

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DATE : 07 MAY 2016

DAY : Saturday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1908

MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Sustain support for nat'l greening program – DENR

TACLOBAN CITY, Leyte – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Eastern Visayas regional office based in this city is appealing for sustained public support for the National Greening Program (NGP).

DENR Eastern Visayas regional

director Leonardo Sibbaluca issued the appeal since the agency is aiming to reforest another 15,686.5 hectares with over 17.5 million seedlings of various species.

Sibbaluca pointed out that with overwhelming public support, last year's goal in terms of number of hectares

planted with trees was surpassed. He said that a total of 16,052 hectares land were covered by the NGP, which surpassed the target of 14,153 hectares.

Sibbaluca said that to sustain and improve on the gains of 2015, his office has tapped 147 Letter of Agreement (LOA) holders composed of people's

organizations (POs) and barangay local government units (BLGUs) for the reforestation activities which included nursery establishment, seedling production, site preparation, tree-planting activities, and plantation maintenance such as brushing, ring weeding, and fertilization. (Restituto A. Cayubit)

THE REPORT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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• Hot logs seized

TACLOBAN CITY, Leyte – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Eastern Visayas regional office based in this city seized illegally cut lumber worth ₱240,000 recently. DENR Eastern Visayas regional Director Leonardo Sibbaluca said the newly - cut lumber with an estimated volume of 6,000 board feet loaded in two trucks were intercepted over the weekend near the San Juanico Bridge en route to a hardware in this city. Sibbaluca said that the illegally cut lumber came from Basey and Marabut, Samar, considered as illegal logging hotspots in the region. "The confiscation of the illegally cut lumber is the result of the relentless campaign of our office to stop the illegal cutting of trees in the two municipalities," he said. (Restituto A. Cayubit)

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Deluge of coal plants: 27 approved

Protesters ask next leader to cancel OK of new polluting power sources

By Marrah Erika Rabe and Maricar Cinco
Inquirer Southern Luzon

BATANGAS CITY—The cancellation of all 27 applications to build coal-fired power plants in the country should be the first order of the day for the next Philippine President, environmental and religious groups said.

On Wednesday, at least 10,000 members of environmental groups, civil society organizations and representatives of the Catholic Church made this urgent call to whoever would win the May 9 presidential election, as they gathered in this capital of Batangas province to launch the "Piglas Batangas! Piglas Pilipinas!"

Those who attended the event, mostly in red shirts, marched from the city's diversion road to Batangas City

Sports Center in what was dubbed one of the biggest initiatives against dirty fuels in the country.

The antioal rally also kicked off the "Break Free from Fossil Fuels 2016," a global wave of climate action that runs until May 14.

"It does not look very urgent but once you put up a coal-fired power plant, you miss an opportunity for renewable energy," said Naderev "Yeba" Sano, Greenpeace Southeast Asia executive director and former commissioner of the Philippine government's Cli-

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Deluge of coal plants:

mate Change Commission.

Sano said 27 coal plant applications had been approved by the administration of President Aquino.

Letting these applications pass unchallenged, he said, would "run contrary to the Philippines' commitment to climate policies."

"Otherwise, we're just fooling each other," Sano said.

The Philippines submitted a target of 70 percent reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 to the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) in Paris. Countries at the COP21 struck a deal to keep the earth's average temperature increase below 2 degrees Celsius.

Sano said Batangas communities were threatened by the planned construction of a 600-megawatt coal-fired power plant in Barangay Pinamucan Ibaba here, the biggest in the country so far.

The plant is a project of JG Summit Holdings Inc. of the Gokongwei Group that also owns and operates a naphtha cracker plant here.

Two other existing coal projects were the 32-year-old coal plant in Calaca town owned and operated by DMCI Power Corp. and a coal storage facility in Ibaan town, said climate activist Chuck Baclagon of 350.org.

"These two plants (300 MW each) affect our health and threaten to pollute the seas," said Reymond Mendoza, 27, a resident of a fishing community here.

Another youth leader, John

Rey Balasan of Youth for Climate Justice, said he was convinced that coal projects would have adverse effects on the city's fishing industry.

Some candidates in Batangas were seen at the rally.

Lipa Archbishop Ramon Arguelles appealed to voters to choose leaders who were "pro-environment, pro-family and pro-life."

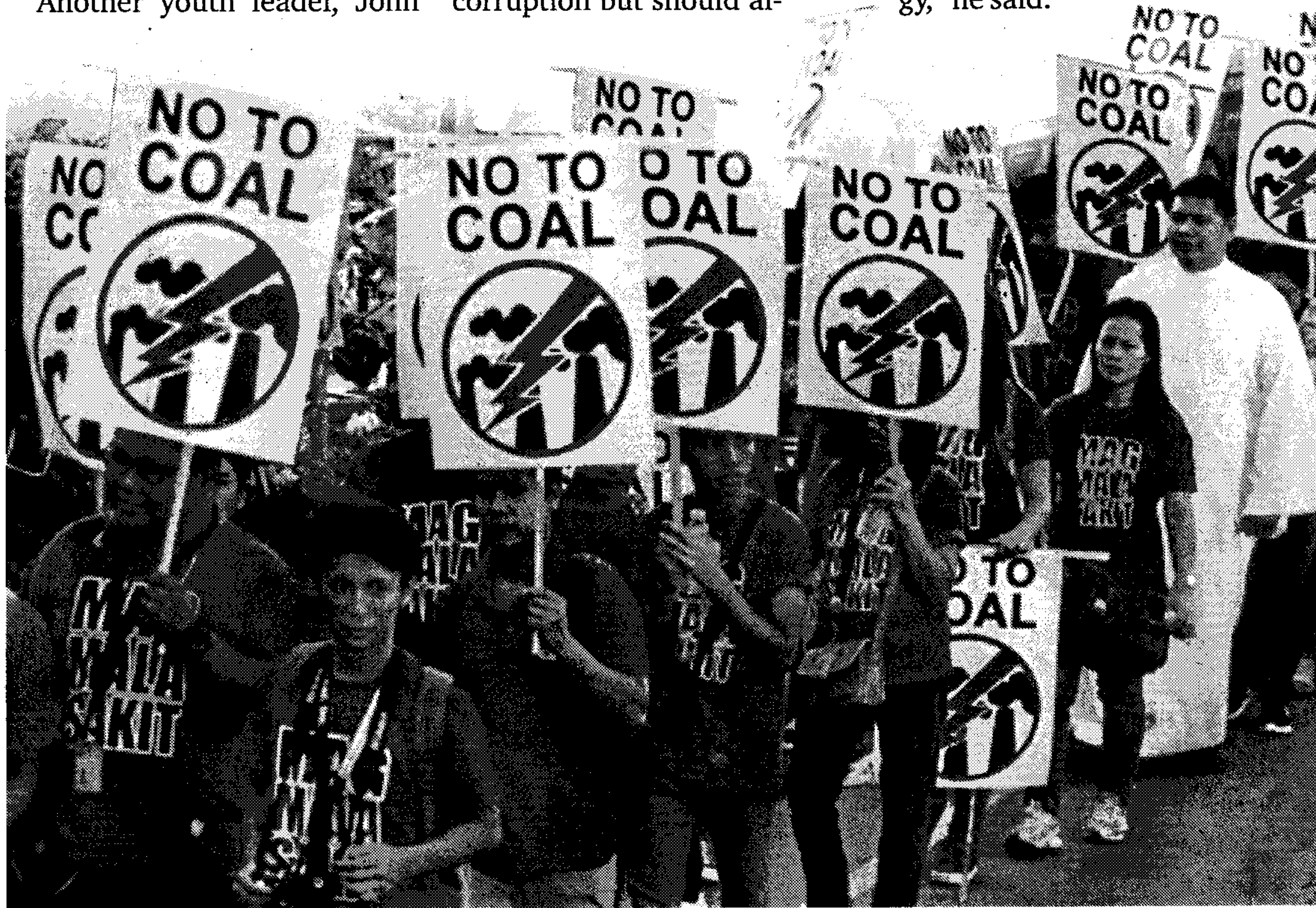
"Let us tell the poor that good leaders are not only against corruption but should al-

so work for the well-being of Batangas," said Arguelles.

Sano, however, said the coalition was not endorsing any candidate.

Baclagon said coal remained to be the "biggest contributor" to greenhouse gases.

"We only demand two things: One is to set a moratorium on new applications for coal plants and two, to start phasing them out and begin a just transition from fossil to renewable energy," he said.



PROTESTERS march on the streets of Batangas City to draw attention to the continuing climate threat that coal power plants pose and ask the country's next leader to adhere to a green agenda. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Stop burning 'dayami,' PhilRice tells farmers

SCIENCE CITY OF MUÑOZ, Nueva Ecija—The Philippine Rice Research Institute has cautioned Filipino farmers to refrain from burning "dayami" (rice straw), saying this could reduce nutrients in soil and make farmlands less productive.

Evelyn Javier, supervising science research specialist of the PhilRice's agronomy, soil and physiology division, said rice straw-burning, which is practiced during the harvest season, causes air pollutants such as carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide.

When done frequently, she said this could reduce the soil's nitrogen content and

phosphorus content by 25 percent. It also cuts potassium content in soil by 20 percent and sulphur by 5 percent to 60 percent.

Javier said this practice also damages food resources of beneficial insects in the rice field.

The institute said Republic Act 9003, also known as the Solid Waste Management Act (RA 9003) and the Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999 both prohibit open-field burning, including burning of rice straws.

According to PhilRice statistics, the country produces 15.2 million tons of rice annually of which 11.3 millions are turned into rice straw.

To minimize post-harvest waste, rice straws can be used by farmers as organic fertilizer and primary material for mushroom production. Also, rice straw and other biomass from farm by-products can help farmers save expenses from chemical fertilizer inputs.

Javier said when rice straws are scattered in the field during land preparation, they maintain the soil's nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, sulphur, silicon and carbon as well as moisture.

They also preserve the biodiversity of microorganisms that helps in nutrient cycling and efficient fertilizer utilization.

PILIPINO MIRROR

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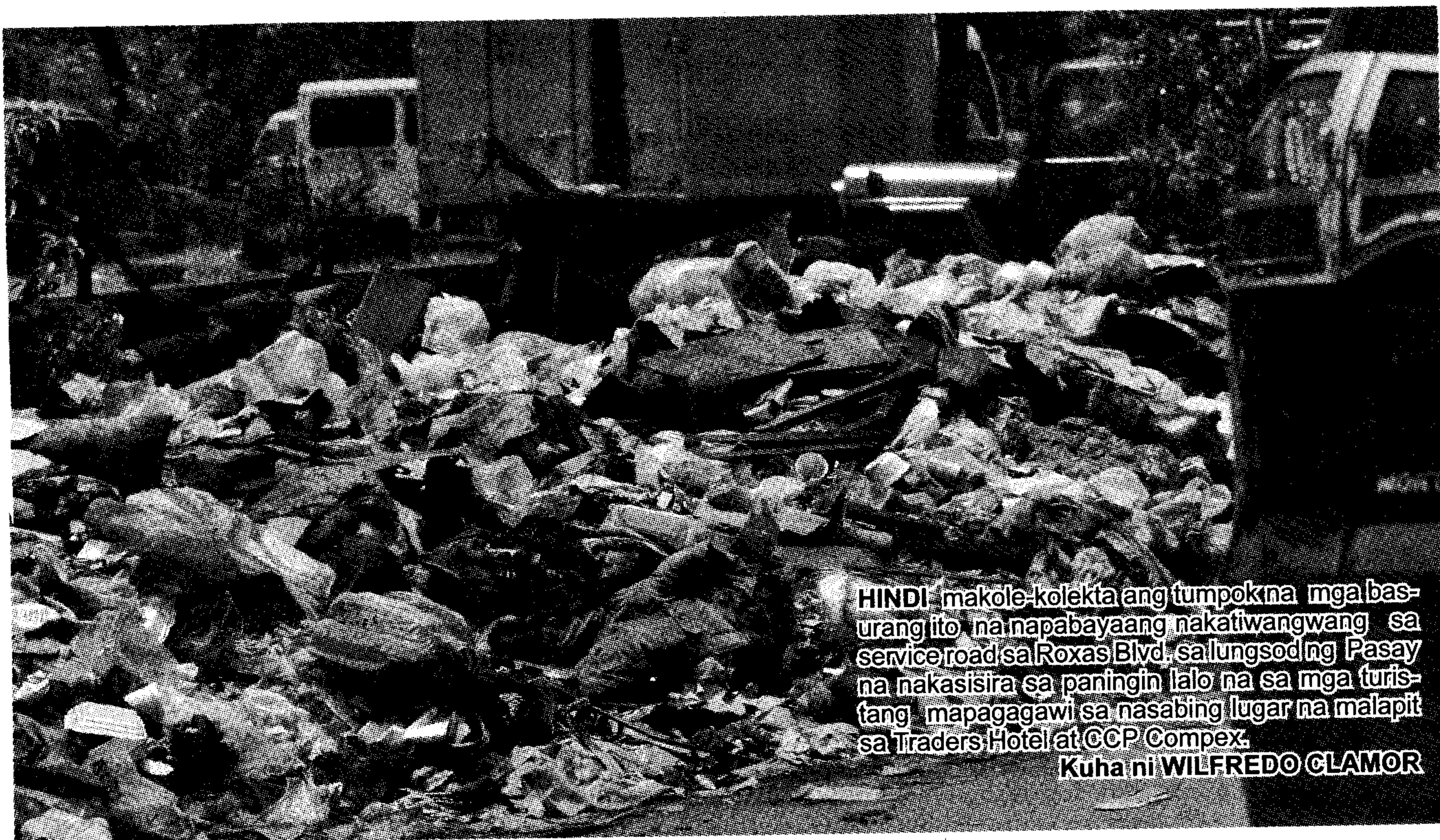
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AMIN NG KATOTOHANAN •

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HINDI makole-kolekta ang tumpok na mga basurang ito na napabayaang nakatiwangwang sa service road sa Roxas Blvd. sa lungsod ng Pasay na nakasisira sa paningin lalo na sa mga turistang mapagagawi sa nasabing lugar na malapit sa Traders Hotel at CCP Complex.

Kuha ni WILFREDO CLAMOR

PEOPLES Tonight

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Green jobs

PRESERVING or restoring the quality of the environment, like food security, should be the focus of the next administration considering the worsening of the problem of climate change.

In fact, the Filipino people expect the incoming government to fully implement newly signed Republic Act (RA) No. 10771, which seeks to promote the creation of "green jobs" in the country.

RA 10771 or the "Philippine Green Jobs Act of 2016" grants incentives to encourage business firms to generate and sustain green jobs, as certified by the Climate Change Commission (CCC).

The law applies to all establishments engaged in the production, manufacturing, processing, repackaging, assembly or sale of goods and/or services, including service-oriented enterprises.

Signed into law by President Aquino last April 29, the new piece of legislation promotes the rights of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature.

The act provides that the State shall identify needed skills, develop training programs, and train workers for jobs in a range of industries that produce goods and render services for the benefit of the environment.

It also mandates the Department of Labor and Employment to coordinate with other state agencies in formulating a National Green Jobs Human Resource Development Plan on the enhancement and utilization of the labor force.

The plan shall have the primary objective of sustaining the transition into a green economy and the generation of green jobs towards more employment and equal opportunities and the promotion of social justice and workers' welfare.

Under the new law, the Department of Finance shall administer the granting of incentives, such as special deduction from the taxable income equivalent to 50 percent for the total expenses for skills training and research development expenses.

In the view of many, the incoming public servants, who will be elected in Monday's elections, have no choice but to implement RA No. 10771 if we are to preserve or restore the quality of the environment.

That's long!

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Building a healthy, resilient, sustainable nation

It is with great pleasure that I take part in this gathering to encourage Rotarians to take a more active role in finding solutions to the growing social, economic and development challenges caused by environmental degradation and disasters arising from natural hazards made stronger by climate change.

We are living in a world with finite resources and yet generations have lived over the centuries like there is no tomorrow.

Our natural environment has been compromised. Our biological diversity has been significantly reduced and the general health of our environment is conceded to the greed of some. Our ecosystems have been altered more rapidly in the name of development; but the poor have remained poor and their numbers are increasing notwithstanding the emergence of megacities and the increasing "GDPs" of nations.

The effects of our exploitative activities are evident in the increased frequency and volume of natural hazards. We have seen many times the impact of natural hazard extremes and the prevalence of disaster risk, exacerbated by climate change. They kill thousands of families, wipe out cities and communities, and undo years of development gains.



Speech of Senator Loren Legarda delivered before members of the Rotary Club of Makati Luncheon in a meeting held at Manila Peninsula Hotel on May 3, 2016—Ed.

Losses due to Typhoons Ondoy and Pepeng in 2009 were equivalent to 2.7% of the country's GDP; while damage from Super typhoon Yolanda is estimated at P101.79 Billion, representing 0.9% of GDP for 2013.

Each year, five million lives are lost due to climate change and the health impacts of its chief driver — fossil fuels.[1] The World Health Organization estimates direct damage costs to health alone at between 2 and 4 billion dollars each year by 2030.[2]

The 5th Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) declared that "about half of the anthropogenic carbon dioxide emissions between 1750 and

2011 have occurred in the last 40 years."

The world will continue to get warmer and with this comes long lasting changes in our climate system. Ordinary people have limited understanding of this, until they are painfully introduced to their impacts via extremely harsh weather events, flooding, declining fish catch, water scarcity, declining agricultural harvests, exacerbating health issues, extinction of animal and plant species, displacement of people, and even the demise of low-lying areas, among others.

Last April 22, 175 countries, including the Philippines, formally signed the Paris Agreement on Climate Change at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Agreement was the result of the climate negotiations in Paris culminating last December.

Now, we await the affirmation of commitments through the completion of ratification or accession processes of each country.

The Philippines has joined calls for the early entry into force of the Agreement by ensuring that at least 55 nations representing 55 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions will

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Building a healthy, resilient, sustainable nation

Building...

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ratify the Agreement within the year.

But while nations await the Agreement's entry into force, governments must already start the work to implement their respective Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and to meet the goal of the Paris Agreement.

The main aim of the Paris Agreement is to limit global temperature rise within the century "well below 2 degrees Celsius and to drive efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels."

Vulnerable nations, especially the member states of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF), fought for the inclusion of the 1.5 degrees Celsius warming limit in the Paris Agreement. We must not go higher than that because the additional 0.5 degrees Celsius could spell the difference between survival and extinction.

Global warming has al-

ready breached the 1°C level with unprecedented warming in the past months. We have already borne countless tragedies and losses from recurring impacts of extreme weather events under a 1°C global warming. How much more with higher temperatures?

The World Bank projects that under a 2°C scenario, there will be a 20% decline in water availability for many regions and 15-20% decrease in crop yield.

Moreover, with warming of up to 2°C, sea-level rise is projected to be around 70 centimeters. Sea level rise, floods that damage fish farms, and the increased acidification of the oceans by 2050 could reduce farmed fish yield by 90%.

The IPCC revealed that a 1.5 to 2.5 degrees Celsius increase in global mean temperatures from pre-industrial levels threatens extinction of 20-30 percent of all species.

The half a degree difference between 1.5 and 2 degrees Celsius matters. The 1.5°C is not a mere aspirational goal.

It is the minimum deliverable. It is non-negotiable. It is a matter of survival.

Even the success of attaining the sustainable development goals (SDGs) is at risk if we do not limit warming to 1.5°C.

Moreover, the mobilization of the US\$100 Billion Fund under the Paris Agreement is necessary to support vulnerable nations who happen to be low-emitting, developing economies. But additional funding in the form of independent official development assistance (ODA) commitments is also vital.

Finally, there should be 50:50 balance in international climate finance between adaptation and mitigation. Funding should not only be on efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Equal financial support must also be available to help those on the front-line that are feeling the brunt of climate change impacts.

Here in our country, we actually have numerous laws and policies that are focused on addressing environmental, cli-

mate change and disaster resilience issues. Among these are the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, Renewable Energy Act, Environmental Awareness and Education Act, Climate Change Act, Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act, and the People's Survival Fund Law.

Laws, however, are just part of the equation, and their implementation through good governance could spell a big difference.

Solutions for climate and resource risks entail investing in water supply, sanitation, flood control, transport, roads, social and health services, and energy infrastructure that build resilience to climate variability.

Moreover, promoting sustainable growth is not the duty of the government alone. It is everyone's responsibility. It is thus important to put communities at the heart of relevant programs and policies and gather collective action that is rooted in a sense of solidarity and shared responsibility. **TO BE CONTINUED**

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A broader look at today's business

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ADB stresses need for sustainable devt

By CAI U. ORDINARIO [@caiordinario](#)

FRANKFURT, Germany—The Asian Development Bank (ADB) said that while climate change-related projects and programs take time to implement, countries like the Philippines, must focus on them to attain sustainable development.

Stephen P. Groff, the bank's vice president for East Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific, said the challenge for the Philippines and other developing ADB member-countries with a climate-change program or project is implementation.

Groff said implementation is also the key in realizing the aims of the Green Jobs law, which was recently passed by the Philippines, as well as other climate-change projects and programs.

"It's relatively easy to announce

these things, and it's the right and important thing to do, but implementing and executing those things just takes time, and it's frustrating for all of us, but it is not something that's unique to the Philippines, all countries face these challenges," Groff said.

"It takes time, but it also takes continued dedication by the administration, takes continued perseverance by people of the country, and I'm confident that that's the direction that the Philippines

will go on, because it is really the only direction the country can go on to be on a sustainable path," he added.

Groff said achieving sustainable development is similar to ramping up the country's infrastructure spending—it takes a considerable amount of time.

He said the government aimed to increase infrastructure spending to 5 percent of GDP from only 2 percent, which is among the lowest in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations area.

However, documents obtained by the BUSINESSMIRROR in April showed that the country is nowhere near achieving its 5 percent of GDP goal.

Data showed that programmed national spending for infrastructure was at 3.5 percent of GDP, or P442.31 billion, in 2014 and 4.48 percent of GDP, or P595.77 billion, in 2015.

However, actual spending as a percentage of GDP was at 2.74 percent, or P346.24 billion, in 2014 and 3.28 percent, or P435.3 billion, in 2015.

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ADB STRESSES NEED FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Aquino administration, they set out a goal to increase their infrastructure spending, which has regionally been low compared to a lot of your Asean countries, and they've succeeded in increasing infrastructure spend quite dramatically over the last number of years, but that's taken quite some time," Groff said.

Nonetheless, Groff added that the ADB recognized the efforts made by the national government in attaining sustainable and inclusive development.

In March the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) bared the results of AmBisyon2040.

It showed 79.2 percent of Filipinos want a simple and comfortable life in 25 years and 3.9 percent of Filipinos wanted the life of the rich.

A simple and comfortable life means owning a medium-sized home; earning enough to support everyday needs; owning at least one vehicle; providing for the children's college education and traveling around the country for vacation.

The data from AmBisyon2040 will be translated into national targets and goals that will become the backbone of future development plans.

Planning for a better future was also part of the main message of the ADB President Takehiko Nakao in his closing news conference here.

Nakao said the ADB and its work in developing member-countries (DMCs) in the next 20 years will be incorporated in its Strategy 2030, or its Long Term Strategic Framework (LTSF).

The ADB new Strategy 2030 will replace the bank's Strategy 2020 released in Madrid, Spain, in 2008. The LTSF 2030 may include climate finance as a priority of the bank in the next few years.

This will be complemented by the ADB's commitment to double its climate-change financing to an annual average of around \$6 billion from the current average of \$3 billion a year.

"Many of you expressed strong support for the preparation of Strategy 2030, and stressed the

importance of close consultation with all stakeholders, including CSOs [civil-society organizations]. The new strategy will help us define our approach to the Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs] and COP21 [21st Conference of Parties]. It will also elaborate on our approaches to upper middle-income countries and regional cooperation and integration," Nakao said.

In July 2015 the ADB, together with other multilateral development banks and private institutions, have committed at least \$400 billion for projects related to the SDGs in the next three years.

The ADB, World Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and others will pool some \$400 billion in the next three years to support the world's Agenda 2030.

The World Economic Forum also disclosed that three blended finance initiatives, with a collective amount of \$100 billion over the next five years, was launched at the United Nations Financing for Development Conference in Addis Ababa.

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DMCI plans to invest \$300m in hydro sites

By Alena Mae S. Flores

DMCI Power Corp., a unit of the Consunji Group, plans to invest \$300 million to build 100 megawatts of run-of-river hydro power projects to expand its power generation portfolio.

"We're looking at some mini-hydro opportunity, run-of-river," DMCI Power president Nestor Dadivas told reporters.

The projects include four different hydro potential areas in Sultan Kudarat with a combined capacity of 90 MW and a 9-MW hydro project in Cagayan de Oro City.

"In Cagayan de Oro... we're looking at buying in. They have a service contract but it expired and they are renewing it," Dadivas said.

"In Sultan Kudarat, it's around 90 MW, but there are like three or

four different areas there," he said.

The projects are estimated to cost \$3 million per megawatt to construct.

Dadivas said the company was focused on run-of river hydro projects among the renewable energy technologies.

"Too many people are getting into solar, biomass. We're not convinced on feedstock availability. It must be significant to make it happen and the seasonality of it," he said.

Davidas said while hydro projects were more costly to build at \$3 million per MW, compared to

\$2.5 million for coal plants, the fuel of the hydro projects is free.

"What is good about hydro is that the fuel is free. You just have to look at the capacity factor. The capacity factor should be high for the project to earn because your project cost is also high," Dadivas said.

He said the government was looking at a capacity factor of 46 percent for hydro, compared to solar at 20 percent and biomass at 30 percent.

"If we ever go into renewable, we're going hydro because it has a bigger capacity factor and a big percent of project cost would be civil works which can be undertaken by DMCI," he said.

Davidas said the company was carefully studying hydro power development, because "we've never done hydro in our life yet."

"We're in the due diligence stage right now. We also have funding

for the CDO project of P2 billion from LandBank," Dadivas said.

Dadivas said the company was in the initial stage of identifying locations for the renewable energy projects.

"Right now, we have identified one or two areas. But the locations could still change depending on the results of our feasibility studies," Dadivas said.

The company cited market conditions and government incentives as the reasons for its plan to foray into renewable energy.

"Having priority dispatch government support and a competitive price at a growing but highly competitive power industry makes these RE projects more attractive," Davidas said.

DMCI Power was established in 2006 to provide sufficient and reliable electricity to areas that are not connected to the main transmission grid.

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'I don't see any help from gov't'

By Dexter V. Cabalza
and Jhesset O. Enano

(Second of a series)

VOTERS' VOICES

THINQ. VOTE.

FELICIANO Suarez has known the waters of Laguna de Bay all his life. He is 75, and his habits have been shaped

by the lake and its changing conditions through the years.

Suarez, known as Tata Feli in his community, is one of the elderly fishermen in Barangay Libis in Binangonan, Rizal province. He was born on Talim, the most populated island in Laguna de Bay, to a family that largely depended on the lake and its resources. Now, he and his wife, Viring, live in one of the many houses dotting the lakeshore, which borders the southeastern side of the province.

Tata Feli said that throughout the election campaign not one politician visited the place. Posters of candidates, however, are displayed everywhere, their smiling faces turned away from the lake.

"I don't see any help from the government," Tata Feli said. "No one really visits us. Maybe just now because there's a wake here."

In the Philippines, to live as a fisherman is to live in poverty. The Philippine Statistical Authority reported that in 2012, the fishing industry was the poorest sector, with a poverty incidence of 39.2 percent, even higher than the national figure of 25.2 percent.

The presidential debates highlighted the platforms of the five candidates, including programs for people relying on fisheries as their main source of livelihood. All the aspirants planned to extend the coverage of the conditional cash transfer program to fishing families and make the government subsidize their capital for livelihood.

Laguna de Bay is the largest lake in the Philippines, with a surface area of about 900 square kilometers. According to the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA), it is bounded by six provinces, 12 cities and 49 towns that are economically dependent on the lake.

LLDA records showed that aquaculture production in 2012 totaled 150,957 metric tons, or 3 percent of the total national production. Studies also re-

vealed that two-thirds of the freshwater fish requirements of Metro Manila, such as tilapia, come from Laguna de Bay.

Dwindling lake catch

Tata Feli and his family have relied on Laguna de Bay all their lives. He recalled that when he was young, the lake teemed with fish. A fisherman would spend only an hour or two in his boat and he would have enough for the whole day.

"We never really thought it was important to finish school, because the lake could provide for us," he said. "It was enough to know how to read and write."

The situation is different now, Tata Feli said. The lake is shallow and murky, far from the body of crystal-clear water that he remembers from his youth. The fish are significantly fewer, too.

Small fishermen in Binangonan partly blame the decline in the lake's productivity on the Napindan Hydraulic Con-

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I don't see any help from govt

trol Structure (NHCS).

The structure was built in 1983 to prevent the backflow of saline and polluted water from the Pasig River into Laguna de Bay, making the lake water suitable for irrigation, domestic and industrial uses. It is also one of the components of the Effective Flood Control Operation System, which aims to prevent flooding in the surrounding cities and towns.

For the people of Libis, however, the goals of the NHCS are contrary to what the government has promised. While Metro Manila is spared flooding, rainwater trapped in Laguna de Bay inundates the low-lying towns on the lake's rim.

In 1992, the fishermen were alarmed by the sight of sickly looking fish. Fisherman Ronel Arambulo, 30, told the INQUIRER that some fish had exposed bones, while others had "boils." The fishermen believed the cause was the lack of saline water, which used to flow into the lake, mixing

freely with its freshwater.

According to a study done by the Japan-based International Lake Environment Committee (Ilec) Foundation, fish catch from Laguna de Bay declined to 13,060 MT in 1996 from 44,741 MT in 1993.

Invasive fish species

At present, the situation is even worse, Tata Feli said. Fishermen contend with the decline of the lake's productivity caused by industrial pollution, domestic waste, fertilizer runoff, and siltation and sedimentation. The lack of government policy and programs also resulted in the lake's deterioration.

"Before, even if you just waded in the lake, there's catch and there's food to eat. Now, mud is your only catch," Tata Feli said. "The water is shallower, muddy and smells terrible. It really affects the fish, if there are any."

Invasive fish species, such as the janitor fish and the knife fish, also contribute to the lake's rapid demise.

"The janitor fish is such a huge burden to us. You can't sell those," Tata Feli said. Janitor fish compete with other fish for food, destroy fishing nets and contribute to the siltation of the lake. "At least the knife fish, we can sell ... but only for export," he said.

Both the janitor fish and the knife fish were accidentally introduced into Laguna de Bay and became pests. A survey conducted by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources in 2013 found that the knife fish comprised 40.35 percent of the fishermen's total catch, much bigger than the harvest of aquaculture fish, including tilapia and milkfish (*bangus*).

Fish cages

Fish pens and fish cages also significantly grew in number on the lake, reducing the areas for open fishing for small fishermen. The Ilec study noted that the pens grew from 38 hectares in the 1970s to more than 30,000 ha in 1983. This has sowed conflict between fishpen operators and other fishermen relying only on their boats and nets.

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I don't see any help from govt

A son of Tata Feli used to fish, but left the lake when he found out that some fishermen were shot when they came close to the pens. He now works as a tri-cycle driver in the same town.

Tata Feli's other children are working at different jobs far from Binangonan. Not one of them is interested in fishing because of the meager income and lack of support from the government.

This story is not unique. Many other men and women living by the lakeshore do not engage in fisheries anymore. They have chosen other jobs, such as construction work.

But Tata Feli is too old and frail to shift to other jobs. He is on constant medication for asthma, a condition he developed after many years of working in the lake.

Still, Tata Feli shows no signs of stopping anytime soon.

Alternative livelihood

He now mainly relies on shrimp catch, which he can do much nearer to the shore. Every day at 3 a.m., he walks from his home to the lake, gets in his boat and lowers his shrimp traps for about an hour or two.

"I'm lucky if I get to about 2 kilos of shrimps," he said. Tata Feli sells his catch for P90 per kilo, barely enough for his family's food and other needs, as well as payment for debts.

Without the aid of government officials, small fishermen like Tata Feli rely on organizations like Pamalakaya (National Federation of Small Fisherfolk Organizations in the Philippines). The alliance has given him the blue boat that he now uses every day.

"We don't rely on the government. We rely mostly on ourselves," he said.

Tata Feli said, however, that he would vote in Monday's elections, hoping that the new President would really help the poor. But the struggle for Tata Feli and the other fishermen would continue.

"When I stop fishing, it means I have stopped living," he said. "But while I still can, I will continue to fish."

(Editor's Note: The INQUIRER is running a series profiling the plight of six disadvantaged basic sectors of society—farmers, fishermen, senior citizens, people with disabilities, contract laborers and overseas Filipino workers—as their situations have been high on the governance priorities of the presidential candidates. Jejomar Binay, Rodrigo Duterte, Grace Poe, Mar Roxas and Miriam Defensor Santiago have vowed to increase the productivity of the sectors while promising them poverty alleviation programs, such as cash doles and subsidies.)

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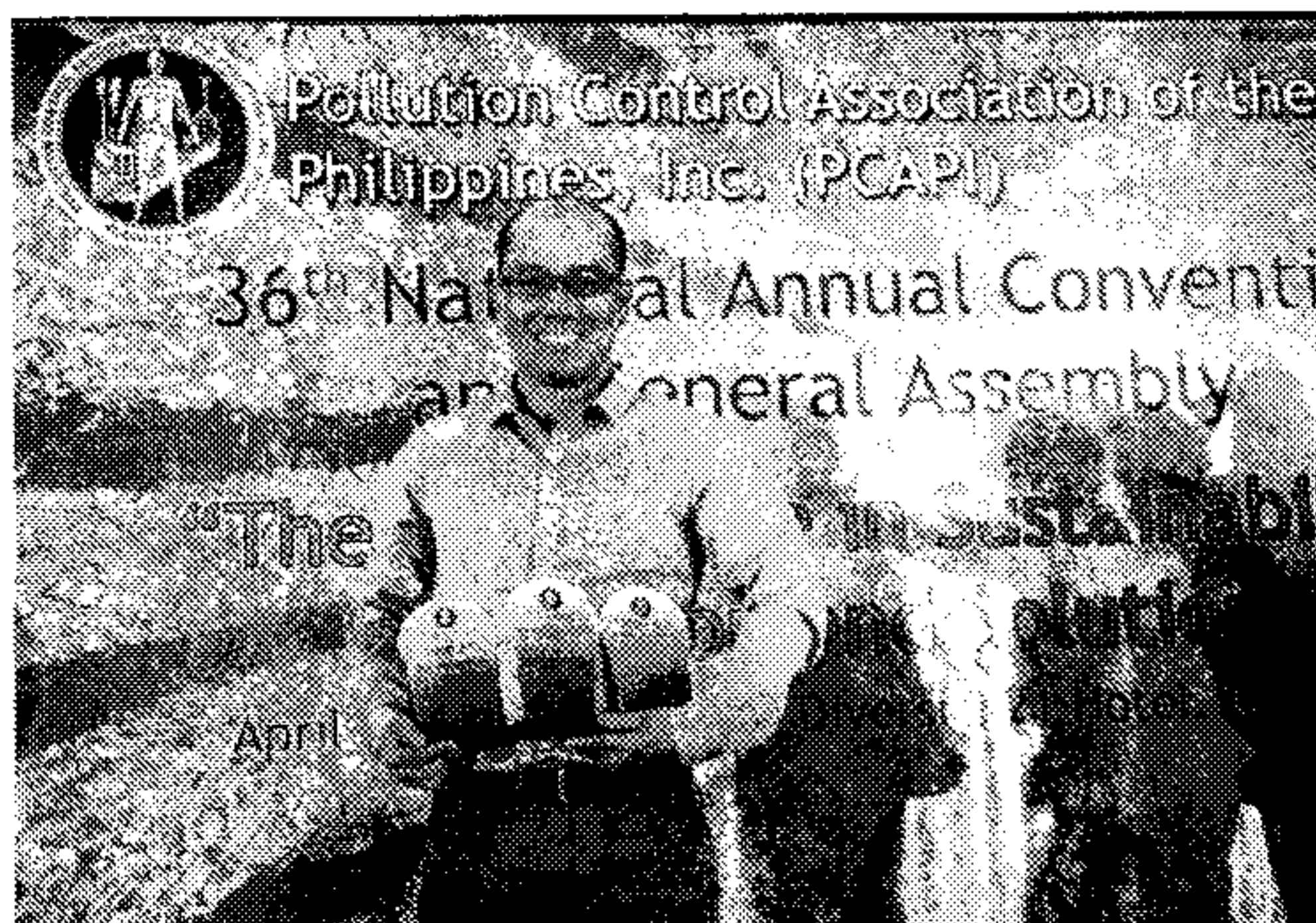
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

RCI wins PCAPI Environmental Awards

Underscoring its commitment as a company that spearheads green initiatives, Republic Chemical Industries (RCI) recently earned recognition from PCAPI (Pollution Control Association of the Philippines, Inc.) on several categories.

Out of 12 shortlisted companies, the PCAPI Environmental Awards chose RCI as the second runner-up Mother Nature awardee, second runner-up Success Story awardee out of 16 success stories, and third runner-up TOPCO (Ten Outstanding Pollution Control Officers) awardee out of 14 shortlisted PCOs (Pollution Control Officers).

The Mother Nature award recognizes companies that have implemented excellent environmental management practices and well-established measures for pollution prevention and control. The Success Story award on the other hand is given to a successfully implemented environmental program that had a major contribution in reducing the organization's environmental impact, for which RCI's installation of 100 kilowatt Solar PV (photovoltaic) system was a runner up. The TOPCO award is handed out to companies that have exerted excellent efforts and shown a strong commit-



Engineer Marfel Ancheta, RCI manager for building and facilities/environment, health and safety.

ment in ensuring that the organization operates in an environment-friendly manner, exemplifying the character of a true environmental protector.

The Environmental Awards is a national award-giving body given by the PCAPI-National Chapter in recognition of the outstanding achievements of establishments and Pollution Control officers in the implementation of an effective environmental management system.

"As our President and CEO John Spakowski II would always remind us, it is RCI's vision to protect and conserve the environment through responsible environmental practices in all of its business activities," Engr. Marfel Ancheta, RCI manager for Building and Facilities/Environment, Health and Safety, affirmed.

"Through our various environmental efforts, we are able to actualize the vision, minimize the environmental impacts concerning our activities and even initiate green and eco programs," Ancheta added.

Through RCI's CSR arm Pioneer Adhesives Foundation, Inc. (PAFI), the company is championing an environmental campaign titled "Our earth. Our responsibility." The campaign's first project took place in Boracay Island, in partnership with Boracay Foundation, Inc. (BFI), with "Coral REEFurbishment." The activity facilitated the donation of over 3,600 tubes of Pioneer EpoxyClay Aqua to help fix damaged coral fragments. The "Coral REEFurbishment" project also conducted coastal cleanup and underwater coral transplantation.

RCI is the maker of the trusted brand Pioneer adhesives and sealants such as Mighty Bond, Pioneer Epoxy and Elastoseal.

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Water crisis looms

THE European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines is calling for the holding of an immediate multisectoral dialogue to address and avert a looming water crisis in the country.

ECCP vice president Henry Schumacher cited a need for the government, private sector and water stakeholders to meet and come out with solutions amid the current El Niño and water levels dropping to critical levels.

Schumacher said the two top priorities were to ensure enough water supply for the agriculture sector and the consumers.

"Metro Manila along with several key cities in the country including Angeles, Baguio, Cebu, and Davao will most likely experience severe water shortage by 2025. What we are experiencing right now are telling signs that point in that direction," Schumacher said.

The Philippines is the second Southeast Asian country to sound the alarm on scarcity of water supply after Thailand did last month. **Othel V. Campos**

THE REPORT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

FAO HELPS CL RICE FARMERS WITHSTAND
'LANDO', EL NIÑO

By ROY C. MABASA,
MART T. SUPNAD
and FRANCO G. REGALA

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga — Many of the rice farmers in Central Luzon who lost their newly harvested and ready-to-harvest rice to two typhoons the previous year while also suffering from the impact of El Niño are now reaping their first harvest for 2016 thanks to the support of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

At the request of Department of Agriculture (DA), FAO mobilized its typhoon "Lando" (international name: Koppu) Response in December 2015. Bags of certified rice seeds and complete fertilizer were delivered to affected rice-farming households to complement the farm inputs that the government provided. The timely assistance enabled them to catch

the imminent planting season, which ended in January. Missing that window could have resulted in six more months without adequate income or falling into greater debt—a serious issue that farmers face especially in times of crisis.

About 18,900 of them who were able to re-plant their damaged farms are now reaping their first harvest for 2016.

"This first harvest represents the recovery of thousands of households spread across 36 municipalities in the provinces of Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Tarlac and Aurora," said FAO Representative in the Philippines José Luis Fernández who joined beneficiary farmers in Candaba, Pampanga for a ceremonial harvest.

With FAO's support, farmer beneficiaries are expected to produce a total of 99,200 metric tons of palay (paddy rice), which could generate 59,500 metric tons of milled rice that can feed about 522,000 people for one year.

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Afternoon showers herald the coming rains

THE country is beginning to have thunderstorms bringing sudden rains to various parts of the country. These are not yet the steady rains of the wet season; those are no due until near the end of May. But the scattered afternoon rains are serving to ease the summer heat we have been enduring for many weeks now.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said that the nation must expect more of the summer heat this week. It foresees the maximum temperature in Tuguegarao City to reach as high as 41.5 degrees Celsius and warned the people against heat cramps and heat exhaustion, with continuing activity possibly resulting in heat stroke.

This year's hot season has been intensified by the El Niño phenomenon, the heating of the equatorial Pacific, causing below-normal rainfall in many parts of the world including the Philippines, especially in Mindanao. The drought has parched rice fields all over the country, damaging crops, notably corn and rice.

This week, reports from India, Thailand, and Vietnam, the world's top producers of rice, said

they have all reduced their production. These three countries normally produce 60 percent of the global rice trade of 43 million tons. Because of the drought, rice inventories in these three countries are expected to fall by one-third. We hope that the rice shipments the Philippines has already ordered from Thailand will be sufficient for our needs as the global supply is down.

This possible rice problem is one reason we pray that the rains will soon come, so that we can mobilize our own agricultural sector to produce at least a part of what we cannot import this year. If the ongoing drought moves our government to boost agriculture in a big way, so much the better. The incoming administration should make increased agricultural production a major part of its plans for the country.

When the rains do come towards the end of this month, they will bring another problem – floods. Our town and city governments, especially in Metro Manila, must not be lulled by the current hot season into neglecting the annual cleanup of flood channels. For the showers of blessing that will come will soon become powerful typhoons like Yolanda. For all of these forces of nature, we must be prepared.



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EDITORIAL

Killer disease

The drought induced by El Niño has been blamed, but sheer lack of access to safe water is likely to be another key culprit in the outbreak of diarrhea that has reportedly killed nine people in Zamboanga City in the past two months.

Health officials said 65 percent of water samples collected from around the city had tested positive for fecal matter. The officials attributed the contamination to water rationing that has been enforced since January because of the drought. From March to April alone, diarrhea has downed 1,539 people in Zamboanga, health officials reported. Also affected were about 400 inmates.

Diarrhea can be easily cured with affordable medicine. Still, it continues to be the second leading cause of death among children under five around the world, according to the World Health Organization. The problem is most prevalent in impoverished communities and in areas with inadequate sanitation and water treatment facilities. Weak public health services aggravate the

problem.

Even cholera, which has been eradicated in many countries, continues to be reported from Mindanao to Metro Manila. Bottled distilled water has become a thriving business as Filipinos fear that water from the tap may be contaminated. For millions of impoverished Filipinos, however, bottled water is a luxury, and even boiling water to get rid of bacteria means additional expenses for cooking gas.

Health officials traced the diarrhea in Zamboanga to a severe rotavirus outbreak from contaminated water. The infection is a common cause of vomiting and diarrhea in infants, and can cause severe dehydration.

Treatment for dehydration, vomiting and gastroenteritis, however, are widely available. The loss of nine lives in just two months to a common disease is appalling. Those deaths could have been prevented. Before more lives are lost, authorities must move to improve public sanitation facilities and access to safe water, not just in Zamboanga but all over the country.

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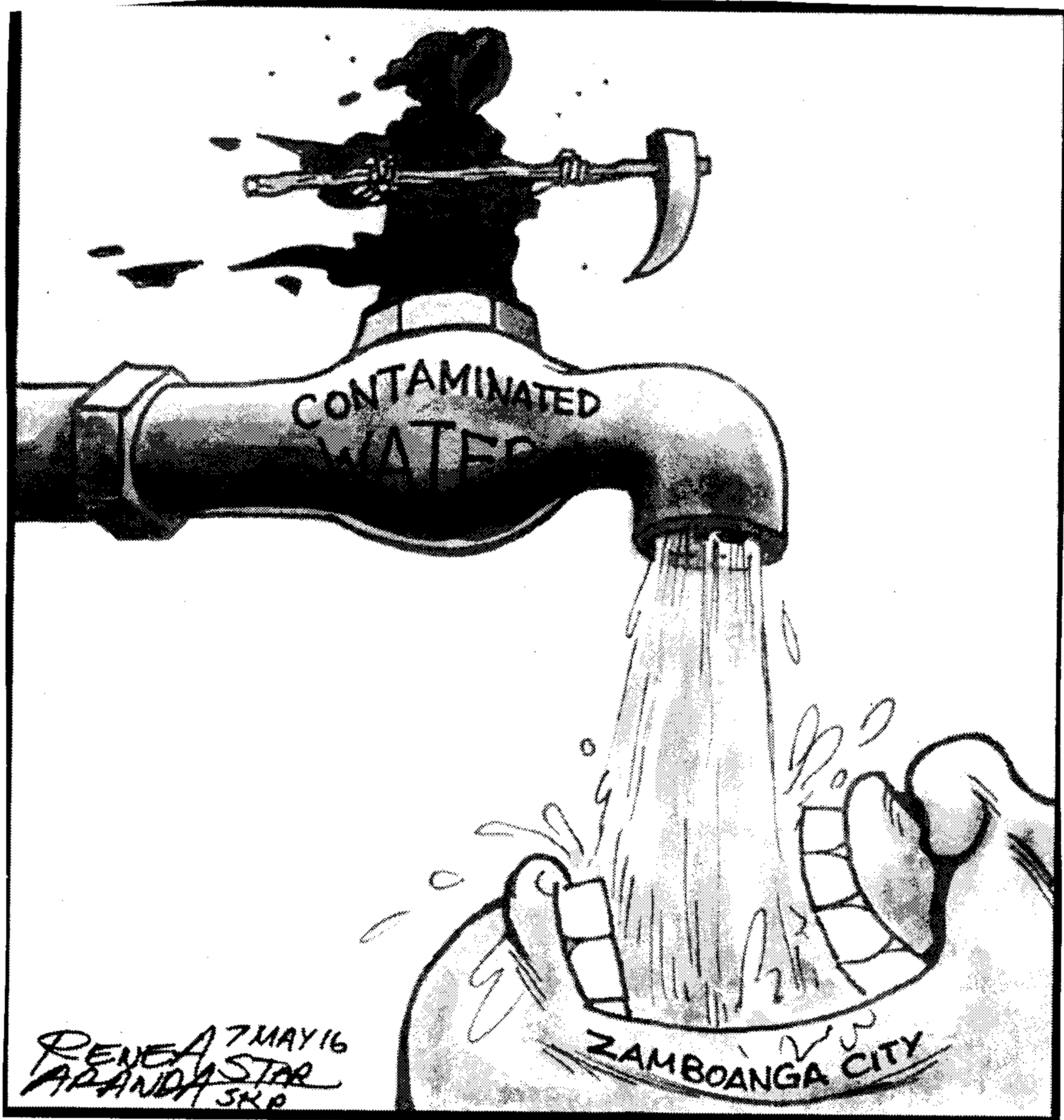
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Noy inaugurates Albay flood control project

LEGAZPI CITY – President Aquino inaugurated a flood control project and a rehabilitated bridge in this city on Thursday.

Aquino unveiled the marker of the flood control project in Barangay San Roque after attending the ribbon cutting ceremony at the Yawa Bridge in Barangay Rawis.

The P1.3-billion flood control project consists of elevated dikes, bridges, pumping stations and floodgates traversing the rivers of Yawa, Makabalo and Tibo.

“We are very grateful to the Aquino administration for funding the comprehensive flood control system master plan... this is the biggest project funded by the national government in a single LGU (local government unit) in Bicol,” Albay City Mayor Noel Rosal told **The STAR**.

The rehabilitation of Yawa Bridge, which was damaged by floodwaters at the height of Typhoon Reming in 2006, amounted to P90 million. The bridge connects Legazpi City to the towns of Sto. Domingo, Bacacay, Malilipot, Malinao and Tiwi and Tabaco City.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Unity needed to address China problem

THE BRUTAL act of China in releasing chemicals to destroy the corals and marine species around Pag-asa island does not just destroy the immediate vicinity of that island. It will affect the different bodies of water connected to it. China is consistently doing something against us. Any move our country is making to prevent the Chinese government's inhumanity? What else can China do against us? When shall we act to condemn its government?

The Philippine government does not pay much attention to this due to the busy election campaign. It's possible for us to wake up one day with Chinese soldiers already on our shorelines, until then unnoticed because everybody was focused on winning the elections in 2016. Right now, no one cares about

the West Philippine Sea. I just hope that China will not take advantage of this opportunity to stage an atrocity against the Philippines.

All Filipinos should join hands to put an end to the insurgency and separatist rebellion so our country can focus on addressing its dispute with China over the West Philippine Sea. We need a collective, solid effort to protect our country. Let there be no New People's Army, Communist Party of the Philippines, National Democratic Front, Abu Sayyaf, Moro Islamic Liberation Front. Instead, let there be only one group, the "Filipinos" fighting to protect the Philippines. Let us unite now for our children and grandchildren, and the generations of Filipinos to come after them.

—RECTO M. KALISKIS,
rectokaliskis@gmail.com

The Manila Times

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

China wants 'new chapter' with PH under new leader

BY MICHAEL JOE T. DELIZO
REPORTER

CHINA hopes to have a "new chapter" with the Philippines whoever gets elected after the elections on Monday, a Chinese senior diplomat said.

Chinese Ambassador to the Philippines Zhao Jianhua said he wants the new administration to improve the ties of the two countries whose relationship went to its lowest point over a sea dispute.

With the new chapter, Zhao means that the Philippines and China will have a bilateral relationship that focuses on areas of common interest, economic, financial, trade cooperation, tourism and people-to-people context that both countries can

benefit from.

"Of course, we have differences. We hope that we can handle it properly and we should not let these differences be the focus of our relationship," Zhao told members of the diplomatic press on the sidelines of the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the European Union-Philippines relationship on Thursday night.

He also said that the relationship of the Philippines and China should not be affected by the upcoming ruling of the

international tribunal later this month or in June.

Manila filed a memorial against Beijing before the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague in 2013 to affirm its right to areas within 200 nautical miles of its coastline, under the terms of a United Nations convention.

The ambassador maintained that China will not recognize the ruling.

"We did not participate [in the court proceedings]. We will not accept and we will not implement [the decision]. That's our position. No changing," Zhao said.

The diplomat added that the Philippines and China should have no dispute over territories that could be settled through bilateral talks.

"Some media talks about 'conflicts.' I hate that word. There is no conflict between China and the Philippines. China and the Philippines are friends, neighbors, partners. We don't fight against each other," he said.

Zhao expressed willingness to personally meet the next Philippine president, whom he hopes will initiate the resume of bilateral talks to find a solution that is agreeable to both sides.

He noted that China was able to resolve its separate territorial disputes with Russia and Vietnam through bilateral dialogue and negotiation.

The last time the Philippines and China had a bilateral talk was during the visit of President Benigno Aquino 3rd to Beijing in 2014.