

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DATE : 03 JUL 2016

DAY : Sunday

# DENR

## IN THE NEWS

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS  
SINCE 1900

# MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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TURNOVER CEREMONIES AT DENR, DA – Outgoing Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Ramon Paje turns over the DENR flag to new Secretary Gina Lopez (left photo) while Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol (left, second photo) is congratulated by outgoing Secretary Proceso Alcala as he turned over the reins at the DA on July 1, 2016. Both events took place at the departments' offices on Visayas Avenue in Quezon City. (Camille Ante)



STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## LOPEZ ANTI-GROWTH -CONSUMER GROUP

By Alena Mae S. Flores

*THE* appointment of Regina Paz Lopez, a staunch anti-mining and anti-coal advocate, as Environment Department Secretary, could have detrimental effects on the country's long term economic growth, especially on the lives of Filipinos in Mindanao, a consumer and advocacy group said over the weekend.



**TURNOVER.** Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Ramon J.P. Paje (right) hands over the DENR flag symbolizing the formal turnover of leadership to his successor Regina Paz L. Lopez in simple ceremonies held on Friday at the DENR Social Hall in Quezon City.



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# The Standard

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

LOPEZ ANTI-GROWTH  
- CONSUMER GROUP (PAGE 2)

CitizenWatch expressed strong concern over the pronouncements of Lopez as these send an alarming message to the business sector and investors who are looking at Mindanao for badly needed, job-generating investments.

The group said Lopez's views on these two issues contravene the current policy of the Energy Department and more so with the no "non-sense" development agenda of President Rodrigo Duterte.

Wilford Wong, secretary-general of CitizenWatch said: "The NGO sees the Lopez's appointment will peril economic development in Mindanao. Her statements run contrary to the growth agenda of the country and to the ideals of the newly inaugurated President Duterte."

Lopez has long made public her views against coal-fired power plants.

CitizenWatch, however said, her stand, does not consider the complex dynamics on the ground. The Philippines' growing economy needs reliable energy supply to continue on its phenomenal growth trajectory.

Mindanao, for example, only contributed 14.4 percent to the country's gross domestic product in 2015 and one of the factors affecting growth in the region is the constant threat of power shortages due to the lack of power supply.

The region experienced rolling brownouts of up to 12 hours, especially during the summer months in the past years.

The private sector, in response built and continues to build power plants, many of them coal-fired to meet the growing demands in the region.

CitizenWatch said that with Lopez leading the Environment Department, these projects, and the arrival of the needed power they will provide, could come to a halt.

Some pro-environmentalist groups have called on Lopez to halt coal power plants around the country in favor of renewable energy.

CitizenWatch said that they have overlooked the fact that coal-fired plants produce much more energy per plant than solar or wind-powered counterparts as they are intermittent.

The group also said that the unpredictable weather here can lead to extremely dry months leading to lower water levels, which in turn reduce the output of hydro-based plants.





# Balita



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# Balita



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**ENVIRONMENTAL WARRIOR** Initado ni Gina Lopez ang ilan sa kanyang mga magulang sa programa matapos siyang pormal na manumpa sa tungkulin bilang tagapag-alkim ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources sa turn-over ceremony sa pampang langgapan ng DENR sa Visayas Avenue, Quezon City, Lungsod ng Maynila.

CAMILLE ANTE



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Gina knows 'calderos'

IT has been asked, with tons of sarcasm, whether Gina Lopez ever cooked with a *caldero* or does she eat, or order takeout. She's got the money for it. Actually, so does everyone if they eat like Gina: mainly veggies, mostly raw.



**FREE FIRE**  
By Teddy Locsin Jr.

Has she even seen a *caldero*? She actually has; and she's actually used it in the most primitive conditions. I've known her since she was a girl of the generation after mine.

She was pretty, and pretty rich, and never spoiled. And just when she *could have* been a spoiled young woman, she joined Hare Krishna (really Ananda Marga, but who can tell with the same saffron robes?). For real, in earnest, and lived like an itinerant nun.

Once she dropped in with her group, led by their yogi. No sooner were they in our living room than he dropped to the floor and wriggled and writhed there.

My mother said in Spanish, "Doing that will make anyone hungry." So she prepared sandwiches—ham sandwiches, which he gobbled up. My mother said, "Aren't they vegetarian?"

I said, "They are, from birth; why they can't tell ham from cucumber."

Gina would ask friends from her old life to tag along with her. She took Tony Boy and me to Luneta, where she took babies used as props from beggars pretending to be mothers, and handed them to us. I was young then; I could hold a baby at arm's length for an almost indefinite time.

Gina knows from raw experience

**Gina would ask friends from her old life to tag along with her. She took Tony Boy and me to Luneta, where she took babies used as props from beggars pretending to be mothers, and handed them to us. I was young then; I could hold a baby at arm's length for an almost indefinite time.**

what *calderos* are, and that they are indeed made of metal. But she also knows that it is not imperative to hollow out entire landscapes by open-pit mining—so they look like

*damoon*—in order to extract minerals, like nickel and bauxite, copper and gold—that are never used to make *calderos*, but jet planes, bullets and jewelry.

And that vastly more is taken out of open-pit mines than are used to make anything. A lot that's extracted is thrown away. The rest are shipped raw at next-to-zero taxes, to countries that do not use them to make anything, but for trading in stock and commodity markets. Mining is not about extracting necessary minerals for necessary things; but first, foremost and almost entirely, it is about money and the saliva that makes it grow. F\_\_k, miners.



# The Manila Times

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

HARING IBON

## Does Duterte have plans for this flying Davaoeño?

BY J KAHLIL BOHOL PANOPIO HARIBON FOUNDATION

**H**IS campaign slogan "Change is coming" was the rallying call of his supporters during the campaign period. Now that he has been proclaimed as the 16th President of the Philippines, does Rodrigo "Rody" Duterte also have plans for his fellow Filipino, Mindanaoan, and Davaoeño, the Haring Ibon—the national bird of the Philippines?

The Philippine Eagle, known locally as the Haribon or the Haring Ibon (Bird King), was discovered on June 1896 in Bonga, Samar by English naturalist and zoological collector John Whitehead. A year later, Scottish ornithologist William Robert Ogilvie-Grant named it *Pithecophaga jefferyi* (jefferyi in honor of John Whitehead's father, Jeffery Whitehead).

The Haring Ibon was discovered during the time when the Philippines was still lush with forests—there were 21 million

hectares of forest in the 1900s, covering 70% of the country's total land area. Unfortunately, the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Forest Management Bureau (DENR-FMB) estimates that, as of 2003, the remaining forest cover of the Philippines is now down to 7 million hectares.

As a pair of Haring Ibon needs at least 7000 hectares of forestlands to survive, the extent of forest loss since



■ Haring Ibon Monitoring Group observes the forests of the Sierra Madre Mountain Range in Aurora Province



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Does Duterte have plans for this flying Darabeno?

their discovery spells a bleak future for the magnificent raptor.

### Haring Ibon under past administrations

The Haring Ibon caught international attention in 1965 when Dr. Dioscoro Rabor, a noted Filipino ornithologist, notified the international community of its endangered status. Multiple initiatives have since been done to prevent the extinction of the species.

In 1970, President Ferdinand E. Marcos issued Presidential Administrative Order No. 235 to protect the species by prohibiting the wounding, taking, selling, exchanging and or exporting, possessing and killing of the bird. He then issued Presidential Proclamation No. 1732 in 1978 officially changing the name of species from "monkey-eating" to the Philippine Eagle for Filipinos to take pride in the Haring Ibon as an enigmatic species exclusive to the country.

To further highlight the Haring Ibon as a source of pride for Filipinos, President Fidel V. Ramos issued Presidential Proclamation No. 615 in 1995 effectively declaring the Philippine Eagle as the national bird of the Philippines. Under this proclamation, instructed DENR to establish sanctuaries for the species, promote the participation of local communities in management of Haring Ibon's habitat, accelerate field research and monitoring activities for the species, and promote public awareness and education.

Recognizing the Haring Ibon's grim conservation status despite its national and international recognition, President Joseph Ejercito Estrada issued Presidential Proclamation No. 21 in 1999 declaring June 4-10 of every year as Philippine Eagle week. The proclamation was aimed to instill to Filipino people the importance of the Haring Ibon in forest eco-



■ Flying high statue in Davao City's People's Park



■ The Philippine Eagle is also known as the 'Haring Ibon' or king of birds



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Does Duterte have plans for this dying Davaoño?

systems, as a unique heritage, and as a national symbol. The declaration also encourages government offices, civil society organizations and other stakeholders to implement activities focusing on the Haring Ibon and its habitat during the celebration of the Philippine Eagle Week.

In the same year, Estrada also issued Proclamation No. 155 effectively declaring 3,728.98 hectares of forest in the Municipality of Taft, Province of Eastern Samar as a Wildlife Sanctuary for the Philippine Eagle. Taft Forest Wildlife Sanctuary is the first wildlife sanctuary in the Philippines declared explicitly for the conservation of the Haring Ibon.

Perhaps the most significant legislature to protect and conserve the Haring Ibon and the country's flora and fauna is the Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources and Conservation and Protection Act of 2001 passed under President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's administration. The objectives of the Wildlife Act are to conserve, protect wildlife species and habitats, regulate the collection and trade of wildlife, and to follow through with the Philippine's commitment to the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity.

### Davao City, Duterte, and the Haring Ibon

Next to the Philippine Eagle, Haring Ibon could be an iconic

symbol of Davao City. Photos of the Haring Ibon can be seen everywhere in Davao City—from airport, public transportations to business establishments. It is ingrained in Davao's culture—giant eagle statues are all over the city—and in the minds of every Davaoño so much so that it is most certainly no stranger to President Duterte.

After all, he has been the longest-serving mayor of Davao City for seven terms or an equivalent of 22 years and been credited for transforming Davao's image of a crime-ridden city to one of the world's safest cities.

Change for Davao City, will it also come for Haring Ibon now that Duterte is our president?

The presidential administration described above supported the conservation of the Haring Ibon at various levels. The proclamations, administrative orders and laws passed under their administrations has helped the Haring Ibon to survive despite the continuous threats that are driving them to extinction.

For a start, President Duterte's choice for DENR secretary, anti-mining advocate Gina Lopez, is a welcoming move to a more environment and Haring Ibon-friendly administration.

We hope that his administration and incoming DENR secretary, Lopez can do the same to check the fate of our national bird.



THE RESPONDER OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS  
SINCE 1908

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Under Duterte administration

## Mining industry set for bumpy ride

By **MANOLO SERAPIO JR.**  
and **ENRICO DELA CRUZ**  
(Reuters)

**A**fter the Philippines became the top supplier of nickel ore to China in the last two years, its struggling mining industry may have felt like it was turning a corner.

But hope in the industry of getting an easier ride exploiting minerals in a country with a strong anti-mining lobby now looks misplaced with the new administration of President Rodrigo Duterte sending tough messages on mining.

Duterte has warned that he could cancel mining projects causing environmental harm, though he told business leaders last week that he was not against mining per se.

"But in making money out of the precious metals of the earth that belongs to the Filipino people you have to do it right," he said.

The country's mining sector, one of the world's largest in the 1970s, has since struggled partly due to environmental rules and policy flip flops, missing much of the mining boom in recent decades and now facing much lower commodity prices.

While not saying that she will ban any form of mining, Regina Lopez, the new mining minister, says it can cause suffering among the poor and has described it as "madness" even to consider open pit mining because of the environmental impact.

"We must stop killing our future for the interests of a few", the staunch environmentalist told Reuters.

The country has suffered mining disasters, including a 1996 tailings leak at Canadian-owned Marcopper Mining Corp's copper mine in Marinduque that contaminated rivers.

Lopez is expected to outline her plans at a media briefing on Friday.

Ramon Adviento, senior vice president at Global Ferronickel Holdings Inc,



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### MINING INDUSTRY SET FOR BUMPY RIDE (PAGE 2)

the Philippines' second-biggest nickel ore miner, said the industry was "shell shocked" by Lopez' appointment.

"I don't think it means the death of the industry, but what we expect to see is the survival of the fittest," he said, adding that there could be a nationwide crack-down on irresponsible miners, likely targetting small-scale producers.

But miners say hardline policies could backfire particularly as the Philippines has become the biggest nickel ore supplier to China after previous top exporter Indonesia banned shipments of unprocessed minerals, shipping 34.3 million tonnes last year.

Mining contributes less than 1 percent to the Philippine economy. Of 9 million hectares identified by the government as having high mineral reserves, only 3 percent is being mined.

"Duterte wants hard investments and new projects invest billions of dollars... and these are done in far-flung areas which goes with the president's call for rural development," said Nelia

Halcon from the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines.

The challenge is how to lure back foreign investors.

Mining investment shrank to a three-year low in 2015 below \$1 billion, after President Benigno Aquino, Duterte's predecessor, banned new mining permits during his term and sought to increase the state's revenue share from mines.

Commodities giant Glencore Plc last year quit the \$5.9-billion gold-copper Tampakan project in the southern Mindanao island, that has failed to take off after the province where Tampakan is located banned open-pit mining in 2010.

The country only has a handful of foreign investors in mining currently, including Australia's Oceanagold Corp and Canada's B2Gold.

It's going to take some time to reassure foreign investors, which have the capital and technology, that "the risk is not too high," said business consultant Peter Wallace.



## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Environmental NGO: Responsible mining exists in the Philippines

**R**ESPONSIBLE mining exists in the Philippines, said a non-governmental organization (NGO) advocating for the environment.

The Philippine Business for Environmental Stewardship (PBEST) issued the statement in response to the earlier pronouncement of Environment Secretary Regina Lopez that "where there is mining, there is poverty."

PBEST, as an environmental NGO, advocates for 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, the mining industry should be leading the cause of environmental stewardship, given their 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," PBEST Secretary General Ysan Castillo said.

Dr. Carlos Primo C. David, lead convenor of PBEST and a professor at the University of the Philippines National Institute of Geological Science, earlier developed the Environ-

mental Performance Tracking Program (EPTP), designed to provide the 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 analysis of documentary evidence and other factual information gathered," PBEST said.

"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 head of the DENR [Department of Environment and Natural Resources], the government agency

tasked to properly implement the environmental laws of the land," PBEST added.

Policies, especially those involving the very complex concept of the environment, must be grounded on facts and science, not on emotions or any other agenda, according to PBEST.

It said government officials should have the necessary skills and technical competence to adequately fulfil their sworn duties.

PBEST said with the kind of pronouncements from the new environment secretary, the environmental policies of the Duterte administration may disregard facts and science and fail to distinguish between the role of an advocate and the responsibility of a regulator.

"PBEST stands by its findings that there exists responsible mining as distinguished from illegal and destructive mining," said David, in the policy book *Thinking Beyond Politics*.

"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 mitigation systems in place, and hardly pay the taxes due to the government," PBEST said.



# 4 minahan sa Zambales, pinatigil

**NI ALEX GALANG**

**IBA, Zambales** – Pinatitigil na ang lahat ng operasyon ng minahan sa Zambales makaraang magpalabas ng mining moratorium ang bagong halal na gobernador na si Amor Deloso kahapon.

Ginawa ni Gov. Deloso ang unang Executive Order sa pagpapahinto ng lahat ng mining operation matapos ang inaugural address at mass oath-taking ng mga bagong halal na opisyal sa Zambales.

Ayon kay Deloso, matalagal ng minimina ang lupa ng Zambales at ang kalikasan ay nasalanta na ng husto kaya kailangan na itong ipatigil.

"75-taon ng minimina ang chromite sa bayan ng

Sta. Cruz ng Acoje Mines at 50-taon namang minimina ang ginto sa bayan ng Masinloc ng Coto Mines subalit ang mga Zambaleño ay hindi naman yumaman o umasenso kung saan ang kalikasan ng Zambales ay nasalanta ng husto," ngayon, puputulin ko na ito," pahayag pa ni Gov. Deloso.

Sinabi ni Deloso na ang EO #1 ay agad ipatutupad partikular sa mga bayan ng Sta. Cruz at Candelaria at muli lamang papayagang magmina kung maipapakita ng mga mining companies na mayroon silang inihandang "social engineering" para sa kalikasan.

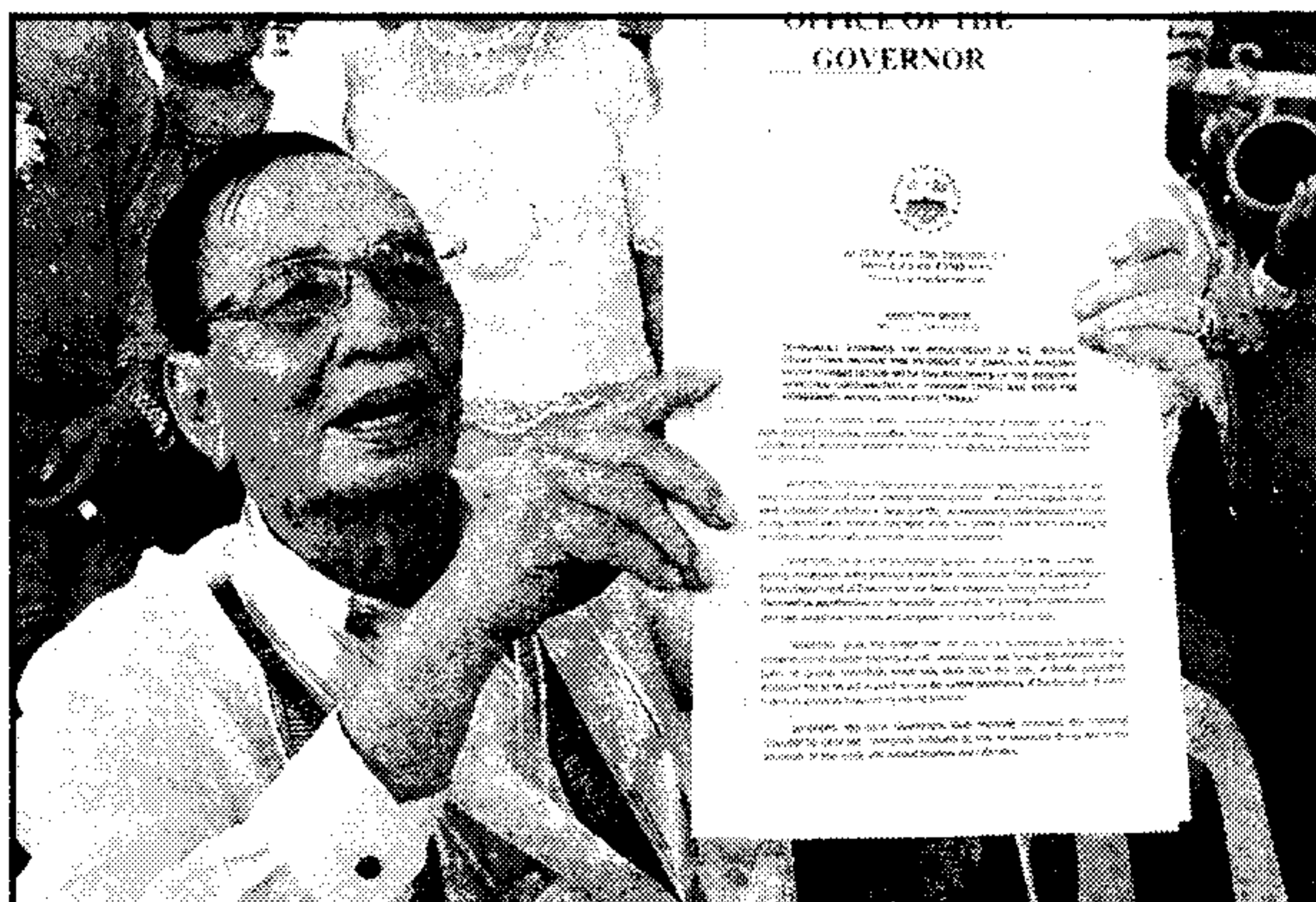
Kabilang sa mga minahang apektado ng moratorium ni Gov. Deloso ay ang Benguet Corp. Nickel

Mines, Inc. (BNMI); LnL Archipelago Mining Corp. (LAMI); Zambales Diversified Metals Corp. (ZDMC); at ang Eramen Minerals, Inc. (EMI).

Matatandaan na ang Supreme Court ay nag-isyu ng Writ of Kalikasan laban sa apat na minahan kasama na ang Shangfil Mining and Trading Corp (SMTC),

at inutusan ang Court of Appeals na magsagawa ng pagdinig upang alamin kung dapat ma-isuhan ng Temporary Environmental Protection Order (TEPO) ang mga minahan.

Subalit patuloy pa rin ang operasyon ng minahan kahit nag isyu na ng Writ of Kalikasan ang Mataas na Hukuman.



Hawak ni Zambales Governor Amor Deloso ang Executive Order #1 para ipatutupad ang suspensyon sa lahat ng pagmimina sa nasabing probinsya. *Alex Galang*



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**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**

## Mining firms willing to work with new DENR secretary

**By Ed Velasco**

Mining firms have signified their intention to work harmoniously with Regina Paz "Gina" Lopez, the new secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Manuel Pangilinan, chairman of Philex Mining, one of the biggest mining firms in the Philippines in terms of revenues and number of workers, said they are willing to work with the new secretary to promote responsible mining.

"We are prepared to work with DENR to promote the cause of responsible and environmentally-friendly mining," Pangilinan told *The Daily Tribune* in a text message.

Earlier, Global Ferronickel Holdings Inc. (FNI), which operates a mine in Cagdianao, Claver in Surigao del Norte, conveyed that it supports the mining policies of President Rodrigo Duterte and welcomes the appointment of Lopez as head of the DENR.

Lopez was a former missionary

who spent more than a decade in Portugal, India and Africa taking care of poor children.

She joined a Hindu-type of charity work and spent many years in slums taking care of underprivileged children. She is known in the country as head of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission.

"As a significant contributor to the Philippines' mining sector, it is our duty at FNI to ensure mining is conducted in a responsible and sustainable manner. We are proud

to say that our operations are conducted in accordance with ISO standards," Dante Bravo, president of FNI.

"We are committed to practices that respect human rights and the aspirations of local communities. We also provide safe and healthy workplaces for our employees," he added.

DENR is the mother unit of the agency that supervises mining firms' operations in the country — the Mines and Geosciences Bureau.



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**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**

## Environmentalist in Bataan shot dead

**By Ted Tuvera**

An environmentalist in Bataan is the first activist casualty under the Duterte administration.

Gloria Capitan, 57, was gunned down by yet-to-be identified motorcycle-riding gunmen last Friday night in Baranggay Lucanin, Mariveles town.

According to Philippine Movement for Climate Justice's Lidy Nakpil, Capitan "was very active in the fight against coal, and led their village last year in a series

of mass actions and petitions calling for a permanent closure of a coal stockpile near their village."

"If this is an attempt to silence other anti-coal activists like her, then they are mistaken," Nakpil said.

"Instead of silencing us, it will only strengthen our conviction that this evil menace which is coal must end," she added.

President Duterte's Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Gina Lopez, a vocal anti-coal advocate herself, is yet to be heard with regards to this case.



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## Anti-coal activist killed in Bataan

**MARIVELES, Bataan:** Two unidentified men riding a motorcycle gunned down a woman activist involved in the anti-coal mining movement inside her videoke bar in the village of Lucanin in this town on Friday night.

Efren Capitan, Lucanin village councilor, said his wife Gloria sustained three gunshot wounds from a .45-caliber revolver, two in the neck and one in the arm.

Capitan said the suspects held his wife by the shoulder and shot her in the neck at blank point.

The victim was president of the cause-oriented group Kilusang Pambansang Demokratiko (KPD) that fought, among other issues, against coal mining in the country.

The victim's eight-year-old grandson, who incurred a scratch in the arm from a stray bullet, told investigators his grandmother was fixing a curtain at their videoke bar when the suspects arrived at around 8 p.m.

Capati said the gunman wore a crash helmet, while the other one had a towel over his face. He appealed to Pres. Rodrigo Duterte for help to get justice for his wife's death.

Mariveles police said the investigation was ongoing as to the identity and motives of the killers.

**ERNIE B. ESCONDE**



# Abante

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

## MINAHAN NA WALANG ISO /SASARA

Ni Lhean Angeles

Nanganganib na mapasara ang mga minahan na hindi makakakuha ng ISO 14001 International Standards.

Ito ang tiniyak ni bagong Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Gina Lopez matapos atasan ang mga Regional Director ng DENR na busisiin ang lahat ng mga nagmimina sa bansa, ito man ay metal at hindi metal, kung nakasunod o hindi ang mga minahan sa international standard.

Sinabi ni Lopez na inatasan siya ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na suriin at alamin kung res-

ponsableng pagmimina ang pinapairal ng mga kumpanya sa kanilang paghuhukay ng mga mineral gaya ng ginto, pilak, tanso at maging ang mga gumagawanguling o coal mining, mga gumagawang semento.

Ayon kay Lopez, ang pagbusisi sa mga minahan ay aabutin ng isang buwan.

Tiniyak ni Lopez na ang mapapatunayang hindi nakasunod sa ISO 14001 International Standards ay ipapasara ang mga minahan.

Kaugnay rito, sinabi ni Director Leo Jasareno ng Mines and Geosci-

ences Bureau na 30% lamang ng 42 mining operations ang nakakuha ng ISO 14001 International Standards.

Ito aniya ay habang humingi ng ekstensyon ang ilan sa mga kumpanyang ito, bagaman depende na kung aaprubahan ng bagong kalihim ng DENR na si Secretary Gina Lopez na kilalang kontra sa operasyon ng pagmimina sa bansa.

Binigyang diin ni Lopez na mahalaga ang kapakanan ng mga mamamayang Pilipino kung malalagay sa panganib ang kanilang kalusugan at kabuhayan.



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## DENR exec airs side on building demolition

A Department of Environment and Natural Resources official clarified yesterday his role in the allegedly anomalous demolition of a building in the DENR compound in 2014.

In an audit observation memorandum dated March 14, the Commission on Audit said the DENR officials responsible for the demolition without getting approval for the construction of a new building should pay for the structure, which was last valued at P20.4 million in 1997.

Assistant Secretary Rommel

DPWH that the memorandum of agreement was modified from the proposed renovation to the construction of an entirely new FASPO building.

Abesamis said though the letter was prepared by FASPO on Dec. 19, 2013, it was released by FASPO and received by DPWH on Dec. 20, 2013, coinciding with the date of the special order that authorized him to sign the contract with the DPWH.

"It appears that the audit observation or recommendation of the COA is premature.

Abesamis, who is in charge of the Foreign-Assisted and Special Projects Office Service, said the FASPO building's renovation and repair was the subject of a draft memorandum of agreement between the DENR and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH).

Abesamis said that in 2012, the required MOA for construction was drafted by FASPO and submitted to the DENR's Administrative and Finance Office.

"The following year, several

Thus, it may require further investigation to prove their claims," the official said.

Abesamis said former DENR secretary Ramon Paje cleared him of any liability in relation to the demolition of the FASPO building and that there was no fraud or graft committed.

"I will submit the complete documentation of the construction of the FASPO building to Secretary Gina Lopez to address the concerns raised by COA," he added.

— Rhodina Villanueva

meetings were conducted by the concerned DENR officials who agreed on the construction of a three-story building for FASPO instead of renovation so as to provide more space to employees and project staff in anticipation of the full implementation of the rationalization plan," Abesamis said.

Banking on the DENR officials' approval, Abesamis said he signed a letter dated Dec. 19, 2013. The letter, sent to district engineer Roseller Tolentino of DPWH-National Capital Region, informed the



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## Int'l students plant trees in Makiling

BY MA. LOTUSLEI DIMAGIBA  
DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE  
AND TECHNOLOGY

PARTICIPANTS in the 5th ASEAN Plus Three Junior Odyssey or APTJSO climbed up the Makiling Botanical Garden in the University of the Philippines Los Baños for a tree planting activity as their own little way of helping Mother Earth cope with climate change.

With the theme "Climate Change and the Rainforest," the 5th APTJSO—an annual international competition among youth who are gifted in science—saw participants from the ASEAN region and from Sweden, Korea, and China.

"Most of the kids have not been to the forest or the real rainforest, so this is time for them to experience what it is like to be in the forest," Ruby Cristobal of Department of Science and Technology's Science Education Institute said.

"At the same time, the activity enables the students to contribute to enriching



■ Students from the ASEAN region joined the tree planting activity as their little way of helping Mother Earth PHOTO BY GERRY PALAD

this resource, which is slowly being affected by climate change," she added.

Another activity on the second day of the activity involved data collection by country teams and field exposure for mixed groups. Participants collected data for the 'laboratory skills assessment' component of the competition with three subject areas namely biology, chemistry, and physics.

Over all, Cristobal sees the activity as an eye opener for the ASEAN student.

"The purpose of the activities is to make the students more conscious or aware of what the problems in the rainforest are and what solutions the rainforest can offer. And additionally, to identify what projects can be done in their level as students," Cristobal finally noted.



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### Where are the marshlands?

I had a wonderful time connecting with sustainability advocate Susan Santos de Cardenas in her home city of Lima, Peru on a recent trip for APEC.

Susan is a Filipina happily married to Peruvian Ambassador Julio Cardenas who has stayed in Manila, Singapore, and Japan in Asia. He has also been the APEC officer in charge in Peru for many years. That is something Julio and I have in common—besides sharing a love for food and nature, we can talk about APEC.



GREEN  
SPACE

CHIT JUAN



■ Susan Santos de Cardenas (right) with Green Space in Peru

Susan and I reminisced about the movement 'The Coron Initiative' (TCI) which she started many years ago and is being pursued by local Pinoysustainability advocates like Al Linsangan of CoronGaleri. ECHOstore partner Reena Francisco and I spoke at these seminars held in Coron. We also invited Urban Planner Karmi-Palafox, met green advocates Eric Raymundo and PJ Aranador who all shared the dream of making Coron a green tourism destination.

Susan saw how Boracay went bad because the environmental planning went out the window. There is a plan or was a plan to preserve marshlands, for example. But if you look at the map, these marshlands are now "reclaimed" and on them sit hotels and resorts! How did that happen? Stealing nature's sanctuaries is a criminal act just like drug pushing and corruption. There are nine marshlands in the environmental map but they are nowhere to be found now. We do not want this to happen to Coron. And we are still crossing our fingers that this recovery of marshlands in Boracay can still happen.

Susan knows what she speaks of. She worked and still consults for Peru's greenest and most sustainable resort, Inkaterra. She passionately relates to us how just planting indigenous trees in Peru brought back hundreds of species of orchids, and birds who again found their natural habitat. And that can happen in our forests too. I am hopeful that the new DENR secretary can reforest Palawan, and other denuded areas, and find the lost marshlands in Boracay.

Besides recovering marshlands, what else can we learn from Susan's experience?

**Carrying capacity.** It's not just about

number of tourists. We must consider the number of people a place can hold and still be protected from damage. This is what Bhutan does. It has a limit to the number of visitors it can accept so that the natural

habitat will not be destroyed or even diminished. But then tourists spend more per person, which still makes tourism a dollar-earner.

It's quality tourist arrivals, not quantity. However, I just heard our new tourism secretary mention a 10-million target, just on the news last night! Could we spread them over other islands perhaps?

**Greening our hotels.** How many hotels have greening programs as part of their strategic plan? Is it a real green initiative or just a CSR or green washing for PR purposes?

**Making Caticlan a gateway town.** There is a proposal to move residents to Caticlan town and reserve the island Boracay itself for tourists. Will its citizens ever consider this so it can be a sustainable resort town?

Will the new DOT secretary review this proposal?

**Sustainability schools.** We need schools like the Carnegie-Mellon school in Peru where Susan teaches Hotel Sustainability practices. Mina Gabor has started this institute in Clark that we hope can be sustained so our tourism industry can be kept active for many years while preserving our environment.

I was kidding Susan that she must come back to Manila and teach us what she has learned in Inkaterra ...again. Maybe with two women now at the helm of the agencies responsible for greening and tourism, we may see some light and improvement in implementing our laws.



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Where are the Marshlands?

e "Our environmental laws are good," Susan says.  
"But implementation is poor," she continues.

We'll guess what Susan—we now have a new leadership who pledged that he can crack the whip and with our friend Sonny Dizon as Tourism adviser, we may see results.

**Tourism and Environment**—two agencies where we hope to see the green light, the light to make our country green, that is. And with this, I hope my friend Susan will finally come home and help find the marshlands in Boracay.

*Chit Juan is a founder and owner of ECHOStore sustainable lifestyle, ECHOmarket sustainable farms and ECHOcafe in Serendra, Salcedo Village, Podium, Centris QC mall, Davao, Cebu City, Iloilo and Antipolo City. She also is Chair of the Women's Business Council of the Philippines and President of the Philippine Coffee Board Inc., two non-profits close to her heart. She often speaks to corporates and NGOs on sustainability, women empowerment, and coffee. You can follow her on twitter.com/chitjuan or find her on facebook: Pacita "Chit" Juan. Email her at puj@echostore.ph*



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## The 'Bleeding Heart' that needs our help

BY JOSE EDUARDO VILLARAIN  
REPORTER

THE Mindoro Bleeding Heart, one of the few species of pigeon that is found only in the Philippines, has long been on the endangered species list.

With only 400 of this bird remaining, it is rarely seen even in the wild.

There are five known Bleeding Heart species—Luzon Bleeding Heart, Mindoro Bleeding Heart, Negros Bleeding Heart, Sulu Bleeding Heart and Mindanao Bleeding Heart, all named after where they are found. The species are all identically the same, varying only in numbers and first names.

The Bleeding Heart species belongs to the bird family Columbidae, a branch of vertebrae of pigeons and doves. This pigeon is medium-sized and short-tailed with a distinct small, bright orange central patch to otherwise white underparts, hence the name: Bleeding Heart.

The Mindoro Bleeding Heart or Puñalada, as locals call it, is endemic to Min-

doro Island and is the rarest bird of all the five known species. With only a few hundred remaining, the critically endangered pigeon is one of the top priorities of the Haribon Foundation.

"As this bird is mostly seen on the ground, deforestation plays a major part in making the species endangered." Maria Belinda dela Paz, chief operating officer of Haribon Foundation told

*The Sunday Times Magazine*. "We [The Haribon Foundation] have been working on conserving the Mindoro

Bleeding Heart since year 2000."

The foundation has worked with local government units as well as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to preserve and develop not just the Bleeding Heart's habitat but all habitats for animal life.

With the Local Government Code or Republic Act 9147 (An act providing for the conservation and protection of wildlife resources and their habitats, appropriating funds therefor and for

other purposes), Haribon believes that sustaining the natural habitat of all species can be achieved.

"There are very few Mindoro Bleeding Heart birds left, and with that we can use it as an icon to indicate the habitat in which it resides. We can calculate the health of the habitat by the numbers. Seeing it incline or decline can help us observe if the habitat is getting better," dela Paz said.

Species are said to have been vanishing at a much faster rate for about a century because of human factors such as pollution, commercial overexploitation, poaching and deforestation.



■ The Mindoro Bleeding heart





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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

MOU FOR INSTITUTIONAL  
COOPERATION IN AGRICULTURE  
AND BIODIVERSITY

**Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (Searca) Director Gil C. Saguiguit Jr. (third from left) and Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) Executive Director Roberto V. Oliva (second from left) show the copies of signed memorandum of understanding (MOU) for institutional cooperation between the two Philippine government-hosted, Los Baños-based international centers. The MOU aims to pursue common capacity-building objectives, including research, knowledge management and graduate education in biodiversity and agriculture. Signed on Friday, the MOU will be in force for three years. Witnessing the signing are Dr. Bessie M. Burgos (right) of Searca and Clarissa C. Arida of ACB.**







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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# A DAY IN EL NIDO, PALAWAN

STORY & PHOTOS BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA [@jonlmayuga](#)

**L**OOK, there's one. We have lots of them here," said an excited Pablo Castro, popularly called as *Kuya Pabs*, the tour guide and "skipper" during our island-hopping tour on the famous island-paradise in Luzon: El Nido in Palawan.



PABLO CASTRO, popularly called as *Kuya Pabs*, the tour guide and boat owner in El Nido Palawan

*Kuya Pabs* was referring to a green marine turtle, one of the most common marine turtles in the Philippines. Locally called *pawikan*, marine turtles thrive in El Nido. In fact, there's one island in this town in Palawan called Turtle Island, a wildlife sanctuary for *pawikan*.

"It is where we bring eggs, which we find on other islands, to keep them safe and to make sure the eggs hatch," *Kuya Pabs* said.

When asked for a possibility to go to the island, he smiled back at this writer and said, "It is not allowed. It is forbidden. We can't go there because it is a sanctuary for *pawikan*."

*Kuya Pabs* said the island is also visited by other amazing creatures, like whale sharks, locally called *butanding*; sea cows or *dugong*; and dolphins.

"We have lots of them [*pawikan*] here. We often see them playing as we pass by. If we're lucky, we will have a chance to see them," he said. "There are also sharks," he joked with a grin.

As we went on with our island-hopping, he would tell his crew of their assigned chores. In between, he would motion them to pick up trash, including plastic wrappers for proper disposal in the small garbage bag at the back of the boat.

*Kuya Pabs*, is indeed, not your ordinary tour guide. At 60, he owns and operates a motorized





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### A day in El Nido, Palawan

boat that is duly accredited by the town's tourism office, just like the more than 100 tourist boats for island-hopping in El Nido.

Together with his sons Cam, 26, and Chuck, 24, Kuya Pabs has been in the tourism business for 15 years and has led his small crew in guiding a number of local and foreign tourists himself.

#### Key biodiversity area

THIS tourguide-fisherman-farmer knows what makes El Nido a booming ecotourism destination: the beauty of its natural environment, plus Filipino hospitality at its finest.

El Nido is a first-class municipality and managed resource-protected area in the province of Palawan, considered as the country's last ecological frontier. It was once described as having the best dive spots in the world by a group of scuba-diving enthusiasts.

Incidentally, it is bidding to be declared as a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) World Heritage Site, showcasing its being a key biodiversity area for marine wildlife, and its unique beauty befitting the description of "island-paradise."

About 420 kilometers southwest of Manila and about 238 km northeast of Puerto Princesa, El Nido is a good five-hour drive away from Puerto Princesa City airport.

Like most fishermen, Kuya Pabs said he decided to grab the opportunity offered by ecotourism.

With his boat, he earns a gross of P8,000 to P15,000 a day, depending on the tour package he is able to secure. It also provides employment to a number of people in his crew—his sons and distant relatives. His motorized banca, named *Lady Mia*, can accommodate 15 passengers and two crewmembers.

The crew, like all tour guides, act as boatmen, who bring tourists safely from one island to another; bodyguards; handyman; lifeguards; and food caterer, as well. They do all these as they give tourists the information about every island the boat passes by.

#### Picture-perfect

EL Nido municipality has more than 50 islands and islets, each with a unique feature. From its pristine waters, healthy marine ecosystem, breath-taking dive spots, white-sand beaches, lagoons and the town's virgin forests that cover even the small islands and islets, El Nido is picture-perfect. One can truly feel being one with nature, free of the stressful city life.

He said El Nido is one of the best places to visit in Palawan because of its natural beauty, which the people themselves have learned to protect.

An experienced tour guide, Kuya Pabs said its people, who warmly

welcome guests, make a day in El Nido unforgettable.

#### Foreign and local tourists

BORN in El Nido, Kuya Pabs said tourists started to visit in the 1980s. But it was in 2000 when the number of visitors grew exponentially.

Both foreign and local tourists visit El Nido. During the holidays—Christmas, New Year and Holy Week—it has the highest number of visitors. El Nido Resorts—composed of small resorts at the beach front of the poblacion or town center—promotes sustainable ecotourism by limiting development.

There are no big hotels in El Nido. Only a few small hotels and resort offer board and lodging at a cost ranging from P2,200 to P3,000 a day. Some residents allow home stays for backpackers at an even affordable cost.

At night, the beachfront of the poblacion is alive with foreign and local tourists partying after an island-hopping tour and other activities during the day.

The small beachfront is often filled with party people at night, but at daytime it is all quiet and peaceful, as most of the visitors have gone out for island-hopping.

Kuya Pabs admitted that El Nido became more popular when the Puerto Princesa Underground River was declared as a Unesco World Heritage site. "The tourists visiting Puerto Princesa





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A day in El Nido, Palawan

come here, too," he said.

### Employment and livelihood

"THIS town was so quiet before. There are only a few of us who live here. Now, there are people everywhere," he said.

Ecotourism, he said, helps provide employment and livelihood to the people with those from other towns even migrated to do business in El Nido. "For us, life didn't change so much. Of course, ecotourism helped provide jobs and livelihood. For us, this is normal. Sometimes, we get to earn big time, sometimes we don't. With that, we have to go fishing," he said.

He said long before El Nido became a famous tourist destination, it was also under siege by erring fishermen from the municipality, from other neighboring towns in and even those from other provinces with big fishing vessels. "There were fishermen who came all the way from all over [the country] to fish here. Some use dynamite and cyanide. All we could do is talk to them and tell them what they are doing was wrong," he said.

"Your fish in Metro Manila came from Palawan," he proudly claimed.

### Future generation

ACCORDING to Kuya Pabs, protecting El Nido is not just protecting the environment,

but ensuring the survival of the future generation in their beautiful town.

"If these corals, these forests, vanish we will have nothing left for our children's children. That is why we have learned that to protect it, we must tell the visitors what is right and what is wrong," he said, lamenting that some tourists come and go, leaving behind indiscriminately discarded trash in the beaches, and floating in the waters. Some tourists, he said, sometimes harm marine life and the ecosystem.

"One time, I saw one tourist snorkeling. But when I looked closer, I noticed he has a knife and he was trying to pick on a clam. That is prohibited," he said.

Kuya Pabs said tour guides wanted to undergo training and taught about activities that are prohibited by laws, such as the Wildlife Act and Fisheries Code.

"As tour guides, we are also here to protect our environment, because it is our livelihood and it is now our way of life. If we allow these acts, our future generation might soon lose all these [beautiful natural sights and resources]," he said.

People go to El Nido by groups of 10 or a smaller group of three backpackers, to have the adventure they have been dreaming of—to spend even just a day in this picture-perfect paradise.





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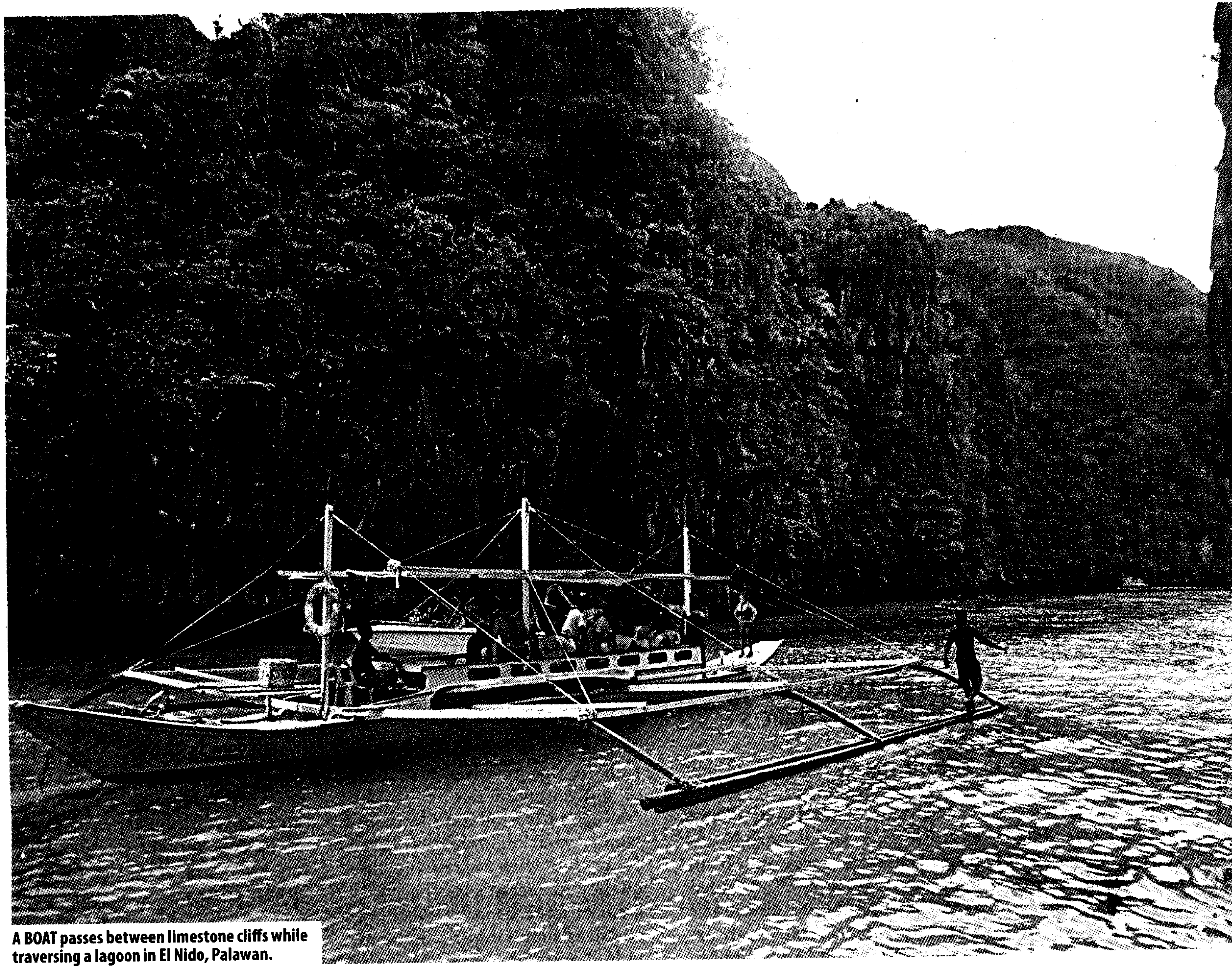
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A day in El Nido, Palawan



A BOAT passes between limestone cliffs while traversing a lagoon in El Nido, Palawan.



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### PAGBILAO POWER STATION CITED FOR ECO WASTE MANAGEMENT

**LUCENA CITY, Quezon:** The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Environmental Management Bureau in Quezon Province (EMB-Quezon) cited the Pagbilao Power Station (PPS) for strict compliance with the Ecological Solid Waste Management (ESWM) Act of 2000. The 735-megawatt power facility located in Pagbilao town was chosen, along with four local government units in Quezon by the DENR-EMB to participate in an exhibit to showcase best practices of compliant organizations. Melvin Fiegalan, Provincial Environmental Management Unit's officer-in-charge, said the exhibit was aimed to "heighten environmental consciousness and generate greater participation and integration of efforts through the extended celebration of environmental protection concern and awareness." Hazel Caasi, of TeaM Energy's PPS, said that recovery and proper disposal of various waste products such as recyclables, biodegradables, residual and other special waste have been fully integrated in the plant operations. Aside Pagbilao plant, the municipalities of Lucban, Gumaca, Mauban and Atimonan were also cited by the DENR-EMB for complying with the ESWM Act.

**BELLY M. OTORDOZ**



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## Floods raise doubt about P500M projects

By Doris C. Bongcac and Nestle L. Semilla  
*Inquirer Visayas*

**CEBU CITY**—More than P500 million worth of drainage improvement projects were implemented in Cebu City and Cebu province in the last two years but they hardly eased the city and province's flooding woes.

Several portions of Metro Cebu, including Cebu City, were flooded late Friday when more than an hour of heavy rain caused water to rise from knee- to waist-deep.

The entire stretch of A.S. Fortuna Street in Mandaue City, a site of a national government

drainage improvement project, looked like a river.

Engineer Suzette Nwannaka, of the 6th Engineering District of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), said garbage, especially plastic, blocked the waterways, causing water to overflow.

Violators face a penalty of P500 fine or imprisonment of not more than five days.

Quisumbing said the ordinance would be implemented after a week of information dissemination.

The city legal office and the City Environment and Natural Resources Office were tasked with training village watchmen to enforce the ordinance.

Oscar Tabada, of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) based on Mactan Island, Cebu province, said Friday's downpour was caused by the intertropical con-

vergence zone.

He said Pagasa recorded at least 55 millimeters of rain in an hour. This was equivalent to 25 percent of the average rainfall in the city a month—202 mm.

The rains and floods caused hundreds of commuters to be stranded in the cities of Cebu, Mandaue and Lapu-Lapu and neighboring areas.

The floods surprised many Cebuanos since the DPWH implemented about P516.4 million worth of drainage projects, most of which had already been completed.

A status report posted on the DPWH regional website

“The floodwater carried a lot of garbage that blocked the manhole inlets,” she said.

Friday's floods prompted Mandaue Mayor Gabriel Luis Quisumbing to enforce a 2010 city ordinance that bans the use of plastic.

“I humbly ask for cooperation and understanding as we implement these measures. I am convinced these are for the greater good,” said Quisumbing, following a meeting with his crisis management team on Saturday.

The ban on the use of plastic, which would take effect after a week, was posted on Mandaue City's Facebook page.

showed that seven of the projects had been completed while four others are 95 to 98 percent completed. Three others are ongoing.

Nwannaka, of DPWH, said maintenance workers also cleaned drainage systems along national highways.

The problem occurs when floodwater carries garbage from subdivisions and village interiors to the drainage systems, she added.

“We do not have jurisdiction in subdivisions and barangay drainage systems so these are not included in cleanup (work by the DPWH),” said Nwannaka.





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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### Study: Climate change warming Asian waters, altering monsoon

**N**EWDELHI—Each year as temperatures rise across India, farmers look to the sky and pray for rain.

The all-important monsoon forecast becomes a national priority, with more than 70 percent of India's 1.25 billion citizens engaged in agriculture and relying on weather predictions to decide when they will sow their seeds and harvest their crops.

But getting the forecast right remains a challenge, thanks to the complex—and still poorly understood—ways in which South Asia's monsoon rains are influenced by everything, from atmospheric and ocean temperatures to air quality and global climate trends. Even the amount of ice in Antarctica is suspected to have an impact.

And it's only getting harder to figure out, scientists say, as the monsoon becomes increasingly erratic.

A new study released on Friday in the journal *Science Advances* helps clear up a bit of the mystery, by showing that man-made climate change is responsible for most of the change seen in ocean-surface temperatures near the equator across Asia, which, in turn, affect regional rainfall patterns, including the Indian monsoon.

By showing that link, the study indicates future ocean warming in the region, which could, in turn, increase the amount of rainfall during monsoons, strengthen cyclones and increase precipitation over East Asia.

"This has important implications for understanding changes in rainfall patterns for a large, and vulnerable population across Asia," said oceanographer Evan Weller, who led the research team while he was at Pohang University of Science and Technology in South Korea, before recently shifting to Monash University in Australia.

The study looks specifically at a mid-oceanic body called the Indo-Pacific Warm Pool, which holds some of the world's warmest seawaters and spans the western Pacific to the eastern Indian Ocean.

Scientists have long known that India's monsoons are partly influenced

by that warm pool. And they've known that the pool has been expanding—and warming—for decades. That expansion and warming have already caused some sea rise around islands in Asia.

It wasn't entirely clear why the pool was changing, until now.

Weller and his team compared data observations with several climate models, and deduced that rising greenhouse gases, along with aerosols and other atmospheric pollutants, were the dominant cause of the pool's warming and expansion over the past 60 years, though regional climate variations also had some effect.

"This wasn't entirely surprising. We've long suspected climate change to be behind the changes, but no one had yet proven it," Weller said. What they didn't expect was to find that the western portion of the pool, near India, was expanding more than the eastern part in the Pacific. "We don't really know why. We'll try to figure that out next."

But one thing is clear: If climate-change trends continue, and by most indications they will, forecasters will have to consider the warm pool in their monsoon predictions. And by demonstrating how greenhouse gases are the dominant driver of changes in the warm pool, the team has added another dimension that can help improve climate models.

Asia, in general, could face significant consequences from this trend: more storm activity over East Asia, and stronger South Asian monsoons between June and September.

That sounds like good news for water-scarce India, but probably isn't. Most of that rain would likely fall before the monsoon front reaches land. Already, studies by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology show a declining trend in precipitation over land.

Still, climate modeling is complex, and models still have their biases and limitations. Focusing so specifically on the warm pool may obscure the larger picture, some suggested, especially in the Pacific, where there are many other factors at play. *AP*

#### Erratum

IN the conclusion of the story "Saving eagles, protecting forests" published on Biodiversity page on June 26, the fourth paragraph under the subtitle "Captive breeding program" should have read: "'Kabayan,' the first eagle bred in captivity that was released into the wild on April 22, 2004, at the Philippine National Oil Geothermal Reservation within the Mount Apo National Park in Kidapawan City, accidentally died of electrocution on January 8, 2005."

Our apologies to our readers.



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### Climate change gives birth to new community

THE local government of Maragondon town, Cavite province has started a relocation program for settlers living in danger zones along the town's coastal areas.

In a statement, Mayor Rey Rillo said the local government is making sure that the town's people, especially those living in coastal com-

munities are protected from the effects of climate change.

Maragondon's land area of 16,459 hectares makes it Cavite's largest town.

The mayor said as part of the local government's plans, in partnership with the private sector, some residents of the village of Sta. Mercedes, which the mayor said is "really a no-build zone," have been relocated.

They were brought to a new

community on six-hectare site near the town proper. It now has finished concrete houses for at least 300 families and a campus of Cavite State University (CSU) that caters exclusively to children of relocated families.

Residents are getting training on dress

making, welding, automotive and electronic repair, Rillo said.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A CAMPUS of Cavite State University rises on a six-hectare relocation site for residents of Maragondon town who are living in a danger zone.



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### Gov't urged to assert right to fish in PH areas

LUCENA CITY—The government must assert the rights of Filipinos to fish in the country's territorial waters in the West Philippine Sea amid claims by China over sections of the disputed territory, the outgoing director of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) said.

"But any conflicts should be resolved in a peaceful settlement. We continue pushing our claims but through a peaceful process," said BFAR director Asis Perez here.

Perez said the West Philippine Sea belongs to Filipinos and the country's fishermen should benefit from its rich marine resources.

The Chinese Coast Guard has continued patrolling sections of the West Philippine Sea and, in several occasions, has driven Filipino fishermen from their traditional fishing ground in the Scarborough Shoal, locally known as Panatag Shoal or Bajo de Masinloc.

Fishermen from the provinces of Pangasinan, Zambales and Bataan have also used the shoal as a shelter during storms.

The shoal lies 240 kilometers from the coastline of Zambales and western Pangasinan, well within the 370-km exclusive economic zone of the Philippines.

Filipino fishermen have reported cases of harassment, intimidation and violence from Chinese Coast Guard personnel patrolling the shoal.

But Perez said BFAR patrol boats were the first symbols of government authority that confronted Chinese intruders in the high seas.

"To that extent, we are willing and capable of maintaining our claim in the area," Perez said.

He said, however, that BFAR personnel can only do so much.

"There are things beyond our power, BFAR is a small agency. But we have to maintain our stance because that area belongs to us," he said.

Perez, a lawyer, said the Philippines has all legal rights to use the resources in the disputed area.

Perez described his replacement at BFAR, retired Commodore Eduardo Gongona of the Philippine Coast Guard, as sincere and "more than capable" of doing his job as BFAR director.

"His success will also be the success of the fishery sector and the country," he said.

Perez, also a veterinarian, said he will return to law practice and continue his advocacy of protecting the environment.

Before he led BFAR, Perez served as executive director of Tanggol Kalikasan, a public interest environmental law office.

Perez considers the launch of the Comprehensive National Fisheries Industry Development Plan 2016-2020 early this year as one of BFAR's achievements under his watch. *Delfin T. Mallari*  
*Jr. Inquirer Southern Luzon*



THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS  
SINCE 1908

# MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

03 JUL 2016

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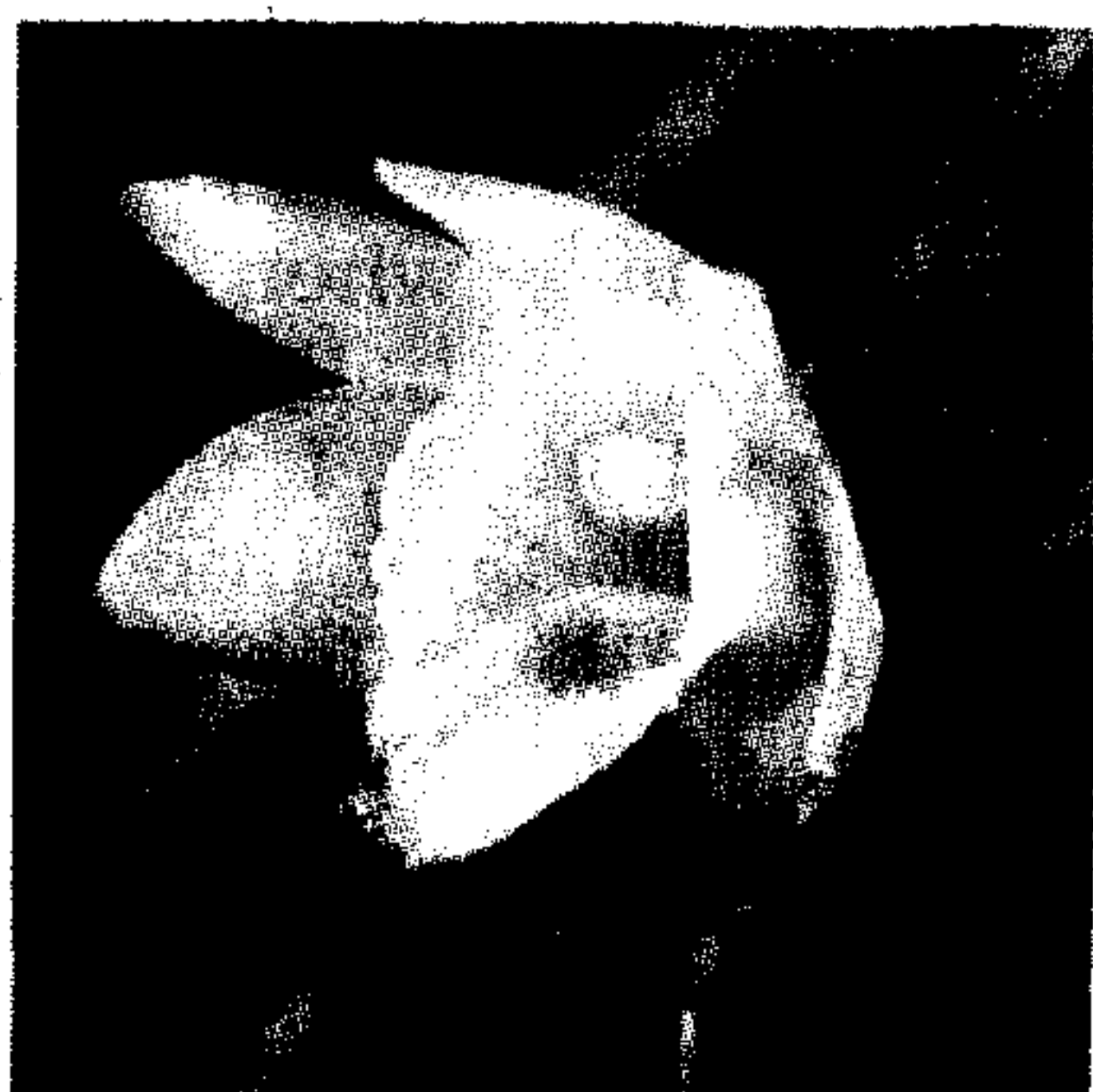
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## AN ORCHID FOR LYDIA

A new *Dendrobium* orchid that blooms in the mountains of Bukidnon, Mindanao, at 1,300 meters elevation, has been named in honor of Mrs. Lydia Chua Yap, grandmother of Dr. Emilio C. Yap III, an orchid and forest conservationist who is the Vice Chairman and Executive Vice President of the Manila Bulletin. Mrs. Yap is the wife of Don Emilio T. Yap, former chairman of the Manila Bulletin.



Dr. Miguel de Leon, who discovered the species while trekking in the area last May, described the new orchid as "beautiful, having a pristinely white flower which lasts for several days." He said the *Dendrobium lydiae* "borrows characteristics of other sections and yet it is distinct."

The authors of the description, which was published in *OrchideenJournal*, are Jim Cootes, Dr. De Leon, and Mark Arcebal Naive.

"*Dendrobium lydiae* is a rather unique member of section *Crumenata*. The flowers generally resemble those of *Dendrobium mindanaense* from section *Strongyle*, but they differ in the attenuated leaves, and the very differently shaped labellum," the description said.

The characteristics of the orchid species were described in the *OrchideenJournal* as "sympodial, upright to pendent epiphyte with stems growing up to 1.5 cm long by 1.5 mm in diameter, gradually enlarging cylindrically into two nodes, which are constricted centrally, with a total length of approximately 4 cm by 1.4 cm in diameter."

The flower's color is "pure white with purple veins on the side lobes; there is a greenish blotch on the center of the mid lobe; dorsal sepal: ovate, apex acute, 1.1 cm long by 5 mm wide, three-veined."

The petals were described as "lanceolate, 1 cm long by 4 mm wide, single veined," and the lateral sepals

as "broadly falcate, 1.3 cm long by 6 mm wide, forming a short base; labellum (central petal) - three lobed, 1.2 cm long by 7 mm wide; side lobes rounded; mid lobe broadly ovate; there is a small patch of hairs on the mid lobe. Pedicel and ovary: ridged longitudinally, tapering gradually, 1.2 mm in diameter by 7 mm long."

Dr. De Leon, who got interested in orchids as an offshoot of his being a raptor conservationist and trekker, said the new species was named after Yap's grandmother in recognition of Yap's orchid and forest conservation efforts. De Leon explained Yap's passion for conservation as extending to replicating rare orchid species and distributing those to be planted in similar habitats.

De Leon explained that an orchid species being named after a person or place is very significant as the name will be used in all future literature to describe the species. "It becomes a scientifically-identified orchid and the name will stay forever," he said.

There are two kinds of orchids: a species and a hybrid. A species grows in the wild while a hybrid is man-made, he explained. There are many hybrid orchids that have been named after celebrities.

De Leon explained that the discovery of a new species is guided by the "Philippine Native Orchid Species" book published in 2011 by Jim Cootes who is known as a "taxonomist," a biologist who groups organisms into categories.

De Leon, whose affection for orchids seems to be going towards that direction, is an ophthalmologist-vitreo retina surgeon. He calls himself a "raptor conservationist."

He also discovered a new *Epicrianthes* species and named it the *Epicrianthes aquinoi*, in honor of Benigno "Noyoy" Aquino III, the 15th President of the Philippines.



THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS  
SINCE 1900

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***Dendrobium lydiae***  
Photos by Dr. Miguel De Leon