

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

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DENR

IN THE NEWS

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08 JUN 2016

DATE

A-7

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Sabang, Coron Bays placed under gov't protection

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

TWO of the country's most famous diving spots were placed under official government protection due to the threat of being destroyed by tourist activities.

Environment Secretary Ramon Paje said he had declared Sabang Bay in Puerto Galera in Oriental Mindoro and Coron Bay in Palawan as water quality management areas (WQMA) to boost efforts to protect their rich marine biodiversity from the impact of tourism.

Sabang Bay and Coron Bay are world-class dive sites with great visibility and masses of underwater life. Sabang Bay is part of the world-famous Verde Island Passage.

Aquatic views

To the west of Sabang Bay, separated by the Batangas Channel, is Muelle Bay which is the only bay in the country that made it to the list of the world's most beautiful bays in 2005.

The aquatic views from the sunken World War II Japanese ships in Coron Bay are listed in

Forbes Traveler Magazine's top 10 best scuba diving sites in the world.

Their designation brought the total number of WQMAs in the country to 25.

Paje said designating them was "critical" to safeguard the ecosystem from the rapid growth of tourism activities in Coron and Puerto Galera while sustaining the economic benefits for the host communities.

The diving tourism and the associated residential and commercial developments along with the impact of climate

change "exert a considerable pressure" on the coral reefs around Coron and Puerto Galera, he said.

More teeth

Paje said the WQMA designation would provide more teeth to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the local government, communities and other stakeholders to undertake control measures against pollution, water quality problems and development issues in Sabang Bay and Coron Bay.

A multiagency governing board headed by the regional director of the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau will make policies to protect the water quality of Sabang Bay and Coron Bay.

Barangay Sabang

The governing board will also create a multisectoral group to assist in monitoring and reporting activities that affect the two bays.

The Coron Bay WQMA covers the bay itself and eight of the 23 barangays in the municipality

of Coron.

The rivers that traverse Coron drain into an area about 5.5 hectares in size located within the eight coastal villages.

The Sabang Bay WQMA covers the bay itself and the whole Barangay Sabang covering 449 hectares.

Barangay Sabang is critical to the bay's overall water quality as 283 hectares or 63 percent of its land area serves as the drainage site for all the surface water from Puerto Galera's 12 other barangays.

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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08 JUN 2016

DATE

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DENR declares Coron, Sabang Bays as water quality management areas

By ELLALYN B. DE VERA

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has declared two new water quality management areas (WQMAs) to further protect the rich marine biodiversity within two of the country's most famous diving spots.

In two separate administrative orders signed by Secretary Ramon Paje earlier this month, the DENR designated the Sabang Bay in Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro and the Coron Bay in Palawan as WQMAs, bringing the total number of WQMAs in the country to 25.

The initiative is seen to boost efforts to protect the bustling biodiversity within the two water bodies from the unwanted effects of tourism activities in those areas.

Both Sabang Bay and Coron Bay are world-class diving sites with great visibility and masses of underwater life, making them as among the favorite destinations for tourists and diving enthusiasts.

"These latest WQMA designations are critical to effectively address development issues on safeguarding the areas' ecosystem qualities from the rapid growth of tourism activities in the towns of Coron and Puerto Galera,

while sustaining the economic benefits for the local host communities," Paje said.

As diving tourism and the associated residential and commercial developments "exert a considerable pressure on the ecological fabric" of the two bay areas, Paje said there is absolutely a need to ensure that their water qualities comply with the standards prescribed under Republic Act No. 9275, or the Philippine Clean Water Act.

He added that strong reliance on healthy and attractive coral reefs makes the tourism sector in Coron and Puerto Galera "particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change."



08 JUN 2016

DATE

13

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Coron, Sabang Bays declared WQMAs

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has taken a crucial step to further protect the rich marine biodiversity within two of the country's most famous diving spots by declaring the sites water quality management areas (WQMAs).

Secretary Ramon Paje signed two administrative orders designating the Sabang Bay in Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro and the Coron Bay in Palawan as WQMAs.

The latest move brought the total number of WQMAs in the country to 25.

Both Sabang Bay and Coron Bay are world-class diving sites, with great visibility and masses of underwater life, making them as among the favorite destinations for tourists and diving enthusiasts.

According to Paje, the initiative is seen to boost efforts to protect the bustling biodiversity within the two water bodies from the unwanted effects of tourism activities.

"These latest WQMA designations are critical to effectively address development issues on safeguarding the areas' ecosystem qualities from the rapid growth of tourism activities in the towns of Coron and Puerto Galera, while sustaining the economic benefits for the local host communities," Paje said.

He added that the strong reliance on healthy and attractive coral reefs makes the tourism sector in Coron and Puerto Galera "particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change."

The Coron Bay WQMA covers the bay itself and eight of the 23 barangays comprising the entire town of Coron.

An analysis of Coron's water resources and its distribution showed that the rivers traversing the town drain into a drainage area of 5.5 hectares located inside the eight coastal villages.

Joel dela Torre

P1

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Senators eyeing mining-sector probe as group calls on DENR to declare Manicani Island 'no-go zone'

BY BUTCH FERNANDEZ [@butchfBM](#)
& JONATHAN L. MAYUGA [@jonlmayuga](#)

THE Senate, taking the cue from President-elect Rodrigo R. Duterte's stand against "illegal and irresponsible" mining activities, is set to firm up initiatives to protect the environment, while ensuring fair and rational sharing of profits among all stakeholders in the mining industry.

"As a starting point, there must be a faithful implementation of the Mining Act and the small-scale mining law," Sen. Juan Edgardo M. Angara said.

He told the BUSINESSMIRROR that the incoming Duterte administration "will be in such a position, as to punish violators who do not fulfill the conditions set forth in their mining arrangements with the government."

"Perhaps, going forward, Congress can look at how it can further strengthen capabilities for enforcement on the ground," Angara added.

Full-blown hearing

SENATE Deputy Minority Leader Vicente C. Sotto III pushed for a "full-blown" Senate inquiry prior to crafting remedial measures that would merge the interests of business/job creators,

represented by members of the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) and, on the other, the government's duty to protect the environment.

"First of all, the Senate Committee on Environment must call [for] a full-blown hearing, which should include all stakeholders," Sotto said. "Then we can assess the necessary legislation to control and safeguard the different concerns."

Damage

COMEBACKING Sen. Richard U. Gordon prodded the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) to quickly assess the reported damage to the environment, "if [there's] any."

In a brief interview, Gordon also stressed the need for a regular oversight of all mining operations and,

at the same time, assess the kind of support to be extended to key players in the industry.

Chamber's stand

THIS, even as big players in the mining industry earlier assured Duterte that they do not condone illegal and irresponsible miners.

The COMP has affirmed it does not tolerate illegal and irresponsible mining, including the supposed "small miners" reportedly being condoned by some local government units (LGUs).

In a news statement issued early this week, the chamber also assured the government it continues to look for ways to provide social development and management programs "to include indigenous peoples and environment enhancement."

The COMP, which is composed of large-scale mining firms, likewise, affirmed its commitment to work with the Duterte administration in addressing concerns of the mining industry, in order to "promote true inclusive growth" in the country.

Duterte earlier warned major players in the mining industry to shape up and stop harming the environment.

He suggested that the mining industry be run like a cooperative, in which even small players would benefit.

Manicani Island case

IN a related development, the

P. 2

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Senators eyeing mining sector probe as groups call on DENR to declare Manicani Island "no-go zone"

antimining group Alyansa Tigil Mina (ATM) on Tuesday urged the DENR to stop mining operations on Manicani Island, in the town of Guiuan, Eastern Samar.

Stopping the operations of the Hinatuan Mining Corp. (HMC), according to the ATM, should include the hauling and transport of mineral ores from the island to be processed elsewhere.

The island is part of the Guiuan Bay Protected Landscape and Seascape (GBPLS), a key biodiversity area (KBA), by virtue of Presidential Proclamation (PP) 469. The proclamation states that mining operations in KBAs and protected areas (PAs) should be stopped, and that no-go zones map should be updated and be fully implemented.

Many KBAs in the Philippines remain unprotected, despite their status as a PA covered by the National Integrated Protected Area System (Nipas) Act. According to the Philippine Misereor Partnership Inc., a network of over 250 non-governmental organizations, the poor implementation of the Nipas Act is to be blamed for the deterioration of some PAs, such as Manicani island.

Manicani Island is covered by the GBPLS by virtue of PP 469, signed by former President Fidel V. Ramos, who declared the coastal areas of Guiuan and the neighboring islands, such as Manicani, Candulo, Suluan, Tubabao, Calicoan and Homon-

“ [President-elect Rodrigo R. Duterte] will be in such a position as to punish violators who do not fulfill the conditions set forth in their mining arrangements with the government.” —ANGARA

hon and their surrounding reefs, as protected landscape and seascape in 1994.

Manicani Island's ecosystem has been severely damaged by the operation of a large-scale nickel mine for almost two decades. Despite the declaration as a PA and an order stopping large-scale operation on the island in 2002 by the DENR, people on the island complain that hauling of nickel stockpiles by the mining company persists.

According to the ATM, Manicani is a small island with only over 3,000 farmers and fishermen residents. The island has a fragile ecosystem, and is already facing the impacts of damaged environment.

The situation on Manicani Island, the ATM added, is aggravated by the impacts of climate change during the onslaught of Super typhoon Yolanda in November 2013.

Manicani residents have earlier called on the DENR-MGB to issue an order canceling the mining permit it issued to extract

mineral ores on the island.

Call of the communities

THE ATM believes that the government agencies must listen to the call of the communities for the cancellation of mining permit on their island.

According to the ATM, the hauling of nickel ores since May 15 was condoned by the MGB Region 8 without consulting the affected communities.

The same incident happened in June 2015, when employees of HMC attempted to haul its nickel-ore stockpile.

The ATM said communities, led by Save Manicani Movement that set up barricades in the periphery of the stockpile, continue to cry foul over the DENR and the MGB's inaction to support miners and demand justice for the destruction and impact caused by mining.

The ATM proposes that the Manicani Island, among many small island ecosystems in the country, be declared as a "no-go zone."



08 JUN 2016

DATE

10

PAGE

UPPER HALF

✓

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Environmentalists urge Duterte: Punish destructive mining groups

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

A group of environmentalists commended president-elect Rodrigo Duterte for his recent pronouncements on punishing destructive big miners.

The Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment (PNE) is also proposing that Duterte punish mining groups that have extensive track records on environmental destruction, community

displacement and human rights violations but were not sanctioned by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources or its Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB).

"We welcome Mayor Duterte's ultimatum against destructive large-scale mining and encourage him to expand his scope to cover not only the worst in Mindanao, but across Luzon and the Visayas

as well," said Clemente Bautista, national coordinator of Kalikasan PNE.

He added that "there are so much violations and destruction brought about by corporate mining all over the country, yet the Aquino administration had been very lax in penalizing these corporations and prosecuting their erring officials."

In his recent victory party speech, Duterte said the big miners have destroyed the environment especially in Mindanao, and promised that Filipino interests will be prioritized over corporate interest in mining.

The MGB reported that half of the 44 operating metallic mines in the country have repeatedly been warned because

of environmental violations.

But Kalikasan noted that only a few mining companies have been slapped with suspension orders and that no corporate mining executives have been prosecuted in court. The violations allegedly vary from toxic contamination and air or water pollution to forest and agricultural degradation.

"These big mines are notorious violators of environmental

laws and have time and again trampled upon people's rights in their host grassroots communities," Bautista said.

"President-elect Duterte can expect massive support from the protest movements by affected communities. We challenge the incoming president to suspend these large-scale mining companies and cancel their mining permits," he added.

08 JUN 2016

DATE

9

PAGE

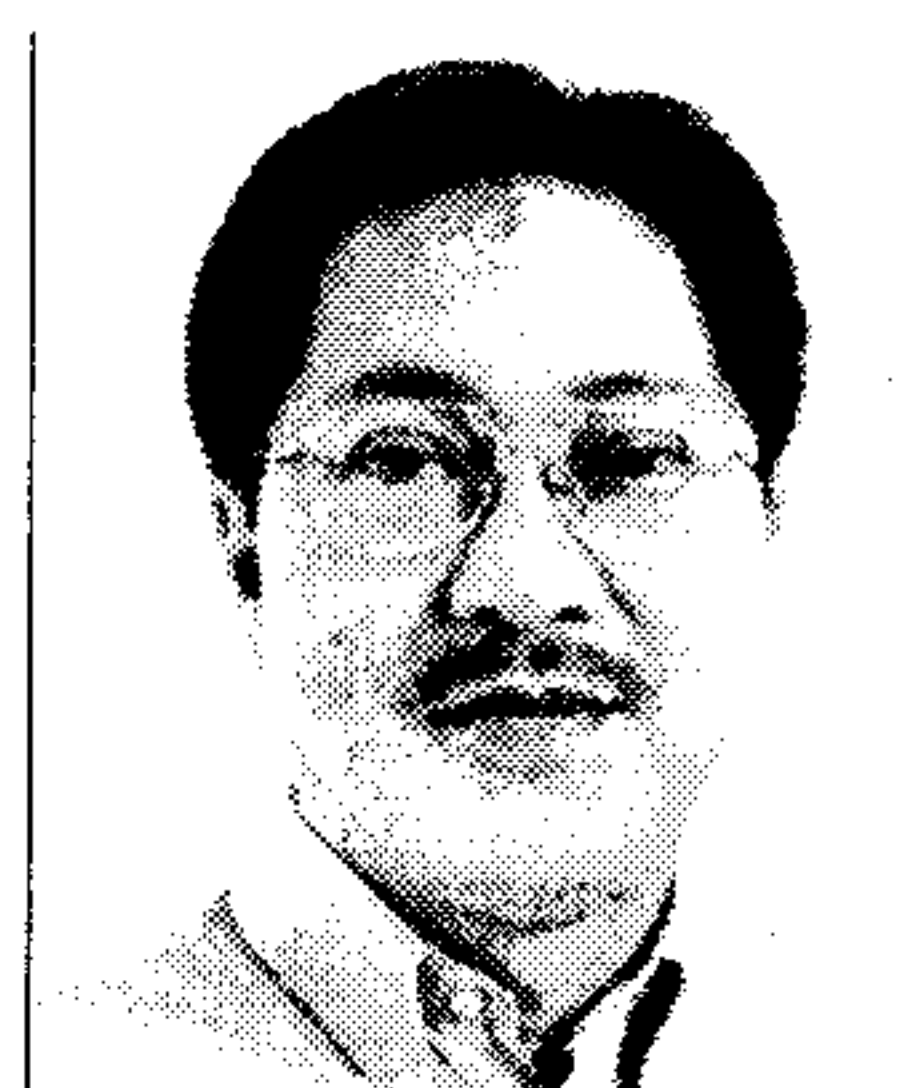
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Gotcha

By JARIUS BONDOC



Punish companies of dirty politicians

For sure they'll cry "political harassment." Still crony companies of the departing Aquino regime must be punished. In food, mining, and transport they make life miserable for consumers, farmers, Lumad, and train commuters. They owe blood debts, have plundered tens of billions of pesos, and corrupted state regulators. The electorate has voted to stop them. It's up to the incoming Duterte admin to exact justice.

Foremost of the cronies is SR Metals Inc. For 10 years now people of Agusan del Norte, in Mindanao's Pacific coast, have been decrying its destructive nickel mining. The Aquino regime ignores them, as SR Metals financed its presidential bids in 2010 and 2016. Behind the firm are Eric Gutierrez and Liberal Party spokesman Rep. Edgar Erice. President-elect Rody Duterte has the dossier from the Philippine National Police.

SR Metals started in April 2006 as "small-scale miner" to extract at most 50,000 tons of ore a year. By August, however, it already exceeded the limit, prompting closure orders from local and national offices. Defiant, SR Metals reinterpreted its license to mean 50,000 tons of processed nickel. At 1.5 percent metal per ton of ore, that would allow it to level a mountain range. Such feat, by a wee miner purportedly with only picks, shovels, and wheelbarrows. Lumad and lowlanders demonstrated against the ruin of forests and rivers. Lawsuits ensued, including plunder raps against SR Metals' principals. Allegedly it extracted 40 times the quota, raking in P2.9 billion. Still the environmental pillage went on.

In March 2008 SR Metals got "large-scale miner" status from new Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources, LP-mate Lito Atienza. More than covering up past misdeeds, the new license expanded the mining scope from 20 to 572 hectares. Displaced tribals and farmers stepped up protests, begging new President Noynoy Aquino in mid-2010 to intervene. They also asked Malacañang to make SR Metals recompense them, as mining laws state. But they continually were dispersed with bullets and water cannons, and their leaders killed or jailed. Erice charged with frivolous suits the mayor who supported them. Accompanying P-Noy in 2012 to state visits in the US and UK, Gutierrez was billed as one of the "top 26 Filipino Businessmen." Presidential spokesman Ricky Carandang then joined Gutierrez's transport chartering firm Air Juan. (Expect vicious trolls to swarm in reaction to this column.)

In June 2015 the Supreme Court affirmed the 2006 closure of SR Metals and the paltry P7-million fine for over-extracting P3 billion of ore. In turn, the mountains all the way north to Surigao were militarized, triggering an exodus of Lumad. To date 68 persons have been killed in protests in Agusan-Surigao, where other LP financiers hold adjacent nickel mines. Yet the plunder raps against SR Metals pends at the Ombudsman. In January 2016 P-Noy even awarded SR Metals for supposed exemplary pro-environment and pro-people deeds.

Meanwhile, the firm is contesting at the DENR the applicability of the SC ruling. It contends that it already is "large-scale," so no longer violates the 50,000-ton limit for "small-scale." What should be at bar is why a bogus, abusive "small miner" was elevated to bigger license at all. But that perhaps is for DU30's new DENR secretary to resolve.

For Election 2016 Air Juan lent its entire fleet to the LP presidential run of Mar Roxas. To reports of that Roxas retorted: "Eric Gutierrez is my friend, what is wrong with that?"

Aside from the PNP dossier, two points can be pointed up. One, Air Juan got tax exemptions and hasty licenses for its jet imports and operations that competitors never enjoyed (see *Gotcha*, 12, 15, 17, and 24 Feb. 2016). That's from aviation agencies under Transport Sec. and LP president Joseph Abaya. Too, the Election Code prohibits any government franchisee, like a miner, from contributing to any candidate, who is also barred from accepting. Belatedly Roxas claimed to have rented Gutierrez's aircraft, but has shown no contract.

It would be interesting to see how they declare such arrangement in the candidate's Statement of Contributions and Expenses. By law, that SOCE must be filed by today. The Comelec and state auditors would do well to check the valuation of the aircraft, seven of which are brand new. If they don't, then maybe the numbers men of DU30, who promises new politics, should do it.

Catch *Sapol* radio show, Saturdays, 8-10 a.m., DWIZ (882-AM).

Gotcha archives on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Jarius-Bondoc/1376602159218459>, or **The STAR** website <http://www.philstar.com/author/jarius%20Bondoc/GOTCHA>

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★

Foremost is SR Metals, which over-mined 40 times its quota and plundered P3 billion in nickel ore.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

‘What – me, worry?’

JOSE BAYANI BAYLON



No one in his right mind can disagree with the President when he says that miners have to look after the environment.'

THIS quote is sure to provoke the revelation of a generation gap if one were to ask kids of today about the origin of these words.

It is safe to guess that “kids” of my generation will point to Alfred Neuman, the poster boy of MAD Magazine, as the source of the quote. But it seems even that is questionable as an even much older generation can argue that the words were first used in a cartoon in 1898.

Then again since no one who was alive in 1898 would be alive today, no one from that generation could actually argue with mine.

It was with a similar “What – me, worry?” reaction that Jerry Brimo, President and CEO of Nickel Asia (NAC), responded to questions about the statements of incoming President Rodrigo Duterte on mining, specifically on mining firms operating in Mindanao (Surigao); Duterte had said that the big firms did nothing but bore holes, and that they should stop doing this.

“We do not feel alluded to”, said Brimo – who happens to be my boss in my life outside of being a commentator in this space – and

that’s because NAC is one of the large mining firms that comply with the requirements of the law. And there are many requirements that apply to a large scale operator that do not apply to the small scale guys.

Like being required to rehabilitate mined out areas. Small scale miners are exempted from this requirement, but large scale miners are not.

Being required to set aside a Final Mine Closure fund and prepare a plan; large scale operators are required to do that, but not small scale miners.

Or spending what could easily amount to hundreds of millions of pesos a year for Social Development projects like building roads, schools, hospitals, housing, water systems, etc – in effect, doing what Government is supposed to be doing; again, large scale mining operators are required by the Philippine Mining Act to do that, small scale miners, not.

In the process of complying with the law, companies like NAC and its fellow Chamber of Mines members get recognized and, where merited, are awarded Presidential awards – yes, referring to the President of the Philippines himself. As the Mines and Geosciences Bureau website explains:

“The PMIEA was officially established under Executive Order No. 399 on February 03, 1997 in compliance with the policy that mineral exploration and mining operation shall be pro-environment and pro-people in sustaining wealth creation and improve quality of life and that exploration and mining operation shall be managed in an environmentally responsible manner to achieve and maintain sustainable conditions at every stage of mineral exploration and mining operations, as well as the establishment of a functional and socially-acceptable post-disturbance land use capability. It is meant to be a fitting recognition of the private minerals sectors’ initiatives and exemplary achievements in the protection of the environment.”

The criteria are stringent, which makes taking home a Presidential

See WHAT ➤ Page B5

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

WHAT

award an honor. Not only an honor, actually, but it can and should be a shield against unwarranted attacks by those who see nothing good coming out from the mining industry.

The point is this: no one in his right mind can disagree with the President when he says that miners have to look after the environment and those who are found to be irresponsible in their practices should cease operations. Are there irresponsible miners? For sure, just as there are irresponsible parents, teachers, religious, politicians, mediamen, children, humans.

But some humans – clerics, mediamen, socialites, even politicians with interesting (read: fund-raising) agenda – insist that one irresponsible miner makes everyone irresponsible. And that everyone should be shut down. That's fine with me if the logic will apply to them: one irresponsible priest or socialite or mediaman or politician will make all of them irresponsible, for which they will be shut up.

Or shot. Which, by the way, will require the use of a bullet and a weapon that cannot exist without mining.

But I digress.

The reason for Jerry Brimo's being "unperturbed" – a word I enjoy using when I can and was happily used by Warren de Guzman of ABS-CBN in his report – is that he remains confident that if the industry is given a hard shake so that those that are irresponsible fall to the ground and wither and die, the four operating mines he oversees will remain among those considered responsible and worthy of the social license to operate they currently have.

As do most members of the Chamber of Mines. (Why only most? Don't ask.)

One more thing: just as no one in his right mind can disagree with the incoming President on the need to tighten scrutiny on mining operators in the country – especially those whose first tongue is a foreign (Asian) language – no one in his right mind can also disagree with the point responsible miners always try to make: without responsible mining, we would still be living in caves, using stone tools to survive and missing the NBA finals because TV won't exist. Heck – so wouldn't the basketball goal and all!

So anyone who insists that mining IS bad and should stop absolutely and totally should be consistent and should absolutely and totally stop using anything and everything that is a product or by-product of mining: from cars and airplanes and ships and trains to cellphones, laptops TV cameras, studio lights and TV sets, utensils to household and office gadgets, hospital beds to needles and pins, houses and buildings and malls and streets and bridges, indeed almost anything and everything that is part of human life in the 21st Century.

Because if the buying of these products stops, mining will stop, too, yes?

It's that simple-- if you believe in and live by your absolutist anti-mining principles.

BusinessWorld

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08 JUN 2016

DATE

44

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

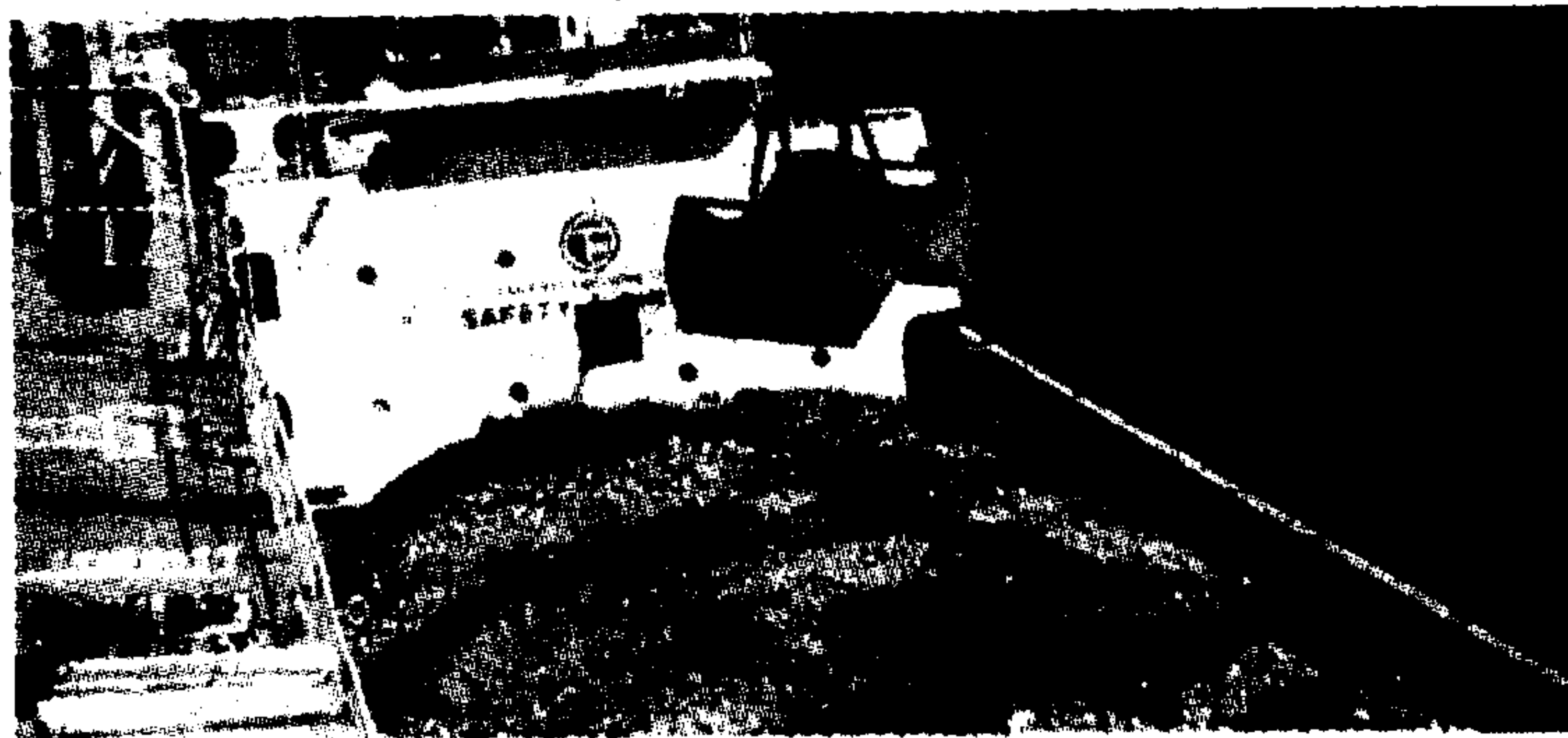
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

LME nickel rides on Duterte's warning

NEW YORK/MOSCOW — Nickel had its the biggest advance in three weeks amid concern about potential disruptions to supply in Colombia and the Philippines.

The main union at South32 Ltd.'s Cerro Matoso, the world's second-biggest ferro-nickel mine, said it will press ahead with plans to strike starting June 14.

Over the weekend, Philippine President-elect Rodrigo R. Duterte warned mining companies whose operations threaten the environment to either upgrade their practices or face closure. Much of what they do now, "especially in Surigao," is problematic, he said, referring to the province that ships nickel ore to China.



NICKELASIA

NICKEL ORE extracted at Claver, Surigao del Norte is shown being loaded on a barge in this undated photo from the 2011 annual report of listed Nickel Asia Corp.

Nickel for delivery in three months advanced 2% to settle at \$8,665 a metric ton at 5:51 p.m. on the London Metal Exchange (LME), marking the second-biggest gain among the six main

metals traded on the bourse.

"Anytime you have these supply issues, it really helps boost sentiment," Mike Dragosits, a senior commodity strategist at TD Securities in Toronto, said in

a telephone interview. "That's the case here. It's just sentiment because there's still really high, visible inventories on the LME."

There's concern that nickel may enter a deficit if the Philippines stops providing ore to China for nickel pig iron production, according to Dmitry Kolomytsyn, chief commodities strategist at Sberbank CIB in Moscow.

A gauge of 18 global base metal producers tracked by Bloomberg Intelligence rallied 3.8%, led by Anglo American Plc, Vedanta Resources Plc and Rio Tinto Plc. Freeport-McMoRan, Inc., the largest publicly traded copper producer, climbed as much as 5.1%, while Teck Resources Ltd. surged more than 6%. — **Bloomberg**

BusinessWorld

INCREASE YOUR BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

08 JUN 2016

DATE

S1/3

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Philex backs Duterte call for miners to 'shape up'

PHILEX MINING Corp. said it welcomes the warning issued by President-Elect Rodrigo R. Duterte to shut down mining firms that degrade the environment, backing the position set out by the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines and other listed miners.

"Philex Mining Corporation... fully supports the drive of President-elect Rodrigo Roa Duterte against illegal and irresponsible mining..." said lawyer Michael T. Toledo, Philex Senior Vice-President for Public and Regulatory Affairs, in an e-mail sent to reporters Tuesday.

Mr. Duterte over the weekend told big mining firms to "shape up" and warned he may suspend operations of those that breach environmental laws.

The chamber, along with officials of Global Ferronickel, Inc. and Nickel Asia Corp., have issued statements in support of Mr. Duterte.

Mr. Toledo added that Philex, one of the oldest and largest mining companies in the Philippines, "commits itself to work with him and his administration in addressing this problem which has tainted the image of the industry for so long."

He noted that Philex is now on its 60th year which translates to "60 years of responsible mining," citing their Integrated Management System Certification, awards for corporate governance and sustainability, as well as active participation in government transparency initiatives.

"Surely, we do not want that kind of image or reputation to be tainted by those that operate illegally and irresponsibly," Mr. Toledo said.

Philex Mining is one of three Philippine subsidiaries of Hong Kong's First Pacific Co. Ltd., the other two being Metro Pacific Investments Corp. and Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT).

Hastings Holdings, Inc., a unit of PLDT Beneficial Trust Fund subsidiary MediaQuest Holdings, Inc., has a stake in *BusinessWorld* through the Philippine Star Group, which it controls.

Janina C. Lim

08 JUN 2016

DATE

A-7

PAGE

UPPER HALF

✓
LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

E. Visayas officials face charges before environmental ombudsman

TACLOBAN CITY—Local government unit officials in Eastern Visayas are facing criminal and administrative charges at the Office of the Environmental Ombudsman for operating open dumps.

Those involved are mayors, vice mayors, town councilors and environment officers of Catarman, Northern Samar; Bato, Leyte; and Hindang, Leyte.

Environmental Management Bureau Regional Director Letecia Maceda said the towns were among those areas found to have been insistently operating open dumps and failed to comply with the solid waste management standards under the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act or Republic Act No. 9003.

Maceda stressed that these were not yet full-blown administrative and criminal cases, but rather complaints for fact-finding investigations and the Ombudsman will gather evidence to determine if conduct of full investigation is needed.

"We need to take action against these open landfills that cause environmental disasters," Maceda said.

Erring local government officials said it is hard to comply with the law due to lack of funds, high cost of land acquisitions and the huge volume of garbage.

Maceda clarified that filing of cases against local officials is not a "scare tactic."

"We want to instill in

them the need for action," she added.

Officials will be given the opportunity to remedy the situation by submitting the corrective action plans within six months and to implement the plans afterward.

"If there's no action yet and no implementation of corrective action plan or there's only partial compliance, a full-blown administrative case or even criminal case will be filed against them," Maceda said.

The EMB has earlier endorsed six other LGUs in the region to the National Solid Waste Management Commission for evaluation and filing complaints at the Environment Ombudsman for violation of the waste management law. **PNA**

08 JUN 2016

The Standard

DEFINING THE NEWS

DATE

A 10 to A 11

PAGE

✓

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

TO MINE OR NOT TO MINE

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TO MINE or not to mine, that is the question.

Some noisy “environmentalists” are pushing the envelope, so to speak, with the incoming president’s statements against how some miners have despoiled the soil of Mindanao. They now push for a total stop to all mining activities.

Legitimate investors in the mining industry are expectedly worried about the situation. Is the new president going to decree *finis* to their multi-billion dollar investments? It isn’t easy, after all, to go into the mining business. You spend a lot trying to figure out whether your mine has the right amount of mineral deposits, whether it would be cost-efficient to even mine the area at all. Not that you did not spend much to get the concession from the DENR to begin with. That’s what economists call “sunk costs,” to make a play of words.

“*Wala ka pang nahuhukay, nakalubog ka na,*” as the Tagalogs would say.

Smart DENR and mining officials of course have staked their claims on several mine sites which they have themselves identified as “viable,” and either got some “small miners” with foreign financiers to “buy” these claims outright (which is probably why President-elect Rodrigo Duterte should add the natural resources department to his potential “to-the-laundry-list” of the most corrupt agencies he will have to clean up), or worse, claimed the sites themselves, using dummy companies and groups.

Legitimate mining companies with legitimate foreign financial partners who invest “long-term” money on long ges-



tating projects and that comply with environmental standards that Duterte himself once described as “Australian standard” are thus hemmed in from both sides: One, the threat of misplaced environmental purists who want ALL mining stopped, and two, the destructive mining practices of “small” miners who invest “short-term” in cahoots with corrupt government agencies, both national and local (courtesy of the Small Mining Act) who because of their “dig and leave” (in forest malpractice, these are akin to slash and burn “subsistence” loggers, a.k.a *kaingineros*) have given the mining industry a bad name. And shallow media practitioners grist for their “crusading” environmental posturing.

Okay, let’s enter the realm of theological divination: Why did the Supreme Being create minerals to begin with, and why did He emplace these beneath the earth’s crust? Why did the Old Testament talk of gold, and silver, of how both the “faithful” and the heathen adorn their altars with precious metals, all “mined” from the bowels of the earth that God created for man? Surely, not because the Divinity disliked mining per se?

There really are times when some priests can drive government people nuts. They preach against artificially controlling the growth of people, but in the same breath, they preach against almost anything that will create jobs for the miserable people brought to existence by the mul-

tiplication of miserable genes.

Straddling the boundary of the two Surigaos, there is what they call “Red Mountain.” It is practically a bald mountain because the soil is lateritic, which leaves it rust-red in color, where very few plants and trees survive. When it rains heavily, you see the adjacent sea which is part of the mighty Pacific turn red. Beneath these mountains and the areas surrounding it are nickel, chromite, and low-grade iron deposits. Nobody “farms” these areas, because plants do not grow well, if at all. So what economic activity will bring livelihood and jobs to the inhabitants other than mining? Tourism? Who would swim in reddish sea?

Now, admittedly, mining has its impact on the environment, even of surrounding areas. So which miners should government allow—the responsibly big and few who protect the surrounding sea from leach and tailings, or the irresponsible many who claim to be “small,” who just dig and leave?

The forests of Mindanao were once lush and verdant, until the colonialists began to cut for timber that they used for their construction needs. With “independence” came the local loggers, very few of whom were responsible enough to replant, but many of whom, especially the local politicians favored by the national politicians, just cut and cut, sold and sold to Japanese and other foreign buyers, and left the *lumad* inhabiting these mountains poor and destitute, fodder for their vote-buying spree every election season. While they parlay their ill-forested gains into construction

Continued on A11

08 JUN 2016

The Standard

DEFINING THE NEWS

DATE

A-10

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Page 2: To mine or not to mine

To mine... From A10

companies that earn big profits from (again) crooked government deals. Rent-seeking then; rent-seeking activities still, all at the expense of the republic and the helpless citizens these political overlords call their constituents. These are the “scum” Rodrigo Duterte must seek out and obliterate.

So should it be in mining. How do we create jobs in places where huge mineral deposits lie beneath the earth if we totally disallow mining, refusing to make use of God’s natural gifts for the benefit of His beloved creatures, using capital and risk-taking to optimum economic benefit? Did not the Roman Catholic priests tell the poor to follow the Biblical exhortation to “go forth and multiply” even beyond their capabilities to feed and clothe their multiplied progeny? So what do we want the children of the destitute to do, just burden the government who must perforce spend for their education, only to leave the country to their parents in search of survival in foreign lands? How very irresponsible, *n’est-ce pas*?

To mine or not to mine?

The logical answer should be to mine, but responsibly. Apply strict standards, ensure best practices. And jail the irresponsible, along with those who gave out those “small” mining permits among local dynasts and their “national” patrons.

On a systemic front, maybe the new government would do well to carve out the mandate of environmental protection from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Why should the agency in charge of “responsible” natural resource development and exploration be the same agency to “protect” Mother Nature?

Create an Environmental Protection Authority (or whatever Agency) and place it under iron-fisted Rodrigo Duterte’s direct charge in the Office of the President.

Meanwhile, let’s not go overboard and say Duterte should stop all mining activities. The new president knows what he will do, even if sometimes he has to say “stop” to instill fear of authority in the hearts of those who have despoiled our environment.

The Standard

DEFINING THE NEWS

08 JUN 2016

DATE

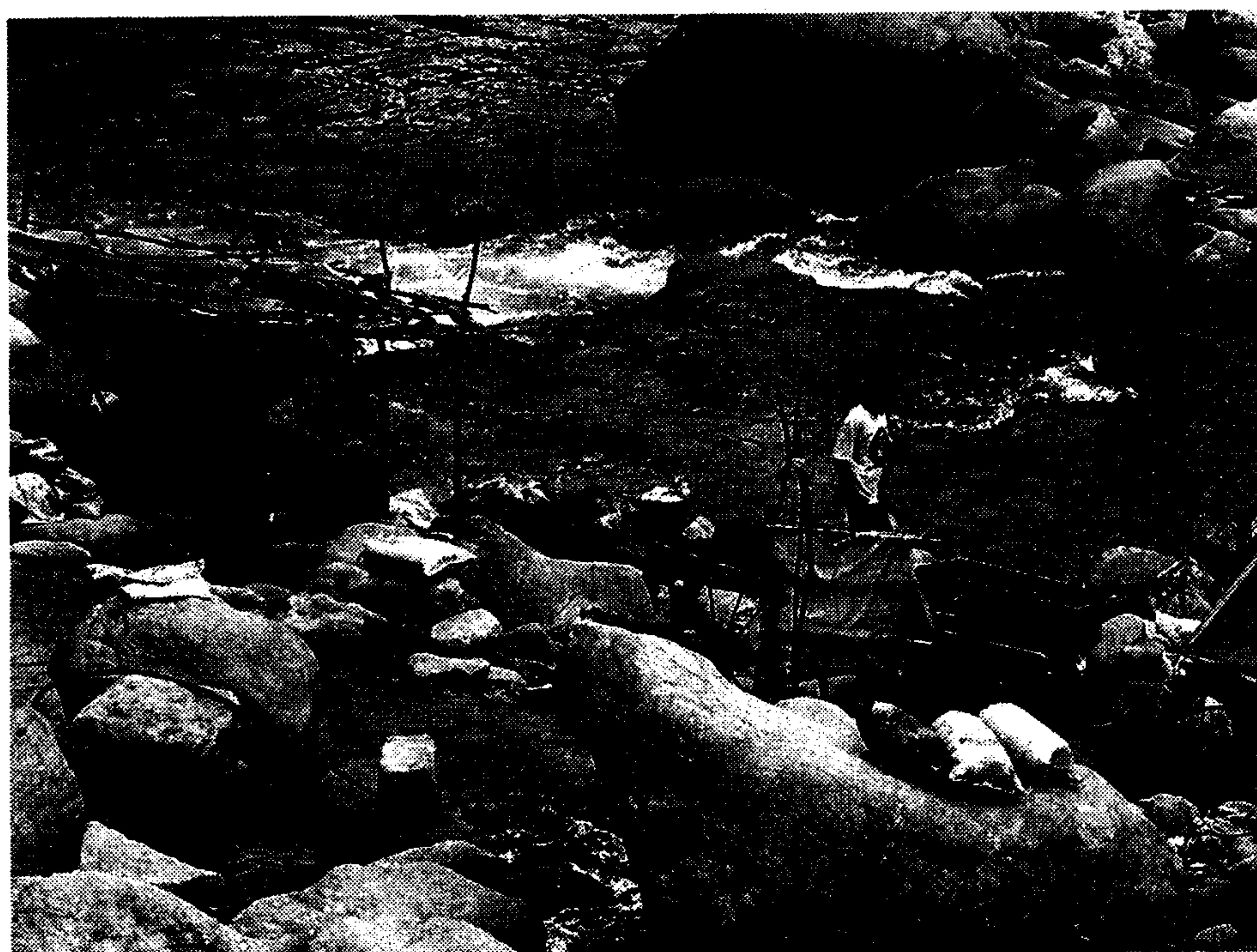
A-7

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Traditional way. Workers toil along the banks of Chico river in Alab, Mt. Province extracting gold through the 'barkis' sluicing method. **DAVID CHAN**

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

08 JUN 2016

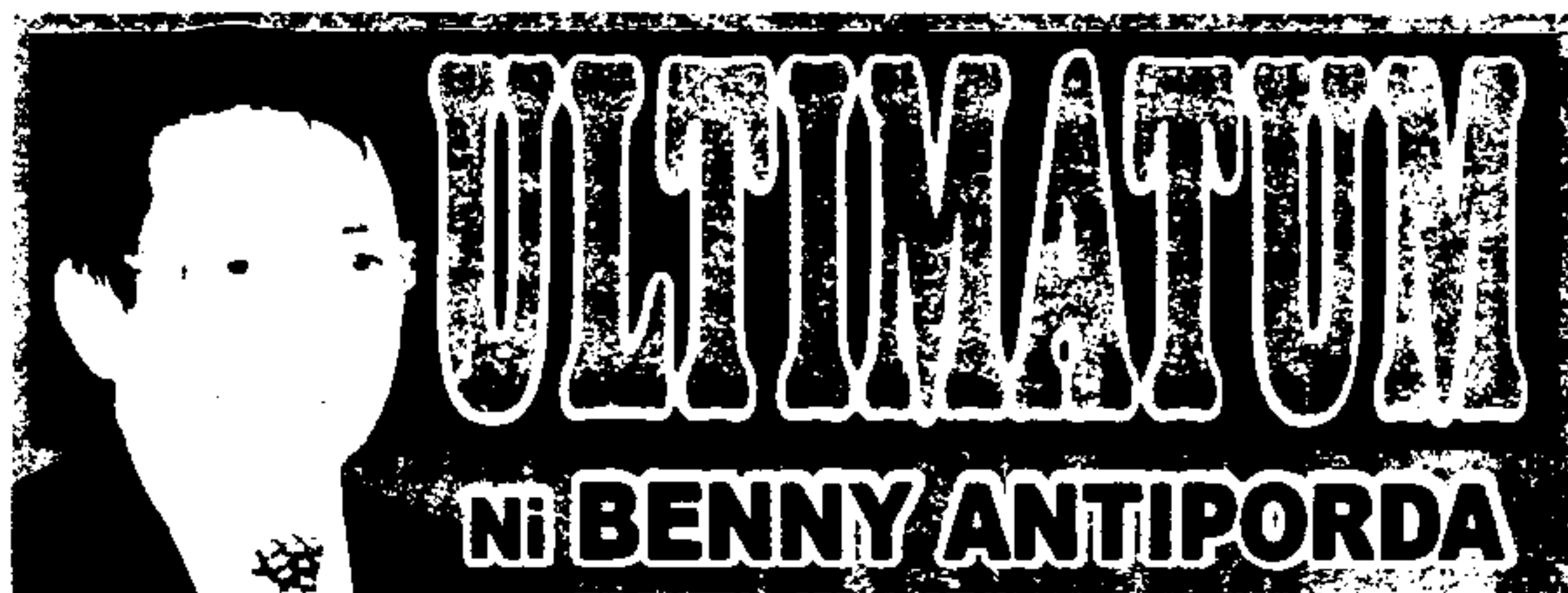
DATE

12

PAGE

UPPER-HALF

LOWER-HALF



TINALAKAY natin kaha-
pon, mga Bro, ang panga-
ngailangan ng Pilipinas na
gumawa ng sariling bakal
para maging industriyal at
umunlad.

Sa rami ng mga mineral
na matatagpuan sa bansa,
lalo na ang para sa pagga-
wa ng bakal gaya ng iron
ore, nickel, copper, asupre,
manganese, carbon at iba
pa, kaya ng Pilipinas ang
gumawa ng sarili nitong
bakal.

At mula sa bakal at iba
pang katulad na materyales
na mabubuo mula sa mga
mineral, maaari tayong ma-
kagawa ng sarili nating
mga makina.

Ang mga makina ay ga-
gamitin para sa paglikha ng
iba pang makina, transpor-
tasyon, makabagong pag-
sasaka at pangingisda,
paglikha ng mga kuryente,
komunikasyon at iba pa.

KAPIT-BANSA

Ang Malaysia, Taiwan,

South Korea, Japan, Tsina,
India at iba pa ay mga kapit-
bansa natin na may sariling
gawaan ng bakal.

Ito ang susi ng kanilang
tagumpay para sila umunlad
at ang kanilang pag-unlad ay
nagiging matatag o pangma-
tagalan.

May sarili silang minahan
ng mga mineral at kung sila'y
kinakapos, nag-i-import sila
mula sa Pinas, halimbawa.

Kaya makikita ninyo kung
gaano tinitibag ang ating mga
kabundukan, isasakay sa
barko ang mga ito, dinadala
ng ilan sa mga ito sa kani-
kanilang mga bansa saka pi-
noproseso upang maging
bakal.

Bukod sa mga mineral
para maging bakal, nakaiipon
din ang mga bansang ito mula
sa mga barko-barkong galing
sa ating mga kabundukan ng
mga ginto, pilak at iba pa.

Matapos na magawa ni-
lang bakal, makina, yero at iba
pa ang mga lupang bundok

MINAHAN SA KAMAY NG PINOY AT 'DI DAYUHAN

na galing sa Pinas, ibineben-
ta nila ngayon sa atin ang mga
ito.

May trabaho nang mata-
tag ang mga mamamayan sa
nasabing mga bansa, may
maganda pa silang negos-
yong para sa loob at labas
ng kanilang bayan.

KORAP, ETC.

Sa ngayon, ang pagkalkal
ng ating mga lupain, kabun-
dukan at karagatan para
makuha ang ating mga mine-
ral at pagbibyahe sa loob at
labas ng ating bansa ay isi-
nasagawa ng iilang pribadong
kompanya, lokal at dayu-
han.

Pero hindi makakilos ang
mga ito, mga Bro, kung wala
ang mga kasosyo nilang ma-
tataas na opisyal ng gobyer-
no na nag-aaprubang lahat ng
kanilang mga kailangan gaya
ng prangkisa, mining permit,
environmental certificate,
permit to operate, permit to
export at iba pa.

At puno ang ating mga ba-
tas at patakaran ng pabor sa
mga ito, kasama na ang pag-
papaikot maging ng ating Sali-
gang Batas.

Ayon sa Konstitusyon, sa

sosyohan sa kompanya ng
mga dayuhan at Filipino, da-
pat na 40 porsyento lang ang
pag-aari ng mga dayuhan at
60% ang sa Filipino.

Pero, anak ng tokwa,
baligtad ang nagaganap.

Sa minahan ng Malam-
paya natural gas sa Palaan,
10% na lang ang parte ng
gobyerno o Filipino at ang
90% ang pag-aari ng Shell at
Chevron.

Ang Mining Act pa nga na
inaprubahan noong panahon
ni Aling Gloria ay nagbibigay
ng 100% pagmamay-ari ng
mga dayuhan sa sakop nilang
minahan.

KOMUNISTA, TERORISTA

Ang nasabing kasaluku-
yang kalagayan sa pagma-
may-ari, korapsyon at pan-
darambong sa mga minahan,
mga Bro, ang pinakaugat ng
mga pagpatay o masaker sa
mga lumalaban dito.

Pinapatay ang mediamen,
gaya ni Doc. Gerry Ortega,
at sinomang lumalaban dito,
gaya ng mga Lumad sa Min-
danao.

Ang masakit, tinatawag
na terorista at komunista ang

mga lumalaban sa maling
sistema ng pagmimina.

At kung tinawag kang te-
rorista at komunista, diyan na
ang kuyog na pwersa mismo
ng pamahalaan para pumatay
at mangmasaker sa iyo.

Babaklasin ang iyong
pamilya, barangay at iba
pang komunidad sa lugar,
idedeklara ng mga pwersa
ng pamahalaan na no man's
land at tanging ang mga ta-
ong minahan na lang ang
pupwedeng gumala at ku-
muha ng lahat ng yaman ng
lugar ng minahan, gamit ang
mga sundalo at pulis bilang
mga sekyu.

Paanong hindi madidiskaril
ang buhay at pamumuhay ng
mga Filipino kung libo-libong
ektarya ang sakop ng isang
kompanya ng minahan?

SIRA-SIRANG KAPALIGIRAN

Diyan na sinisira nang
walang habas ang kapaligi-
ran.

Paghinto ng minahan ha-
bang nagpapatuloy ito, puro
perwisyo na ang sinasapit ng
mga mamamayan at nangyari
ito sa Marcopper sa Marinduque,
Philex Padcal sa Benguet at hinihintay ang per-
wisyo mula Tampakan min-
ing sa Mindanao.

Sa Mindanao matatag-

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

08 JUN 2016

DATE

12

PAGE

P.2

UPPER-HALF

LOWER-HALF

Minahan sa kamay ng
Pinoy at 'Di Dayuhan

puan ang 15 mining company na kumakalbo sa mga kagubatan at kabundukan at gumagawa ng mga lawa na may mga nakalalasong kemikal na pagdating ng mga bagyo gaya ng Sendong at Pablo ay libo-libong mamamayan ang namamatay at milyones ang napipinsala sa iba pang paraan mula sa baha, landslide at iba pa.

SI DUTERTE

Pag-upo ni Duterte sa Malakanyang, susubukin niyang baguhin ang sistema sa pagmimina.

Kooperatiba ng mga Pinoy ang itatatag para magmay-ari ng mga minahan at sila na rin ang magmimina upang matiyak ang pangangalaga sa kapaligiran at kumita at umunlad ang mga Pinoy.

Filipino muna bago dayuhan at kasosyo ng mga ito, katwiran ni Digong.

Para matupad ang mga ito, buong suporta ng mga mamamayan ang kailangan ni Duterte.

Call ba tayo lahat?

oOo

Anomang reklamo o puna ay maaaring iparating sa www.remate.ph o sa 09214303333.

The Manila Times

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

08 JUN 2016

DATE

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PAGE

UPPER-HALF

LOWER-HALF

CONTRIBUTED COMMENTARY PNoy's DENR officials do not understand plain English

BY ESTANISLAO JR. ALBANO

SOMETIME last year after the Commission on Audit released its findings that the National Greening Program (NGP) was a failure, I wrote President Benigno Aquino 3rd suggesting that if he wants to save the remainder of the program, he must personally make surprise random checks on NGP sites to see if trees are really growing there.

I explained that previous presidents had made the mistake of swallowing the rosy reports of their Environment Secretaries hook, line and sinker and as a result, it is good if 5 percent of all the seedlings planted in government tree planting programs since the time of his mother, President Corazon Aquino, have grown into trees.

In response, I received a furnished copy of a memorandum from Assistant Secretary for Field Operations Marcial Amaro, Jr. to OIC-Cordillera Regional Director Ralph Pablo stating that per instruction from the Secretary, he must bring me to any NGP site in the Cordillera I want to see. Apparently, my letter was misconstrued to be referring only to what was happening in my region and not all over the country. Although I mentioned the joke circulating in the Cordillera that if all the DENR seedlings planted in the region have survived, even the roofs of houses

would now be forested, it was plain in the letter that I was referring to the implementation of the NGP in general.

I then wrote Pablo to provide me with their list of NGP sites with their basic data including the coordinates and likewise the incidents of burning by year starting 2011. They provided me the latter data but said that regarding the list and individual plantation data, I must communicate with the Community Environment and Natural Resources Offices (CENROs).

The instruction from Amaro was for Pablo to take the trouble of personally bringing me to any site in the Cordillera I want to see and here I am being directed to take the trouble of coordinating with two offices per province for data that are available in the regional office!

In response to my letter requesting the same data requested from the DENR-CAR, NGP National Coordinator Ricardo Calderon wrote me to say that I would have to get the data on the NGP sites from the DENR website and instead of giving me the national burning incident data, Calderon explained that fires are force majeure and enumerated what they are doing to minimize the incidence. Well I guess Calderon is different from Paje and Pablo because he reads selectively: it is impossible he does not know that

their master list available in their website does not contain the coordinates.

That was not the end of it. When I requested Amaro to issue the same order he gave to Pablo to the regional directors of Regions 1, 2 and 3 so I would also be assisted in visiting sites in those areas, he told me he could not issue such orders unless he first get an instruction to that effect from Paje. Same situation, same need and what he wants is I have to write Paje to request for the same treatment from other DENR regions what Paje already thought was alright for the DENR-CAR to extend to me. If that's not stupidity, I do not know what is.

On second thought, I strongly suspect they are just pretending to be stupid and their actual intent is to try and hide what is happening to the NGP. In the case of the NGP burning report, the Cordillera data gives the hint that the national figure could be staggering. According to the data, as of March 2016, 2,600 hectares have already been burned. Multiply that by the budget for the seedlings and the planting per hectare of P10,000.00 then that's a cool P26,000,000.00 that went up in smoke in the Cordillera alone. No wonder, in his letter, Calderon pretended I was asking why the burning of plantations continues. Pathetic.

08 JUN 2016

910Z NOV 50

DATE

8

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

EDITORIAL

Healthy oceans, healthy planet

The rainy season is upon us, and with it comes the flooding that brings up to the surface tons of garbage. In Manila Bay, every storm washes ashore truckloads of trash, with strong tides often bringing the solid waste all the way to Roxas Boulevard. The regular inundation of garbage is proof that Filipinos still have a long way to go in keeping Manila Bay clean.

Today the Philippines joins the international community in observing World Oceans Day, with several communities planning coastal cleanups to mark the event. Some progress has been made in ridding Philippine seas of pollution, particularly in communities that are reaping the benefits of eco-tourism and clean fishing grounds. Sea pollution, however, remains a serious problem all over the country.

"Healthy oceans, healthy planet" is this year's theme for World Oceans Day. The United Nations is reminding the international community that oceans are the lungs of the planet, producing oxygen,

feeding billions, providing sources of medicine and interconnecting the world.

The UN is particularly concerned about plastic waste dumped in the ocean, which choke fish and other marine life. Toxic industrial waste even from inland waterways also finds its way into oceans, destroying coral reefs and the marine life that they sustain.



While they help ease pollution, regular coastal cleanups alone will not do the trick. People need to change their attitude toward the ocean and its blessings for humanity. Several countries have shown what can be done to keep oceans clean and ensure the sustainability of marine resources. Those best practices can be replicated in other countries.

The UN officially recognized June 8 as World Oceans Day in 2008. Since then, awareness has been raised about the need to keep oceans healthy, but the challenges remain daunting. Today's event should encourage more people to become "citizens of the oceans."

1 story

THE REPORT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1900

MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

08 JUN 2016

DATE

UPPER CASE

Page 1 Story

PAGE

LOWER CASE

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



FOCUS ON TAAL LAKE - A Southeast Asian Box Turtle, *Cuora amboinensis*, is one of the reptiles on exhibit at the 'Taalamán,' Taal Lake's First Biomuseum at the University of Santo Tomas. A number of species endemic to Taal are on exhibit during the four-day event on freshwater biodiversity. (All Vicoy)

Malaya
Business Insight

www.malaya.com.ph

DATE

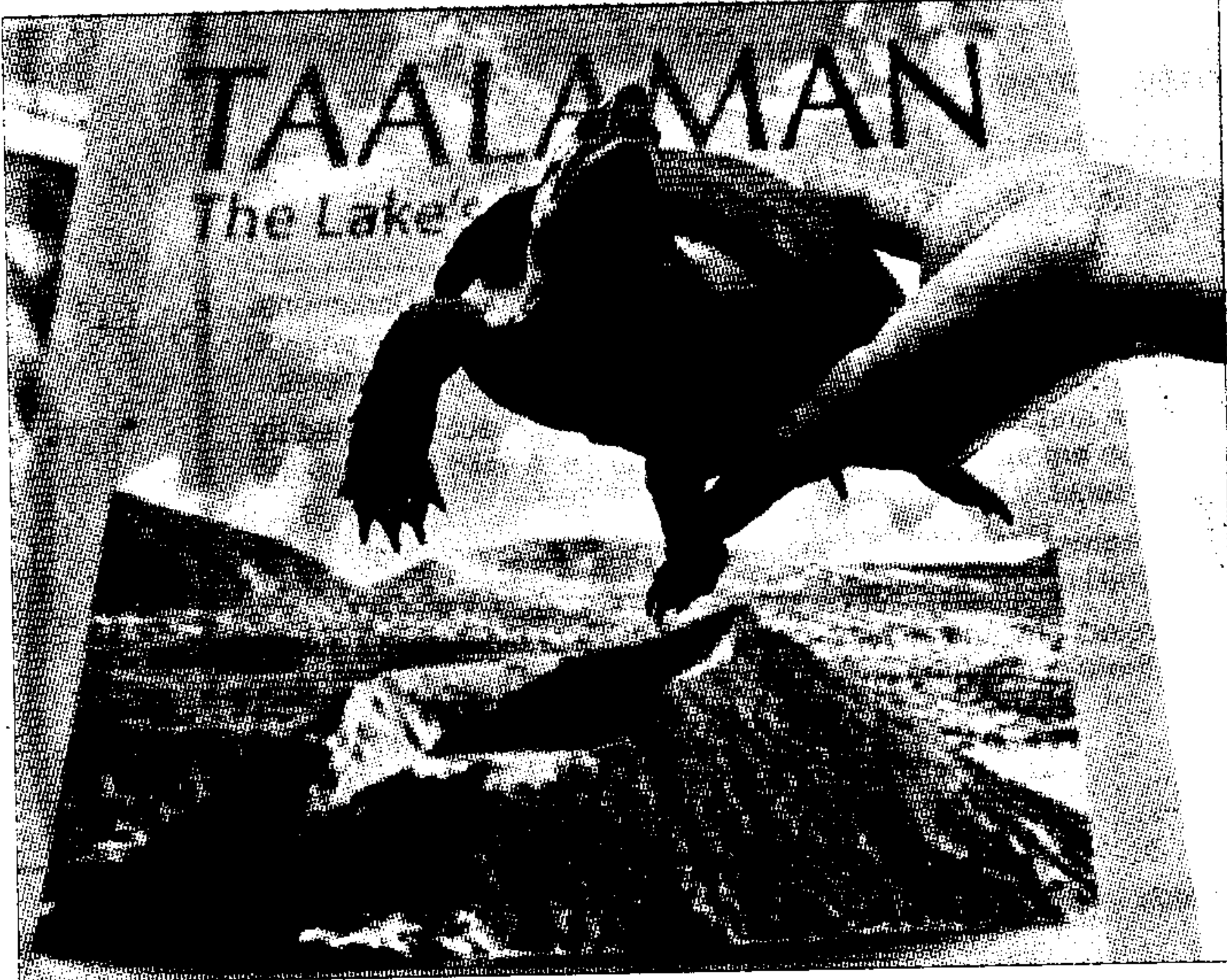
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PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Taal born. A Southeast Asian Box turtle, or *Cuora amboinensis*, is one of the reptiles on exhibit at the Taalaman, Taal Lake's first bio-museum at the University of Santo Tomas in Manila, where a number of Taal-endemic species are exhibited on a four-day symposium on freshwater biodiversity.

PHOTO BY JONAS SULIT

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1908

MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

08 JUN 2016
DATE
PAGE

UPPER HALF
LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



FOR A BETTER WORLD — Employees of SM City San Jose Del Monte, together with their Mall Manager Architect Erlinda Estrella (third from left), brings the message of environmental awareness to students through a wall mural that highlights sustainable practices to mitigate climate change at the newly painted San Manuel Elementary School of San Jose Del Monte City, Bulacan. (Freddie C. Velez)

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

08 JUN 2016

DATE

PAGE

UPPER-HALF

LOWER-HALF

ANG mga petsang June 4 hanggang 10 ay kinikilala bilang "Philippine Eagle Week" alinsunod sa Presidential Proclamation No. 79 (1999, dating Pangulong Joseph Ejercito-Estrada). Ngayong taon, pangungunahan ng Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang pagdiriwang sa temang "Saving Eagles, Protecting Forests, Securing our Future."

PAMBANSANG IBON:

Sang-ayon sa P.P. No. 615 (1995, dating Pangulong Fidel V. Ramos) kinilala ito bilang pambansang ibon kahalili ng maya. Dati itong tinatawag na monkey eating eagle at kilala rin bilang agila, Haribon (Haring Ibon) at banog.

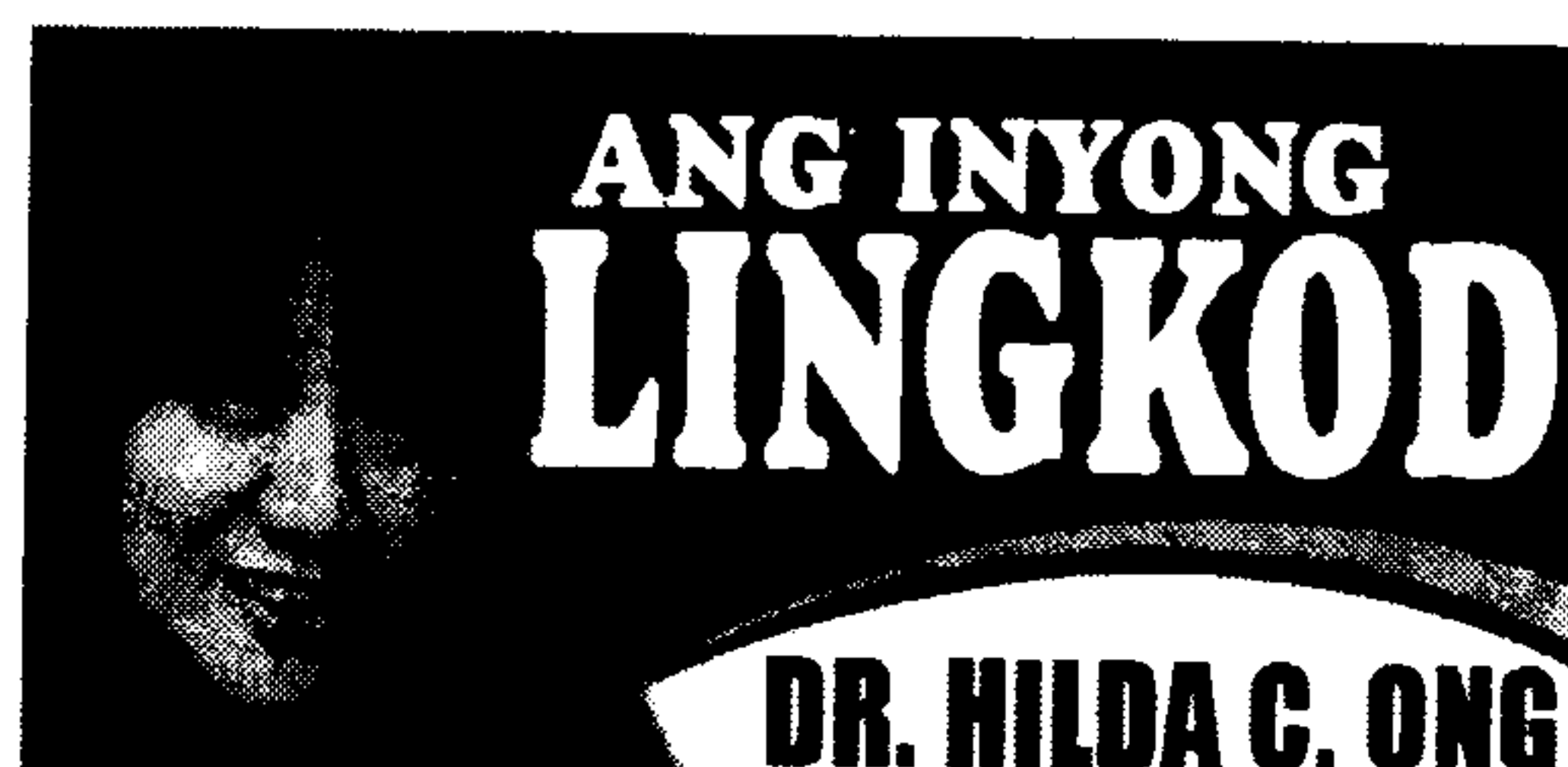
Ang Philippine Eagle (Pithecophaga jefferyi) ay kabilang sa pamilyang Accipitridae na endemic o tanging dito lamang sa Pilipinas matatagpuan. Ito ay kulay brown at cream, may sukat na 2.82 hanggang 3.35 feet, may timbang na 4.7 hanggang 8 kilograms at lumilipad sa taas na 5,900 feet. Ito ay nabibilang sa mga "rarest, largest and most powerful bird in the world".

CRITICALLY

ENDANGERED:

ITINUTURING ng International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) at ng Birdie International ang Philippine Eagle bilang isang 'critically endangered' o lubhang nanganganib na mabubos.

Tinatayang mayroon na lamang 180 hanggang 500 ang bilang ng ibong ito sa ating himpapawirin sanhi ng mabilis na pagkakalbo ng ating mga kagubatan, pag-



DR. HILDA C. ONG

PHILIPPINE EAGLE WEEK

mimina, polusyon buhat sa mga mabagsik na pestisidyo at iligal na panghuhuli.

SI PAMANA:

Noong August 10, 2015 ay natagpuan ng mga kawani ng Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF) ang babaeng agila sa Mt. Hamiguitan Range Wildlife Sanctuary (MHRWS) sa Davao Oriental na may tama ng bala sa kanang dibdib na siyang sanhi ng pagkamatay nito, base na rin sa isinagawang necropsy.

Pero alam n'yo bang sa 16 na agila na pinakawalan na muli sa himpapawirin kabilang na si Pamana, kalahati na ang namamatay sanhi ng pamamaril at wala pang ni isang nahuhuli o napaparusahan. Sa kasalukuyan, umabot na sa Php500,000 ang reward money para sa sinomang makapagbibigay impormasyon hinggil sa pumaslang kay Pamana.

KAKULANGAN NG

FOREST GUARDS: ISA sa mga nakikitang dahilan ng walang habas na pamamaril sa mga agila ay ang kakulangan ng mga forest guard na siyang dapat magbabantay sa mga kagubatan ng ating bansa.

Pero sa totoo lang, ang kawalan ng pagpapahalaga at kawalan ng puso ng ilan nating mga kababayan ang dahilan nito. Kailangan tala-gang magkaroon ang DENR-

BMB ng malawakang information campaign drive ukol sa Republic Act No. 9147 (Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act) upang matigil na ang pagpatay sa lahat ng buhay ilang natin.

FAMILY BONDING:

Sa selebrasyong pangungunahan ng DENR-BMB katuwang ng Enchanted Kingdom (EK) noong June 4, nakita ang pagparada ng mga nagwagi sa Agila costume contest sa EK's Circle of Artist.

Inasahan na habang nagkaka-bonding ang pamilya, sabay na may natututunan din hinggil sa Philippine Eagle. Magandang habang bata pa ang inyong mga anak, matutuhan na nila ang pagpapahalaga at pagmamahal sa mga agila at sa iba pang buhay ilang.



PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

08 JUN 2016

DATE

3

PAGE

UPPER-HALF

LOWER-HALF

Plastic, alisin sa dagat

Ang mga plastic pa rin ang nangungunang basura na naiipon sa dagat, umaabot ng 275 milyong tonelada sa 192 bansa ang pinaniniwalaang aktuwal na dami ng mga ito.

Sa talaan ng Journal Science, aabot 4.8 milyon hanggang 12.7 milyong metriko tonelada ang mga basura sa dagat. Pumapangallo ang Pilipinas sa buong mundo sa may pinakamaraming plastic na basura sa karagatan kabuntot ng China at Indonesia.

"Rapid population growth along with unsustainable marine practices such as overfishing, waste dumping, oil spills, among others, have seriously damaged marine habitats and life in the sea over the years," sabi ni Senator Loren Legarda kaugnay sa paggunita ng World Ocean Day ngayon.

Ayon kay Legarda, doble ang hatid na pinsala ng plastic waste sa yamang dagat dahil nakakain ito ng mga isda at nakakasira sa mga coral reef.

Sinabi ng senador na kailangang maging epektibo ang pagpapatupad sa Ecological Solid Waste Management (ESWM) Law para masagip ang yamang dagat. **Leonel Abasola**



PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

08 JUN 2016

DATE

5

PAGE

UPPER-HALF

LOWER-HALF

AT IBA PA

Greenpeace calls on Duterte to champion RE for jobs, sustainable national development

RESPONDING to REN21's "Renewables 2016 Global Status Report", which showed a record-breaking past year for the renewable energy sector in terms of new installations, policy targets, investments and jobs, Greenpeace urged the incoming administration of President-elect Rodrigo Duterte to fast-track the shift from

fossil fuels in order to ensure sustainable national development for the Philippines.

"The Philippines should take advantage of renewable energy (RE), which is outpacing dirty oil, coal, and gas in terms of growth worldwide. President-elect Duterte should champion the country's shift from fossil fuels to renewables, which would give his administration the higher moral ground when it negotiates lower carbon emissions from developed countries. Doing so would not only lower the main source of climate change, but also take advantage of the growing opportunities

for jobs and investments, as shown in the REN21 report," said Reuben Muni, Philippine Climate and Energy Campaigner of Greenpeace Southeast Asia.

"The report comes at an opportune time for the Philippines, just over a week after the Climate Change Commission issued Resolution 2016-001, calling for a comprehensive review of the country's energy policy in order to reduce our dependence on coal and urging relevant government agencies such as the Department of Energy, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the National Economic Development Authority, to come up with

a national framework for a just transition to renewable energy. This will open the country to a low-carbon economic pathway. Any national development would not be sustainable if our power sector is still hinged on fossil fuels," Muni added.

The report showed that developing countries put in USD 156 billion in investments globally in renewable energy in 2015. This is a reported 19% increase compared to 2014 and higher than all the investments for 2015 of developed countries combined. Greenpeace is optimistic that the results of the proposed policy review will open more doors for investments in the Philip-

ines and provide more green jobs in the renewable sector in the country.

Greenpeace says that the renewable energy sector showed very clear growth despite the hold of fossil fuel companies on the energy industry.

"Although the deck remains stacked against renewables - with fossil fuel subsidies, low fuel prices, problems accessing the grid, vested interests and government inertia - they are still breaking through. If renewables can add 147 GW of power in 2015 with this economic picture, imagine what they could achieve if the cards were even, said Emily Rochon, Global Energy Strategist of Greenpeace International.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

08 JUN 2016

DATE

A-12

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Developing the 'Southeast Asian Sea'

THERE IS today an urgent need to collectively develop and share the rich resources and energy potentials of Southeast Asia's largest body of water. These should ultimately be for the social use and common good of the region's populations, to peacefully sustain their future together. To attain a progressively principled agenda for the area, the vast aquatic mass should eventually be transformed into a "shared regional area of essential commons" (SRAEC), as this writer first publicly advocated four years ago.

The fundamental principles that universally bond human aspirations—upholding rights-based freedoms, advancing democracy with social justice, and realizing shared progress for all—must become a key basis for this progressive regionalist plan. As a collective developmental framework for the region, the SRAEC necessarily requires the active and consensual participation of the states bordering the highly strategic maritime zone. This regional project must thus be placed within a positive and forward-looking internationalist context. And as a first step, the region's huge mass of water should be renamed objectively as the "Southeast Asian Sea" (or SEAS), because it factually lies within Southeast Asia.

Six states—Brunei, China, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam—have long been staking their respective national and/or historical claims on parts or the whole of the SEAS. In mid-March, Indonesia became the latest state to tangle with China over a subarea of the SEAS, specifically the Natuna Islands. Indonesia's declared exclusive economic zone overlaps with China's nine-dash-line territorial claim, and Beijing and Jakarta are now caught up in a delicate bilateral course over their dispute.

Aggravating this regional condition is the fact that some of these states label and attach specific country-oriented names to the SEAS. In effect, they portray to the global community a misplaced pride in their own national chauvinism. While they may have differences with one another for obvious and various reasons, they manifest the same narrow-minded and jingoist-patriotic mind-set in the conduct of their individual foreign policy tracks.

COMMENTARY

Rasti Delizo

Historically speaking, it is this national-chauvinist attitude of one country toward another/others that triggered the first interimperialist global war of aggression in August 1914. Indeed, one country reacting "patriotically" by employing largely combative means on another country's government and its citizens can easily spark an interstate conflict. This has been amply shown in the past.

When states basically react to shifting undercurrents within their proximate external environments in an extremely nationalistic manner, the emergent situation can easily escalate into an armed worldwide conflagration. In fact, the general pattern of the 1914 dynamics once again repeated itself a quarter of a century later to activate the second interimperialist global war of aggression in September 1939. Since the last half of the past century, most interstate conflicts arose because the protagonists mainly reacted belliciously in protecting their very narrowly defined nation-statist interests (i.e., claiming strips of land and water resources).

Sadly, most of these international conflicts were rooted in a country's reactions to its feelings getting hurt by another. Thus, it usually boiled down to a war between them to mollify insulted national pride. Destructive wars became the normal default mode for countries to regain their "lost national dignity" on the world stage.

But in today's highly globalized system, this wrong must urgently be corrected. Wars of aggression cannot advance a people's interests within the context of a sovereign state's pursuit of its foreign policy with others. Governments must start thinking beyond a nation-state mind-set to constructively reach their respective external policy objectives. In this manner, all of the countries now linked to the SEAS question should immediately start pursuing a strategical-

ly collective and progressively regionalist direction to peacefully resolve this volatile issue. The aim is to foster and create an internationally cooperative and just world order in the near term.

Accordingly, these principled elements need to be considered in building a future SRAEC for the SEAS. In reality, such a concept is already in existence in certain regions of the world today and is, therefore, workable. Some of these area-based water governance models are: the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea (or the Tehran Convention established in 2006) involving five neighboring countries; the Lake Victoria Basin Commission involving three countries; and the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (1995) involving eight countries.

These regionally cooperative conventions focus on the protection, preservation, restoration, and sustainable and rational use of the biological resources of these bodies of water.

In the 21st century, the international community of nations has to urgently replace obsolete and regressive norms and forms of conducting global relations. A fundamental reframing of how human beings should relate to one another across borders means viewing humanity as a single living body organic to planet Earth, and not purely as alien entities that can be cast aside and separated from any individual state's specific endeavors.

In practical terms, this simply means having a country pursue its own economic-social system by also considering the sustainability dimensions of its neighboring countries in equilibrium with positive regional dynamics.

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DATE

4

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



EDITORIAL

Proudly socialist

PUBLIC service is the universal language of government.

Does it really matter from which political or ideological color the leader of the nation comes from?

We have been through all kinds of national leaders coming from all shades of the political spectrum – the right which includes both political and military officials, religious figures, the private sector, academe, and even show business.

All of these leaders were not able to establish a society that is peaceful, progressive, and harmonious.

What's wrong with an immensely popular leader emerging from the Left?

Davao City mayor and now President-elect Rodrigo Duterte proudly boasted during the campaign for the highest office in the land of being a socialist.

"And what's so wrong about Socialism?" a late firebrand of a senator once complained.

The President-elect has reiterated that he is not a member of the Communist Party of the Philippines despite belonging to the so-called Left.

"I came from the Left. You know that, those who are from Davao," Duterte said during his thanksgiving party here on Saturday. "I belong to the left-center but I am not a member of the Communist Party of the Philippines."

Duterte said he does not agree with armed struggle and the killing of people, especially Filipinos.

Earlier, the incoming President said that while he traces his ideologies to the Left, he was more of a socialist rather than a communist.

Following his victory in the May 9 polls, Duterte extended a hand to the communist rebels for the possible resumption of peace talks between the government and the CPP.

He initially offered four Cabinet posts to the Left: the Departments of Social Welfare and Development, Agrarian Reform, Labor and Employment and Environment and Natural Resources.

He later named University of the Philippines faculty regent Judy Taguiwalo as DSWD secretary, outgoing Anakpawis Rep. Rafael Mariano DAR secretary, and former Anakpawis representative Joel Maglungod as DOLE undersecretary.

Named DOLE secretary is former justice secretary Silvestre Bello III, who is set to travel to Europe with Jesus Dureza, incoming presidential adviser on the peace process, for initial talks with exiled CPP founder and Duterte's former professor Jose Maria Sison.

This makes the Duterte cabinet a true coalition of ideological opponents or rivals.