

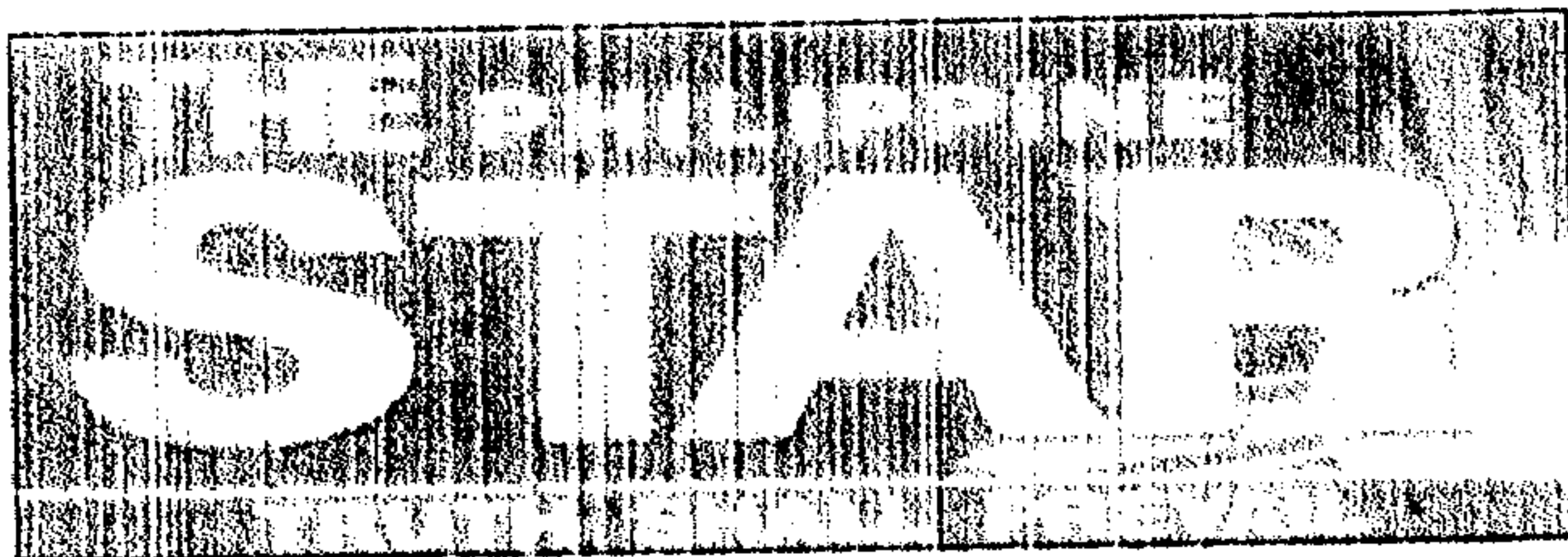
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DATE : 15 AUG 2016

DAY : Monday

DENR

IN THE NEWS



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Semirara Mining operations to be assessed by gov't

By DANESSA RIVERA

Operations of Consunji-led Semirara Mining and Power Corp. will be assessed by a government team after the country's biggest coal miner was included in the hit list of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), its top official said.

Semirara chairman and CEO Isidro Consunji said in a text message the company met with the Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi and Environment Secretary Gina Lopez on separate occasions last week and discussed the company's compliance with safety and environment regulations.

"We have met both secretaries separately... We have answered them verbally," he said, noting their meeting with the DENR secretary "went well."

During their meetings, Consunji said they expressed to the Cabinet secretaries the company was strictly complying with safety and environment rules.

"The company is compliant with requirements (and) we are prepared to help host the community as always," he said.

Following the meetings, the DOE and DENR will send a team to look at the operations of Semirara in Antique.

"They will form a team to look at all allegations," Consunji said.

DENR is responsible for the issuance of environmental compliance certificates (ECCs) while the DOE's mandate includes monitoring energy resource developers.

Last week, Lopez gave three firms—Semirara, Sagittarius Mines Inc. and Century Communities Corp.—an ultimatum of seven days to explain the alleged violations or face the suspension of their ECC.

For Semirara, in particular, a show cause order will be issued to explain why violations were committed based on complaints of the local communities in Antique.

The agency said the coal miner's violations include degradation of water quality, siltation of marine environment, damage of coral areas, presence of toxic contaminants in the water, displacement of local residents and unsafe working conditions of workers among others.

In a letter dated Aug. 12, the DOE wrote to Semirara ordering it to explain in writing the collateral issues such as toxic waste, sulfur content, mining overburden, land-grabbing and livelihood raised by DENR within 48 hours.

The DOE said the company's "strict compliance to their obligations stated on the Environmental Compliance Certificate is critical to the stability of the coal supply requirements of the country."

Semirara has exclusive rights to explore, extract and develop the largest coal mine in the country located in Semirara Island in Antique province.

It supplies 90 percent of the coal produced in the country, and coal share in the power industry is about 30 percent.

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DOE asks Semirara to explain DENR concerns

BY RYAN VELASCO

The Consunji group is being asked to explain within the next 48 hours the "toxic impact" hurled against its Semirara coal mining operations.

In a letter, Energy Secretary Alfonso G. Cusi has ordered Semirara Mining & Power Corporation (SMPC) Chief Executive Officer Isidro A. Consunji "to explain in writing the collateral issues raised by the DENR [Department of Environment and Natural Resources] against the mining industry participants, which include Semirara."

The energy department has listed these concerns as the presence of toxic waste in their mining operations, sulfur content, mining over-burden, land grabbing, and livelihood concerns for host communities.

"The DOE asked the company [SMPC] to submit reports within 48 hours upon receipt of the letter because their strict compliance to their obligations stated in their Environmental Compliance Certificate [ECC] is critical to the stability of the coal supply requirements of the country," Cusi said.

The energy department expounded that it is doing supplemental check on

the DENR-lodged issues because this is part of its duty being the agency overseeing exploration and development of indigenous energy resources.

The Semirara mine is a vital source of fuel for several coal-fired power plants in the country – including the fuel blending requirements of some generating facilities.

It is currently the Philippines' biggest commercial coal mine, with many of the other discoveries still not being able to match Semirara's production scale.

Government scrutiny is not new to SMPC – it had just gone through another snag last year when one portion of the coal mine collapsed, leading to deaths of some of its workers in the field.

Its operations had been halted for some time, but the DOE was later prompted to lift the directive on energy security concerns, because of coal supply that some plants have been sourcing from the Semirara mine.

For one, the Calaca coal plant is sourcing almost all of its coal requirements from Semirara – and with the ominous power supply situation in the Luzon grid now, further capacity curtailment is the last thing that the industry should be suffering from.

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Tampakan no gold mine for govt: Lopez

BY JED MACAPAGAL

REGINA Lopez, secretary of environment and natural resources, said the government will hardly benefit from the \$5.9 billion Tampakan gold mine since the government will only get a share of windfall profits.

"The mining industry is not labor intensive, it is capital intensive. The \$5.9 billion will not benefit the local economy it will be spent on infrastructure and machines. We will never get any money at all unless there's windfall profit," said Lopez in a briefing.

But Lopez acknowledged that government will get a big share from the project if the operators hit windfall profits, as provided under the terms of the financial and technical assistance agreement (FTAA) but noted that its chance to register windfall profits is very slim.

An FTAA is an agreement entered into by a contractor and the government for the development of large-scale exploration, development and utilization of gold, copper, nickel, chromite, lead, zinc and other minerals.

"In a dissenting opinion when the Supreme Court was deciding on the legal challenge of the FTAA,

Justice (Antonio) Carpio said that if the FTAA will be allowed to use the windfall profit as a basis for government share, there will be no government share. Per his study using 10 mining companies abroad, not one company realized windfall profit," said Leo Jasareno, DENR undersecretary.

Lopez said allowing Tampakan to operate would be a big risk since it will greatly affect the environment as well as the welfare of many people.

"It could have been substantial but in analyzing 10 mining companies all around the world, not even one got windfall profit so why jeopardize the food basket of Mindanao for what? It's grossly unfair... That windfall profit is a dream that might not even happen and to do that we are going to jeopardize six rivers, take away the land of 3,000 farmers," Lopez said.

The environment chief said at present, the local mining industry earns P40 billion but only 18 percent goes to the country.

The DENR earlier issued a show cause order against

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TAMPAKAN

proponents of the Tampakan prospect, asking them to explain following the suspension of its environmental compliance certificate (ECC) on complaints filed by local communities.

The DENR said Sagittarius Mines, Inc. (SMI), the owner of the Tampakan prospect also failed to submit proof of compliance to permits and clearances required by other agencies including the Department of Agriculture and Department of Agrarian Reform.

The agency also noted that another basis for the suspension of SMI's ECC is its failure to secure favorable endorsement from the local government of Sultan Kudarat where part of the project is located as well as issues on maintenance of post mining facilities and its effects to downstream agricultural land.

The Tampakan prospect is said to be one of the largest undeveloped mineral deposits in Southeast Asia with estimated reserves of 15 million tons of contained copper and nearly 18 million ounces of gold. Total taxes and royalties government can gain from it over the 20-year life of the project is estimated at around P346 billion.

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BMReports *Extra*

Federalism seen to offer uncertain future for mining, power sectors



THIS October 29, 2005, file photo shows a gold trader weighing gold sold by a small miner from Mount Diwata in Compostela Valley province in southern Philippines. While the gold rush in the mountain area has brought livelihood to thousands of people, it also led others to their deaths due to improper handling of chemicals in the processing of gold. AP

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

🐦 @jonlmayuga

Part One

THE shift to a federal form of government offers a ray of hope to the minerals-development sector, with big players optimistic of changing the games under a different—and quirky, for some—scenario.

There are two laws that regulate mining in the Philippines: Republic Act (RA) 7942, or the Philippine Mining Act of 1995, which regulates large-scale mining; and RA 7076, or the People's Small-Scale Mining Act, which regulates small-scale mining.

The former, signed by then-President Fidel V. Ramos in 1995, aims to attract more foreign investment

“by defining the agreements for mineral exploitation, and provide the requirements for acquiring mining rights,” according to Roberto B. Raymundo of the De La Salle University (DLSU) School of Economics.

In the paper he presented at the DLSU Research Congress in 2014, Raymundo explained the law allows 100-percent

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Federalism seen to offer uncertain future for mining, power sectors

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foreign ownership of mining projects through Financial or Technical Assistance Agreements (FTAAs). To encourage mining the law also gives several incentives such as a four-year income-tax holiday, tax and duty-free capital equipment imports, value-added tax exemptions, income-tax deductions (when operations are posting losses) and accelerated depreciation.

Raymundo also said the law "strengthens the role of local government units in mining projects, both as beneficiaries and as active participants in mineral resource management, consistent with the provisions of the constitution and government policies on local autonomy and empowerment."

Under a new government, mining operations currently pass through the proverbial eye of the needle with an environmental advocate at the helm of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Unclear future

DENR officials told the BUSINESS-MIRROR that a change in the form of government offers an uncertain future. Leo L. Jasareno, DENR senior undersecretary for Mining, said mineral resource management would depend on the law that would create federal states.

"Hindi pa natin alam [We still don't know what would happen to

the law]," Jasareno said. "It all depends on Congress," he added.

DENR Undersecretary Luis Jacinto, the concurrent chief of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), agreed.

"It will depend on the form that [government] will take. There will be set of rules," Jacinto said. "*Makikita doon kung ano ang* [The set of rules would show the] key role of federal states as far as the country's minerals-resource management is concerned."

He added that the rules would also determine how governance would not be only of the mining sector, but also of the country's natural resources. According to Jacinto, the Lower House has not crafted a working paper yet on how to govern the mining sector under a federal form of government.

"It all depends on what will Congress come up with," he said. "Right now, we have no clear picture of federalism's impact on mining."

Local condition

THE application of RA 7942 was marked by several hiccups marked the application of the country's mining act, according to Raymundo.

The law was met by protests by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and indigenous peoples' communities. Lawsuits were filed that, according to Raymundo, arose from the conflicting national and local government laws.

The noise spooked investments and risked the attainment of the law's purpose.

He added that, "Because of the continued protest over alleged violations of mining companies, their destruction of the environment and the displacement of indigenous people and communities, local governments of 14 provinces had promulgated ordinances banning open pit mining."

"The amount of investments flowing into the mining sector [has] not been sufficient in order to fully tap the immense potential mineral reserves of the country," Raymundo said. "One of the primary reasons for the low level of investments being generated by the sector is the risk and uncertainty created by the flawed provisions of the Philippine Mining Act of 1995 and its overlaps with other laws, such as the Local Government Code of 1991."

Better days

ALREADY shaken by pronouncements of new DENR chief Regina Paz L. Lopez, mining companies remain hopeful of better days ahead under federalism.

The Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP), which represents large-scale mining companies through its Executive Vice President Nelia Halcon, says while the federal form of government will not take shape overnight, it will be good for everyone to consider the sys-

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

*Federalism to offer uncertain future
for mining power sector*

tem. Halcon added that the Comp believes federalism is expected to enhance the development of the rural areas and provinces.

"A federal economic center in the regions that will oversee the development of provinces based on their priorities and economic advantage will be a welcome development and, hopefully, will also put all local government officials on their toes since no LGU [local government unit] would want to be placed at the bottom line of development," Halcon said.

However, COMP believes that federalism will not necessarily improve minerals production.

"This will depend on the implementation of the system of processing permits and licenses. Streamlining the process is a must," she said.

Halcon, however, said she and COMP are confident that LGUs would toe the line in seeing to it that no illegal-mining operations will be allowed under their "transparent" governance.

Devolution to LGUs?

HALCON said COMP believes under federalism, the DENR's mandate would not necessarily be diminished. She expressed hope that devolution of functions and responsibilities will be clear "so that it would be easier for the mining industry to work with LGUs since their operations are in the provinces.

"We presume that the DENR

will work hand in hand with LGUs and while LGUs have their own levels of needs and policies, they will think about the good of the country or the macro level benefits," she added.

For its part, the COMP said the industry could harness the technical capabilities of government agencies, which can help capacitate LGUs.

She said discussions about mineral resource development could open the minds of everyone that mining could be undertaken in a responsible manner and the need to explore areas to delineate the nation's wealth is paramount for developing a country, like the Philippines.

Halcon said the perspective of the industry to link its Social Development Management Program (SDMP) with the development plan of LGUs would further enhance the province or region's economic base, thereby providing the catalyst for economic growth.

"The development of industries, no matter how big or small, can promote the development of industrial centers of growth in the region and can reverse migration to the cities," she added.

Solving hiccups

ACCORDING to Halcon, federalism can address conflicts in the implementation of laws governing environmental protection measures, as well as in share in mining profit.

She said these conflicts could either be avoided or ultimately resolved.

Among these conflicts is the ban on open pit mining, an extraction method allowed by law.

However, such method is banned in several provinces, like South Cotabato. The province is one of the areas covered by the \$5.9-billion Tampakan Copper-Gold Project.

Other conflicts include the non-transmittal or late transmittal of the rightful share of LGUs on mining taxes and the expansion of "no-go zones" in mining without clear justification.

Halcon said COMP believes under federalism, rules and regulations on these issues could be made clearer, and responsibilities and accountabilities are pinpointed.

Elected officials in the provinces who do not implement laws will need to think twice about their governance framework under federalism, she added.

Lopez had already suspended at least nine mining operations for failing to meet environmental standards and violating mining and environmental laws.

An ongoing mining audit, with very rigid criteria giving more weight to social, environmental and lately biodiversity considerations on top of the physical or technical aspect of mining regulation makes all mining operation prone to closure under Lopez's watch. *To be continued*

With additional reporting by Dennis D. Estopace

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS. FEARLESS VIEWS

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Improving gold prices boost Apex net income

By Ronnel W. Domingo

APEX Mining Co. said the Brexit vote had helped push its first-semester consolidated net income up by 60 percent year-on-year to P133 million from P81.7 million in the same period of 2015.

At the same time, revenue revved up 42 percent to P1.7 billion due to continued rise in production of gold and silver despite lower ore grades.

The company ~~locked~~ ^{produced} up 26,577 ounces gold and 140,317 ounces silver, both showing an increase of 31 percent in volume.

Apex attributed the higher net earnings mainly to the new production record that the Maco mine achieved during the period.

The Maco mine in Compostela Valley saw throughput rise 34 percent to 203,476 tons of ore. Daily milling volume averaged 1,400 tons or 27 percent higher.

Apex said that as metal prices started to recover toward the second quarter, gold prices in the first

half averaged \$1,247 per ounce or 3 percent higher year-on-year.

"The higher volume outputs and gold price combined to generate the highest average level thus far in the company's history," it added.

Also, Apex said the depreciation of the peso against the dollar contributed to the rise in revenue.

"The general weakening of the US dollar against gold and the British vote to exit the European Union provided the impetus for the gold price to move favorably for the gold producers," company president and chief executive Walter W. Brown said in a statement.

"While we have seen gold price rise to \$1,375 per ounce as its highest level in the past months or so, it still has yet to break the \$1,400 resistance level," Brown said. "We would be pleased if the metal price would move up, nevertheless at this level, we expect the company's earnings for the year to be significantly higher than the income reported for the whole of last year."



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Dynamite found in Kudarat mine

SULTAN KUDARAT – Authorities recovered 39,000 sticks of dynamite from an old mining site in Bagumbayan town in this province on Saturday.

The explosive, piled in an abandoned shelter at a copper and ore mine site in Barangay Sarapinang, was discovered by villagers, according to provincial police director Senior Superintendent Raul Supiter.

Initial investigation showed the sticks of dynamite were owned by the Ippo China Mining Co., which stopped operation several years ago.

Supiter asked barangay officials to order villagers to surrender some of the dynamite they took from the site and were keeping at home.

"These are powerful explosives, very harmful if mishandled," he said.

Explosives and mining experts from the Army's 57th Infantry Battalion and Department of Environment and Natural Resources assisted the local police in disposing of the dynamite.

– John Unson

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Dangling house halts plugging of sinkhole

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—A race to plug a sinkhole in the mining town of Itogon in Benguet province was suspended because of new danger posed by a dangling house, according to the provincial engineer.

The void opened in October last year during a typhoon, swallowing seven houses atop a hill.

Another house near the precipice is about to plunge, forcing workers to cut short refilling and a stone walling project to stabilize the hillside, said Rene Tabdi, provincial engineer, adding that they cannot risk the safety of workers.

The provincial government financed the project to rehabilitate the area, which was declared a part of a danger zone before torrential rains widened and deepened the hole.

Government engineers discarded the option of blasting the house because it may worsen the instability of the area.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau had concluded that rainwater dumped by Typhoon "Lands" last year had penetrated underground pocket crevices that had eroded, causing the surface to collapse and create a 20-meter wide pit.

"All we can do is wait and let nature take its course," Tabdi said.

The construction of the retaining wall would cost up to P4 million and would be undertaken in two phases.

Tabdi said the Benguet engineering office was tasked to build the wall and to rehabilitate a road that was destroyed by the sinkhole.

Residents of Sitio Kamangan in Barangay Virac have been provided a relocation site by a mining company operating in the area.

Tabdi said it would take 1,000 cubic meters of soil, rock and silt to fill the sinkhole. The materials would come from the Ambalanga River and debris from a road widening project near the area. **Kimberlie Quitasol, Inquirer Northern Luzon**



WORK to plug this sinkhole in the village of Virac in Itogon town, Benguet province, has been suspended.

RICHARD BALONGLONG / INQUIRER

NORTHERN LUZON

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DENR warns gov't projects

ILOILO CITY — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is urging government projects in Western Visayas to follow environmental laws.

DENR Undersecretary Nicanor Perlas III said that some government projects damage the environment in

Panay and Guimaras Islands.

Perlas mentioned the flood-mitigating project of the National Irrigation Administration (NIA-6) in Zarraga town, Iloilo.

The project's contractor allegedly cut trees near a creek without permits from DENR. Perlas disclosed the problem during the August 11 launching of the public-private environmental task force known as Amlig Panay-Guimaras

in Iloilo City.

"The farmers and the community are favorable to the project, but it is not done properly," noted Perlas, a DENR undersecretary for the new-created civil society division.

For DENR-6 Regional Director Jim Sampulna, the Amlig Panay-Guimaras is designed to create a stronger partnership between the public and private sectors in implementing laws to preserve the remaining biodiversity in the two major islands comprising Western Visayas.

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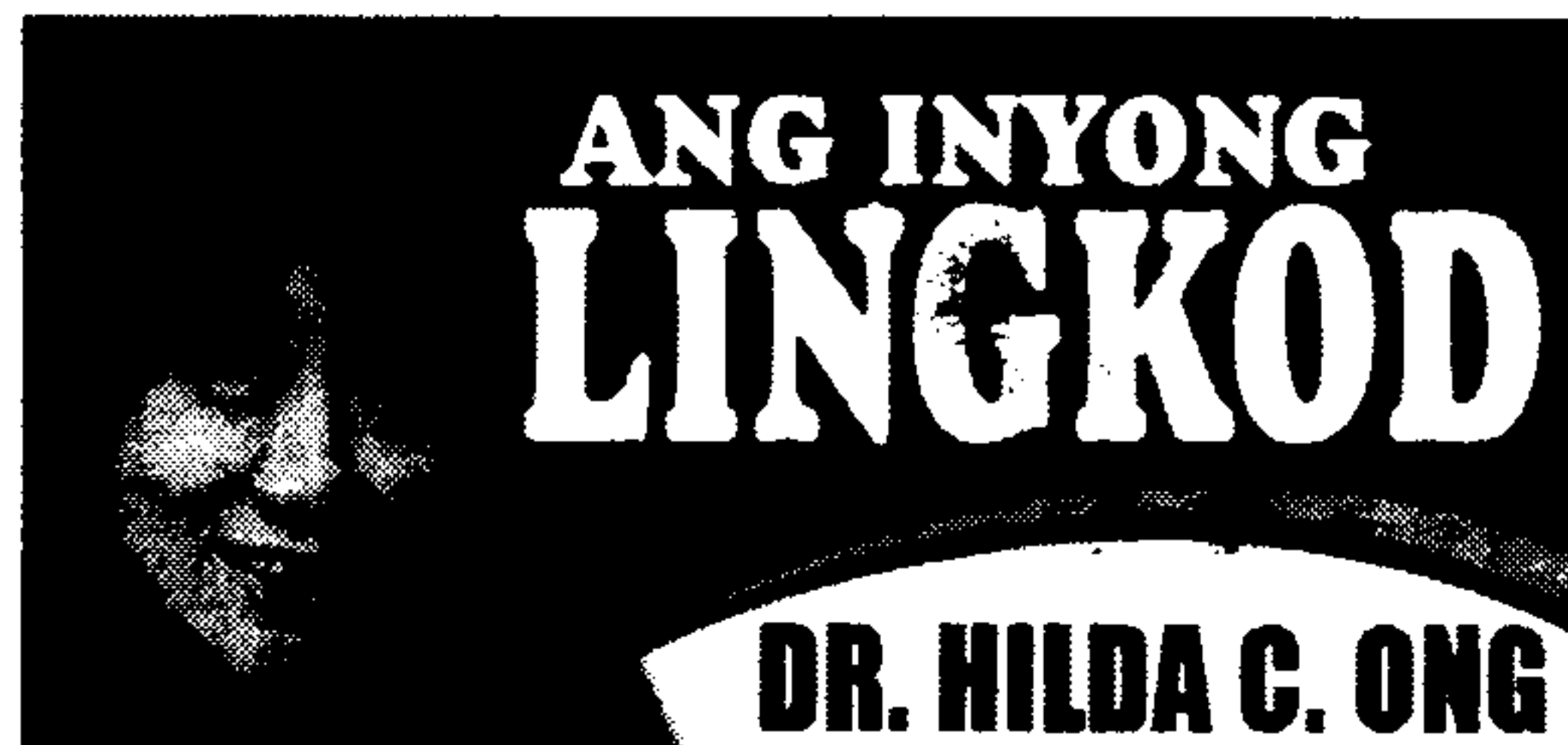
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SA kanyang pagharap sa mga bumubuo ng Financial Executive Institute of the Philippines (FINEX) sa Makati City noong July 20, 2016. Hiningi ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Gina Lopez ang kanilang tulong at mas malawakang partisipasyon sa pagsusulong at ibayong pagpapatupad ng mga environmental policy at programa ng kagawaran sa ilalim ng administrasyon ni Pangulong Rodrigo R. Duterte.

Para kay Secretary Lopez, lubhang mahalaga ang maiaambag ng iba't ibang ahensya ng pamahalaan, pribadong sektor, Civil Society Organizations (CSO's), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's), at mga eksperto sa tama at akmang direksyong tatahakin ng DENR.

Katulad ng matagal nang pangarap ng mga CSO at NGO, nangako ang kalihim na mas bibigyang pansin ang mga ito sa pamamagitan ng pagkakaroon ng pinagsama-samang CSO/NGO arm sa loob ng kagawaran. "Civil society should be the one to protect the environment. We can accomplish this together" diin ni Secretary Lopez.

Aminado rin ang DENR chief na lumalala ang kondisyon ng kalikasan at kapaligiran sanhi ng kahirapan, kaya naman sa loob ng kan-



DR. HILDA C. ONG

'STRONGER PARTNERSHIP' HINILING NI DENR SEC. LOPEZ

yang panunungkulan, bibigyang pansin niya ang pagsasaayos ng ekonomikal na buhay ng mahihirap na umaasa lamang sa bunga at yamang hatid ng kalikasan sa pamamagitan ng alternatibong kabuhayan.

Ganito rin ang pananaw ni General Renato Miranda nang siya ay executive director pa ng dating Anti-Illegal Logging Task Force (AILTF) sa ilalim ng Executive Order No. 23. Kung nagpatuloy lamang si Gen. Miranda, marahil ay hindi na-back to zero si secretary Lopez sa pagpapatupad ng "social fencing".

Kabilang sa mga programang bibigyang bihis ng DENR sa bagong administrasyon ay ang National Greening Program (NGP) na mas tututok sa mga magsasaka, mangingisda, at mga kabataan. Maaari anyang maging behikulo ang NGP sa pagkakaroon ng isang agro-forestry based

economic zones.

Nais din ni Secretary Lopez na magkaroon ng direktang pakikipagtulungan sa mga kabataan, "I want to capture their idealism and energy into doing something for the environment and the people."

Gayundin, kokunsulta rin ang kagawaran sa mga nasa akademya at ibang sangay ng pamahalaan sa pagtataguyod ng "island models" na magpapakita ng tinatawag niyang "convergence approach in developing environment", at kabilang sa mga lugar na ito ay ang Oriental Mindoro, Sibuyan Island sa Romblon, Palawan, Sorsogon, Guimaras, at Batangas.

Simula August 10, 2016 at tuwing Miyerkules ay idineklaran bilang "People's Day" sa lahat ng tanggapan ng DENR sa buong bansa. Ibig sabihin, ang lahat ng opisyal at kawani ng kagawaran ay magiging bukas at nasa kanilang tanggapan upang dinggin at bigyang solusyon ang mga problema at isyung ihahatag sa kanilang harapan.

May bago nang hotline ang DENR, para sa inyong mga katanungan at mga hinang, tumawag o mag-text lamang sa 0917-5229344 o kaya'y mag-email sa aksyonkalikasan@denr.gov.ph. Puwede rin naman sa bagong bukas na hotline number ng Malacañang, ang 8888.

Talagang damang-dama na ang malaking pagbabago sa DENR sa ilalim ng pamumuno nina Pangulong Duterte at Secretary Lopez.

Nasa sa likod ninyo ang suporta ng taumbayan.

The Standard

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Energy Development Corp. organizes a site visit for various stakeholders to its Southern Negros Geothermal Power Plant in Valencia, Negros Oriental, to dispel allegations about its 60-megawatt expansion plan. EDC, the country's biggest geothermal energy producer, is expanding SNGP's capacity from 222.5 megawatts to 282.5 MW to meet the region's growing electricity needs. Shown are the visitors and hosts during the site visit.

EDC plant expanding within geothermal site

ENERGY Development Corp. said over the weekend the 60-megawatt expansion of the Southern Negros Geothermal Power Plant in Valencia, Negros Oriental will not encroach into a biodiversity area.

EDC, the country's biggest geothermal energy producer, is expanding Southern Negros Geothermal's capacity to 282.5 MW from 222.5 MW to meet the region's growing electricity needs.

"We will confine our expansion within SNGP's existing geothermal production block in Valencia," EDC's Negros Integrated Geothermal Business Unit head Jay Joel Soriano said.

EDC recently organized a recent site visit for various stakeholders to the Southern Negros Geothermal power plant in Valencia, Negros Oriental to dispel allegations against the expansion plan.

Reports from some quarters said EDC's expansion required an additional 5,163 hectares that would encroach into Mount Talinis, considered a key biodiversity area in Negros Oriental.

EDC, however, said the expansion involved an increase in capacity, not the area.

Southern Negros Geothermal's existing geothermal production or development block spans 5,163 hectares in the Palinpinon-Okoy watershed in Valencia, which is physically separate from Mount Talinis.

Southern Negros Geothermal's steam field and power plant occupy less than 200 hectares, and EDC assured the expansion would be confined within the existing development block of 5,163 hectares.

"I believe the issue about SNGP's

plan to expand by another 5,163 hectares is a result of a misunderstanding, because the supposed additional expansion area corresponds to our existing development block," Soriano said.

"But as we have been saying, we are not in Mount Talinis and we are not going to Mount Talinis," he said.

EDC is awaiting the release of the environmental compliance certificate from the Environment Department for the 60-MW geothermal expansion.

The company said the proposed expansion went through public consultations and hearings for the ECC application and received the strong endorsement for an ECC from the host communities and local government of Valencia.

"But pending the release of the ECC, EDC has not begun any activity for its proposed geothermal expansion project," Soriano said. **Alena Mae Flores**

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Coast Guard cleans up oil spill in Puerto Princesa

By ARGYLL CYRUS B. GEDUCOS

A sack of oil-contaminated debris was collected by the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) in a clean-up and recovery operation following an oil spill off the coast of Puerto Princesa City, Palawan recently.

The PCG's report released yesterday said around 50 liters of used oil was also collected during the operation conducted by the personnel of Coast Guard Station (CGS) Puerto Princesa along

the shoreline of LS Tidepole, Barangay Bagong Silang in Puerto Princesa City last Wednesday.

It said the PCG had around 100 liters of used oil spilled in the area covering up to 60 meters off the shoreline.

However, the team temporarily stopped the operations as the oil slowly dispersed due to strong winds and big waves.

For now, the PCG will monitor the area for any recurrence of the spill during low tide.



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COA presses Gina Lopez: Whatever happened to the La Mesa Ecopark money?

Gina Lopez's COA problem just won't go away.

Her ABS-CBN Foundation's Bantay Kalikasan has been asked anew by the state bean counters to account for the non-remittance since 2004 of the government's profit-share in the La Mesa Ecopark business.

While not specifically naming the new DENR secretary, a new report by the Commission on Audit was especially critical of her ABS-CBN

Foundation since the same issues have gone unresolved after COA already red-flagged them in 2011.

According to the ABS-CBN Foundation, its Bantay Kalikasan arm started a reforestation program in Metro Manila's last natural forest cover in 1999.

Then MWSS administrator Jose Mabanta and the rest of the MWSS board awarded to the Lopez foundation not only the watershed management, but also the task of clearing the squatters and illegal agricultural settlers out of the 33-hectare forest cover.

Years later the state auditors were zeroing on the financial management of the La Mesa watershed, not on its environmental concerns.

And COA was not amused with its findings.

A special COA audit team said the ABS-CBN Foundation had "gone overboard by collecting management fees of 15 percent and still holding on to the 100 percent net income" since 2004.



On top of the 15 percent management fee, the ABS-CBN Foundation is also entitled to 30 percent of the park's profit.

The rest of the net income should accrue to the state's Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, 40 percent, and the Quezon City government, 30 percent.

Just as in 2011, the new COA audit focused as well on the alleged continuing lack of MWSS board approval of the agency that effectively privatized the watershed maintenance.

"The post-facto approval/ratification of the memorandum of agreement by the (MWSS) Board of Trustees...has not been secured to date and the other deficiencies noted in the contract have not been acted upon," said COA, unusually suggesting a way out of the legal predicament.

The MWSS management, in turn, told COA it would request from the Bureau of Internal Revenue an official copy of a ruling presented by the ABS-CBN Foundation on the latter's right to collect the 15-percent management fee.

Lopez: What profit-sharing?

Reached for comment, Lopez emailed back:

"The ABS-CBN Foundation largely through my efforts raised \$130 million to reforest La Mesa and raised another \$150 million to build La Mesa Ecopark.. We get mph thing!" she said, before adding, "Only 15 percent to run operations..."

"Maybe someone should say thank you, no?" she continued. "Instead of trying to find loopholes for whatever...Just say thank you!"

As to the alleged profit-sharing scheme, this was Lopez's answer:

"Hmmm, the agreement before I got into this was that 100 percent of the profit should go to the watershed because that's the reason why I was doing the ecopark - for the sustainability of the watershed."

"I made it clear I was not keen on giving MWSS any money because I would not know what would happen to it," she said.

"I made it very clear - government changes often and I am not in this to give government money. I am in this to make sure the watershed is okay. That our prime responsibility was to the watershed."

"And they agreed - and they also agreed that they would only take a share WHEN and only WHEN the watershed was okay in terms of operations, etc."

"That was very clear to me," Lopez said.

Heard through the grapevine

The 4 p.m. Friday PAL flight from Davao to Manila arrived nearly midnight, a victim of the non-stop rains that nearly crippled the Ninoy Aquino airport.

The almost fully-loaded flight was initially diverted to Clark and but, because there were more than a dozen other planes circling on a holding pattern, was forced to turn back and land in Iloilo instead.

There the A320 sat on the tarmac for an hour, its passengers thankfully generally behaved even as food and drinks except for water had ran out, before the plane again took off and resumed its flight to Manila.

E-mail: cocktales_to5@yahoo.com



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Lopez optimistic on AFP, PNP's new role as environment protectors

ENVIRONMENT and Natural Resources Secretary Gina Lopez believes the image of the military and the police will be put in a more positive light with their new role as protectors of the environment.

Lopez said the country's security forces play a crucial role in the newly created anti-environmental crime task force led by the DENR which will go after environmental offenders and ensure strict implementation of environmental laws and regulations.

The DENR recently signed a memorandum of agreement with other key government agencies, including the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police, for the creation of the task force called "A-TEAM Kalikasan."

Lopez said their new role in environmental protection will help erase the bad image of soldiers and policemen as bodyguards of influential politicians and businessmen and make them guardians of the nation's wealth and the environment.

"The (military and the police) were being used as bodyguards for big business interests. I want to shift that and work together with them, to work with the farmers, to work with the indigenous people, because my experience with the military has been only very good and we need to shape that," Lopez said.

"I think of we do that and we all work together with the civil society, I don't see why we can't make a difference, added Lopez as she sees the military and the police as partners in development," she added.

Other parties to the MOA are the Department of National Defense, the Department of the Interior and Local Government, the Department of Transportation, and the Philippine Coast Guard.

The task force aims to respond to the clamor for social justice, especially among the indigenous peoples who complain about land grabbing and the negative impacts of mining and illegal logging to the environment and their livelihoods.

Cory Martinez



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Phl ends climate forum chairmanship today

The Philippines is set to turn over the chairmanship of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) to Ethiopia during a high-level meeting at the Senate today.

Secretary Emmanuel de Guzman, vice chair and executive

director of the Climate Change Commission (CCC), thanked the CVF for the opportunity to lead nations highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change in pushing for greater global action to stop global warming.

He said the Philippines, which chaired the CVF for 19 months since January 2015, would continue to lead the coalition as it joins the CVF Leadership Troika together with Ethiopia and former chair Costa Rica.

- Giovanni Nilles

Q.1
 STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Climate victims: Every second 1 person displaced by disaster

ROME—Climate change and related extreme weather events have devastated the lives and livelihoods of tens of millions of most vulnerable people worldwide—by far exceeding the total of all the unfortunate and unjustifiable victims of all terrorist attacks combined.

26 million

The average number of people displaced by disasters, such as floods and storms every year, or one person forced to flee every second

However, the unstoppable climate crisis receives just a tiny fraction of mainstream media attention. See these dramatic facts.

"Every second, one person is displaced by disaster," the Oslo-based Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) reports. "In 2015 only, more than 19.2 million people fled disasters in 113 countries. Disasters displace three to 10 times more people than conflict and war worldwide."

As climate change continues, it will likely lead to more frequent and severe natural hazards; the impact will be heavy, warns this independent humanitarian organization providing aid and assistance to people forced to flee.

"On average, 26 million people are displaced by disasters, such as floods and storms every year. That's one person forced to flee every second."

"Climate change is our generation's greatest challenge," says Jan Egeland, secretary-general of the NRC, which counts with over 5,000 humanitarian workers across more than 25 countries.

The climate refugees and migrants add to the ongoing humanitarian emergency. "Not since World War II have more people needed our help," warned the secretary general of the NRC

Jan Egeland, who held the post of UN undersecretary general for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief (2003 to 2006).

Egeland—who was one of the most active, outspoken participants in the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in Istanbul in May—also said that the humanitarian sector is failing to protect civilians. "I hope that world leaders ask themselves if they can at least stop giving arms, giving money to those armed groups that are systematically violating the humanitarian law, and bombing hospitals and schools, abusing women and children," he said to Inter Press Service (IPS) during the WHS.

For its part, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) forecasts 200 million environmental migrants by 2050, moving either within their countries or across borders, on a permanent or temporary basis.

Many of them would be coastal population. On this, the United Nations Environment Programme warns that coastal populations are at particular risk, as a global rise in temperature of between 1.1 and 3.1 degrees Celsius would increase the mean sea level by 0.36 to 0.73 meters by 2100, adversely impacting low-lying areas with submergence, flooding, erosion and saltwater intrusion.

In a recent interview with IPS Nairobi correspondent Manipadma Jena, the director general of the IOM, William Lacy Swing, said that coastal migration is starting already but it is very hard to be exact as there is no good data to be able to forecast accurately.

"We do not know. But it is clearly going to figure heavily in the future. And it's going to happen both in the low-lying islands in the Pacific and the Caribbean, and in those countries where people build houses very close to the shore and have floods every year as in Bangladesh."

"It is quite clear that we will have more and more conflicts over shortages of food and water that are going to be exacerbated by climate change," Lacy Swing warned.

Political crises and natural disasters are the other major drivers of migration today, he told IPS.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Climate victims? Every second 1
person displaced by disaster

Lacy Swing confirmed the fact that climate victims now add to record 60 million people who are fleeing war and persecution.

"We have never had so many complex and protracted humanitarian emergencies now happening simultaneously from West Africa all the way to Asia, with very few spots in between which do not have some issue. We have today 40 million forcibly displaced people and 20 million refugees, the greatest number of uprooted people since the Second World War."

On July 25, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution approving an agreement to make the IOM part of the UN system.

Founded in the wake of the World War II to resettle refugees from Europe, OIM will celebrate its 65th anniversary in December this year.

"Migration is at the heart of the new global political landscape and its social and economic dynamics. At a time of growing levels of migration within and across borders, a closer legal and working relationship between the UN and IOM is needed more than ever," said the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in a statement welcoming the Assembly's decision.

IOM, which assisted an estimated 20 million migrants in 2015, is an intergovernmental organization with more than 9,500 staff and 450 offices worldwide.

"We are living in a time of much tragedy and uncertainty. This agreement shows Member States' commitment to more humane and orderly migration that benefits all, where we celebrate the human beings behind the numbers," Lacy Swing said.

Through the agreement, the UN recognizes IOM as an "indispensable actor in the field of human mobility." IOM added that this includes protection of migrants and displaced people in migration-affected communities, as well as in areas of refugee resettlement and voluntary returns, and incorporates migration in country development plans.

The agreement paves the way for the agreement to be signed by Ban and Lacy Swing at the UN Summit for refugees and migrants on September 19, which will bring together UN member states to address large movements of refugees and migrants for more humane and coordinated approach. *IPS*

The Manila Times

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

TORNADO This video grab from the Twitter account of Karen Madrigal shows a tornado sweeping across Manila from the Port Area before 5 p.m. on Sunday. Madrigal took the video from a condominium in Binondo district.



■ SWEEPS FROM A1

Tornado

p.m. and was seen traveling toward Intramuros and Balic-Balic districts in Manila, and then to Galas and New Manila in Quezon City.

It toppled trees, electrical posts and destroyed property along its way.

Among those hit and damaged was the National Press Club (NPC) building in Intramuros. Parts of the glass staircase of the NPC was destroyed and as well as some of makeshift eateries in front.

Several houses were reported damaged and a number of residents were injured in the Baseco com-

pond in Tondo. The area is adjacent to the Port Area where the twister was believed to have formed.

The twister also shattered the glass door of a 24-hour convenience store and felled some trees on G. Tuazon Street.

The tornado was caught on video by Twitter user Karen Madrigal as it swung from the Port Area and Intramuros in Manila.

Madrigal uploaded a time-lapse video of her two-minute clip of the tornado, taken from her condominium unit in Binondo district.

WILLIAM B. DEPASUPIL

BusinessWorld

INCREASE YOUR BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DAVAO

DENR to fine, imprison Mt. Apo trekkers

AN OFFICIAL of the Department of Environmental and Natural Resources (DENR) regional office warned that mountaineers caught climbing Mt. Apo without a permit will be fined P5,000 to P100,000 plus a possible imprisonment of one to six years. DENR Parks Operations Superintendent Eduardo V. Ragasa also said tribal leaders in the area are undergoing training to serve as park rangers. Mt. Apo, the country's highest peak, has been closed for five years following major forest fires in March-April. — **Maya M. Padillo**

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Aboitiz grows 76,000 seedlings nationwide

The Aboitiz Group, together with several of its business units, renewed its pledge to create a #BetterWorld at the Aboitiz Annual Groupwide Simultaneous Tree-Planting (STP) Activity last July 16, with company team members planting 76,492 seedlings all over the country.

A total of 2,649 Aboitiz team members and partners trooped to 21 locations in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao to grow several fruit-bearing, hardwood, and other indigenous types of seedlings. These include mahogany, agoho, mangroves, pomelo, and durian, among others.

For Manila-based Aboitiz team members, the Aboitiz Annual Groupwide STP took place at the Makiling-Banahaw (MakBan) Geothermal Site in Sitio Bungahan, Barangay Limao in Calauan, Laguna, a host community of AP Renewables, Inc. (APRI). Participating BUs in Luzon were Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Aboitiz Foundation, WeatherPhilippines Foundation, Aboitiz Aviation, AboitiPower, SN Aboitiz Power, Hedcor, APRI, Therma Luzon, Therma Marine, Therma Mobile, Aseagas, Advent Energy, AESI, UnionBank, CitySavings, PETNET, Pilmico, and Republic Cement.

Also present were Mayumi Quintos-Natividad, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Assistant Director, Forest Management Bureau, National Greening Program (NGP) and members of the National Power Corporation MakBan Watershed Area team.



The Aboitiz Annual Groupwide STP forms part of A-PARK, the Aboitiz Group's firm commitment to grow nine million seedlings by 2020 (revised upward from an initial goal of three million seedlings by 2015, met a year ahead of schedule), thus upholding the importance of a healthy ecosystem by shrinking the Aboitiz Group's overall carbon footprint.

The Aboitiz Group, through A-PARK, is one of DENR's largest NGP partners to date.

"A-Park is the Aboitiz Group's contribution to reforestation and a healthy ecosystem. Under this, we conduct our annual simultaneous treeplanting as well as our other year-

round tree growing activities that are led by our SBUs nationwide," said Erramon I. Aboitiz, Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc. President and Chief Executive Officer.

"The Aboitiz Group's commitment to help restore the planet's forest cover encompasses nearly four decades of watershed development and looking after forest lands," Aboitiz noted.

As of end-2015, the Aboitiz Group has already grown 3.8 million seedlings in various locations nationwide, with each seedling having an average survival rate of 78%. This puts the Aboitiz Group well on track to growing nine million seedlings by end-2020, which are then estimated to sequester 450 million pounds of carbon dioxide annually.

The Standard

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



NATURAL BEAUTY. PTT Philippines, in support of the government's National Greening program, launched the 'Sibol: Re-Greening Marikina Watershed' reforestation program to rehabilitate the Upper Marikina Watershed. In photo, hundreds of volunteers join Miss Earth 2016 Imelda Schweighart at a tree planting activity at the San Ysiro Elementary School in Brgy. San Jose in Antipolo City. Manny Palmero

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

15 pythons kept as pets in Espinosa's house

By **RESTITUTO A. CAYUBIT**

TACLOBAN CITY – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources regional office 8 (DENR-8) has recovered 15 snakes being kept as pets from the residence of Albura mayor last August 13, a report from the DENR-8 said.

DENR-8 Regional Director Leonardo R. Sibbaluca told reporters an anonymous caller called up his office Friday afternoon asking if Mayor Rolando Espinosa and his son Kerwin had the necessary permits to keep pythons in their house in Sitio Tinago in Barangay Benolho, Albura.

After finding out that the Espinosas have no permit to keep wildlife, Sibbaluca formed a team to rescue the animals.

Sibbaluca said that of the 15 pythons, 11 were Philippine pythons while the four were imported from Burma. The team also found a dead python in the house.

The smallest python, a local species, is the size of the thumb which is. The biggest, also a Philippine python, is five meters long and big enough to swallow a dog, pig or a small boy.

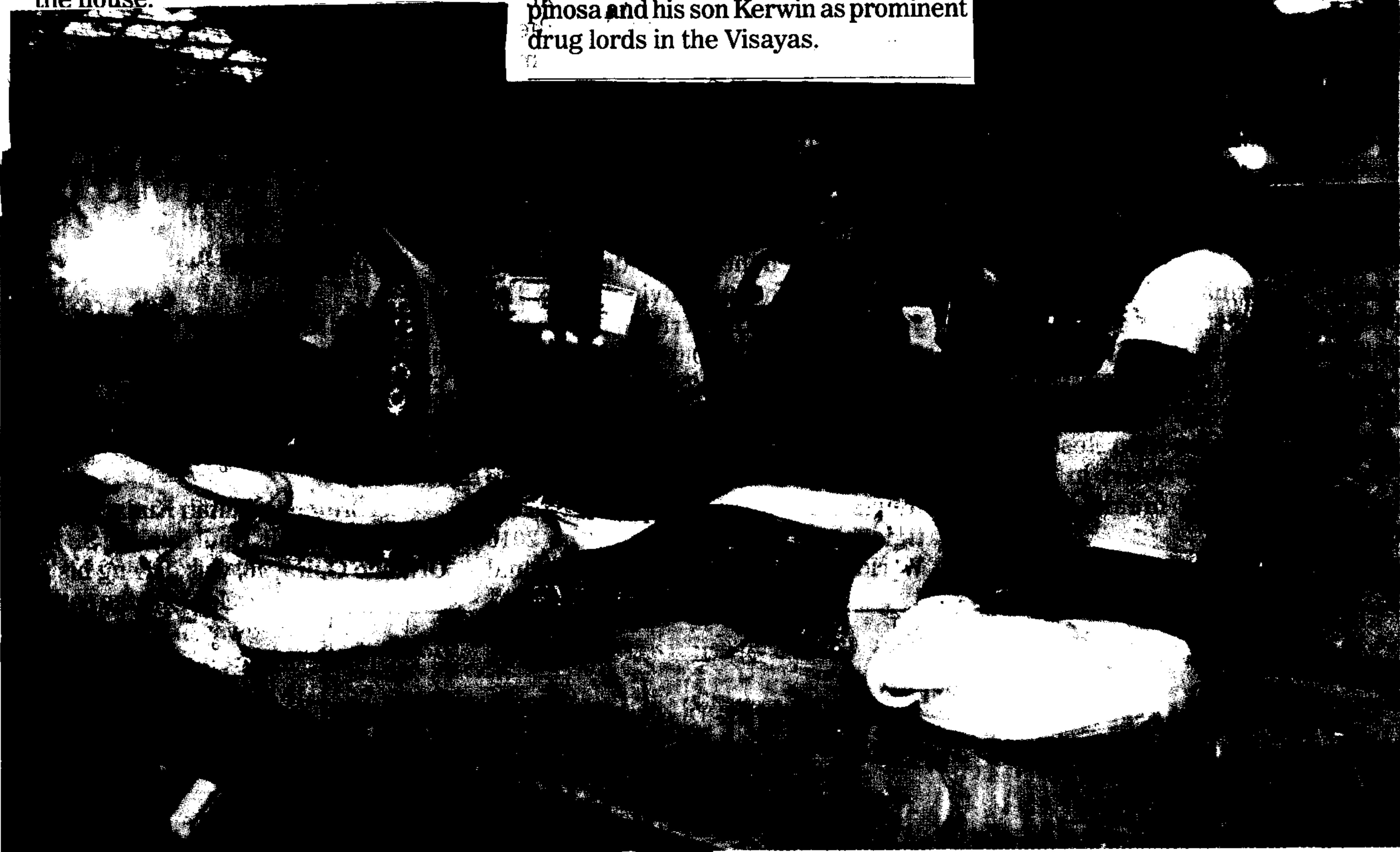
The biggest Burmese python has the size of the human leg more than four meters long, and the smallest the size of a human arm.

Sibbaluca said the animals were weak and hungry. They were brought to the DENR-8 Regional Wildlife Rescue Center in Palo, Leyte.

Sibbaluca said a veterinarian to examine the animals' condition. "If the animals are already healthy enough, they will be released to their habitat, one of the DENR-8 protected areas in Eastern Visayas," he said.

Sibbaluca said his office will file a case in court against the Espinosas for violation of Republic Act 9147 otherwise known as the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act of 2001.

President Duterte had named Espinosa and his son Kerwin as prominent drug lords in the Visayas.



RESCUED – DENR-8 Regional Director Leonardo Sibbaluca (second from right) takes a look at the pythons recovered from the house of Albura, Leyte, Mayor Rolando Espinosa were taken to Regional Wildlife Rescue Center in Palo, Leyte. (Restituto Cayubit)

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

15 PYTHONS RESCUED

DENR Region 8 Leonardo
B. Sibayan (second from
right) is shown with a large
Philippine python and two
Burmese pythons. (Rescued
A. Cayubit)



Espinosas in hot water for keeping them as pets at home

By RESTITUTO A. CAYUBIT

TACLOBAN CITY — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources Region 8 has recovered 15 snakes being kept as pets in the house of Albueria, Leyte Mayor Rolando Espinosa last August 13.

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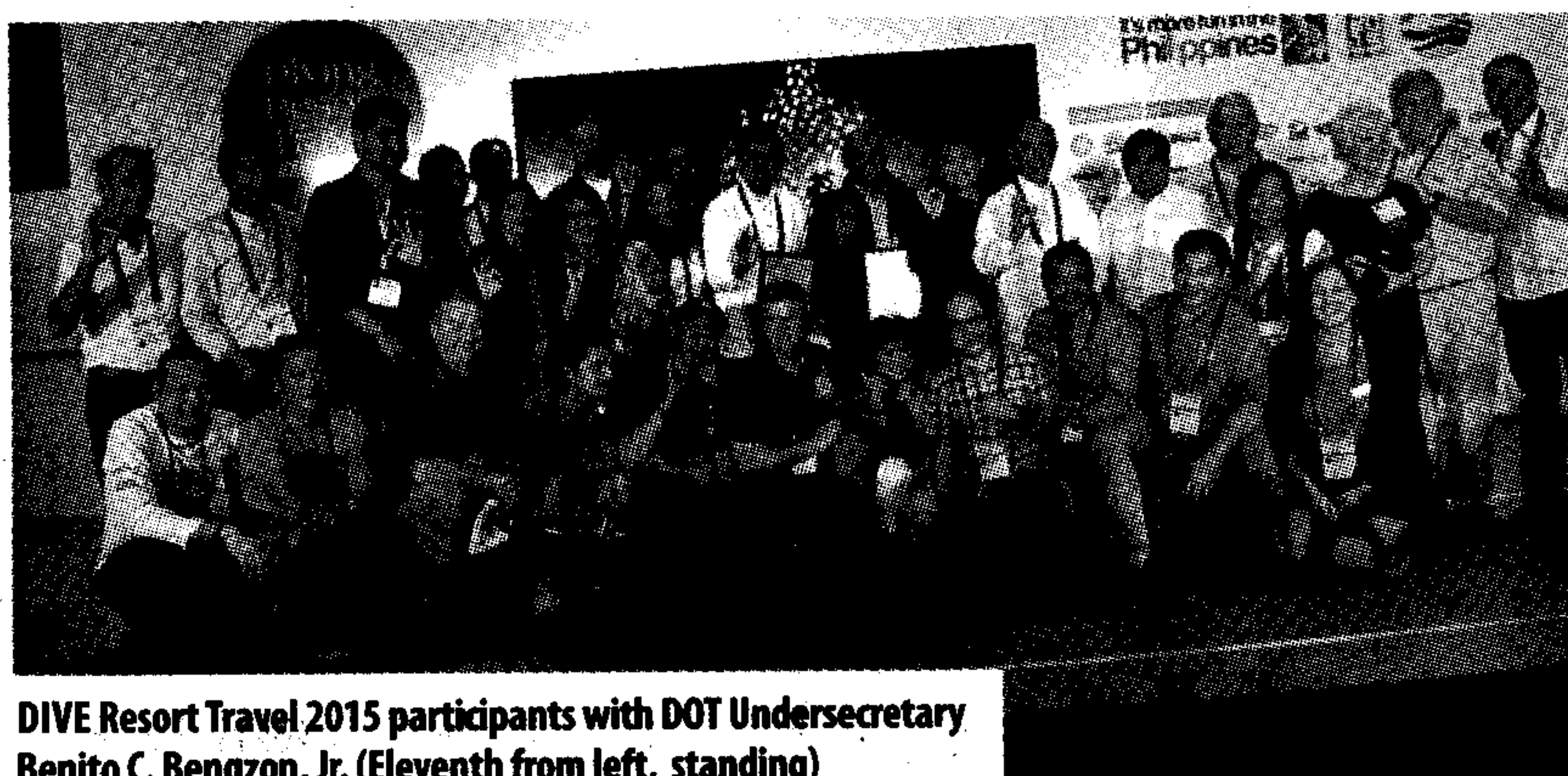
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

It's more fun to dive again in the Philippines

BY BERNARD L. SUPETAN

Photos from the DOT Market Development Group

THE Philippines have the most species in the least space of anywhere in the planet. Out of the Earth's 500 coral species, more than 400 are here."



DIVE Resort Travel 2015 participants with DOT Undersecretary Benito C. Bengzon, Jr. (Eleventh from left, standing)

So boasts the Department of Tourism's (DOT) "It's More Fun in the Philippines" TV ad.

So when Dive Resort Travel (DRT), Asia's largest diving and resort expo, set its foot in Manila for the first time last year, the international diving community was blown away by the country's lush underwater world.

Being at the center of the world's Coral Triangle, which is host to rich marine biodiversity, with 7,500 charming islands and an infinite coastline, the whole archipelago is a virtual dive spot.

The country's marine wonder takes global spotlight once more as the DRT Show returns in a three-day power-packed exposition from September 9 to 11 at the Megatrade Hall in SM Megamall.

Organized by the Hong Kong and Shanghai-based LX Development Group (LXDG) and supported by the DOT, the event will gather the world's dive industry stakeholders, which include some 2,000 dive centers, tourism boards, dive tour operators, equipment suppliers and marine conservationists.

The core event is the Philippine Dive Travel Exchange (Dive Travex) where foreign buyers of dive-tours and services will meet local dive-tour sellers in business-to-business (B2B) meetings.

This year's Travex is expected to be stronger with the presence of the biggest international dive operators from major source markets, such as the United States, China, Korea, Japan, Taiwan and

Australia.

To date, 67 buyers have registered and confirmed their participation, the most notable of which are Caradonna and Ultimate Dive Travel from the US, and Dive Ad-

ventures and Allways Dive Expeditions from Australia.

New markets, such as India, the Middle East, Italy and Spain, will also be looking into the vibrant local dive market.

An added component is the "Know Your Market Seminars," led by international buyers, to introduce local sellers of dive products and services to appropriate markets.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

It's more fun to dive again in the Philippines

Activities include seminars on dive tourism, dive safety training, exhibits of top dive sites, and pep talks and competition on underwater photography featuring the world's top diver-photographers.

Meanwhile, lectures on marine biodiversity and conservation from the Marine Wildlife Watch of the Philippines and Ocean Quest will highlight the need to conserve and enrich the marine ecosystem.

Adding glitter to the event are Emmy Award-winning underwater IMAX film producers Howard and Michele Hall, French shark conservation specialist Steven Surina and prized Filipino underwater photographer Scott Gutsy Tuason of Squires Bingham.

Tourism authorities recognize scuba diving as a high-value activity that can help spur the economy in the countryside, especially the communities which are host to dive spots.

This adventure watersport also brings attention to the need to preserve the marine and coastal ecosystem for sustainable development and tourism.

Foreign buyers will also be taken to a post-event dive tour to some of the country's top marine havens, such as Coron in Palawan, Malapascua and Moalboal in Cebu. Ne-



DRT buyers gear up to dive in Bohol

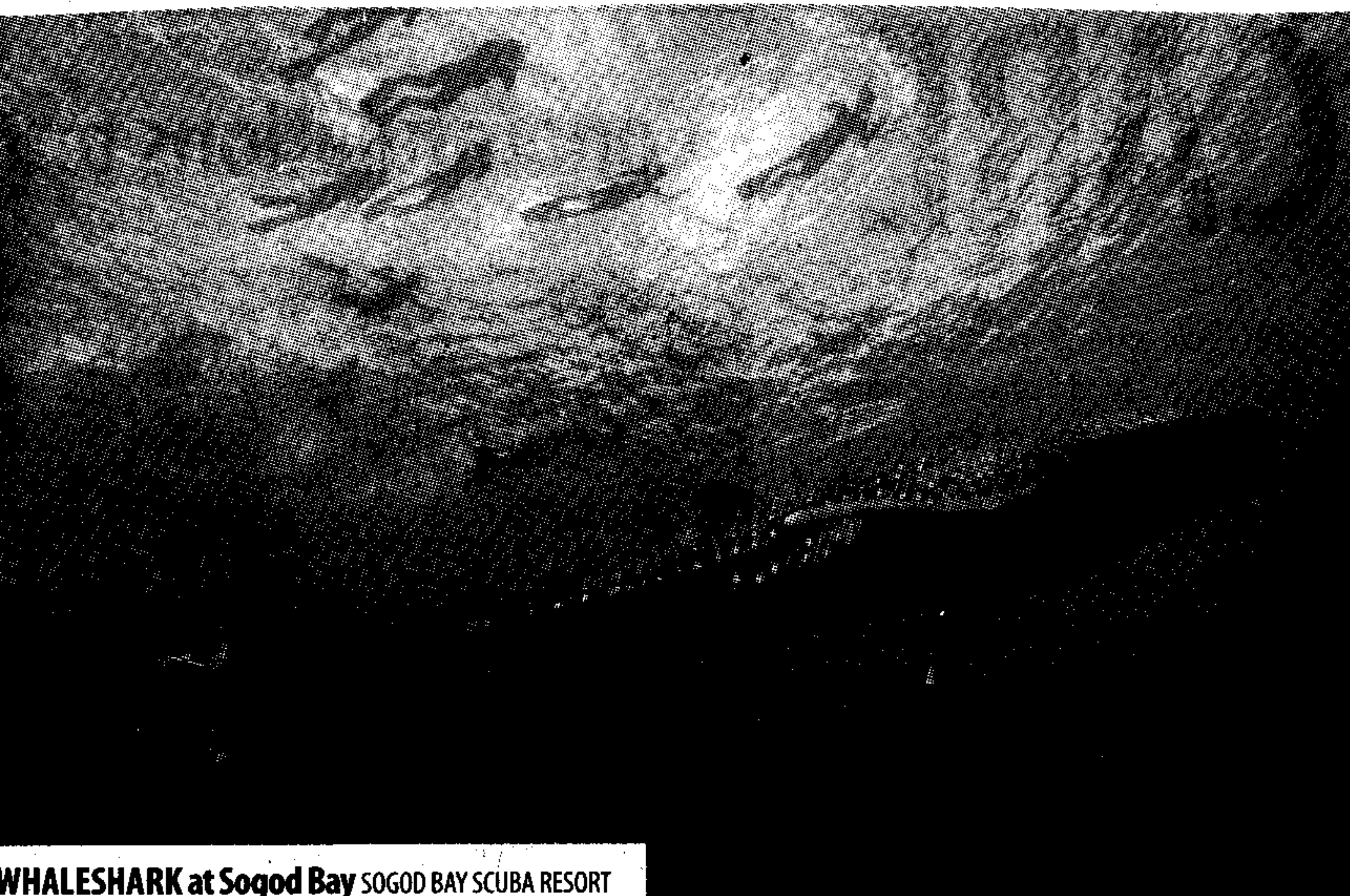


SARDINE Run at Moalboal, Cebu JEROME KIM

© JeromeKim.com

gros Oriental DRT Show is also supported by the Tourism Promotions Board, the Tourism Infrastructure

and Enterprise Zone Authority, and the Philippine Commission on Sports Scuba Diving.



WHALESHARK at Sogod Bay SOGOD BAY SCUBA RESORT



THRESHER shark of Malapascua BO MANCAO

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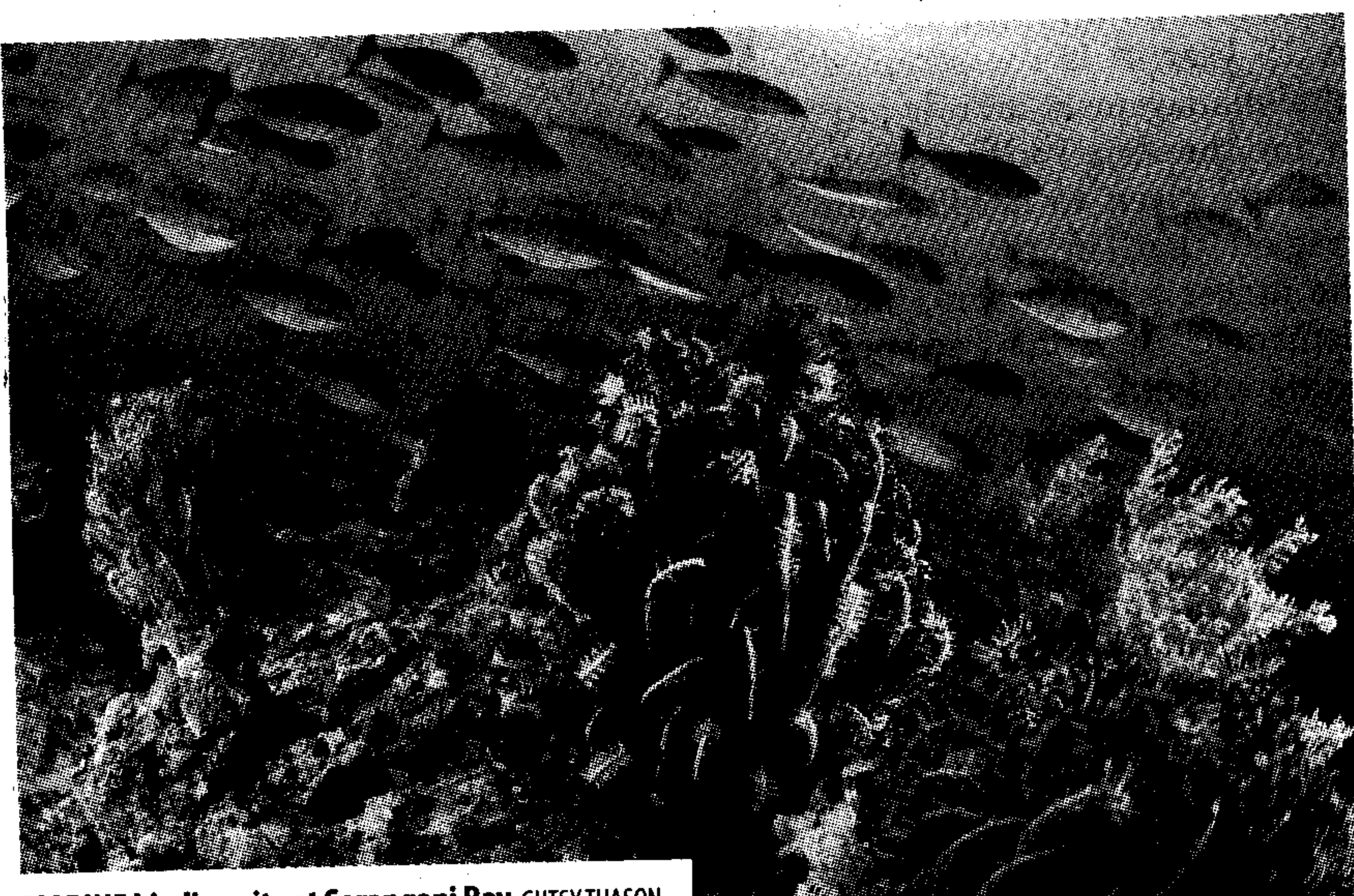
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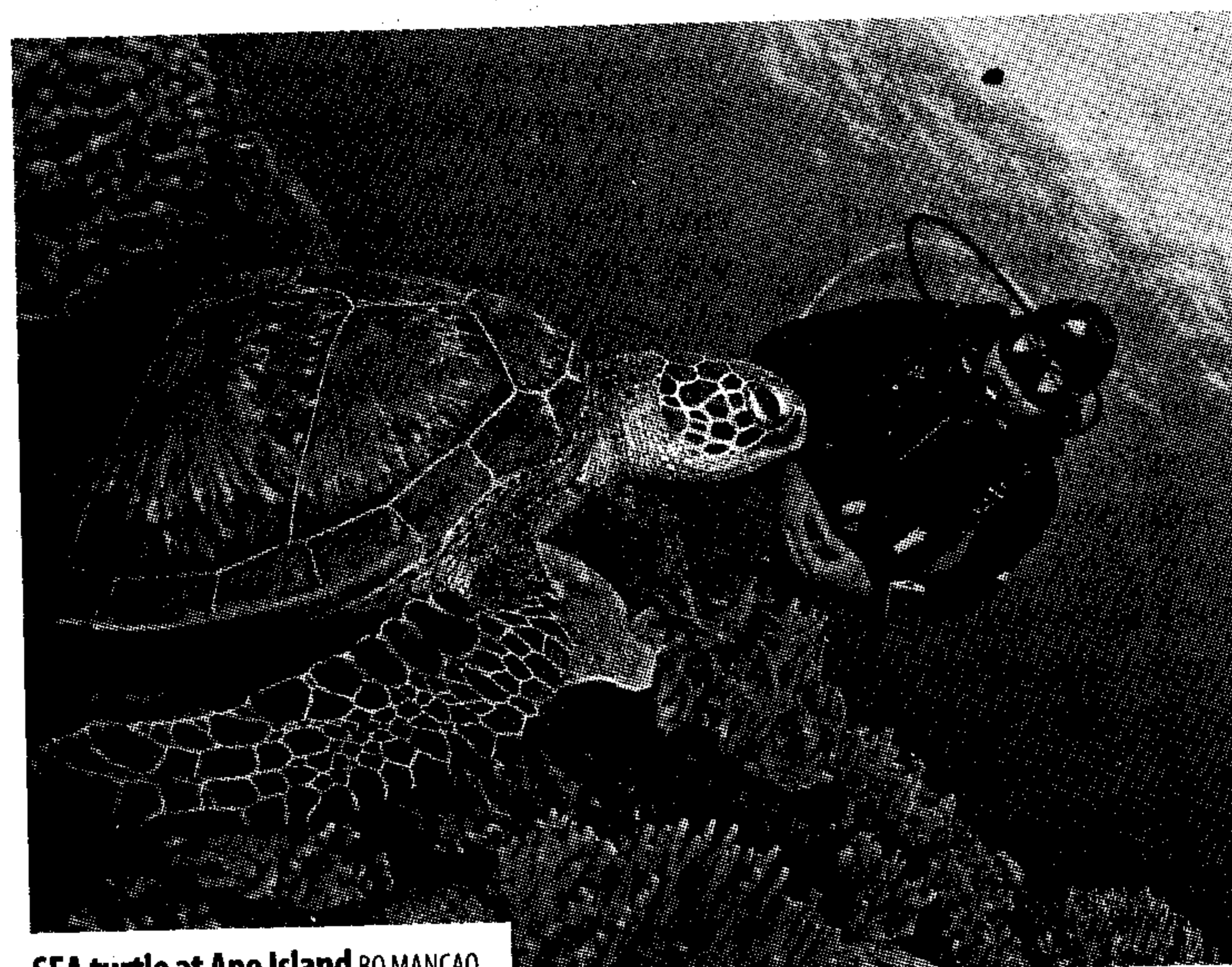
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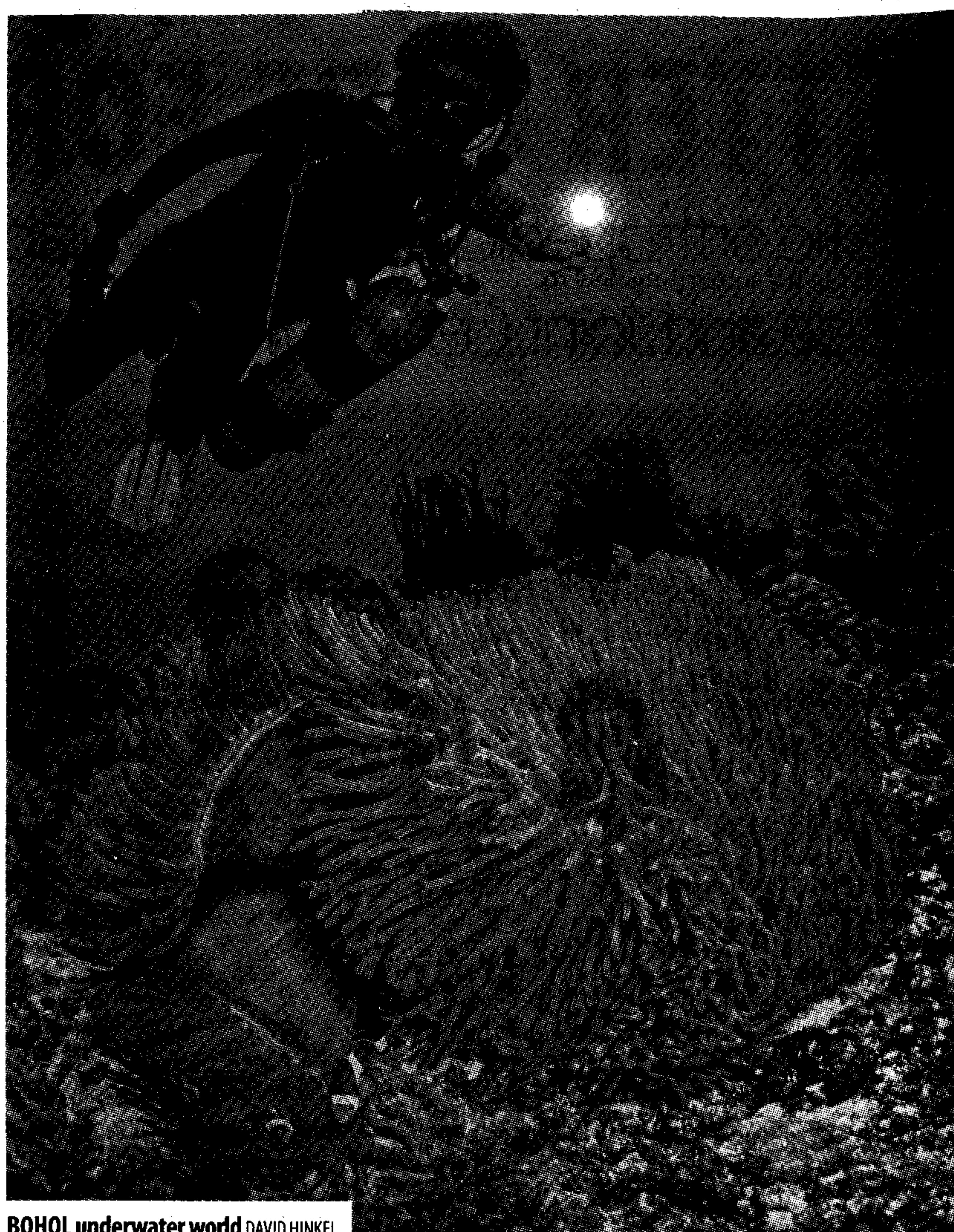
It's more fun to dive again in the Philippines



MARINE biodiversity at Sarangani Bay GUTSY TUASON



SEA turtle at Apo Island BO MANCAO



BOHOL underwater world DAVID HINKEL

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Environment advocates: Declare Spratlys marine-protected area

AN environmental advocacy group and a private think tank have expressed support to push for the declaration of the Spratlys as a marine protected area.

Ysan Castillo, secretary-general of the Philippine Business Environmental Stewardship (PBEST), said the damage done to the marine ecosystems in the area is shocking.

"There must now be a conscious effort to protect remaining coral reefs and preserve marine resources," Castillo lamented.

Castillo said protection of the fragile marine resources in the Spratlys is critical being the spawning area of fish caught in the coastal waters of Luzon, Palawan, Malaysia, the Sulu seas, Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, as well as China.

Castillo aired the urgent

environmental concern during a forum held on August 11, entitled "Post-Arbitration Series: A Focus on the Harm Done to the Environment," organized by The Stratbase Institute (ADRI) and PBEST, in partnership with the Office of the Chancellor and the International Studies Department of the De La Salle University-Manila.

Stratbase ADRI President Dindo Manhit said, "We cannot afford a major fisheries collapse that will cause starvation to millions of people in the nations surrounding the Spratlys.

"A declaration by all concerned countries to preserve marine resources and the banning of destructive fishing in the disputed waters will be a positive move for food security and peace in the region."

Manhit asked what happened to environmental

groups who claim to espouse the rights of the marginalized.

"I believe the Filipinos need their zeal in this one," Manhit remarked, when the destructive fishing practices of the Chinese were discussed during the said forum.

"The bottom line is that the government must unite every Filipino to one position where the nation can effectively stop the destruction of our marine environment," Manhit said.

Prof. John McManus of the University of Miami pegs the economic damage from China's incursions at nearly \$6 billion per year from the destruction of an estimated 16,200 hectares of coral reef.

This approximation only factored in the environmental services provided by the coral reefs, not the human anguish brought about by this dispute. That is harder to ascertain.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Tubbataha Reefs featured in Monaco's Oceanographic Museum 360° video

THE Oceanographic Museum of Monaco is currently featuring the Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park in 360° immersive experience. According to the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), the footage used for the virtual-reality experience was taken during the State Visit of Prince Albert II of Monaco to the Philippines in April.

The initiative led by Prince Albert II is meant to raise awareness on the issue of sea turtles.

"The 360° video exhibition, viewed through a mobile phone attached to a virtual-reality headgear and a headphone, is available

in French and English. The video features a mix of footage of Prince Albert's expedition, including the boat ride to the site, the Prince's interaction with Filipino locals, underwater footage of marine life, as well as the tagging of sea turtles for the Oceanographic Institute's scientific research," the DFA said.

Representatives from the Philippine Embassy in France and the Department of Tourism office in Frankfurt had the opportunity to visit the exhibition on August 5. The exhibit will run until August 31.

For more information, visit the museum's web site <http://www.oceano.mc/en>. *Recto Mercene*

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Taal Volcano ecotourism receives boost from Globe-Pusod project



BOAT ride to Taal Volcano Island RICHARD TABIGUE/GLOBE VOLUNTEER

TAAL'S ecotourism has received a big boost from the collaboration between Globe Telecom and the nonprofit environmental organization Pusod Inc., which are both working to empower communities around the lake through environment education and sustainable enterprises.

One of the key programs implemented by Globe and Pusod to address the area's environmental concerns is the promotion of ecotourism through the Taal Lake Conservation Center (TLCC), which gives a low-impact alternative to commercial tourism and promotes conservation of the ecosystem.

As a result of the partnership, the earnings of TLCC jumped by 1,400 percent. From revenues of only P40,000 during its first year, TLCC registered an annual revenue of P600,000 by end 2015.

The facility was established by Pusod, in partnership with the local government of Mataasnakahoy and Taal Volcano Protected Landscape (TVPL) Protected Area Management Board in 2011.

TLCC serves as a knowledge hub for researches conducted in TVPL and operates the ecotourism program in partnership with Globe Citizenship. The program offers community walking tours, heritage tours, knowledge tours to the Calawit side of the volcano island and other low-impact water sports—kayaking, ozgoose sailing and standup paddling.

"We continue to find ways of cooperation to protect the environment and support sustainable livelihood and conservation, thereby, giving birth to our partnership with Pusod, which shares the same environmental values as Globe. Through our joint efforts, we are able to create positive impact across the value chain—from the community-based tour guides, boat operators, horse guides, local caterer and community volunteers," said Fernando Esguerra, director of Globe Citizenship.

"Lakes take a long time to respond to conservation measures. Those that are still connected deeply with the livelihood that the lake provides are less and less reliant on it. It prompted

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Taal Volcano ecotourism receives boost from Globe-Pusod project

us to take action because a lot of people really depend on the lake for livelihood. The only way we can really save the lake is if they take pride in it," said lawyer Ipat Luna, executive trustee and founding member of Pusod Inc.

Ann Hazel Javier, executive director of Pusod Inc. added: "Together with Globe, we work with communities and tell them more about the ecosystem where they are and to eventually help them to protect it and create enterprises around them. We started with the ecotourism program. We have built capacities for the people in the volcano island whose main motivation is really to help conserve and protect the ecosystem."

TLCC tours provide the least economic leakage as possible, ensuring that the local community benefit as tour and boat guides or food caterers.

The tours include a full briefing on the lake region and eruption history of the volcano, a boat ride from Kinalaglagan, Mataas-nakahoy, to Calawit, Balete, on

Volcano Island and back, a horse ride or trek with a local guide, insurance, snacks and lunch of Batangas fusion cuisine and local refreshments, user fees and a conservation contribution.

The tours also encourage visitors to engage in lake conservation. Besides ecotourism initiatives, Globe was able to establish a monitoring system involving 5,000 fishermen of the Kilusan ng Maliliit na Mangingisda ng Lawa ng Taal through the TxtConnect facility, a Web-based platform that enables them to broadcast messages critical to the implementation of the TVPL Management Plan.

Globe also paved the way for mobile financial services to reach almost all fisherman communities across the 13 municipalities and three cities in Batangas and Cavite under the TVPL by distributing 5,000 SIM cards with discounted call and SMS rates.

At the same time, it improved the productivity of 276 households in Barangay Calawit, Balete, Batangas, with the provision of solar lamps through the Stiftung Solarenergie collaboration.

WWF-Philippines and ComCo Southeast Asia join forces for environmental conservation

ComCo Southeast Asia aims to deliver creative and compelling campaigns while providing strategic communications advice to drive more support for WWF-Philippines' conservation programmes.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Dams under watch as rains

By ELLALYN B. DE VERA

Water level in Angat Dam in Bulacan went up significantly on Sunday and local officials had to evacuate hundreds of families in low-lying areas as a large portion of Luzon received bountiful rain in the past week.

Based on the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) data, water level in Angat Dam rose to 179.30 meters on Sunday, which is 4.26 meters higher than Saturday's 175.04 meters.

However, the current level of Angat Dam remains lower than the 185-meter normal operating level for irrigation, hydropower generation and domestic supply.

Meanwhile, Ipo Dam also in Bulacan has been releasing excess water after reaching 101.10 meters or 10 centimeters above its 101-meter normal high water level.

La Mesa Dam in Quezon City remains on alert as its level has been stable at 80.05 meters, just 10 centimeters short of its spilling level.

Bulacan Governor Wilhelmino M. Sy-Alvarado yesterday said they are closely monitoring the release of waters from the three big dams — Angat, Bustos and Ipo — as well as the water elevation at the Candaba swamp at the Pampanga River.

Alvarado also said, they already dispatched rescue teams to the flood stricken areas to ensure the safety of the people.

He said that disaster control officials are now keeping a tight watch on the coastal towns of Hagonoy and Calumpit — the perennial catch basins — of backfloods coming from Pampanga, Nueva Ecija and parts of Bulacan.

It was learned that as of 9:30 a.m. Saturday, more than 150 families in Sitio Tumana, Brgy San Jose in Baliuag town evacuated to upper place of the village after learning that the Ipo and Bustos Dams released water reportedly to maintain the water elevation of the dams, but were closed at 10:30

continue

in the evening.

"Mahirap na nadala na kasi kami, sa tuwing magpapakawala ng tubig

ang Ipo at Bustos dams ay lubog kaming lahat dito sa bandang ibaba ng Tumana kaya takut na takot na kami

at agad kaming umakyat sa bandang itaas bitbit ang nga bata," Jhengheng of said barangay said.

The Manila Times

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Century vows to work with govt on La Mesa development

PROPERTY developer Century Communities Corp. is ready to work with government agencies and other stakeholders to ensure the best use for the parcel of land within the La Mesa watershed, which was supposedly identified as a housing project.

In a statement, Century Communities said it will await guidelines from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and local government for the land's best use, but also looks forward to working hand in hand with the DENR, including partnering with government agencies, to further safeguard public interest.

"As a responsible property development company, our business philosophy and practice has always been to include welfare of the communities and its environment," the company said.

Century Communities issued the statement after Environment Secretary Regina Paz Lopez asked them to explain why their environment compliance certificate (ECC) should not be canceled for alleged environmental violations.

Century is the first property company facing the cancellation of ECC in relation to an environmental audit issued by Lopez.

Lopez said that they have already issued a show-cause order against Century Communities Corp. giving the company seven days to explain their side. She also stressed that her stand to permanently cancel Century's ECC is non-negotiable, even if it complies with the regulatory

requirements.

"They have to secure the approval of the two water concessionaires operating in La Mesa, and I don't think that they will ever get that approval," Lopez said, stressing that she will not allow a property developer to destroy the source of water for the entire Metro Manila area.

Lopez had also said earlier that no mining operation or company will be spared from the audit.

"Everything will be audited in the light of the common good," she said, stressing that the DENR won't hesitate to shut down all operations found to have violated environmental and health and safety laws and regulations.

"If you break the law, you face the consequences of breaking the law. Whatever the law says that's what we should follow. If you break the law, there are penalties," Lopez said.

The company, on the other hand, claimed that it 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 property developer also said that despite its plans and the issuance of the ECC for the project on July 16, 2015, it has not commenced any development on the site.

"The company has not proceeded with any development over 1 year from when the ECC was issued," it added.

JAMES KONSTANTIN GALVEZ

Daily Tribune

WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOR

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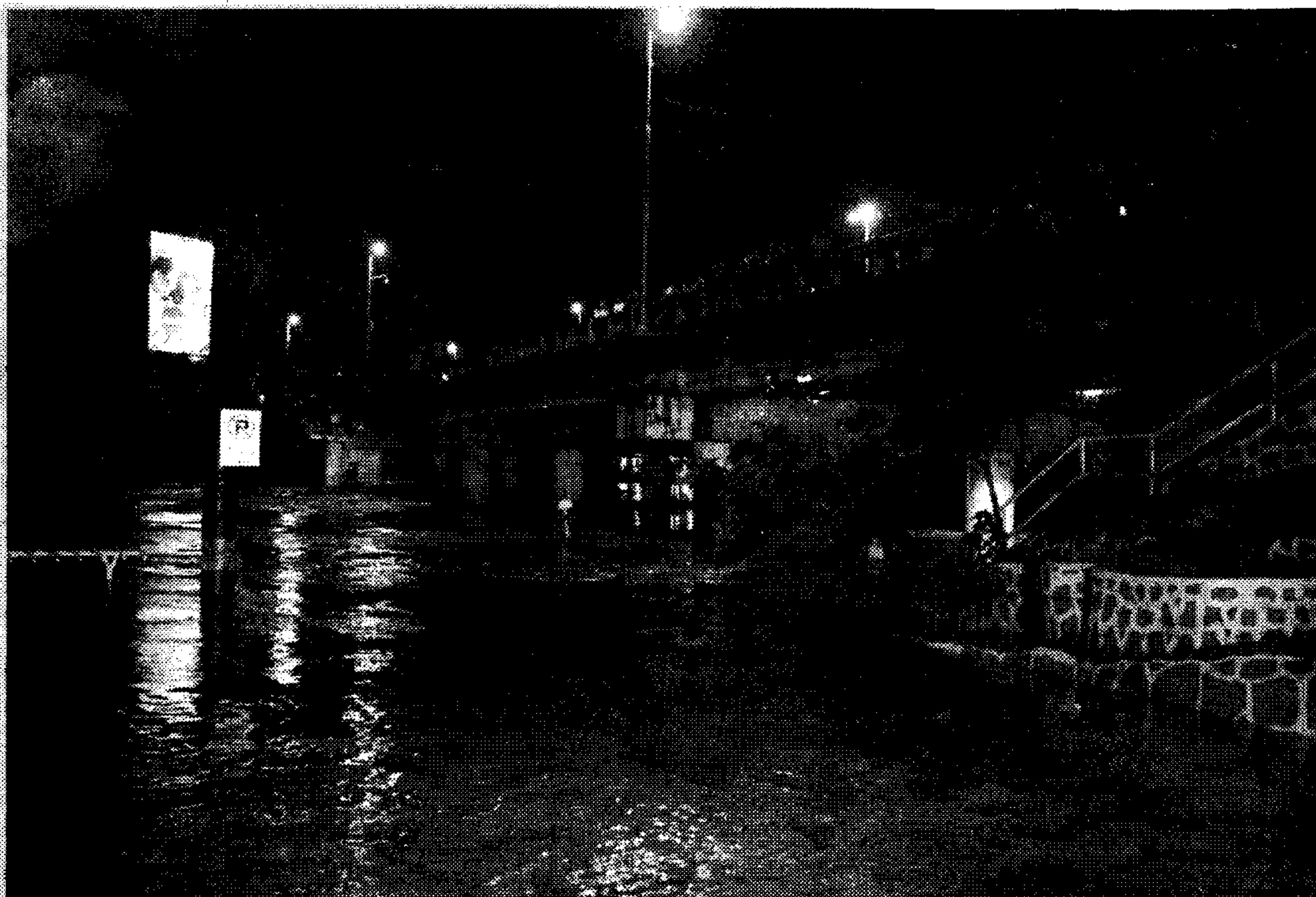
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Level 2 Due to heavy rains brought by the southwest monsoon or *habagat*, the city government of Marikina raised "Alert Level 2" as the water level of the Marikina River in Barangay Sto. Niño was at 16.2 meters as of yesterday morning. In its Twitter account, Marikina Public Information Office said that all of the river's eight flood gates were opened.

PNA



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23 barangay sa Bulacan lubog sa baha; 1,632 pamilya inilikas

MALOLOS CITY, Bulacan - Habang nagpapatuloy ang pag-ulan na dulot ng habagat, nasa 23 barangay sa anim na bayan sa Bulacan ang nananatiling lubog sa hanggang anim na talampakan ang taas na baha, iniulat ng Bulacan Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRRMO) kahapon ng umaga.

Ayon sa PDRRMO, 1,632 pamilya o 8,269 na indibiduwal mula sa 23 nakalubog sa baha na barangay sa Balagtas, Bocaue, Marilao, Sta. Maria, Norzagaray at Meycauayan City ang inilikas na sa 26 na evacuation center sa lalawigan.

Sinabi ni Liz Mungcal, ng

PDRRMO, na nasa isa hanggang dalawang talampakan ang taas ng baha sa mga barangay ng Borol 1st, Wawa, Panginay, San Miguel, San Juan at Longos sa Balagtas; gayundin sa Bambang, Antipona at Taal sa Bocaue.

Sa Marilao, umabot sa anim na talampakan ang baha sa Barangay Liyas, at mataas din ang baha sa mga barangay ng Magbalon, Ibayo, at Poblacion 1. Nasa anim na talampakan din ang baha sa Bgy. Bagbaguin sa Sta. Maria at apat na talampakan naman sa Bgy. Poblacion.

Lubog din sa baha ang Bgy. Matictic sa Norzagaray; ang mga barangay

ng Caingin, Lawa, Bayugo, Gasak, Zamora, Hulo, Pandayan, Tugatog, Malhacan, Banga, Calvario, Saluysoy, Bancal at Longos sa Meycauayan City.

Hindi naman madaanan ang McArthur highway sa Meycauayan City, gayundin ang Banga patungong Valenzuela at Pandayan malapit sa SM Marilao.

Nakaalerto rin ang pamahalaang panglalawigan sa pagbabawas ng tubig ng Angat Dam, Bustos Dam at Ipo Dam, gayundin sa posibleng pag-apaw ng sapa sa Candaba at Pampanga River.

Freddie C. Velez

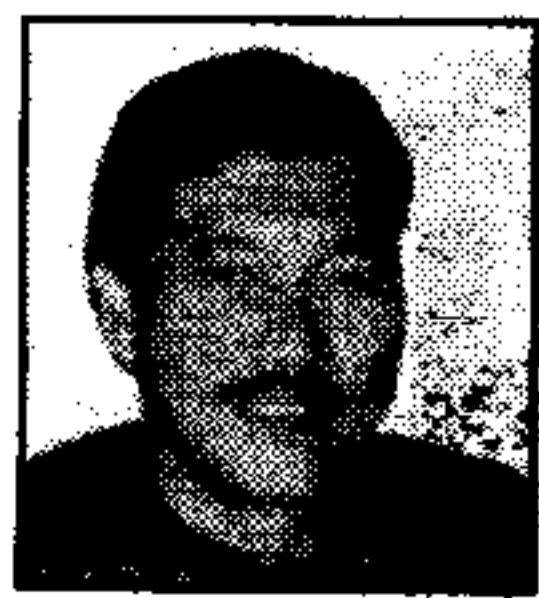
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**MGA BINABAHA:
NO MAT NGAYON**

Dave M. Veridiano, E.E.

WALANG humpay ang buhos ng ulan simula pa noong Biyernes at kung hindi papaltos ang forecast ng Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) na limang araw na magtutuluy-tuloy ang pag-ulang ito na dala ng hanging habagat, siguradong maraming lulubog na lugar sa buong Metro Manila.

May minarkahang 22 lugar ang Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) na mga lugar na palaging binabaha sa Metro Manila para sa mga motoristang kinakailangang bumiyahen kahit na matindi ang pag-ulan.

Kayat kung dadaan ka sa mga lugar na ito sa kalakasan ng buhos ng ulan, medyo mag-isip-isip na kung kakayanin ng iyong sasakyan: España-Antipolo-Maceda sa Maynila; P. Burgos-sa paligid ng Manila City Hall; Osmeña-Skyway northbound (NB) at southbound (SB), Makati; EDSA-North Avenue, Quezon City (QC); Don Bosco, Makati; Buendia-SB at NB; Buendia-South Superhighway (NB); C-5-Bagong Ilog; West Service Road, Merville, Paranaque City; East Service Road, Sales Street; North Avenue sa harap ng Trinoma; Buendia extension, Macapagal ave - World Trade; EDSA - Camp Aguinaldo Gate 3 QC; NLEX Balintawak - Cloverleaf QC; EDSA Megamall sa Mandaluyong City; EDSA Pasong Tamo Magallanes Tunnel; Quezon Ave, Victory ave / Biak na Bato sa QC; C-5-BCDA, Taguig City; R. Papa-Rizal Ave, Maynila; C-5 McKinley Road Makati; C-5 Bayani Road, Makati; at Philcoa Area, QC.

Hindi pa kasama rito ang mga lugar ng kabahayan na lumulubog din agad sa baha kapag walang humpay ang buhos ng ulan gaya ng Roxas District at Talayan Village sa Q.C; Pinaglabanan sa San Juan; Navotas, Malabon; Balut at Gagalangin sa Tundo, Maynila; sa Dimasalang, Sampaloc at Sta Mesa sa Maynila rin.

Para sa mga bagong henerasyon na galit na galit sa mga ahensiya ng pamahalaan na inaakala nilang nagpapabaya kayat 'di nalulutasan ang problemang ito, huwag kayong mag-alala at 'di ninyo solo ang problema. Kaming mga henerasyon ng "Baby Boomers" sobrang naranasan din ito noon dahil ang mga lugar na binabaha ngayon ay ang mga lugar din mismo na binabaha noon. 'Yung iba rito ay pangalan lang ng mga kalye ang napalitan, pero yung baha ay hindi nawala.

Pero kung ako ang tatanungin ninyo, sobrang na-enjoy ko ang pagtatampisaw sa mga bahang katulad nito. Kami kasing mga batang may kalikutan at medyo matitigasang ulo noon sa aming lugar sa Tundo, Maynila - sa halip na magkulong sa bahay kapag may baha ay naglalabasan at dinadayo pa ang mga lugar na binabaha para doon maligo sa ulan habang nagtatampisaw sa umaapaw na tubig sa kalsada.

Mag-text at tumawag sa Globe: 0986993459 o kaya'y mag-email sa: daver@journalist.com