attributed the faster rise in food prices seen in the past few months due to the effect of the dry spell on crop yield.

Gov't subsidies to agri agencies rise amid efforts to mitigate dry spell

THE GOVERNMENT extended more subsidies to state-owned firms in November, supporting mostly agencies involved with agriculture, water and health as El Niño ravaged the countryside.

Subsidies to government-owned and -controlled corporations increased 38% year on year to P3.71 billion, according to data from the Bureau of the Treasury.

The Philippine Health Insurance Corp. accounted for 61% or P2.26 billion of the total. The National Irrigation Administration received the second largest share of P720 million.

The government gave P527 million to the Local Water Utilities Administration and P124 million to the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp.

The Philippine Rice Research Institute and the Philippine Fisheries Development Authority also received P39 million and P9 million, respectively.

The remainder went to the Philippine National Railways (P14 million), People's Television Network, Inc. (P13 million), Southern Philippines Development Authority (P4 million) and Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions (P2 million).

The government disbursed P66.01 billion between January and November, slightly less than the P66.32 billion released a year earlier.

Subsidies form part of the national government's expenditures, which accelerated 13% year on year to P1.992 trillion during the 11 months to November.

Most of the firms that received subsidies in November form part of the interagency task force created to mitigate possible adverse effects of the El Niño phenomenon.

The current El Niño cycle is expected to linger until the second quarter. Its strength has been widely compared with the 1997-1998 episode, when the Philippines' agriculture output dropped by almost a fourth.

President Benigno S. C. Aquino III on Dec. 11 approved a P19-billion program to mitigate El Niño's impact across sectors. This included projects aimed at supporting rice production, ensuring stable power supply and minimizing health risks. — **Keith Richard D. Mariano**



IRRIGATION captured a large share of government subsidies as farmers battled drought throughout the Philippines.

AFP

However, Mr. Abad said that frontloading the countermeasures ahead of the peak of the dry spell could boost the economy further.

"If you are not going to do anything, then El Niño will have an adverse impact. But if you have a mitigating measures to address, minimize the impact of El Niño,

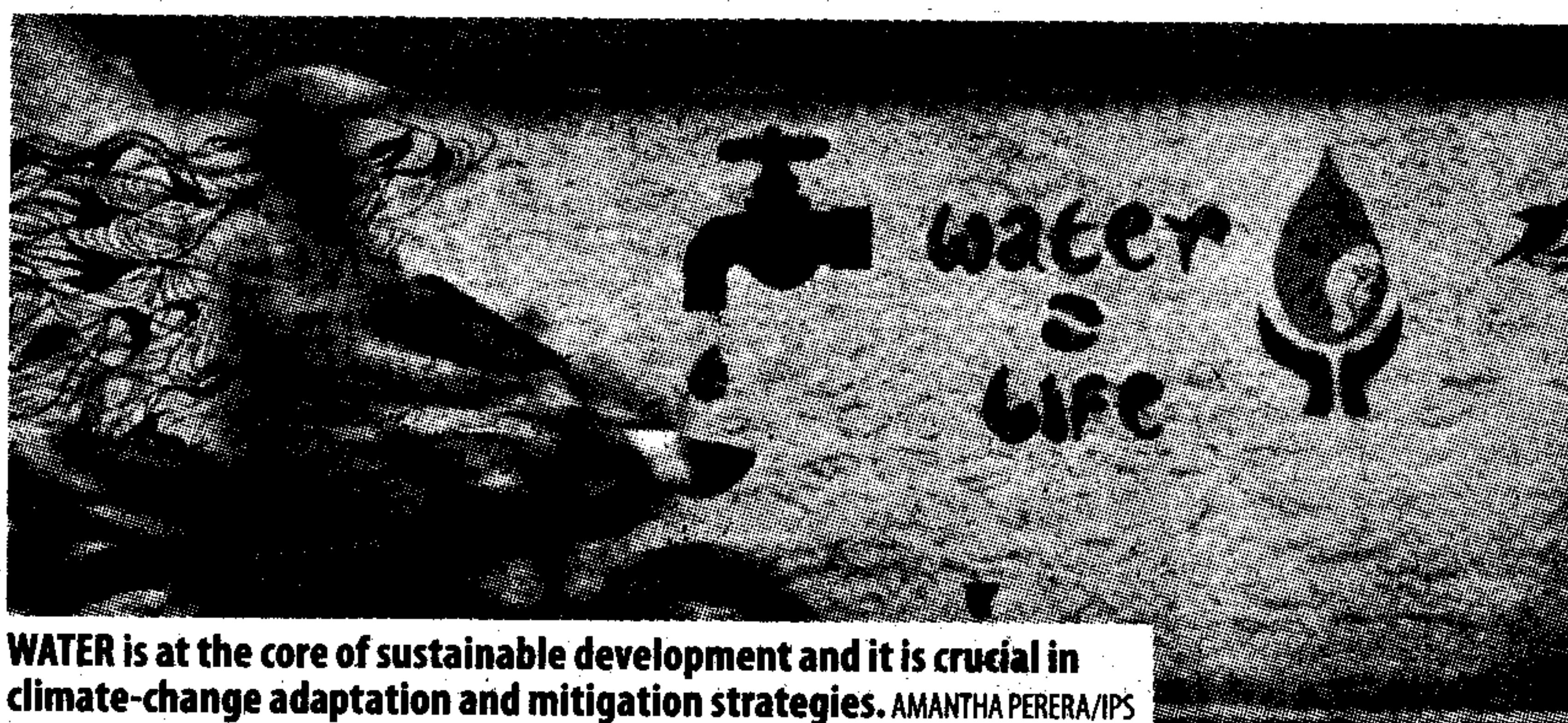
then that will sort of neutralize the effects," the Cabinet official said. "In fact, it may even generate more spending — and we have money to spend."

Initial projections showed the El Niño would last six months, but this was later extended to June this year.

Mr. Abad has also said he expects more rapid releases of public funds this year, sustaining a double-digit rise in government releases seen in the second half of last year and despite an infrastructure spending ban ahead of the May 9 national elections.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Water everywhere but too much or too little



WATER is at the core of sustainable development and it is crucial in climate-change adaptation and mitigation strategies. AMANTHA PERERA/IPS

ROME— “Water is at the core of the Lima-Paris Action Agenda (LPAA), but it is true that for a long time water and oceans issues have been marginalized in climate conferences, considering that 90 percent of natural catastrophes are linked to water and 40 percent of global population will face water scarcity from now to 2050,” said Marie-Ségolène Royal, French Minister of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy, during the news conference at the launch of the #ClimateIsWater initiative at Conference of Parties (COP)21.

“It is through water that it is possible to measure climate change impacts,” she said.

On December 2, “Resilience Day,” the international water community gathered in Paris’s Le Bourget for the launch of the #ClimateIsWater initiative. A series of events and a news conference took place with the aim of increasing visibility and raising awareness on how water is key to addressing climate change.

The initiative brought together several organizations representing civil society and stakeholders. Sustainable water management is fundamental for addressing climate change.

“Actors across all sectors should contribute to climate-change adaptation and mitigation strategies

integrating water into future climate architecture.” In order to meet this goal, financing is a crucial aspect, declared Torgny Holmgren of the Stockholm International Water Institute (Siwi) during the news conference.

Water is at the base of all forms of life on earth, and its existence on the planet created the preconditions for the origin of life and the billion years of evolution. Through the history of humanity many civilizations flourished depending on a water source.

Mesopotamia (land between the rivers in ancient Greek), and known as the “cradle of civilization,” depended on the Tigris and Euphrates. Ancient Egypt developed on the Nile, the Chinese empire prospered along the Yellow and Yangzi basins, and developed a complex administrative machine based on water management for agricultural irrigation.

It is possible to say that human development is water-driven, and this crucial resource is vital to economic and social prosperity. Today in many countries, water is a common good, underlining the importance of its universal access.

On the other hand, especially in western countries, water is often taken for granted. But without being able to either control its abundance as in floods and bursting sea levels and extreme weather or its

scarcity with drought and desertification, water can be catastrophic.

In 2015, the World Economic Forum ranked water as the highest risk affecting global society. According to World Water Council (WWC), 1 in 8 people lives without safe drinking water, and 2 people in 5 do not have adequate sanitation globally.

Moreover, nearly 3.5 million deaths from water related diseases are registered every year. Unfortunately, the most affected people live in the global south. In addition to these shocking facts, directly linked to our so-called water crisis, there are very strong connections between water and some of the core areas of sustainable development, such as agriculture and food security, demography and urbanization, as well as climate and the environment. According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), agricultural irrigation accounts for 70 percent of global water withdrawals, an impressive ratio considering demographers’ preoccupations for population growth projections. Indeed, food demand is expected to increase by 60 percent and energy by 100 percent by 2050.

Water is inextricably connected to energy. It is necessary not only for hydropower, but also for cooling power plants, for oil and gas hydraulic fracturing or frack-

BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Water everywhere but too much
or too little

ing, and for biofuels. Some 1.3 billion people, mainly in Africa, have no access to electricity. New urban development from 2010 to 2030 is expected to equal what was built in all of human history.

This will increase water withdrawals from municipalities, implying issues of access, infrastructure, ~~safety and security~~ from extreme water hazards.

Surprisingly, in spite of all the above evidence, for a long time water has not been at the top of global agenda. It is not highlighted in climate issues, even though "the effects of climate change will be felt mainly in the water cycle," said Benedito Braga, president of WWC, during the media conference. Water management has a great potential for both climate-change adaptation and mitigation, he said.

According to WWC estimates, there have already been \$2.5 trillion economic losses from disasters—70 percent related to floods and droughts—so far this century. And other key issues such as migration and infrastructure damage are connected to climate disasters related to water.

Even though water is not specifically mentioned in the final Paris agreement, it is possible the international water community is gaining momentum.

At the seventh World Water Council held in Daegu and Gyeongbuk last April, South Korea was a notable participant. This council also brought water into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include a goal completely dedicated to water.

SDG 6 aims at ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. SDG 6 covers the entire water cycle, including the management of water, wastewater and ecosystem resources, and have strong linkages to all of the other SDGs. In fact, its realization would mean a huge step towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

There is further evidence that civil society plays a crucial role in mainstreaming water in the Global Agenda. In fact, the LPAA that brought water at the centre of discussions in Paris, involves national governments, cities, regions and other sub national entities, international organizations, civil society, indigenous peoples, women, youth, academic institutions, as well as businesses. And over 300 organisations signed Paris pact on water and adaptation to climate change in river basins at COP21. *IPS*

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Tons of toxic chemicals used to control eggplant pest

By RUDY FERNANDEZ

LOS BAÑOS, Laguna – Expect vegetable production in the country to continue being a “pesticide-laced” industry following the Supreme Court (SC) ban on field trials of genetically modified (GM) eggplant.

Hundreds of tons of toxic chemicals are being used to control eggplant fruit and shoot borer (FSB), the most destructive pest attacking the vegetable in the Philippines and in other Asian countries.

“What you buy in the markets are newly sprayed eggplants,”

a plant scientist declared in one conference.

Not long ago, a Bukidnon farmer told a science-media forum in Makati that a farmer sprays his eggplant crop 70 to 80 percent per cropping season (six to eight months) to shield it from destructive pests.

These grim facts and figures become more perturbing when one considers that about 40,000 vegetable growers today are planting eggplant in about 21,000 hectares across the country.

Eggplant is now the country’s top vegetable crop, edging out tomato a few years back. Harvest reaches 201,000 metric tons, valued at more than P3 billion.

As of 2011, five provinces – Pangasinan, Quezon, Isabela, Cagayan and Iloilo – were the biggest producers, according to the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Statistics (DA-BAS).

“Not a lowly crop by any means, it is a good source of vitamins, minerals, and fibers, as well as an important agricultural commodity in the country,” said Jennifer Panopio and Sophia Mercado in a SEARCA-BIC (Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture-Biotechnology Information Center) report titled “FSBR/Bt eggplant: A safe, more profitable biotech innovations.”

However, since the Court of Appeals (CA) – and only last month the SC – stopped research on the pest-resistant *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) *talong*, many farmers will continue “spreading poison and damaging our environment,” the Mindanao farmer said at the Makati forum sponsored by the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA) and Philippine

government-hosted, University of the Philippines Los Baños-based SEARCA.

A farmer usually applies in one cropping season six brands of pesticide to protect his plants from pests: five kilograms and 10 kg of two pesticides; 20 bottles (250 milliliters) each of two different brands; and 10 liters and five liters of two other separate pesticides.

Given that about 40,000 farmers use six brands of pesticides, the eggplant industry consumes in one season about 100,000 (100 tons) and 200,000 kg (200 tons) of two different pesticides; 400,000 bottles (250 ml) each of two separate chemicals; and 200,000 liters and 100,000 liters of two different brands.

Over the years, fruit and shoot borer has evolved as the most destructive pest attacking eggplant.

Farmers spend an average of P28,000/ha per season on pesticide to control FSB, equivalent to 29 percent of total production cost, according to Sergio Francisco of DA in his economic impact assessment studies.

“FSB could ruin 100 percent of output,” he said on GM or Bt eggplant.

Cesar Quicoy of UPLB also reported that chemical pesticide use is prevalent in the top eggplant-producing provinces (all the farmer-respondents in Quezon, 97 percent in Batangas; and 96 percent in Pangasinan).

Many farmers overdo their efforts (as high as 80 percent per season) to control the pest, said Quicoy, author of a chapter in the book “Socio-economic Insects of Bt Eggplants” published by UPLB

and SEARCA, with the support of UPLB, Agricultural Biotechnology Service Project II, China Academy of Sciences, Indian Society of Cotton Development, and John Templeton Foundation.

The Manila Times

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

PH urged to rethink climate, energy policies

BY KRISTYN NIKA M. LAZO
REPORTER

AN industry lobby has called on the government to rethink its energy policies and adopt caution before implementing its climate pledges to ensure that such policies will not impede the country's economic growth.

The Federation of Philippine Industries (FPI) noted that the country's commitment to cut its greenhouse gas emissions by 70 percent by 2030, which it pledged at the Paris Summit in December last year, was "much higher" than those of big emitters like China, India, and even the United States which pledged a reduction of only 20 percent to 30 percent.

The adoption of "wrong strategies to achieve the 70 percent pledge will hurt the Philippine economy to the ultimate detri-

ment of the poor and the nation's capability to institute adaptation measures against climate change-induced disasters," the group said.

FPI chairman Jesus Lim Arranza said, "Moving away from fossil fuels will need long time to implement. However, the impact on global warming will not be significantly injurious considering the Philip-pines' very low green house gas and carbon dioxide inventories."

With the cost of electricity in the country already being one of the

highest in the region, moving away from fossil fuels to meet the emis-sion pledges may further burden the poor, Arranza said.

He said there should be clearer guidelines on increasing the ener-gy mix by 33 percent in accordance with the government's push for higher usage of renewable energy.

He noted that the "energy mix" should be measured via gigawatt hour-based annual production rate than the current measurement of plant capacities in megawatts.

Certain issues surrounding the Renewable Energy Act, such as tariff implementation on renewable energy players which pass on their cost burdens to consumers, should also be resolved, the federation said.

The FPI said an ambitious re-forestation plan should be imple-mented but it should be studied first to make sure there is enough land to plant the declared 1.5 bil-

lion trees in 2017, which can be accommodated on a total of 1.5 million hectares of land.

The federation also proposed implementing co-benefit mea-sures such as improved energy usage and traffic decongestion to cut down greenhouse gas emis-sions which endangers living conditions in cities.

The efforts are part of FPI's par-ticipation in the Manila Declaration, which supports the government's effort to establish an Intended Na-tional Declaration of Contributions (INDC), or mitigation measures aligned to national priorities, cir-cumstances and capabilities.

The Paris Summit was attended by delegates from 195 countries in December 2015, with the hope of stopping global warming and climate change which causes in-tensified natural disasters across the globe.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Walk the talk on renewable energy, ecologists dare P-Nov

BY MANUEL T. CAYON
Mindanao Bureau Chief

DAVAO CITY—Local environmental groups challenged President Aquino to show his sincerity when he bragged about his administration's push for renewable energy while inaugurating the first of a series of coal plants to be operating soon in Mindanao.

"If the Aquino administration is sincere in its rhetoric of inclusive development, it should prioritize community-based renewable-energy solutions. It should be people-led and not corporate-driven," said Dr. Jean Lindo, cochairman of the environmental network Panalipdan Mindanao.

The group has been criticizing Malacañang for alleged "bias for corporate-led development, which favors projects like the coal-fired power plants."

In his speech on Friday's inauguration of the 300-megawatt coal-fired power plant here, Mr. Aquino said "allow me to point out: it's not as if we have forgotten our goals in terms of developing renewable energy, and doing our part to mitigate climate risk."

"In fact, we have increased our usage of renewables, and they now make up 33 percent of our energy mix; we have reduced the number of illegal logging hot spots by 88 percent; and in 2011 we started a National Greening Program, the goal of which is to plant 1.5 billion trees on 1.5 million hectares by this year," he said.

"We did all this, even if our nation's carbon emissions are minimal, especially compared to more industrialized countries," he added.

The energy crisis that has hounded Mindanao over the last two decades was also pointed out by President Aquino for the necessity of the coal plants to be operational soon. "The Mindanao situation has made it obvious that we also need more base-load

power. After all, while I am a believer in developing renewables, at this point, we are still hounded by the questions: What if there's no wind? What if the clouds are overcast and the solar efficiency is down? What if we do not have enough biomass? Unfortunately, right now, we cannot wean ourselves completely from relying on coal."

Environmentalist groups have cited the attendance of Mr. Aquino in the recently concluded United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21) in France as an obligation to have skirted on the promotion of coal.

"This is a counterproductive move that does not help mitigate the effects of climate change, particularly for food security," said Geonathan Barro, executive director of another environmentalist group, Masipag Mindanao, who said that the inauguration of the coal plant in Binugao, Toril district here "is a backward step for the Philippines."

Barro pointed out that the coal emissions by coal power plants aggravate climate-change patterns, causing unpredictable rainfalls and extreme weather conditions that are detrimental to farm productivity.

"We need to be focusing on sustainable climate-mitigation measures which do not harm the environment. Rather than relying on unsustainable power sources, we should instead harness our renewable sources of energy which are very abundant in the country," he said.

"Climate justice is distributive justice. Countries with coal-fired power plants should retire from using coal and, instead, invest on renewable energy. The Philippines should not build more coal plants and should start retiring the existing ones," she said.

The watershed advocacy group Interface Development Interventions

(Idis) also warned about the coal-fired power plants as "clear and present threat for the city's water resources due to the high risk of contamination from its toxic waste water by-products."

"All over the world, coal-burning power plants have been pointed out as one of the top polluting industries. In US alone, it has been estimated that its coal power plants are responsible for the annual release of at least 5.5 billion pounds of pollution into their rivers and waterways. And despite this alarming fact, the Aquino administration continues to implement policies which favor the coal industry," Idis Executive Director Ann Fuertes said.

She said coal power plants produce toxic pollutants like lead, mercury and arsenic.

She emphasized that "even with the current clean-coal technologies, pollutants are merely moved from one waste stream to another but will still be eventually released into the environment."

"Whatever containment methods they will use, the probability of these pollutants escaping into the environment will still be high," she said.

The groups said Malacañang can still patch up its error by putting up "stricter monitoring" of the coal-plant operation.

"We have to be even more vigilant in safeguarding our environment now that the coal plant is operational. The Multipartite Monitoring Team, which includes representatives from the local government agencies and from the Environmental Management Bureau, should strictly monitor its impact on air and water quality, as well as the health of surrounding communities," they said in a statement over the weekend.

They said that copies of Therna South's Environmental Impact Statement and environmental compliance certificate, "along with the monitoring data, should also be made available to the public so that we will know if the company is complying with the environmental measures in order to mitigate its negative impact."

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THE EXPONENTIAL OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS SINCE 1900

MANILA BULLETIN

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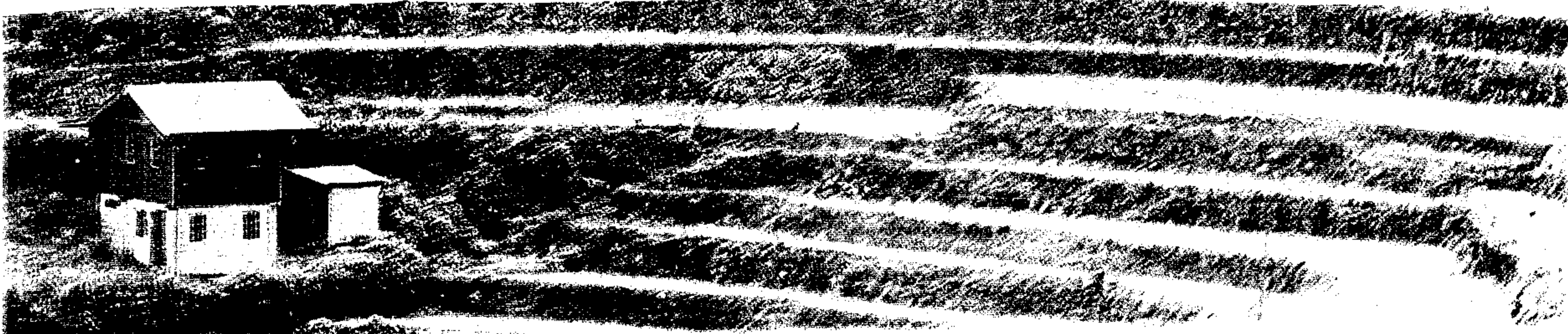
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICES



'STAIRWAYS TO THE SKY'
— The Maligcong Rice Terraces, built several centuries ago, is among the beautiful man-made structures in Mountain Province that embody the richness of the culture and history of the province and its people. (Zaldy Comanda)



MOUNTAIN PROVINCE

Maligcong Rice Terraces endorsed to NCCA as National Heritage Site

By ZALDY C. COMANDA

BONTOC, Mountain Province — The Provincial Board here has passed a resolution asking the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) to endorse the declaration of the Maligcong Rice Terraces as a National Cultural Heritage Site.

The local legislative branch action came after barangay Maligcong officials acted on the residents' request seeking the terraces' inclusion on the list of heritage sites.

Maligcong Rice Terraces is 30 minutes away by jeepney from the capital town of Bontoc. It is one of the favorite destinations of local and foreign visitors because of the picturesque beauty of the man-made stone-walled rice terraces. Its stone walls make the terraces more stable and withstand erosion.

One has to see it to appreciate its unique characteristics from the other terraces in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR).

Believed to have been built centuries ago, the Maligcong Rice Ter-

racess is among the structures in the Mountain Province that exemplify the richness and abundance of the culture and history of the province and its people.

The provincial board said that the Maligcong Rice Terraces is a testament to the ingenuity, indigenous engineering skills, workmanship, and industry of the villagers.

A copy of the resolution was furnished to Felipe de Leon Jr., of the NCCA.

Maligcong, one of the barangays in Bontoc town, has six

terraces covering an area of 1,500 hectares. Maligcong came from the word "ligcong" which means to level land for a rice field.

Stories have it that after years of labor, the people had to carve the mountains and steep slopes on the mountainside into terraces for their fields and other crops.

The time came when the whole village was surrounded by rice

fields, the people then named the village Maligcong, meaning surrounded by rice fields.

There is no entrance fee for those who visit the Maligcong Rice Terraces. One can just walk along this attraction while going to the barangay proper. The rice terraces here are a sight to see because the main village is right at the center of the sprawling fields.

Maligcong is also considered a pride of the village people because it is a source of quality organic and indigenous rice as well as "malagkit" or glutinous rice.

Some visitors have called it "Stairways to the Sky." For first-time visitors, it is advisable for them to wear rubber shoes and a hat because it is quite a long walk. It is also wise to pack food and water.

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

Devotees leave tons of garbage

BY EVAN ORIAS

THE annual procession for the Feast of the Black Nazarene, which started Saturday morning and ended Sunday morning, has yielded almost double the amount of garbage left by devotees last year, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority said yesterday.

Francis Martinez, MMDA Metro Parkway Cleaning Group head, said the MMDA had collected 35 truckloads, or about

along the procession route from the Quirino Grandstand at the Luneta Park to the Quiapo Church.

Last year, the trash collected amounted to 20 truckloads or about 210 tons.

Most of the collected waste materials were plastic bags, water bottles, paper, food wrappers, and Styrofoam packs.

Martinez said the garbage will be dumped today at Pier 18 in Tondo, Manila.

The National Capital Region

DEVOTEES

Police Office said about 1.5 million devotees joined the 20-hour "Traslacion 2016," which ended around 2 a.m. yesterday. Last year, there were almost 1 million participants in the 23-hour, 31-minute procession but a total of some nine to 10 million devotees participated in the whole celebration, including those who attended masses at the Quiapo church and those who waited in the streets where the Nazarene's image passed.

Quiapo Church rector Msgr. Hernando "Ding" Coronel said this year's Traslacion was successful and attributed the faster Traslacion to proper coordination among concerned agencies.

The procession started at 5:55 a.m. Saturday at the Quirino Grandstand. The image arrived at the Quiapo Church at

2:02 a.m. yesterday.

The run-up to the "Traslacion 2016" kicked off Saturday midnight when Manila Archbishop Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle celebrated mass.

Manila Mayor Joseph Estrada, the feast's "hermano mayor," led the millions of devotees in participating in the mass.

Coronel asked devotees of the Black Nazarene to continue their devotion by praying for two fellow devotees who died during the procession.

Alex Fulyedo, 27, of Sampaloc, Manila collapsed while taking a break from the procession. He was declared dead on arrival at the Ospital ng Maynila.

Mauro Arabit, 58, of Binangonan in Rizal expired at the Jose Reyes Medical Center after he suffered from acute coronary syndrome.

There were also two fatalities last year.

The National Capital Region Police Office said the celebration of the Feast of the Black Nazarene was generally peaceful with no major untoward incident.

NCRPO chief Director J Pagdilao said all the government agencies tapped to watch over the devotees did their well.

Pagdilao said intelligence operatives have arrested a wanted for murder in Malabon City while attending the "halik" at Quirino Grandstand. Also, a pickpocket was arrested after he preyed on a radio porter.

"There was no security threat to the feast. Our intelligence community and those from AFP and NICA were continuously monitoring the situation. What worried us was the big number of devotees who attended the feast," he added. — *With G. Naval and Raymond Africa*

THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER Malaya

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPING

COA blames lawmakers, local pols for aggie scholarship program failure

BY PETER J. G. TABINGO

THE government's multi-million-peso scholarship program that was supposed to produce future experts in the fields of agriculture, fisheries, forestry and veterinary medicine is failing and the Commission on Audit is blaming senators, congressmen and local government officials.

In its audit report on the Department of Agriculture released last January 6, the COA

revealed that almost half of college students admitted into the Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (ACEF) scholarship program since 2009 were endorsed by lawmakers and local politicians.

"Of the 5,069 scholars from Batch 1 to 5, 2,334 (students) or 46 percent of scholars were endorsed by various legislators or public personalities. The respective coordinators of the SUCs (state universities and

colleges) revealed that most of their ACEF scholars were not screened but were endorsed by ...party lists, congressmen, senators, and mayors" state auditors said.

The COA report, however, did not name any of the elected officials involved.

Under the ACEF scholarship program, the government assumes payment of students'

See COA ► Page B6

COA

tuition and miscellaneous fees. They are also given allowances amounting to 1,000 per month.

Political patronage eroded the program from its very foundation as screening of applicants to ensure that only those deserving of the privilege can get in has been effectively waived.

The effect showed up almost immediately - many of the ACEF scholars failed to meet the required grades and had to be dropped from the program.

The worst case was reported in Batch 1 covered by academic year 2009 to 2010 when 87 percent of those given scholarships, 1,303 out of 1,501, were politically-endorsed.

Over the years, political interference has lessened due to scrutiny of government auditors but as of school year 2014-2015 under Batch 5, there were

still 129 students out of 1,151 ACEF scholars who got in solely based on political backing.

Auditors traced the trouble straight to the Department of Agriculture, saying it is where politicians submit the names of their scholars.

They noted that the DA even issued Administrative Order No. 18 dated July 12, 2013 which transferred the authority to "screen and approve the endorsements of scholars" from the SUCs to the DA Undersecretary for Special Concerns.

"They (SUCs) just received a letter from the DA informing them of the approved list of scholars. As a result, the ACEF scholarship program is sometimes misinterpreted by the scholars and university coordinators as scholarship of some party list or politician," the COA said.

While getting tertiary education is a big headache for most

families in farming or fishing communities, auditors noted that there were many instances when scholarship slots went to waste because the student listed by the politician did not even enroll or went to a different school.

Of 1,120 scholars from Batches 2 to 4 who were evaluated during audit, some 240 were terminated for various reasons but the biggest cause was failing to meet the minimum general weighted average (GWA) of 2.50.

To prevent more casualties the DA has decided to lower the grade requirement to 3.00 effective as of the second semester of School Year 2013-2014.

The COA recommended that the authority to pre-screen ACEF scholars be given back to SUCs so that only deserving students who could not otherwise afford such education will be given priority and minimize the number of terminated scholarships.

Daily Tribune

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Toyota dealer gets ISO tag Toyota Dasmariñas-Cavite (TDM) recently acquired the ISO 14001:2004 Environmental Management Systems (EMS) Certification as confirmed by AJA Registrars. TDM, a part of the Toyota Manila Bay Group (TMBG), is the first automotive dealership in the Philippines to be ISO-certified. This is a testament to the organization's commitment to not only provide excellent products and customer service but also ensure sustainable environmental practices in its operations. Toyota Motor Philippines Corp. (TMP) is also ISO 14001-certified and highly encourages its entire value chain to follow suit as Toyota places environment conservation to be one of its top priorities. Present in the awarding ceremony were (from left): TMP Regulation, Certification & DESH Section supervisor Benjie Dionela, TMBG president Yoshinori Hattori, TMBG Pollution Control & Safety head Leilanie Bertis, TDM general manager Virgincita Rizarone, AJA auditor Laarni Narido, and TMP Customer Service Operation (CSO) Technical Department vice president Godofredo Arcangel Jr.

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THE EXPONENTIAL OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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Geothermal producer plants 400,000 trees in Negros

BACOLOD CITY, Negros Occ. (PNA) — Geothermal producer Energy Development Corporation (EDC) has planted almost 400,000 premium native trees for its "10M in 10 for a Greener Negros" project, the company said Wednesday. The "10M in 10" project launched last Oct. 10, 2015, which is considered the biggest forest restoration movement in Negros Island, aims to plant, grow and maintain 10 million trees in 10 years. Native trees were planted in Valencia, Dauin, and Zamboanga in Negros Oriental; and San Carlos, Calatrava, and Salvador Benedicto in Negros Occidental. Over 400 members of EDC's farmers' associations benefited from these native trees, the company added. "All these reforested areas are part of our commitment to EDC's Binhi greening legacy, which is already on its seventh year of implementation," said Norreen Bautista, head of EDC's Community Partnerships, External Relations, and Watershed Management in Negros Island.

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Dummies among Luisita claimants

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DAR says list
only advisory,
not indicator
of qualified
beneficiaries

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The preliminary list of 1,717 potential beneficiaries of 358 hectares in Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac province, owned by relatives of President Aquino, includes the names of 61 people who do not farm or live in the area, the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) said on Friday.

Antonio Flores, KMP secretary general, described the 61 beneficiaries in the list prepared by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) as “outsiders and dummies.”

But the list, which the DAR posted on Dec. 29, was “not an indicator of who are qualified or not,” said Justine Vincent la Chica, DAR assistant secretary for legal affairs.

He said the list is “simply an advisory” with two major purposes: To notify those who were listed to submit more documents and to encourage the public to scrutinize the list and oppose the inclusion of unqualified beneficiaries.

The 61 beneficiaries are from Barangay Dolores, Maliwalo, Laoang, Ungot, San Miguel and Maligaya in Tarlac City, Barangay Anupul in Bamban town, also in Tarlac, and Sta. Veronica in Guimba town in Nueva Ecija province, Flores said, citing a report of the Alyansa ng mga Manggagawang Bukid sa Asyenda Luisita (Ambala).

Florita Sibayan, Ambala chair, said Luisita farm workers and their relatives should be given priority because they had worked at Hacienda Luisita and had been tilling many portions of the estate immediately after the strike of sugar mill employees and farm workers in 2004.

Under Republic Act No. 6657 or the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) law, one can qualify as a beneficiary if he or she is a farmer or tiller who owns less than 3 ha of agricultural land; is a Filipino citizen and a resident of the barangay (or the municipality if there are not enough qualified beneficiaries in the barangay); and was at least 15 years old at the time of identification, screening and selection of farmer-beneficiaries.

Beneficiaries are also required to have the aptitude to cultivate and make the agrarian land productive.

La Chica said the DAR launched in March 2014 an information drive on the distribution of the 358 ha after the estate owned by the Cojuangco family's Tarlac Development Corp. (Tadeco) was issued a notice of CARP coverage on Dec. 17, 2013.

The property is located in the villages of Balete and Cutcut in the Tarlac City side of Hacienda Luisita. At least 50 ha have been leased to a German company doing a solar power project.

La Chica said the 358-ha property is not part of the 4,500 ha that the Supreme Court in 2012 ordered distributed to more than 6,000 farm workers.

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Dummies among Lucita claimants

The distribution was mandated after the high court upheld the decision of the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council to cancel the stock distribution option in the first round of CARP at the estate in 1989.

He said the DAR Tarlac office accepted applications and conducted interviews of applicants from March 25 to May 20, 2014.

"These procedures are not special to Tadeco lands. It is the same as [the procedures] we use in acquiring and distributing CARP-covered lands," he said.

The DAR proceeded to take these steps despite the objections of Tadeco, which argued that the lands had been converted for industrial use.

La Chica said the DAR has 30 days starting Jan. 5 to "accept applications from qualified and interested applicants who were not included in the preliminary list."

The DAR, he said, would "proceed with the acquisition proceedings... if the Tadeco protest is denied."

Daily Tribune

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

BCDA, Filinvest sign deal for Clark Green City dev't

The Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) and Filinvest Land Inc. have sealed a joint venture (JV) partnership for the development of a 288-hectare parcel in Clark Green City recently.

The JV marks the first step toward the full development of the BCDA's flagship project — the 9,450-hectare modern, intelligent and sustainable Clark Green City.

"We celebrate a momentous event as the signing of this joint venture agreement with Filinvest Land Inc. jump starts the full development of Clark Green City as the country's first smart, green and disaster-resilient metropolis," said BCDA president and chief executive officer Arnel Paciano Casanova.

The JV will be a 45 percent-55 percent venture between BCDA and Filinvest Land, Inc. in all aspects, particularly revenues.

The term is 50 years renewable for another 50 years.

The JVC shall have the full development and usufructuary rights over the 288-hectare

property.

"With the signing of the agreement, BCDA generated P160 million for Filinvest's right to become BCDA's partner for the development of the new urban core for innovation, commerce, trade and industry in the country," Casanova said.

Filinvest president and chief executive officer Josephine Gotianun-Yap said, "as the pioneer developer involved in Clark Green City, we are excited to be a catalyst of growth in such a visionary endeavor. At the same time, this is also a prime opportunity for us to expand our geographic footprint in Northern Luzon."

The developer is the real estate arm of EastWest Bank.

Filinvest will soon be mapping out development plans.

"Based on the terms of the joint venture, the Filinvest parcel will have two distinct components: an industrial zone and a mixed-use development with residential, office, commercial and institutional

elements," Gotianun-Yap said.

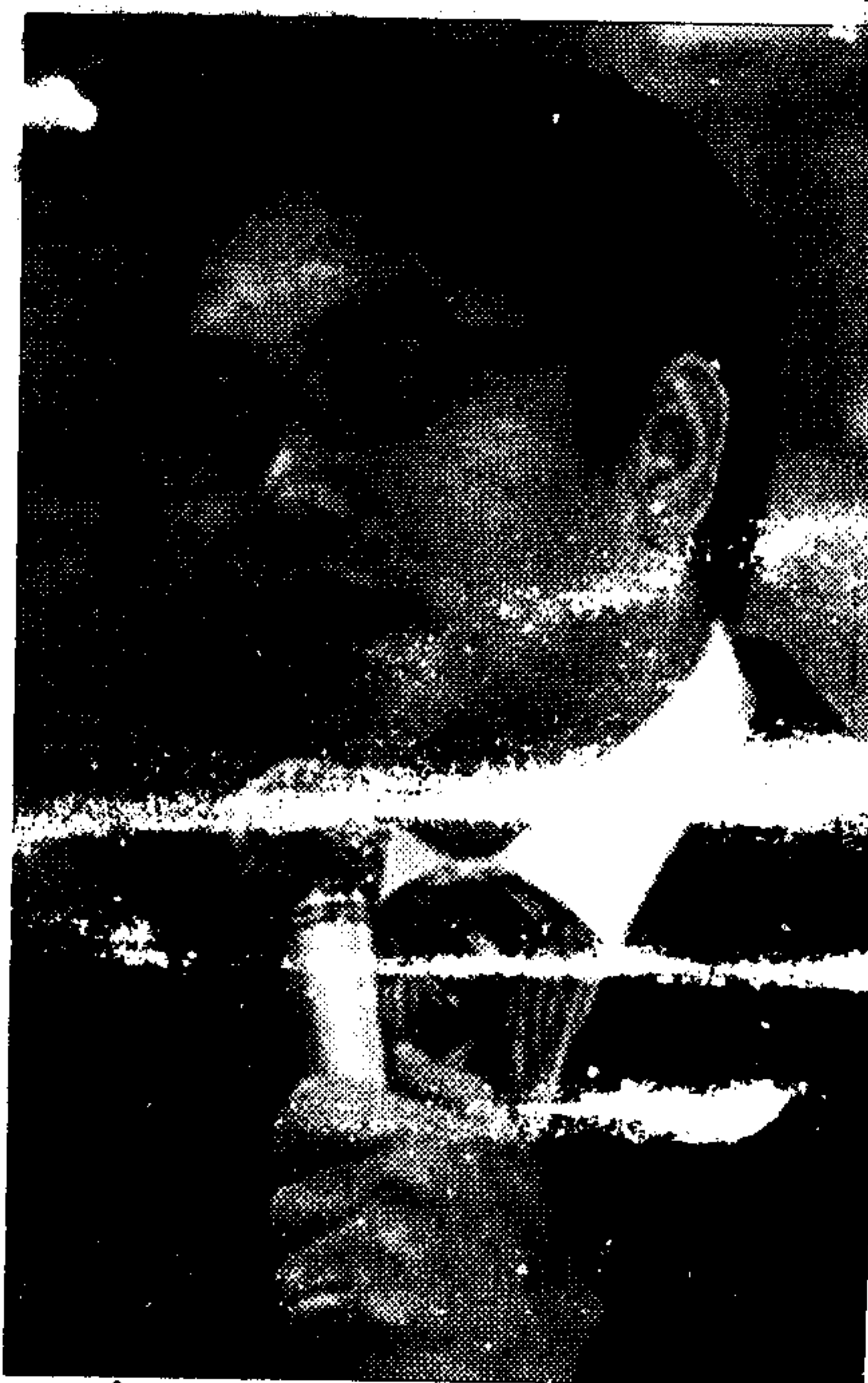
BCDA chairperson Ma. Aurora Garcia said the signing "marks the first step of BCDA's biggest contribution to sustainable urban development in the country."

"Now is the ripe and opportune time for the government to build a city that will not only absorb the growth of the population but more importantly, sustain the momentum of the sterling economic performance that the country is now experiencing," the chairperson said.

The entire Clark Green City is a 9,450-hectare master planned property within the Clark Special Economic Zone in the province of Tarlac, Philippines.

At full development, Clark Green City will have some 1.12 million residents, 800,000 workers and contribute a gross output of approximately P1.57 trillion per year to the national economy or roughly four percent share in the country's gross domestic product.

Ed Velasco



CASANOVA