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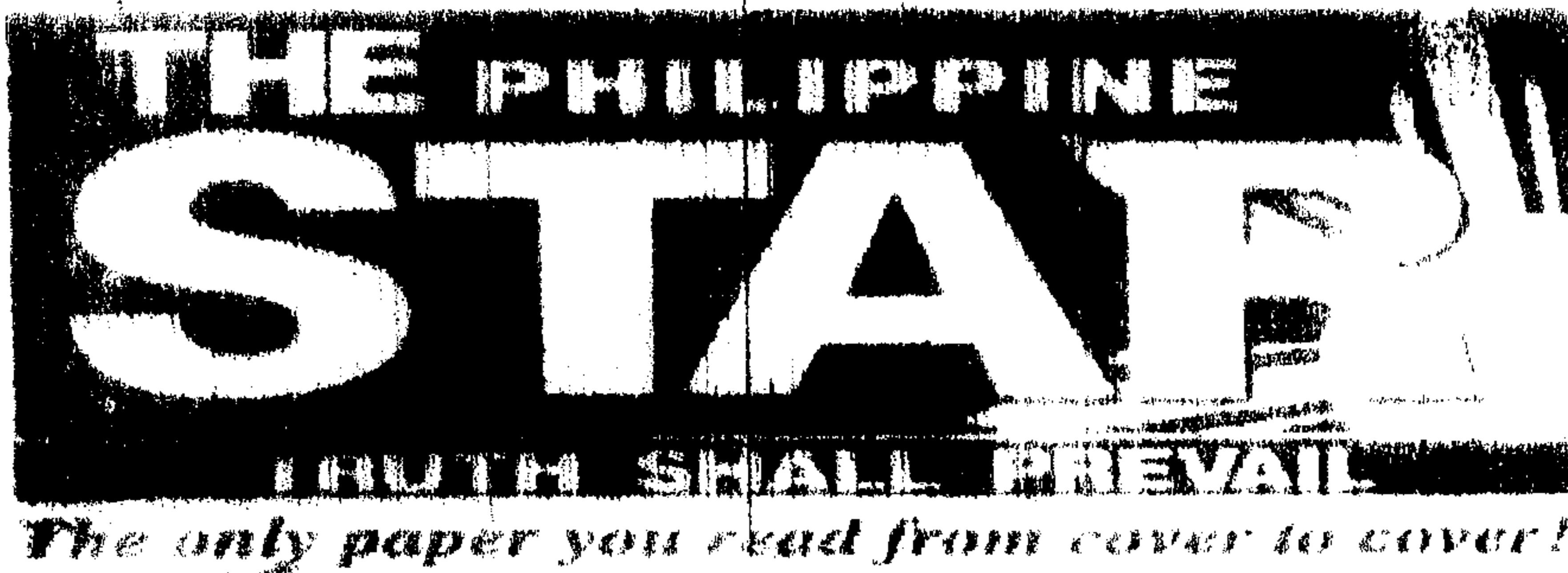
SUNDAY
January 31, 2016

Sunday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

SUNDAY, JANUARY 31, 2016



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

125 M mangrove seedlings planted in Yolanda-hit areas

At least 125 million mangrove seedlings have been planted in 43 Yolanda-hit provinces, according to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The DENR's ecosystems research and development bureau (ERDB) achieved its target to plant the seedlings in 50,417 hectares of coastal areas in a little over a year, said DENR Secretary Ramon Paje.

Paje said the ERDB also exceeded its seedling production target under the mangrove and beach forests development project of the National Greening Program (NGP) for 2011 to 2014.

A total of 139 million mangrove propagules and beach forest tree species have been produced, which was almost triple the program's regular seedling production for coastal reforestation.

Paje said the project generated 87,500 jobs. At least 12,500 people were hired to prepare planting sites and seedling production.

Eastern Visayas has the widest coverage area at 13,633 hectares; followed by Mimaropa (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, Palawan) 8,096; Bicol region, 7,943; Central Visayas, 4,947; Zamboanga peninsula, 4,731; Western Visayas, 3,468; Caraga, 4,452; Davao region, 1,768; Calabarzon (Cavite-Laguna-Batangas-Rizal-Quezon), 1,000; and Northern Mindanao, 378.

The planting of mangrove seedlings was made a priority project under the NGP in 2014 in view of the crucial role mangrove forests play in mitigating the effects of climate change.

Mangroves act as shields against storm surges and buffers for rising sea levels.

— Rhodina Villanueva

The Standard

DEFINING THE NEWS

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

MANGROVE PROJECT ON TARGET—DENR

THE government has completed a program aimed at restoring mangrove and natural beach forests in coastal areas battered by Super Typhoon "Yolanda" in 2013, Environment Secretary Ramon Paje said on Saturday.

Paje said some 50,417 hectares of coastal areas in 43 Yolanda-hit provinces were covered by the Mangrove and Beach Forests Development Project, which was carried out by the Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

"Although ERDB only had a little over one year to implement the MBFDP, it was able to achieve the target of 50,000 hectares and 125 million seedlings," Paje said.

He added: "MBFDP mirrors the commitment of the Aquino

administration to build back better the communities ravaged by the disaster, and the ERDB has done well in amplifying that commitment."

MBFDP is a special coastal reforestation initiative under the National Greening Program that was created to hasten the establishment of mangrove areas and beach forest belts in areas devastated by one of the strongest storms in history.

Of the more than 50,417 hectares, around 90 percent or 44,800 hectares of the rehabilitated areas were planted with native mangrove, while the remaining 5,617 hectares of beach forest belts were planted with indigenous beach tree species like *talisay*, *agoho*, *apatot*, *antipolo*, *alagawdagat*, *bitaog*, *dampalit*, *kalumpang* and *katmon*.

The MBFDP had also exceeded its

seedling production target for the NGP from 2011 to 2014, having produced 139 million mangrove propagules and beach forest tree species or 293 percent higher than the program's regular seedling production for coastal reforestation.

The project likewise generated 87,500 jobs and benefited 12,500 individuals who were hired as workers doing planting site preparation tasks and seedling production activities.

Of the 10 regions targeted under MBFDP, Region 8 topped the list of having the highest number of areas covered at 13,633 hectares; followed by Region 4-B with 8,096; Region 5 with 7,943; Region 7 with 4,947; Region 9 with 4,731; Region 6 with 3,468; Region 13 with 4,452; Region 11 with 1,768; Region 4A with 1,000; and Region 10 with 378.

Enero 31, 2016

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

Gawing 'habit' ang car check-up!

Hinihikayat ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang lahat ng motorista na gawing 'habit' o ugaliin ang regular na check-up ng kanilang mga sasakyan upang makatiyak na hindi sila nakadaragdag ng polusyon sa hangin.

Batay sa istatistika, 80% ng air pollution sa bansa ay nagmumula sa mga usok mula sa sasakyan, at ang natitira ay mula naman sa sinusunog sa factory.

Naniniwala si DENR Sec. Ramon Paje na sa pamamagitan ng pakikiisa ng mga may-ari ng sasakyan sa pagmamantina

ng kanilang mga behikulo ay malaking tulong upang mabawasan ang polusyon lalo na sa Metro Manila.

Sa kasalukuyan, nagpapatuloy ang isinasagawang free vehicle emission testing ng DENR kasama ang LTO at Coalition of Clean Air Advocates of the Philippines (CCAAP).

Sabi ni DENR Sec. Ramon Paje, "We advocate the need for each vehicle owner to consciously inspect and maintain his vehicle, not only to ensure its longevity and good condition, but also to reduce its potential to contribute to air pollution."

(Lhean Angeles)

BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

'BPI-inspected' boxes yield tarsiers, endemic wildlife

AUTHORITIES seized on Thursday night five boxes containing tarsiers, a critically endangered species, and other endemic wildlife, and arrested an employee of the Office of the Transport Security (OTS) of the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) following a sting operation in Pasay City.

The operation uncovered an elaborate scheme to illegally export endemic Philippine wildlife, a modus operandi believed employed by members of a syndicate engaged in the illegal wildlife trade, currently estimated to be worth \$20 billion in Southeast Asia alone.

Officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said the seized boxes, bearing stickers of the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) which say "Inspected," yielded 11 tarsiers, 11 monitor lizards, eight tailfin lizards, six watersnakes,

five ratsnakes, three scops owls, and two juvenile and one adult Philippine Eagle owls. The rescued wildlife were taken to the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Rescue Center in Quezon City for quarantine and rehabilitation.

The authorities, who include agents of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), and led by wildlife law enforcers from the DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB), stopped the shipment at the Philippine Air Lines (PAL) cargo area just as it was about to be loaded to a waiting aircraft.

Arrested by authorities in connection with the illegal activity was Gerald Bravo, who works at the OTS under the DOTC.

Authorities said Bravo is the middle man who prepares the wildlife, applies for the permits and physically sends the animals to Japan via PAL's cargo service. He is now facing charges for violation of the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act.

The boxes were supposed to contain an aquatic plant species, *Echinodorus amazonicus* and *Alocasia macrorrhizos*, based on the phytosanitary permit granted by the BPI-Central Office.

Authorities are still determining the identity of the applicant of the special permit to export what was initially declared as aquatic plant, but turned out to be live animals.

It was learned that the shipment is for one Shoji Masuyama of Japan.

A certain "Taguro," who buys large number of endangered Philippine wildlife, is believed to be the buyer of the rescued wildlife, and authorities are still investigating whether Masuyama and

Taguro are the same person.

DENR-BMB's wildlife enforcement unit earlier received information that Taguro ever paid P50,000 in advance for his cargo. This does not include the cost of every wildlife specimen delivered to him by his supplier.

Generally, once a cargo has a phytosanitary permit from BPI and with the sticker indicating that it has passed the Quarantine-Philippines inspection, it will be loaded in a waiting aircraft immediately and will not pass any inspection, said a report prepared by the team that conducted the operation.

Bravo, who has been under surveillance by authorities, exploited his position and knowledge of the system to facilitate the illegal activity, the report said.

Meanwhile, BMB Director Resa Mundita Lim said that she had been asked to shed light on the incident.

She said the BPI should examine how boxes with "BPI Inspected" stickers, surprisingly, yielded endangered wildlife.

Jonathan L. M.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

TO KEEP MINING OUT OF PROTECTED AREAS

Groups support expanding Nipas Act

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

ENVIRONMENTAL groups urged the House of Representatives to pass the proposed Expanded National Integrated Protected Area System (E-Nipas) Act that will strengthen the protection of 100 protected areas (PAs) in the country.

E-Nipas aims to reinforce Republic Act 7586, or the Nipas Act of 1992, which establishes unique bodies of land or water as areas for conservation by expanding the coverage of the old law and adding 100 more PAs to the 13 PAs already covered or backed with legislation.

The Senate has approved its version of the E-Nipas authored by Sen. Loren Legarda in July 2015, but a bill in the House of Representatives that was filed by Rep. Josephine R. Sato of Occidental Mindoro is stalled by spirited debate over the coverage of five PAs in Palawan.

The inclusion of five PAs in the E-Nipas, opponents of the law said, will overlap the existing Strategic Environmental Plan (SEP), which already covers the entire province of Palawan. Palawan is under the mandate and jurisdiction of the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development, which allows mining in certain areas.

100



More protected areas targeted by the proposed law

Under the E-Nipas, the management of PAs is governed by Protected Area Management Boards (PAMBs) headed by an official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) with representatives from other concerned agencies, local government units, academe, people's organizations and other stakeholders as members.

All PAs covered by the law will be declared "off-limits" to mining and other destructive activities.

It also prohibits the use of destructive fishing gears or methods

within marine PAs. In an interview on Thursday with the BUSINESS-MIRROR, Edward Lorenzo, legal and policy director of Oceana Philippines, underscored the need for the House of Representatives to resume deliberation and settle the issue of overlapping laws and jurisdiction to pass the law.

He expressed urgency in the passing of E-Nipas before the 16th Congress ends in the middle of the year, so it could take effect as soon as possible and prevent the entry of mining and other destructive activities in PAs.

At a news conference organized by Oceana Philippines Quezon City on Wednesday, lawyer Gloria Estenzo Ramos, the group's vice president, said there is an urgent need to strengthen the country's PAs system.

Besides Oceana, leaders of environmental groups, including Haribon Foundation, Pusod and Philippine Misereor Partnership, have expressed support behind the passage of the E-Nipas bill. "Aside from protecting important ecosystems and habitats, protected areas are necessary in order to

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Groups support expanding Nipas Act.

feed our growing population. Scientific studies prove that marine protected areas all over the world host dramatic increases in spawning stocks, and that fish in marine protected areas live longer, grow larger and produce more eggs. Furthermore, we need protected areas for the survival of the human race in the face of climate change, as it promotes resilience and mitigate disaster risk," Ramos said.

E-Nipas mandates the delineation of the terrestrial and marine PAs, including the existing 13 PAs that are not clearly delineated nor mapped, lawyer Maria Paz Luna of Pusod said in a news release. "This will clearly define boundaries

covered by the PAs," she said. Sato, in a news release, said the enactment of the E-Nipas into law will enable the country to fulfill its commitment to the Convention on Biological Diversity, an international treaty to which the Philippines is a signatory, and position the country in terms of financing in the advent of the recent climate-change agreement in Paris.

Once put in place, E-Nipas will pave the way for the creation of the PAMBs, which will design, develop and implement programs and projects in their respective areas. According to Oceana Philippines, the 24-year old Nipas needs to be strengthened to boost protection

and conservation efforts. The proposed law, the group said, will also provide local communities and stakeholders more incentive in managing the PAs.

Director Theresa Mundita Lim of the DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau said the enactment of E-Nipas will hopefully increase the annual budget allocation of the 100 PAs—from the current P4 million—to P10 million yearly that is sufficient to run the operation that will ensure the conservation of important ecosystems and protect the rich floral and faunal biodiversity that thrives within. With the E-Nipas, the budget for the 113 PAs will be at least P1.13 billion. She

said the proposed E-Nipas law does not run counter to current environmental laws, but would complement and strengthen their implementation. "What it [E-Nipas] will do is to strengthen the protection and conservation of country's PAs. All we need is to harmonize these laws," she said.

Lim had earlier called for the enactment of more laws to strengthen the protection and conservation of the country's PAs, underscoring the need for increased budget allocation to boost conservation and protection efforts. There are currently 240 PAs in the country covering over 5 million hectares of forest and marine areas, but only 13 of them are backed with legislation.



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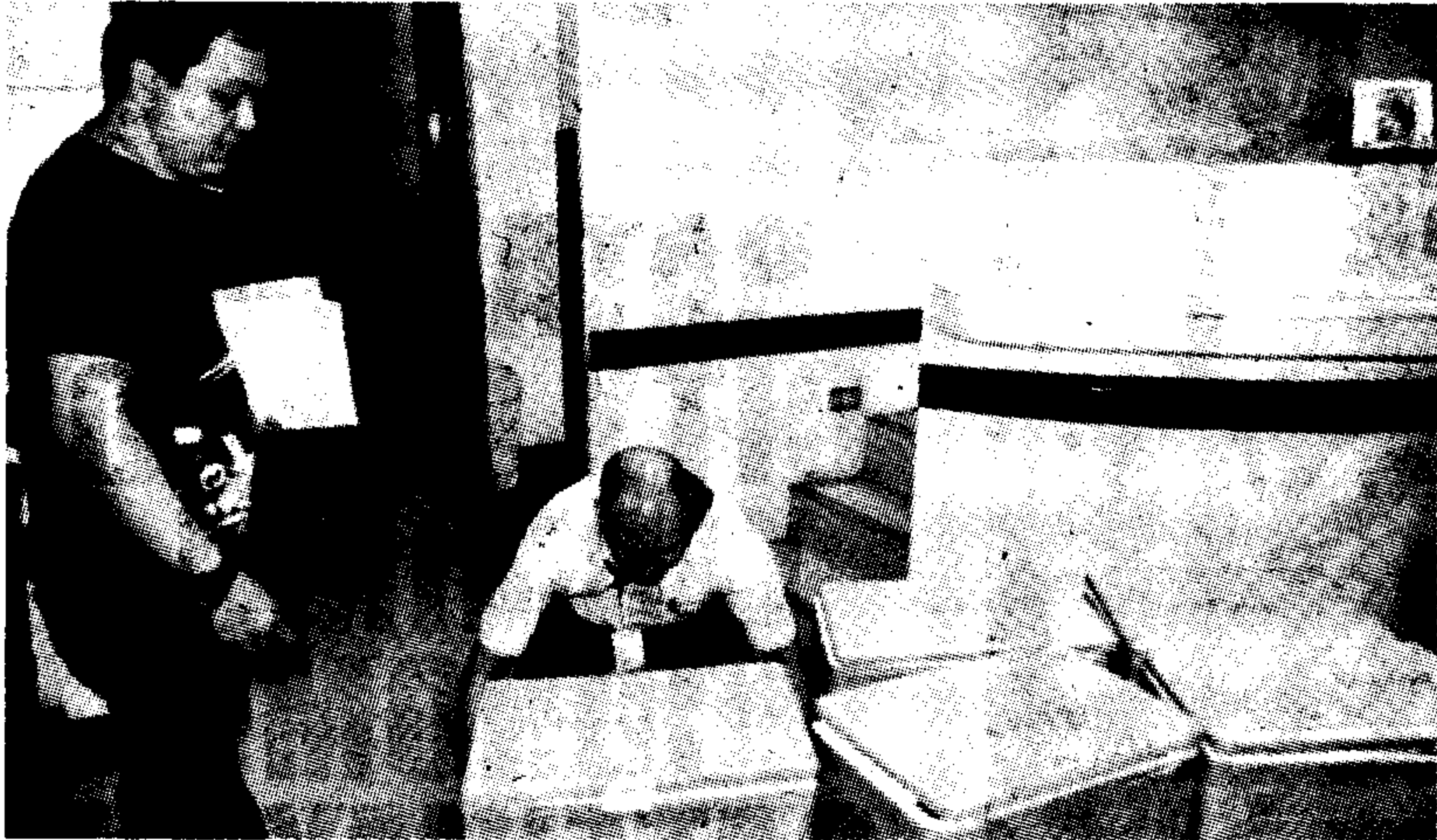
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ANG kahong-kahong endangered species na nasabat sa Ninoy Aquino Airport kamakalawa. Dadalhin sana sa Japan ang mga kahong ito na naglalaman ng mga kuwago, ahas, tarsiers, lizard & Phil eagle na pinagbabawal ng gobyerno na ilabas sa bansa nang walang kaukulang papeles.
Kuha ni **RAOUL ESPERAS**

Daily Tribune

Sunday, January 31, 2016

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STRATEGIC

Cavite mayor, 2 others indicted for graft

INITIATIVES SERVICE

By Alvin Murcia

The Office of the Ombudsman has approved the indictment of the incumbent mayor of Indang, Cavite and two others after finding probable cause for the charge of graft in connection with the approval of a water intake facility in the town.

Ombudsman Conchita Carpio-Morales approved the recommendation of field investigation office to indict Indang Mayor Bienvenido Dimero for violating Section 3(e) of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act for approving the controversial PTK2 H2O water facility build on a vital water source in the municipality, which was permanently stopped by the Court of Appeals through a Writ of Kalikasan.

Also indicted for violating the same law was Barangay Captain Roberto Aterrado of Kayquit II while municipal councilor Arcadio Ramos was charged for violating Section 7(d) of the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards of Public Officials and Employees, indirect bribery, and corruption of public officials.

"This is our second victory for the environment," said Iluminada Silao of SWIM. "After securing our historic writ of *kalikasan*, which stopped the PTK2 water project from draining the waters of Indang, the Ombudsman decision made the erring public officials pay for supporting such a disadvantageous project."

The resolution of the Ombudsman was welcomed by incumbent Indang Councilor Rey Zafra the person who exposed the handing out of P30,000 worth of bribe money by PTK2 to each of his fellow councilors.

"This only shows that the strong arms of justice will not spare environmental plunderers," Zafra said.

The subject water facility, operated by PTK2 H2O Corp. along the springs of Ikloy River in Barangay Kayquit II, was permanently closed by the Court of Appeals on Jan. 30, 2015 after it had issued a Writ of Kalikasan against the facility.

The project aims to sell water to uptown Tagaytay City, which has been bustling with numerous residential and commercial buildings. The project has been proven to be detrimental to the environment of several low-lying municipalities and cities in Cavite which likewise depend on Indang for its water supply.

"Record shows that as early as 2008, when PTK2 applied for water permits before the NWRB, respondent Dimeño issued a Certification, stating that the Municipality of Indang, Cavite has authorized PTK2 'to utilize, use, or tap' the waters of Saluysoy, Lambak, Indang, and Ikloy Rivers in supplying bulk water to Indang and nearby municipalities.

The ground clearing and excavation activities in Barangay Kayquit II started in 2012 by PTK2 for the construction of its water filtration plant atop Ikloy River; however, respondent Aterrado failed to ensure that PTK2 had the necessary local permits, licenses, or clearances prior to the conduct of construction activities in his barangay.

The conspiracy between respondents Dimero and Aterrado is evident because the latter would not have committed such acts or omissions without the authority and consent of the former," the Ombudsman resolution stated.

"Simply put, for conspiring to allow PTK2 in building a structure atop Ikloy River and in performing excavation and water pipe-laying activities within the Municipality of Indang sans municipal permits or clearances, respondents Dimero and Aterrado clearly acted with gross inexcusable negligence, manifest partiality or evident bad faith, and gave undue advantage, unwarranted benefit or preference to PTK2," the Ombudsman added.

Moreover, Indang councilor Arcadio Ramos was indicted for violating Section 7 (a) and (d) of Republic Act 6713, Indirect Bribery, and Corruption of Public Official (under the Revised Penal Code), for receiving bribe money from PTK2 H2O and for giving the same, "on behalf of PTK2.

BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

Asean biodiversity meet to highlight ecosystem approach in conservation

USING the ecosystem-based approach in conserving Southeast Asia's rich, yet highly, threatened biodiversity will be a major topic at the Second Asean Conference on Biodiversity (ACB2016) from February 15 to 18 in Bangkok, Thailand. The event is organized by the Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) and hosted by the Thai government.

With the theme "Biodiversity for Sustainable Development," ACB2016 is expected to draw some 500 delegates from Asean national governments; private-sector companies; international, regional and national institutions; non-governmental organizations; academic, science and research community; students; media; and ACB partner countries and organizations.

The UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) defines the ecosystem-based approach as "a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way." The approach, which recognizes that humans are an integral part of ecosystem functions, underscores the inclusion of human interactions, and the use of science and appropriate

technologies in sustaining biodiversity conservation. The ACB2016 session on ecosystem-based approach will highlight institutions and programs at the regional, subregional, national and subnational scales that demonstrate good practices and case studies on ecosystem-based approaches to protected-area management, species conservation, and to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, in general.

The session will focus on the linkage and interface between science and policy as an effective means to ensure the sustainability of ecosystem-based initiatives.

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment emphasized that humans have been mainly responsible for the deterioration of our natural environment. With increasing human population, the corresponding demand for basic services also rises and exerts more pressure over resources derived from biodiversity. This led to unprecedented changes in ecosystems and losses of biodiversity over the past 50 years. The Asean Biodiversity Outlook has validated the issue that has affected the Asean region, as well. This predicament can still be reversed and addressed

through appropriate interventions at the policy level and by changing the behavior of people toward the environment, among others.

Specifically, the session on ecosystem-based approach will cover both the regional and national perspectives through various programs presentations. From the regional perspective, these programs will include the Asean Heritage Parks Programme, Coral Triangle Initiative, Heart of Borneo Initiative, Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion, Greater Mekong Subregion Program and the Asean Peatlands Programme.

From the national perspective, selected Asean member-states will present case studies on ecosystems-based approaches. Representatives from the secretariats of various multilateral environmental agreements, such as the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas, the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance and the Convention on Migratory Species, will also participate and present global mandates and experiences. Each session topic will feature panelists from the government, academe and civil-society organizations in the Asean region.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Climate Change and Natural Disaster Vulnerability of LdBR

The closing of the Climate Change Convention (COP21) in Paris, France marks historic achievements in renewed commitment of participating countries.

Although the exact details for reducing and ultimately stopping global warming is still contentious among participants, everybody agreed that there is a need to take action in order to prevent further rise in global temperatures.

The Philippines is among the 196 countries that participated in the climate talks. Despite being one of those contributing the least to the rise in the earth's temperature, we are also considered one of the middle-income and developing small-island states that are most vulnerable to the effects of global warming, along with Bangladesh and Costa Rica to Ethiopia and the Maldives.

There is an estimate of an average 50,000 deaths each year from natural disasters in our country, in addition to the billions worth of damage to properties and infrastructures. Speaking at the Nature-Based Adaptation forum, Presidential Adviser for Environmental Protection and Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) General Manager Sec. Neric Acosta said that "resilience is our new freedom." He also noted that resilience and disaster risk reduction are dependent on a robust system of protected areas and nature-based solutions.

ECOLOGY IS THE BASIS OF ECONOMY

Still at COP21 in Paris, Sec. Acosta emphasized that for a country such as the Philippines, "climate change is more about water, food and energy than the abstract language within the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change)." He emphasized that there is "no economy without ecology."

Being susceptible to the effects of climate change as well as other natural disasters, disaster risk management is also a key concern for the country. In addition to climate change such as storms, floods, drought and fires, the Philippines is also located within the Pacific Ring of Fire making it vulnerable to earthquakes as well.

THE "BIG ONE"

In 2013 Bohol experienced an earthquake with 7.2 magnitude that affected the whole Central Visayas region. An earthquake of that magnitude in the jurisdiction of LLDA, specifically Metro Manila and CALABARZON (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon), an estimate of at least 34,000 lives would be instantly lost according to a study conducted by the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The damage to structures would instantly kill thousands and affect the lives of 20 million people, but the effects of the damage could also have more lasting impact.

For example, once the "Big One" hits, in addition to the obvious structures of

buildings, roads, and bridges, other important structures could also break or collapse such as dams and oil pipes.

A breach on the integrity of dams would mean that nearby low-lying communities will be instantly inundated by the water stored in it, killing thousands of people and displacing more.

Breaks in oil pipes and storage tanks of petroleum and other chemical products would lead to leaks, possibly causing hazards such as fires and explosions. Leaked chemicals may also seep through the ground, contaminating water sources such as rivers, lakes, and underground water, rendering them unpotable and useless to humans, animals, as well as plant life in the affected area. A leak of any toxic chemical, whether in water or on land will harm and kill wildlife and people living in the affected areas.

Since a clean water supply is essential not just to the economy, but to life itself, part of preparing for disasters is avoiding the impact of force majeure when we can. This may include reinforcement of structures to withstand damages caused by natural disasters, or replacing when possible materials and equipment used for building them, among many other ways to prevent, manage, and recover during calamities. Such projects are included in the Investment Priorities Plan (IPP) of the administration of President Benigno Aquino III, which aligns with the Philippine Development Plan (PDP). There are

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Climate change and Natural Disaster Vulnerability of LTR

different IPPs for each year including investments related to Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Recovery Projects. This is part of President Aquino's fulfillment of his social contract with the Filipino people.

THE RESPONSE

There are companies that take the responsibility upon themselves to discover and develop products that are environmentally sound and "disaster proof." Alltank Solutions Pilipinas Corporation which is the "ONLY Manufacturing Plant" categorized under the "Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Recovery Projects of the Aquino Government's 2013 Investments Priorities Plan, is one such company.

Alltank Solutions Sdn Bhd (ex-STP Malaysia) has approached CSI Global in June 2011 to work together in bringing in UL Listed Double Wall (DW) Fiberglass Reinforced Plastic (FRP) Underground Storage Tanks as their Philippine exclusive representative.

Double Wall Fibreglass Tanks are the most critical storage solutions for critical and highly demanding applications in the Petroleum, Petrochemical and Chemical industry sectors. Since storing these precious, yet hazardous commodities requires a higher degree of storage tank strength and reliability, these tanks are designed to perform over a long period of time with safety as a top concern. They optimize protection in the event of any leaks due to their unique "Double Wall" feature.

What is the "Double Wall"? -

Exclusive Features:

- Effectively prevents any ground water contamination
- Offers a most comprehensive 360 Degree Secondary Containment Protection Cover
- Can be "pressure-tested" both before and after installation
- A wide variety of Monitoring Devices can be installed in the interstitial space inherent in the Double Wall Tanks
- TRU-Check and Hydrostatic Monitoring System provided by AllTank Solutions Malaysia facilitates owners and operators to conduct a Tank Tightness Test that meets EPA Criteria
- This Test meets EPA Criteria and Underwriters Laboratories Certification.

WHAT NOW?

The Double Wall Fibreglass Tanks is just one example, and there are many more which addresses different factors and effects of natural disasters. With the technology that is available, there is no excuse to not take action to protect ourselves from forces we cannot control. We are very prone to natural disasters like earthquakes, and the Philippines is just waiting for the "big one" to happen-it's not a matter of "if" but of "when," as experts have been telling us. We cannot prevent earthquakes from happening, nor can we even predict them. That is why our best defense is to minimize as much as we can the disastrous and devastating effects when they do occur.

PAID ADVT

BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

Caribbean biodiversity overheated by climate change

SANTO DOMINGO—The nearly 7,000 islands and the warm waters of the Caribbean Sea are home to thousands of endemic species and are on the migration route of many kinds of birds. Preserving this abundant fauna requires multilateral actions in today's era of global warming.

That is the goal of the Caribbean Biological Corridor (CBC), a project implemented by the governments of Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic, which was created in 2007 with the support of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the European Union with the aim of protecting biodiversity in the region.

"Puerto Rico should form part of the corridor in 2016," Cuban biologist Freddy Rodríguez, who is taking part in the initiative, told Inter Press Service (IPS). In late 2015, Puerto Rico, a free associated state of the US, presented an official letter asking to join the sustainable conservation project, whose executive secretariat is in the Dominican Republic on the border with Haiti.

"The admission of new partners, which has been encouraged from the start, is a question of time," Rodríguez said. "Several countries have taken part as observers since the beginning."

He said the Bahamas, Dominica, Jamaica and Martinique are observer countries that have expressed an interest in joining the corridor.

The Caribbean region is already prone to high temperatures, because the wind and ocean currents turn the area into a kind of cauldron that concentrates heat year-round, according to scientific sources. And the situation will only get worse due to the temperature rise that was predicted as a result of climate change, a phenomenon caused by human activity which

has triggered extreme weather events and other changes. The extraordinary biodiversity of the Caribbean is increasingly at risk from this global phenomenon, which has modified growing and blooming seasons, migration patterns and even species distribution. Meanwhile, the biological corridor is one demonstration of the growing efforts of small Caribbean island-nations to preserve their unique natural heritage. It also reflects the long road still ahead to regional integration in the area of conservation.

The 1,600-kilometers CBC includes the Jaragua-Bahoruca-Enriquillo Biosphere Reserve and Cordillera Central mountains in the Dominican Republic; the Chaîne de la Selle mountain range, Lake Azuéli, Foret Pins, La Visite and the Massif du Nord mountains—all protected areas in Haiti; and the Sierra Maestra and Nipe-Sagua-Baracoa mountain ranges in Cuba. Studies carried out by researchers involved in the biological corridor have documented damage caused to nature by extreme events like Hurricane Sandy, which hit eastern Cuba in 2012, and the severe drought of 2015, which affected the entire Caribbean region.

Rodríguez said they have carried out more than 60 training sessions, involving local communities, as well as government officials from the three countries, with the participation of guests from other Caribbean nations.

Their web site compiles the results of studies, bulletins, a database and maps of the biological corridor. "Other people and institutions say the CBC's biggest contribution has been to create a platform for collaboration with regard to the environment, which did not exist previously in the insular Caribbean. This

has created the possibility for the environment ministers to meet every year to review the progress made, as well as pending issues," Rodríguez said. "We are trying to grow in terms of South-South collaboration," he said.

The insular Caribbean is a multicultural, multiracial region where people speak Spanish, English, Dutch, French and creoles. It is made up of 13 independent island-nations and 19 French, Dutch, British and US overseas territories. These differences, along with the heavy burden of underdevelopment, are hurdles to the conservation of the natural areas in the Caribbean, which is one of the world's greatest centers of unique biodiversity, due to the high number of endemic species.

Experts report that for every 100 square kilometers, there are 23.5 plants that can only be found in the Antilles, an archipelago bordered by the Caribbean Sea to the south and west, the Gulf of Mexico to the northwest, and the Atlantic Ocean to the north and east.

The project is focusing on an area of 234,124 sq km of greatest biodiversity, home to a number of unique reptile, bird and amphibian species. CBC's 2016-2020 development plan also involves continued research on climate change, and aims to expand to marine ecosystems.

The 4 million sq km of ocean around the Antilles are "the heart of Atlantic marine diversity," according to the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund. The region contains 25 coral genera, 117 sponges, 633 mollusks, more than 1,400 fishes, 76 sharks, 45 shrimp, 30 cetaceans and 23 species of seabirds. The area also contains some 10,000 sq km of reef, 22,000 sq km of mangroves, and as much as 33,000 sq km of seagrass beds. **Ivet Gonzalez/IPS**

BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

'Prepare for disaster, establish Fema now'

A LAWMAKERSaid the country needs its equivalent to the US Federal Emergency Management Agency (Fema), saying that "we need to seriously consider retooling and upgrading the existing National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council [NDRRMC] from the ground up to make the country's disaster preparation and response systems more comprehensive."

Fema is an agency connected with the US Department of Homeland Security. Its main purpose is to coordinate with federal government efforts during those times local and state authorities are overwhelmed in times of disasters and natural calamities.

"We need to elevate disaster management to a permanent position in the Cabinet," said Lakas Rep. Martin Romualdez of Leyte, whose district was devastated by Supertyphoon Yolanda.

"The country experiences an average of 20 typhoons a year, the effects of which cost billions of pesos to rehabilitate. We are in the so-called Pacific Ring of Fire that's very prone to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. These factors clearly justify the creation of a full-time, Cabinet-rank agency similar to the Fema," Romualdez urged.

He cited the limitations of the

current NDRRMC. "The reality is, the NDRRMC operates mostly ad-hoc, and 'as the need arises.' You don't hear about it and you don't feel its presence when there's no actual disaster or calamity."

With the creation of a Fema-patterned agency, Romualdez said the government would be able to implement comprehensive nationwide disaster trainings, coordinated through the appropriate instrumentalities, such as the departments of National Defense, Education and, the Interior and Local Government.

"What would make a Fema-like entity different from the existing NDRRMC, among others, is the capacity to provide trained personnel and experts to local governments for more training and preparation on a more regular basis."

"A department similar to Fema could be entrusted with the authority to provide calamity victims needed loans that cut the red tape. We've complained about how inefficiently the Department of Social Welfare and Development manages delivery of disaster assistance. This can be solved if there's a permanent government agency dedicated to the sole purpose of addressing issues before, during and after disasters," Romualdez maintained. *Jovee Marie N. dela Cruz*

X-FILES

SAGAD SA SHOWBIZ • BULGAR SA BALITA

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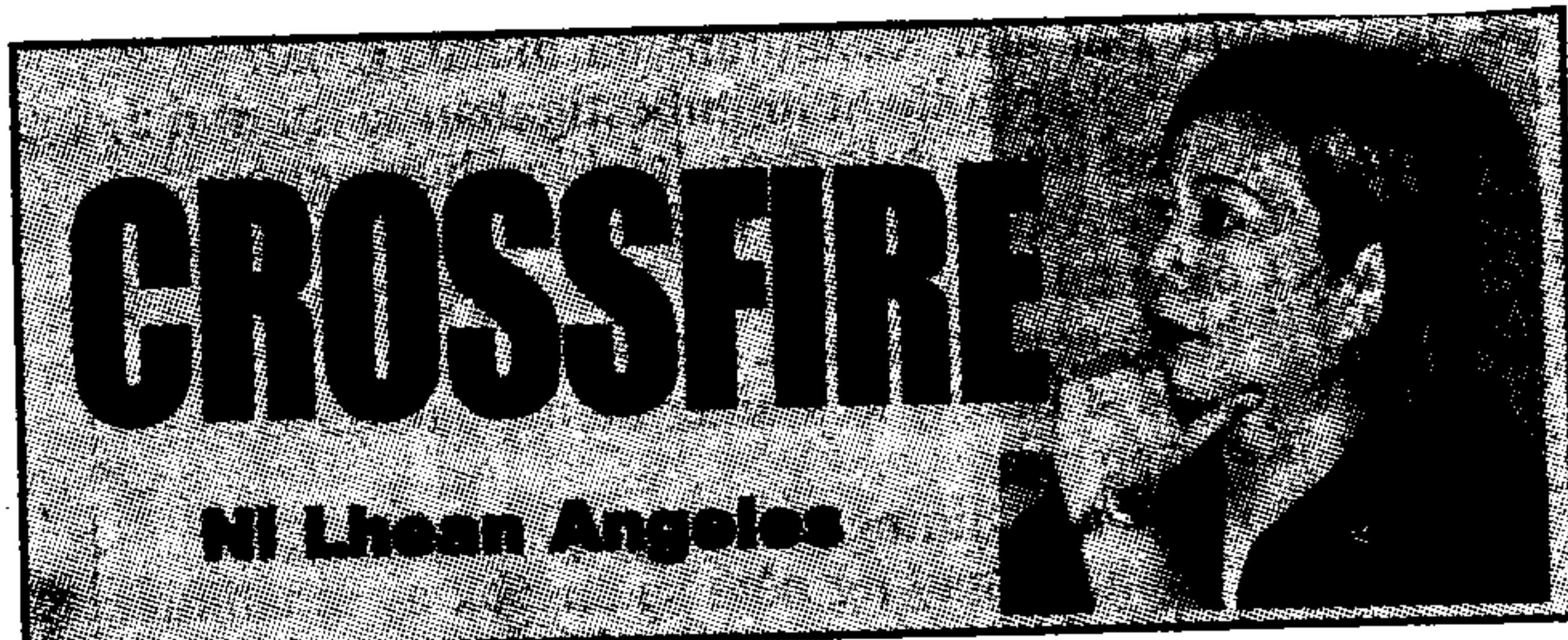
NAGPAHAYAG ng suporta ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa isang pagkilos na humihiling ng 'road sharing' o bayanihan sa daan ' upang mag karoon ng espasyo ang mga motor, bisikleta at pedestrians sa lahat ng mga kalsada sa Metro Manila. Sa idinaos na 'Bayanihan sa Daan' awards na ginanap sa Malakanyang , naging panauhin si Sec. Paje, sinabi nito na nais niyang suportahan ang environmentalist na si Atty. Antonio Oposa, sa pagsusulong nito na magkaroon ng road sharing.

Ayon kay Paje, hindi lamang sa pagkakaroon ng espasyo sa kalsada ang nakikita niya sa movement na ito bagkus ay ang magiging epekto para sa kasalukuyang umiiral na climate change. Sa pamamagitan aniya nito, mababawasan ang polusyon, at mapagbubuti pa ang kuwalidad ng hangin .

Ang road sharing movement o 'Bayanihan sa Daan' ay humihiling na ilaan ang kalahati ng espasyo sa kalsada para lamang sa mga motor, bisikleta at lagyan ng safe and covered sidewalks para sa mga pedestrian.

Ayon kay Atty. Oposa, isa itong kakaibang stratehiya ng mga Pilipino para sa transport evolution, urban sanity at climate crisis. Ang Bayanihan sa Daan ay binubuo ng mga samahan ng Share a Road Movement, DENR, Office of the Presidential Adviser for Environmental Protection (OPAEP), Department of Transportation and Communications, Department of Public Works and Highways, at Climate Change Commission.

Kasama din ang National Anti-Poverty Commission, the Department of the Interior and Local Government, Pasig City Government, Office of the Chair of Senate Committee on Climate Change, Institute of



ROAD SHARING MOVEMENT, SINUPORTAHAN NG DENR

Governance and Sustainable Development of Washington, Environmental Law Program of University of Hawaii, Partnership for Clean Air, Clean Air Asia, and National Bicycle Organization.

"It aims to make public transportation safe and reliable, give proper space for non-motorized transport for people who want to walk or bike, improve the air quality of urban centers and reduce the discharge of climate disruptive gases," ayon kay Paje.

Samantala, nanawagan si Oposa sa publiko na makiisa sa "Metro Manila-wide Road Sharing Exercise" sa darating na Feb. 7. Gagawin aniya ang hiwalay na linya para sa mga cyclists, pedestrians, behikulo sa Metro Manila kasabay ng mga aktibidad na idaraos sa Plaza Mexico in Intramuros, Manila.

MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICES**Increased penalty pushed for persons faking land titles**By **BEN R. ROSARIO**

From a six-month jail term, Quezon City Rep. Alfred D. Vargas III is battling for life imprisonment for persons found guilty of falsifying land titles, an illegal activity that has remained prevalent despite the computerization of the torrens system.

Vargas who is running unopposed in his re-election bid in the 5th District of Quezon City said House Bill (HB) 6375 which seeks to amend the law against falsification of land titles, will be re-filed if congress does not act on it.

Congress has only a week to act on the measure.

Vargas says the penalty of life imprisonment provided under HB 6375 will seek to stop the nefarious practice of anomalous titling of lands.

The actor-turned-politician noted that syndicates faking land titles have continued to operate.

The integrity of land titles are guaranteed by Torrens System of Registration and the best evidence of ownership of land or interest therein is the Certificate of Title issued under the System which is supposed to be indefeasible and incontrovertible.

"Persons who are dealing with land or interest therein are not one hundred percent sure of validity of the title. The system helps the surety of the person to the title," Vargas said.

A former Quezon City councilor, Vargas said fake land titles in the Philippines are fabricated by syndicates to entice buyers into acquiring supposedly cheap real estate properties.

"If the illegal act continues, our

country will be flooded with fake and falsified titles each inflicting harm on the integrity of the System, to the detriment of the country's economic stability," he said.

More than one

HB 6375 amends Articles 171 and 172 of Act No. 3815, as amended, otherwise known as the Revised Penal Code to increase the penalties for falsification of land titles.

Under the bill, the penalty of reclusion temporal (minimum jail term of 12 years and a fine of ₱50,000) shall be imposed if the document falsified is a certificate of land title or any land patent application, deed, instrument or document in support thereof, reasonably connected with and calculated to cause the issuance of a certificate of land title.

Life imprisonment shall be imposed if the fair market value as shown by its tax declaration issued by the city or provincial assessor or zonal valuation as determined by the commissioner of internal revenue, or aggregate value thereof, where the falsification or series or combination thereof involves more than one title is at least ₱10 million.

The penalty of prision mayor (minimum jail term of six years and a fine of ₱25,000) shall be imposed if the document falsified is a certificate of land title or any land patent application, deed, instrument or document in support thereof, reasonably connected with and calculated to cause the issuance of a certificate of land title.

Under current laws penalty for the said illegal acts is six months imprisonment and a ₱5,000 fine.

The Manila Times

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Anti-mining activist dies

AN Anti-mining activist died on Saturday morning, three days after a failed assassination attempt by two unidentified gunmen in a remote village in Pantukan town Compostella Valley, police reports said.

Reports reaching the PNP National Operation Center said that Teresita Navacilla, 60, of Brgy. King King in Pantukan town died at a hospital where she was taken after the failed assassination attempt against her Wednesday night.

Police reports said that Navacilla was shot in the head by a lone gunman with a .45 caliber pistol while tending her store in Brgy. King-King. Another suspect stood as look out.

Navacilla was reportedly a Purok chairperson and convenor of Save Pantukan Movement, aside from being a small scale miner that is heavily involved in the campaign against the impending operations of two large mining companies in Pantukan town.

Human rights group Karapatan Southern Mindanao, in a statement, said that Navacilla's killing was meant to silence her and her campaign against large scale mining in Compostela Valley.

Elements of t Pantukan Municipal Police Station (MPS) are still conducting an investigation to determine the motive and the identity of the gunman. **ANTHONY VARGAS**



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Ex-Cebu mayor, kinasuhan sa ilegal na pagmimina

Kinasuhan ng Office of the Ombudsman ang isang dating alkalde ng Consolacion, Cebu, at pitong iba pa dahil sa umano'y pagkakasangkot sa ilegal na pagmimina noong 2009.

Sinampahan si dating Consolacion Mayor Avelino Gungob Sr. sa Sandiganbayan ng kasong Theft of Minerals, sa ilalim ng Section 103, ng RA 7942 o Philippine Mining Act of 1995.

Kinasuhan din ang mga dating opisyal at empleyado ng lokal na pamahalaan na sina Glicerio Galo,

Leonardo Capao, Joeboy Dayon, Juanito Gerundio, Beda Comesos, Nicarter Yray, at Dionito Mangilaya.

Inirekomenda ni Graft Investigation and Prosecution Officer III Gerald Varez, na siya ring naghain ng kaso sa Sandiganbayan, ang piyansang P12,000 sa bawat akusado.

Nai-affle na rin ang kaso at ito ay bumagsak sa Sandiganbayan Third Division.

Ayon sa Ombudsman, ginamit umano ni Gungob ang kanyang posisyon upang makipagkutsa bahansa

kanyang mga empleyado sa munisipyo sa pagkuha ng limestone at diorite sa Barangay Garing, Consolacion.

Naikarga umano ng mga akusado ang mga limestone at diorite, na aabot sa 30 metro kubiko, sa tatlong truck mula sa lugar.

Iginiit ng Ombudsman na ang mga naturang mineral ay pag-aari ng gobyerno at isinagawa ang pagmimina ng mga ito nang walang kaukulang permiso, tulad ng nakasaad sa RA 7942.

Jeffrey G. Damicog