

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

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DENR

IN THE NEWS

THE REPORT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1988

MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Ocean hero vows to protect Tañon Strait despite threats

By LEO ORTEGA LAPARAN II

CEBU CITY - He may be wheelchair-bound now, but that won't stop him from standing up again and keeping his sight on the sea.

"Bantay Dagat" (ocean guard) volunteer and now hero Norlan Pagal knows by heart how important Tañon Strait is to him, his family, and the rest of his fellow residents in Barangay Anapog in San Remigio, Cebu, that when he learned about illegal fishing activities going on in the waters under the jurisdiction of his municipality, he knew he had to take action.

"I am a fisherman. The sea (Tañon Strait) is where I get food for my family," Pagal, 46, said in an interview after the Ocean Heroes Awards ceremony held at the Cebu Parklane International Hotel here recently.

Protected area

Tañon Strait is the body of water that separates the islands of Cebu and Negros. Two regions, three municipalities, 42 coastal cities and towns, and 298 villages govern the strait, which was declared a protected area in 1998 via an executive order.

More than 40,000 fishermen depend on Tañon Strait for their livelihood, according to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Pagal, who has been a staunch advocate of fisheries laws for the last 13 years, said that most of the offenders, who engage in such illegal means as dynamite fishing, come from neighboring areas, like Bantayan Island, also in Cebu province,

"I'm afraid that if no one would

apprehend these offenders, time will come when future generations could no longer benefit from the sea."

Brush with death

Pagal's burning love for the sea nearly cost him his life last October 14, 2015.

"I caught an owner of a compressor, who conspired to kill me. They shot me. The bullet hit my spinal cord; now, I can't walk," he said. The shooting happened after delivering a short speech as barangay councilor in a barangay fiesta.

Compressor fishing is an illegal method that destroys marine resources. It also exposes fishers to health risks and hazards.

"I really keep watch on these compressor operators, because they are the most hard-headed ones in marine protected areas like Tañon. That is why they're so furious at me, and I always have an encounter with them."

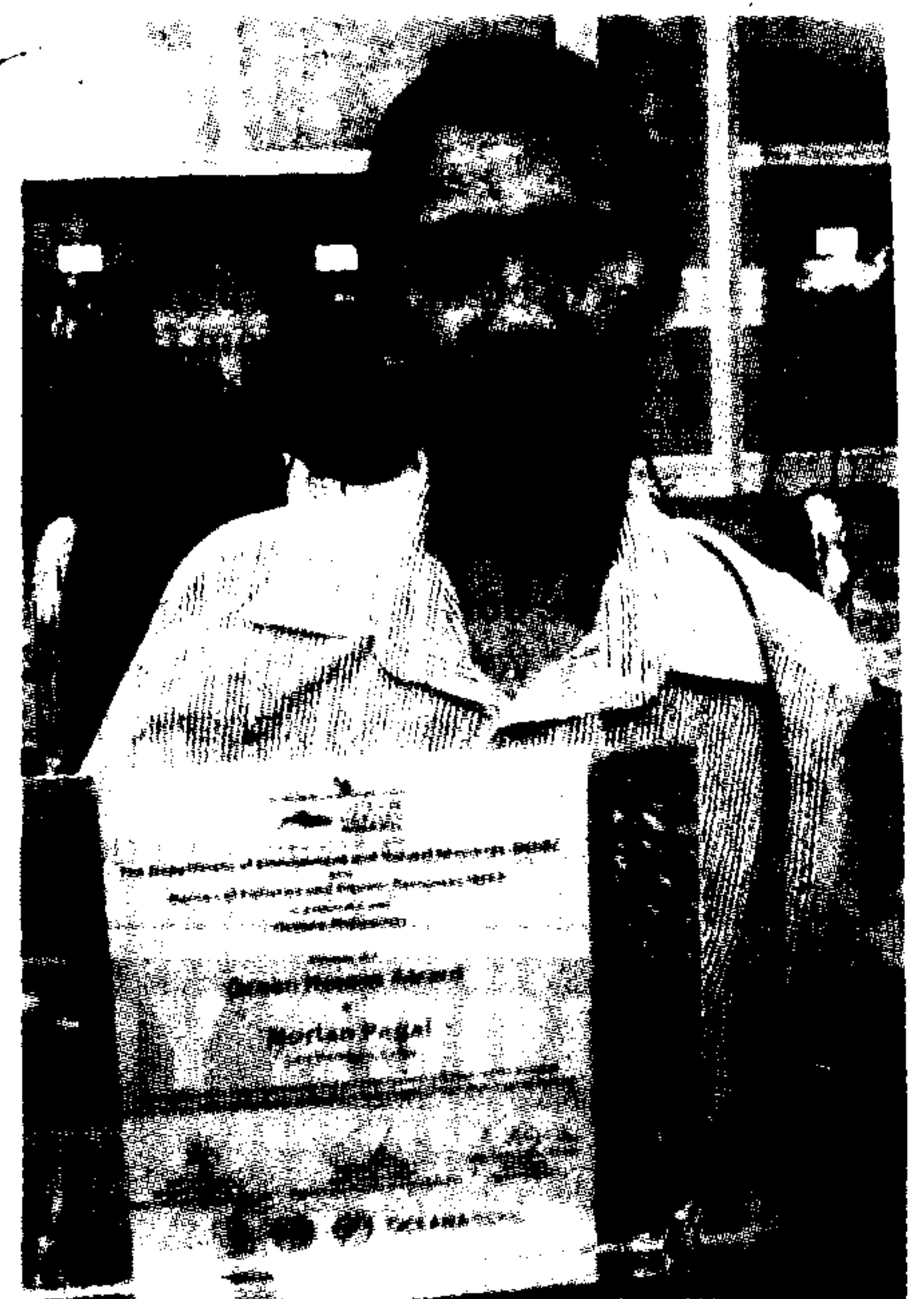
Despite the incident, Pagal is not one to take this environmental headache in his locality sitting down on his wheelchair.

"I cannot stop just because of what they did to me. I know a lot of people have seen what I have done, and they would do the same because they see the good results: Dynamite fishers in our area have disappeared, even those who engage in other forms of commercial fishing that are considered illegal, like using compressors," he said.

Support and recognition

Pagal's efforts have paid off.

"From then until now, the municipal government of San Remigio, especially our Mayor (Mariano Martinez), has



NORLAN PAGAL (Photo by Leo Ortega Laparan II)

always been by my side because they saw that even if I am a volunteer, I wholeheartedly offer and dedicate my services," he said.

At present, too, Pagal is no longer the only water warrior in his barangay; he surmised that about 80 percent of his fellow citizens there are ready to guard and defend their area in Tañon Strait.

Pagal's heroic deed caught the attention of Oceana Philippines, the non-governmental organization that conferred him one of the awards, which were first given out this year.

"Tañon Strait has been a protected area for 18 years now. Oceana may be a young organization, but we know that a lot of people have been working so hard, in their own little way, to protect and conserve Tañon," Oceana Philippines Campaign Manager Daniel Ocampo

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said.

The recognition rites on June 8 coincided with the observance of World Oceans Day as declared by the United Nations.

"We've heard a lot of stories when we went around Tañon, that some of these people sometimes get death threats or harassed by enforcing the law, and for believing that they are instruments in protecting our coastal resources," Ocampo said. "We thought [the Ocean Heroes Awards] is the best way to recognize them and encourage other people to follow them."

Light of inspiration, change

DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau Director Dr. Theresa Mundita Lim stated that with ocean heroes like Pagal, hope has never been lost for the country's marine resources.

"Day after day, [our awardees] serve their purpose of consistently working for the protection of Tañon Strait. They fight against those who dared destroy and conduct illegal fishing activities within the area, which damage the habitats, as well as marine organisms," Lim said. "They act as a light to inspire and change the way of thinking of individuals, groups, and organizations toward sustainable resources management."

Aside from a plaque of recognition, Pagal also received P50,000 in cash, half of which shall be used to help boost his proposed projects: The Anapog Fishermen Association's "bigasan" (rice market) and the sea cucumber-clamshell abalone seeding project in his municipality.

The other three pioneer awardees out of 11 finalists are Roberto Quigay of

Brgy. 6, San Carlos City, Negros Occidental category; the late Oliver Dayupay of Brgy. Iniban, Ayungon, Negros Oriental; and Veda Raunillo of Sitio Kinayan, Brgy. Bulado, Guihulngan City, Negros Oriental for the Women's Category.

No fear

"I'm very, very glad that I was chosen as a winner because it helps me see the fruits of what I've worked so hard for in protecting Tañon Strait," Pagal beamed with pride.

Pagal, who was accompanied by his wife Elma and daughter Christine during the awards night, advised his fellow ordinary citizens to break free from their fear when it comes to facing wrongdoers of nature.

"Yes, no one has no fear, but we need to set fear aside because if we don't apprehend the ocean offenders, nothing will happen. That is our livelihood. Only they would rise, and we would be pinned further down if we don't do anything about it," he said.

"If we allow fear to consume us now, who will do what we're supposed to do? How about those little children today, the future generations, what will happen to them if we ignore what's happening to nature?"

Now, Pagal has become more enthusiastic and empowered to go on with what he has started. Only death can stop him from doing so.

"I'm not afraid to continue my advocacy. For as long as I live, nothing can stop me from realizing my principles. If God takes my life back because of it, it's okay; someday soon, many people will see what I have done, not for my own sake, but for my entire community."

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15 protected areas in Region 1 eyed for ecotourism

By **FREDDIE G. LAZARO**

LAOAG CITY, Ilocos Norte –The 15 protected areas declared by the Philippine Area Management Board (PAMB) in the Ilocos provinces are being eyed for ecotourism development.

Gwendolyn Bambalan, the assistant regional director for technical services of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Region 1, disclosed during the recent PAMB convention in Ilocos Norte that these protected areas have great potentials for sustainable enterprise to benefit the local stakeholders.

“PAMB members from the four provinces in Region 1 such as Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, and Pangasinan are currently undertaking capability building seminar to ensure they are ready to implement new innovations in protected area management,” said Bambalan.

The 15 protected areas that are being promoted for ecotourism are the Kalbario-Patapat Natural Park in Pagudpud; Tanap watershed forest reserve at Barangay Tanap in Burgos, Metropolitan Ilocos Norte watershed forest reserve in Sulbec, Pasuquin; and the Paoay Lake Natural Park in Ilocos Norte.

In Ilocos Sur, the protected areas are: the Libunao protected landscape in Sinait;

Bigbiga protected landscape in Marozo, Narvacan; Northern Luzon Heroes Hill in Magsaysay, Santa; Bessang Pass natural monument in Malaya, Cervantes; Lidlidda protected landscape located in between Lidlidda and Banayoyo; Santa Lucia protected landscape in Salcedo; and the Tirad Pass National Park in Gregorio del Pilar Quirino, Sigay, Cervantes, and Suyu.

Other protected areas in Region I are the Manleluag Spring in Malabobo, Catarataran, Pacalat, Lawaklangka and Calomboyon Sur in Mangatarem, Pangasinan; Hundred Islands in Alaminos City; Agoo Damortis protected landscape and seascape in Agoo, Sto. Tomas and Rosario, La Union; and the Naguilian Watershed at Brgy. Casilagan, also in La Union.

With the passage of Republic Act 10629 in 2013, at least 75 percent of the income generated by protected areas by PAMB, can now be used by stakeholders to develop and sustain its ecotourism potential.

The remaining 25 percent will go to the National Treasury for the utilization of other national parks in the country.

Income generated by protected areas comes from entrance fees paid by tourists, payment for the lease of areas used by tourism concessionaires, contributions from industries and facilities directly benefitting from the protected area.

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DENR execs in hot water over demolished P20-M building

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE GOVERNMENT will run after outgoing top officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to make them pay P20 million for a building in its Quezon City compound that was demolished when it was supposed to be renovated only.

The Commission on Audit (COA) recently voided the 2014 contract worth P5 million for the supposed renovation of the Foreign-Assisted and Special Projects Office (FASPO) building, since the structure ended up being “totally demolished.”

In an audit observation memorandum dated March 14, 2016, state auditors assigned to the DENR told Environment Secretary Ramon Paje and other top officials to sanction those responsible for ordering the demolition without first getting approval for a new building construction, and to make them pay for the building.

The two-story FASPO building was last valued at P20.4 million in 1997. It stood adjacent to the main office building within the DENR compound along Visayas Avenue in Quezon City.

Since the demolition in early 2014, the lot where the building used to stand has become a pit of dirty stagnant water. Galvanized iron sheets were put up around the lot in an attempt to cover up the dirty pool.

Based on the audit findings, the DENR signed a memorandum of agreement on Dec. 9, 2013, with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) Quezon City First Engineering District to repair and renovate the FASPO building for P5 million.

Instead of renovating, DPWH through its contractor demolished the building in January 2014.

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Who has Duterte's ear? 'War' over \$13-B bid to build new Manila airport rekindled

By RECTO MERCENE [@rectomercene](#)

PROBABLY, banking on incoming President Rodrigo R. Duterte's vaunted decisiveness to address and rid the country's multifaced ills, the president of diversified conglomerate San Miguel Corp. (SMC), Ramon S. Ang, has bared plans to resubmit a proposal to the new Palace administration his bid for the construction of a new Manila airport in Manila Bay.

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Who has Duterte's ear? 'War' over \$13 B bid to build new Manila airport rekindled

Ang said in May that the feasibility study of the proposed airport conducted by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) is being finalized. And by his own estimate, the extension to the congested and aging Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) would cost about \$13 billion.

But even before Ang's plans to build the futuristic airport on 800 hectares of reclaimed land in Manila Bay, Sen. Cynthia Villar shot down the proposal, again.

On March 16, 2012, Villar filed a petition for writ of *kalikasan* before the Supreme Court with support the majority of Las Piñas residents. She succeeded to stop the project with the backing of the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) on the extent of disruptions that the project would cause to the seaborne traffic on the bay.

Two weeks ago, Villar issued an appeal, through the media, addressed to the incoming Duterte administration to junk the revived proposal to reclaim a portion of Manila Bay near Parañaque City as site for a new international airport.

Villar reiterated her appeal following reports that reelected Parañaque Mayor Edwin Olivarez urged Duterte to push through with the proposed \$13-billion project.

A known advocate of environmental protection, Villar said the reclamation of Manila Bay will destroy the Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Ecotourism Area (LPPCHEA).

Villar lamented that the airport project was being resurrected after SMC's proposal to build a new airport in Manila Bay did not push through during the Aquino administration.

Earlier, the Aquino administration commissioned Jica to undertake a study on where to build the

airport that would complement the Naia. Jica came out with a proposal that this airport could either be in Sangley Point, Cavite, where there is an existing airport, or a reclaimed portion of Manila Bay.

Jica said the Naia is expected to host 37.78 million passengers this year, already in excess of its capacity of 30 million yearly capacity. By 2040, passenger traffic is expected reach 101.49 million.

The Naia's maximum handling capacity stands at 35 million passengers a year.

However, Jica cancelled the \$13-billion Manila Bay airport study after PPA opposed the plan.

Transportation Secretary Joseph Emilio A. Abaya was quoted as saying that the PPA has argued that an international airport could obstruct the active shipping lanes on the bay. The former representative from Cavite said Jica was now looking at Sangley Point in Cavite and Laguna de Bay as

potential locations for the new international airport.

"The whole feasibility [study] for the new international airport would be completed in 18 months," Abaya said.

Clark's Diosdado Macapagal International Airport, a favorite choice by proponents, had been scrapped because it is deemed too far away from Manila at nearly 100 kilometers. The proposed high-speed railway link that would connect Clark to Manila was abandoned, as well.

The high-speed rail's cancellation was supported by the chief of Peregrine Development International Inc. (PDI), who says the claim about the need for high-speed rail to service Clark International Airport is nothing but a "folklore."

Dennis Wright, president and CEO of PDI, told Rappler on February 18 that he wrote for the American Chamber of Commerce Philip-

pines's monthly Journal, wherein he tagged as "folklore" the claim about the need for high-speed rail to service Clark airport.

PDI is the initial developer of the \$3-billion Sabah Al-Ahmad Global Gateway Logistics City at the 177-hectare area near the main gate of Clark Freeport.

Wright said the rail system—which was mentioned by three presidential candidates as a prerequisite to the full operation of the Clark airport—will not be beneficial to people using the airport.

"It actually benefits very few. It does not benefit one single person [among] the 23 million people in the Clark Catchment Basin, nor anyone in Region 4 or South of Manila nor anyone in the Visayas in Mindanao," Rappler quotes Wright as saying.

The Clark Catchment Basin he was referring to includes Central Luzon, Ilocos Region, Cordillera Administrative Region, Cagayan Valley and Camanava (Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas, Valenzuela), which have better access to Clark airport than to the usually traffic congested areas surrounding the Naia in Parañaque City.

Wright claims that the Philip-pines "ruling class," who insists on having a high-speed rail as a prerequisite to the full development and operation of the Clark airport, will not benefit from the project as most of them ride on chauffeur-driven cars.

The chief of PDI said overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) and their families are also unlikely to use the high-speed rail, dragging their oversized *balikbayan* boxes and luggage to board the train.

"It is hardly likely that a large family wanting to greet a returning OFW or send one off to work [abroad] will gather at the train station for a trip to and from the

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“The [proposed] Manila Bay airport project will cause massive flooding, and [is] detrimental to the environment and livelihood of 300,000 poor fishermen.”—VILLAR

airport,” Wright said.

“Also, have you ever tried doing a bag drag and/or *balikbayan* boxes from an airport terminal to a rail terminal and on and off the train car to a taxi? While it can be done, it is not easy,” he added.

The American businessman said rail transportation is not necessary between the Clark airport and the Naia because airlines generally connect to routes between sister airports in the same area.

“For example, no one flies to Narita [Japan] and connects out of Haneda, or flies O’Hare [Chicago] and out of Midway. So passengers, in general, rarely need or would use a rail connection between the airports,” Wright said.

He said Clark International Airport should be developed as a major airport alongside the Naia.

Just like in most cities around the world, two or three major airports are needed to service locals and tourists, as the number of flights continue to increase, Wright added.

He cited the cases of Thailand that built a new airport some 30 kilometers away from the old airport; Japan, that built and operated Narita airport, some 60 km away from the older Haneda airport; and Malaysia, that built a new airport some 45 km from downtown Kuala Lumpur.

Sangley and Laguna de Bay has been chosen because these are about 25 to 30 minutes away from the Naia.

Parañaque Mayor Edwin L. Olivarez told the BUSINESSMIRROR that he welcomes the Jica study wherever they would decide to

locate the new airport.

Olivarez said any development that would accompany the new airport would benefit not only Parañaque and Las Piñas, but the surrounding cities, as well.

“Look, the Entertainment City is near the proposed airport development, and I am sure that [these] would complement each other to the benefit of nearby cities,” he said.

Wright added that the new air

“Let us welcome the new development, but my only appeal is for the authorities to take care, as well, the flora and fauna that might be affected and let us preserve what nature has given us.”—OLIVAREZ

port and the Las Vegas-like gaming and entertainment complex would create more jobs as both areas grew and become entwined through the years.

He added that Jica is an international firm of known reputation and would surely come up with a plan that would take care of all the supposed problems associated with it, such as flooding.

“Let us welcome the new development, but my only appeal is for the authorities to take care, as well, the flora and fauna that might be affected, and let us preserve what nature has given us,” Olivarez said.

The Entertainment City Olivarez was referring is operated by the

Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. in an 8 square kilometer land along Macapagal Boulevard, which is also adjacent to the Mall of Asia and other high-rise developments in the area.

SMC, which used to operate Philippine Airlines (PAL), returned the control of the airline to tycoon Lucio Tan in 2014.

According to the transportation department, the proposed airport would have an international and domestic passenger-handling capacity of 75 million passengers a year that could be ramped up to accommodate more than 100 million passengers.

It would be only 11 minutes away from the Makati Central Business District via a new airport expressway.

In her renewed appeal to block the airport project last week,

Villar said: “The [proposed] Manila Bay airport project will cause massive flooding, and [is] detrimental to the environment and livelihood of 300,000 poor fishermen.”

Under the plan, the proposed airport will make use of 157 hectares of Freedom Island, home and known breeding area of the Philippine Ducks, Chinese Egret and Black-Winged Stilts, all listed as vulnerable species, and 82 other wild-bird species from as far as China, Japan and Siberia.

About 1,000 of the Black-Winged Stilts of only 100,000 existing in the whole world can be found in the area.

Villar pointed out that, con-

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trary to the claim of Olivarez, the Jica proposed the Sangley Point in Cavite and beyond as a viable site of the airport, and not Manila Bay in Parañaque.

She lamented that the airport project was being resurrected after SMC's proposal to build a new airport in Manila Bay did not push through during the Aquino administration.

The lady senator also cited the 2002 ruling of the Supreme Court, which struck down the Public Estates Authority-Amari deal as "unconstitutional." The ruling stated that private companies cannot own reclaimed lands.

"Attracting tourists and investors should not be proposed at the expense of the constitutionally guaranteed rights of citizens for a safe and secure environment to live in," Villar said.

LPPCHEA is a declared critical habitat and a protected area by virtue of Presidential Proclama-

tion 1412 and 1412-A in 2007. It is the first critical habitat to be declared in the country. Covering around 175 hectares of wetland ecosystem, LPPCHEA consists of two islands—Freedom Island and Long Island.

In March 2013 it was also listed as a Wetland of International Importance by the Ramsar Convention because of the critical role it plays in the survival of threatened and restricted-range bird species. It is the only wetland in Metro Manila and in an urban setting.

The five other Philippine sites in the list are the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park in Palawan; the Tubbataha Reefs National Marine Park in Sulu; the Agusan Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary; the Naujan Lake National Park in Oriental Mindoro; and the Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary in Cebu.

The Philippines, being one of the signatories to the Ramsar Convention, is mandated to protect the habitat.

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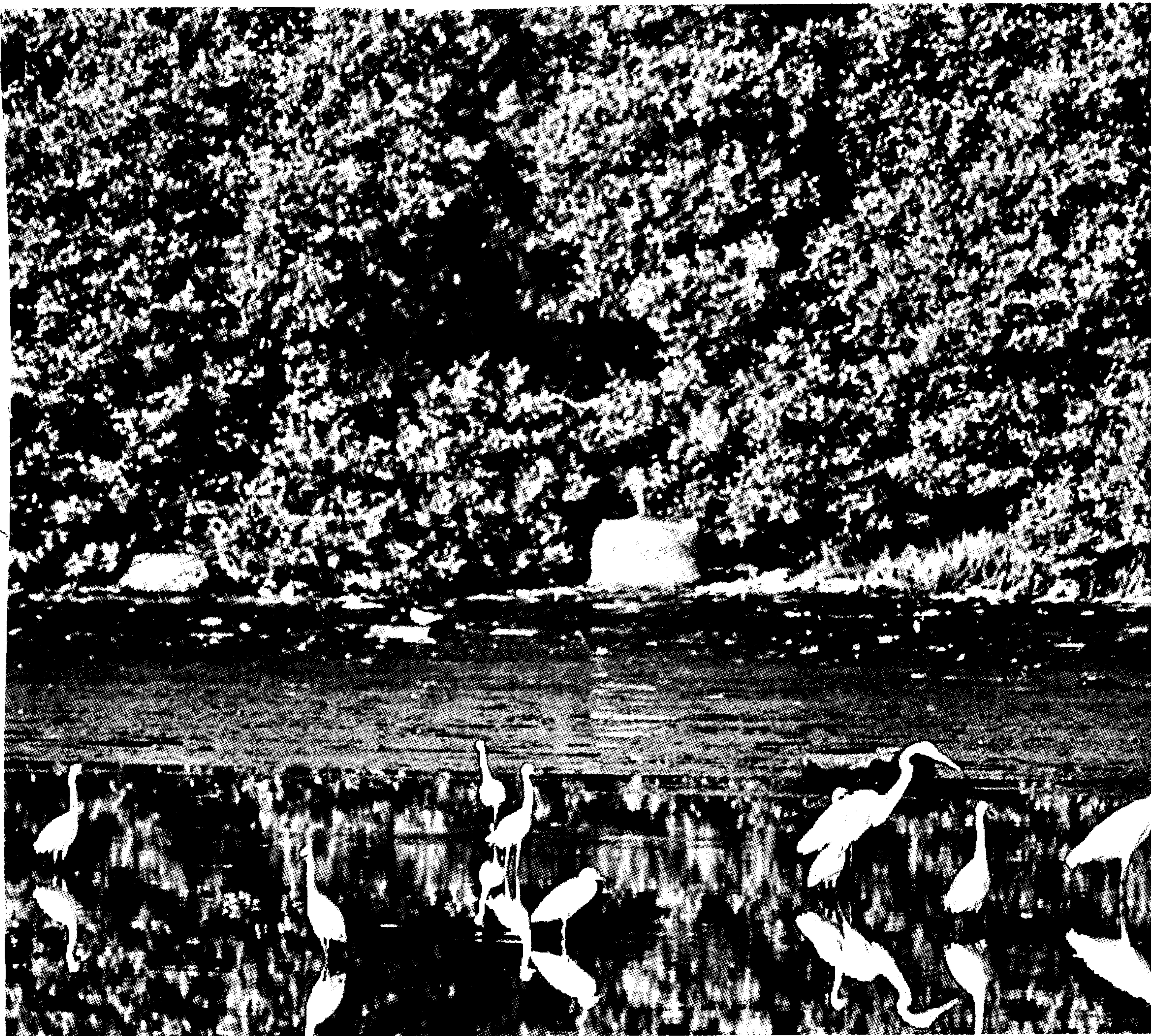
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MIGRATORY birds in Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Ecotourism Area. NONIE REYES

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Capable managers needed, not soldiers



PRESIDENT-ELECT Rodrigo Duterte is both misinformed and misguided on the issue of the environmental destruction caused by big mining companies. It seems he believes that big local and foreign mining companies are often or always more responsible for the destruction than small mining enterprises. The fact is, the small-scale mining industry is the one that really destroys the environment.

This is similar to the *kaingin* (slash-and-burn) practice that cuts down trees in mountain forests. When a strong typhoon hit Luzon in 2004, thousands of logs in Quezon province rolled down from the mountains to the rivers and bays. This revealed the extent of how small farmers denude our forests.

I saw the damage done by small-scale miners in Mindanao in 1987 when I was a member of the fact-finding mission tasked by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to look into it. We flew by helicopter in three different locations. I recall Mt. Diwalwal where we saw the extensive damage done, not by the big mining companies but by the small-scale miners. (The members of our team included future Supreme Court Justice Adolf Azcuña and then Lepanto Consolidated Mining president Art Disini.) The DENR rules and regulations on the extraction of gold were not being enforced. The mercury used to extract gold from the ore was left to seep down from the mountain to the rivers and seas.

In 2011, I saw how small-scale mining in northern Luzon destroyed the environment. There was this huge mine deposit in Quirino, Ilocos Sur, at the boundary with Besao, Mountain Province. When I went there, there was no DENR or local government representative responsible for regulating the mining activities.

President-elect Duterte is wrong in his thinking that he needs a military man to head the DENR so that the soldiers can implement his orders with the mining companies. This is the most primitive line of reasoning. The DENR is a huge organization with offices all around the country. You need a manager there to run it.

The mining sector is not more than 20 percent of the scope of work of the DENR. In fact, there is only one bureau in the DENR headed by a director that attends to and regulates the mining industry. This is the Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

Duterte should not militarize the DENR and the rest of the executive branch of the national government with his appointments of retired military generals and other officers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. They are not needed to head civilian government agencies. What are needed are managers with executive abilities.

Mabuhay ang Pilipinas!

—R. B. RAMOS,
rbrpilipinas@gmail.com

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HOPE FOR PHILIPPINE EAGLE Schoolchildren watch a Philippine eagle named Fighter at the Philippine Eagle Foundation sanctuary. The eagle's population is threatened by relentless hunting and forest destruction. The sanctuary was set up to save the species.

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Davao sanctuary offers hope for Philippine eagle

DAVAO CITY—Surprisingly loud chirps accompany a clumsy flurry of tiny wings as a wispy-haired chick breaks through its shell, its birth offering rare cause for celebration in the struggle to save the Philippine eagle from extinction.

Tropical rainforest destruction and relentless hunting have decimated the population of the majestic bird—one of the world's biggest and most powerful—with just hundreds be-

lieved to be left in the wild.

A small band of conservationists at a tiny sanctuary on the fringes of Davao City is trying to ensure their survival by running the world's only breeding program for the eagles and by rehabilitating the wounded.

"The center serves basically as insurance, or a Noah's Ark so to speak, for the species," Philippine Eagle Foundation executive director Dennis Sal-

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Davao sanctuary offers hope for endangered Philippine eagle

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vador told Agence France-Presse (AFP) on a recent visit.

"But it certainly doesn't substitute for a population in the wild," Salvador added.

Only 250 left

The foundation estimates there are about 800 of the country's national bird remaining in the wild, although it is impossible to count accurately due to their remote habitats. International conservation groups say there could be as few as 250 Philippine eagles left.

In more than three decades of trial-and-error experiments by the foundation that have yet to fully understand the eagles' breeding habits, just 27 have been born in captivity.

The eagles are notoriously hard to pair, with the larger female known to attack and even

kill an unwanted suitor in the wild. Once they do find a suitable partner, it is generally for life, although even in the forests the couples will generally only reproduce every two years.

"It's difficult because we don't really know what happens in the wild, and we can't replicate that here in captivity," said Anna Mae Sumaya, the foundation's curator.

However, after failing to breed any eagles for nearly three years, recent successes have raised hopes.

'Exciting, fantastic'

Go Phoenix, which was brought into the center after being ensnared in a hunter's trap, and MVP, a shooting victim, were successfully paired in 2013 and have produced two chicks in quick succession, the latest in February.

The exceptionally rare moments in nature were filmed from behind glass enclosures, the

footage showing Chick No. 27 breaking out of its shell with a burst of energy and chirping before resting its head on pebbles in a small metal dish.

"It was exciting, a fantastic feeling, we were very lucky," Sumaya said, adding she hoped Go Phoenix and MVP could produce again next season.

Two other pairs of eagles have been given a chance to breed.

Problem of space

However, a growing problem is space: 35 eagles live in cages of various sizes in the center, which covers just 8 hectares (20 acres) of forest.

The center's ultimate goal is to release the eagles back into the wild, but this has proved even more of a challenge than breeding them.

One of the biggest problems has been the eagles becoming too accustomed to human con-

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PAUL EAGLE

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tact at the center. When released, they have been shot after getting too close to communities that are in or near the diminishing forests.

Formerly known as the monkey-eating eagle, the birds are protected by law. Killing one is punishable by a maximum 12-year prison term and a P1-million (\$21,000) fine, but shooters are rarely caught.

Out of 15 eagles from the center that have been released, only one is known to still be alive in the wild, according to Sumaya.

She said four eagles had been brought back to the center after sustaining injuries while the others were confirmed or presumed dead.

In the most recent failure, Matatag was shot in February. He had survived about a year after being released into the forests on Mt. Apo, the country's highest mountain.

Matatag had initially been brought to the center after being shot when he was just a year old, then spent three years in rehabilitation before his ill-fated release.

'Devastated'

"I was devastated. I thought: 'It's happening all over again,'" Sumaya said, but added the bird was recovering well.

The center is trying to eliminate contact between humans and the eagles that are earmarked for eventual release, although Sumaya said there were no plans in the near future to set any more free.

Key to survival

Eagles too badly injured or old to be released in the wild are put on display for tens of thousands of tourists and students who visit the center each year.

While breeding the eagles is important, Salvador said the

key to the eagles' survival was educating Filipinos about their plight and raising awareness about the need to stop logging, mining and other forest-destroying activities.

Four-year-old Fighter spends his days chained to a perch, his gray eyes constantly darting as if he thinks he is searching for prey in the wild, while his striking brown and white crest occasionally flares in a sign of stress or territorial aggression.

Fighter is missing nearly half of his left wing from a gunshot injury, making his survival in the wild unlikely. But he is helping to teach visitors about the eagles' plight.

"Just don't destroy the habitats of eagles, don't destroy their forests," 9-year-old Daneen Sinsuat replied when she was asked what she had learned from her visit to the center with her classmates.

AFP

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Group aims to save PH eagle

Breeding program ensures survival of near-extinct bird

*SURPRISINGLY
loud chirps ac-
company a clumsy
flurry of tiny wings
as a wispy-haired
chick breaks through
its shell, its birth
offering rare cause
for celebration
in the struggle to
save the Philip-
pine eagle from
extinction.*

Tropical rainforest destruction and relentless hunting have decimated the population of the majestic bird—one of the world's biggest and most powerful—with just hundreds believed to be left in the wild.

A small band of conservationists at a tiny sanctuary on the fringes of Davao, the southern Philippines' biggest city, is trying to ensure their survival by running the world's only breeding program for the eagles and by rehabilitating the wounded.

"The center serves basically as insurance, or a Noah's Ark so to speak, for the species," Philippine Eagle Foundation executive director Dennis Salvador told AFP on a recent visit.

"But it certainly doesn't substitute for a population in the wild."

The foundation estimates there are about 800 of the Philippines' national bird remaining in the wild, though it is impossible to count accurately due to their remote habitats. International conservation groups say there could be as few as 250 left.

In more than three decades of trial-and-error experiments by the foundation that have yet to fully understand the eagles' breeding habits, just 27 have been born in captivity.

The eagles are notoriously hard to pair, with the larger female known to attack and even kill an unwanted suitor in the wild. Once they do find a suitable partner, it is generally for life, although even in the forests the couples will generally only reproduce every two years.

"It's difficult because we don't really know what happens in the wild, and we can't replicate that here in captivity," said Anna Mae Sumaya, the foundation's curator.

'Exciting, fantastic'

However, after failing to breed any eagles for nearly three years, recent successes have raised hopes.

Go Phoenix, which was brought into the center after being ensnared in a hunter's trap, and MVP, a shooting victim, were successfully paired in 2013 and have produced two chicks in quick succession, the latest in February.

The exceptionally rare

moments in nature were filmed from behind glass enclosures, the footage showing chick number 27 breaking out of its shell with a burst of energy and chirping before resting its head on pebbles in a small metal dish.

"It was exciting, a fantastic feeling, we were very lucky," Sumaya said, adding she hoped Go Phoenix and MVP could produce again next sea-

son while two other pairs were also a chance to breed.

However, a growing problem is space: 35 eagles live in cages of various sizes in the center, which covers just eight hectares (20 acres) of forest.

The center's ultimate goal is to release the eagles back into the wild, but this has proved even more of a challenge than breeding them.

One of the biggest problems has been the eagles becoming too accustomed to human contact at the center. When released, they have been shot after getting too close to communities that are in or near the diminishing forests.

Formerly known as the monkey-eating eagle, the birds are protected by law. Killing one is punishable by a maximum 12-year prison term and a one-

million peso (\$21,000) fine, but shooters are rarely caught.

Out of 15 eagles from the center that have been released, only one is known to still be alive in the wild, according to Sumaya. She said four had been brought back to the center after sustaining injuries while the others were confirmed or presumed dead.

'Devastated'

In the most recent failure,

Matatag was shot in February. He had survived about a year after being released into the forests on Mt. Apo, the Philippines' highest mountain.

Matatag had initially been brought to the center after being shot when he was just one year old, then spent three years in rehabilitation before his ill-fated release. **AFP**

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ENDANGERED
A Philippine eagle named "Mindanao" spreads its wings at the Philippine Eagle Foundation in Davao City. Forest destruction and illegal hunting have decimated the number of the majestic bird, one of the world's biggest and most powerful, with only hundreds believed to be in the wild.
AFP PHOTO

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Sanctuary offers hope for PH eagle

DAVAO CITY: Surprisingly loud chirps accompany a clumsy flurry of tiny wings as a wispy-haired chick breaks through its shell, its birth offering rare cause for celebration in the struggle to save the Philippine eagle from extinction.

Tropical rainforest destruction and relentless hunting have decimated the population of the majestic bird -- one of the world's biggest and most powerful -- with just hundreds believed to be left in the wild.

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While breeding the eagles is important, foundation executive director Salvador said the key to the eagles' survival was educating Filipinos about their plight and raising awareness about the need to stop logging, mining and other forest-destroying activities. **AFP**

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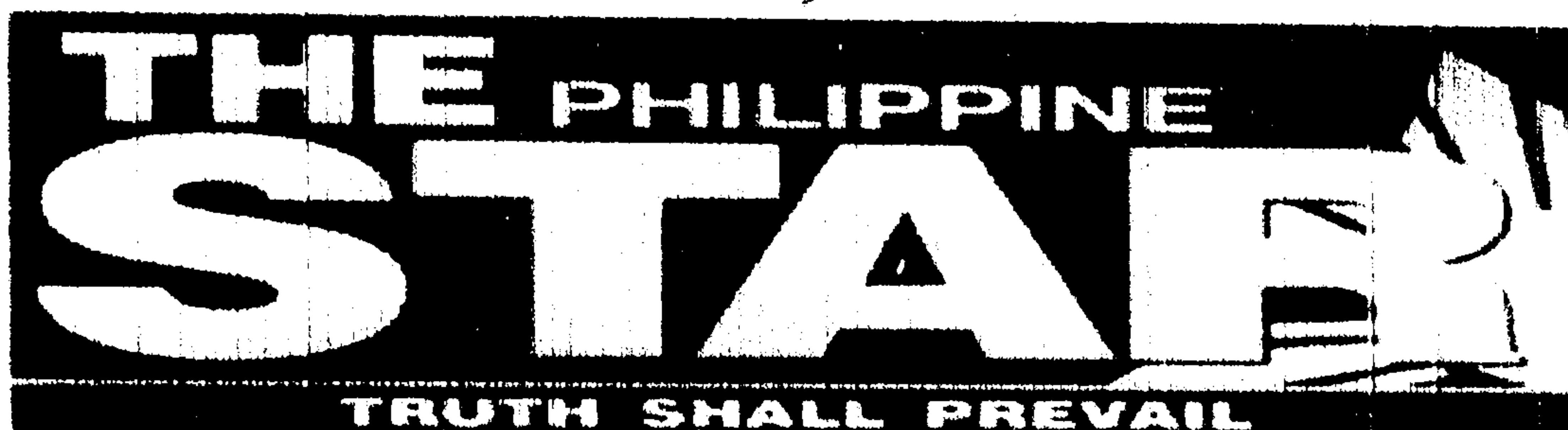
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Philippine Eagle Pag-asa, the first to be bred and hatched in captivity, rests on a tree at the Philippine Eagle Center in Davao City in this photo taken on Feb. 17.

AFP



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Phl in UN program vs wildlife trafficking

By PIA LEE-BRAGO

The Philippines and eight other countries are the latest in a list of nations to receive support for a global program against poaching and illegal trade in wildlife under an expanded United Nations-backed fund.

A UN-backed partnership fund has approved an additional \$40 million to expand support of a program fighting illegal trafficking in a total of 19 countries.

The Global Wildlife Program was approved by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and includes contributions from the Asian Development Bank, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the UN Development Program (UNDP), the UN Environment Program (UNEP), the World Bank Group and the World Wildlife Fund.

In June 2015, the GEF ap-

proved 10 national projects from Botswana, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Gabon, India, Indonesia, Mozambique, Republic of Congo, Tanzania and Zambia.

The announcement on Friday bolsters that program to strengthen the capacity of governments to combat poaching and trafficking of wildlife, and wildlife products in key range and transit countries that are in the front lines of combatting wildlife crime.

The nine additional countries are Afghanistan, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, Vietnam and Zimbabwe.

Activities in the Global Wildlife Program in the source countries will include enhancing anti-poaching tracking and intelligence operations, increasing the size of conservation areas and improving their

management, and providing opportunities for development through nature-based tourism and other agriculture, forestry and natural resource projects that benefit local communities.

In transit countries, the Global Wildlife Program will support anti-smuggling and customs controls, while in demand countries, it will initiate targeted awareness-raising campaigns to help increase legal deterrents for purchase of wildlife and wildlife products.

"The victims of wildlife crime are not only the animals and ecosystems that are devastated by poaching and trafficking, they are people as well," said UNEP executive director Achim Steiner.

He said the human cost of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife is measured in lives lost to the criminal networks

involved and livelihoods destroyed by the erosion of a natural economic foundation.

"Ending the illegal trade in wildlife requires a concerted and cooperative effort between all sectors. These new projects will further these efforts and help bring us closer to ending wildlife crime once and for all," he added.

Specifically, the Global Wildlife Program was established to address the growing poaching crisis and an international call to action. The value of illegal trade has been estimated at between \$10 billion and \$23 billion per year, making wildlife crime the fourth most lucrative illegal business after narcotics, human trafficking and weapons, UNEP said.

The new \$131-million agenda is expected to leverage \$704 million in additional co-financing over seven years

Daily Tribune

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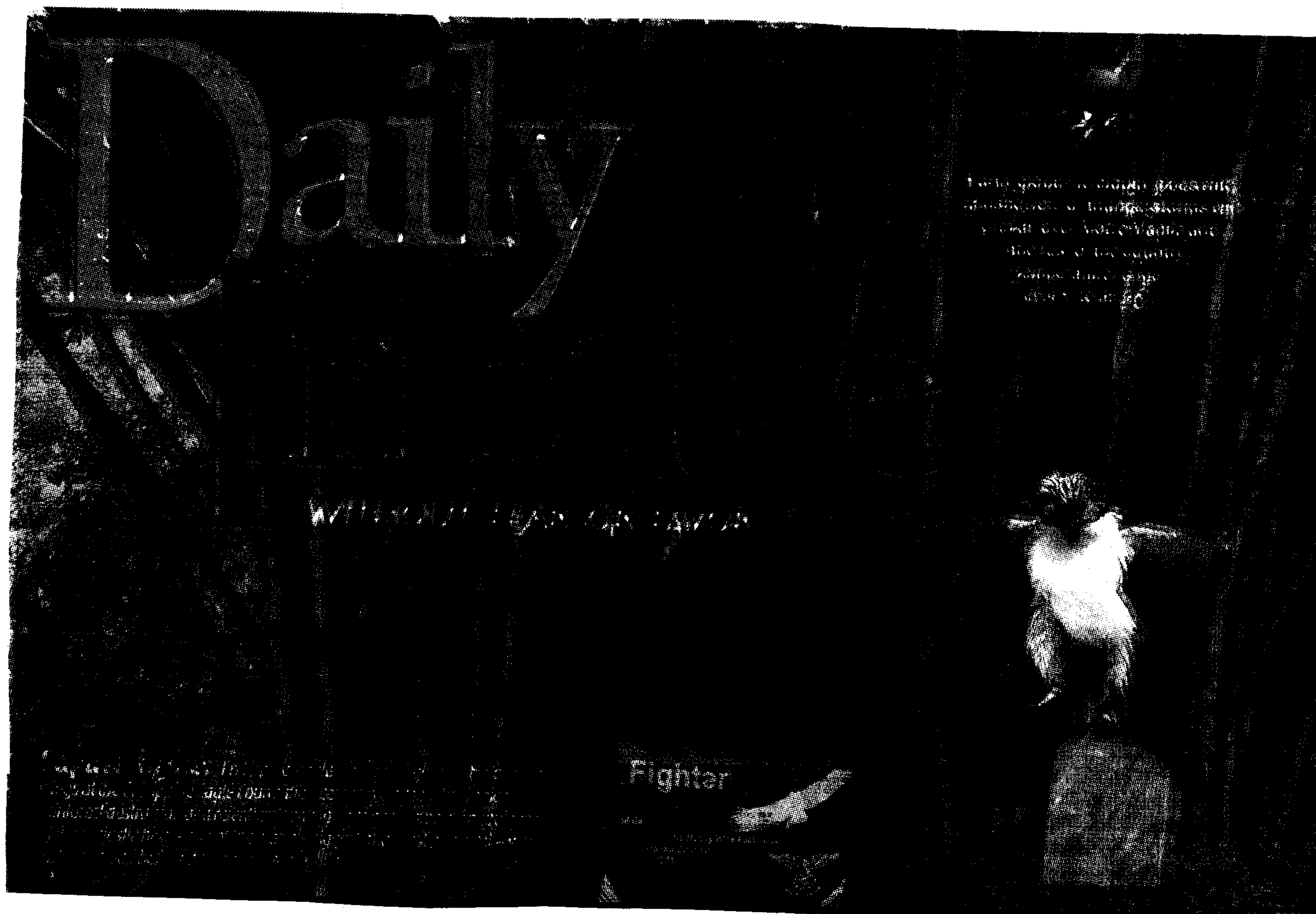
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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

'Save maritime habitats from decades of abuse, pollution'

By **FREDDIE G. LAZARO**

LAOAG CITY, Ilocos Norte — Sen. Loren Legarda has urged the international community to act in unison to halt and reverse the damage to the world's marine habitat brought by human activity.

"We have relied so much on the oceans for our existence — for food, for employment, for energy and for recreation. However, 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," she said.

In celebration of World Oceans Day recently, Legarda called for the prevention of plastic pollution in the ocean and promoted the use of reusable bags in lieu of disposable plastic bags.

Plastic waste inputs from land into the ocean, plastic debris dumped into oceans reached between 4.8 and 12.7 million metric tons.

The Philippines is the third top contributor with around 0.28-0.75 million metric tons of plastic marine waste annually, next only to China and Indonesia.

"Plastic can choke and poison marine species and damage marine ecosystems. Ultimately, it can affect us humans through the seafood that we eat. Thus, we must take this challenge seriously. The effective implementation of the Ecological Solid Waste Management (ESWM) Law is vital in this campaign," said Legarda, principal author of the ESWM Law or Republic Act 9003.

The Senator also highlighted the need to address the impact of climate change on oceans and marine ecosystems.

Legarda, Chair of the Senate Committee on Climate Change and UNISDR Global Champion for Resilience, said, "Studies have shown that oceans have acidified, having absorbed about a third of the carbon dioxide emitted, which has caused coral bleaching."

A strong advocate of marine conservation, Legarda said carbon emissions reduction is crucial in protecting our oceans.

Re-growing mangroves, seagrass beds and marshes, which absorb up to five times more carbon than tropical forests, will greatly help alleviate ocean acidification.

These coastal ecosystems likewise serve as buffers for storm surges and tsunamis.

The Standard

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

PCCI chooses GDP over climate change mitigation

THE reality of worsening world climatic conditions and the international realization of the need for a universal response has forced governments, private institutions and people



RUDY ROMERO

BUSINESS CLASS

to make choices between realistic alternatives to continued normal existence on this planet. Like the rest of the 192 members of the United Nations the Philippines signed in December 2015, a treaty committing all signatories to limiting the Earth's average temperature increase to 2 degrees above an agreed base figure. The Philippines' by-2030 commitment for reduction of carbon emissions – submitted to COP21 (the 21st Conference of Parties on Climate Change) – was 70 percent.

Foremost among the private institutions that have been under pressure to take a position on the issue of climate change mitigation is the business sector of this country, which is principally represented by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry. PCCI has now stated its position. That position, contained in a recent letter from president George Barcelon to the Climate Change Commission, which was created by Congress a few years ago to provide focus for the government's climate change mitigation efforts.

"We are very much concerned," George Barcelon's letter began, "on how this 70-percent commitment will impact on industries, especially those in the manufacturing sector and the small and medium enterprises." The letter went on to say that if interventions in order to reach a 70-percent reduction were to be capital-intensive, enterprises and industries "would be under pressure to incur higher operational costs and consumers would be paying higher prices for goods and services."

Therefore, Barcelon's letter concluded, "With Philippine manufacturing only starting to redevelop, the measures that should be adopted should balance the need to sustain economic growth with the need to protect the environment." He noted that the previous goal of 40 percent reduction had been supported by the private sector and suggested that a 40 percent reduction was "the threshold [at] which industries could reduce their carbon emission."

Assuming that he does not subscribe to the position that he took in his letter to the CCC, George Barcelon does not deserve criticism. He was only acting as the bearer of a message. One may kill a message but never the messenger.

PCCI deserves criticism in full measure. Barcelon's letter was reflective of an institutional mindset made up of two parts that are equally unacceptable. The first part is that it is business-as-usual in the world, which includes this country. The second part of the mindset is that in the realm of policymaking the Philippine business community – particularly the manufacturing sector – must be accorded priority over all else.

Let me address the business-as-usual part first. I pose the question, is PCCI for real? Some of the hottest-ever years have occurred in the past dozen years and PCCI thinks it is business as usual? Really bad bad natural disasters have been occurring with frightening frequency in places in the globe that never experienced them before – the most recent example being the overflowing of the Seine River's banks in Paris, a city with a history of climatic stability – and PCCI thinks it can still be business as usual in this country? And how about Ondoy followed in unrelenting succession by Pablo, Reming, Sendong and that more recent nightmare, Yolanda?

Now, the second part of the apparent PCCI mindset. In taking the position it has – to wit, that the Philippine government's commitment to the COP21 agreement is bad for the manufacturing sector's growth and therefore bad for the nation – PCCI, through its messenger George Barcelon, has echoed the dictum laid down in the 1940s by General Motors Corp. chairman Charles "Engine Charlie" Wilson: "What is good for General Motors is good for the US." A statement worded in that fashion was bound to be misinterpreted, and it was. Charles Wilson never lived down that boo-boo, and today it is one of the prime entries in the lexicon of not-to-be-made business statements.

If what PCCI and George Barcelon were trying to say was that what is good for PCCI's members is good for this country, they are very wrong, like Charles Wilson was. A whole is greater than any of its parts; the PCCI membership can never be greater than the national economy. In the same manner that what was good for General Motors could not be equated with what was good for the US, so the best interest of George Barcelon and his PCCI colleagues need not be in best interest of this country of 102 million people. Most certainly, it is not so in the increasingly urgent matter of climate change mitigation.

PCCI and George Barcelon don't have to be told that global warming and world climate worsening are no longer postponable deferrable, business-as-usual matters. After a disastrous El Niño episode, this country is looking at La Niña that could be worse, and there are the usual 20 or so typhoons lining up to visit these exposed islands this year.

After much study and review, the Philippine government has made a commitment of 70-percent carbon emissions reduction to the UN. That's a done deal. The commitment cannot – and should not – be watered down. The Philippines is one of the most vulnerable and foreign-assistance-needy countries in the world where climate change is concerned.

Instead of responding to the government in "It's bad for us" fashion, PCCI should put the experts to work to see how continued manufacturing-sector growth and attainment of 70-percent carbon emissions reduction can be reconciled. Perhaps the increase from 40 percent to 70 percent will not be as capital-intensive as PCCI fears it will be.

In any event, George Barcelon should not be shot; he is only the messenger. It is PCCI that should be shot, for its inward-looking, damn-the-nation attitude toward climate change mitigation.

E-mail: rudyromero777@yahoo.com

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Simultaneous cleanup drive, tree planting in Bulacan's 'green' month

By **FREDDIE C. VELEZ**

MALOLOS CITY, Bulacan – In line with the celebration of Environment Month this June, Governor Wilhelmino M. Sy-Alvarado is encouraging Bulakenyos to take part in programs to save Mother Earth.

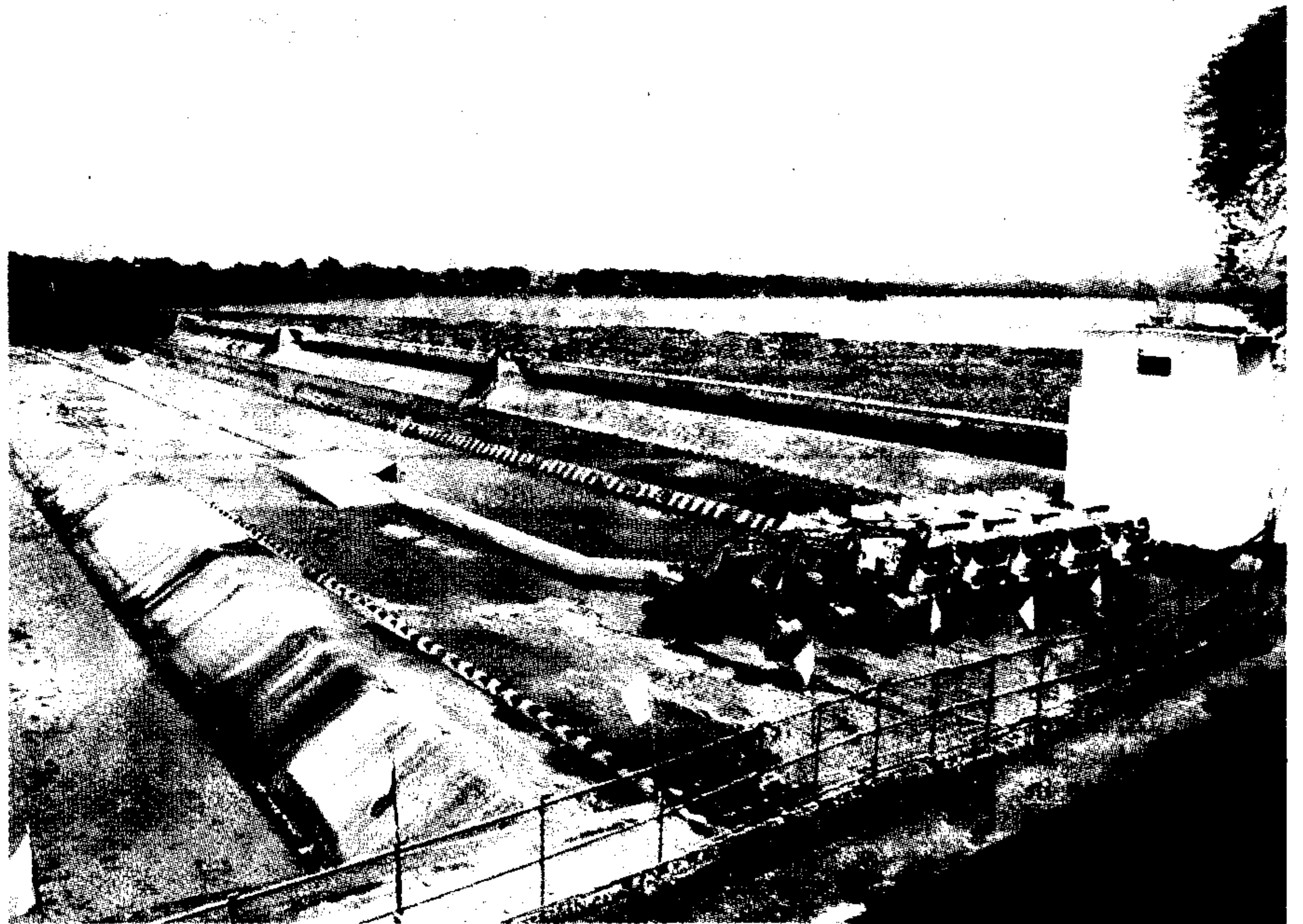
Alvarado reiterated the importance of preserving and protecting the environment to prevent the ill effects of climate change and global warming.

"When God created the world, it has indeed a perfect environment; everyone that a man needs was never a burden. But today the greenhouse effect is being felt universal-wise as planet earth retaliates to the ungodly human behavior which added factors to destroy the ozone layer, the protective covering umbrella of the world in all types of catastrophes," Alvarado said.

The province has come up with comprehensive measures to address the global call to protect the earth.

For one, the Bulacan Environment and Natural Resources Office (BENRO) will conduct a simultaneous cleanup drive and tree planting activity.

BENRO head Elizabeth M. Apresto



Angat Afterbay Regulator Dam, or more popularly known as Bustom Dam, in Brgy. Tibagan, Bustos, Bulacan. (Freddie C. Velez)

said representatives from non-government agencies, local government units, volunteers, barangay stakeholders and residents are expected to join in the cleaning of canals, creeks, and drainage.

It will be recalled that Alvarado declared the 25th of June every year as Arbor Day or Tree Planting Day in Bula-

can requiring all able-bodied citizens to plant one tree every year in accordance with the Philippines Arbor Day.

The Philippines celebrates the whole month of June as Environment Month to focus public attention on the protection and conservation of the country's natural resources.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Innovation key to sustainable dev't

REPUBLIC Cement, a leading cement and construction solutions provider, is spearheading the shift to environmentally responsive manufacturing practices and products.

Speaking at the People Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP) Foundation Summit on Clean Air and Climate Change, Don Lee, Republic Cement country chief executive officer Lee shared the company's many pioneering sustainability initiatives embedded across all aspects of its operations.

"Over the years, Republic Cement has undertaken significant improvements in its manufacturing processes to reduce carbon dioxide emissions," Lee said.

Lee identified one of Republic Cement's sustainability initiatives in the area of responsible stewardship of natural resources.

"Reforestation is an integral part of our operations," Lee said, adding that the company has planted and grown more than 400,000 trees in over 700 hectares of denuded land starting 2013

for its contribution to the country's reforestation efforts. Republic Cement's reforestation program is estimated to sequester as much as 78,000 tons of CO2 from the atmosphere in the next 10 years.

Launched in 2013, Republic Cement's reforestation program further aims to expand its scope to 1,500 hectares by 2020.

Republic Cement also looks to innovative solutions to promote energy efficiency. Lee said that the company has been utilizing alternative fuels since 2002, co-processing rice husk and other select biomass as well as refuse-derived fuel (RDF) sourced from solid waste segregation facilities to power its cement manufacturing operations. Republic Cement plants' co-processing activities contribute to effective waste management while also reducing the company's dependence on fossil fuels.

Republic Cement also operates a waste heat recovery system in its Teresa plant in Rizal, which

further improves energy efficiency by channeling excess heat from the plant's production processes to generate electricity. The WHR supplies nearly 30 percent of the plant's energy requirements, and reduces carbon dioxide emissions by approximately 12,000 tons per year.

Complementing these various process innovations is Republic Cement's total ash management agreements with coal-fired power generating companies, which allow for the use of fly and bottom ash, by-products of coal-fired power generation, in the cement manufacturing process. The use of fly and bottom ash provides a viable and sustainable alternative to the use of non-renewable quarry materials.

Republic Cement is the only cement manufacturer in the country that manufactures fly ash blended cement. Aptly named "Tibay Enhancers," fly ash blended cement increases the durability of concrete and provides for improved workability and a smoother finish.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Brighter prospects for Mindanao eyed after Davao's Duterte assumes presidency

By Carmencita A. Carillo

Correspondent

DAVAO CITY — The Regional Development Council (RDC) Davao Region is hopeful that Mindanao's moniker as a land of promise will finally be realized under the leadership of President-elect Rodrigo R. Duterte.

"With the incoming president hailing from Mindanao the prospects for a better Davao Region of 4.89 Million residents have become even brighter in terms of resource allocation which we have aspired for and which this Council has long fought hard for," RDC Davao Region Chair Rodolfo R. del Rosario said.

He said Mindanao has always been left out in the past years when it comes to development giving rise to the phrase "imperial Manila" because it has always been the priority budget-wise. With Mr. Duterte as president, he hopes that the region and the whole of Mindanao will get special attention.

But even before a Mindanaoan takes over Malacañang, the Davao Region is expected to maintain its position as the country's fastest growing economy with a projection that it could sustain or even surpass its 2014 gross domestic product of 9.4% once all the figures are tabulated for 2015.

"It was reported that the Davao Region's 2014 GDP topped all the other regions and its 9.4% growth rate even better than that of the 6.7% GDP nationwide," RDC Davao Region vice-chairperson and National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) Regional Director Maria Lourdes D. Lim said.

While the Philippine Statistics Authority reported that the national economy grew by 6.9% during the first quarter of the year, Ms. Lim said she is confident the Davao Region can surpass this growth although they have yet to secure the data for the first quarter of 2016.

Ms. Lim said the Region was able to achieve this growth despite a meager share in the national budget. The Region has a P38.21 billion share from the 2016 national budget of P3.002 trillion and this would be distributed among 23 major government agencies. It was allocated P39.44 billion in 2015.

Mr. Del Rosario, said they are proposing a bigger budget of P115.24 billion for the region next year, with the biggest bulk of P57.562 billion eyed for the Departments of Education, Health and Social Welfare and Development. A P50.646-billion budget is being eyed for the region's infrastructure development and will be poured into the Departments of Public Works and Highways, Land Transportation Office, Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines and the Philippine Ports Authority.

BIG TICKET PROJECTS

"In our Development Framework we looked forward to the improved quality of our infrastructure facilities. Along this objective we have targeted the paving of all national roads in the region," Mr. Del Rosario said.

In 2010, the length of the paved national roads in the region was only 693 kilometers, which is only 83% of the region's total national arterial road. By end of 2015, 92% of the total length of the region's arterial roads equivalent to 772 km had been paved. The target is expected to be achieved this year with the paving of the remaining 64 km.

The total paved length of the national secondary roads was 686 km or 84% of the region's total. The remaining 133 km unpaved section is targeted for completion this year.

With Mr. Duterte as president, the Council is confident that the region's big ticket projects, namely the Davao International Airport project and the Sasa Port Development project will be realized. "These are the two main gateways of the region and will boost the region's physical connectivity and boost Mindanao's development and

make it more competitive in view of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Economic Integration," Mr. Del Rosario said.

He also identified other key projects, such as the proposed bridge between the Island Garden City of Samal and the city, Davao City's proposed bypass road, and the Davao Food Exchange Complex, which upon completion, would "support industries and services sectors as (these are) growth drivers."

A Japanese company has conducted a feasibility study on the proposed bridge between Samal and the city, which has been proposed about two decades ago and a pet project of Mr. del Rosario.

Tourism officials and some environmental groups have urged the national government to conduct a thorough study on the proposal, particularly on its impact to the environment of the project. Among those making the calls is Regional Director Roberto P. Alabado III, an environmental planner, who warned that there is a need to look into the carrying capacity of the island city to prevent the destruction of both its natural resources and the environment.

On the bypass road, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources last month announced that the agency has started the 20-kilometer project and is spending about P394 million for the first phase.

On the food exchange center, which was supposed to have started last year, the proponent, councilor Marissa S. Abella, earlier said that the city government has been securing assistance for its setting up in the five-hectare area owned by the National Development Corp. and is located in the southernmost part of the city.

Ms. Abella claimed the P70-million project, which would serve as the trading center for agricultural products, is expected to be completed next year.— *with a report from Carmelito Q. Francisco*

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CENTRAL VISAYAS: CEBU

Ship still stuck but no oil spill

THE M/V BELLE ROSE, the bulk carrier that ran aground in Monad Shoal near Malapascua Island around 3 a.m. on Monday, is still stuck among the corals, but there appears to be no oil spill or threat to the thresher shark population. Salvage operations were set to begin on Wednesday.

>> See full story on <http://goo.gl/NSJHq3>

