

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

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DAY : Monday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

01 AUG 2016

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1980

MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

DATE

UPPER HALF

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Lopez willing to forgo some mining investments

By MADELAINA B. MIRAFLOR

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is willing to forgo parts of the projected \$30 billion worth of investments in the mining sector as regulators believe the money would not ultimately benefit the Filipino people.

DENR Secretary Gina Lopez said the government does not mind if some investments expected in the mining sector over the next 10 years would not take place at all, saying the country anyway will not benefit in it.

"Of all those investments, we benefit minimally. Eighty-two percent of their net goes to the mining [company] only, while 18 percent goes to the country and very, very little, if anything even, goes to the community. And those investments don't even mean labor," Lopez told Business Bulletin.

Lopez earlier said she will not allow the \$5.9-billion Tampakan project — the

country's largest stalled mining project and one of the world's largest copper mines — to take off during her term.

While Lopez has repeatedly stated that she is not against the mining industry, the official also explained that she is willing to deal with disappointed investors over her stringent mining regulations.

"I'm not against the mining industry but the current operations of mining companies cause a lot of suffering," she added.

She even said that mining companies only contribute "0.6 percent to employment and .004 percent in government revenues".

"The costs of destruction that they make far outweigh any benefit that they bring into the country," Lopez further said.

Since the DENR's audit on mining companies began, the number of suspended operations has also been increasing.

While Mines and Geosciences Bu-

reau (MGB) director Leo Jasareno didn't necessarily admit this could dampen the investment climate in the sector, but said the ongoing audit would have a long-term benefit.

"If you have an industry that is clean, they would attract investments," Jasareno said in a separate interview.

Then he said "any mining investor who thinks that the government is not doing it right, they can always complain."

Data from Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) showed that the mining sector could infuse around \$20 billion to \$30 billion worth of investments into the economy over the next five to 10 years.

This includes the much anticipated Tampakan Mine project that Lopez is not keen about.

When asked what could be an alternative source of investments for the country, she only said "tourism and agriculture has much more benefit to the economy and has much more social



GINA LOPEZ

impact".

In 2015, the total investments in major mining projects in the Philippines reached \$924.94 million in 2015, down by 22.5 percent from the total investments of \$1.193 billion made in 2014.

Investments in new mineral exploration projects, on the other hand, stood at \$78.97 million, down also by 44.23 percent from last year's investment of \$141.6 million.

01 AUG 2016

DATE

UPPER HALF

B-3

PAGE

✓
LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DMCI mulls nickel mines shutdown

Diversified conglomerate DMCI Holdings Inc. is considering the shutting down of its nickel mining operations as the industry is rocked by audit and suspension orders by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

DMCI chairman Isidro Consunji said "we could close it [mining operations] down in 60 days [from now]" after noting that it is no longer economically viable to work under a stop-and-go operation.

Through subsidiary DMCI Mining Corporation, the firm has stakes in Berong Nickel Corporation (BNC) and Zambales Diversified Metals Corporation (ZDMC).

Both operations, which employ the "open pit technique" in extracting nickel, chromite and iron laterite, were recently suspended by the DENR after an audit.

DENR alleged that BNC and ZMDC committed "various alleged environmental crimes, violations of the mining and environmental laws, and complaints of various groups against the alleged environmental impacts" of their mining activities.

"Should we decide to shut down, I believe, more and more mining companies would follow suit. It is no longer economically viable to operate under this condition, where mining firms are being audited instead of the environmental compliance monitoring group tasked by the government to monitor us," Consunji said.

He noted that "the government should be auditing the group that monitors us, that's the very reason why this monitoring team is there, they are tasked to monitor environmental compliance among mining firms. Thus, government should not conduct their own auditing." (JAL)

01 AUG 2016

DATE

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

BusinessMirror

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DMCI Holdings mulls over closing mining sites in Palawan, Zambales

By VG CABUAG [@villygc](#)

DMCI Holdings Inc. said it shut down its nickel-mining operations in two months, saying it could no longer operate under the new administration.

"We could close it [mining operations] down in 60 days," Isidro Consunji, DMCI's chairman and president, told reporters last week.

"Should we decide to shut down, I believe, more and more mining companies would follow suit. It is no longer economically viable to operate under this condition,

where mining firms are being audited instead of the environmental compliance monitoring group, which was tasked by the government to audit us," Consunji said.

The conglomerate, through its unit DMCI Mining Corp., has two nickel mining assets: Berong Nickel Corp., which operates sites

in Berong, Long Point, Moorsom and Ulugan, all in Palawan, while Zambales Diversified Metals Corp. has a site in Acoje, Zambales.

Both operations, which employ an open pit mining technique in extracting nickel, chromite and iron laterite for exports to China and Japan, were recently suspended by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for alleged violation of environmental standards.

Such suspensions were the result of Environment Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez's ongoing audit of all mining companies in the country.

"The government should be auditing the group that audits us; that's the very reason this monitoring team is there. They are tasked to monitor environ-

mental compliance among mining firms. The government should not conduct their own auditing," Consunji said.

As of last week, Lopez, who is vocal on her antimining advocacy, has suspended at least six mining operations. Consunji said it is their mining employees who suffer the most because of the indiscriminate suspension of mining operations by the government.

"We have people working for us, and whenever we are ordered [by the government] to stop our operations, they are the ones who suffer the most and their families. How can they possibly provide for the sustenance of their families if regulators keep on suspending mining firms...the source of their income?" he said.



01 AUG 2016

DATE

UPPER HALF

B-4
PAGE✓
LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Semirara has hands full with power plant projects

By DANESSA RIVERA

Consunji-led Semirara Mining and Power Corp. will have its hands full in terms of coal power plant developments with recently commissioned power plant, upgrades on existing facilities and joint venture power project with Manila Electric Co. (Meralco), a ranking official said.

"Our hands will be full by then," Semirara president and COO Victor Consunji said when asked if the company has lined up more power projects in the next few years.

Keeping the company busy will be the joint development of a 2x350-megawatt (MW) coal-fired power plant in Calaca, Batangas with Meralco called St. Raphael Power Generation Corp.

"We will call that Unit 5 and 6," Consunji said, referring to the project as the expansion of the existing 2x300-MW coal-fired power plant under Sem-Calaca Power Corp. (SCPC).

The company official said the joint venture project with Meralco originally consists of three 350-MW units, with no definite plans yet on the third unit.

"What was approved was 3x350 MW but what was closed under the deal was only 2x350 MW. For the other one,

there is no guidance yet if we will undertake it ourselves," Consunji said.

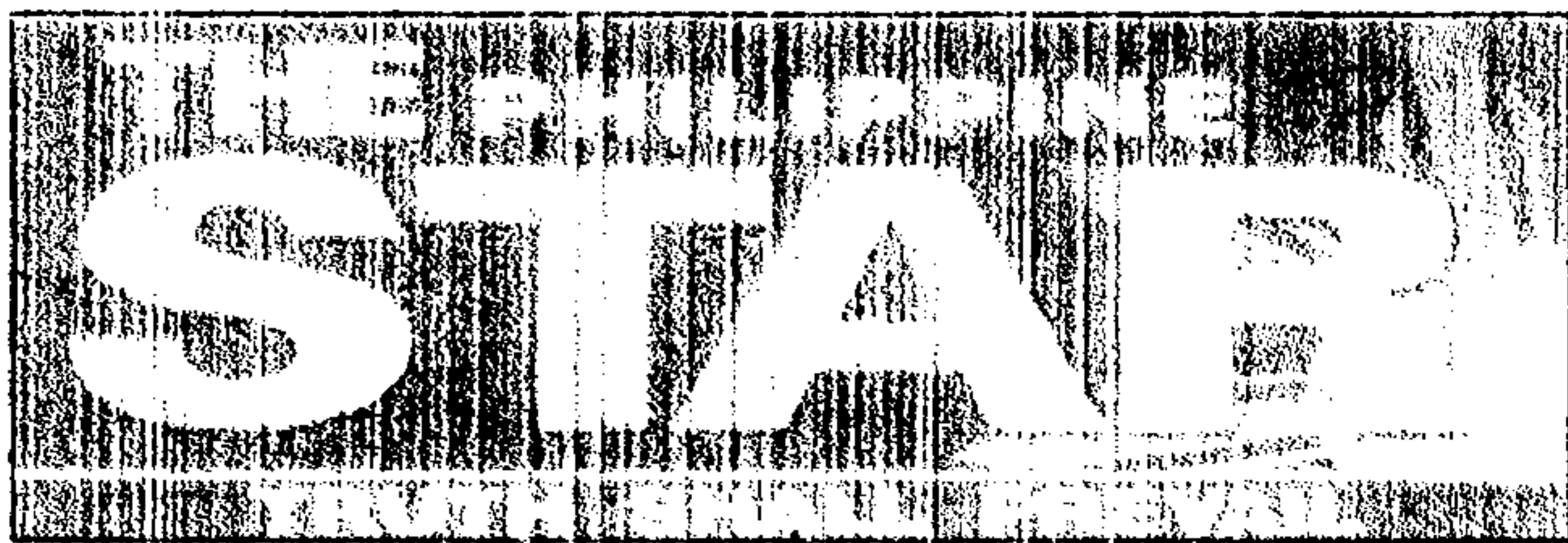
An environment compliance certificate (ECC) from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has already been secured in 2011, Consunji said, expressing hope there will be no hitches in developing the project.

Meanwhile, Semirara has been commissioning its 2x150 MW coal-fired power plant in the same area called Southwest Luzon Power Generation Corp. (SLPGC), or the Unit 3 and 4 of the existing Calaca power plant.

Consunji said the company would be asking the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) to conduct tests on the plant to issue a certificate of commerciality (COC) since it has produced 150 MW in capacity in the past two weeks of commissioning.

"Between now and November, we will call on ERC to do some tests so we will be given the COC. Right now, we only have a provisional authority to operate," he said.

While undergoing commissioning, SLPGC has started contributing to Semirara in terms of revenues because of better rates, and is seen to contribute 25 percent to topline this year.



01 AUG 2016

DATE

UPPER HALF

A-29
PAGE✓
LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Suspension of Aussie mining firm's operation sought

SAN JOSE CITY – The provincial government of Nueva Vizcaya has sought the suspension of the operation of an Australian mining company for allegedly being destructive to the environment.

Gov. Carlos Padilla called on the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to withdraw the exploration permit and suspend the operation of the Oceana Gold Corp. Philippines Inc. (OGPI) in Barangay Dipidio,

Kasibu town.

The mining firm's operation has reportedly put at risk some 300,000 hectares of agricultural lands irrigated by six dams in North Luzon.

In a letter to DENR Secretary Gina Lopez, Padilla cited several reasons why the provincial government is opposing OGPI's operation.

He said the province is a critical watershed of major dams such as Ambuklao, Binga,

By **MANNY GALVEZ**

Casacnan, Magat, Pantabangan and San Roque, which irrigate at least 286,920 hectares of agricultural lands in Cagayan Valley and Central Luzon.

Padilla said OGPI's operation affects these dams and the province's vision to become a watershed haven and its promotion as an agro-forestry area and eco-tourism site.

In a dialogue last July 20, Padilla said Lopez assured him, the anti-mining advocates

and leaders of indigenous groups in Dipidio that if OGPI's supposed violations are proven, she would recommend to President Duterte to terminate the firm's operations.

He said a majority of Vizcayanos is against mining because it disrupts their way of life and destroys their environment and their source of livelihood.

He said the province has a brighter future in agriculture than in mining. //

Co-O mine produces 108,578 ounces of gold

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE CO-O MINE in Agusan del Sur produced 108,578 ounces of gold in the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2016, just past the target output of 108,000 ounces, according to Medusa Mining Ltd.

The mine was originally gunning for a full-year gold output ranging from 120,000 ounces to 130,000 ounces, but the goal was lowered amid mine development activities that pulled down the overall grade of mined ore.

For the 2015-2016 fiscal year, production was 10 percent higher than the 98,539 ounces recorded in the fiscal year 2014-2015, when Co-O was aiming at 95,000 ounces to 100,000 ounces.

In the past four quarters, Co-O mine's quarterly output ranged from a low of 21,980 ounces in the March quarter to a high of 31,495 ounces in the September 2015 quarter.

In the June quarter alone, the mine produced 25,429 ounces of gold at an average of 6.32 grams of gold per ton of material from 133,213 tons of ore.

"Compared to the March quarter, this is a 15-percent improvement on grade at similar tonnage throughputs, resulting in 16 percent more ounces," Medusa said in a statement.

For the fiscal year that started this month, Co-O mine pencilled in an output goal of 105,000 ounces to 115,000 ounces—a decrease of 4 percent from the previous range.

Through Philsaga Mining, Medusa has embarked on a five-year thrust to expand its total output to 400,000 ounces of gold per year—half of which will come from Co-O.

Medusa's portfolio also includes the Bananghilig deposit and the Guinhalinan prospect, both in Surigao del Sur.

This comes as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources formalized

an audit of existing mines and suspended the approval for new ones.

Environment Secretary Regina Lopez issued Memorandum order No. 2016-01 dated July 8, which is in effect "until formally terminated."

Lopez cited three reasons why operating mines should be audited.

First, to determine the adequacy and efficiency of the environmental protection measures of each mining operation.

Second, to identify gaps in environmental protection measures. And third, to determine the appropriate penalty or penalties in case of violations of the mining and environmental laws.

01 AUG 2016

DATE

✓
UPPER HALF

B-6

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

OceanaGold advances underground mining

By **MADELAINE B. MIRAFLOR**

Australian mining giant OceanaGold Corp. has advanced its underground mining operations at its Didipio copper-gold mine project in Nueva Vizcaya as it expects production to commence before 2018.

In a disclosure with the Toronto Stock Exchange (TSX), OceanaGold said that production from the underground mine at Didipio is expected at the end of next year.

"Mining of Stage 5 of the open pit was completed during the quarter, ahead of schedule, while development of the underground continues to advance well," OceanaGold told TSX.

In the first half of the year, Didipio produced 90,887 ounces of gold and 12,244 tons of copper, including 44,076 ounces of gold and 6,272 tons of copper in the second quarter.

"The slight quarter-on-quarter decrease in gold production was expected and as a result of a lower head grade," the company said.

The company also reported revenue of \$330.8 million during the first six months of the year and a net profit of \$63.2 million. In the second quarter alone, the company recorded revenue of \$169.8 million with a net profit of \$39.7 million.

"After a strong first half of the year, the Company is well positioned to achieve its production and cost guidance for the year," Mick Wilkes,

president and chief executive officer of OceanaGold, said.

"We will continue to operate safely while seeking to unlock the organic growth potential of our assets," he added.

OceanaGold is now facing regulatory review following complaints from Nueva Vizcaya residents about the possible expansion of the company's operations.

Joey Leviste, OceanaGold Philippines chairman, said that they have yet to receive a copy of the order from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau over the possible suspension of five-year exploration permit awarded to them earlier this year.

The permit allowed the company to conduct exploration activities in the broader region surrounding Didipio in the next five years.

Didipio mine is a high-grade gold-copper open pit and underground mine located around 270 kilometers north of Manila whose full-year operation began in 2014.

The mine is one of the lowest-cost gold mines in the world, with nominal production of 100,000 ounces of gold and 14,000 tons of copper. It has an estimated reserve of 1.59 million ounces of gold and 210,000 tons of copper.

OceanaGold's mining claim covers around 15,000 hectares, but the company has only explored and developed around 900 hectares.

The Manila Times

01 AUG 2016

DATE

A3

PAGE

✓
UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



'GREEN' RIVER Water lilies clog the Pasig River in Intramuros, Manila. The floating plants "invade" the river during the rainy season. The lilies eventually flow out to Manila Bay. PHOTO BY LANZ MENDOZA

The Manila Times

01 AUG 2016

DATE

A3

PAGE

UPPER HALF

✓
LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

EcoWaste backs testing of fish from Laguna lake

ENVIRONMENTAL watchdog EcoWaste Coalition backed the proposal of Environment Secretary Regina "Gina" Lopez to test fish from Laguna Lake to determine if these are free of environmental toxins such as lead and mercury.

"We support the initiative of Secretary Lopez to look into the potential toxic metal contamination of Laguna Lake fish, which are mainly coming from industrial and domestic pollution sources," said EcoWaste national coordinator Aileen Lucero said.

Lucero said the monitoring of toxic metals and other contaminants in Laguna Lake should be undertaken on a regular basis to assure the public that fish caught in the lake is safe to eat.

Lopez had suggested the testing of fish in coordination with other government agencies such as the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and the Department of Health. She said Laguna de Bay is overfished and "fish in (the lake) have been found to be heavy in mercury."

"The decline or rise in toxic metal concentrations in Laguna Lake fish, as the sampling data would show, will be a good indicator of the effectiveness of government's interventions and help the Duterte administration in realizing its vision for the country's largest freshwater lake," she said.

In his first State of the Nation Address (SONA), President Rodrigo Duterte announced that Laguna Lake "shall be transformed into a vibrant economic zone showcasing ecotourism by addressing the negative impact of the watershed destruction, land conversion and pollution."

The EcoWaste Coalition recalled that a fish sampling conducted in 2010-2011 showed that "mudfish from Laguna Lake is not fit for long-term human consumption primarily due to lead and mercury contamination."

"Long-term human consumption of mudfish from Laguna de Bay is not safe due to elevated levels of mercury and lead that were found to be above the safe non-carcinogenic hazard quotient (NHQ) values," said Prof. Victorio Molina of the University of the Philippines-Manila who conducted the study.

While the levels of arsenic, cadmium and chromium do not pose significant non-carcinogenic health effects associated with the consumption of mudfish from Laguna de Bay, the concentrations of mercury and lead showed elevated levels that are likely to cause adverse health effects on fish long-term consumers, according to Molina's report entitled "Non-Carcinogenic Health Risks of Heavy Metal in Mudfish from Laguna Lake."

Arsenic, cadmium, chromium, lead and mercury are non-essential and are known to have the ability to bioaccumulate through the food chain, the study said.

"Lead is the most urgent pollutant of concern in terms of adverse health effects from risks associated with mudfish consumption from all sampling locations in the lake," the study pointed out.

According to Greenpeace, a member

of the EcoWaste Coalition, the Laguna Lake and its surrounding areas are under immediate threat from household and industrial pollution.

Household or domestic wastes constitute 77 percent of the lake's total pollution load, industry contributes 11 percent, 11 percent comes from agriculture, and 1 percent from forests.

Solid and liquid wastes enter the lake by way of the 22 major tributaries and the more than 100 minor tributaries, including the periodically back-flowing Pasig River," the group said.

Meanwhile, the militant fisherfolk group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya-Pilipinas) welcomed Duterte's order to dismantle vast tracts of fish pens in Laguna de Bay.

"This is what the Laguna lake fishers have long been waiting for; a leader who will address the welfare of the small fishers over big-corporations' greedy interests. Large portions of Laguna de Bay have been occupied by big fishing and aquaculture companies for decades now," Roman Antazo, Pamalakaya secretary general and also a fisherman from Laguna Lake said in a statement.

Pamalakaya said almost 60 percent of the 94,000-hectare lake has been leased to big fish pen operators by the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) through the Fishpond Lease Agreement (FLA).

This, it said, is in violation of the law that only allows 10 percent of inland waters to be occupied privately..

He said that the "corporate takeover" of Laguna de Bay left nothing for the small fisherfolk, who have been making their livelihood out of its productive fishing waters. The once communal fishing grounds for small fishermen are now enclosed with cages, resulting in overcrowding.

"We have experienced several forms of harassments from the armed fish pens personnel and deprivation from our livelihood when we go near the private fish pens," Antazo said.

However, Pamalakaya said the group will oppose moves to transform Laguna de Bay into an ecotourism zone.

"While we welcome the President's stand against corporate fish pens in Laguna Lake, we won't allow transforming our traditional fishing grounds into an ecotourism zone that will put the lives of the fisherfolk in peril. We strongly oppose any plans to convert and transform the lake into other use such as tourist zones because that will also lead to displacement or prohibition of fishers to fish near the declared tourist spots," Antazo said.

"There are many ways to conserve and preserve Laguna Lake without putting the lives of the fishers and residents at stake. We are open to hold a dialogue with the President and come up with more holistic and pro-people solutions for the rehabilitation of the dying lake," he added.

JAMES KONSTANTIN GALVEZ

Dismantle fish cages—fishermen

MILITANT fisherfolk group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya-Pilipinas) on Sunday welcomed President Rodrigo Duterte's order to dismantle vast tracts of private fish pens in Laguna de Bay.

The order was made during the President's 1st State of the Nation Address on July 25.

"This is what the Laguna lake fishers have long been waiting for; a leader who will address the welfare of the small fishers over big-corporations' greedy interests. Large portion of Laguna de Bay have been occupied by big fishing and

aquaculture companies for decades now," said Roman Antazo, Pamalakaya secretary general and also a fisherman from Laguna Lake.

Pamalakaya said that almost 60 percent of the 94,000-hectare lake has been leased to big fish pen operators by the Laguna Lake Development Authority through the Fishpond Lease Agreement.

Pamalakaya said this is in violation to the law that only allows 10 percent of the inland waters to be occupied privately.

The lion's share of the lake is being apportioned by a few private individuals and corpo-

rations which own fish pens covering a total of 700 hectares, according to the group.

"The corporate takeover of Laguna de Bay left nothing for the small fisherfolk who have been making livelihood out of its productive fishing water. The once communal fishing grounds for the small fishermen are now enclosed with cages resulting to overcrowding. We have experienced several forms of harassments from the armed fish pens personnel and deprivation from our livelihood when we go near the private fish pens," Antazo said. **Sandy Araneta**

01 AUG 2016

DATE

✓
UPPER HALF

21

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

₱742-M water treatment plant in Zambo City inaugurated

By **NONOY E. LACSON**

ZAMBOANGA CITY — The biggest water treatment plant outside Metro Manila, which uses the ultra-modern Direct Action Pulsation Smart Clarifier technology, was inaugurated, Thursday in this city with local officials and businessmen in attendance.

Zamboanga Economic Zone and Freeport Authority (ZamboEcoZone and Freeport) chair Christopher Lawrence S. Arnuco said the ₱742-million water treatment plant of Prime Water Infrastructure Corporation (PIC) and the ₱535-million Zamboanga City Water District (ZCWD) Water Pipe Project in the West Coast, which was also inaugurated Thursday, would give “new hope to hundreds of water concessionaires in the west district of continuous and uninterrupted supply of potable water in their homes.”

PIC is one of the 30 locators inside the ZamboEcoZone and Freeport, and is located in Sitio Anuling in the village of Pamucutan this city.

The water treatment facility seats on a 50-hectare lot which will also be used for water retention, forest protection, and various water treatment facilities to sup-

port the operations of the treatment plant.

The PIC facility, and the water pipe project will go into full operation by November.

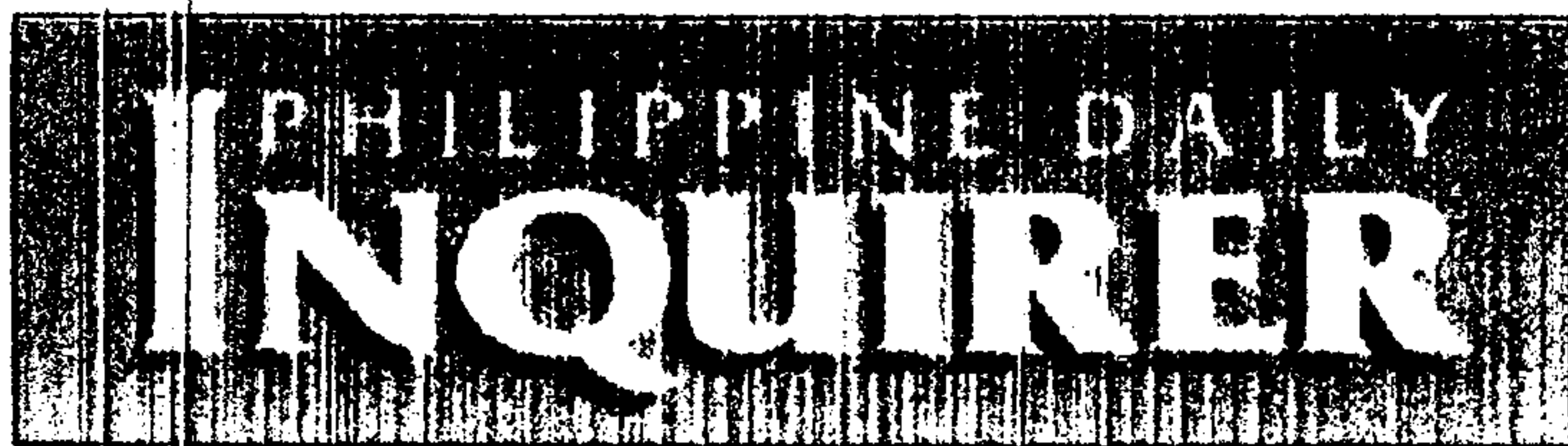
The PIC will treat and supply daily 50,000 cubic meters of potable water to the Zamboanga City Water District (ZCWD) for distribution to the residences in the Ayala District, and another 15,000 cubic meters of water to the ZamboEcoZone and Freeport locators.

The treatment plant is expected to provide suitable potable water to the city's west coast area for the next 50 years. It will also maintain its 50-hectare area with its various forest protection and management programs, especially along the major tributaries in the Upper Pamucutan area.

Former Senator Manuel A. Villar and Arnuco signed the lease agreement for the construction and maintenance of a water treatment plant and various other facilities at the zone.

The agreement also includes a sustainable forest management and protection within PIC's 50-hectare site inside the zone.

The forest protection and management is commitment of Prime Water in all its water resource developments all over the country.



01 AUG 2016
DATE

✓
UPPER HALF

A16

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

On Canada waste: time for Rody to follow up question with action

IT'S GOOD to hear that President Duterte is going after local mayors who have failed to act on the garbage problem in their municipalities. But will the President go after Canada for dumping its garbage here on Philippine soil?

Last year, then Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte urged the Aquino administration to file a diplomatic protest against Canada, calling the dumping "a derogation of our national dignity." It is now in his power to resolve the crisis and instruct Foreign Secretary Perfecto Yasay to formally transmit a protest to the Basel Convention Secretariat, the watchdog on transboundary waste shipments. That transmittal will compel Canada to take back its trash just as Japan recalled trash shipments during the time of president Joseph Estrada.

As we write, Canada's illegal trash shipments, totaling around 1,300 tons, have been sitting on Philippine ports for 1,066 days since 2013. And the trash is mixed municipal waste—the same kind of waste for which mayors have been put to task last week by the President.

Imagine what mixed trash is—used diapers, toxic e-waste and decomposing food waste all mixed up, rotting inside shipping containers while the hot Philippine sun bakes and boils this noxious brew. Will President Duterte allow this to be disposed of in our country even as we face our own garbage crisis?

The Canada waste issue may be just one of the many concerns the Duterte administration faces today. But it is essentially about upholding Philippine sovereignty. Among his priorities

should be to instruct the Senate to ratify the Basel Ban Agreement to prevent similar transgressions in the future.

President Duterte was quoted last year asking this rhetorical question: "*Bakit nila gagawing basurahan ang bayan ko* (Why should they make a dumpsite of my country)?" And now this should be followed by an unequivocal fact: Our country cannot be made into a dumping site by rich countries. To continue to turn a blind eye to Canada's transgression is to make the country more vulnerable to foreign trash being shipped to our shores. It is time for the new President to put his foot down and call for Canada to take back its waste.

—ANNA KAPUNAN,
campaigner, BAN Toxics,
akapunan@bantoxics.org

01 AUG 2016

DATE
B2-4
PAGE

✓
UPPER HALF
LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Bungle of energy

SUCH a bundle of energy, this DENR, with its bright idea of imposing last minute rules with gusto!

About a month ago, our favorite Department of Environment and Natural Resources issued a freaking memo, even with only three days left in the Aquino (Part II) administration.

What do you know—it frontally targeted coal-fired power plants.

From now on, according to the memo, any application for ECCs (environmental compliance certificate) of coal-fired plant must get “clearance” from Sen. Loren Legarda.

The memo also asked for clearance

from the Climate Change Commission, or the CCC, the body tasked to come up with more and—hopefully—better plans for natural disasters, attached to the Office of the President.

That the DENR would add the CCC clearance to the already long list of conditions on ECC application, could be justifiable, according to business.

But for what ungodly reason would the DENR impose the “clearance” from a senator?

The good senator herself initiated it, when she wrote a letter to the DENR questioning ECC issuances to coal plants, despite the trend abroad toward

what she called “climate change mitigation efforts.”

As if the dozen or so coal plants in the Philippines were the most troublesome cause of climate change in the entire planet!

And what would be the next move of the DENR—clearance from China for the domestic price of eggs?

From what I gathered, the controversial memo of the DENR went all the way to Malacañang for approval.

Former Executive Secretary Paquito Ochoa supposedly went along with it, because the Aquino (Part II) administration at that time had only a few more days in power, and the Duterte administration could always scrap it.

In other words, it was an accommodation to Legarda.

Surprise—word went around business that the DENR, now under Secretary Regina Paz Lopez of the rich Lopez clan, would continue to enforce it.

Our contacts in business noted that the former DENR boss, Ramon Paje, brilliantly distanced himself from the controversial memo.

As it turned out, the memo originated from Analiza Re-buelta-Teh, undersecretary for legal services and attached agencies, ordering assistant secretary for environment Juan Miguel Cuna to implement it. Cuna, in turn, passed the ball to Jonas Leones, director of the Environmental Management Bureau.

Recently, coal plants hit the headlines because our new leader, Duterte Harley, hinted he would not dismiss them as an option for power in the country, because they were still the “cheapest” source.

In one of his ad libs in his first Sona, he also said “I cannot just agree on anything that will delay” the industrialization of the country.

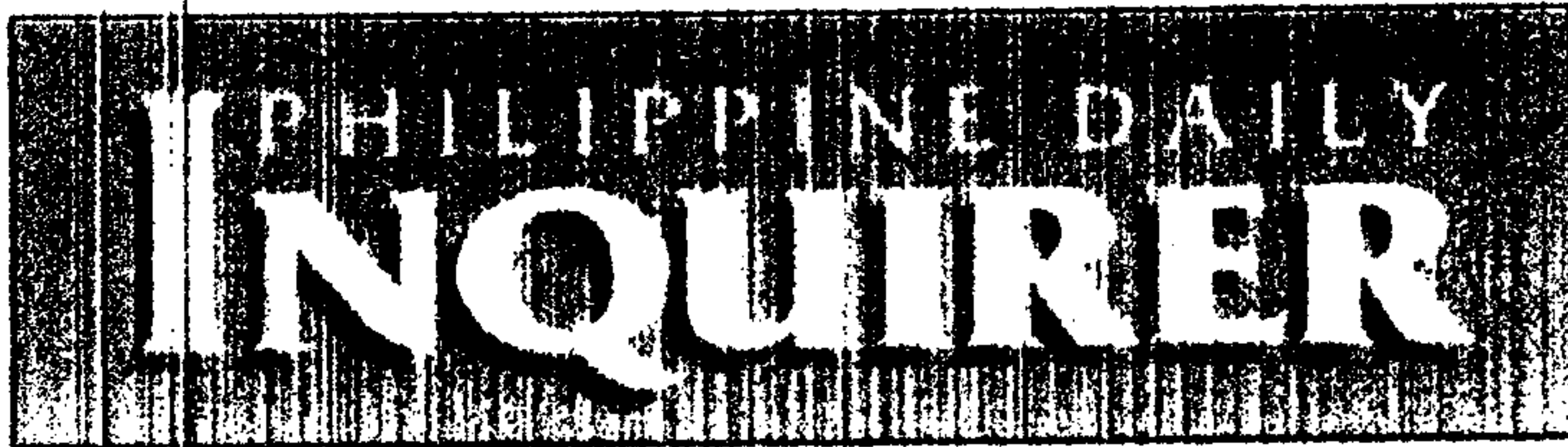
Clear enough—Duterte Harley refused to bungle coal plants as a viable source of electricity in this country to offset the high cost of “renewable energy.”

BREAKTIME

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PAGE 1/2



01 AUG 2016

DATE

B2-A

PAGE

✓
UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

"BUNGLE OF ENERGY"

PAGE 2/2

But then again some groups claiming to be "environmentalists" warned Duterte Harley: He must know that renewable energy has already achieved parity with coal.

Really—why do we still pay extra for renewable energy, what with the Feed-in Tariff, or FIT, the subsidy imposed by the government on all electricity users in this country known to have the most expensive electricity in Asia?

The FIT started with a subsidy of 4 centavos per kilowatt-hour, which the government decided should be doubled to 8 centavos per kWh, which the government wanted to raise by half to 12 centavos per kWh.

Today we still cannot see at what rates the FIT will end!

By the way, one of the biggest generators of renewable energy in the country is Solar Philippines.

Together with Citicore Power, Solar Philippines is in hot pursuit of the largest solar farm in Luzon with 250-megawatt capacity worth \$600 million.

It was also said to be on top of the 100-megawatt solar plant in Tarlac, and another 45-megawatt plant in Misamis Oriental.

The last time I checked, the CEO of Solar Philippines remained Leandro L. Leviste. It would not take much to guess what the middle initial "L" meant.

According to the business sector, just as devastating to the country as the crisis on drugs, and the traffic, would be the white-collar crime called "smuggling."

That was the reason, according to Duterte Harley, why the new administration had to put in the Bureau of Customs an incorruptible former military guy.

Well and good. You see, business groups already estimated that, in the past few years under the Aquino (Part II) administration, smuggling became a threat to national security by denying the government some P200 billion a year in revenue.

Believe it or not, that figure could cover the annual budget deficit of the gov-

ernment, estimated in 2015 at only about P120 billion.

Smuggling—a.k.a. crime of economic sabotage—has been the scourge of local business for the longest time. For example, US-based Global Financial Integrity reported that, from 1960 to 2011, smuggling here amounted to some \$280 billion.

Name the product, and the crooks smuggled it: Cigarette, textile, wrist watch, ceramic tiles, tires, rice and other farm goods, cars and trucks and ships, construction materials, oil and fuel, toys, chocolates, liquor, beauty products, and even toothbrush.

According to farm group Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (Sinag), agriculture suffered much in the past four years because of the smuggling of, P40 billion worth of pork, P25 billion worth of sugar and P94 billion worth of rice.

To think, official figures showed that the farm sector historically had the highest poverty incidence among all the local industries—at more than 40 percent.

Recently, smuggling of cement has become prevalent because of the construction frenzy in the private sector.

In 2015, for instance, industry figures showed the importation went up by 78 times, from some 4,000 tons in 2014 to more than 300,000 tons.

The country has so far imported more than a million metric tons of cement this year. And in the first quarter alone, it was estimated that more than 120,000 metric tons were "undervalued" meaning, smuggled.

This became my favorite: The smuggling of substandard steel bars from China. It was evident in the buildings that collapsed in the earthquake that hit Bohol and Cebu some years ago.

A couple of months ago, the BOC stopped the release of some 5,000 metric tons of reinforcing steel bars from China, said to be defective, lacking the approval of the Bureau of Product Standards under the DTI.

From what I heard, the shipment was to be the first of even much larger shipments to come.

Smuggling already killed several industries here, including textile, ceramic, petrochemical, and shoe making.

Next to go could be agriculture, particularly poultry and piggery sectors.

From what I heard, local animal raisers already scaled down their production.

The Manila Times

01 AUG 2016

DATE

A2

PAGE

UPPER HALF

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

LGUs urged to set climate change action plans

THE Climate Change Commission is pressing local government units (LGU) to double their efforts in crafting their respective climate change action plans amid record-breaking global temperatures that may result in more intense storms and frequent floods.

Citing the occurrence of the recent El Niño phenomenon, Secretary Emmanuel De Guzman, CCC vice chairperson and executive director, said the need for local climate change action plans (LCCAP) has become even more urgent if LGUs are to be equipped against the impacts of global warming.

De Guzman underscored the importance of integrating climate adaptation into the disaster risk reduction and management policies and plans of every LGU.

"Our climate is warming at a faster rate than ever recorded. We cannot afford to ignore climate change and the most recent warming patterns because these may just be a taste of what's to come," he said in a statement.

He issued the statement after the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), an agency under the United Nations, announced that the earth is on track for its hottest year on record, with June marking the 14th straight month of record heat.

Citing two separate reports from the United States' National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the WMO said global temperatures from January to June shattered yet more records.

The average temperature in the first six months of 2016 was 1.3°C warmer than the pre-industrial era in the late 19th century, according to NASA.

NOAA said the global land and ocean average temperature for January-June was 1.05°C above the 20th century average, beating the record set in 2015 by 0.20°C.

"These data provide a cast-iron case for policymakers, especially those in the local governments, to prepare for climate disasters before

they strike," De Guzman said.

He warned that small changes in global temperatures could lead to extreme weather events, including droughts and floods.

De Guzman noted that the Philippines has just experienced its worst El Niño-induced dry spell in 18 years, which wreaked havoc on agriculture and severely affected the livelihood of millions of farmers and fishermen, who are already among the poorest in the country.

After the prolonged dry spell, the country now braces for La Niña, which brings heavy rains that trigger floods and landslides.

De Guzman said the Philippines has experienced more than its fair share of super typhoons in the past decade, with the worst—Super Typhoon Yolanda—killing almost 7,000 people and leaving millions homeless.

The devastation from that typhoon catapulted the Philippines to the top of the list of the 10 countries found to be most vulnerable to climate change, based on the annual Global Climate Risk

Index of Germanwatch. The Climate Change Vulnerability Index 2016 also cites the Philippines as the 13th extremely at risk country among 186 nations.

De Guzman said this is why the CCC is rolling out its Communities for Resilience (CORE) Convergence Forum across the country to strengthen the capacity of LGUs to cope with climate change impacts.

"We need to increase local efforts in applying prevention strategies to reduce the impacts of the changes in weather patterns," he said.

The CCC has just concluded the third leg of the convergence forum in Bohol on July 27 to 28. The first two forums were held in Davao City in March and Cagayan de Oro City in June.

The forum seeks to help LGUs, which are at the forefront of response actions, craft their own LCCAP and implement climate change adaptation, and disaster risk reduction management.

JAMES KONSTANTIN GALVEZ

01 AUG 2016

DATE

UPPER HALF

12

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

PAGE TWELVE

Untold losses of Filipino fishermen at WPS

By **ELINANDO B. CINCO**

HUNDREDS of Filipino fishermen making their livelihood in the South China Sea (West Philippine Sea) are suffering from untold losses of personal income and business profit for almost four years now, but their suffering appears to be ending.

That vast sea had been their well-spring of sustenance for years. But at the beginning of 2012, when Beijing began its massive reclamation work in Scarborough Shoal and nearby areas, the Filipino fishermen were driven away from their means of support.

The new intruders, well-armed and threatening, meant business. The Filipinos were water-cannoned, and at one time their wooden boats were rammed by the steel vessels of the invaders.

There has been no report of fatalities, though.

Significantly, our own coast guard and naval forces have played it cool and have not shown credible retaliatory tactics.

But four years after the first reclamation work, Beijing (they claim ownership of the huge body of water by virtue of its being called South China Sea.), local fishermen have been pouring their anguish to

the Manila government.

Out of work, they have accepted all kinds of jobs in their respective provinces to keep body and soul together, and for the upkeep of their miserable family.

The national government, on the other hand, realizing our inferiority in an armed confrontation with the invaders, chose to go to court instead.

And so it was that our case was filed with the United Nations-supported Permanent Court of Arbitration on the United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Sea located in The Hague, Netherlands.

And then on July 12, 2016, the PCA issued its landmark decision.

But Beijing will have none of it. They are still there patrolling the vast sea day in and day out, this time driving away not only local fishermen but even Filipino groups of observers that were surveying the disputed area after the July 12 ruling.

So, how can the ousted Filipino fishermen recoup their four-year losses in income?

Diplomacy will help. US Secretary of State John Kerry was here July 26 and 27. He reiterated in official statement and in talks with various government officials that the PCA ruling is "legally binding."

By the way, the sea is fertile

ground for commercial fishing. A former college classmate – Alex Quibin – invested part of his retirement money (after a good number of years of working as a Meralco executive) by engaging in deep-sea fishing in WPS some years back.

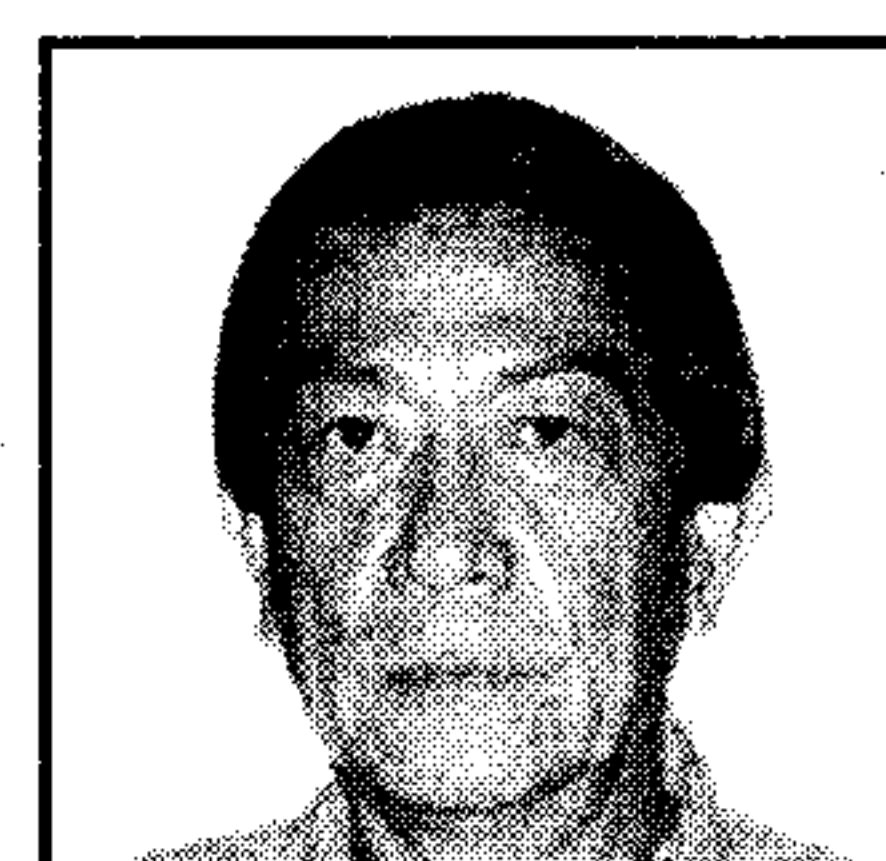
He said that what makes the area rich in marine life is the vast spread of corrals underneath.

By laying a one-kilometer-long net at daytime, his men would have bountiful catch after just one hour. Alex and other deep-sea fishing investors are ecstatic over the PCA decision.

Meanwhile, in a related development, people around the world have significantly increased their consumption of fish. (Read Manila Bulletin, Page B-8, July 28, 2016). To quote:

"According to The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2016, world per capita fish consumption increased from an average of 9.9 kilograms in the 1960s to 14.4 kilograms in the 1990s, 19.7 kilograms in 2013, and 20.1 kilograms in 2014."

The record consumption is the result of increased supplies from fish farming, growing demand linked to population growth, reduced wastage, rising incomes and urbanization, and a slight improvement in some fish stocks, said the UN report.



01 AUG 2016

DATE UPPER HALF ✓
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DAVAO DEL NORTE AMBUSH

Citing safety, 'lumad' hesitate to go home

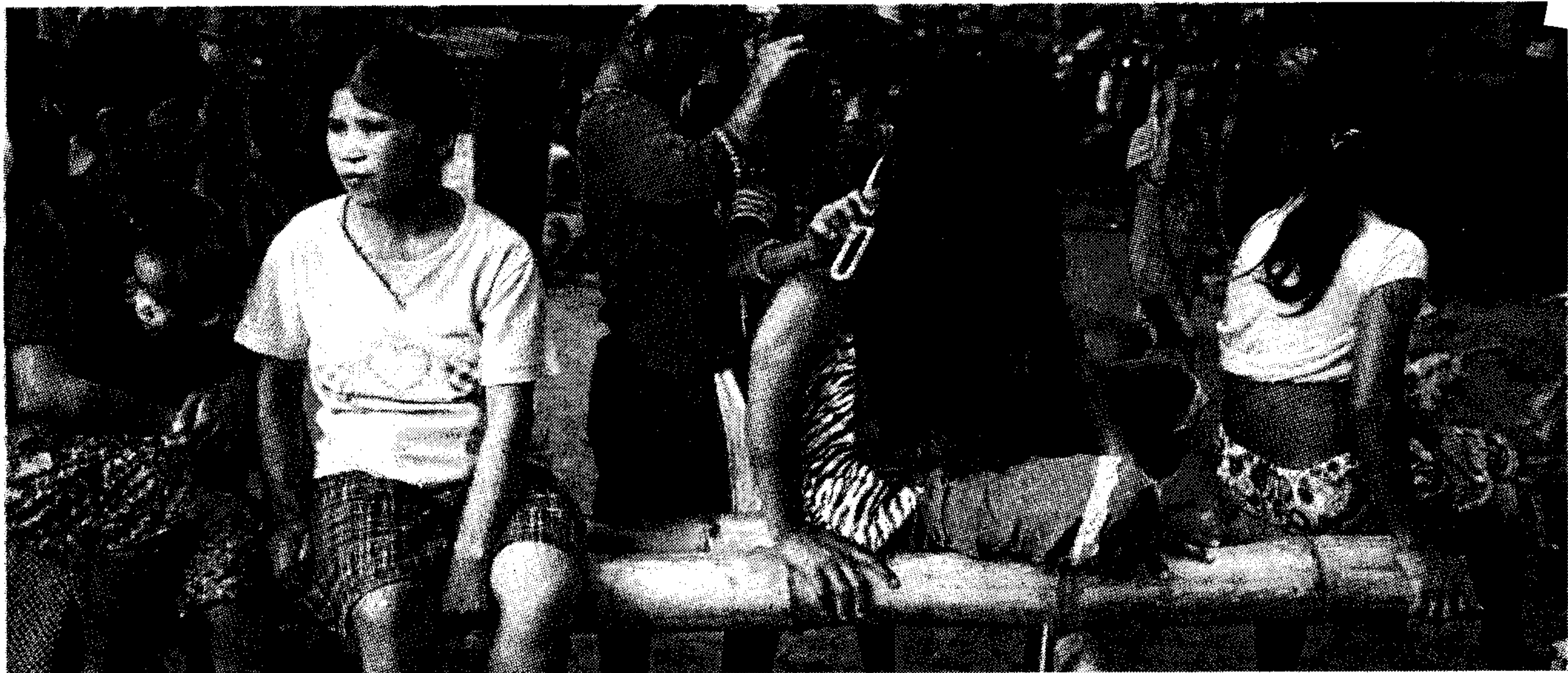
DAVAO CITY—Uncertain about their security in the countryside, especially in the wake of last week's ambush that killed a government militiaman and wounded four others in Kapalong town in Davao del Norte province, "lumad" (indigenous) evacuees at Haran here have been hesitating to return to their communities, a lumad leader said on Saturday.

Kerlan Fanagel, chair of the Pasaka Lumad Confederation, said more than 300 lumad staying at Haran here since fleeing their homes in 2015, were now thinking twice about going home.

"They are assessing the situation but the ambush certainly has an [impact on] their decision to return to their villages," Fanagel said in an interview by Radyo ni Juan here.

The remaining lumad evacuees at Haran were mostly from villages in Davao del Norte.

Asked what exactly was the fear among the lumad evacuees, Fanagel



KARLOS MANLUPIG / INQUIRER MINDANAO

FAR FROM HOME A group of Manobo women whiles away time in an evacuation center in Davao City. Hundreds of "lumad" were displaced from Talaingod and Kapalong towns in Davao del Norte province following a series of attacks allegedly by government forces. The evacuees have been away from their communities for more than a year now.

said they were worried about getting caught in the crossfire anew.

But then, he said the evacuees were raring to go home and were keenly observing developments.

"They said they needed to make sure that it was really safe for them to return," Fanagel added.

Last week, thousands of lumad who had fled their homes due to military operations and alleged abuses by

soldiers started preparing to return to their communities after President Duterte assured them it was now safe for them to do so.

Fanagel, in an earlier interview, said Mr. Duterte also promised that he would ensure the relief and rehabilitation of the returning lumad, through the assistance of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

"We are now processing with the

DSWD our request for relief and rehabilitation. Mr. Duterte said there is an existing budget for this," Fanagel told the INQUIRER.

Fanagel was among lumad leaders who met with the President on July 25 after the his State of the Nation Address.

"The President told us to trust him. Our people, he said, can now return to our villages," Fanagel said. **Allan Nawal, Inquirer Mindanao**

National News

LGU's compelled to act on climate change as global temperatures soar

By ELLALYN B. DE VERA

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) appealed to local government units (LGUs) to work double-time in crafting their climate action plans, amid the soaring global temperatures that reached record highs this year.

Secretary Emmanuel De Guzman, CCC vice chairperson and executive director, said the need for local climate change action plans (LCCAP) has become even more urgent as higher global temperatures could trigger more droughts, intense storms and frequent floods.

LCCAP stipulates the policies and measures that an LGU will enact to increase the community's resilience to climate change.

It identifies the goals and basis of planning a project, along with actions to be implemented, funding source, responsibility and schedules.

De Guzman underscored the importance of integrating climate adaptation into the disaster risk reduction and management policies and plans of every LGU, "especially because we live in one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change impacts."

"Our climate is warming at a faster

rate than ever recorded. We cannot afford to ignore climate change and the most recent warming patterns because these may just be a taste of what's to come," De Guzman said.

According to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), an agency under the United Nations, the earth is on track for its hottest year on record, with June marking the 14th straight month of record heat.

Citing two separate reports from the United States' National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the WMO said global temperatures

from January to June shattered yet more records.

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"These data provide a cast-iron case for policymakers, especially those in the local governments, to prepare for climate disasters before they strike," De Guzman said.

BusinessMirror

P.1

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST FOR PHILIPPINE EAGLE

Sinabadan ready to claim own territory

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA [@jonlmayuga](#)

SINABADAN was only seven months old when its father was shot and killed in 2014. After two years, covered with thick white-and-brown feathers, claws sharp and strong, with a completely grown feather tails and wings that span like most juveniles eagle, Sinabadan is now ready to leave her nest and explore the world on her own.

The story of Sinabadan offers a ray of hope for the conservation of her species, the Philippine Eagle.

Scientifically named *Pithecophaga jefferyi*, the Philippine Eagle is endemic to the Philippines. It is the rarest of all birds of prey and considered as the largest in the world.

The population of the Philippine Eagle, only about 400 pairs left in the wild, are concentrated in the main islands of Luzon and Mindanao, and in Samar and Leyte provinces in the Visayas.

Unfortunately, the Philippine Eagle, also called the monkey-eating eagle, is considered still critically endangered or in the brink of extinction, said Dennis Salvador, executive director of the Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF).

Single parent

SINABADAN, named after an indigenous people's group in Davao, is, perhaps, the first of her species ever to be raised by a single parent, PEF said. The group has documented Sinabadan's young life.

Sinabadan lost her father, Sibulan, to hunters in August 2014. A team from the PEF came looking for Sibulan and discovered the eagle's carcass.

Necropsy report on Sibulan revealed he died of a gunshot wound in the head, which killed him instantly. Since the demise of Sibulan, the unnamed mother of Sinabadan was forced to fend for the young eaglet on her own.

Senseless killing

MOST eagles killed by hunters are victims of senseless killing, Salvador said. Nearly half of the

total of 16 rescued eagles that were released into the wild were shot and killed after a few months upon their release, he noted.

"Many of those we rescued and released back into the wild were killed. The primary survival issue is human persecution," he added. He said the eagle's habitats, especially in Mindanao, have fragmented forest.

P.2

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Sinabadan ready to claim own territory

Healthy eagle

DESPITE being raised by a single parent, Sinabadan is healthy, said Ana Maria I. Lascano, field and attending veterinarian of the PEF.

In her report, Lascano said Sinabadan is "apparently bright, alert and responsive, with good appetite and in good state of health" before she was released on the same day upon examination.

The PEF closely monitored several eagles, including Sibulan, through a Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) transmitter, or tracking device, to determine the eagles' exact location and the areas they had been to. GPS transmitters help scientists study animal behavior in the wild by knowing where they go, how long they stay in a place, or where they spent the night or day to rest.

"It [Sinabadan] could have not survived had its mother decided to abandon it, which is commonly observed among the species," Jayson Ibanez of PEF's Research and Conservation Department said.

Healthy ecosystem

FORTUNATELY, he said, the mother and young female eagles' territory represents a healthy ecosystem.

"Timely, maybe, that the for-

est is abundant with local food source. The mother eagle had to work double time to bring food to Sinabadan to feed it," Ibanez said.

PEF's partners on the ground spotted the mother eagle bringing bats, flying lemurs, and, on one time, a monkey to her nest to feed Sinabadan.

It takes both the male and the female to incubate and take care of their young, taking turns during the incubation period and in finding food for their young until they are old enough to hunt on their own. Mother eagles do most of the work, but without the father eagle, incubation and nurturing would be impossible—except in the case of Sinabadan.

Unique breeding

THE Philippine Eagle's unique breeding habit makes the Philippine Eagle prone to extinction, Director Theresa Mundita Lim of the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said.

"Normally, when one of the parent eagles die, no matter how hard

the surviving parent works, the eaglet also dies. Even if it survives, the eaglet becomes malnourished and would not be able to survive on its own," Lim said.

She said an eagle needs to feed on protein-rich food, which both parent eagles should be able to provide to ensure the eaglet becomes strong and survive.

"Most carnivorous animals are dependent on their parents. Some birds take months to survive. The Philippine Eagle takes longer, and the eaglet needs to feed a lot to become strong and healthy," she said.

Survival of the fittest

IT will not be long when Sinabadan's mother would be ready to find a mate and, hopefully, breed again. The PEF received reports from community partners who also serve as forest guards that the mother was flying with another adult eagle.

The increased aerial displays, frequent stay near the nest and nest-building activity, mark the start of the courtship period for this rare species. Courtship among

Philippine Eagles, particularly in Mindanao, usually starts in July.

Soon, Sinabatan's mother and her new partner would be fixing their own nest, hauling nesting materials and would be ready to lay egg again.

Meanwhile, Sinabadan is starting to hunt farther and farther away from her nest. Eagles are territorial raptors. For a pair to survive, they have to defend their territories, which usually covers 7,000 to 13,000 hectares.

Ibanez said that, in some cases, when the ecosystem is very healthy and preys are abundant, 5,000 hectares would do.

Elimination of the weak

IBANEZ said it would take at least three more years before Sinabadan would be old enough to breed, if it is able to find a mate and, more important, survive in the wild.

The first few months after an eaglet leaves its nest are crucial. This is the time that the eagle has to find its own prey and feed or defend itself from other predators—including humans.

An eagle learns and enhances

01 AUG 2016

BusinessMirror

DATE

A12

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

P.3

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Sinabadan ready to claim own territory

its survival instinct during this period. Those that are not strong enough either die of hunger or fall prey to other predators, either animals or humans. Many young eagles have fallen prey to hunters.

PEF records reveal that most of the eagles it has rescued from captivity or injuries sustained from bullet wounds have died.

"Half of the 16 eagles we have rescued and released back into the wild have been killed after a few months," Salvador said.

Since 2000, the PEF has tagged a total of 17 eagles, but only four remain active.

These include Sinabadan and its mother, and two other eagles in Mount Kimangkil, Bukidnon, and in Pudtol, Apayao, Ibanez said.

Community support

ALSO crucial to Sinabadan's survival, like other Philippine Eagles, is the support of the communities and the enforcement of environmental laws, Salvador said.

In most cases, indigenous peoples (IPs) hunt down the eagles or are helping hunters find the eagle. In the case of Sinabadan, the communities were tapped as forest guards and protectors of the Philippine Eagle.

In 2010, as part of its effort to protect and conserve the species and their habitats, the PEF has partnered with IPs under its Indigenous Forest Guard Program.

A total of 647 indigenous forest guards from eight ethno-linguistic groups in 24 villages are currently actively protecting 18 Philippine eagle-nesting territories.

Altogether, the forest guards monitor wildlife and habitats, and help enforce laws in over 74,000 hectares of forest habitats, according to PEF. Information, education and communication and, more important, livelihood support to the communities is crucial to wildlife protection and conservation program, Salvador said.

He said the PEF is strengthening its partnership with IP communities as part of their social preparation for the inevitable influx of tourists—including bird watchers and photographers—who would soon be rushing for adventure once they learn of the eagle's location.

There is hope for the Philippine Eagle, Salvador said, as long as their habitats remain intact and the people keeps their distance, or better, stay away from wild animal's marked territories.

BusinessMirror

01 AUG 2016

DATE *A12*

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

P. 4

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Sinabadan ready to claim own territory



PHILIPPINE Eagle Sinabadan is now more than two years old and is ready to claim her own territory. JOHN MCKEAN