

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DATE : 13 AUG 2016

DAY : Saturday

# DENR

## IN THE NEWS

## Lopez stops operations of 2 more mining firms

By **MADLAINE B. MIRAFLORES**

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) stopped the operations of two more companies amid the ongoing audit, with the list of suspended Philippine mining operations already amounting to ten.

DENR Secretary Gina Lopez said the Mining Audit Team of the DENR recommended the suspension of two more mining companies both based in Eastern Samar — EMIR Mineral Resources Corp. and Mt. Sinai Mining Exploration Corp.

"The audit report of our team is recommending suspension. Tomorrow [Friday], we will issue an order to these firms," Lopez said.

Leo Jasareno, DENR undersecretary, said the agency found out that these companies are causing siltation to rivers, not practicing engineered mining methods, and causing major damages to forest near the area.

The former Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) said that EMIR is a medium-scale nickel mine that produced 150,000 tons of nickel in 2015, while EMIR produced 50,000 tons of cromite last year.

As of now, there are eight suspended nickel mines, one iron ore mine, and a cromite mine.

Last week, the government suspended the only iron producing mine in the Philippines as part of the audit.

Jasareno said the government has recently suspended Ore Asia Mining and Development Corp. in Doña Remedios Trinidad in Bulacan for failing to obtain ISO Certification. Before that, MGB also suspended the operations of nickel miner Claver Mineral Development Corp., the biggest supplier of nickel ore to top market China. Claver runs a mine in the Surigao del Norte province in Mindanao.

Other firms that are now suspended are Berong Nickel, Citinickel, Benguet-Corp Nickel Mines, Inc., Eramen Minerals, Inc., LNL Archipelago Minerals, Inc., and Zambales Diversified Metals Corp.

Lopez said the DENR will establish a website that will show the results of the audit.

Due to alleged violation of environmental standards and other issues, Environment Secretary Gina Lopez said Thursday the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will issue a show cause order to the country's biggest coal miner, SMPC, for its Molave Coal Project and Sagittarius Mines, Inc. (SMI) for the Tampakan Copper Gold Mine Project.

Both companies will be given seven days to explain why the Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) earlier given to them shouldn't be withdrawn.

For SMPC, Lopez said the company has "to get its acts together" when it comes to operating its existing coal mine in Semirara Island in Antique.

"There are basic issues that must be resolved in mining in Semirara. First is that their open pit mine is now below sea level," Leo Jasareno, DENR undersecretary and head of its Mining Audit Team, told reporters on Thursday.

"The Semirara Island has an area of only 5,000 hectares and the pit occupies about 40 hectares but there is a new expansion area of about 600 hectares in the middle of the island. If the mining commence, the issue is what will happen after the mining? How would DMCI do rehabilitation of the island if you have such a big hole in the area. The issues on pollution have to be addressed," he added.



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### *Pagmimina ng 'black sand' pinatitigil ni de Lima*

Nais ni Senator Leila de Lima na magkaroon ng batas na tuluyang magbabawal sa pagmimina ng 'black sand' o itim na buhangin.

Sa panukalang batas na inihain ni de Lima, sinabi nito na hindi nakakabuti sa kalikasan ang patuloy na pagmimina ng magnetite na mas kilala sa tawag na 'black sand'.

Ayon kay de Lima, sina-

samantala ng ilang mining companies ang kawalan ng batas na direktang nagbabawal sa pagmimina ng 'black sand' kung saan kinakailangan lamang na kumuha ng dredging permits para sa kanilang operasyon.

Sinabi ni de Lima, ang pagmimina ng buhangin ay laganap sa iba't ibang panig ng bansa na naka-

kasira hindi lamang sa kalikasan kung hindi maging sa kabuhayan ng mga tao.

"At dahil sa black sand mining kumokonti ang huli ng ating mga mangingisda, at ang mga komunidad sa tabing-dagat ay nakakaranas ng pagguho ng lupa at pagbaha. Darami pa ang magdurusa kung hindi natin ito ipagbabawal," ani de Lima. (*Malou Escudero*)





## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# De Lima seeks black sand mining ban

Sen. Leila de Lima has called for a ban on black sand mining in the country, citing its harmful effects on the environment and human life.

De Lima has filed Senate Bill 960 calling for a ban on black sand mining and regulating dredging activities.

"A lot of mining firms conduct black sand mining under the cover of dredging permits.

Safeguards must be put in place to prevent this abuse of dredging permits," she said.

De Lima noted that an inter-agency group led by the National Bureau of Investigation conducted raids on illegal black sand mining operations that resulted in the filing of complaints during her term as justice secretary.

"Erosion has been noted in areas near black sand mining op-

erations. Communities are slowly crumbling because of magnetite mining. In communities within these mining operations, there have been cases of severe eye infection and hernia. Farmers and fisherfolk now yield smaller harvest and catch," she said.

• Under the bill, mining firms will be required to dispose dredge materials in government-controlled landfills to

prevent black sand from being passed off as waste.

Violators face imprisonment of six to 12 years and a fine of P1 million to P10 million.

"With the passage of this bill, not only shall we penalize those who plunder our natural resources, the government will also regulate mining and other related activities," De Lima said.

- Marvin Sy



# BusinessMirror

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## Palawan 'off limits' to coal projects—Lopez

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

### 7 days

The number of days for SMPC to answer a "show cause" order on why its ECC for coal mining in Palawan should not be canceled.

Lopez reiterated her policy for Palawan during a news conference on Thursday after announcing the issuance of "show cause" orders to three companies, including the Semirara Mining and Power Corp. (SMPC), the country's single major producer of coal that operates several mines on Semirara Island in Antique Province.

Lopez gave the D.M. Consunji Inc. (DMCI)-led SMPC seven days to explain why the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) should not cancel its environmental clearance certificate (ECC) and allow it to continue operations on the island in view of the numerous complaints against the company's operation, including mangroves and corals that adversely affect marine life in the area.

Lopez said she is currently talking with prospective RE investors to consider Palawan, and that officials of the Department of Energy (DOE) have already been informed about the plan. "Renewable energy is cheaper than coal. Solar [in particular] is cheaper," she said.

According to Lopez, the DENR would not approve or grant applications for ECC involving new coal projects on the Palawan island to

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez has declared Palawan, the country's last ecological frontier, "off limits" to coal projects, reiterating her personal advocacy for the development of clean and renewable-energy (RE) sources.

ensure environmental protection.

Lopez had earlier told the BUSINESSMIRROR that Palawan would have to find other sources of energy that would not cause environmental degradation.

In 2013 an RE company bared plans to construct three hydropower plants in Palawan, eyeing to grab a foothold of the province's energy-supply requirement. The Palawan-based Langogan Power Corp. said it can generate a combined 20 megawatts (MW) of electricity through the construction of hydropower plants at the Langogan, Batang Batang and Talakaigan rivers.

Project Manager Jenny Montegodo said the company is eyeing to generate a maximum of 10 MW at the Langogan River alone. Its proposed power plant site is in Barangay Langogan in Puerto Princesa City. Another proposed project tapping Batang Batang River's potential power-generating capacity in Barangay Princess Urdunja, Sitio Mariwara in the town of Narra can generate 5 MW, while a proposed power plant in Talakaigan river, specifically in

Barangay Kabigaan, in the town of Aborlan, is in the planning stage.

Various studies have confirmed the power-generation capacity of these rivers. Langogan Power has been conducting a study of the potentials of these RE sources since 2007.

Hydropower plants are being pushed as an alternative to fossil-fuel power plants that currently generate electricity being distributed by the Palawan Electric Cooperative.

Non-governmental groups, like the World Wide Fund for Nature, in the Philippines has been lobbying for more investment in clean and renewable energy in lieu of coal. Coal-fired power plants threaten the health of residents in Palawan, as well as the pristine environment of the province. DMCI is eyeing to put up a coal-fired power plant, initially in Narra. Because of strong opposition of communities against the project, however, the company is now looking at Aborlan municipality. The proposed power plant will generate 15 MW of electricity.

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Palawan 'off limit' to coal projects - Lopez

On August 8 the DENR chief led key government officials of the DENR in signing a memorandum of agreement creating an inter-agency environmental task force that would go after large-scale environmental crimes.

Lopez's alter-ego in the inter-agency task force, DENR Undersecretary Art Valdez, said the task force would go after violators of environmental crimes, particularly wildlife trafficking in Palawan and Tawi-Tawi island.

Director Theresa Mundita S. Lim of the DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau welcomed the creation of the interagency environmental task force, saying it would shield the country's protected areas against hunters that continue to threaten the country's wildlife.

"This is a welcome development, especially because it would boost our sustained information, education and communication campaign about the importance of biodiversity conservation," Lim said.

Wildlife trafficking is rampant in Palawan and Tawi-Tawi, threatening endangered species that include migratory water fowls and marine turtles or *pawikan*. Palawan is considered a "Man and Biosphere Reserve" by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco).

The province is also home to two Unesco World Heritage Sites: the famous Tubbataha Reef and the Puerto Princesa Underground River.



## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Why the mining industry is in such a mess



Val A. Villanueva

## BUSINESSWISE

### Conclusion

THE meeting was presided by lawyer Samuel Ablola of the Provincial Mining and Regulatory Board (PMRB). Among the members of the committee were lawyers Collado, Ferrer and Hon. Deloso. Also present were then-Zambales Vice Gov. Ramon Lacbain; Candelaria Mayor Napoleon Edquid; Engr. Lauro Garcia of the Mines & Geosciences Bureau-Region 3 (MGB3); a certain Kagawad Manalo of Biay, Santa Cruz; and representatives of the mining companies Hendrick Martin (ZDMC); Glen Duka, Pamela Gendraño and Rebecca Rapisura (BNMI); Jay Degrani (LNL).

The mining sector in the province of Zambales has been on the hot seat lately, when townsfolk complained that mining activities were contaminating the otherwise pristine river waters in the province were turning reddish brown in color.

To remedy the situation, Ebdane asked the mining firms to help him build haul roads.

MGBOIC Regional Director Danilo U. Uykieng, however, supported earlier findings of local geologists that there was no nickel contamination in the rivers of Zambales.

In a Senate hearing held on September 23, 2015, Uykieng said,

upon questioning by Environment and Natural Resources Committee chairman Francis Escudero, that "For the record, Your Honor, there is no actual nickel contamination in Zambales. However, there is impact on the sedimentation because of natural erosion...."

Such pronouncement echoes the findings of local geologists who said earlier that what caused the color of the Zambales rivers to turn reddish-brown was soil erosion, which occurs during heavy rains. They claimed that the soil in the mining areas is rich in nickel laterites, which render the area inhabitable by large trees.

in which they operate or explore for minerals.

The Philippine Mining Act has enough teeth to ensure that these mining companies toe the line. But too often, provisions of this law become inferior to the ones enacted by antimining local government units, thus frustrating the industry's effort to maximize the economic benefits the country could get from the industry.

These firms are also not required by law to build roads. They are already heavily invested in building

infrastructure and taking care of the indigenous people. The mining sector in Zambales is now in a quandary after being closed twice, even though no direct contamination has been confirmed by the MGB in the first place.

What is happening in Zambales is not an isolated case. Local laws—even if they are directly opposed to the spirit of the Philippine Mining Act (which is supposed to be superior to local ordinances)—have been constricting the growth of the country's minerals industry. Not only is

Trees are a natural deterrent to soil erosion, as they rein in the soil they are planted on. They explained that, even without mining, the soil will cascade downstream causing the waters to turn reddish-brown. This phenomenon has been occurring for centuries and cannot be attributed to mining, they said.

It would be recalled that the operations of LnL Archipelago Minerals Inc., Benguet Corp. Nickel Mines Inc. and Eramen Minerals Inc. in the municipalities of Santa Cruz and Candelaria were shut down, as precipitated by the supposed mineral leakage from these companies such that the color of downstream river has turned into reddish-brown.

As a precondition to their reopening, Ebdane and then-Environment Secretary Ramon Paje required them to chip in to the cost of building haul roads.

But with MGB saying there is no nickel contamination of the Zambales rivers, such precondition becomes irrelevant, geologists say.

The Philippine mining industry could be the world's most regulated industry. Unfortunately, help from the government, if and when needed by the industry, has been disappointing, if not utterly dismal. Mining firms are left to fend for themselves in cases where they are harassed and given the circuitous rounds by local government units

the industry heavily regulated; it is also heavily taxed. Legitimate mining companies are levied corporate, excise, withholding, customs duties, value added and mineral reservation royalty taxes, among others.

For comments and suggestions, e-mail me at [mvala.v@gmail.com](mailto:mvala.v@gmail.com).



# BULGAR

BOSES NG MASA MATA NG BAYAN

13 AUG 2016

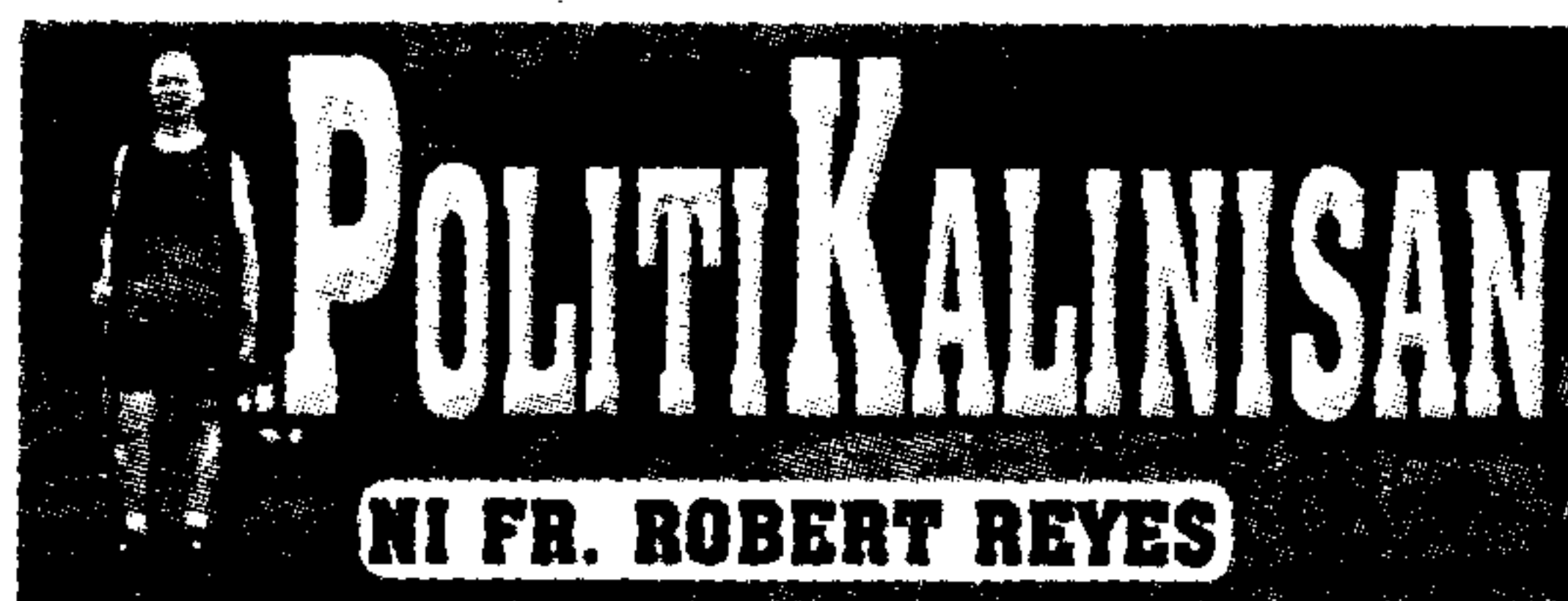
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## Mining ang sisira sa ganda at kaayusan ni Inang Kalikasan!

MAY pag-asa pa bang umahon ang ating bansa sa iba't ibang uri ng problemang kinasasadlakan nito? Makaahon pa ba tayo sa salot na droga? May nagsasabing oo, sa loob ng tatlo hanggang anim na buwan. Subalit, may pag-asa pa bang umahon tayo sa iba't ibang uri ng karahasan na nanganganib na kumalat sa lupang pinalusog ng sariwang dugo o ang kumain ng sapat ang napakaraming nagugutom na nagkakasya na lamang sa noodles at nilugaw na kanin? Makapagsasaka pa kaya nang walang pag-aalinlangan ang milyong magbubukid na malulugi dahil sa baha o bagyo o salot dahil matibay na sumusuporta ang pamahalaan? Makapag-aaral at makapagtatapos pa kaya ang napakaraming bata at kabataan sa kabila ng kahirapan? Ang giyera sa Mindanao at sa iba pang dako ng bansa sa pagitan ng hukbong sandatahan at ng iba't ibang katunggali ng pamahalaan, may pag-asa pa kayang matapos? Malulutas pa kaya ang usapin ng pag-aari ng mga isla at katubigan

ng West Philippine Sea na inaangkin ng China?

Sa dami ng mga tanong hinggil sa pag-asa, kapit-patalim o kapit-baril na ang marami sa pag-asang magmumula ang pag-asa sa puwersa at karahasan. Subalit, sa kabila nang naglipanang maiitim na ulap, masisilayan pa rin ang liwanag na animo'y milyong maliliit na sibat na dinadaplisang ating mga nagdududang isip at nabibigatang puso. Milyon ba o 'di mabilang na maliliit subalit, totoong hudyat ng pag-asa ang dumadalaw at nagpapaalala sa atin na pag-asa ang malalim na kalikasan ng buhay? Oo, habang may buhay, may pag-asa. At salamat sa mga taong naniniwala at nagsasabuhay nito. Salamat kay Secretary Gina Lopez ng DENR na nagbibigay-pag-asa lalo na sa napakaraming biktima ng mapanira at nakamamatay na ganid ng mga mining corporations sa iba't ibang panig ng bansa.

Ilang taon na nating sinasamahan sa DENR ang mga mamamayan ng Antique na lumalaban sa kumpanyang DMCI na nagpapatakbo ng pinakamalaking coal mine sa buong bansa. Inilapit na natin ito kay dating DENR Secretary Mon Paje pati na rin sa Department of Energy sa ilalim ni Secretary Petilla noong panahon ni Noynoy. Ilang ulit nagpabalik-balik ang mga taga-Antique ngunit, sa kabila ng maraming usapan at pangakuan, walang anumang nangyari.

Subalit, kagulat-gulat ang nangyari noong nakaraang Huwebes sa tanggapan ni DENR Secretary Gina Lopez. Iniulat sa media at sa iba





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mining ang sisira sa ganda at  
kanyusan ni Inang Kalikasan

pang naroroon ang balak ni Secretary Lopez na pahintuin o pigilang magsimula ang operasyon ng tatlong kumpanya: MWSS Housing sa gitna ng La Mesa Dam Watershed; ang Tampakan Mining at ang Semirara Coal Mine ng DMCI. Sa simula ng pulong, inilatag ng kalihim ng DENR ang kanyang batayang prinsipyo sa pagbibigay ng naturang Environmental Clearance Certificate o ECC. Hindi dapat mauna ang pagpapahintulot bago ang pagpapatupad sa mga kahingian ng batas. Napakaraming humihingi ng ECC na kagyat na nabibigyan ng pahintulot na ang pangako ay "tutuparin ang hinihingi ng batas." Dapat tuparin muna at masinop na bantayan ng DENR kung talagang tinutupad ang hinihingi ng batas. Malinaw kung paano nakukuha ng mga makapangyarihan at mayayaman ang ECC na may pangakong tutuparin ang batas subalit, iba ang nangyayari at tila pikit-matang pinahihintulutan ito ng DENR. Mabilis na kikilos ang kumpanya ng mina sa pagbubungkal ng bundok at kaparangan upang iahon ang mga mineral na nais nitong

pagkakitaan. At dahil pikit-mata ang DENR sa mga ginagawa ng mga korporasyong nagmimina, tuluy-tuloy ang paglabag sa batas ng karamihan. Samantalang, unti-unting nawawasak at namamatay ang kalikasan, unti-unti ring nanghihina, nagkakasakit at namamatay ang mga mamamayang nakatira sa mga minahan. Isang malinaw na halimbawa ay kung paanong hindi nagbibigay-pag-asa ang pamahalaan dahil pikit-matang pinahihintulutan nitong masira ang kalikasan. Malinaw kung bakit at paano nagbibigay ng pag-asa ang kalikasan, kung bakit at paano sinisira ng mga korporasyon at ng pamahalaan ang pag-asang ito? Umaasa ang mga taga-Semirara at ang mga kasapi ng Save Antique Movement sa mga salita ni DENR Secretary Gina Lopez. Hanggang saan at hanggang kailan kaya makararating ang pag-asang ito? Hindi kaya magagawan na naman ng paraan ng dambuhalang DMCI ang muling pagsamantalahan ang kahinaan ng mga mahihirap at maliliit na mamamayan upang ipagpatuloy ang pagpatay sa pag-asang nagmumula sa kalikasan?



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**Mining, housing  
permit babawiin**

Balak ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na kanselahin ang mining permit ng dalawang malaking kumpanya ng pagmimina, gayundin ang permit ng isang housing project na nasa critical area ng isang watershed sa Quezon City dahil sa mga paglabag sa batas sa kalikasan.

Sinabi ni Environment Secretary Gina Lopez na isasailalim muna nila sa evaluation process ang nakuhang Environmental Compliance Certificates (ECCs) ng coal miner na Semirara Mining Corporation at Tampakan gold and copper project, at ang planong pabahay ng Century Communities Corporation dahil binigyan na ng ECC ang mga ito bago pa kumuha ng environmental requirements.

Ipinaliwanag ni Lopez na ang ECC ay dokumentong ibinibigay ng DENR Secretary o ng regional executive director nito upang kumpirmahin na ang mga mungkahing proyekto ay hindi makasisira kapaligiran o kalikasan.

**Rommel P. Tabbad**



# The Manila Times

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**GREEN REVOLUTION** Miss Earth 2016 Imelda Schweighart, together with school children and hundreds of volunteers, plants a fruit-bearing tree on Friday at the Upper Marikina Watershed in Antipolo City in support of the government's national greening program. PHOTO BY MIKE DE JUAN



## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Century to work with DENR on La Mesa housing project

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

**P**ROPERTY developer Century Communities Corp. on Friday said it welcomes the initiative of Environment Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez to look into the possible impact of its housing project within the vicinity of the La Mesa watershed.

"As a responsible property development company, our business philosophy and practice has always

been to include the welfare of the communities and the environment," Century said in a statement

e-mailed to the media.

This came after Lopez issued a "show cause order" to Century asking the company to explain why the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) should not cancel its environmental compliance certificate (ECC) for various violations of its project in La Mesa, called Nova by Century. Aside from Century, the DENR chief said she had issued a show cause order to Semirara Mining and Power Corp. (SMPC) on Semirara Island in Antique province and the Saguitarrius Mines Inc. for its Tampakan Copper-Gold Project in Mindanao, which covers the political jurisdiction of four provinces.

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**The number of houses that Century plans to build within the vicinity of the La Mesa watershed**

The show cause orders require the companies to respond within seven days.

According to Century, the company has made a thorough and comprehensive study of the development project that focused primarily on the possible impact on the watershed and all the environs around the subject property.

The company clarified that despite such plans, and the issuance of an ECC for the project in July 16, 2015, Century has not commenced any development on the property. The company plans to build 97 houses in the area, according to the DENR.

Century said it will wait for the guidelines from the DENR and local government for the land's best use, but also look forward to working hand in hand with the DENR, in-

cluding partnering with government agencies, to further safeguard public interest. Lopez told reporters during a press briefing that Century committed numerous violations of the conditions under its ECC that would affect 12 million Metro Manila residents who depend on the water coming from La Mesa Dam.

Among other conditions violated by the company, Lopez said Century failed to submit the enhanced environmental monitoring plan for its housing project. It also failed to submit a copy of the social-development plan and secure favorable endorsement for the project from the DENR and the Manila Waterworks and Sewerage System.



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## Declare Spratlys a hotspot marine-protected park – Carpio

Senior Associate Justice Antonio Carpio called on rival South China Sea claimants the other day to declare the Spratlys a marine protected park to shield it from further destruction following China's massive island construction binge in the contested waters.

Backing a proposal by renowned marine biologist Dr. John McManus for the creation of a Spratlys International Marine Peace Park, Carpio said

the move would enable all claimants to suspend for 100 years their territorial claims.

Carpio sees the move as a "way forward" and a "win-win" solution to the territorial disputes that involve the Philippines, China, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan.

An international tribunal on July 12 had invalidated China's massive claim over the resource-rich South China Sea and declared its reclama-

tion activities as illegal in response to a complaint filed by the Philippines in January, 2013.

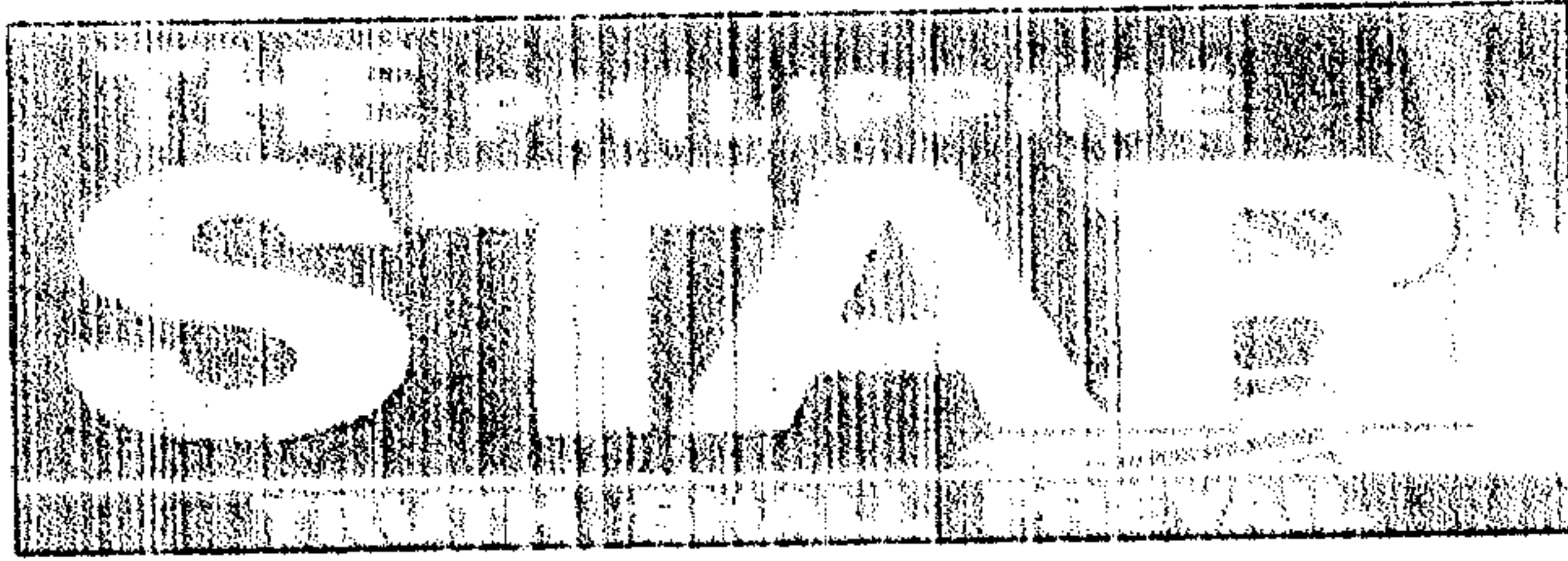
Beijing refused to honor the ruling and discredited the Permanent Court of Arbitration that operates under a United Nations convention, of which it is a signatory, along with the Philippines and more than 160 other states.

China, according to Carpio, has the "legal obligation" to comply with the ruling, but admitted that there is no

"marine policeman" to enforce the decision, making the waters' uninhabited feature vulnerable to future destructive reclamation activities by China.

"We are not moving at all so the Philippines should talk to Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia to declare Spratlys as a protected area on our own. We can do that," Carpio said at a forum organized by think-tank ADR Institute for Strategic and International Studies at De La Salle University in Manila.





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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# *Butanding caught off Negros dies*

Photo shows a 17-foot  
whale shark caught in  
Tañon Strait in Negros  
Occidental on Wednesday.

GILBERT BAYORAN

BACOLOD CITY – A 17-foot long whale shark, locally known as *butanding*, died on Wednesday apparently due to injuries despite being released back into the sea in Sagay City, Negros Occidental.

Investigations of the Sagay City Veterinarian Office showed the male juvenile whale shark's right fin had been cut off.

City veterinarian Baltazar Delorino also noted bruises and other signs of physical trauma on the body of the whale shark.

The whale shark was found entangled in a gill net early Wednesday morning in Tañon Strait, which is between Negros and Cebu.

The fishermen brought it to the shore in Barangay Bulanon in Sagay City.

The whale shark was buried at a sanitary landfill in Barangay Paraiso yesterday.

Whale sharks, which have become tourist attractions in the country, are among the endangered species on the list of the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Fishermen who get to capture *butandings* are advised to immediately release it back into the sea instead of dragging them to the shore.

– Gilbert Bayoran







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### MGA BARIL AT TRAKTORA, 'DI CLIMATE CHANGE, ANG TUNAY NA BANTA SA PANDAIGDIGANG FLORA AT FAUNA

**H**INDI climate change ang dapat sisihin sa paglalaho ng wildlife kundi ang pagkagahaman ng tao sa pangangaso at pagpatay sa mga hayop at halaman para kainin o ipagmayabang bilang tropeo, bukod pa sa patuloy na pagpapalawak ng mga taniman at hayupan, ayon sa mga mananaliksik na nananawagan na baguhin ang mga prioridad sa pangangalaga sa kalikasan.

Sa pagsusuri sa halos 9,000 "threatened" o "near-threatened" species, natuklasan ng mga siyentista na sangkatlong bahagi ang labis nang sinamantala para sa komersiyo, libangan o pag-iral.

Halimbawa, ang pangangailangan sa karne at mga bahagi ng katawan ang nagbunsod upang halos maglaho na ang mga Western gorilla at Chinese pangolin, at tuluyang maubos ang mga Sumatran rhinoceros — na matindi ang demand ng China para sa mga pekeng gamot na nagmumula sa sungay nito.

At mahigit sa kalahati ng 8,688 uri ng hayop at halaman na sinuri ang apektado sa pagbabago sa kanilang natural habitat bilang mga industrial farm at plantasyon, karamihan ay ginagamit sa pag-aalaga ng mga hayop o pagtatanim ng mga halamang mapakikinabangan bilang petrolyo o pagkain.

Sa pagkukumpara, 19 na porsiyento lamang ng mga species na ito ang kasalukuyang apektado ng climate change, iniulat ng pag-aaral na inilathala sa journal na Nature.

"Addressing the old foes of overharvesting and agricultural activities are key to turning around the biodiversity extinction crisis," sabi ng pangunahing awtor ng pag-aaral na si Sean Maxwell, propesor sa University of Queensland sa Australia.

Ang mga bantang ito, sa halip na climate change, "must be at the forefront of the conservation agenda," saad sa pahayag ni Maxwell.

Samantala, isa namang grupo ng 43 pangunahing eksperto sa wildlife conservation ang nanawagan kamakailan sa sangkatauhan na magtulungan upang isalba ang patuloy na kumakaunting terrestrial megafauna sa mundo, mula sa malalaking pusa hanggang sa mga elepante at naglalakihang gorilla.

"They are vanishing just as science is discovering their essential ecological roles," sulat ng researchers sa BioSciences. Hanggang hindi nadadagdagan ang pondo para sa pagsasalba sa mga ito, "they may not survive to the 22nd century", dagdag nila.

Inilabas ang mapaghamong apela sa Nature — na umani ng matitinding reaksiyon — isang buwan bago ang mahalagang pulong ng International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), isang policy-oriented umbrella grouping ng mga gobyerno, industriya at non-governmental organization na naghaharap-harap tuwing tatlo hanggang apat na taon.

Ang IUCN din ang nangangasiwa sa gold-standard na Red List ng endangered species, tumutunton at nagre-record sa kalagayan ng flora at fauna ng mundo.

**Agence France Presse**



**A TWO-METER-LONG** Greenland shark female from southwestern Greenland. This species of shark is Earth's oldest living animal with a backbone. AP

## Greenland sharks may live up to 400 years

WASHINGTON—The Greenland shark, a big and slow-moving deep-ocean predator that prowls the frigid waters of the Arctic and North Atlantic, can claim the distinction of being the planet's longest-living vertebrate, with a lifespan perhaps reaching about 400 years.

Its extremely sluggish growth rate, about four-tenths of an inch (1 cm) per year, had already tipped off scientists that it lived a very long time, and research published on Thursday calculated the Greenland shark's lifespan for the first time.

Danish marine biologist Julius Nielsen said radiocarbon dating that analyzed the shark's eye lens found that the oldest of 28 sharks studied was likely about 392 years old, with 95 percent certainty of an age range between 272 and 512 years.

Females astoundingly did not

reach sexual maturation until they were at least 134 years old, Nielsen said.

The Greenland shark, up to about 5.5 meters long, is among the largest carnivorous sharks.

Nielsen, a University of Copenhagen doctoral student who led the study published in the journal *Science*, said the findings should bring this shark much-deserved respect.

"This species is completely overlooked, and only a few scientists in the world are working with this species," Nielsen said.

"Our findings show that even though the uncertainty is great that they should be considered the oldest vertebrate animal in the world," Nielsen added.

Nielsen said the vertebrate with the longest-known lifespan until now was the bowhead whale, topping 200 years.

*Reuters*