

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

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DENR

IN THE NEWS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DENR, UNDP embark on \$6.78-million program to protect 'sacred' tribal grounds

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

✉ @jonlmayuga

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will embark on a \$6.78-million project to boost environmental protection and biodiversity-conservation efforts in tribal sacred grounds, or indigenous community conserved areas (ICCA), in the Philippines.

The project, called "Strengthening National Systems to Improve Governance and Management of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Conserved Areas and Territories (Philippines ICCA Project)" will be implemented by the DENR Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) and Philippine Association for Intercultural Development.

The project will be partly funded through a grant of \$1.75 million by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF). It will be implemented through a cofinancing mechanism by the national government and other project partners.

The approved project states that the Philippine ICCA Project will be packaged as a medium-sized grant.

While GEF has committed under Cycle 5 \$1.75 million for four years (2016 to 2019), project proponents are expected to generate a total of \$5 million for cofinancing or counterpart funding from the government, Civil Society Organizations, UNDP, and indigenous people (IP) community itself.

The project aims to strengthen the documentation of ICCA and enhance the capacities of IP and popularize ICCAs in support of the country's international commitments, particularly Target 11 of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Aichi Target 11 states that "by 2020, at least 17 percent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 percent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes."

The project will be implemented in 10 pilot ICCA sites with established ICCAs, Director Theresa Mundita S. Lim of the DENR's BMB said.

These are in the provinces of Kalinga, Ifugao, Nueva Vizcaya, Aurora, Bataan, Palawan, Bukidnon, Agusan del Norte and North Cotabato.

Specifically, these are in areas identified to be rich in biodiversity or key biodiversity areas, namely, Mount Taungay in Kalinga, Mount Polis in Tuwali, Ikalahan/Lakanguya Unified Ancestral Domain, Engongot Aurora Sector, Kanawan (Ayta Magbakon), Balabac ancestral waters (Molbog), Mount Kimangkil (Higaunon), Dinarawan (Mamanwa), Mount Apo (Obo Manobo).

ICCAs may be sacred spaces or ritual grounds, such as sacred forests and mountains, indigenous territories and cultural landscapes or seascapes; territories and migration routes of nomadic herders or mobile indigenous peoples; sustainably managed wetlands, fishing grounds and water bodies; or particularly sensitive ecological settings, such as sacred areas on the mountain and hilltops.

Globally, an ICCA is defined as "Natural and/or modified ecosystems containing significant biodiversity values, ecological services and cultural values, voluntarily conserved by indigenous peoples and local communities—both sedentary and mobile—through customary laws or other effective means"

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

HIDDEN AGENDA

By MARY ANN LL. REYES

Responsible mining

The recent appointment of anti-mining advocate Gina Lopez as secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sent chills down the spine of members of the local and foreign business community.



A lot of businesses have encountered problems with environmental activists. In a number of cases, the opposition to certain business projects due to their alleged negative effect on the environment and/or the local community had no basis at all.

True there are so-called extractive industries, such as oil and gas extraction, mining, dredging and quarrying whose very nature involves extracting raw material from the earth to be used by consumers. Without these products, where would we be? We would still be probably living in the dark ages, literally and figuratively. After all, oil and coal, which come from the earth, are used to light our homes and fire our machines.

Mining shares absorbed a two-day beating at the Philippine Stock Exchange after news broke out that Lopez was offered, and later accepted, the position of DENR secretary.

News reports revealed that big mining companies lost over P25 billion combined as a result. Among those affected were Semirara Mining, Philex Mining, Nickel Asia.

The Social Security System (SSS) reportedly lost P2 billion because it owns 21 percent of Philex.

It was only after incoming presidential spokesperson Ernesto Abella assured the public that president-elect Rodrigo Duterte was just against irresponsible and illegal mining that share prices managed to bound back. Abella said the Duterte administration is committed to promote a dynamic economy including responsible mining.

Meanwhile, incoming peace adviser Jess Dureza stressed that mining companies following government regulations have nothing to worry about.

Unfortunately, Lopez has been quoted as saying that there is no such thing as responsible mining, adding that the poorest cities in the country are mining sites.

The big question is, and assuming that her conclusion is correct, without mining, where would these "poor" cities where the lands are mostly unsuited for agriculture, be.

One report mentioned UP environmental economist Dr. Ogie Arcenas as saying that Lopez seems a little rigid in terms of her anti-mining stance and that there might be a need for a little bit of adjustment.

Prof. Carlo Arcilla, a former head of the University of the Philippines (UP) National Institute of Geological Sciences (NIGS), said Lopez lacks scientific training and discernment as revealed in her pronouncements.

Meanwhile, some parties have urged Lopez to personally address certain issues that may damage her credibility.

They cited a 2012 report by the Commission on Audit (COA) which revealed that the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) failed in its P17.7 million program to clean up the Pasig River and that millions of pesos worth of recycling equipment that were bought in advance were rendered junk because the PRRC failed to build the required number of materials recovery facilities (MRFs) where the equipment would be used.

A separate COA report covering the years 2004 to 2009 also showed that the ABS-CBN Foundation Inc. (AFI) had unilaterally collected a 15 percent management fee over and above its 30 percent share in the net income of the La Mesa Eco-Park's at the La Mesa Dam in Quezon City.

And then, of course, there are those environmental problems encountered by Lopez-owned companies, including the landslide at the Energy Development Corp. (EDC) geothermal plant in Leyte that killed five people in 2013, the ecological destruction caused by the EDC-run Northern Negros Geothermal Plant in Mt. Kanlaon, the fuel leak at the West Tower Condominium in Makati City traced to First Philippine Industrial Corp., and the alleged construction of her "glamping" or glamor camping resort for the rich in Brooke's Point, Palawan on a sacred tribal ground without the consent of the indigenous peoples in the area.

The DENR ordered a probe into the reported tree cutting and takeover of ancestral lands in Brooke's Point without the approval of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), but nothing has happened so far.

Let us hope Lopez will put to rest all these allegations.

It is not true there is no such thing as responsible mining. What has given mining a bad name are fly-by-night mining operators who come and go, as well as small-scale mining practitioners that use unsafe methods. Even the Office of the president-elect had released a statement stressing "responsible mining plays a key role in the Philippines" and that "the Duterte administration is committed to promoting a robust and dynamic economy with every sector contributing to its growth."

The keyword here is "responsible," which means the Philippine mining sector should apply the same rigid standards in minerals extraction practiced in developed countries like Australia and Canada.

Nickel Asia president Gerard Brimo has said all their mining operations are ISO-compliant for environmental managements systems and are world class, while company VP Jose Bayani Baylon for his part suggested Lopez could channel her "passion" to fight illegal and irresponsible mining.

A blanket condemnation of mining in this country will render millions of Filipinos that depend on the industry, directly and indirectly, unemployed and without access to socio-economic benefits. Many of these areas have been forgotten by our government and the private sector has taken upon itself to address their needs.



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Responsible mining

Dangerous liaisons

Recently, president-elect Duterte joked about the rivalry between Sen. Koko Pimentel and Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano over the Senate leadership, saying he would just let his two allies fight it out.

On the same occasion, when he spotted Pimentel among the crowd, Duterte addressed him as Sen. Tito Sotto, a member of a different political party who is now backing Pimentel's bid after reportedly being promised the post of majority leader.

There are those who say that by calling Pimentel as Sotto, Duterte is sending a message that he is not happy with the inclusion of his detractors in the so-called "super majority" and that Duterte does not approve of the alliance among Pimentel, Sotto, and the others. After all, these politicians openly attacked Duterte during the campaign and are critical of his plans.

The incoming president will surely not allow the Senate to be led by someone who is easily controlled by traditional politicians who only want to advance their own personal and political interests.

Let us hope Pimentel understood the joke and heard Duterte's message loud and clear.

For comments, e-mail at philstarhiddenagenda@yahoo.com

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

STATEMENT ON THE PRONOUNCEMENTS ON MINING OF THE ENVIRONMENT SECRETARY-DESIGNATE

Philippine Business for Environmental Stewardship

THE Philippine Business for Environmental Stewardship (PBEST) is alarmed over the statements made by the incoming Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources against mining, which essentially questioned the existence of "responsible mining" in the Philippines.

PBEST, as an environmental NGO, advocates the compliance of the country's businesses with all the environmental rules and regulations. The convenors of PBEST believe that instead of being branded as the enemy of the environment, industry should be leading the cause of environmental

stewardship given its resources and culture of innovation. We place emphasis on stewardship to connote sound management of resources or sustainable development that upholds the principle of intergenerational equity.

In line with this advocacy, PBEST, through its lead convenor and professor at the UP National Institute of Geological Sciences Dr. Carlos Primo C. David, developed the Environmental Performance Tracking Program (EPTP), geared to, among others, provide industry with a self-regulating tool. For the first run of the EPTP, PBEST challenged the controversial mining industry to be open to scrutiny.

Some of the biggest mines in the country responded to the call, and PBEST observed that responsible mining does exist. It means operating in a way that follows the various laws and regulations and going beyond what is required with respect to social development and environmental programs. The group arrived at this conclusion after site

visits and analyses of documentary evidence and other factual information gathered.

This is where PBEST takes issue.

To say that "where there is mining, there is poverty" is bereft of factual basis. This statement may be an understandable claim from advocates, but it sends the wrong signal when it comes from the next head of DENR, the government agency tasked to properly implement the environmental laws of the land.

Policies, especially those involving the very complex field of environment, must be grounded on facts and science, not on emotions or any other agenda. Officials must have the necessary skill and technical competence to be able to adequately dispense

with their sworn duties.

With the kind of pronouncements from the incoming secretary, PBEST fears that the environmental policies of this administration will reflect the same disregard for facts and science and the failure to distinguish between the role of an advocate and the responsibility of a regulator.

On the issue, PBEST stands by its finding that there exists responsible mining as distinguished from illegal and destructive mining. Dr. David, in the policy book entitled "Thinking Beyond Politics, said:

"It must also be noted that illegal small-scale mining is responsible for the significant environmental damage being charged to the mining industry at large today. Small-scale mining is largely unregulated, both from an environmental and fiscal perspective. Small-scale miners generally do not have environmental protection or mitigations systems in place, and hardly pay the taxes due to the government."



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Duterte gov't seen as new threat to China's nickel pig iron sector

BY ANDY HOME

LONDON - What sort of threat does the election of a new government in the Philippines pose to China's nickel pig iron (NPI) sector?

Incoming President Rodrigo Duterte has already fired several warning shots at the country's mining sector, calling on local operators to "shape up" and stop "the spoiling of the land".

His actions speak as loud as his words. He has just appointed a committed environmentalist, Gina Lopez, as Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, a position with broad oversight of the mining sector.

The Philippines produces a wide range of minerals but the immediate focus is on the huge amounts of nickel ore it ships every month to Chinese producers of nickel pig iron (NPI).

China's NPI sector, an integral part of the country's stainless steel supply chain, has become increasingly dependent on Philippine ore since 2014, when its previous main supplier, Indonesia, banned all exports of unprocessed minerals.

Since nickel ore is largely produced by open pit mining, likely to be specifically targeted by the new Philippine administration, there is a ripple of bullish expectation running through the nickel market.

But we've been here before.

China's NPI sector was already supposed to have imploded by now, crushed by the loss of Indonesian ore and increased production costs associated with treating lower-grade material from the Philippines.

The fact that it hasn't says much about the resilience of Chinese NPI producers.

And as long as they continue operating, other nickel producers will be tempted to hang on in there rather than curtail output, limiting the potential for a sustained rebound from current low prices.

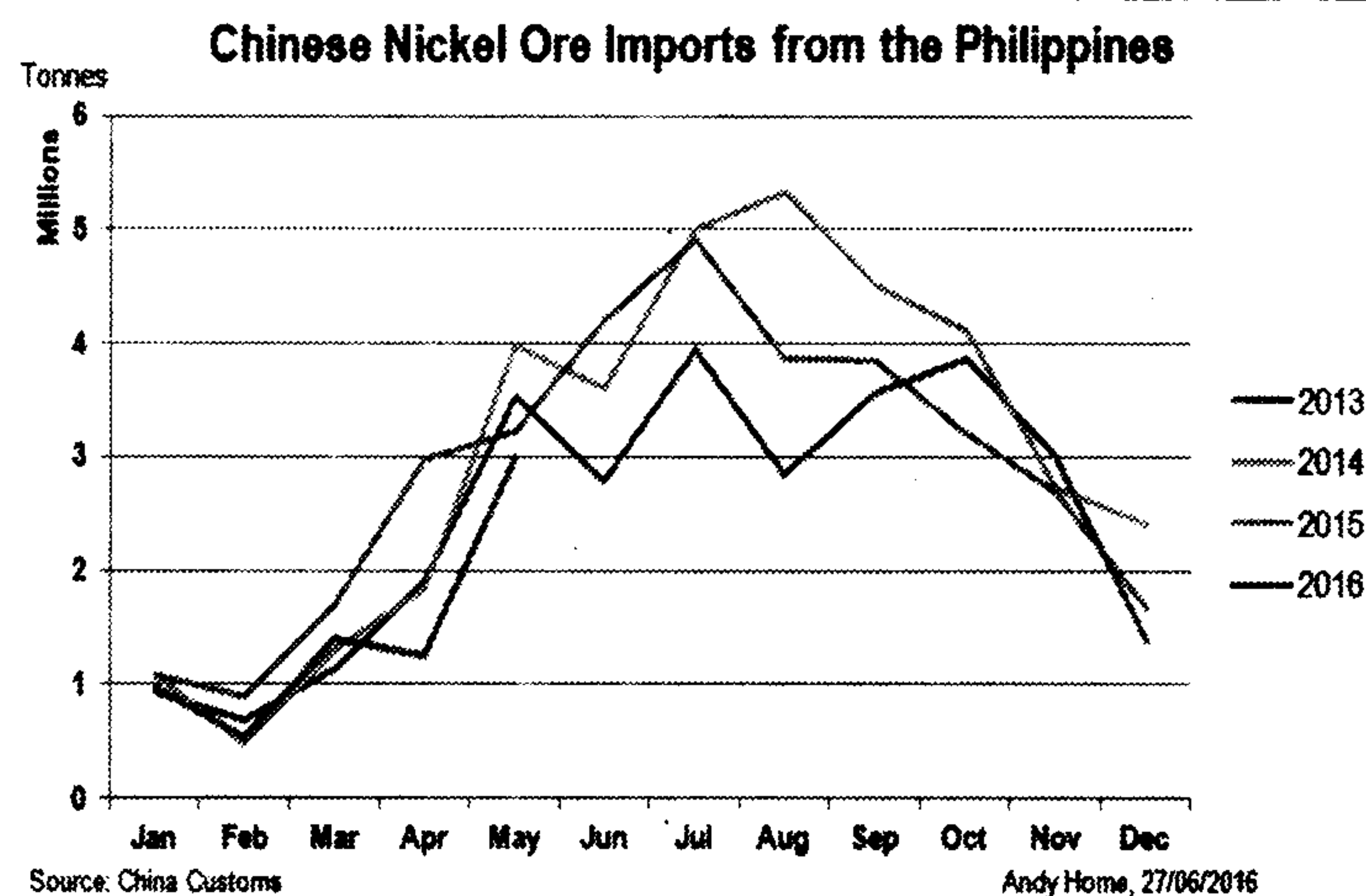
PIPELINE

China's imports of Indonesian nickel ore collapsed almost immediately after the ban on exports of unprocessed ore came into effect at the start of 2014.

Imports plummeted from 41 million tons in 2013 to 10.6 million tons in 2014 and to just 174,000 tons in 2015. The latter may have been no more than a misclassification of iron ore with relatively high nickel by-product content.



Nickel ore is largely produced by open pit mining, likely to be specifically targeted by the Duterte administration, there is a ripple of bullish expectation running through the nickel market. Graph shows Chinese nickel ore imports from the Philippines.



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*Duterte govt. seen as new threat
to china's nickel pig iron sector*

Philippine ore producers stepped up their production and exports in response. Chinese imports accelerated from 29.7 million tons in 2013 to 36.4 million tons in 2014 and largely held steady last year.

The scale of that response surprised just about everyone in the nickel market and was probably the single biggest factor in halting the post-Indonesia price rally that saw the London three-month price peak at over \$20,000 per ton in the middle of 2014.

Chinese imports from the Philippines are running lower this year, even allowing for the "normal" seasonal impact of the rainy season on output and shipping.

The reason is the current low price environment rather than the environment.

The Philippines Nickel Miners Association warned in March its members planned to reduce output by as much as 20 percent this year as prices slid to 13-year lows of \$7,550 per ton in February.

That threat seems to have materialised.

National output of mined nickel slumped 38 percent year-on-year to 75,300 tons in the January-April period, according to the International Nickel Study Group. Chinese imports of Philippine ore were down by 27 percent in the first five months of the year.

No alternative supplier has so far emerged to pick up the renewed supply slack, although one renewed appearance in China's nickel import profile is worth noting.

Imports of ore from New Caledonia have restarted after a gap of three years. This is a displacement effect resulting from the well-publicised troubles of Clive Palmer's Queensland Nickel, a major buyer of New Caledonian material.

The Australian plant is currently shuttered and New Caledonia has exempted two local nickel producers from a long-standing ban on exports of China, albeit with a maximum ceiling of 700,000 tons.

China imported 113,200 tons of ore from New Caledonia over the February-May period, a trickle by comparison with the Philippines but one which may gather pace in the coming months.

EXAGGERATED

All of which begs the question as to how China's NPI sector is still operating at all with no Indonesian ore, reduced flows of Philippine ore and only marginal offset from new suppliers.

But not only is it doing so, all the indications are that the worst of any contraction may be over.

Analysts at the Beijing office of research house CRU expect national production rates to hit 300,000 tons this year after sliding from a peak of over 500,000 tons in 2013.

But they are then expected to "stabilise and increase again in 2017."

Key to understanding this surprising development is the now proven flexibility of China's NPI operators.

CRU estimates, for example, that China's NPI production costs have fallen by a staggering 25 percent since the start of last year and that margins were still positive up until the start of this year.

Not bad for a sector that was once widely assumed to have the highest production costs of any part of the nickel supply chain and which was expected to be out of business at prices below \$20,000 per ton.

Moreover, the sector is still evolving and consolidating. The clearest manifestation is the offshoring of NPI production in Indonesia itself by Tsingshan Group, one of China's largest stainless steel makers.

It has been shipping intermediate material to China in ever greater quantities, although confusingly this flow shows up in the "ferronickel" component of monthly Chinese customs figures.

Imports of such Indonesian material, higher purity than ore but lower purity than ferronickel, totalled 256,000 tons in the first five months of 2016.

Tsingshan has just started up a stainless steel plant in Indonesia, which may serve to reduce NPI shipments to China but which should serve as a warning of how Chinese stainless producers are integrating NPI flows into their core operations.

This process of continuous adaptation explains why, to paraphrase Mark Twain, reports of the death of NPI have so far been greatly exaggerated.

And despite all the rhetoric from the Philippines' new administration about cleaning up mining and potentially following Indonesia in its resource nationalist policies, any wholesale change in the country's mining law could still be years away.

Indonesia itself took five years before passing legislation on a minerals export ban and actually implementing it.

As CRU notes in explaining its NPI production forecasts, "CRU does not expect any significant revision to Philippine exports to emerge in the next 12 months".

Twelve months is a long time when it comes to a fast evolving production sector such as NPI.


Other nickel producers hoping that NPI closures would rebalance an oversupplied market have been proved wrong for several years.

And if they're pinning their hopes that the Philippines will deal a second fatal blow to China's NPI after Indonesia, they're almost certainly going to be disappointed again. -Reuters

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Miner hits back at NGO with cyber-libel case

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

 @jonlmayuga

FOR allegedly spreading malicious information, the Hinatuan Mining Corp. (HMC), an affiliate of Nickel Asia Corp., has filed a criminal complaint against a non-governmental organization (NGO) for cyber libel.

While the complaint was filed in September last year, the Taguig City Prosecutor's Office has recommended the filing of the criminal case against officers of the NGO.

In a three-page resolution, Taguig City Prosecutor Archimedes V. Manabat found probable cause to indict Yolanda Esguerra, Candy Hidalgo, Edel Garingan and Victor Morillo of Philippine Misereor Partnership Inc. (PMPI).

The Prosecutor Office found "libelous" the respondents' statement posted on their web site on June 20, 2015, claiming that HMC's barge destroyed three small fishing boats on their way into the port of Manicani Island in Guian, Eastern Samar. "Skipton Manila, a large barge containing several heavy equipment and machinery for mining operations, was sent by HMC despite a suspension order from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources [DENR]," PMPI alleged as posted in its web site. It added: "We fail to understand how a suspended mining company was able to get the support of our police to bring heavy equipment they can use to resume their supposedly suspended operations."

Another press release was posted by the respondents on June 24, 2015, on PMPI web site reiterating their claim that HMC intentionally destroyed three fishing boats.

"Something is to be said when a mining

firm intentionally ran over small boats of the fisherfolks of Manicani, for the second time. The first was only last December, with the similar intent: To haul heavy equipment into the island and continue their mining operation," it said.

Some Manicani Island residents also executed a joint affidavit attesting that it is not true that the barge rammed the pump boats and no nickel ores were transported by the barge.

Apart from local residents, the incident was also witnessed by the Philippine Coast Guard, the Philippine Maritime Police, the Philippine National Police, national and local media, and Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) and DENR personnel. After viewing the footages submitted by the parties, the prosecutor said the collision was caused by the pump boats, which intentionally blocked the path of the slow-moving barge.

"After the collision, the barge even retreated to find another berthing spot. Thus, the phrase 'intentionally ran over small boats' would be false," the prosecutor said in its resolution.

The resolution added: "The publication puts complainant in a bad light because it portrays a mining corporation's use of brute force, notwithstanding damage to property of others, in its operations." PMPI has been vocal about HMC's alleged operation in Manicani Island despite a suspension order slapped against the company.

The group has been hitting the company for hauling stockpiles of nickel ore in the island, an action sanctioned by the DENR-MGB.

PMPI said hauling of the stockpiles of nickel is considered part of mining operation on the island, which is now supposed to be a "no-go zone" for mining. It was declared part of the Guian Protected Landscape and Seascape.

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Romblon Gov files opposition vs mining

ROMBLON Gov. Eduardo Firmalo has filed a complaint before the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) Region IV-B opposing the offshore mining application of Asian Palladium Mineral Resources, Inc. (APMRI) in the province.

The opposition was filed after APMRI filed an application for a financial technical assistance agreement (FTAA) for the exploration of palladium, platinum and other related mineral deposits in certain municipal waters in Tablas Island covering about 10,000 hectares.

MGB Regional Director Roland de Jesus said the complaint will be forwarded to the panel of arbitrators for resolution.

Other complainants along with Firmalo are Tomas Faminial of the Romblon State University, Jojo Mesana of the Alliance of Students Against Mining (ASAM), and retired Philippine National Police (PNP) Director Orville Gabuna, from the municipality of Looc, with Rodne Galicha of The

Climate Reality Project as witness.

In a letter addressed to Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) outgoing Sec. Ramon Paje and incoming Sec. Regina Paz Lopez, Firmalo said that "the Province of Romblon, as a whole, we would like to inform your good office that we strongly object to the application of Asian Palladium Mineral Resources, Inc. to conduct any mining activity in the water areas of the island. No to metallic mining both on land and under the water has long been the united stand of the people of Romblon."

The complaint was prepared by the Romblon Ecumenical Forum Against Mining (REFAM) and the ASAM supported by 81,630 signatures with resolutions from the municipal and barangay levels and non-government organizations.

It battled for the protection, preservation and saving of rich marine resources and the liveli-

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Romblon Gov files opposition vs mining



■ Rodne Galicha of the Climate Reality Project, MGB-IVB Regional Dir. Roland de Jesus, PNP General Orville Gabuna (ret.), and Dr. Tomas Faminial of the Romblon State University and the Romblon Ecumenical Forum Against Mining. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

hood of fisherfolk, for the people of Romblon and succeeding generations, adding the fact that Romblon is composed of critical island ecosystems.

Bishop Ronelio Fabriquer, chairperson of the REFAM, said that "the people of Romblon will continue to oppose any mining activity as we take care of God's creation which should be used

sustainably, addressing our present needs without compromising the capacity of the next generation to survive."

In 2011, Firmalo signed a moratorium on metallic mining, and REFAM mobilized 10,000 people to oppose another mining application which eventually backed out.

Galicha, co-chair of the Eco-

nomic Development Committee of MIMAROPA Regional Development Council (RDC) and country manager of The Climate Reality Project, said that "the stance of the provincial government of Romblon and its people is consistent with Sustainable Development Goals (SGD) targets, especially on sustainable communities, climate action, and life below water."

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Aussie mine firm stops diggings

BY LEANDER C. DOMINGO
AND THOM F. PICAÑA CORRESPONDENTS

KASIBU, Nueva Vizcaya: In an apparent move to appease anti-mining residents blocking the entrance to the exploration and drilling site, Oceana Gold Philippine Inc. (OGPI) has stopped its operation and pulled out their drilling equipment from the area.

But former Didipio village chief Erenio Bobola, Samahang Pangkarapatan ng Katutubong Manggagawa at Magsasaka, Inc. (Sapakmami) chairman said that the pulling out of the Australian firm's equipment from the area is only a temporary victory of them.

He said the company clandestinely brought in their resources

and equipment to their exploration and drilling areas when the community was busy attending to other social obligations.

The barangay council in Didipio, where the mining site is located, and anti-mining indigenous peoples and farmers under the Didipio Earth Savers Multipurpose Association (DESAMA)

and Sapakmami also eased their barricade, but vowed to be vigilant.

"Now, we will maintain to be vigilant against the company's tactics of sneaking in again their drilling equipment in the area," Bobola said.

On Sunday, Governor-elect Carlos Padilla, with over a hundred leaders of the Abot Palad organization led by outgoing Gov. Ruth Padilla met with indigenous peoples and residents showing their support against the mining exploration and expansion activities of OceanaGold.

The Abot Palad brought with them logistics and vowed to support the anti-mining groups in their crusade against the mining operations and expansion of OceanaGold in the province.

The residents have put up a barri-

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cade at the exploration site entrance to block OceanaGold's trucks from bringing in more drilling and other equipment into the area.

In August 2014, Didipio residents submitted a petition to the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) opposing the expansion of OGPI's mining operations, but in March 2016, the mine firm was granted an extension of its exploration activities, further expanding its operations until 2021.

Village officials and anti-mining groups have raised sanitary concerns like water seepage from the tailings dam, water pollution, respiratory and other diseases and other environmental issues resulting for the explorations.

With their operations stopped over the weekend, OceanaGold immediately called for a meeting

with *barangay* residents, taking up new amendments of their Environment Compliance Certificate, which is the basis of their entry to the exploration area.

However, DESAMA board director Myrna Duyan stressed that they already passed a resolution in 2012 prohibiting any further mining activity in the area.

Meanwhile, indigenous peoples allied with the Katribu (Kalipunan ng Katutubong Mamamayan ng Pilipinas) urged newly appointed Environment Sec. Gina Lopez to support their collective call to immediately stop mining operations and cancel the permit of Oceana Gold Philippine Inc. (OGPI) in Nueva Vizcaya.

Mining-affected indigenous peoples also call on Lopez to seriously pursue President Rodrigo

Duterte's promise to heed the people's growing demand to end large-scale and destructive mining not only in Mindanao but also throughout the country.

The call was supported by Padilla, saying that Lopez's bias for the protection and conservation of the environment and natural resources will be a big shift for the DENR, which many label as a facilitator of destructive projects.

Padilla said while agriculture is the main industry in Nueva Vizcaya, it also has a high ecotourism potential. However, the province is threatened by large-scale mining projects.

There are two foreign large-scale mining operations in the province - the Australian-Canadian OceanaGold and the British FCF Minerals in Runruno, Quezon

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CAGAYAN VALLEY: NUEVA VIZCAYA

IPs claim victory as mining firm pulls out drilling gear

THE INDIGENOUS people (IP) of Nueva Vizcaya claimed victory, albeit one they acknowledged could be temporary, when their three-day barricade in Sitio Camgat, Barangay Didipio, Kasibu prompted a mining firm to halt its drilling operations. "We will continue to be vigilant against the company's dirty tactics of sneaking in drilling equipment in the area," Erenio Bobola, chairman of the Samahang Pangkarapatan ng Katutubong Mangagawa at Magsasaka, Inc., said after Oceana Gold Philippines, Inc. withdrew its drilling equipment. — interaksyon.com

>> See full story on <http://goo.gl/33Seok>

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Editorial

Air pollution, hamon sa bagong DENR chief

GRABE na ang air pollution sa Metro Manila. Araw-araw ang nakakasulasok na usok ang nalalanghap ng milyong residente sa Metro Manila at nagiging dahilan ng sakit sa respiratory system. Kapag hindi nasolusyunan ang air pollution, magkakatotoo ang isang pag-aaral na sa darating na panahon, hindi na matitirahan ang Metro Manila dahil sa sobrang pagkalason ng hangin. Maraming magkakasakit at malaking pera ang kakailanganin para pantustos sa mga pampublikong hospital.

Sa pag-aaral mismo ng DENR, ang mga sasakyan ang nagdudulot ng grabeng pollution sa Metro Manila. Umano'y 70-80 percent ng emissions ay galing sa mga tambutso ng sasakyan. Ang maruming usok na ito ang nalalanghap ng kawawang commuters araw-araw. Nakalantad sila sa particles na may lason.

Itinalaga ni incoming president Rodrigo Duterte si Gina Lopez bilang DENR secretary. Naniniwala kami na kayang patunayan ni Lopez na hindi nagkamali si Duterte sa pagpili sa kanya. Kayang-kaya niyang pangalagaan ang kalikasan at kapaligiran.

Aming suhestiyon para masolusyunan ang air pollution, lahat nang mga luma at karag-karag na sasakyan ay ipagbawal na sa kalye. Ipatupad na ang mga sasakyang 15 taon pataas ay dapat nang i-phased out. Ang mga lumang sasakyan ay malakas kumunsumo ng gasolina at nagpo-produce nang nakasulasok na usok.

Ipagpatuloy ang smoke belching campaign para masiguro na ang mga sasakyang yumayaot ay hindi nagbubuga ng may lasong usok. Iligtas ang Metro Manila sa mapaminsalang air pollution. Maawa sa mga susunod pang henerasyon na umaasang may malalanghap pa silang sariwang hangin. Hamon ito sa bagong DENR secretary.



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DU30: Canada's toxic garbage?

AS Filipinos usher in the Duterte government and his promise of change, environmental activists gathered anew outside the Embassy of Canada in Makati City to denounce the long-drawn-out Canadian garbage dumping scandal that haunted the outgoing Aquino administration.

At a peaceful rally organized by the EcoWaste Coalition and Buklod Tao, the activists called out Prime Minister Justin Trudeau for his government's failure to re-import the illegal trash shipments that have been rotting in Manila and Subic ports.

"We ask PM Trudeau not to saddle the Duterte government with these overstaying containers of reeking garbage from Canada. His government must move quickly to repossess these illegal shipments for environmentally-sound disposal in Canada," said Noli Abinales, president of the EcoWaste Coalition, a watch group on chemicals and wastes.

"Removing Canada's garbage from our ports will be viewed as a meaningful gesture of goodwill towards the new government and put this hullabaloo behind us," he pointed out.

To get their message across loud and clear, the protestors paraded 12 mock garbage-filled shipping containers bearing Canada's iconic maple leaf and unveiled a banner that says "PM Trudeau: What ever happened to the 'Canadian solution'? For the sake of justice, take back garbage now!"

On the fringe of the APEC Summit last year, Trudeau stated that a "Canadian solution" is being developed to address the dumping

controversy that had remained unresolved for far too long.

The Green Convergence for Safe Food, Healthy Environment and Sustainable Economy (Green Convergence), Citizens' Environmental Network (CEN) and the Green Thumb Coalition (GTC) also joined the EcoWaste Coalition in appealing to Trudeau to act fast on the matter.

"We reiterate our demand for PM Trudeau to take their trash back as soon as possible so we can conclude this unhappy episode in Canada-Philippines relations and move on," said Dr. Angelina Galang, President of the Green Convergence.

"I add my voice to the persistent call asking Canada to re-import their garbage and bring this blatant case of environmental injustice to a close under the Duterte presidency. We've waited long enough, it's time to return those stinking containers to where they came from," said "running priest" Fr. Robert Reyes, lead convenor, CEN.

DAHLI ASPILLERA



The Green Convergence for Safe Food, Healthy Environment and Sustainable Economy (Green Convergence joined the EcoWaste Coalition in appealing to PM Trudeau to act fast on the matter.)

Aaron Pedrosa, one of the convenors of GTC and Secretary General of Sanlakas, said: "Canada has to assume full responsibility for its illegal garbage export to the Philippines that contravenes national and international laws. PM Trudeau must act fast with unflinching resolve to put this matter to rest."

Some 100 shipping containers of largely residual household garbage declared as scrap plastics for recycling were illegally exported to the Philippines from Canada from 2013-2014. In 2015, garbage from 26 of these containers was unlawfully disposed of at a landfill in Tarlac, causing an uproar.

A government-led waste characterization study in 2014 confirmed that 63.94% of the garbage shipments were residuals, which can no longer be recycled and should be hygienically disposed of.

Local authorities, including officials from the provincial governments of Bulacan and Tarlac and the city governments of Navotas

and Quezon Cities, have rejected foreign waste disposal in landfill facilities operating within their jurisdictions.

The EcoWaste Coalition, which espouses environmental justice and zero waste, has warned that "the disposal of the Canadian garbage in local landfills, cement kilns and waste-to-energy facilities will be totally wrong and unacceptable," and will be in violation of Republic Act 9003, the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act and related local regulations.

The group noted that "Canada, a highly developed country, should have no problem dealing with their soiled diapers, spent electronics, plastic junks and other rubbish right in their own backyard," stressing "there is no justification at all for their refuse to remain in our soil to be buried or burned."

In the proposed "Agenda on Wastes and Toxics for President Rodrigo Duterte's First 100 Days in Office" submitted by the EcoWaste Coalition to the Duterte team in Davao City last May 18, the group requested the new government to "order the re-export of Canadian garbage back to its origin and initiate policy reforms to effectively block foreign waste dumping in the country, including ratifying the Basel Ban Amendment."

For more info, EcoWaste Coalition, Unit 329, Eagle Court, 26 Matalino St., 1101 Quezon City, Philippines, Phone/Fax: 4411846 Email: info@ecowastecoalition.org, Website: <http://ecowastecoalition.blogspot.com>

Dahliaspillera@yahoo.com

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TRUDEAU SCORED OVER GARBAGE

By Cory Martinez

ENVIRONMENT advocates yesterday pressed their demand for Canada Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to take his country's trash back as soon as possible to end an unhappy episode in the Canada-Philippines relations.

The advocates, who belonged to different environment-advocate groups, held a rally outside of the Canadian Embassy in Makati City and denounced the long-drawn-out Canadian garbage dumping scandal that has haunted the outgoing Aquino administration.

The rally, which was organized by the EcoWaste Coalition and Buklod Tao, was attended by the members of the Green Convergence for Safe Food, Healthy Environment and Sustainable Economy (Green Convergence), Citizens' Environmental Network (CEN) and the Green Thumb Coalition (GTC).

The environment advocates lambasted the Canadian PM for his government's failure to re-import the illegal trash shipments that have been rotting in Manila and Subic ports.

"We ask PM Trudeau not to saddle the Duterte government with these overstaying containers of reeking garbage from Canada. His government must move quickly to repossess these illegal shipments for environmentally-sound



CANADIAN STINK. Environmental activists from the EcoWaste Coalition and Buklod Tao protest outside the Embassy of Canada in Makati City and prod Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to re-import their illegal garbage shipments for environment-sound disposal in Canada to bring the dumping scandal to a close.

Photo by Roger Talan

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



ILLEGAL DUMPING Environmental activists from the EcoWaste Coalition and Buklod Tao stage a protest action in front of the Canadian Embassy in Makati demanding that Canada re-import its illegal garbage shipment and bring closure to the dumping scandal.

PHOTO BY RUSSELL PALMA

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Outgoing Butuan mayor inireklamo sa Ombudsman

Naghain ng reklamo sa Ombudsman ang ilang residente ng Butuan City laban kay outgoing Mayor Ferdinand M. Amante, Jr. dahil sa umano'y pagpapahintulot nito sa operasyon ng isang open dumpsite na direktang lumalabag sa Ecological Solid Waste Management Act R.A. 9003.

Sa kanilang petisyon ay hiniling din ng mahigit 500 residente ang agarang pagpapasara sa naturang open dumpsite.

Ayon sa inihaing reklamo sa Ombudsman, pinahintulutan ng outgoing mayor ang operasyon ng dumpsite mula pa noong 2012 nang hindi man lang dumaan sa kahit anong public consultation. Nagpatuloy rin umano ang operasyon ng nasabing dumpsite sa Brgy. Dulag sa kabila ng kawalan nito ng Environment Clearance Certificate (ECC) mula sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Una nang nagsumite ang Dulag Brgy. Council ng resolusyon na nagpapasara sa naturang dumpsite ngunit hindi umano ito ipinatupad ni Amante.

Kasama sa pinaiimbestigahan ang City Environment and Natural Resources officer na si Alexander Alaan at ang punong barangay ng Barangay Dulag na si Erlinda Rosales.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

MMDA eyes Tarlac landfill for Metro trash

By ANNA LIZA VILLAS-ALAVAREN

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) is eyeing Metro Clark Waste Management Corporation Sanitary Landfill located in Capas, Tarlac as an alternative to dump Metro Manila's garbage.

MMDA Chairman Emerson Carlos clarified that Metro Manila is not on a brink of garbage crisis even if it is looking for another disposal facility.

Carlos said the sanitary landfill in Barangay Kalangitan, Capas town, would serve as backup to the landfills where local government units in Metro Manila are dumping their garbage.

The availability of the 100-hectare sanitary landfill of the Clark Development Corporation was offered to LGUs in Metro Manila.

"We do not want to wait for a garbage crisis (to happen) before we begin looking for another site," said Carlos after meeting with some of the Metro Manila mayors.

At present, there are existing disposal facilities that take in garbage in Metro Manila. They are the Payatas sanitary landfill that accommodates garbage only from Quezon City; Navotas landfill where Navotas and Malabon City dump their trash; and Rodriguez town in Rizal that takes in garbage from the remaining LGUs.

Among the three, the capacity of the Payatas landfill is already limited and can only be used for up to three years.

Even if they want another site, Carlos said no city wants to host another landfill in Metro Manila due to environmental reasons.

"We are still lucky to have Navotas and Payatas," said Carlos.

During the term of MMDA chairman Bayani Fernando, Carlos said the landfill in Tarlac took in garbage from Metro Manila but the contract had expired.

Based on records, Metro Manila produces 8,000 tons of wastes daily.

Electricity from Boracay trash

By JUN AGUIRRE

AKLAN – Boracay Island, the country's premier beach destination, may soon generate electricity from trash.

This, as the local government of Malay town, Aklan province, is awaiting for the approval of the proposed waste-to-energy program that aims to curb environmental degradation.

Councilor Manuel de Los Reyes said that the Malay Town Council will most likely approve

the proposal of El Elyon-Orion Renewable Solutions Corp.

De Los Reyes said the committee report has recently been submitted to the Malay Town Council.

It was sometime the last quarter of 2014 when El Elyon Orion presented its proposal of generating 60 megawatts of electricity for Boracay Island as well as mainland Malay town.

For more than a decade, Malay local government has been in a dilemma how to manage its garbage. The growing tourism industry in Boracay Island means generating more trash daily.

Based on estimates of Department of Tourism (DoT), each tourist generates at least a kilo of trash on a daily basis **(With reports from Tara Yap)**

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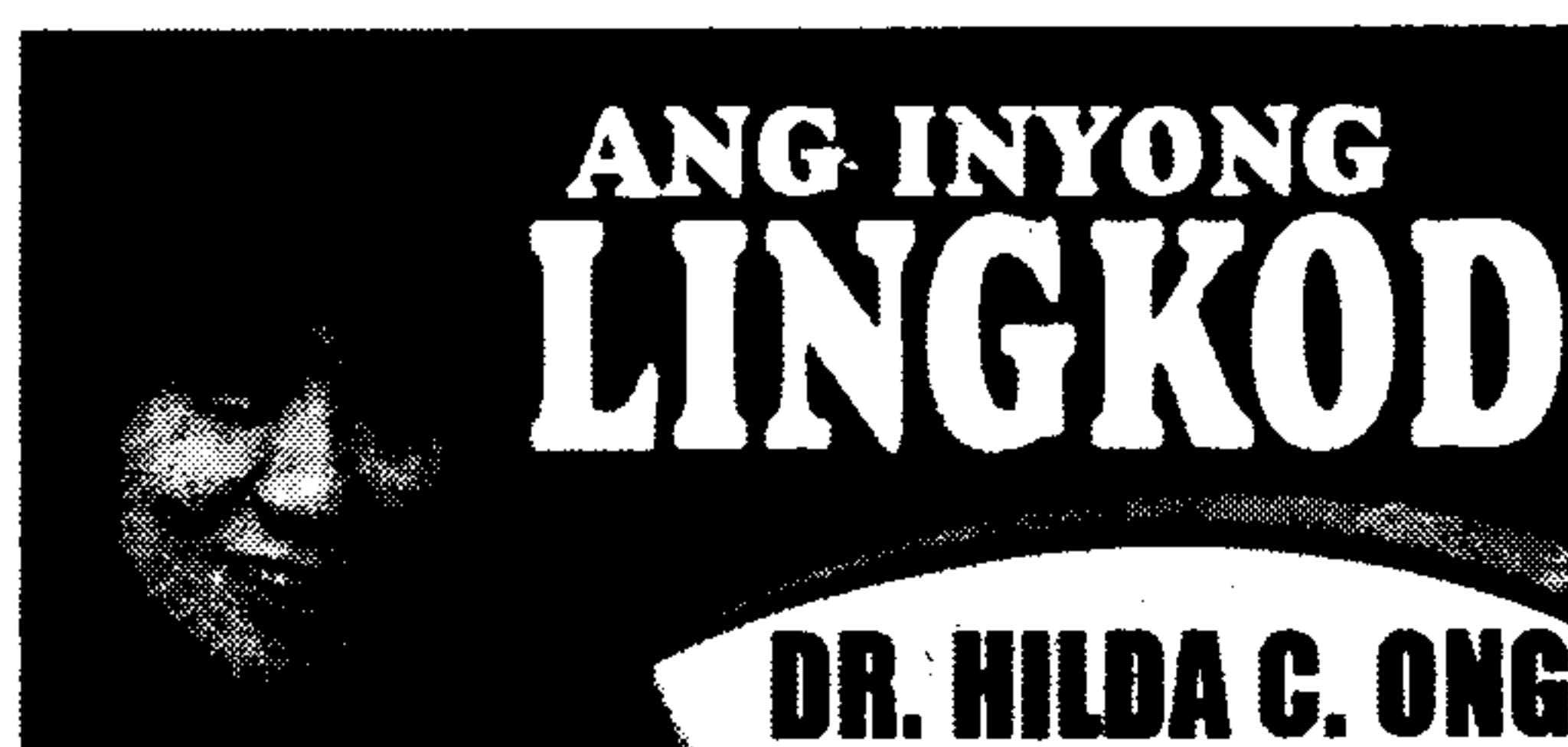
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ISA ang Manila Water sa mga masugid na kabalik ng Department of Education sa programang Oplan Brigada Eskwela na naglalayong ihanda ang mga paaralan ngayong pasukan na ng mga mag-aaral.

Umabot sa 2,389 ang water quality tests na isinagawa ng Manila Water mula sa 538 na paaralan mula Abril hanggang Mayo upang siguruhin na ligtas, malinis at maiinom ang tubig sa mga paaralan.

Pahayag ni Manila Water OIC for Strategic Affairs Group at Corporate Communications Head Jeric Sevilla, Jr.

"Mahalaga sa amin na maibigay ang mataas na kalidad ng serbisyo sa aming mga customers lalo na sa mga pampublikong paara-



ANG INYONG LINGKOD

DR. HILDA C. ONG

WATER SAMPLING TESTS ISINAGAWA NG MANILA WATER SA MGA ESKWELAHAN SA METRO MANILA

lan."

Bukod dito, naglagay rin ang Manila Water ng mga karagdagang drinking fountains at wash areas sa mga eskwelahan sa Metro Manila at lalawigan ng Rizal na bahagi ng programang Lingap Eskwela ng Manila Water.

Nakiisa rin ang Manila Water sa paglilinis ng mga silid-aralan, pagpipintura ng

mga school ground at classrooms, pagsasaayos at pagkukumpuni ng mga sira at depektibong gripo at palikuran sa iba't ibang paaralan sa Makati, Mandaluyong, Pasig, Balara, Cubao, San Juan, lalawigan ng Rizal, Pateros, Taguig, Marikina, ilang bahagi ng Lunsod ng Quezon at Manila. Nagsagawa rin ng pagsisipsip ng posonegro o desludging sa mga paaralan.

Makikita sa larawan ang mga empleyado ng Manila Water, volunteers at school teachers ng Concepcion Elementary School sa Marikina City na nagtutulong-tulong sa paglilinis ng mga classrooms bilang paghahanda sa pagbubukas ng klase nitong Hunyo.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Pasay City is selling Manila Bay to SM

YES, this is what Pasay City-SM reclamation deal actually boils down to once the project is approved by the Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA). It will resurrect the notorious PEA-Amari deal. Only this time, it is the Pasay City government that is the major player and main proponent instead of the PRA.

Portrayed as a public-private partnership (PPP) project of the Pasay City local government, the deal calls for SM to undertake and finance the reclamation of 360 hectares of Manila Bay and, in exchange, the mall and property giant will get 49 percent or 176.4 hectares of the reclaimed land, while Pasay City will end up with the remaining 51 percent or 183.6 hectares.

Last week, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) conducted the (first and only?) public hearing on the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report of the Pasay City-SM reclamation project—the first indispensable step in the approvals process.



FLIPSIDE
ATTY. DODO DULAY

With that, the ball is now in the court of incoming DENR Secretary Gina Lopez, so to speak.

Not a few thinking Filipinos are hoping that Lopez, a staunch anti-mining advocate and a well-known environmentalist, can finally put an end to what many see as the continuing destruction of Manila Bay for profit's sake.

We got hold of a copy of the Executive Summary of the EIA report and as we pored over it, it became obvious that the only real beneficiaries of the reclamation project are the officials of the Pasay City government and mall and property giant SM. That only a privileged few should profit from a natural resource owned by all Filipinos definitely leaves a bitter taste in the mouth.

Perhaps what's more amusing about the report are the justifications given by Pasay City for undertaking the reclamation project. Here are some of them:

"[The project will] help in decongesting Metro Manila and the City of Pasay by providing alternative site for future development ... instead of such developments being located in the already-crowded inland."

"The expanded reclaimed areas

will provide the sufficient critical mass and synergy to enable Pasay City to compete with and surpass other business districts existing within Metro Manila."

"The benefits that shall accrue to the to the City of Pasay will be substantial and these will be in the form of additional income and revenues generated from additional real estate taxes, permits and licenses and business taxes ..."

And perhaps even more tellingly, the EIA report admits that "(w)hen completed, the Proposed Pasay Reclamation Project will be linked up with, and will serve as an extension of the existing Mall of Asia Complex located just across the Libertad Channel." In short, the Pasay City-SM reclamation project is really just a (very profitable) land deal, after all.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Pasay City is selling Manila Bay to SM.

The way a lot of folks see it, it is a cheap way for SM to acquire property and expand its MOA complex in the booming Bay City area where land prices, brokers say, are expected to hit P500,000 per square meter or more, by the time the seven-year reclamation project is completed. That easily translates to an P880-billion windfall profit for SM.

Recently, an anti-reclamation alliance composed of fisherfolk groups such as the *Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas* (Pamalakaya), *Koalisyon Kontra Kumbersyon ng Manila Bay* (KKK-Manila Bay), *Sagip Manila Bay Movement* (SMBM), *Save Freedom Island Movement* (SFIM) and *Anakpawis* partylist, have called for a stop to the Pasay City-SM deal, saying that "too many malls have been built

to displace [fisher folks]."

"The Henry Sy empire should refrain from establishing a republic of reclaimed areas in Manila Bay. Manila Bay is not for sale and it is owned by the Filipino people," the groups said.

Salvador France, vice chair of Pamalakaya, claims the P54-billion land reclamation project was approved because of the juicy commissions the approving authority would get from the deal, aside from the promise of a lion's share for the higher-ups. "Multiple crimes of plunder and first-rate felony of corruption are written all over this P54-billion reclamation project at the expense of people's livelihood and environment," France added.

Aside from the Pasay reclamation project, SM was awarded another 300-hectare reclama-

tion deal in Manila Bay by the adjacent city of Parañaque. The mall and property bigwig previously announced its plan to merge the Pasay and Parañaque reclamation projects in a contiguous 600-hectare area.

Indeed, we find ironic that in the midst of the government's campaign for earthquake readiness (MMDA officials called last week's quake drill a "resounding success"), the PNoy government has not put the brakes on the reclamation of Manila Bay, especially since reclaimed foreshore lands are most vulnerable to natural hazards like storm surges, land subsidence, and destructive ground shaking and liquefaction during earthquakes, according to internationally renowned Filipino geologist Kevin Rodolfo.

Rodolfo says reclaiming

new land when Metro Manila is overdue for a magnitude 7.2 earthquake is "simply insane."

But those natural hazards are a minor detail to Pasay City and SM. The potential "benefits" of the reclamation deal are obviously too tempting to pass up. Besides, if anything bad happens during an earthquake, they can always avoid liability by blaming it on a fortuitous (unforeseen) event.

No wonder many expats in the country say we have the smartest bureaucrats in the world.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Manila Bay deteriorated – Sen. Villar

By MARIO B. CASAYURAN

Manila Bay, a historical landmark, has deteriorated even after the Supreme Court issued eight years ago a writ of continuing mandamus ordering 13 government agencies to clean and rehabilitate the bay.

Sen. Cynthia A. Villar, outgoing Senate agriculture and food committee chairwoman, made the observation as she urged these agencies to work double time in cleaning up Manila after noting “no significant improvement can be seen in the bay.”

On Dec. 18, 2008, the Supreme Court issued a landmark decision in GR No. 171947-48 ordering 13 government agencies “to clean up, rehabilitate, and preserve Manila Bay, restore and maintain its waters to make them fit for swimming, skin diving, and other forms of contact recreation.”

These agencies are the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and the departments of environment and natural resources (DENR), education, health, agriculture, public works and highways, budget and management and interior and local government; the Philippine Coast Guard, Philippine National Police Maritime Group, Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, Local Water Utilities Administration, and the Philippine Ports Authority.

Around 300 people joined the clean-up activity at BASECO headed by Villar; Villar SIPAG (Social Institute for Poverty Alleviation and Governance), Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Department of Environment and Natural Resources -National Capital Region (DENR-NCR), Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA), residents of Brgy. 649, BASECO and the Kabalikat sa Kaunlaran ng BASECO Manila.

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Slow relocation of informal families along Pasig River criticized by COA

BY PETER TABINGO

THE Commission on Audit has criticized the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) for failure to follow its own target commitments on the relocation of close to 3,000 informal settler families (ISFs) from waterways and tributaries of the Pasig River in 2015.

In its 2015 audit report on the PRRC, the COA said the agency reported that 2,442 ISFs were relocated, equivalent to 82 percent of 2,973 families set as target accomplishment for the year.

The PRRC is headed by Gina Lopez who was appointed last week as secretary of the Department of Environment and Natu-

ral Resources by President-elect Rodrigo Duterte.

The relocation program started in 2000 and was supposed to free up a 10-meter easement on either side of the tributaries and main Pasig River channel to be designated as "Environmental Preservation Areas (EPAs)" that

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SLOW

will serve as buffer zones and help improve water quality of Metro Manila's main waterway.

The PRRC estimates that up to 65 percent of garbage and waste water that end up in Pasig River come from shanty towns scattered along its 26-kilometer length.

However, auditors noted that based on PRRC's Major Final Output submission, the beneficiary families were supposed to come from 16 esteros and creeks that were already identified for rehabilitation.

These were the Estero de San Miguel, Estero de San Sebastian, Estero de Sampaloc, Culiati Creek, Pasong Tamo, San Francisco River, Maytunas Creek, and Ermitaño Creek where 5,040 informal settler families

are situated.

Of this number however, only 1,014 ISFs have been moved to designated relocation sites in Bulacan and Cavite provinces.

The 1,428 ISFs that make up the accomplishment figure of PRRC were families transferred from other areas of Pasig River that were not yet due for rehabilitation.

At the same time, the COA questioned the failure of the PRRC to maximize the P41.88-million budget for demolition and relocation budget in 2015, spending only P24.47 million, thereby slowing down implementation.

"The data...showed that out of the remaining surveyed ISFs of 12,673 to be relocated as of December 31, 2014...only 2,442 were actually relocated in 2015. At the rate the number of ISFs

is being relocated, it is unlikely or impossible to rehabilitate the esteros/creeks by the last year of the relocation program in 2019," the COA said.

Auditors noted that based on the outlined plan of the PRRC for 2015, P41.88 million was allotted to move ISFs from the eight areas for rehabilitation but only P9.82 million was actually spent as planned. On the other hand, P14.65 million was spent to relocate families in esteros or creeks that were not yet even covered by on-going easement projects.

According to the PRRC's 2015 financial statements, it also hired 206 service personnel as additional workforce which increased its "other professional services" expense to P36.24 million compared to P26.04 million in 2014.

