

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DATE : 27 JUN 2016

DAY : Monday

# DENR

## IN THE NEWS

27 JUN 2016

THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER

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## PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

### DENR adds 6 more to protected water areas

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has declared six more water bodies in the country as water quality management areas (WQMA) to better protect them from pollution.

Environment Secretary Ramon Paje said the DENR designated as WQMA the Naguilan River System in La Union; Cañas-Maalimango Rivers in Cavite; Ayala River in Zamboanga City; Taoloan River Basin in Misamis Oriental; Talomo River in Davao City; and Lake Sebu in South Cotabato.

The designations of the six water bodies bring the total number

of WQMAs nationwide to 31.

"This is part of our effort to keep the country's waterways clean and ensure the sustainable water supply for Filipinos," Paje said.

"The designations would help determine what control measures to institute to effectively achieve water quality objectives and improvements in those areas," he added.

According to Paje, all six newly-designated WQMAs have a combined area of 221,376 hectares of inland water systems, including land portions surrounding the water bodies.

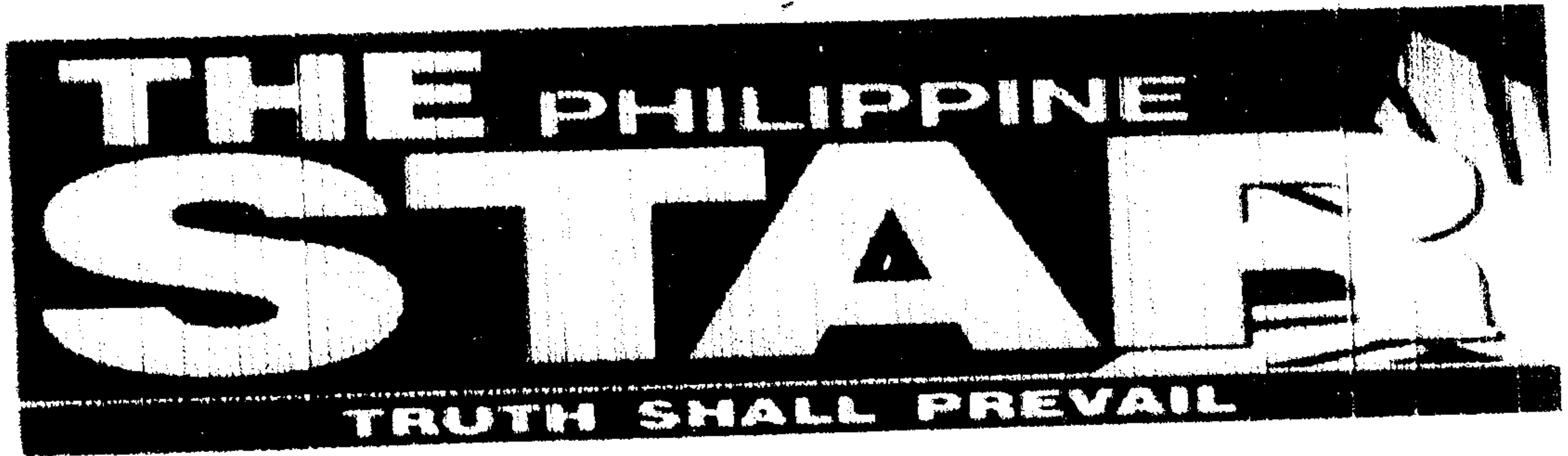
He said four of these water

bodies are critical to aquifers and irrigation. These are the Naguilan River System, Talomo River, Ayala River, and Lake Sebu.

He noted that the designation of Cañas-Maalimango Rivers as WQMA strengthens government compliance with the Supreme Court mandamus on the cleanup of Manila Bay because the two rivers serve as major transport route of pollutants from establishments within the Cavite area.

Paje said the Tagoloan River Basin serves as a repository of all water that stream through from the watershed areas of Bukidnon and Misamis Oriental provinces.

-- *Angela Lopez de Leon*



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### DENR identifies water quality management areas

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has identified six new water quality management areas (WQMA) to ensure sustainable water supply for the country.

Outgoing environment Secretary Ramon Paje designated the Naguilan River System in La Union, Cañas-Maalimango Rivers in Cavite, Ayala River in Zamboanga City, Taoloan River Basin in Misamis Oriental, Talomo River in Davao City and Lake Sebu in South Cotabato as the new WQMA.

"This is part of our effort to keep the country's waterways clean and ensure the sustainable water supply for Filipinos. The designations would help determine what control measures to institute to effectively achieve water quality objectives and improvements in those areas," he said.

The new WQMA have a combined area of 221,376 hectares of inland water systems, including land portions surrounding the water bodies.

Four of the water bodies are critical to aquifers and irrigation these are Naguilan River System, Talomo River, Ayala River and Lake Sebu.

# BusinessWorld

## INCREASE YOUR BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## DENR classifies 6 water bodies as water quality management areas

By Janina C. Lim *Reporter*

THE DEPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has named six more water bodies around the country as water quality management areas (WQMAs), which would put the areas under more stringent policies for protection from land-based pollution sources.

In separate administrative orders signed by Environment Secretary Ramon J. Paje, the DENR designated as WQMAs the Naguilan River System in La Union; Cañas-Maalimango Rivers in Cavite; Ayala River in Zamboanga City; Taoloan River Basin in Misamis Oriental; Talomo River in Davao City; and Lake Sebu in South Cotabato.

The designation of WQMAs is in pursuance of Republic Act No. 9275 or the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004, which aims to provide a decentralized management system for water quality protection and improvement of river systems.

The Clean Water Act tasks the DENR to create a governing board for each WQMA to serve as a planning, monitoring, and coordinating body.

The DENR, in coordination with the National Water Resources Board, is further tasked to enlist certain areas as WQMAs using appropriate physiographic

units such as watersheds or river basins in ensuring the water quality of these bodies.

The department and its stakeholders are to craft ways to deal with pollution and maximize the beneficial use of these water bodies.

All six newly designated WQMAs have a combined area of 221,376 hectares of inland water systems, including land portions surrounding the water bodies.

Four of these water bodies — the Naguilan River System, Talomo River, Ayala River, and Lake Sebu — are critical to aquifers and irrigation.

The Cañas-Maalimango Rivers have become a major route of pollutants from establishments within the Cavite area south of Manila Bay.

The designation of the two rivers as WQMAs strengthens government compliance with the Supreme Court's 2008 issuance of a writ of continuing mandamus directing 13 government agencies to clean up, rehabilitate, and eventually preserve Manila Bay.

The Tagoloan River Basin, the 13<sup>th</sup> largest river system in the country, serves as a repository of water streaming through from the watershed areas of Bukidnon and Misamis Oriental provinces.

This brings to 31 the total number of WQMAs nationwide, as opposed to five designated by the previous Arroyo administration.

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### 39 more caves under protection

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has placed 39 natural caves across the country under the protection and management of the government.

Environment Secretary Ramon Paje said the classification, as embodied in Memorandum Circular 2016-05 that he signed, was necessary to ensure that the caves would be "preserved and properly enjoyed by the public."

"The directive will help enhance public awareness and appreciation that caves are part of our natural resources because of their significance as ecosystems which host various forms of wildlife," Paje explained.

"It also helps protect the geological, archaeological, historical and cultural values these caves carry, and helps sustain them for the enjoyment of future generations," he added.

The additional 39 caves brings to 454 the total number of caverns that

are now part of the country's natural wealth and therefore require sustainable management and protection.

The 39 caves include six in the Cordillera Administrative Region; seven in Ilocos Region; two in Cagayan Region; 15 in Bicol; three in Davao del Norte province; and six in Region 12 (SOCCKSKARGEN).

Nine caves were categorized as Class I for their delicate and fragile formations, threatened species and extremely hazardous conditions being closed to ecotourism. Activities allowed within these caves are limited to mapping, photography, and educational and scientific purposes.

Categorized as Class I caves are the Karilagan and Aswang caves in Catanduanes, and the Kasilac Bat Cave in San Isidro, Davao del Norte.

A total of 23 caves were classified as Class II, including the Sorolla Cave in Koronadal City. Class II caves have portions with hazardous conditions, as well as sensitive geological, cultural and

historical values or ecosystem. These sections may be declared closed, while the other portion may be open to experienced spelunkers or guided visits.

Seven caves, including the Dalangin Cave in Camarines Sur and the Sibud-Sibud Cave in Abra, were identified as Class III or those safe for inexperienced, yet expert-accompanied visits. These caves may also be utilized for economic activities like extraction or collection of guano or bird's nest.

The DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau has been studying the caves prior to their classification, pursuant to Republic Act No. 9072 or the National Caves and Cave Resources Management and Protection Act.

The law mandates the DENR to formulate, develop and implement a cave management program to conserve and protect caves and cave resources.

**JAMES KONSTANTIN GALVEZ**

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## WESTERN VISAYAS

### DENR to put up arboretum in Antique town

THE DEPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will put up an arboretum in Pandan, Antique to protect and conserve trees that are considered endangered species. According to the Philippine Information Agency regional office in the Western Visayas, the arboretum will be put up in Barangay Sto. Rosario in Pandan. — *The Freeman*

>> See full story on <http://goo.gl/1LxOUA>

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## **₱9.35 M worth of land titles given free – DENR**

By **TARA YAP**

**I**LOILO CITY—A total of ₱9.35-million worth of land titles has been distributed in Western Visayas by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Region VI (DENR-6) in the last two years.

According to DENR-6 Regional Director Jim Sampulna, this is equivalent to 8,743.38 hectares of agricultural land and 225.60 hectares of residential lands.

The DENR-6 successfully distributed 11,022 agricultural land titles and 9,062 residential land titles for free in Panay and Negros Islands for fiscal years 2014-2015.

“Thousands of beneficiaries are now proud land owners and enjoy their security of tenure. It would have cost them millions of pesos if they had to undergo the grueling process,” Sam-

pulna explained.

With the completion of the cadastral survey for Western Visayas region, DENR-6 rigorously implemented the Patents Processing and Issuance program.

Prior to this, land claimants had to spend a fortune to process their land applications.

“We do not want our land beneficiaries to worry a lot about spending so much to process their land titles. It is unnecessary. And we do not want to keep them waiting for a lifetime. It is our duty to deliver our functions as fast as possible and we must do it well,” Sampulna added.

Meanwhile, DENR-6 is also beefing up its program on Land Administration and Management System (LAMS). This aims to correct erroneous data, duplication of records and other problems that causes land-related conflicts.

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### Carbon neutral project launched in Zambo City

By **NONOY E. LACSON**

ZAMBOANGA CITY – The Society of Filipino Foresters, Inc., (SFFI), in cooperation with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Zamboanga Peninsula, launched yesterday in this city the Carbon Neutral Project, which is aimed at instilling in the minds of Filipinos the importance of

trees in the ecology system.

SFFI National Council President Tommy T. Valdez personally led about 200 foresters from Region 9 in planting of trees in Sitio Murok, Upper Pasonanca in this city.

During the tree-planting, Valdez, a known environmentalist, reminded the foresters about the importance of trees and how it helps reduce carbon dioxide

in the atmosphere.

Valdez said that each person has to have a mission to plant atleast 100 trees in his lifetime to help absorb carbon dioxide.

DENR-9 Director Arleigh J. Adorable yesterday urged the people in the region to help eliminate carbon dioxide in the air by planting trees in their respective community.

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### ■ ANTI-MINING FROM A1

## Zambales anti-mining activists win big

"We fought against injustice in several arenas, we lost. The Supreme Court gave us hope. I hope they will not dampen, but give us eternal flame," Concerned Citizens of Santa Cruz (CCOS) chairman Dr. Benito Molino told *The Manila Times* recently.

Molino and his companions have been fighting against what they call irresponsible and destructive mining operations in the province of Zambales, particularly in the northernmost towns of Candelaria and Santa Cruz.

Residents of the two towns have even tried to put up barricades to stop hauling trucks of mining firms to transport nickel ore from the mine sites to the pier but these only resulted in the arrests of some residents and others facing charges in court.

Their persistence against the difficult odds, however, seemed to have paid off lately with the Supreme Court issuing a Writ of Kalikasan against five mining firms, namely: Benguet Nickel Mines Inc. (BNMI); Eramen Minerals Inc (EMI); LNL Archipelago Minerals Inc. (LAMI); Zambales Diversified Metals Corp. (ZDMC); and Shangfil Mining and Trading Corp.

(SMTC) operating in Zambales.

"The court found the petition sufficient in form and substance to merit the issuance of the Writ of Kalikasan," said the tribunal in a full-court session.

The High Court also ordered the Court of Appeals (CA) to look into the petition against mining operations in the province.

SC spokesman Theodore Te said the SC referred a petition filed by CCOS to the CA "to receive the appropriate pleadings and conduct hearings hereon."

Writ of Kalikasan is a legal remedy that provides for the protection of one's right to a "balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature," as provided for in Section 16, Article II of the 1987 Constitution.

Newly-elected Zambales Gov. Amor Deloso, who will assume office on July 1 this year, said his first executive order is to issue a moratorium on all mining activities in the province.

Deloso's declaration affirms his adherence to the SC's issuance of the Writ of Kalikasan to the five mining companies.

Deloso said once a Temporary Environmental Protection Order

is issued, mining operations in the town will be suspended.

If it can be done in Santa Cruz, he added, it would be better to suspend mining operations in other towns in Zambales as well.

"We don't want Santa Cruz to be submerged in mud again during this rainy season. The safety of the people and the protection of the environment will be first on my agenda, not mining," Deloso said.

Molino's group also rejoiced upon learning that the DENR post has been given to ABS CBN's Lingkod Kapamilya Foundation chairman Regina "Gina" Lopez, who has been supporting CCOS in their anti-irresponsible mining struggle in the province.

It has met with Deloso and gave suggestions for the green development of the province.

Aside from a province-wide mining moratorium, other suggestions given are: conduct of an environmental audit; compensation for the damage to livelihood and environment; rehabilitation of damaged areas; review and revision of the Environmental Code of Zambales; and push for green development and concrete plan and action to achieve this.

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## Zambales anti-mining activists win big

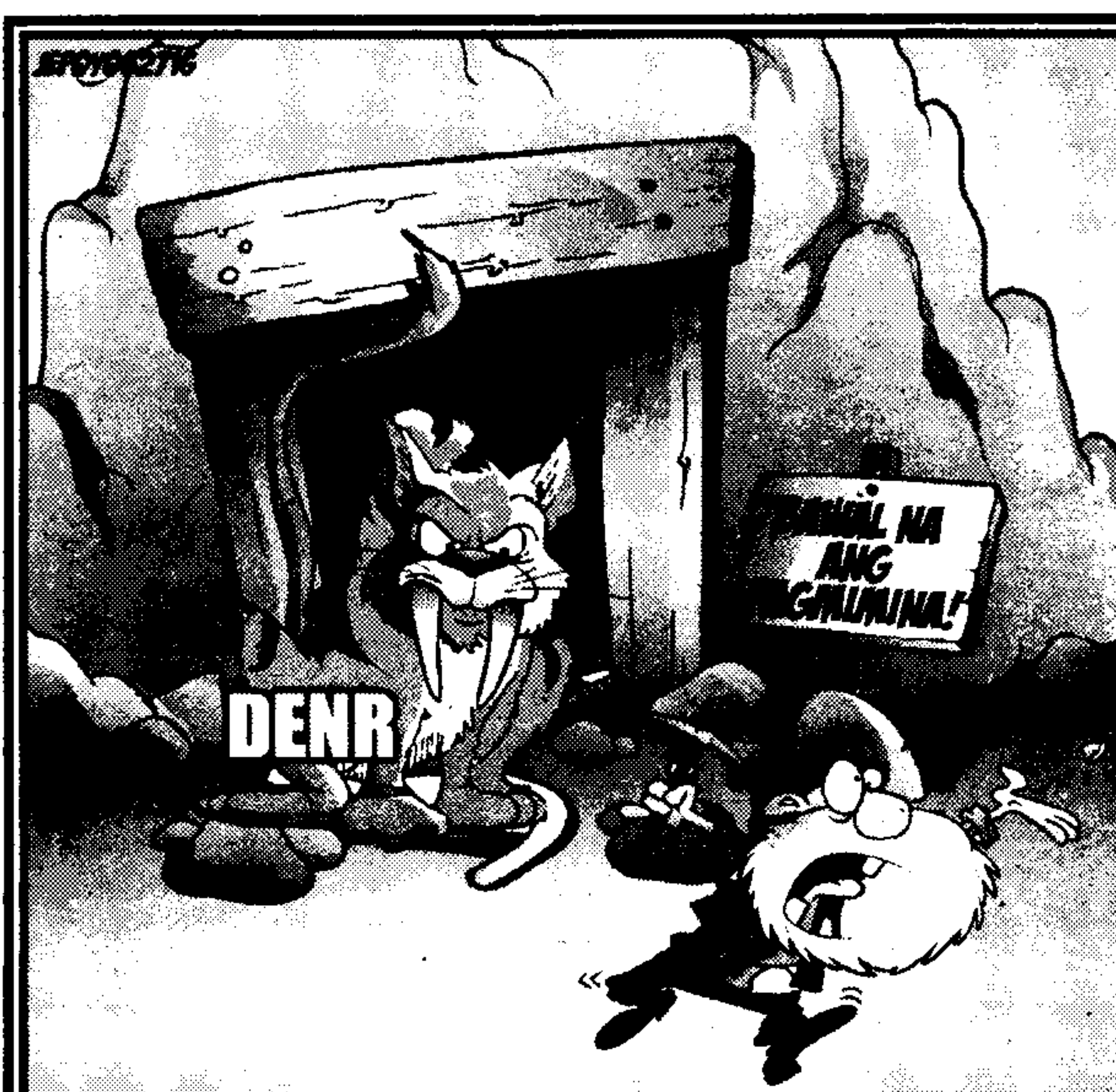
**BY PATRICK ROXAS**  
CORRESPONDENT

**SANTA CRUZ, Zambales:** A sudden turn of events that appear to them like manna from heaven--the Supreme Court issuing

a Writ of Kalikasan against five mining firms in the province, the incoming governor announcing his first executive order will be a moratorium on mining activities in Zambales and the appointment of a new Department of the Envi-

ronment and Natural Resources (DENR) secretary that is known for her staunch opposition to irresponsible mining--has put anti-mining advocates here on an upbeat mood.

► **Anti-miningA8**



### Editorial

## Babala sa mga gahamang minero

**T**UMATAK agad sa isipan nang marami ang mga sinabi ni incoming Environment secretary Gina Lopez, makaraang hirangin ni president-elect Rodrigo Duterte noong nakaraang linggo, *"I don't like mining, the foreigners and the rich are the only ones benefitting from it but the farmers and the fishermen suffer."*

Swak na swak ang kanyang sinabi at hindi na ito lingid sa mamamayan sapagkat ngayon ay marami nang tumututol sa pagmimina dahil sa kagagawan ng mga iresponsableng minero. Nasisira ang kapaligiran dahil sa ginagawang pagmimina. Hinuhukay at binubutas ang mga bundok nang walang pakundangan. Wala silang pakialam kung mawasak man ang mga bundok. Ang mahalaga sa kanila ay mahukay ang inaasam nilang mina na magpapayaman sa kanila.

Wasak ang mga kabundukan sa Compostela Valley at Davao Oriental. Masahol pa sa sungkaan ang tuktok ng mga bundok doon dahil sa walang pakundangang pagmimina. Nang manalasa ang bagyong Pablo noong 2012, bumigay ang bundok. Napuno ng tubig ang mga butas at iyon ang naging dahilan para magkaroon ng landslides. Tinangay ng putik ang mga bahay kasama ang mga troso. Mahigit 300 katao ang namatay.

Noong Pebrero 17, 2006, naguho ang bundok sa St. Bernard, Southern Leyte at tinakpan ang isang barangay. Isang school na may mga bata at guro ang nalibing nang buhay. Ang pagmimina rin ang itinuturong dahilan nang pagkawasak ng bundok.

Noong Marso 24, 1996, sinira rin ng Marcopper Mining Company ang pinagkukunan ng ikinabubuhay ng mga taga-Marinduque. Ang dating buhay na buhay na Boac River ay nalason at namatay dahil sa tailings. Ilan sa mga tao ang nagkasakit sa balat.

Inaasahang ang pagkakahirang kay Lopez sa DENR ang pipigil sa mga matatakaw na minero upang hindi masira ang kapaligiran. Inaasahan din na bibigyang solusyon ang mga basura ng Canada na itinaapon sa bansa at walang ginawa ang Aquino government. At bibigyan ng ngipin ang Clean Air Act para hindi dekorasyon lamang. Maraming sumisira sa kalikasan at dapat silang papanagutin.

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## PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

### What does Gina Lopez use to brush her teeth?

**A**N exchange between Gina Lopez, incoming President Rodrigo Duterte's choice as secretary of Environment and Natural Resources, and a pro-mining advocate is going the rounds of social media.

Lopez was asking the man to choose between food and minerals because Lopez argues that mining that extracts minerals from underneath the ground destroys the land where man produce food. Apparently Lopez does not believe in responsible mining.

Apparently also, the pro-mining man mentioned the things that we use in our daily lives that came from mines such as toothpaste.

Here's the exchange that followed:

Lopez: Kumakain ka ba? Ano ang mas importante, toothpaste o pagkain? ...Ano ang pipiliin mo mineral o pagkain?

Pro-mining person: Both.

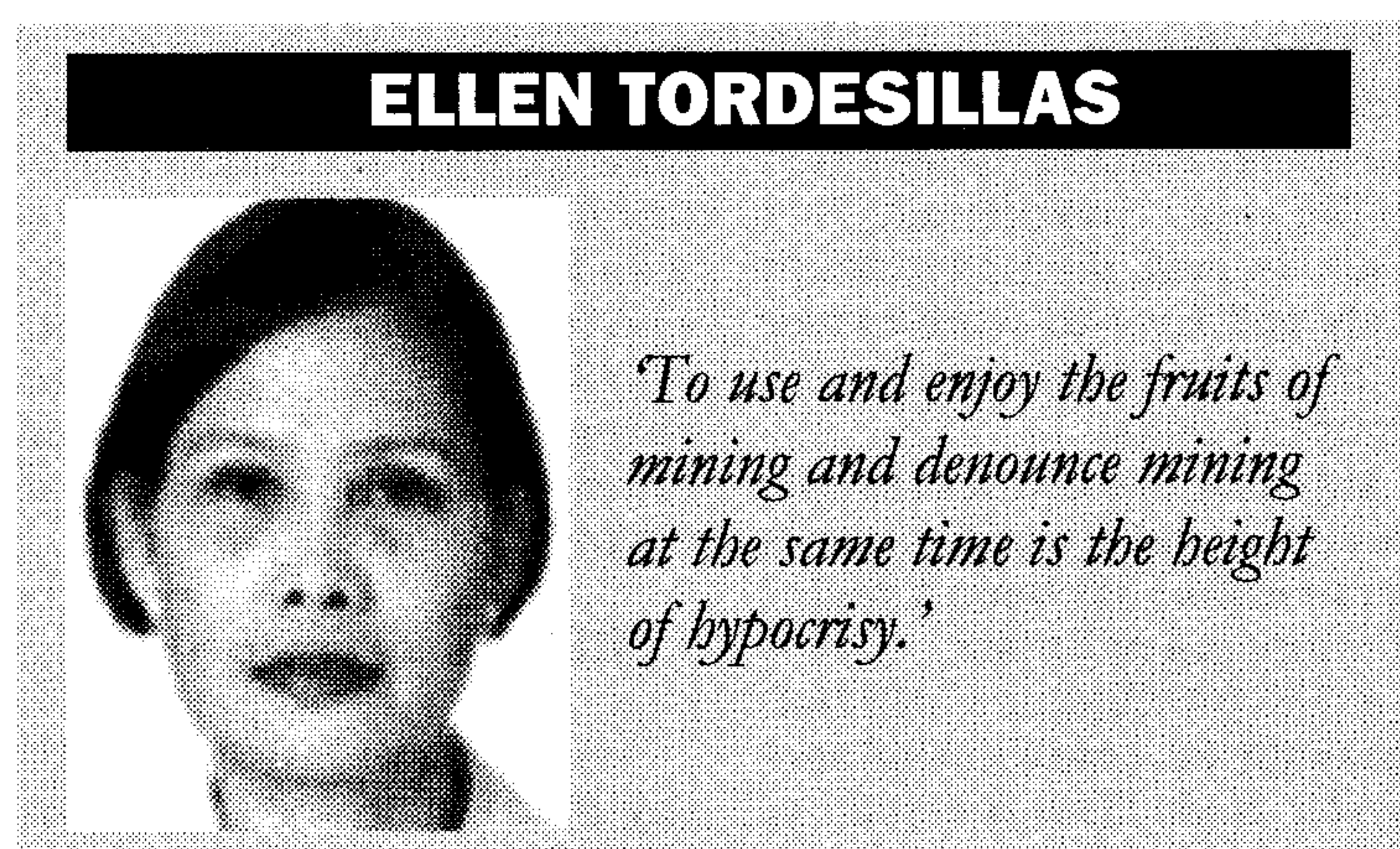
Lopez: Ay hindi pwede.

Pro-mining person: Sa pagkain, may kaldero ka o wala?

Lopez: Wala.

Pro-mining person: Wala kang kaldero?

Very interesting exchange. The pro-mining guy probably brought up kaldero because you need that to cook food. A kaldero or any



**ELLEN TORDESILLAS**

*'To use and enjoy the fruits of mining and denounce mining at the same time is the height of hypocrisy.'*

cooking utensil including rice cooker contains metals that was extracted from the earth.

But then Lopez was probably telling the truth when she said she has no kaldero because maybe she does not cook. For all we know she doesn't know what a kaldero is. She probably eats out or she orders and food is delivered to her. She has the means to do that.

Maybe she doesn't know that the food that was delivered to her was cooked in a kaldero? When she eats, she uses plate, fork and spoon and drinks her water from a glass. Those things contain miner-

als that came from mining.

When Lopez was arguing with the guy, she was holding a microphone to deliver her message. That microphone contains metals from mining.

In that forum, Lopez was wearing a red dress. We imagine she was wearing shoes. Those were produced by machine that contained metals produced by mining. If mining is totally banned, there would be no sewing machines, no needles to produce clothes and shoes. Gina would have to wear leaves just like Adam and Eve.

Did Lopez walk from her house

to the venue of the forum? If she took a car, she was being untrue to her anti-mining advocacy because a car contains metals produced by mining. There would be no vehicles without mining. There would be no airplanes, no trains without mining.

The forum was held in an air-conditioned room. An aircon unit contains metals from beneath the ground that can only be obtained by mining. We imagine that the rooms in Lopez's house are air-conditioned. Her house, we imagine, is sturdy because it is made of concrete and steel. She is able to sleep well and not exposed to the sun and the rain because materials from mining sheltered her from the elements.

Does she have a cellphone? She should throw that away because that contains many things from underground obtained through mining. Same with computers.

Lopez family is into telecommunications, a business that is dependent on equipment made of materials from mining. To use and enjoy the fruits of mining and denounce mining at the same time is the height of hypocrisy.

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### Maynilad's 'Plant for Life' targets 50k trees in 2016

**W**est Zone concessionaire Maynilad Water Services, Inc. (Maynilad) has officially kicked off its annual tree-planting activity "Plant for Life," which is part of an extensive reforestation program to help save the Ipo Watershed in Norzagaray, Bulacan.

The kickoff was graced by the finalists of the Miss Earth Philippines 2016, who rolled up their sleeves to plant saplings along with Maynilad officials and employee-volunteers.

The company aims to plant 50,000 saplings this year to cover an additional land area of approximately 33 hectares. Since the program's inception in 2006, Maynilad has planted 417,600 saplings at the Ipo watershed using indigenous trees like narra, acacia, cupang, and apitong.

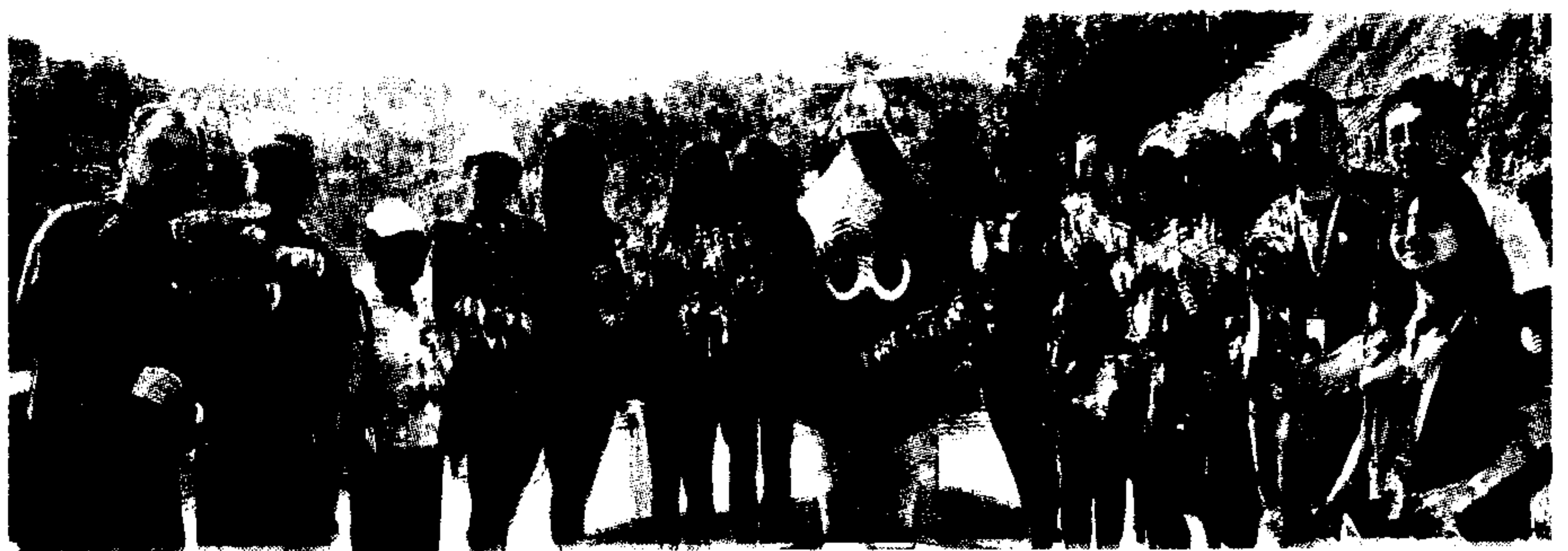
"Planting trees at the denuded Ipo watershed is a vital part of Maynilad's overall program to protect the environment and keep our water resources sustainable. We hope to encourage more partners to join us in this effort," said Maynilad President and CEO Ramoncito S. Fernandez.

Maynilad's "Plant for Life" program is done in coordination with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, local government of Norzagaray, National Commission for Indigenous People (NCIP), and Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS).

Volunteers are welcome to participate in Maynilad's series of tree-planting activities, which is held every year between the months of June and November. Interested parties may

call the company's Environmental Management Department at 981-3484 to inquire about the schedule and requirements.

Maynilad is the largest private water concessionaire in the Philippines in terms of customer base. It is the agent and contractor of the MWSS for the West Zone of the Greater Manila Area, which is composed of the cities of Manila (certain portions), Quezon City (certain portions), Makati (west of South Super Highway), Caloocan, Pasay, Parañaque, Las Piñas, Muntinlupa, Valenzuela, Navotas and Malabon all in Metro Manila; the cities of Cavite, Bacoor and Imus, and the towns of Kawit, Noveleta and Rosario, all in Cavite Province.



Maynilad officials are joined by Miss Earth Philippines 2016 finalists, Bulacan's Provincial and Community Environment and Natural Resources, and NCIP during the Maynilad "Plant for Life" kickoff activity held recently at the Ipo watershed in Bulacan.

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## Bataan gets second Guinness this year

**ORION, Bataan:** Bataan for the second time this year on Saturday got the certificate as title holder of the Guinness World Records under the category "Most Trees Planted in one Hour by a Team of Unlimited Size in a Single Location."

Swapnil Dangarikar, adjudicator of Guinness, announced Bataan successfully planted 223,390 trees surpassing India's record of 208,751.

More than 20,000 people participated in the planting of various seedlings of forest trees like eucalyptus, narra, cashew and fruit trees in more than 20 hectares of public lands in the mountain side of Barangay General Lim below the giant War Memorial Cross in Mount Samat.

"Congratulations. The project was wonderfully done," the Indian said after a long and rigid validation of the results.

Gov. Albert Garcia and Mayor Antonio Raymundo of Orion beamed with joy as they received the Guinness certificate.

The governor said massive tree-planting activity had two purposes. "Una, gusto nating matulungan ang environment. Kapag nagtanim ng puno, kapalit nito soil protection at oxygen para sa Bataan at sa

bansa [Firstly, we want to help the environment. When we plant trees, the benefits is soil protection and more oxygen for Bataan and the country]," he said.

"Pangalawa [Secondly], we want to send a strong message why we want to get the world record. The message is - Ang Bataan mabilis mag develop, mabilis lumago ang ekonomiya pero at the same time, gusto nating balansihin ang environmental protection [Bataan's development is rapid, its economy grows fast but at the same time, we want to balance it with environmental protection]," he added.

As early as 4 a.m., thousands trooped to the planting site. Many hiked uphill traversing more than four kilometers of concrete and dirt roads.

Planting started at 10 a.m. and in less than an hour, the activity in close watch by the police, a private auditing firm and Guinness adjudicators was finished.

Last March 18, 2016, Balanga City beat Mexico City in the Guinness World Records' category of "Dance Fitness Exercise" after 16,218 people joined the hataw along the 2.2-kilometer long four-lane road in the city.

**ERNIE ESCONDE**

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### Bataan posts new Guinness record for trees planted

By **MAR T. SUPNAD**

ORION, Bataan — This province now holds a new Guinness World Record after 20,000 Bataños volunteered to plant a total of 223,393 seedlings inside one hour at a single location in Barangay Gen. Lim, Orion town, last Saturday.

The feat, participated in by mostly students, local government workers, and civilian organization members, broke the existing world record of 208,751 seedlings planted by 5,928 participants in Punjab, India on Oct. 30, 2015.

Volunteers from all over Bataan trooped to the planting site at 10 a.m. Saturday and scurried get their seedlings planted well into the plots.

Mayor-elect Jopet Inton of Hermosa town mobilized his town mates and brought with him more than 1,000 volunteers to join the environmental program

of Governor Abet S. Garcia.

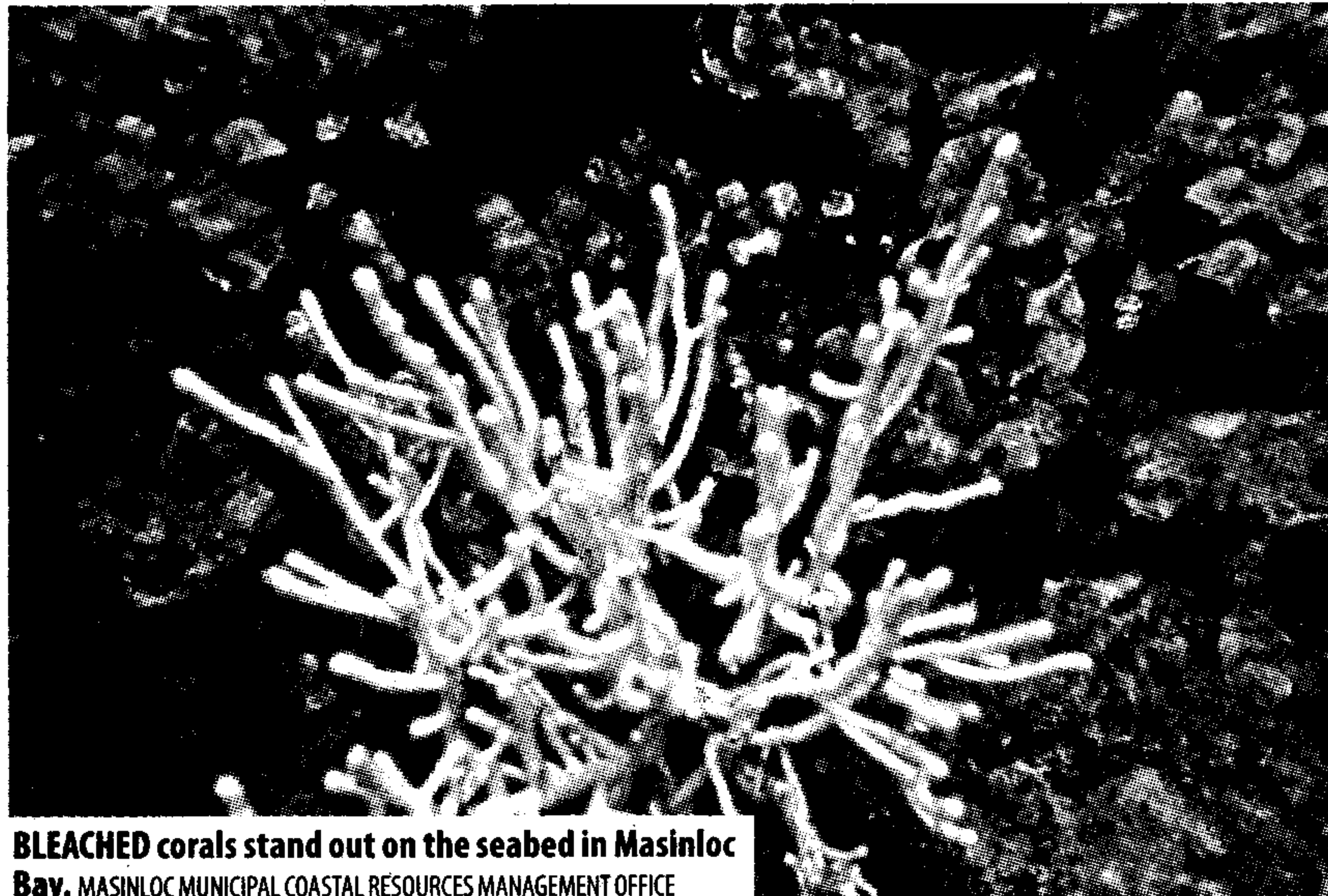
Garcia said that the purpose of the event is not only to surpass the record of India in tree planting, but to balance what he called the fast industrialization of the province with big-time investors

racing against one another at Bataan's Freeport and industrial zones.

After confirming the validity of the program and the figures, a certificate from Guinness was immediately handed over to Garcia right at the planting site.

## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### Coral bleaching reported in Zambales



**BLEACHED** corals stand out on the seabed in Masinloc Bay. MASINLOC MUNICIPAL COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT OFFICE

BY HENRY EMPENO  
*Correspondent*

**M**ASINLOC, Zambales—Environment officers in this town have confirmed reports of coral bleaching, a phenomenon wherein corals turn completely white due to stress caused by warm-water temperature and other environmental changes.

According to Olive Ebido-Gregorio, Masinloc municipal coastal resources management officer, the bleaching of various coral species has been discovered in at least three points of Masinloc Bay, which contains several marine-protected areas. "Coral bleaching has been observed since the second week of May, and it was first reported by fishermen belonging to the local Bantay Dagat," Gregorio told the *BUSINESSMIRROR* in an e-mail interview.

The bleaching, she added, involved "various coral species, particularly massive and branching corals mostly found in our marine-protected areas on Panglit Island, in Taklobo Farm and Barangay Bani."

The areas she referred to practically encompass the whole of Masinloc Bay, which local residents have developed into a marine sanctuary and ecotourism site despite the presence of coal-fired thermal-power plant at its northwestern boundary. Panglit is at the southern extremity of the bay, while Taklobo Farm is on San Salvador Island midway, and Bani, which is hosting the Masinloc

Coal-Fired Thermal Power Plant, is at the northwest end. Gregorio said the municipal environment office verified the reports during inspections from June 10 to 12.

She added that Masinloc officials are coordinating with the Marine Science Institute of the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City, which has mobilized a team to assess the coral reef-bleaching phenomenon.

Another environment officer in Masinloc said the recent summer heat might have caused the bleaching, as marine experts have previously found out that warmer-water temperatures produced the whitening phenomenon. When water gets too warm, corals reportedly expel the algae living in their tissues, causing the corals to turn white.

Masinloc, which lies 230 kilometers northwest of Manila, has a large fishing community, that relies on municipal waters for food fish. It is also home to commercial fishermen who have recently been displaced by the virtual takeover by China of the Scarborough Shoal, or Bajo de Masinloc, a rich fishing ground some 220 km west of Zambales.

Gregorio and other marine environment officers worry that unabated coral bleaching might lead to further losses in marine productivity, since coral reefs are home to a wide variety of food fishes, as well as tourist attractions that bring in revenue to the local economy.

# PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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SAGADA

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Sacred mummy cave in Sagada threatened by DPWH-DOT road project

Infra guidelines, visitor regulation pushed for tourism-weary Mountain Province town

By Edgar Allan M. Sembrano  
Contributor

A GOVERNMENT road-widening project in Sagada, Mountain Province is threatening the integrity of an ancient mummy burial cave in Ambasing Village.

The road-widening is part of the "convergence project" of the Department of Public Works (DPWH) and Department of Tourism (DOT) designed to ease traffic to and from the picturesque Mountain Province municipality.

The convergence project has irked residents who have criticized the local and national governments for their reckless disregard of environmental, heritage, and even sensitive cultural-religious concerns caused by public works in aid of tourism profits.

Earlier, residents and heritage advocates protested the felling of pine trees along the Sabangan-Sagada road.

The same project, they said, may affect the integrity of an unnamed burial cave in Ambasing village.

The ancient burial coffins will be spared, but residents and heritage experts noted that the project will encroach on at least a meter of the cave's rim.

The construction racket may also damage the integrity of the ancient cave and undermine it.

Residents said that the project had been awarded to E.T. Latawan Construction.

The outgoing mayor of Sagada is Eduardo T. Latawan.



HANGING coffins at Sagada

PHOTOS BY BEATRICE JOY DODMAN

Latawan, according to the International Council on Monuments and Sites (Icomos) Philippines, has not heeded the appeals of Icomos and other heritage groups for the town to come up with an Infrastructure Guidelines (IG) and a Tourism Management Plan (TMP) to regulate tourism and construction activities so as to conserve Sagada's natural and cultural heritage sites.

The DPWH and DOT appear blase or entirely ignorant that the burial caves are supposed to enjoy protection and conservation from the national government.

Presidential Decree 260 in 1973 declared as National Treasure (today's National Cultural

Treasure) the "Mummy Burial Caves in Sagada and in Barangay Alab in Bontoc, also in Mountain Province."

The declaration likewise covers the burial caves of Kabayan, Benguet.

"All these road-widening projects in Sagada are very disturbing and heartbreaking," said Tracey Santiago, secretariat head of the Philippine chapter of Icomos, the international body of heritage experts advising the United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (Unesco).

"I hope that the local elders along with the local and national government can look into this and do the necessary investiga-

tions and stop destroying Sagada's natural resources," the Icomos official added.

### Tourism plan

Unregulated tourism, according to observers, has resulted in an uncontrolled construction boom as well as garbage and water problems. It has also resulted in road-widening projects which critics say would only aggravate the foot and vehicle traffic in this Anglican municipality but originally an Augustinian territory in the late 19th century.

"The problem with this rapid growth of construction is that Sagada (has a) dearth of plans for the uses of its lands," heritage

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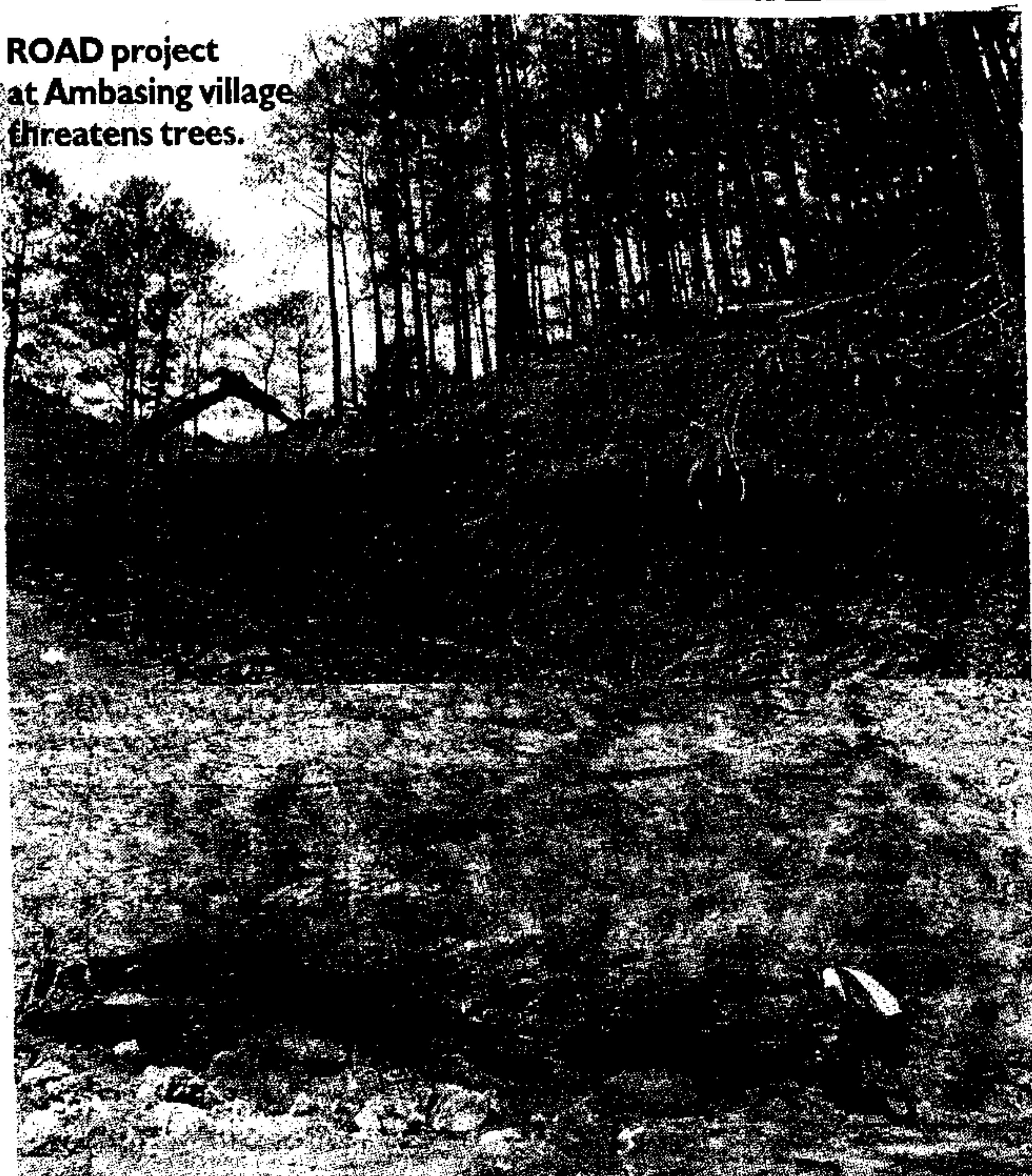
SAGADA

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

ROAD project  
at Ambasing village  
threatens trees.



POSSIBLE cave accidentally hit by the road project

advocate and resident Celia Peñaflor wrote in her "Save Sagada" blog. "The National Building Code is nowhere near to being implemented, thus zoning ordinances are also still nonexistent."

She wrote that Sagada residents were not against progress; they were for sustainable development and "responsible tourism."

Santiago said Icomos had proposed the Infrastructure Guidelines (IG) and Tourism Management Program (TMP) to Mayor Latawan, but they went unheeded.

In an interview, Unesco National Commission of the Philippines Commissioner Eric Zerrudo explained that before a TMP or IG is crafted and implemented, the town should have an up-to-date comprehensive land use plan (CLUP).

With the CLUP, the town will be properly zoned which is needed for the crafting of the TMP, explained Zerrudo. CLUP would identify the zone areas, preservation areas, and high-traffic areas, he added.

Such sites should be declared first by the local government before a TMP is created.

TMP would then lead to the crafting of the infrastructure and activity guidelines which would identify the various tourism activities and set rules on the construction of structures and facilities.

Zerrudo said the intent of convergence project is good "but they (DPWH and DOT) should have considered that part of a tourist destination are the heritage values which include the spirit of the place."

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## No farmer will be ejected from land, says Mariano

From page A1

Cojuangco relatives.

Mariano said he would personally hold a "consultation" with Hacienda Luisita farm workers, this time with the authority of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR).

The 59-year old former Anakpawis representative has promised to himself that no farmer, whether an agrarian reform beneficiary or not, will be ejected from his land under his watch.

"Maybe my advantage is I come from a family of farmers, I have more than 30 years [in the peasant movement]. So I will do my best to defend agrarian reform. It's my continuing advocacy: genuine agrarian reform," Mariano said in an interview on Friday.

The longtime leader of Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas has just concluded a four-day conference with all DAR officials nationwide.

### New law needed

"I told them, 'You know where Ka Paeng Mariano is coming from.' I know that the existing agrarian laws and programs have inherent flaws, limitations and imperfections. But it is my continuing advocacy to implement genuine agrarian reform program and my advocacy is that we need a new law [for that]," he said.

Since the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reforms (CARPer) lapsed on June 30, 2014, the



**DAR MEET** Incoming Agrarian Reform Secretary Rafael Mariano meets with regional officers of the Department of Agrarian Reform at a hotel in Quezon City.

LYN RILLON

DAR can no longer issue notices of coverage to a still substantial number of private agricultural landholdings, mostly in the Negros provinces.

Mariano, author of "genuine agrarian reform" bills that never made it past the landlord-dominated House of Representatives, said he "urged" DAR officials to study the bill since they would defend the proposed measure

once refiled in July.

He said he would ask Duterte to certify the bill as urgent, along with the free irrigation and coconut levy bills.

### Order of business

His order of business for the first 100 days in office are:

- Order a quick inventory of the 2.7 million farmers who have supposedly been awarded

a total 4.7 million hectares from 1972 to 2015 to find out if the farmers still control the land.

- Reintroduce the genuine agrarian reform bill in Congress.

- Encourage farmers' groups to file petitions for a notice of coverage of their agricultural land even if the DAR's authority to issue a notice of coverage has lapsed, since the department will start the documentation process.

- Immediately review past orders issued on land exemption, exclusion, retention, conversion and cancellation of land titles given to beneficiaries to find out how much agrarian reform covered land have been taken back from farmers.

- Review and file charges against landowners in cases of "illegal, premature and unauthorized conversions," citing a

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



**DAR THRUSTS** Incoming Agrarian Reform Secretary Rafael Mariano explains the thrusts of the Department of Agrarian Reform to journalists after meeting with regional agrarian reform officers in Quezon City. LYN RILLON

## No more farm evictions—Mariano

LIKE a farmer who knows the lay of his land, militant peasant leader Rafael Mariano has readied his to-do list for his first 100 days as agrarian reform secretary.

His order of business includes filing cases against illegal and premature land conversion, re-

viewing agribusiness, leasehold and stock distribution arrangements between landowners and tenants, and seeking to condone bank penalties on unpaid farmer payments.

He will also ask President-elect Rodrigo Duterte to convene the highest agrarian poli-

cymaking body for the first time in six years, and order an inventory of all agrarian reform beneficiaries since the 1970s.

His priority case, however, is the Hacienda Luisita sugarcane plantation in Tarlac owned by President Aquino's

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

violation by Tarlac Development Corp. in Hacienda Luisita.

- Validate the stock distribution option in Hacienda Luisita and other haciendas in Negros provinces.

- Ask the Land Bank of the Philippine board of directors to condone the penalties imposed on arrears of farmers still paying their amortization.

- Ask Duterte to convene the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council (PARC) within the first 100 days to resolve with finality several cases on appeal.

- Review agribusiness contracts and agricultural leasehold contracts between landowners and tenants covering 3 million hectares, whether the contracts are already disadvantageous to the farmers.

### Fix rentals

Mariano said the DAR had the authority to fix the lease rentals.

"I will be there. We will try to hold a consultation with agrarian reform beneficiaries in Hacienda Luisita in the first 100 days," he said.

"That's why I want to convene the PARC to set this clear policy and I will suggest this to President Duterte: that no farmer can be evicted from the land he tills whether he is in an area covered by an agricultural leasehold, an agribusiness venture agreement or even in an area that is not yet covered by land acquisition," Mariano vowed. *Dona Z. Pazzibugan*

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# PHL center of pitcher-plant diversity

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA @jonlmayuga

**H**ERE is one more good reason to protect our forests: The Philippines now holds the record with the most diverse species of pitcher plants (*Nepenthes*) in the world, topping competitors, such as Malaysia, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.

With more than 53 different pitcher-plant species having been recorded so far, the Philippines may now lay claim to the title as the "center of diversity of *Nepenthes*," an official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said.

Director Theresa Mundita S. Lim of the DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) is urging Filipino botanists to continue their research and explorations in the forest, with the hope of finding more unique and rare plant species, like pitcher plants, which can be included in the DENR-BMB's database.

## Carnivorous

PITCHER plants belong to a family of plants that are carnivorous. They grow and thrive in natural forests. They have modified leaves called pitfall traps, shaped like a pitcher, which served as prey-trapping mechanism that features a deep cavity filled with digestive fluid or liquid.

The pitfall traps lure preys, mostly insects, and in some cases, small amphibians, such as frogs and reptiles, and even small mammals, which the plant "digests." The plant absorbs the prey's nutrients like it is actually eating or digesting like food to man and animals. Because of its carnivorous nature, pitcher plants are ecologically important, Lim said.

"They help control the population of insects, preventing overpopulation," she added.

## Data base

LIM is pushing to build a data base of Philippine plants in partnership with various stakeholders.

One particular partnership is maintaining the web site Co's

53

The recorded number of pitcher-plant species

Digital Flora of the Philippines. Co is renowned Filipino botanist Leonard L. Co, who was killed in a crossfire between government soldiers and Communist rebels in Kananga, Southern Leyte on November 15, 2010.

Co's Digital Flora of the Philippines is a checklist of vascular plants native to the Philippine archipelago. The web site is "a continuation of the works of Elmer D. Merrill (1876-1956) and Leonardo L. Co (1953-2010). Merrill and Co were authorities on the Philippine vascular Flora.

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# BusinessMirror

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PHL center of pitcher plant diversity

## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

The plants in the web site are described based on the studies conducted by those who discovered them, including their location and distribution. Digital photos of the plants were also uploaded in the web site.

### Wide variety

A WIDE variety of pitcher plants exist in the Philippines and they come in different size and color.

Previous "record holders" of having the most number of pitcher plants, like Malaysia, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea, have more than 30 varieties of pitcher plants on record. The Philippines has less number two decades ago, according to Lim.

Over the past decade, however, explorations conducted by Filipino botanists, individually, as a group, independently or in collaboration with the DENR-BMB, have doubled the number of this unique and rare plant on record, exceeding that of its Southeast Asian neighbors.

"There is one pitcher plant named after a mayor of a town where the plant was discovered. We have a wide variety of these pitcher plants. Before, we only have 27 on our record. Now, we have 53 species in our data base," Lim said.

A Filipino botanist said almost half of the 53 pitcher-plant species in the Philippines are found in Mindanao.

A total of 26 species of the recorded pitcher plants in the Philippines can be found on Mindanao island.

Palawan, a province considered as the country's last ecological frontier in Luzon, is also home to a good number of pitcher plants.

Some areas in the Visayas also have pitcher plants unique to specific areas or locations.



VICTOR B. AMOROSO, director of the Center for Biodiversity Research and Extension in Mindanao, with pitcher plants *Nepenthes truncata* on Dinagat Island. COURTESY OF VICTOR AMOROSO

### Site endemic

VICTOR B. AMOROSO, director of the Center for Biodiversity Research and Extension in Mindanao, and Higher Education Regional Research Center of the Central Mindanao University based in Musuan, Bukidnon, said some of the pitcher plants recorded in the Philippines are site-endemic species, which means that they can only be found in a specific area or location, such as in Mount Hamiguitan. One of the recent articles on pitcher plants was linked with the mayor of San Isidro town in Davao Oriental.

"We have the new species of *Nepenthes* named after the mayor. It was named *Nepenthes justinae*," Amoroso said, referring to the plant discovered in Mount Hamiguitan that was named in honor of Justina Yu.

In 2014 and 2016 Amoroso coauthored reports on *Nepenthes* found in Mindanao. In the latest publication, the authors concluded that Mount Hamiguitan is home to four endemic species (*N. peltata*, *N. micramphora*, *N. hamiguitanensis*, *N. justina esp. nov.*).

Amoroso also coauthored a

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**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**

PHL center of pitcher-plant diversity

publication, entitled *Field Guide on Pitcher Plants*, which was printed outside the Philippines. Incidentally, Yu helped the Mount Hamiguitan Range Wildlife Sanctuary (MHRWS) earn the title as a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization World Heritage Site in 2014.

The reports described the new pitcher plants as unique from those already described in other areas.

A protected area known for its rich biodiversity, MHRWS is also home to the Philippine Eagle and other unique wildlife.

**Threatened**

MANY of the pitcher plants recorded in the Philippines are considered "threatened" because of massive habitat loss and the unchecked collection from the forest.

According to Lim, harvesting of any plant species in the forest is allowed only upon the issuance of necessary permits by the DENR as mandated by the Republic Act (RA) 9147, or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act. In the case of harvesting within a protected area, it is under RA 7586, or the National Integrated and Protected Areas System (Nipas) Act.

"We have to make sure that harvesting of these plant species is sustainable," Lim said.

Because of its uniquely shaped modified leaves, pitcher plants are now being collected like other ornamental plants or orchids for commercial purposes.

Picher plants sell as much as P2,000 per plant, depending on the variety.

"Most of these species are in the critically endangered category in the sense that many are endemic to our country. Sometimes, they are site endemic. It means it is only found in one place, and nowhere else. The moment they are gone, they are gone forever," Amoroso said.

He added that site-endemic species should be conserved by protecting their habitats, or collecting the species from the wild to propagate outside their habitats.

In Bukidnon he said there is a botanical garden where species of the pitcher plants are propagated and are now commercialized.

"In Mount Hamiguitan there are six pitcher plants, but four of them are site-endemic species," he said. Lim encourages hobbyists to learn to propagate pitcher plants to help save the species from extinction and, at the same time, benefit from its potential economic benefits.

"In Malaysia they are now propagating pitcher plants for commercial use as ornamental plants," she said.

**Taken for granted**

"SOMETIMES, these plants are taken for granted. For the longest time, the DENR is focused on trees," Lim said.

She added that, along with trees, local vegetation is also lost. She said no amount of tree-planting as part of reforestation or forest rehabilitation will replace the uniqueness of local vegetation that will be forever lost.

"We lose the local vegetation that goes along with the trees that are lost. Documentation [of plant

species] will help us know what we stand to lose if we lose our native trees," she said.

According to Lim, much needs to be learned about pitcher plants, which have enzymes that have never been researched for their potential medicinal value from which local communities may benefit.

Lim said an inventory of these unique plants is important for the future benefit of local communities who are protecting them.

Pharmaceutical companies spend millions in search of raw materials for medicines, which the Philippines should benefit from as "owner" of the raw material, particularly if the plant is site endemic, Lim explained.

Many areas in the Philippines, particularly those identified as key biodiversity areas, are home to unique plant species, such as pitcher plants, she added.

"We are anticipating more species to be described. In my last visit in one of the islands in Mindanao, a botanist told me that there are potential new pitcher plants that can be added to our database," Lim said.

Knowing what the country stands to lose in letting go its natural forests, Lim reiterated, is "a must" to serve as guide to various stakeholders so that a plan and policy can be developed on how to best protect and conserve the country's rich biodiversity.

## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Absorb carbon through forest rehab

STORY BY STEPHANIE TUMAMPOS

✉sbtumampos\_BM

Special to the BUSINESSMIRROR

**T**HERE'S only a little time left," said Dr. Rodel Lasco, country coordinator of World Agroforestry Center in his address on the issue of climate change at the recent fifth Asean Plus Three Junior Science Odyssey held at the University of the Philippines Los Baños in Laguna.

"Your generation will inherit this problem [on climate change] and it is, indeed, your generation who will have to wrestle and seek solutions to this problem," he said.

### Greenhouse-gas scenario

FOSSIL fuels make up most of the greenhouse gases (GHG) that human activities emit at 65 percent. With this rate, it is likely the planet will be warmer by up to 5 degrees Celsius for the next 100 years.

The best-case scenario, according to Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), is to control the emissions to achieve a rise in temperature of only about 2°C.

In the last century, experts have said evidence have shown the Earth has warmed over un-

precedented levels. A climate-change synthesis report by the IPCC in 2014 indicated that, "It is extremely likely that more than half of the observed increase in global average surface temperature from 1951 to 2010 was caused by the anthropogenic [based on human activities] increase in GHG concentrations and other anthropogenic forcings together."

This means that in only half a century, the contribution of environmental pollutants due to human activities has increased surface temperatures for more than a degree Celsius.

Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane and nitrous oxide are the gases that warm the planet. "Without these gases, our planet will be 30°C cooler than it is today," emphasized Lasco, who has a field of specialization on forestry and climate-change mitigation. "Can you imagine living in a planet 30°C cooler than now? That's like having an average temperature of minus 20°C all the time," he exclaimed.

### Forest importance for climate-change adaptation and mitigation

THERE are three concentrations of tropical forests in the world—the

Amazon, the Congo River basin and the Southeast Asia rainforest. Southeast Asia is known for its rainforests, most especially Indonesia, which has the largest area.

"There is a lot of uncertainty how climate change may affect our forest resources," Lasco said in an interview with the BUSINESSMIRROR. The ecosystem is very well connected to us all that when climate change gets in the picture, it is important for science to learn and assess the consequences.

Lasco emphasized that planting more trees is the answer if we want to adapt and help mitigate climate change. Through the natural process of photosynthesis, trees absorb light and convert the carbon dioxide to emit oxygen and store carbon inside them in the form of biomass. "This biomass leads to carbon sequestration—carbon stock stored in the biomass," Lasco explained.

If trees die, they emit the carbon stored inside them. "Hence, we need to plant more trees for it to be absorbed again," he said.

Lasco added that deforestation is one of the leading causes of GHG emissions. "Ten billion to 12 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub> are released per

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### Absorb carbon through forest rehab

**P**ENANG island off Malaysia's north-western coast is tourism's best-kept secret among travelers in the South-east Asian region. The island has a vibrant multiethnic community comprising of Malays, Chinese, Indians and Europeans, and its history and culture draw from these multiple sources. Some of its famous attractions include beautiful Chinese clan houses and mansions, British-era Fort Cornwallis and Clock Tower, and resplendent Buddhist and Hindu temples.

Known as the food paradise of Malaysia, Penang island is a favored spot for foodies from around the region and Singapore, with its famous Asam Laksa and local delicacies. For those who like a bit of adventure, there are sunny beaches and a beautiful national park to visit. A funicular train ride up Penang's highest point—Penang Hill—is an experience not to be missed, as it shows breathtaking views of heritage city George Town.

Add to this a host of festivals that showcase regional and international art and culture, and you have an unforgettable travel experience. August is the best time to travel to Penang, as it is the "festival month" with the Bon Odori festival, which celebrates Japanese culture, Eurasia fiesta and many other cultural showcases. It is also the month of "hungry ghosts," according to the Chinese lunar calendar; and Buddhist temples across Penang host puppet theater and live opera as an offering to the spirits—these events are mostly open to the general public and a great way to learn about the local culture.

Offering a unique mix of international world-class shows, as well as intriguing lo-

cal performances, is the George Town Festival, starting from July 29 and ending on August 28. Since Penang is a small island with just a community hall, the entire city of George Town turns into a giant canvas featuring arts, music, dance, theater and site-specific installations.

Walk or cycle along George Town's streets and in every corner, you will see an art exhibition, a street show, someone playing live music, and many site installations that are entertaining and thought-provoking at the same time. There will also be local handicrafts and artworks up for sale, the best way to buy some genuine souvenirs of Penang. The creative energy flowing through George Town is evident in the hundreds of wall murals and quirky wire-art installations dotting its winding lanes, telling hidden stories about Penang's heritage, culture and history. Not to mention that they make for some amazing selfies.

The George Town Festival began in 2010, when the Penang government sought to celebrate George Town's listing as a Unesco World Heritage Site. What started as a two-day event is now a monthlong affair, featuring award-winning performances from Japan to Canada and intriguing local acts. The best part is that it is incredibly light on the pocket—while many of the GTF events are free, ticketed shows are affordably priced, starting from \$10 per pax.

One of the highlight shows we have this year is *Triptyque* by Canadian group Les 7 doigts de la main, who has performed at the 2012 Academy Awards and opening ceremony of Sochi Olympic Games. *Triptyque* is a visual feast, with its combination

Another show to watch out for is *Missing* by award-winning physical dance theater company Gecko. *Missing* tells the story of Lily, whose memories are "attacking" her, trying to remind her who she is, but curiously, she doesn't want to remember. The show is an electrifying piece of dance theater with extraordinary images, deliciously gray characters and an intriguing plot.

This year the festival has reached out to a wider regional community with the Asean showcase—a two-day event featuring some of the best talents from Australia and Southeast Asia. The event will feature Dutch scientist Theo Jansen's *Strandbeests*—mammoth installations made of plastic and PVC pipes that can "walk" like mammals, thanks to a unique feat of engineering. They will be joined by giant Australian snuff puppets, which are handcrafted and depict the human body in its myriad forms. Visitors will also get to enjoy a thrilling concert featuring musical talents from Malaysia, Indonesia and Australia.

If its local culture you want to learn about, you should definitely see *Potehi*, a traditional hand-puppet performance from Taiwan that was earlier only performed in temples. Going back hundreds of years, the festival's opening show is *Svara Bhumi (Songs of the Earth)*, a unique tribute to the land and its people via indigenous music from Australia, Indonesia and Malaysia.

With more than 100 arts showcases, the festival has something for everyone.

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### La Trinidad residents unite to create the first and biggest community artwork in the Philippines



Photo by  
Mr. CLINTON ANIVERSARIO

**L**a Trinidad, Benguet—Tourists visit the town of La Trinidad, Benguet to see the strawberry and flower farms, and buy fresh vegetables. Now, there is another reason to make the trip from Baguio City.

Last 23 June 2016 was the unveiling of the STOBOSA Hillside Homes Artwork—the largest community artwork in the country and the first in the Philippines. The project is a component of the Department of Tourism-Cordillera Administrative Region's Rev-Bloom (REV-UP, REVIVE, REVISIT, REVITALIZE) Urban Redevelopment Tourism project supported by Davies Paints.

STOBOSA stands for Stonehill, Botiwitiw, and Sadjap—the three sitios on which the artwork now stands.

The 200 houses that line the Stone Hill on Km. 3, La Trinidad previously formed something akin to a confusing wall overlooking the Balili river. It has now been transformed to an 18,000-sqm collective canvas brilliantly painted

by 520 residents and volunteers, the endeavor commenced in January 2016. This is a testament to the Bayanihan spirit still alive among Filipinos.

Davies Paints, the country's #1 Paint Exporter and #1 in colors, provided environment-friendly paints as part of its advocacy to beautify the Philippines, give back to communities and bring color into people's lives. The local government of La Trinidad provided paintbrushes and rollers, and built scaffolding; Tam-awan artists, led by Jordan Mang-osan, designed the connective landscape. The residents and volunteers executed the artwork beautifully, motivated by community spirit.

"More than the mural, more than the beautification, you will see the community has bonded together to spruce up their areas," DOT-Cordillera Regional Director Venus Tan said.

Johnlee Garcia, President of Davies Paints, said: "Davies has always been passionate about finding ways to help improve

communities in whatever way we can and this project is a great opportunity to create a big impact in the area. We have a long history of engaging in CSR programs and beautification efforts in the country; we're proud to be a major part of this project and we plan to continue these efforts in the future."

The project was inspired by the Favelas in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The STOBOSA community has pledged to make the project sustainable by touching up the artwork as necessary. Working together has also inspired representatives of the households—mostly women—to endeavor other efforts to beautify their area by keeping it clean and infusing life by planting greens.

After their collective effort, the area is now a burst of vibrant and brilliant colors—a welcome sight as you enter the town. So the next time you go up North, get your cameras ready: the community artwork will be visible on your right after you cross the La Trinidad arch from Baguio City.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## Best practices cited in PH response to Pinatubo blast

By Tonette Orejas  
*Inquirer Central Luzon*

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Public and private responses to the 1991 eruption of Mt. Pinatubo in Central Luzon produced best practices in volcanic crisis mitigation that are being used worldwide, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said.

"For many years since, scientists, disaster officials and other practitioners in the field of volcanic crisis mitigation worldwide adopt and ascribe to the work accomplished in Pinatubo as best practices," Phivolcs announced in its website.

These include the use of volcanic hazard maps, real-time seismic and sulfur monitoring, community-based information dissemination, documentaries for communicating hazards, an alert level scheme and other protocols for relaying hazards, and interagency coordination.

Dr. Renato Solidum, Phivolcs director, said he shared these best practices in a tandem presentation with Dr. Chris Newhall of the United States Geological Survey (USGS) recently at the Carnegie Institution for Science in Washington DC.

Newhall presented the pre-eruption monitoring and hazard assessment while Solidum tackled the climax and the effect of eruption and ensuing lahar.

The two scientists also emphasized the importance of collaboration, with Phivolcs saying, "the Pinatubo crisis also brought to the forefront the importance of scientists, disaster managers, local governments, and various national government agencies as well as armed forces working together for effective emergency management."

Phivolcs said it "forged a scientific collaboration that put forth the body of basic scientific information, instrumental monitoring, communication tools and decision-making processes that proved to be ultimately life-saving."

This was at the time when Phivolcs was led by the late Dr. Raymundo Punongbayan and the USGS Volcano Disaster Assistance Program by Newhall.

"Pinatubo's eruption thus set the standard for effective and successful volcanic crisis management," Phivolcs said.

It assured the public it has been monitoring and seeking scientific understanding of Mt. Pinatubo "to effectively raise awareness among stakeholders and to mainstream the use of scientific data in living with the volcano safely."

Mt. Pinatubo, which straddles the provinces of Pampanga, Tarlac and Zambales, erupted nine months after a 7.8-magnitude earthquake rocked Luzon on July 16, 1990.

It woke back to life starting April 9, 1991, culminating on June 15 and setting out a 40-kilometer high column of ash made heavier by rains of Typhoon "Diding."

According to Phivolcs' accounts, "airborne volcanic ash paralyzed aviation in East Asia for days. Deadly pyroclastic flows, high-velocity mixtures of hot gas, fragmented rock and ash, rushed down all sides of the summit to distances of 16 kilometers, burying major river valleys in hundred meters of hot volcanic debris."

"These would sooner and later spawn secondary explosions and far-reaching hazardous lahar across five major river systems draining the volcano during heavy and prolonged rains. After the climactic eruption, discrete but minor explosions occurred until September 1991," the agency said.

By the end of 1991, the volcano discharged 5.5 cubic kilometers of magma, prompting scientists to regard it as the second largest eruption in the 20th century after Mt. Novarupta in Alaska.

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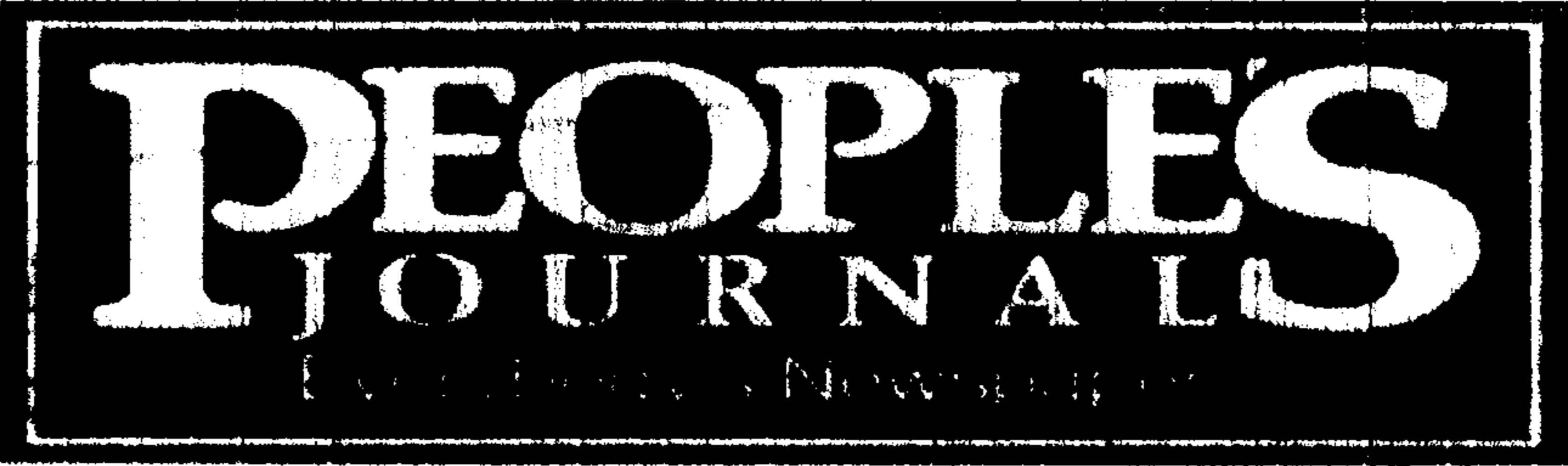
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TONETTE OREJAS/INQUIRER CENTRAL LUZON

ASH, SAND and other volcanic debris that Mt. Pinatubo spewed in its 1991 eruption have spawned a quarry industry in Pampanga province.



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Duterte gov't urged to tap Benham Rise's rich oil deposits

AN ENVIRONMENTAL group in Aurora province has called on the incoming Duterte administration to tap the vast oil deposits in the 13-million hectare Benham Rise.

The Noble Blue Falcons, Inc. (NBFI) said President-elect Rodrigo Duterte should carry on the Aquino administration's program to harness the underwater region for the country's needs.

NBFI national chairman Joseph Usita said seven years have already passed since the country lodged a full territorial claim to Benham Rise and four years have also passed since the United Nations finally recognized and approved the claim, yet the national government has not indicated if it's interested in utilizing it as an alternative to the Malampaya gas fields.

He noted that as early as last February, Japan and Korea have expressed interest in research and exploration in the mineral resource-rich Benham Rise.

Carlos Primo David, executive director of the Department of Science and Technology's Philippine Council on Industry, Energy and Emerging Technologies Research and Development, said Benham Rise has attracted the interests of experts from the Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology (JAMSTEC) and the Korea Institute of Ocean Science and Technology (KIOST) to collaborate on conducting the survey.

JAMSTEC would like to do a survey using its Y6-billion submarine research project.

Benham Rise refers to the undersea region east of Luzon located off the provinces of Aurora and Isabela. It is said to be rich in natural gas and minerals. The plateau, named after American admiral and geologist Andrew Benham, was first mapped in 1933. In April 2009, the country lodged a full territorial claim on the vast, largely unexplored territory. The UN, through the UN-Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf officially approved the Philippine claim on April 12, 2012, bringing to 43 million hectares the total land area of the country from 30 million hectares.

**Mamerto Bañez**

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## Aeta folk suing Zambales municipal execs for meddling in tribe's affairs

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Leaders of four Aeta villages near the crater-lake of Mt. Pinatubo in Botolan town in Zambales province are suing re-elected Mayor Doris Maniquiz-Jeresano and several local officials for allegedly violating the tribe's right to govern their ancestral domain, according to the Aeta representative in the Regional Development Council (RDC).

Ernesto Juliano Sr., indigenous peoples' representative in RDC Central Luzon, said the dispute arose after Jeresano took over the tourism program managed by the Pinatubo Aeta Multi-Purpose Cooperative, on behalf of the villages of Villar, Burgos, Moraza and Belbel, until March this year.

"Only one discussion was held seeking our free and prior informed consent [to the local government's plan to collect

P700 from tourists going to the volcano's crater-lake] but they immediately took over the program," Juliano said.

Jeresano denied Juliano's accusations, saying there had been consultative meetings with the officials and tribal leaders of the four villages.

"Everything was done above board [and we followed] the right process. We had six or seven dialogues with the cooperative and we consulted all village officials and tribal chieftains," Jeresano said.

She said she was not aware about the complaint but noted that Botolan town must generate income from tourism activities around Mt. Pinatubo's crater. Without the consent of the four villages and the cooperative, the mayor had included seven more villages as recipients of the 30 percent (P210) share of Aetas from the total amount

charged to tourists, Juliano said.

Jeresano said: "It is not only the cooperative that should benefit from the fees. Other villages must also receive income [from tourism activities]."

Since Botolan has been receiving its share from the tourism fees, Aeta families have been employed "to keep the place clean and safe," she said.

A resolution approved by the town council on March 18 prescribed P100 as ecotourism fee, P350 as environmental protection fee and P250 as ancestral domain preservation fee. It sets a fine of P2,000 for tourists who do not pay the fees.

Listed as recipients of the 30 percent proceeds are Barangays San Juan, Malomboy, Poon Bato, Owaog, Maguisguis, Nacolcol and Palis. These villages are not covered by a certificate of ancestral domain title (CADT), Juliano said.

Issued by National Commission on Indigenous Peoples on Nov. 9, 2009, the CADT spans 15,998 hectares in the four villages that straddle the crater-lake as well as portions of the Zambales towns of Cabangan, San Felipe and San Marcelino.

The seven villages were not identified in the resolution that authorized Jeresano to enter into a memorandum of agreement with Villar, Moraza, Burgos, Belbel and the Mt. Pinatubo Ancestral Domain Association for a joint management agreement on the ancestral domain.

Juliano said the four villages used to get a share of P100 from the P450 that the local government of Capas, Tarlac, collects from every tourist who passes the Sta. Juliana route on the way to the crater-lake. **Tonette Orejas and Allan Macatuno, Inquirer Central Luzon**

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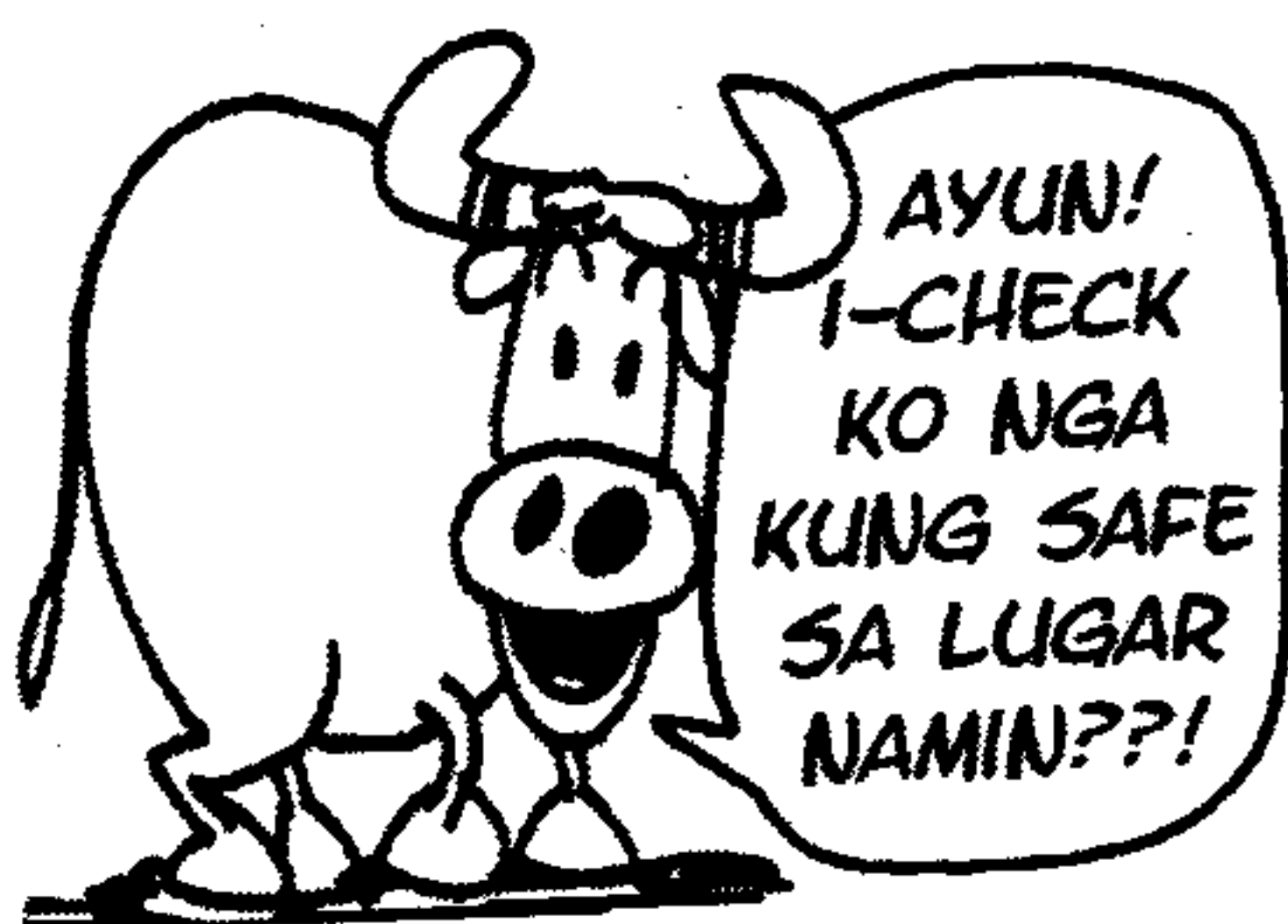
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STRATEGIC COMMU

## Phivolcs app helps review quake risks



### Phivolcs app helps review quake risks

By **Tonette Orejas**  
*Inquirer Central Luzon*

CLARK FREEPORT—Want to know if the land, farm, house or building you are buying stands on an earthquake fault? Or how far it is from your place of work, or your kids' school?

The answers can be found in  
**PHIVOLCS/A10**

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Phivolcs Fault Finder, an application that will be available next month in mobile telephones.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) is launching the app in time for National Disaster Consciousness Month.

Phivolcs Director Renato Solidum said the app would use three base maps from the National Mapping and Resources Information Authority, Google and OpenStreetMap.

The maps show where the 1,200-kilometer Philippine Fault Zone transects northwestern Luzon to southeastern Mindanao, and the Valley Fault System (VFS) in Luzon, including trenches.

"We have been testing this since last year. A Filipino [technology whiz] working in Japan is among the volunteers [working on this app]," Solidum told members of Capampangan in Media Inc. in a June 24 forum.

Many of these hazard maps are accessible through the Phivolcs website, [www.phivolcs.dost.gov.ph](http://www.phivolcs.dost.gov.ph). The maps show the Philippine fault zone, active faults and trenches, earthquake-induced landslides, and liquefaction and tsunami prone areas.

One of the precautions that homeowners should consider is living away from rupture points at a minimum distance of five meters, Solidum said.

Phivolcs maintains 86 stations that monitor earthquakes nationwide through sensors using GPS (global positioning system).

Maps on the VFS are helpful because that zone is ripe for movements "in this generation," Solidum said, referring to the accepted theory that ground faults move every 400 years.

In nationwide earthquake drills, the national

government works on a scenario where movements along the VFS could trigger a 7.2 magnitude temblor.

The East Valley Fault stretches 10 kilometers in Rizal province while the West Valley Fault runs over more than 100 km through Bulacan, Rizal, Cavite and Laguna province and Metro Manila.

Phivolcs has projected that without interventions and should it strike at night, the Big One in Metro Manila alone could kill 31,000 people and injure 130,000 more.

### Dam strengthened

Angat Dam in Bulacan province is being strengthened for this temblor.

Gladys Sta. Rita, president and chief executive office of National Power Corp. (Napocor), said Angat Hydropower Corp., owned by San Miguel Corp. and Korea Water Resources Corp., had an operations and management agreement with the government to rehabilitate the dam and its dikes as it runs the hydroelectric power plant there.

"The dam failure would present considerable risks to lives and properties downstream, as the contents of Angat Dam reservoir would cause flooding in nearby areas. As such, we at Napocor and partners from the national government continue to do measures to prevent dam failures and keep lives of people in nearby areas safe," Sta. Rita said last year.

Angat Dam was built in the 1960s to supply water to the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, irrigate 25,000 hectares of farm lands in Bulacan and Pampanga, generate 246 megawatts for the Luzon grid, and control flooding.

## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Half of Bicol area prone to flooding, landslides

**LEGAZPICIty**—More than half of the towns in Bicol are prone to flood and landslides, prompting the Mines and Geosciences Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to warn people living in low-lying villages and near river channels, shorelines and mountain slopes to be extra cautious in the light of the creeping La Niña phenomenon.

Arlene Dayao, MGB chief geologist, said four of seven cities and 90 of 107 municipalities in Bicol are prone to floods and landslides as indicated by the geo-hazard mapping study conducted by the agency.

This means that more than half or 79 percent of the 114 local government units (seven cities and 107 municipalities) in Bicol are under threat of flood and landslides.

Susceptible to high and moderate landslide occurrences are 52 towns and the cities of Ligao and Sorsogon, while flooding are prone to 43 towns—including the cities of Legazpi, Tabaco, in Albay and Naga in Camarines Sur.

High landslide susceptibility means these areas are to be declared by the local government units as “no dwelling zones” as these are highly vulnerable to landslides.

In the moderate category are areas where dwelling and development of institutional, commercial and industrial sites may be allowed subject to detailed engineering geological and geohazard assessment.

All of three cities of Albay—Legazpi, Ligao and Tabaco—are vulnerable to flood and landslides as well as 14 of its 15 towns, the MGB geo-hazard map showed.

The flood-prone towns are Bacacay, Camalig, Daraga, Guinobatan, Libon, Malilipot, Malinao, Manito, Oas, Rapu-Rapu, Sto. Domingo, Pio Duran, Polangui and Tiwi.

Manito and the island-town of Rapu-Rapu are also landslide-prone areas.

In Camarines Sur, 22 of 35 municipalities aside from the city of Naga are prone to flooding and landslides. These are Bato, Bombon, Buhi, Bula, Calabanga, Camaligan, Canaman, Caramoan, Garchitorena, Goa, Magarao, Lagonoy, Libmanan, Lupi, Pasacao, Presentacion, Sagnay, Sipocot, Pili, Ocampo, Tigaon and Tinambac.

In Camarines Norte, prone to landslides are the towns of Capalonga, Labo, Basud, Mercedes, Paracale, San Lorenzo Ruiz, San Vicente and Sta. Elena.

Vulnerable to flooding are the towns of Talisay, Vinzons, Basud, Capalonga, Daet, Mercedes, and Paracale.

In Sorsogon, the towns facing risk of landslides are Juban, Magallanes, Matnog, Sta Magdalena and Bulan, and Sorsogon City while the towns of Juban, Barcelona, Bulan, Bulusan, Donsol, Irosin, Magallanes, Pilar, Prieto Diaz, and Sta. Magdalena are flood prone.

In Catanduanes, prone to landslides and flooding are all of the 11 towns of the island-province: Bagamanoc, Baras, Bato, Caramoran, Gigmoto, San Andres, San Miguel, Pandan, Panganiban, Viga and the capital, Virac. **PNA**

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Carpio: UN tribunal must void China claim

## Says bilateral talks may follow ruling

By Estrella Torres

SUPREME Court Senior Associate Justice Antonio Carpio says the United Nations arbitral court needs to categorically void China's claim to almost all of the South China Sea to put an end to Beijing's aggressive behavior in the heavily contested waterway.

The international panel of the UN Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague is expected to hand down its decision on the Philippines' challenge to China's so-called nine-dash-line claim on July 7, but parties and observers will be notified seven days before the decision is released, Carpio told a gathering of foreign correspondents in Makati City on Friday.

Officials and analysts inside and outside of the region be-

lieve the ruling will largely go against Beijing.

China has ignored the proceedings, saying it did not recognize the tribunal's jurisdiction and would not abide by its ruling.

Beijing claims 90 percent of the 3.5-million-square-kilometer South China Sea, including waters within the 370-km exclusive economic zones (EEZ) of its small neighbors in the region.

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Carpio: UN court must void China claim

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That sweeping claim is demarcated on Chinese maps by a line made up of nine dashes that encompass waters within the EEZs of Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Taiwan, which have overlapping claims in the strategic waterway, where \$5 trillion in shipborne global trade passes every year and where islets, reefs and atolls are said to be sitting atop vast energy reserves.

To bolster its claim, China has reclaimed land to build artificial islands on several reefs in the Spratly archipelago in the middle of the South China Sea, topping some of them with airstrips that can receive large military planes.

### Panatang Shoal

In 2012, China seized Panatang Shoal, a rich fishing ground 230 km off the coast of Zambales province, after a two-month standoff with the Philippine Navy and the Philippine Coast Guard, forcing Manila to bring a law of the sea suit against Beijing in the UN arbitration the following year.

In its suit invoking the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (Unclos), the Philippines asked the tribunal to void China's nine-dash-line claim to the South China Sea and demanded its right to explore resources within its EEZ, locally known as West Philippine Sea, be respected.

Carpio said three possibilities could be expected: A "win-win" ruling in which some of the 15 points raised by the Philippines would be granted and some denied; the voiding of China's nine-dash-line claim, and a rul-



**FOCAP GUEST** Supreme Court Associate Justice Antonio Carpio speaks during a forum of the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines (Focap) in a hotel in Makati City on Friday.

ESTRELLA TORRES

ing completely ignoring Manila's petition to nullify Beijing's sweeping claim.

The third is a remote possibility, Carpio said.

"If they say nine-dash line is valid, we just forget Unclos, nobody will bring any case to the tribunal, and the judges will be jobless," he said.

A decision favorable to the Philippines, he said, is one that declares China's nine-dash-line claim "invalid and cannot be a source of maritime claims."

### Campaign for support

But China's stubborn stand not to abide by any ruling requires the Philippines to press its diplomatic campaigns in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), United Nations and European Union for pressure on Beijing to comply with the decision, he said.

Carpio said the Philippines' campaign for support could

take two years and may require "influencing" the Chinese mindset.

"It's in the DNA of the Chinese, because they [have been] taught [from] grade school ... that they own [the] waters within the nine-dash line," he said.

Carpio said he agreed with the plan of President-elect Rodrigo Duterte for bilateral talks with China, but he made it clear that the time for talks should come "after the ruling."

### Mending fences

Foreign Undersecretary Laura del Rosario said diplomacy had a big role to ease tensions in the South China Sea.

"We have to do some mending of fences," she said. "China has questioned why we have gone into arbitration, so we have to do a lot of reaching out."

Del Rosario said bilateral

talks with China should carry the line, "We went to arbitration to save a friendship and not to offend them."

The United States, a longtime defense treaty ally of the Philippines, has urged China to stop "provocative" moves in the South China Sea and recognize that the tribunal's ruling is legally binding.

Washington has challenged Beijing's sweeping claim in the South China Sea by sending warships and surveillance planes over areas near the artificial islands the Chinese have built in the Spratlys.

Last week, the US Navy sent two aircraft carriers, the USS John C. Stennis and the USS Ronald Reagan, on joint exercises in waters off the eastern coast of the Philippines, in a clear message of support for Manila.

### Submarine tender

The US Embassy in Manila said yesterday that the USS Frank Cable, one of two forward-deployed submarine tenders, had concluded port visits across the Philippines and would join the US 7th Fleet in monitoring the waters in Indo-Asia-Pacific region.

"The USS Frank Cable is on a scheduled deployment in the US 7th Fleet area of operations to conduct maintenance and support deployed US naval force submarines and surface vessels in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region," the embassy said in a statement.

It said the Frank Cable, carrying more than 500 sailors and civilian mariners, was on deployment to provide vital flexibility to the fleet commanders, extending the range and impact of US naval forces.

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## Durian as aphrodisiac: Myths and legends about Duterte's favorite fruit

By Christine F. Godinez Ortega  
Contributor

**T**HE WORLD is looking more closely at Davao these days since the 16th elected President of the Republic, who will be inaugurated on June 30, hails from there.

Let's then go back in mythical times to see what Davao was like and how her famous fruit, the durian, originated in myth.

As a frequent Davao visitor, I've always associated the city with the durian fruit, an acquired taste, mind you, because a writer friend had told me, you can't call yourself a "Mindanaoan" if you don't eat durian.

Since then I have always enjoyed eating durian with friends from shabby, wooden table and chairs along Davao's fruit stands, at Magsaysay Park, or getting durian sweets at Lola Abon's, or enjoying durian ice cream in one of the city's numerous restaurants.

But, durian is not exclusive to Davao as it is grown in other parts of Mindanao, and yes, in other parts of Southeast Asia as well.

In Iligan City where I am based, residents enjoy durian coffee and durian shake at the famous Iliganon resto-bar.

The other year when I did research on nature and setting in selected Japanese and Mindanao folk tales for a Sumitomo Research fellowship, I included in the study "The Legend of the Durian" retold by Jose Manuel Torrento and, with it, a glimpse of what Davao was like as told in myth.

Here are two known versions of the "Legend of the Durian." Both elicit the metaphor of love and how the two heroes in the tales differ in their quest for it and how love can be had out of great sacrifice, patience and determination and that only the gods know of its secret.

### Durian and vengeance

This version, retold by Jaybee Arguillas is about vengeance and the lack of faith taking the best of a naturally imperious Datu. His wife was a snake in reality. It expressly narrates two characteristics of tribal life where the Datu has absolute power and, the justification of vengeance for a dead or murdered parent or sibling.

As told, the Datu's wife was a snake who took the form of a woman to avenge her mother Mikunawa's death in the Datu's hands. She had danced before the Datu, making him marry her.

When she was about to give birth to a son, she told the Datu not to enter her room until he would be called in. But, as all ab-

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

solute rulers go, the Datu grew impatient. To his shock, the Datu saw that his wife-turned-snake was giving birth to their son. The snake-woman faced the Datu and said she did what she did to avenge her mother whom the Datu had killed. Now, she said, you have to raise our son alone but on his 16th birthday he would die. After saying this, she quickly disappeared.

The Datu was left to rear his son alone whom he named "Durian" (Little Horn) and he forgot about the curse. When the son Durian was almost 16, he sickened and died. Grief-stricken, the Datu never left the gravesite until he himself became ill and lay dying but not before he observed a "green ribbon" coming out of his son's grave until it grew into a large tree. He heard the Great Manama's voice who told him that the tree was a memorial to his son and its fruit would feed his people long after he was gone.

### Durian as potency

The second version is from the Bagobos of the Mindanao and it shows the durian's restorative, rejuvenative, and yes, aphrodisiac qualities.

The setting describes how the folk in early times enjoyed the natural bounty of an unpolluted land, Davao having been blessed by the gods.

In this kingdom, all people lived long owing perhaps to the unpolluted environment. Most of all, Bagani (brave hero), leader of the Bagobos became lonely for he had no wife or children.

At the age of 173, he fell in love with Madayaw-Bayhon ("She who is beautiful of face"). Her beauty was likened to bedewed flowers at dawn. She had long lashes and her lips were likened to "fire orchids," and her skin was like "white sand bleached in the sun"—the adjectives taken from the natural environment—quite refreshing, and a rest from Western allusions.

This version about the durian or "fruit of love" is rich with allusions from nature. The setting was during a time of peace and plenty. When Bagani ate of the "odoriferous" fruit he became young again, and his wife, Madayaw-Bayhon, finally fell in love with him and rushed to him after her having taken a bite of the same fruit—proof that the durian was also an aphrodisiac.

### 'Sexually receptive' female

Such description of the manner in which the young wife "fell" for the husband who had regained his youth after having a bite of the magical fruit suggests

DURIAN/D3

## Durian as aphrodisiac . .

that the wife had become, akin to what Sarah Blaffer Hrdy, as quoted by Donna Haraway, calls the "sexually interested" or "sexually receptive" [human] female, in this case.

The tale is, in fact, quite Asian too, with the emphasis on "face" as significant in attracting any male, especially a politically powerful alpha male.

The setting of the tale is described as "a kingdom in Maguindanaw" nestling like "a green gem" among the foothills of Mt. Apo, whose tall peak reaches "the very roots of heaven"—abode of Mandaragan, chief of the Bagobo gods."

This suggests that the power of the tree comes from its support of "the very roots of heaven" like a powerful father of a family or the leader of a group holding up a naturally blessed kingdom. In other words, Mt. Apo was likened to the giant, powerful tree holding up the "very roots of heaven" hence, the place was blessed by the gods.

Mt. Apo today has remained a mystery although many climbers have tried to conquer it and often, in the process, risking or losing their lives. But there is no debate that in numerous Mindanao tales, the mountain is either mysterious or sacred. It has its own power and people attribute value to such a high mound where the clouds

beyond the ridges often settle.

Bagani, a conqueror of many lands, ruled this most alluring of environments and people like him, were happy and contented. It was an earthly paradise.

But Bagani did marry; however, every time the young wife would miss her father Kudehrat's kingdom, she would leave Bagani's kingdom without his permission. Kudehrat's name in the narrative came as a surprise. Historically, Sultan Kudarat (Kudehrat) was the most powerful of all Maguindanaoans and adjacent regions during his lifetime.

In the legend, however, Bagani was more powerful, and Kudehrat the father, would sail and return his spoiled daughter Madayaw-Bayhon to Bagani. This happened often and Bagani grew tired of this and demanded a solution from his most ancient adviser, the 600-year-old Tageb and his 15 other advisers, who were just as ancient.

### Thorny, foul-smelling

Datu was advised to see the 2,700-year old hermit, Matigam, who was half-mortal, half-god. His power was such that once he had transformed the proud princess of Daba-Daba into a Waring-Waring, a wild orchid known today as Waling-Waling, a sought after, expensive variety of

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orchid.

The wise hermit prescribed three things for Bagani to gather: the egg from a black Tabon bird (Tabon is a white bird), milk from a white carabao and nectar from the Tree of Make Believe hidden in the hair of the wood nymph.

Of course, with the help of the Sea nymph, Punta Dumalag, Bagani was able to get the black Tabon's egg from the navel of the sea; the milk from the white carabao which his people had gathered; and, the nectar from the blossom of the Tree of Make Believe hidden in the hair of the Wood nymph through the help of her sister, Hangin-bai (Air nymph).

Bagani brought the ingredients to the wise hermit. The hermit cracked a portion of the black Tabon's egg, then poured the milk from the white carabao and the nectar of the flower from the Tree of Make Believe. He then stirred the mixture inside the egg and returned the egg intact, to Bagani.

The wise hermit instructed Bagani to plant the egg in the royal garden and asked that he be invited to the celebration only when Bagani's plan turned successful.

A great feast was held. Bagani invited everyone but he forgot to invite the wise hermit, Matigam.



**AUTHOR with musician-actor Aiza Seguerra, a supporter of Duterte, in recent NCCA meeting.**

In anger, Matigam transformed the fruit by having this covered with thorns and whoever would hold it would "spill his blood" and, instead of the sweet scent, he said "whoever eats them will foul his breath."

Since then, the "magic fruit" or durian (full of thorns) has turned "odoriferous" as punishment of Bagani's lack of gratitude.

This version of the Legend of the Durian is more indigenous for its specific use of place names, Daba-daba Gulf (Davao Gulf), Maguindanaw (Maguindanao), Baguio, Samal, Talicud and Ligid, the reference to Mt. Apo, and of natural elements, flora and fauna of the environment (*waling-waling*, *kalaw* bird, *tabon* bird, crows, fire orchids, white sands) from which they are found to this day.

The egg of the Tabon bird plays a prominent symbol in the

Bagobo version of the durian tale because it marks the beginning of the happiness of Bagani beside his wife, Madayaw-Bayhon—a reminder of the ancient Greek myth where Leto hatched the sun and moon out of an egg and that of the ancient Egyptians where Hathor hatched the "golden egg" of the sun at the beginning of the world.

*The author is head of the National Literary Arts Committee of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts. She is a senior faculty of the Department of English and the director of the Office of Publication & Information, of the Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology in Iligan City.*

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



**ARBOR DAY** Senator Cynthia Villar, together with the Philippine National Police, Bureau of Fire Protection and Philippine Coast Guard, leads the tree planting and clean up to celebrate Philippine Arbor Day at the Las Piñas Parañaque Critical Habitat and Ecotourism Area on Sunday. PHOTO BY RUSSELL PALMA

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UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**



Sen. Cynthia Villar leads the planting of trees at the Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Eco-Tourism area to mark Philippine Arbor Day yesterday.

EDD GUMBAN