

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DATE : 06 AUG 2016

DAY : Saturday

DENR
IN THE NEWS

Lopez suspends Surigao nickel-mining firm

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

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez has suspended Claver Mineral Development Corp. (CMDC) in Surigao del Norte, after failing to meet environmental standards.

CMDC is operating under a Mineral Ore Transport Permit (MOTP), specifically to remove and transport raw nickel ore from its concession area in Claver, Surigao del Norte.

Lopez issued the suspension order during the Mindanao Environment Summit held at the Ateneo de Davao University (AddU) after promising to defend Mindanawans against destructive foreign and business interests.

According to Lopez, the audit team from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), CMDC failed to secure tree-cutting permit for its ore-removal operations. It also failed to provide siltation control facilities and drainage systems as recommended by the government.

Since assuming the top DENR post, Lopez had ordered to suspension of operations of at least four nickel-mining operations in Zambales and Palawan. She had also stopped hauling activities of a nickel-mining company on Manicani Island, Guiauan, Eastern Samar.

CMDC's hauling operations allegedly resulted to massive discoloration of run-offs and deposition

“ Hopefully, we will complete everything by the end of the month.

—JASARENO

of lateritic sediments in its area of operation.

To date, the company has completed at least three shipments of nickel ore totaling around 150,000 metric tons (MT), while another 114,000 MT tons of nickel ore remained.

CMDC was the second mining company operating through MOTP that was suspended by Lopez. Early this month, Lopez had ordered to stop the hauling activities of Hinatuan Mining Corp., a subsidiary of Nickel Asia Corp. on Manicani Island, in Guiauan, Eastern Samar.

The ongoing mining audit in Mindanao includes new criteria—environmental and social—of mining operations on top of the usual technical or physical aspect as the

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CONTINUATION: LOPEZ SUSPENDS SURIGAO NICKEL-MINING FIRM

DENR chief vowed to tighten the screw on mining.

Environment Undersecretary Leo Jasareno, who led the team conducting the mining audit covering all 40 operating metallic mines, the DENR audit will be completed by

the end of the month. He said the audit for the 65 nonmetallic mines would begin in September.

"Hopefully, we will complete everything by the end of the month. We are covering in our audit 40 mining firms: 23 are from Mindanao,

and then we will move on to the 65 nonmetallic firms for our auditing by September," he said.

The audit, Jasareno said, will be the basis of a decision whether the mining companies would be allowed to operate.

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DENR starts audit on 40 metal-mining firms

By **ANTONIO L. COLINA IV**

DAVAO CITY – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) started Thursday the audit of 40 metal-mining companies in the country that will be completed within the month.

In a media interview, Environment Undersecretary Leo Jasareno, head of the Mining Audit Team, said that the audit would cover a comprehensive study on the mining companies if these have been able to comply with both technical and social requirements.

He said the audit “will be the basis for the final judgment (on) how we would allow those mining operations.”

“Depending on the violations,

the DENR may suspend until the violations are rectified, or in a worse situation, the DENR might cancel the contracts,” he said.

Jasareno added that the DENR will also start next month an audit on 65 non-metallic mining companies.

DENR secretary Gina Lopez had earlier said that she was for the “rule of law and the common good” as she threatened to close down the mining companies that do not observe responsible mining practices.

“The audit is not just technical. The audit is also social kung may komunidad na nagdurusa, kung may nagkakasakit hindi pwede yan. We are testing the water, the agriculture, the fishing kung palpak sila dyan, they are not following the law,”

Lopez said.

Meanwhile, Stand Firm, a group of pro-responsible mining advocates, professional and students called for the implementation of more policies that would address irresponsible mining practices and, at the same, time prioritize Filipino interests towards the utilization of minerals and benefits gained through mining for sustainable development.

Stand Firm Deputy Head Aldous Pitogo said companies observing responsible mining practices have rehabilitation programs, respect human rights, and follow the standards as provided for in the Philippine Mining Act of 1995, also called “An act instituting a new system of mineral resources exploration, development, utilization, and conservation.”

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1995 Mining Act, isang pagtataksil sa bayan -- DENR

Inilarawan ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Gina Lopez na isang pagtataksil sa bayan ang nilalaman ng 1995 Philippine Mining Act na nagbukas ng 100 percent foreign ownership sa minahan sa Pilipinas.

Ayon kay Lopez, nakasaad sa Konstitusyon na pag-aari ng estado ang mga yamang mineral na matatagpuan sa bansa kaya pag-aari ito ng mga tao. Ngunit dahil sa batas na ito, halos libreng tinatangay ng mga dayuhang kumpanya ang mga mineral ng Pilipinas, kaya oras na para baguhin ito at ihanay sa interes ng mga Pilipino.

Kaugnay nito, papanagutin ng DENR ang sinumang kumpanya, indibidwal, kapamilya man o hindi sakaling lumabag ito sa batas ng kapaligiran.

Ito ang tiniyak ni Lopez matapos ireklamo ng mga residente sa Mt. Talinis ng Negros Oriental ang energy development corporation o EDC hinggil sa planong palawakin ang kanilang geothermal plant.
(Lhean Angeles)

Mining permits to be limited to save environment – Rody

The government intends to limit the issuance of mining permits to curb the destruction of the environment, President Duterte announced last Thursday.

At the Mindanao environment summit in Davao City, the President expressed concern the country may turn into a "wobbling island" if mining operations are not put in check.

"Sabihin mo legal and you issue permits, and it would number to thousands. Whether it is legal or not, it will destroy the country so there has to be a limit," the President said in the forum organized by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Duterte said the country's lands could only take so much damage from mineral operations even if they have legal permits.

"Maski na legal, we can only

hold so much. Ilang butas 'yan kung bigyan mo lahat na may pera makapag-apply. It would be a wobbling island," he said.

Also, the President said the government would run after mining companies violating the country's environmental laws. He said the mining industry has become a "sunset industry," a economic growth driver the country do without.

"We are still starting but we will go after mining na hindi sumusunod sa standard, the strictest," the President said.

"I'm telling them that the best practices sa mining industry can be found in Canada and Australia. If you cannot follow that standard, I'm sorry," he added.

Recently, the President cautioned mining firms to follow the country's laws or risk closure. Duterte said he was ready to forgo

the ₱40-billion annual mining revenues so these companies would no longer bring harm to the environment. **(Genalyn D. Kabiling)**

The Manila Times

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Court urged to suspend Pangasinan lawmaker

BY REINA TOLENTINO

THE prosecution has asked the Sandiganbayan's Sixth Division to order the suspension of newly elected Pangasinan 5th District Rep. Amado Espino Jr., pending litigation of graft cases filed against him and several others for allegedly authorizing two unqualified firms to extract black sand in the Lingayen Gulf area in 2011.

Espino, who is out on bail, was governor of Pangasinan at the time the alleged irregularity was committed.

In a three-page Motion to Suspend Accused Pendente Lite (pending litigation) filed on Friday, the prosecution invoked Section 13 of Republic Act 3019 or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, which provides that "[a]ny incumbent public officer against whom any criminal prosecution under a valid information under this act... is pending in court shall be suspended from office."

Espino was arraigned last month.

"Wherefore, premises considered, it is most respectfully prayed that this Honorable Court issue an order suspending accused Espino from discharge of public office pending trial of this case," the prosecution said.

In filing the two counts of graft against the former governor last March, the Office of the Ombudsman alleged that the respondents gave unwarranted benefit, privilege or advantage to Xypher Builders

Inc. and to Alexandra Mining and Oil Ventures Inc. and caused undue injury to the government.

The firms were allegedly authorized to conduct soil remediation and/or magnetite and mineral extraction activities within Barangay Sabangan in Lingayen Gulf, even if they were "not lawfully entitled to conduct mining activities within said protected area."

Based on the charge sheets, the two firms were allegedly not duly accredited by or registered with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board and the mining activities allegedly lacked the requisite area clearance from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Alexandra Mining and Oil Ventures Inc. also did not possess any business permit from the municipality of Lingayen, the Ombudsman alleged.

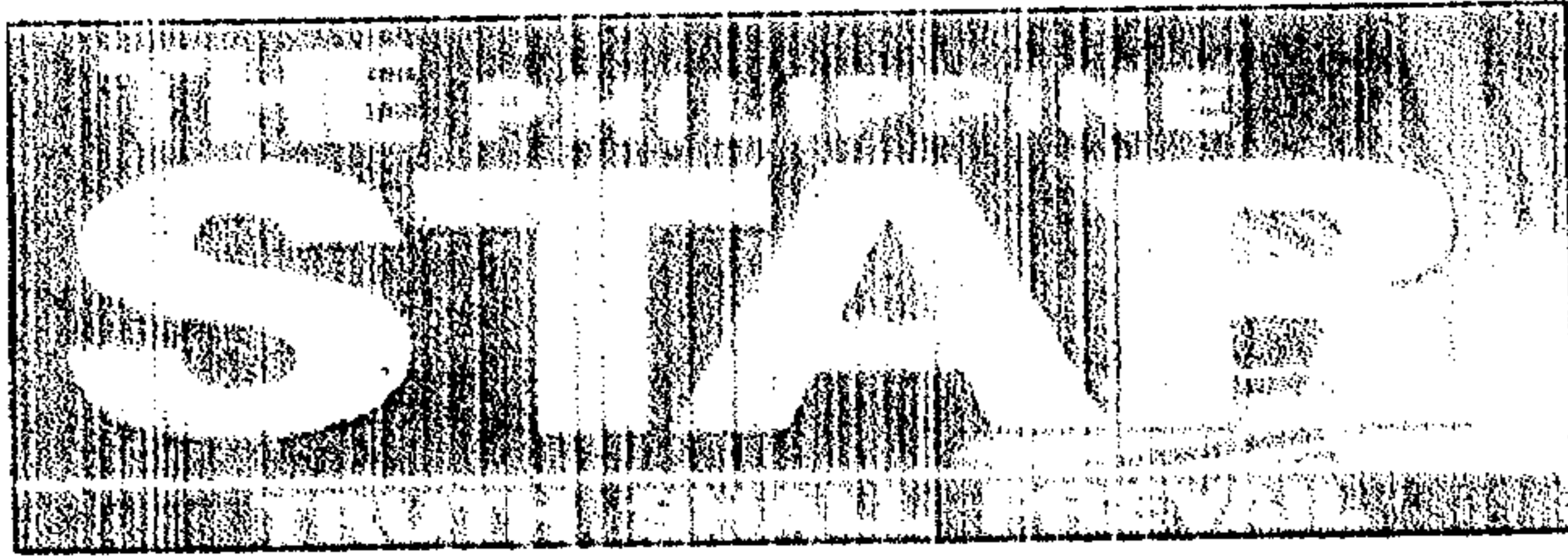
Named respondents in the first graft case were Espino, former provincial administrator Rafael Baraan, then-provincial housing and homesite



■ Rep. Amado Espino Jr.

regulation officer Alvin Bigay and ex-members of the board of directors of Xypher Builders Inc. Michael Ramirez, Gina Alcazar, Avery Pujol, Cynthia Camara and Lolita Bolayog.

In another graft charge, Espino and Baraan were named respondents along with former members of the board of directors of Alexandra Mining and Oil Ventures Inc. --Cesar Detera, Edwin Alcazar, Bolayog, Denise Sia Kho Po, Annlyn Detera, Camara, Glenn Subia and Emiliano Buenavista.



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Sandigan asked: Suspend Pangasinan lawmaker

Government lawyers have asked the Sandiganbayan to suspend former governor and now Pangasinan Rep. Amado Espino Jr. while undergoing trial for graft.

Espino and several other former provincial government officials were arraigned in June in connection with illegal black sand mining operations in the Lingayen Gulf in 2011.

In a motion filed before the anti-graft court's sixth division, ombudsman prosecutors said the law requires the preventive suspension of officials facing charges.

"Any incumbent public officer against whom any criminal prosecution under a valid information... for any offense involving fraud upon government or public funds or property whether as a simple or as complex offense and in whatever stage of execution and mode of participation, is pend-

ing in court shall be suspended from office," the motion stated.

60-day TRO

Meanwhile, Cagayan de Oro Mayor Oscar Moreno keeps his post after securing a 60-day temporary restraining order (TRO) from the Court of Appeals (CA) stopping his suspension.

The Office of the Ombudsman issued the suspension order in view of a complaint filed by Barangay Puntod chairman Marvin Beja.

Moreno was accused of releasing funds to lease a property as housing accommodation for amateur boxers without the approval of the city council.

In a three-page resolution, CA Justices Edgardo Camello, Oscar Badelles and Ronaldo Martin said the TRO was effective on Thursday.

— Michael Punongbayan,
Gerry Lee Gorit

The Manila Times

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'Vizcaya can survive without mining'

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya: Governor Carlos Padilla said the province can survive even without mining as he expressed deep concern over mining issues dividing the people during a briefing by an Audit Mining Team sent by Environment Secretary Regina Lopez.

"Between mining and agriculture, we chose thousands of years of agriculture than years of mining. Nueva Vizcaya will definitely survive without mining," Padilla pointed out.

The Mining Audit Team met with Padilla and local officials and representatives from anti-mining groups for a scheduled operations audit of OceanaGold Corporation for its Didipio Copper-Gold Project in Kasibu town.

Forester Nemesio Beronilia from the Forest Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) central office, led the audit team with DENR Region Director Wilfredo Malvar, representatives from Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) and Environmental Management Bu-

reau (EMB) from the Bicol Region.

During the briefing, Padilla cited former Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban saying he believes in responsible mining but unfortunately the apparatus and the infrastructure to ensure responsible mining are not yet in place.

"Therefore if the apparatus is not yet in place, then I am in the belief that at this stage we cannot say that there is responsible mining in the country," the governor said.

What the province wants, according to Padilla, is an assurance that "the environment is not affected and that our people are not disturbed."

He said from the time mining activities started in the province, bickering among Novo Vizcayanos also started, with fighting ensuing over confusing mining issues, thus, dividing the people.

Nueva Vizcaya, Padilla added, is progressing not because of mining but because the province is one of the major suppliers of rice and vegetables to the entire country.

"Our per capita income has increased

not because of mining but because of our robust agriculture. The province has not gained anything from mining as of this stage, therefore, it is better not to have any mines here," he said.

The governor cited a Department of Agriculture report citing Nueva Vizcaya as one of the top five outstanding rice-producing provinces along with Ilocos Norte, Occidental Mindoro, Davao del Norte and Davao Oriental.

The province is also a major watershed for major dams in Luzon, including Magat dam and Pantabangan dam 40 percent of whose water come from the province.

Aside from OceanaGold, the province is host to the British FCF Mining Corporations with its Runruno Gold-Molybdenum Project in the town of Quezon. Both mines are operating under their respective FTAA, OceanaGold being the first FTAA holder in the country.

Earlier this week, former MGB chief Leo Jasareno, now DENR undersecretary, also sent a team to investigate ongoing

expansion of OceanaGold under its five-year extension of its FTAA, opposed by residents and the anti-mining advocates.

Padilla has requested cancellation or suspension of the newly issued OceanaGold exploration permit granted by MGB valid from March 2016 to 2021 and that an exploration moratorium be declared pending amendments to mining policies.

Meanwhile, Mick Wilkes, managing director and chief executive officer of OceanaGold, said they will continue to support the government's advocacy of responsible mining.

President Rodrigo Duterte on Thursday called mining a "sunset industry" that "will destroy the country" during the State of Mindanao Environmental Summit in Ateneo de Davao University.

He reiterated his administration will go after mining companies that will not follow the strictest international standards.

Duterte said that even compliant mining companies are ultimately bad for the country. **LEANDER C. DOMINGO**



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Gov't mining revenues further decline in May

By PRINZ MAGTULIS

Mining revenues of the government suffered a fifth straight month of decline last May.

Excise taxes from mining and mineral products dropped 12.44 percent to P96.15 million in May, data from the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) showed.

That was the slowest decrease recorded in the first five months of the year that saw revenues plummet 33.6 percent in April, 30.08 percent in March, 42.8 percent in

February and 39.58 percent in January.

Industry analysts said the decline could accelerate further after seven mining operations have been suspended since the new government took over last June 30.

"You definitely can see further slowdown down the road," said Emmanuel Lopez, economics department chair at the University of Santo Tomas.

"More or less, what you are seeing now in the industry – the declining shares of stocks and resignation of Bobby Ongpin – will reflect on government revenues," he said in a phone interview.

Businessman Roberto Ongpin resigned as chairman of PhilWeb Corp. last Thursday after being singled out by President Duterte during his speech lambasting "oligarchs."

Ongpin was separately fined P174 million and barred from listed firms by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) related to an insider trading case involving Phillex Mining Corp. in 2009.

The Court of Appeals, however, stopped SEC from enforcing its decision upon Ongpin's appeal. SEC said it would ask for a reconsideration.

Turn to B-4

Gov't mining... From B-1

Lopez said the drop in mining revenue could even turn for the worse, should more mining firms get suspended by Environment Secretary Gina Lopez, a staunch anti-mining advocate.

This, even as Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez said earlier the government is not against all forms of mining, but only those that does damage to the environment.

"Mining's share in revenues is very small. It's very very minimal and not significant," Lopez

said. "Whatever we will lose from it, we could easily recover from other sources," he added.

Last year, excise revenues from mining totaled P2.08 billion, the lowest since 2011, BIR data showed. As of May, revenues went down by more than a quarter to P668.83 million.

BIR, the government's main revenue agency, accounts for 80 percent of state revenues.

As of June, it increased its collections by 11 percent to P783.4 billion, data showed.

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MGB forms more allies to help fight illegal mining

By **MADELAINE B. MIRAFLOR**

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), who has now a new leadership under presidential appointee Mario Luis Jacinto, has formed and strengthened its allies from various government agencies to intensify its fight against illegal mining.

MGB conducted separate briefings this week on matters involving illegal mining among members of the Regional Intelligence Committee – National Capital Region (RIC-NCR) of the National Coordinating Authority and the National Intelligence and Security Force (NISF) of the Philippine Navy.

"These are in response to the growing concerns not only on national security but also on environmental protection," MGB said in a statement.

Basic information on black sand mining and the results of the operations against illegal mining were among the

highlights discussed during the briefings.

Emphasis was given on the importance of having collective efforts with various entities, such as non-government organizations, to successfully eradicate illegal mining operations.

At the end of the briefings, the RIC-NCR and NISF Commanding Officers both committed their support to the MGB's fight against anti-illegal mining operations.

They also expressed willingness to render assistance, should the need for their expertise and service arise.

"Let us do things right. Let us be true to our oath of office and let us serve the people," Jacinto, the new MGB director, then said.

Jacinto, during his first week in the office, reminded MGB employees of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte's directive that mining in the country should be done in a responsible manner and should be based on existing laws, rules

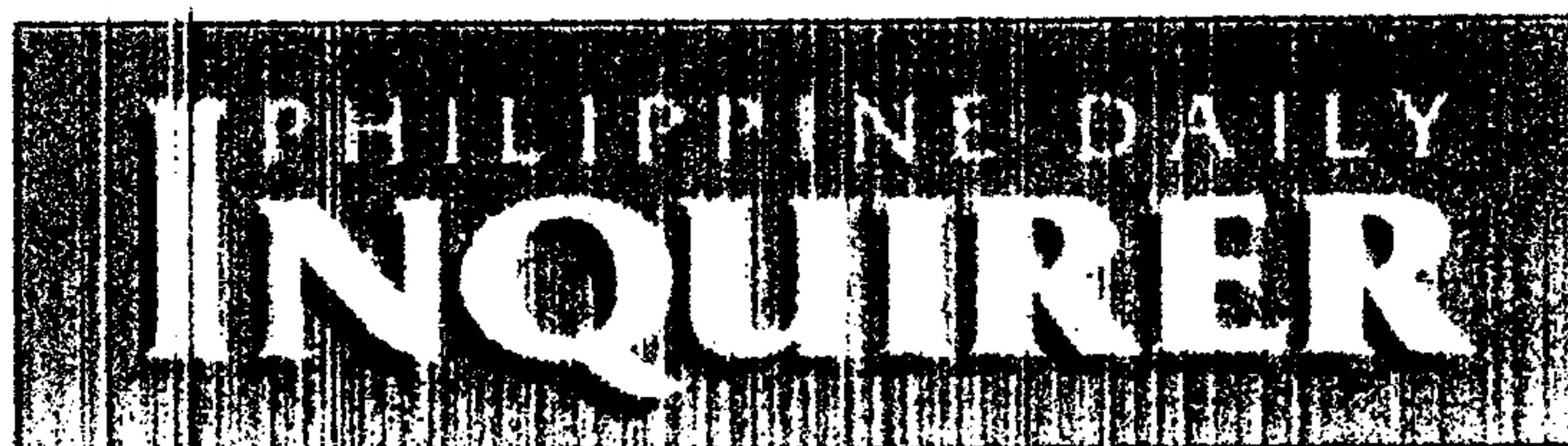
and regulations.

He added that mining can only be responsible if the development of the country's mineral resources will be on the basis of technical feasibility, environmental sustainability, social acceptability, and financial viability. The absence of one will not render the project responsible.

Jacinto is a licensed Geologist and started with the MGB in August 1977. He was assigned to the Mindanao area where he later served as Senior Geologist, MGB Regional Technical Director (1987-1990), and DENR Regional Executive Director (1990-1992). He resigned from the government service in 1992 to join the private sector in various capacities.

From 2001 to 2010, Jacinto served full-time as City Planning and Development Coordinator in Davao City under then Mayor Rodrigo Roa Duterte.

He also served as consultant to several mining projects in the country.



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Ex-gov: No truth to reclamation yarn

IBA, Zambales—Figments of the imagination.

This was how former Zambales Gov. Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. on Wednesday branded reports that China had been using soil and boulders extracted from Zambales mountains for its reclamation projects in the disputed West Philippine Sea.

Ebdane's successor, Gov. Amor Deloso, had informed Environment Secretary Gina Lopez that massive boulders and mountain soil from several Zambales towns were hauled to sea to form part of a 3,500-hectare Chinese reclamation area that is supposedly rising near the Scarborough Shoal.

The report has reached President Duterte, who ordered an investigation.

"There's no use [for] such [a] foolish investigation. These [mountains] are owned by the government. These are not alienable and disposable. Nothing was sold to China," Ebdane said.

He was referring to mining sites in Sta. Cruz town where several companies were extracting nickel ore.

Ebdane said soil extraction from the mountains was allowed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, which issued hauling permits to trucks that transported mountain soil from the mine sites.

Ebdane, who served as public works secretary during the administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, also said he believed there were no reclamation activities by China near the Scarborough Shoal.

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Ebdane debunks claims Zambales soil sold to Chinese

IBA, Zambales: Former Zambales governor Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. has belied claims by incumbent governor Amor Deloso that he sold the mountain soil of the province to the Chinese that is allegedly used in the reclamation of the disputed Scarborough Shoal.

Ebdane said the allegations were a figment of Deloso's imaginations.

He was blamed for the leveling of at least two and a half mountains in the province.

Deloso earlier claimed that truckloads of Zambales soil were hauled out of the province, after the area was sold to the Chinese by Ebdane.

He was even quoted in a report published in a newspaper (not The Manila Times) claiming that the Chinese military was occupying a 500-hectare mountain area in Santa Cruz town in Zambales where a Chinese missile is supposedly stationed.

Deloso, however, clarified this in an interview with *The Manila Times*, saying "This Chinese

military is based at an airport built by China at the reclaimed area near Scarborough Shoal, which was built out of the mountain soil of Santa Cruz."

The Philippines also calls the shoal Panatag.

When asked by the media on Wednesday if he can prove his claim, Deloso said, "It's up to the authorities to prove it."

Ebdane said it was the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) that in 2004 gave permits to mining firms to explore and extract minerals from the mountains of Zambales.

"Historical records indicate that the DENR issued Mineral Production Sharing Agreements (MPSAs) to these mining firms and mining explorations happened after that," the former governor added.

He said actual mining happened in 2007 and it was at its peak in Zambales in 2008.

"Who was the governor from 2007 to 2010? It's Deloso," Ebdane pointed out.

Ebdane, a former chief of the Philippine Na-

tional Police, national security adviser, secretary of the Department of National Defense (DND) and secretary of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) under the Arroyo administration, won the provincial top post during the 2010 elections and was reelected again in 2013 but lost to Deloso in the May 2016 elections.

He said nobody can sell the mountains because they are government property and no people in the government can initiate transfer of property.

Ebdane also debunked Deloso's claim that the Zambales mountain soil was taken to Bajo de Masinloc (another name for Scarborough Shoal), describing it as unbelievable. He said its composition is not suitable for reclamation and nickel ore is an expensive mineral.

Current Environment Secretary Regina Lopez has ordered an investigation of the alleged use of mountain soil from Zambales for reclamation work in the Scarborough Shoal. **PATRICK ROXAS**

The Standard

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OceanaGold cites mining's contribution to community

MINING is more than digging and extracting minerals from the bowels of the earth, as it helps improve lives of the people and the community where it labors and interacts.

This was pointed out by mining industry leaders as they called for a greater understanding and circumspection in addressing the issue of mining.

OceanaGold Corp. senior vice president for communications and public affairs Ramoncito Gozar said the company had 1,875 employees, of whom 97 percent were local residents at its mine site in Didipio, Nueva Vizcaya.

These workers and their families, who had no steady work and regular income before, are now in possession of increased purchasing power which benefits not only themselves but local shops of mom-and-pop variety and larger business establishments, he said.

Gozar said OceanaGold invested P6.5 million in site skills training for employees before putting them to work in areas requiring diverse competency such as underground work using UG simulator, heavy equipment fitting,

electro-technology, basic computer knowledge, light vehicle operation and emergency response knowhow.

"Training and acquiring new skills have imbued locals with greater confidence in facing challenges in today's environment and gung-ho spirit in accepting bigger responsibility, attitudes not easily discerned, if at all, prior to the operation of OceanaGold in the area" Gozar said.

"Counting with human resources development the infrastructure projects such as roads and school facilities that OceanaGold either built or upgraded and continuously maintains benefitting its host community and neighboring towns, it can be truly said that OceanaGold is a game changer—one mining outfit that has brought significant changes in the economy, outlook and quality of life to people and community in which it lives and works," Gozar said.

Gozar cited OceanaGold's strict adherence to the highest and exacting mining standards observed in Australia as key to its seamless and satisfactory-result-producing operation.



MSME SUPPORT. Trade Secretary Ramon Lopez (right) chats with Vice President Leni Robredo during the 47th National Marketing Conference in Pasay City. Lopez urged participating CEOs to support micro, small and medium enterprises by adopting the inclusive business model by involving communities as partner in mainstream business and allowing them to become part of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations production network and supply chain.



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Sunod na target: May-ari ng fish cages sa Laguna de Bay

Sunod na target ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte ang mga makapangyarihang nagmamay-ari ng fish cages sa Laguna de Bay.

Ipinag-utos ng Pangulo ang pagwasak sa mga pribadong fish pen, kung saan ang mga mahihirap na mangingisda umano ang dapat na makinabang sa Laguna de Bay, hindi ang mga mayayamang police general, military general, mayor, governor at mga hustler.

"I'm sure, one time or another. Kita mo maglipad ka diyan sa Laguna de Bay. Laguna de Bay puro triangle na fish pens. Ang makita mong open spaces are the distances between one fence to the other," ayon sa Pangulo.

"I told them dismantle all of those things and give back Laguna de Bay

to the poor fishermen of the country," dagdag pa nito.

Ang Laguna lake ay nagsu-supply ng halos kalahati sa konsumo ng Metro Manila, ngunit lumiit pa ang supply ng isda dahil sa dami ng fish cages doon.

Ang pagwasak sa fish pens ay hiniling na ni Lipa Archbishop Ramon Arguelles sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Ikinatwiran nito na ang feeds ay nakalalason sa "rightful inhabitants".

"The chemicals in the fish feeds destroy the lake water and the indigenous marine life," ayon sa Arsobispo, kung saan kapag wala umanong pag-abuso sa Laguna lake, masisiguro ang supply ng isda sa Metro Manila.

Leslie Aquino
at Genalyn Kabling

Fish cages clogging Laguna Lake up next

By GENALYN D. KABILING

Rich and powerful owners of fish cages clogging Laguna de Bay are next on the target list of President Duterte.

The President has ordered the dismantling of the vast tracts of private fish pens in the Laguna de Bay, saying the poor fishermen must be given priority in the use of the lake.

Duterte, in a speech during Mindanao environment summit in Davao City last Thursday, said small fishermen have been deprived of livelihood and gone hungry since the lake has been inundated by fish cages owned by "police general, military general,

mayor, governor, and hustlers."

"I'm sure, one time or another. Kita mo maglipad ka diyan sa Laguna de Bay. Laguna de Bay puro triangle na fish pens. Ang makita mong open spaces are the distances between one fence to the other," the President said. "I told them dismantle all of those things and give back Laguna de Bay to the poor fishermen of the country," he added.

The Laguna Lake, the largest inland body of water in the country, supplies nearly half of fish supply in Metro Manila but the stock has been reduced due to many fish cages.

In seeking the sustainable use of the Laguna Lake, Duterte also

vowed to protect the interest of the poor over the rich. "Wherever there is inequality, it will be resolved in favor of the poor as against the rich," he said.

"Kasi ang mga rich, may pera 'yan, putulin mo isang negosyo, marami pa sa bangko. It is inexhaustible, hindi nauubos. Pero ang tao, pag walang medisina, walang pera, patay," he added.

In his State-of-the-Nation Address last month, the President announced plans to convert the Laguna de Bay into a vibrant eco-tourism zone. Duterte said his government intends to address the negative impact of the watershed reduction, land conversion, and pollution in Laguna Lake.

The Manila Times

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Govt crafts fisheries plan for Laguna Bay

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) is now crafting a program to ease any possible impact on fish supply and prices in Metro Manila as a result of the dismantling of fish pens in Laguna de Bay.

In a statement, Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol said that the DA and its line agency, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), will be actively involved in the dismantling effort.

Piñol said that 36 percent of Metro Manila's fish supply comes from the fish pens of Laguna de Bay.

"The DA-BFAR must come up with a backup plan to ensure that during the period of the dismantling of the fish pens, sources of fish from other parts of the country—especially bangus (milkfish) and tilapia—would be able to fill the requirements of Metro Manila consumers," Piñol said.

President Rodrigo Duterte had earlier ordered the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the DA to restore Laguna de Bay to its pristine state as in the days of national hero Jose Rizal.

"The 911-square kilometer lake, the biggest in the country and which Rizal mentioned extensively in his writings, is now a virtual maze of fish pens, which effectively choke the small fishermen," Piñol said.

"The fish pens are owned by big politicians—governors and

mayors—and police and army generals. All that is left for the small fishermen are the spaces in between the fish pens," he said.

Piñol said that the Laguna de Bay fisheries program will be designed to ensure that those currently involved in fish pen operations will have an option on how to continue their business without crowding the lake with fish pens, while the small fishermen will be given the opportunity to also enjoy the bounties of a rehabilitated Laguna de Bay.

Duterte envisions Laguna de Bay as a vibrant economic zone. He wants it to showcase ecotourism by addressing the negative impact of watershed destruction, land conversion and pollution.

Environment Secretary Regina Paz Lopez plans to implement a massive reforestation program around Laguna de Bay and make sure that the lake no longer becomes the "septic tank" of the communities around it and the dumping pit of industrial wastes of companies located at the periphery of the lake.

Lopez said municipalities around the lake would be required to put up water treatment facilities so that the wastewater from the communities would be treated and cleaned before being released into the lake.

JAMES KONSTANTIN GALVEZ

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

P500 M needed to jumpstart Laguna Lake ecotourism zone

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

Approximately half a billion pesos will be needed next year to jumpstart the conversion of Laguna Lake, the country's largest body of freshwater, into an ecotourism zone as part of the administration's plan to prioritize small fisherfolks in the area.

In an interview with The STAR, Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) general manager Neric Acosta said around P500 million would be ideal to start Environment Secretary Gina Lopez's conversion masterplan.

"If we want to make it in real time, then allot billions. But we should do this one step at a time

and not haphazardly. We will do everything we can for that," he said.

Lopez earlier ordered the destruction of large fish pens allegedly owned by large corporations occupying the area.

"We are going a step further, we're gonna convert the whole Laguna Lake into a magnificent ecotourism zone," Lopez said.

But Acosta emphasized converting the whole 911-square kilometer lake would transcend even after the Duterte administration.

"Ecotourism, including organic farming, are doable in the east side. But the rest of the

area would take more than one presidency," he said.

Acosta said the conversion would require additional manpower as it is not only about building an ecotourism site alone, but would require waste water treatment, pollution control, and land treatment among others.

"It's a good thing that the President and the Secretary are prioritizing the lake. And several private sectors have also expressed their interest to participate [in the conversion]," he added.

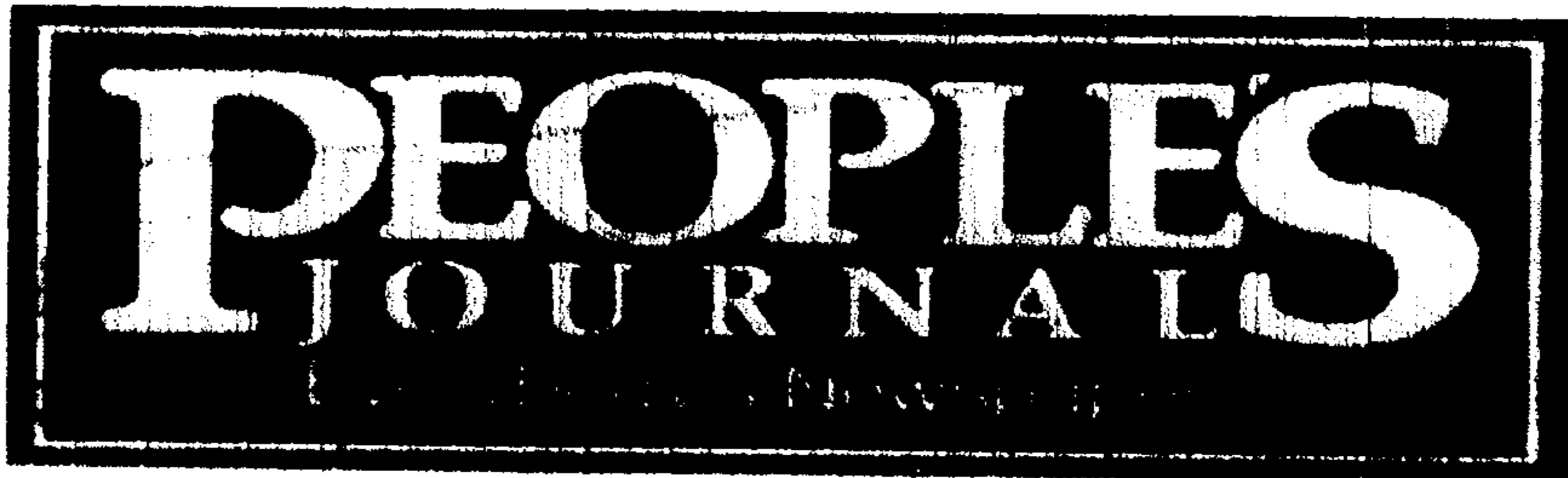
The LLDA is already looking into 10 pilot areas in the East Zone

in cooperation with the Departments of Tourism and Trade and Industry, Office of the President and local government units.

Meanwhile, the dismantling of fishpens and the eventual conversion of the lake into an ecotourism area is feared to have an adverse effect on the supply and price of fish in the metro.

Laguna Lake fishpens are the source of close to 40 percent of the fish requirements of Metro Manila.

In line with this, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) of the Department of Agriculture is set to come up with a back-up plan to ensure demand of consumers will be filled up.



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

EDITORIAL

Unshackling natural wealth

AT least this chunk of the national wealth the poor can have equal access to.

No longer would the rich have a disproportionate share of an otherwise free or available natural resources.

Equal access to these resources is the essence of socio-economic justice.

And President Duterte is determined, resolute, unwavering in his commitment to make this happen under his watch.

The President assured to unshackle the oligarchs' hold on natural wealth nationwide so present and future generations of ordinary Filipinos can increasingly access and benefit from this resource as well.

"It's time to reconfigure wealth of the nation among our citizens," he said Thursday at the environmental summit in Mindanao.

He noted such reconfiguration was necessary since at present, only the moneyed few are mainly benefiting from extraction of minerals and other natural wealth in the country.

Environmental destruction arising from such extractive activities continue jeopardizing ordinary Filipinos' prospects for a brighter future, however, he pointed out.

"Wherever there's inequality, it'll be resolved in favor of the poor," he assured.

During the summit, Duterte reiterated the need to decongest Laguna de Bay - the lake already reeling from proliferation of aquaculture facilities allegedly owned by big-time operators - so small fisherfolk can increasingly fish there to earn.

"Give back that lake to poor fisherfolk there," he told authorities concerned.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources spearheaded the summit to provide a venue where stakeholders concerned can discuss possible solutions to Mindanao's most pressing environmental problems.

"The most important thing is everything will be interactive and will allow all stakeholders to foster a closer working relationship - this is also a step for DENR in embarking towards being more than regulatory but an activator of change," environment chief Gina Lopez said earlier.

In his maiden State-of-the-Nation Address last month, President Duterte announced his administration's plan to transform Laguna de Bay into an economic zone that'll showcase ecotourism.

He noted his administration plans achieving this target by addressing negative impacts of watershed destruction, land conversion and pollution around Laguna de Bay.

Laguna de Bay's impoverished fisherfolk would have priority in entitlements there, he said.

President Duterte also ordered DENR to review all permits granted for mining, logging and other environmentally sensitive activities to ensure compliance with government standard.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



EDITORIAL

Balancing act

Climate experts have identified the Philippines as one of the countries most vulnerable to global warming. Blessed with rich biodiversity, many of the country's indigenous species have become threatened or endangered because of the destruction of their natural habitats and other human activities.

Bodies of water are dying from pollution, and large fish pens are upsetting fragile aquatic ecosystems. Environmental destruction has led to freak cataclysmic floods and massive mudslides that have killed thousands in recent years. In Metro Manila and other urban centers, polluted air has led to health problems requiring costly treatment.

So putting an environmental warrior in charge of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources raises hopes that what's left of the nation's natural riches may still be preserved for future generations. Gina Lopez has been one of the controversial choices of President Duterte for his Cabinet. But he has strongly defended his choice, and warned that despoilers of the environment face the toughest sanctions.

Miners are particularly under fire, with the President promising to turn mining and logging into "sunset industries." As in criminality, however, you can't solve environmental problems by killing everyone – even figuratively in this case – who crosses the path of the environment police.

The extractive industries developed

out of necessity. Human beings have used forest products and processed minerals dug with much effort from the earth to build shelters and communities, create means of transportation and communication and even produce great works of art. Anything that has a wooden or metal component benefits from the extractive industries.

Stopping these extractive activities means the country will have to import many raw materials needed for industries, public works, and property development including mass housing. Higher production costs are always passed on to the end user; the impact will be felt across all income levels.

Instead of killing extractive industries, they should be tightly regulated. The buzzwords should be sustainability and responsible practices. Even clean and green New Zealand engages in forestry for both domestic consumption and export, planting vast areas to fast-growing trees whose woods are suitable for various purposes. After harvesting, the trees are quickly replaced.

Mines are never pretty, but once the operations are over, responsible companies have shown that the environment can be restored, with new soil allowing for the areas to be turned into fertile farmlands and even forests. In the Philippines, areas allotted for mining can be drastically limited. Crafting environmental policies calls for a delicate balance of conflicting interests.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS



PAGING DENR SEC LOPEZ...

gud lam po, concern citizen lang po, sana masilip din ni Sec. Gina Lopez itong Lazi Bay resources devt inc na pag-aari ng isang chinese. Sila po nagmimina at nagko quarry ng mga lime stone sa lugar po ng Simacolong, Sequijor, binibili nila ito sa piso per cubic ang nasabing lime stone sa lugar ang dahilan para masira ang mga kabundukan doon, umaasa po kami na mabibigyan po ito ng aksiyon. Marami pong salamat

Kung kayo po ay may suliranin o puna sa maling gawain ng ilan nating mga government officials o anumang reaksiyon lalo na sa mga nababatikos ng ARYA ay bukas po ang espasyo para sa inyong mga nais ipaabot., mag-email lamang po sa aryakolum@yahoo.com o magtex sa 09334089090.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Decoding Duterte

IT IS not easy to reconcile seeming discrepancies among statements made by President Rodolfo Duterte (PRRD) and between what he says and what he does. But the task should not take the skills required to read tea leaves or chicken entrails. Five weeks after he assumed office, we begin to get a sense of the presidential style.

First, prepared scripts do not sit well with PRRD, as demonstrated not only by his casual treatment of the State of the Nation Address prompter, but also by his undisguised surprise at portions of his text. After reading the plan to accelerate commuter train speed from 40 to 60 kilometers per hour, he commented: *"Huwag kayong maniwala dito"* (Don't believe this). He then talked about the risk of raising speed limits with dilapidated train tracks.

He softened this warning by addressing Transportation Secretary Arturo Tugade: *"Art, ambisyoso ka, ah. Kaya mo kaya ito?"* (Art, you are ambitious. Can you really do this?). The possibility of being publicly disavowed may make PRRD's executives more modest in their claims. It may also lead the public to wonder which of the prepared texts issued under his name PRRD takes seriously.

Second, the remarks probably reflect PRRD's limited time and patience with protracted planning processes. Management consultants would prescribe a system for approving speeches or, for instance, critical personnel appointments. The latter would involve several steps, including preparing a short list of candidates and the metrics to evaluate each one's fitness for the job. This was not the process PRRD described in appointing Environment Secretary Gina Lopez. //

PRRD acts decisively, guided by a quick read on people and a gut feel sharpened by personal experience. In the Lopez case, he explained his judgment: "I would not be appointing somebody who is alien to my thinking. I would take in somebody who shares my horizons in life."

This spontaneity can become problematic, as

BUSINESS MATTERS

Edilberto C. de Jesus



in the reported offer of the Commission on Higher Education chairmanship to Jose David Lapuz, PRRD's former professor at Lyceum. The post was not vacant, as the fixed term of the current chair, Patricia Licuanan, had not expired. Lapuz apparently also lacked the earned doctorate required for this position.

PRRD's experience, his "horizons," came mainly from 23 years as a mayor. Election as a local government executive brought him closer to his constituency and, perhaps, reinforced the tendency toward action more than analysis and the emphasis on service delivery. In the Sona, he pushed for facilitating the processes of obtaining driver's licenses, passports, business permits, even train tickets.

These were low-hanging fruit, perhaps, but these addressed issues that directly touched the majority of people who lack the money or the connections to ease the oppressive irritants of daily life. He understood, and empathized with, the plight of those who have to camp on city streets overnight to secure a place in the queue: "I do not want to see people lining up under the heat of the sun. I do not want people lining up under the rain."

While sensitive to the concerns of the marginalized, PRRD's passionate crusade against the drug trade leads to some dissonance. Addressing the issue of the communist insurgency, he waxed emotional, speaking of feeling the pain and grief of the widows and orphans left behind by slain government soldiers and rebels. But he has no sympathy to waste on those widowed

and orphaned by the action of police or vigilante groups. Surely, whatever the circumstances of their loss, those widows and orphans also feel pain and grief. His dismissal as "drama-drama" of the Pieta-like photograph of the grieving woman cradling her dead, alleged drug-pusher partner, which the New York Times reprinted, thus appears uncharacteristically callous.

Many rely on PRRD's assurance that his "adherence to due process and the rule of law is uncompromising." Not "belief," not "commitment," but "adherence," which is validated in action. He has already proven that he can deal death to drug dealers. He still has to demonstrate that he can act as decisively in punishing those who practice extrajudicial executions in violation of the rule of law.

A third point has become obvious: PRRD is not afraid to change his mind. After initially finding reasons for their actions, he has come around to characterize the Abu Sayyaf as terrorists and criminals. He has agreed that a basic law for Bangsamoro autonomy should not have to wait for a federal system. He switched from supporting a constitutional commission to a constitutional assembly as the mechanism for political change. This willingness to change course gives hope to those who believe in a legal basis for denying Ferdinand Marcos burial in the Libingan ng mga Bayani.

The President's presumed "transparency" has rightly drawn much favorable comment. We just need to remember that "transparent" does not necessarily mean "consistent," much less "predictable." We still need to understand what role messengers or messages play in persuading PRRD to change his mind.

Edilberto C. de Jesus (edcdejesus@gmail.com) is professor emeritus at the Asian Institute of Management. Prof. Rofel Brion's Tagalog translation of this column and others earlier published, together with other commentaries, are in <http://secondthoughts.ph>.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Philippines is losing billions because of Pasig River



Jemain Tinio Diaz de Rivera

FORWARD MOVING

IN the late 1990s Regina Paz L. Lopez was a speaker at the second Hitachi Young Leaders Initiative where she spoke on corporate social responsibility, and how ABS-CBN Foundation was helping make a difference in communities. She later not only headed the foundation's Bantay Kalikasan projects, but was on top of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission. Recently appointed by President Duterte as secretary of environment, it would be exciting to see what her plans are for the Pasig River.

Pasig River is not a cost center but can be a source of profit for the country, or specifically Metro Manila, just as the Chicago River provides income to the city of Chicago and its citizens. The Chicago River is a body of water that flows backward, a pioneering, massive public works effort that saved the Chicago region from waterborne diseases caused by sewage contamination of its drinking water supply—Lake Michigan. Years ago the contaminated sewers caused typhoid, cholera and dysentery epidemics, killing an estimated 12 percent of Chicago's 750,000 residents and raised a public outcry to find a permanent solution to the water-supply and sewage-disposal crisis.

The Chicago River rehabilitation initiative began in the 1800s. Once a corridor of commercial activity, the river has been transformed into a recreational area with sightseeing boats and kayaks. Along the banks are pedestrian-friendly promenades lined with cafés and eateries, servicing thousands daily. There are 45 movable bridges that span the river, many of them well-known and quite picturesque. Many of Chicago's greatest buildings border the Chicago river, making the river ideal for architectural boat tours.

The Pasig River connects Laguna de Bay to Manila Bay. Stretching for 25 kilometers, or 15.5 miles, it bisects Manila and its surrounding urban areas into northern and southern halves. It is technically a tidal estuary, as the flow direction depends upon the water-level difference between Manila Bay and Laguna de Bay. The river used to be an important transport route and source of water for Spanish Manila. Due to negligence and industrial development, the river is polluted and considered dead by some ecologists. The PRRC was established to oversee rehabilitation efforts for the river with the support of private-sector organizations.

The growth of Manila along the banks of the Pasig River has made it a focal point for development and historical events. The foremost landmark on the banks of the river is the walled district of Intramuros, located near the mouth of the river on its southern banks. It was built by the Spanish colonial government

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

CONTINUATION: PHIL IS LOSING
BILLIONS...

in the 16th century. Further upstream is the Hospicio de San Jose, an orphanage on Pasig's sole island, the Isla de Convalecencia. On the northern bank stands Malacañan Palace, the official residence of the president of the Philippines. Also on Pasig River's northern bank and within the Manila district of Santa Mesa is the main campus of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines.

In Makati City, along the southern bank of Pasig, is the Circuit Makati and the Rockwell Commercial Center, a high-end office and commercial area containing the Power Plant Mall. At the confluence of the Pasig and Marikina Rivers is the Napindan Hydraulic Control Structure, which regulates the flow of water from the Napindan Channel.

The Kapit-Bisig Para sa Ilog Pasig (KBPIP) project has not only rehabilitated the river, but also spurred changes well beyond its banks. Of the 47 tributaries of the Pasig River, 17 have already been rehabilitated. Transforming the remaining 30 by 2019 would be doable with the support of the Duterte administration.

Transforming the Pasig River, from a dead river into one that is safe and beneficial for all, will take a few more years, but it is only possible under the leadership of the national government and the strong support of the local governments that surround the river.

The PRRC is an attached agency of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Its task is to rehabilitate the heavily polluted Pasig River into a body of water suitable for transport, recreation and tourism. It is a mammoth job because it is so multifaceted, which entails resettlement, solid-waste management and working together with stakeholders. There is a concerted effort in working with the concerned local government units, government agencies, private sector, non-governmental organizations and the general public all attempting to address the problem by mitigating river pollution at the source.

There must be sustainable development for Pasig River and the 19 bridges that cross it. It is important to conserve the river and protect the environment as an essential part of the cities it passes through, creating a profit center.

Duterte bans logging, cites adverse impact

In line with his plan to protect the country's environment, President Duterte has ordered a cessation of logging operations in the country.

At the Mindanao environment summit in Davao City, the President said he would no longer allow the cutting of trees in the country due to its adverse impact on the country's environment.

"Logging, lumber wala na talaga. It's not sunset, it's not

even sunset time. It's already too late. Kung 'ika nga, if there are 24 hours one day, logging is it's on 25th hour. Tapos na 'yun," the President said in his remarks.

"We cannot cut trees anymore. Yan ang tatrabahuhin sa six years," he added.

Duterte said he expects strong opposition from many powerful people affected by environmental crusade but he would not be intimidated.

"Many will get mad. Many will get angry. Many would like to maintain the status quo. Kung nandyan na sila, they will power, maybe elective officials appointed, they would hang on to that," he said.

"Kaya dahan-dahan kong sisirain 'yan and open all opportunities to all Filipinos, a respected tribe, race, religion," he added. **(Genalyn D. Kabiling)**

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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1900
MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

President orders stop to logging to protect country's environment

President Duterte yesterday ordered a cessation of logging operations in the country, to protect, he said, the country's environment.

Speaking at the Mindanao environment summit organized by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Davao City, the President said he would no longer allow the cutting of trees in the country.

"Logging, lumber wala na talaga.

It's not sunset, it's not even sunset time. It's already too late. Kung 'ika nga, if there are 24 hours in one day, logging is on its 25th hour. Tapos na 'yun," the President said.

"We cannot cut trees anymore. Yan ang tatrabahuhin sa six years," he added.

Duterte said he expects strong opposition from many powerful people affected by his environmental crusade but he will not be intimidated.

"Many will get mad. Many will get angry. Many would like to maintain the status quo.... they would hang on to that," he said. "Kaya dahan-dahan kong sisirain 'yan and open all opportunities to all Filipinos."

The President expressed his resolve to protect the environment for the sake of the next generation.

Apart from logging operations, Duterte also spoke strong words against mining industry. He said

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President orders stop...

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mining is destroying the country even if the operations have legal permits.

The President also said he intends to limit the issuance of mining permits to curb the destruction of the environment.

"Sabihin mo legal and you issue permits, and it would number in the thousands. Whether it is legal or not, it will destroy the country so there has to be a limit," he said.

He added that the government will run after mining companies violating the country's environmental laws. The

mining industry, he said, has become a "sunset industry," an economic growth driver the country can do without.

"I'm telling them that the best practices sa mining industry can be found in Canada and Australia. If you cannot follow that standard, I'm sorry," he added.

The President recently cautioned mining firms to follow the country's laws or risk closure. He said he was ready to forego the ₱40-billion annual mining revenues so these companies will no longer bring harm to the environment. (Genalyn D. Kabiling)

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Tree planting ng KBP-Nueva Ecija chapter

Nakatakdang itanim sa araw na ito sa Palayan City ang mahigit 4,000 narra at mahogany seedlings ng mga kasapi ng Kapisanan ng mga Broadcaster ng Pilipinas (KBP)-Nueva Ecija chapter bilang bahagi ng KBP-OPLAN Broadcastreeing 2016 na idaraos ngayon sa buong Pilipinas.

Ayon kay Ms. Joy Galvez-Dominado, KBP-

Nueva Ecija chapter chairperson ito na ang pang-anim na broadcastreeing project at isasagawa ng KBP-NE members sa tent city sa loob ng kampo ng 7th Infantry Division (ID) ng Philippine Army (PA) sa Fort Mag-saysay, Palayan City.

Sa tulong ni Army Colonel Eugene Batarra, 7th ID G7, ay iginayak ang lugar na pagdarausan

ng programa, ceremonial tree planting ng mga lider ng mga grupong kalahok at ang pagtatamnan ng kulang sa 3,000 kalahok.

Ayon pa kay Libert Ong ng Big Sound FM, project administrator, kasama sa mga participants ang Nueva Ecija Press Club; Nueva Ecija Police Provincial Office, sa pamumuno ni P/Sr. Supt. Manuel Cornel; iba't ibang civic

groups at educational institutions sa lalawigan.

Katuwang ng KBP ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) at Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) sa aktibidad na batay sa Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) na pinagtibay noong pang Abril 27, 2011 sa taunang gawain. (Jojo de Guzman)

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

• **Tree planting
in Region 13**

BUTUAN CITY – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) yesterday disclosed that 51,487,064 trees of various species have already been planted in various idle and vacant lands, watershed areas and private lands in the five provinces and six cities in northeastern Mindanao (Caraga region). The DENR 13 regional office also disclosed that 95 percent of the trees were planted in a total area covering 72,113 hectares. These have since survived and grown after they were planted in 2009. This year, DENR Caraga targets to plant 54,607,067 seedlings of different tree species in a total area of 36,732.87 hectares under the National Greening Program (NGP). (Mike U. Crismundo)

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Punto Mo

Editorial

Mga estero na umaapaw ang basura, linisin na

MINSAN ay nasabi ni President Rodrigo Duterte na marumi ang Metro Manila. Marami aniyang basura. Kahit saan daw tumingin ay may basura.

Hindi sanay sa basura ang Presidente sapagkat sa Davao City na kanyang pinamunuan nang matagal na panahon ay walang basura. Sabi ni Duterte, ipahahalungkat umano niya ang mga nakalaang pondo ng mayor para sa pagpapalinis ng kani-kanilang lugar. Hindi raw dapat maging marumi o nakatambak ang basura sapagkat may pondo namang gagamitin dito.

May katwirang mainis ang Presidente sa nakikitang tambak ng basura. Maaari naman itong solusyunan ng mga mayor dahil may pondo. Political will lang ang kailangan para hindi matambak ang



RONNIE M. HALOS • Editor

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basura sa kung saan-saan lalo na mga estero at iba pang daanan ng tubig. Kapag naging barado ang waterways, magkakaroon ng pagbaha. Wala nang maagusan ang tubig.

Siguro'y dapat ding kumilos ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) para ganap na malinis ang mga estero, ilog at kanal. Maraming estero sa Metro Manila ang halos hindi na umaagos dahil punumpuno ng basura. Umaapaw na ang basura at naghahatid ng mabahong amoy. Sa mga basura ring ito namumugad ang mga daga, langaw, lamok at ipis na nagdadala ng sakit.

Si DENR Sec. Gina Lopez ay nakilala sa pagrehabilitate ng waterways sa Metro Manila. Minsan niyang pinamunuan ang ABS-CBN Foundation's Kapit Bisig Para sa Ilog Pasig (KBPIP) and the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC). Sa ilalim ng foundation maraming estero ang naibalik ang buhay. Muling umagos sapagkat nawala ang basura. Kabilang sa mga nilinis ng foundation ni Sec. Lopez ay ang Estero de San Miguel, Uli-Uli, Aviles, San Sebastian, at ang mga kanal na konektado sa Estero de Paco, Estero de Balete, Concordia, Pandacan, Provisor, Sampaloc, Santibañez, Tanque at Valencia.

Inaasahan na marami pang malilinis na waterways, ngayong siya na mismo ang namumuno sa DENR. Hindi nagkamali si Duterte sa pagpili sa kanya.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Lopez open to working with rebels to protect environment

By ANTONIO L. COLINA IV

DAVAO CITY – Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Gina Lopez said she is open to working with Moro and leftist rebel groups in Mindanao to ensure the protection of the environment in the island.

In a press conference here, Lopez said she is willing with rebels from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), and New People's Army (NPA). "to upgrade the economic status of Mindanaoans by putting up more eco-zones through the National Greening Program (NPG) that earns sustainable income for communities."

"I want to work with the MNLF and the NPAs. We will work together with everyone. Why would there be any fighting here if people have money to send their kids to college, money for their health, money to put food on their table? We will have a very different Mindanao because the President comes from Mindanao," she said.

She said that she was confident the Duterte administration will be successful in bringing peace in Mindanao.

"Having a President like this, like a no non-sense President, I have no doubt that we can even bring peace in Mindanao. If we address the social injustice, if the people of Mindanao are able to enjoy their resources, it's gonna be a different Mindanao in a very, very short span of time," she said.

The Manila Times

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Gina Lopez vows not to spare family firm

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Regina Paz Lopez on Thursday said that she will not hesitate to use the full force of the law against Energy Development Corporation (EDC), a company owned by her family, which supposedly poses a threat to portions of the remaining virgin forests in Mount Talinis in Negros Oriental.

"We will look into this and I assure the public that DENR will be fair through the entire process and take into account the concerns of all," Lopez said in response to complaints from environmental advocates and residents of Mt. Talinis.

Mt. Talinis or the Cuernos de Negros mountain range in Negros Oriental is a key biodiversity area (KBA), spanning 23,565 hectares and covering the municipalities of San Jose, Sibulan, Dauin, Zamboanguita, Siaton, Sta. Catalina, Pamplona, Amlan, and Valencia.

EDC, which operates a 223-megawatt geothermal plant in Valencia, Negros Oriental, submitted an application for an

environmental clearance certificate to expand plant capacity by 60 megawatts.

EDC is a pioneer in geothermal energy in the Philippines.

Local residents are opposed to the expansion, saying it would lead to cutting old-growth trees in the mountain range.

Lopez said that the DENR Environmental Management Bureau office in the region has held public hearings on the application to gather the position and opinions of stakeholders.

"Through good environmental governance, we aim to harmonize our economic activities with nature through sound practices that will not only address climate change but ensure the sustainable use of our resources, conservation and preservation," Lopez said.

This was the paramount reason for her adherence to strict compliance with environmental laws, rules, regulations, and standards, the cabinet official said, emphasizing that "there

is no room for violation."

"This is our guiding principle, our commitment, our preaching, and our practice in our quest for sustainable development. This is our call to all stakeholders. Our concern for the environment and the pursuit of the common good transcends familial and other ties," she added.

In April 2016, environmental group 350 Pilipinas sought the DENR's help in a petition signed by 3,000 individuals. The petition called the DENR not to issue an environmental compliance certificate (ECC) for the proposed expansion of the Energy Development Corporation-Southern Negros Geothermal Project (EDC-SNGP).

Zeph Repollo of 350 Pilipinas said the previous EDC expansion in the area last year destroyed 576 natural old growth trees at Cuernos de Negros.

"Now, the EDC is proposing another expansion covering the area of 5,163

hectares," she said, noting that the proposed development block is within a key biodiversity area.

An Environmental Performance Report and Management Plan (EPRMP) submitted to DENR in April 2016 noted the EDC-SNGP's development block lies within Cuernos de Negros, which was recognized as a KBA.

Cuernos de Negros is on the list of conservation priority areas.

"Old growth forest surrounds the peak and lakes covering an area of about 4,800 hectares. About 3,000 hectares is classified as close natural forest while about 1,800 hectares is secondary natural forest," Repollo said.

Repollo said the remaining forest at Cuernos de Negros is the remaining 1 percent natural forest in Negros Oriental.

"It is not only a habitat to wildlife but also serves as water source for the entire southern part of Negros," she said.

JAMES KONSTANTIN GALVEZ

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DENR chief to act on complaints against EDC operations in Negros

By **MADELAINE B. MIRAFLOR**

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Gina Lopez will stand by its mandate to protect the environment even if it means going against their family business.

Responding to complaints from local residents in Mt. Talinis against the Energy Development Corporation's (EDC) planned expansion of its geothermal plant in Negros Oriental, Lopez said she will not hesitate to "use the full force of the law" to protect the environment and preserve the ecological balance of Mt. Talinis and other biodiversity areas.

EDC is one of the world's biggest geothermal producers and is owned by the Lopez family.

"We will look into this and I assure the public that DENR will be fair through the entire process and take into account the concerns of all," said Lopez.

Some local residents and representatives of some organizations are opposing EDC's expansion saying it would lead to cutting of old trees in the local mountain range.

EDC, which operates a 223-megawatt (MW) geothermal plant in Valencia, Negros Oriental, submitted an application for environmental clearance certificate (ECC) for the expansion of the plant's capacity by some 60 additional megawatts.

The DENR's Environmental Management Bureau office in the region has held public hearings on the application to gather the position and opinions of stakeholders.

"Through good environmental governance, we aim to harmonize our economic activities with nature through sound practices that will not only address climate change but ensure the sustainable use of our resources, conservation, and preservation," Lopez said.

Lopez said this is the paramount reason for her adherence to strict compliance with environmental laws, rules, regulations and standards, stressing "there is no room for violation."

"This is our guiding principle, our commitment, our preaching and our practice in our quest for sustainable development. This is our call to all stakeholders," she said.

"Our concern for the environment and the pursuit of the common good transcends familial and other ties,"

she added.

Before taking up the position, Lopez' appointment as the country's environment chief has been criticized by many groups and stakeholders.

Lopez is also staunch advocate against coal-fired power plants but she is also part of the same clan who runs First Gen Corporation (FGEN), a listed renewable energy company.

Some argued that there's a conflict of interest here because her being the new DENR secretary may also benefit the growth of her family's business.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Reinventing French fizz in face of climate change

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By Fanny Lattach

REIMS, France—France's Champagne country has little to celebrate as global warming threatens to wreak havoc on production, forcing winegrowers to take a sober look at their future.

"We are taking a very long-term view," says Thibaut Le Mailloux of the Champagne Committee, a trade association of independent winegrowers and merchants.

Climate change has already had an effect on the champagne production cycle.

The past 20 years has seen the harvest brought forward by about two weeks; grapes are bigger and the alcohol content has risen by around one degree.

For the time being these factors help production, but they could spell disaster if, as experts predict, average global temperatures rise by up to five degrees Celsius between now and the end of the century.

"We really must start researching now as in 25 years it will be

too late," Le Mailloux says.

The Champagne Committee is looking to develop new, more resistant grape varieties while retaining all the properties of the "King of Wines."

Joining forces with the National Institute for Agricultural Research and a winegrowers institute in the southern region of Montpellier, they have embarked on a 15-year program to create grape varieties that will beat climate change.

The challenge is to cross grape varieties that are allowed for the production of champagne—black Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier and white Chardonnay—with varieties that are naturally resistant to certain diseases such as downy or powdery mildew.

They are also looking for genes favoring late maturation, which provides natural resistance, the Champagne Committee says.

Environmental change can not only hurt harvests and degrade quality, it can also create microclimates that encourage grape-

vine diseases.

On the plus side, rising temperatures can lead to lower acidity levels.

In addition, they lessen the risk of frost damage. Champagne is France's most northerly wine-producing area, with warm temperatures not guaranteed even in summer.

Hybrid supergrapes

Hybrid grapes are not new to Champagne—or for that matter most of France's winegrowing regions—which used hybridization as well as grafting to create varieties resistant to the phylloxera aphid that wiped out vast swathes of the country's viticulture in the second half of the 19th century.

"We are crossing highly resistant super-genitors with our varieties," says Arnaud Descotes, deputy technical and environmental director for the Champagne Committee.

"We start out with a cluster of grapes just starting to flower which we fertilize with pollen from the variety that interests

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Reinventing French fizz in...

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us. The first cross-breeding took place in 2015, the second in June 2016," Descotes says.

"This is nothing to do with genetically modified crops, but hybrids obtained through technology," he is quick to add.

The hybrid seeds—4,000 of them—will be ready in six years to be planted in experimental plots across Champagne.

The researchers hope to complete their analyses and tastings of the resulting wine by 2030, when they will be able to present the new varieties to the appellation authorities.

Throughout the program, "maintaining the champagne style is a central goal," Le Mailoux says. "We are keeping up our tradition of innovation—but champagne will always be champagne." AFP

This file photo taken on May 27, 2016 shows a technician of the Interprofessional Committee of Champagne Wine showing an inflorescence of a hybrid vine plant from research conducted jointly by the CIVC and the National Institute of Agricultural Research, to develop grape varieties adapted to climate change and disease resistant, in Epernay, northeastern France. AFP



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Code of conduct on disputed sea pushed

By Estrella Torres

FOREIGN secretary Perfecto Yasay Jr. has urged the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) and China to speed up the adoption of a Code of Conduct on the South China Sea to return peace and stability in the disputed waters.

Yasay spoke at the Second Conference on South China Sea which was held at the Manila Hotel on Wednesday and Thursday this week, barely a month after the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague junked China's massive claims over virtually the entire South China Sea.

China has refused to recognize and abide by the international arbitration court ruling. Its Supreme Court recently countered with a ruling that fishermen from other countries would be arrested and detained if caught fishing in "Chinese waters."

Yasay said on Wednesday the Philippines continued to exert its best efforts to see that an existing nonbinding agreement, the Asean-China Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (2002), proceeds to a binding Code of Conduct.

Early adoption

"We continue to urge parties concerned to do the same," said Yasay.

All parties in the sea dispute need to work expeditiously toward the early adoption of an effective Code of Conduct, he said.

Ambassador Rosario Manalo, who led the High Level Task Force to draft the Asean Charter in 2006, said that in spite of China's high court ruling, the Philippines and China can still sign a political agreement that allows fishermen from both countries to freely fish in the South China Sea.

The conference was attended by representatives and experts from the 10-member Asean. Representatives from Japan and Australia were present. China sent a representative from its embassy in Manila and other experts.

Asean is composed of the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Burma (Myanmar).

Meanwhile, two of the Philippine Coast Guard's vessels are patrolling the coast of northern Luzon, intensifying its presence in the West Philippine Sea.

The 35-meter BRP Nueva Vizcaya was deployed on Thursday to join the 56-meter BRP Pampanga, which has been keeping watch over the area since last week.

"These ships will conduct law enforcement patrols against poaching and other lawless activities at sea," said PCG spokesperson Commander Armand Balilo.

The vessels will patrol within a 12-nautical-mile territorial limit from Manila to Northern Luzon. The patrol mission will pass by Subic, Zambales, which is near the Chinese-controlled Scarborough Shoal.

"They could go beyond the 12-nautical-miles territorial limit and if they see any violators at sea, they could run after them," Balilo said, adding that this would depend on the ship's commanding officer.

With a report from Julie M. Aurelio