

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DATE : 18 AUG 2016

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DENR

IN THE NEWS



18 AUG 2016

DATE

UPPER HALF

B-2

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Drop in mining stocks dampens market

Share prices retreated yesterday, dampened by the plunge in mining stocks amid the continued crackdown of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on mining companies.

Expectations that second quarter economic growth would be higher were not enough to lift the market.

The benchmark Philippine Stock Exchange index retreated 37.19 points, or 0.46 percent, to end at 7,946.19, while the broader All Shares index declined 16.49 points or 0.35 percent to finish at 4,697.11.

By IRIS GONZALES

Most of the indexes also closed in negative territory except for the services index, which increased 3.01 points or 0.18 percent to end at 1,618.54.

On the other hand, the Mining and Oil index plunged to 10,129.48, down 174.81 points or 1.69 percent.

Total value turnover reached P9.47 billion. Advancing stocks numbered 97 while decliners stood at 87. Fifty four stocks were left unchanged.

Analysts said the index was again dragged by the decline in the shares of Semirara Mining

and Power Corp.'s which closed lower by 4.07 percent to finish at P103.70. This is amid the risk that its environmental clearance certificate may be cancelled by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Despite the decline, Justino Calaycay said there is much to hope for in the final four months of the year.

"Solely on the basis of the fundamentals, both on a company and broad economy levels, there is much to hope for in the final four months of the year."

18 AUG 2016

DATE

UPPER HALF

8

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Baguio clamps down on illegal small scale mining

BAGUIO CITY (PNA) — The Baguio City Council approved a resolution filed by Councilor Michael Lawana supporting City Mining Regulatory Board (CMRB) Resolution No. 001, series 2016 for the full implementation of Stoppage Order No. 2K15-001 and other similar stoppage orders issued to all small-scale mining and mineral processing plant owners operating in Barangay Uabac, Camp 7, Kennon Road.

The resolution stated that it is the policy of the city, through its environmental code, to implement all existing laws, rules and regulations to protect its environment.

The city's Environment Code, which

was recently approved, declares that the locality shall maintain its unique ecological and socio-cultural character.

The stoppage order was first issued in July 2015 and was again served in February 2016 but both were ignored by the small scale miners of Uabac who are operating without the necessary permits, thus making their mining activities, illegal.

The third attempt to stop the illegal mining activity was made this August which will be strengthened by the approved "Lawana Resolution".

Mining activities in the area have been linked to constant rock and soil

erosions or landslides.

The CMRB resolution likewise stated that mining operations in the area cause environmental degradations such as the pollution of the Bued river, and undermines the stability of Kennon Road, buildings and other constructed structures proximate to the small-scale mining operations.

The full implementation of the CMRB stoppage order is not limited to seizures or confiscations of illegally sourced minerals or mineral products, including the tools and units of equipment and conveyance used in the operation, but also dismantling of facilities and filing of complaints against the alleged illegal small-scale mining operators.

The small-scale miners have been given until August 31 to voluntarily dismantle their respective shafts and remove their equipment from the area.

18 AUG 2016

DATE

UPPER HALF

B-12

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Nickel market to feel PH mine shutdowns only next year

Nickel will feel the full impact of mine shutdowns in the Philippines only next year, when exports may fail to ramp up as usual, according to UBS Group AG, describing the metal as one of its most-preferred commodities that's supported by rising demand and deficits. Prices gained.

The government's audit of standards in the mining sector is a front-of-mind risk that's already shut down about 2 percent of world supply, analysts including Daniel Morgan wrote in a note. Ore shipments from the top supplier could fall to 314,000 metric tons next year from 410,000 tons last year, it said.

Nickel has been the best-performing base metal in the second half, rallying to its highest level in a year Aug. 10, on speculation that the Philippine crackdown led by President Rodrigo Duterte will crimp supplies. Prices have also been supported as rising

stainless-steel output boosts consumption, the UBS analysts said in the Aug. 12 report.

As Philippine supply usually drops from July to January each year, "the real impact may not be felt until early 2017, when exports fail to ramp up as they normally would," the analysts said. "Our price forecast is a bullish trajectory and nickel remains one of our most-preferred commodity exposures."

Nickel rose as much as 0.9 percent to \$10,400 a ton on the London Metal Exchange and was at \$10,380 at 1:40 p.m. in Shanghai. UBS sees prices at \$11,023 next year, \$13,228 in 2018 and \$19,621 by 2020 after the market flipped from a surplus last year to what's expected to be a run of shortages.

President Duterte has pledged to shut any mines that don't comply with international standards, telling miners that "we will survive as a nation without you" if they are closed. (Bloomberg News)

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

BW FILE PHOTO

DENR's Lopez seeks 'poster boy' for responsible mining practices

By Janina C. Lim
Reporter

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez is looking for a mine that may serve as a model to the industry for responsible practices, after initially signaling her doubts about the entire industry's environmental record, an official said.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Senior Undersecretary Leo L. Jasareno said in a news briefing Wednesday that Ms. Lopez conducted a dialogue last week with two mining executives, and received an invitation to expect their mine.

"Our secretary asked: 'Is there really such a thing as responsible mining?'" to which the miners replied positively, according to Mr. Jasareno.

Ms. Lopez also asked if "there can be poster boys in mining," a sentiment with which the executives also agreed, Mr. Jasareno said. He declined to identify the executives or their company.

Mr. Jasareno reiterated that the audit being conducted into the environmen-

tal management practices of mining companies "will be fair and will be transparent in criteria."

The ongoing audit is expected to weed out irresponsible miners and leave the field to the ones employing best practices.

The meeting marks what may be a softening of Ms. Lopez's aggressive position towards miners. In an Aug. 8 news briefing, Ms. Lopez, when asked if there are any mining operators she considers responsible, replied that she is not aware of any.

The crackdown on mines comes with the support of President Rodrigo R. Duterte, who has told the industry to "shape up."

The review, which carries the threat of suspension for those that fail to pass, has left companies scrambling to establish their green credentials, with some touting their receipt of awards such as the Presidential Mineral Industry Environmental Awards (PMIEAs).

Established through Executive Order 399, the PMIEA is the highest award given to mining companies, signifying their exemplary performance in the aspects of environmental

management; safety and health; and social development.

Engineer Louie R. Sarmiento, president of the Philippine Mine Safety and Environment Association (PMSEA), the award-giving body of the PMIEA, noted that awardees typically go through a thorough vetting process.

"It is a Presidential award.. it is very prestigious so we don't want it to be tainted with any irregularities," PMSEA's Mr. Sarmiento said.

Asked if PMIEA recipients will receive due consideration when they undergo the audit, Mr. Sarmiento said it "will depend on the findings" of the ongoing review.

The recipient of the award is evaluated by an eight-member selection committee composed of the government and the private sectors and chaired by the DENR secretary.

With the audits beginning on July 8, the DENR has since suspended the operations of 10 miners.

Mr. Jasareno, who formerly led the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, said that "the future of the mining industry will depend largely on the audit" and final reports will be released within the month.

P-1

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Why the mining industry is in such a mess

**Val A. Villanueva**

BUSINESSWISE

Conclusion

To those readers who called my attention to some glitches in the initial publication of the second part of this column, my apologies for the confused jumble. Here's how this second instalment should have been printed.

ANTIMINING activists often refer to the province of Zambales as a prime example of why mining should be completely banned in the country.

Images of murky rivers and ruined parts of the mountain range in the province, they point out, serve as a testament to the environmental dangers posed by the industry. In the first part of this series, we wrote that the destructions featured in the media are not caused by legitimate mining companies, which are bound by mining laws to preserve the eco-system in areas where they operate.

It has been documented that those responsible for environmental degradation in Zambales are seven Chinese companies, which had gouged out the area, using nickel mining as pretext.

Yet, the mining sector in the province had been demonized. Townsfolk, agitated by antimining groups whose members are mostly not even Zambales residents, have been led to complain against mining activities for allegedly polluting their, otherwise, pristine river channels and turning the water's color reddish brown.

Then-Zambales Gov. Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. did not even issue a warning against the seven Chinese firms, but had immediately ordered the closure of the legitimate mining companies LnL Archipelago Minerals Inc., Benguet Corp. Nickel Mines Inc. and Eramen Minerals Inc., in

the municipalities of Santa Cruz and Candelaria. Last year, however, the Office of the Ombudsman found probable cause to charge him with graft and usurpation of duty in connection with the alleged anomalous issuance of permits to a small-scale mining firm.

Ebdane later on allowed some of these legitimate mining companies to reopen in exchange for their participation in building "haul roads," which was allegedly brokered by a certain Antonio Marfori.

Veteran newsman and blogger Philip Lustre wrote on his Facebook page that Marfori—who has no legal identity to represent Ebdane, Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) chief Leo L. Jasareno and Environment Secretary Ramon J.P. Paje in the aforementioned negotiation—was the one who made the rounds to convince these mining firms to chip in to a fund for constructing these so-called haul roads.

In a Senate hearing on September 23, 2015, MGB OIC Regional Director Danilo U. Uykieng supported earlier findings of local geologists that there was no nickel contamination in the rivers of Zambales.

Upon questioning by the Senate's Environment and Natural Resources Committee Chairman Francis Escu-

dero, Uykieng stated 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...."

Studies by local geologists had revealed that what caused the color of the Zambales rivers to turn reddish-brown was soil erosion, which occurs during heavy rains. These experts claimed that the soil in the mining areas is rich in nickel laterites, which render the area inhabitable by large trees. Trees are a natural deterrent to soil erosion. Even without mining, the geologists explained, the soil will

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 the local government units in which they operate or explore for minerals.

BusinessMirror

p. 2

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Why the mining industry is in such a mess

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 because mineral leakage supposedly from their operations had turned the color of downstream river waters reddish-brown.

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

But with the MGB concluding that there is no nickel contamination of the Zambales rivers, such precondition becomes irrelevant, geologists point out.

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 the local government units (LGUs) 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 LGUs, 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.

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 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. No wonder then that the mining industry in the country is in such a mess!

For comments and suggestions, e-mail me at
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

HMC employees ask DENR chief to lift company's suspension order

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

✉ @jonlmayuga

GUIUAN, Eastern Samar—Residents of Manicani Island on Tuesday appealed to Environment Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez to allow Hinatuan Mining Corp. (HMC) to resume its nickel retrieval and disposal operations.

Some 100 Manicani residents staged a picket to air their appeal through the media during a recent mine visit organized by HMC almost a month after Lopez ordered the cancellation of the company's ore-transport permit.

Igmedio Abucejo, 57, of Barangay Buenavista, said losing his job now would put him and his wife in a very difficult position.

"It is difficult to lose a job at my age. Many would lose their jobs and would have no other source of income after that," Abucejo said.

Only about 2,500 people live on the island, which has an estimated total land area of 5,000 hectares. The 495 employees of HMC represent about 70 percent of the household heads who earn as much as P12,000 a month.

Nerissa Ida, 51, of Barangay Banaag, said since HMC returned, many people became gainfully employed.

"Life is better for us with HMC operating. If the majority of the people here on the island would be asked, we prefer mining," she said in Tagalog.

"We are appealing to her [Lopez]. Reconsider the decision. Don't let hundreds of people starve because of your decision," she added.

Estrella Loyola, 57, of Barangay Homorawon, echoed Ida's sentiment. "Because of HMC, people here are able to send their children to school. That is why we are appealing to Secretary Lopez to visit us in Manicani. Talk to us and we will tell her what we feel about HMC. We would suffer more without jobs and regular income," she said.

Lopez had promised to provide

livelihood to employees of mining companies whose operations were suspended for failing to meet environmental standards.

Francis Niño D. Malones, HMC community relations manager, said the company's presence is highly appreciated by the people because of the various corporate social responsibility projects they have implemented in the area.

"As far as HMC is concerned, we know we are welcome here and those who oppose our presence here are not from the island. People

on the island are benefiting from HMC's hauling operation. They get a sack of rice every month, their children are also scholars and we have free medical checkup," he said.

Around 10,000 employees stand to be affected with the suspension of at least nine mining operations so far.

Lopez wants those affected by the suspension order to benefit as Department of Environment and Natural Resources's (DENR) partners in the implementation of the National Greening Program (NGP).

"How are we going to survive if our source of income would be planting trees. It would take years for these trees to be ready for harvest. What happens before that? What are we going to eat," Ida said.

According to HMC officials, at least 435 employees of HMC would lose their job by the end of the month.

Manolito M. Javar, HMC project manager on Manicani Island, said only 60 of the total 495 employees would be retained as the company shifts to "care and maintenance" mode.

Close to a thousand residents of Manicani Island have also signed a manifesto supporting the operation of HMC.

A subsidiary of Nickel Asia Corp. (NAC), HMC is confident that the company's operation would pass the mining audit.

Javar said the NAC had already requested for a reaudit of HMC's

operation, which he clarified, only involves the retrieval and disposal of old nickel-ore stockpiles.

He said nickel ore-extraction activities stopped more than two decades ago, and it was only in 2014 that the company went back on Manicani to help in the rehabilitation effort when Super typhoon Yolanda struck in November 2013.

The operation, he said, aims to remove the old nickel-ore stockpiles to prevent disaster. "It is for the safety of the people and to prevent runoffs during heavy rain," says Fernando Ramirez, safety manager of HMC on Manicani.

Of the more than 1.3 million metric tons of nickel-ore stockpile, around 265,000 have been shipped out to China. Jose Bayani Baylon, NAC vice president for corporate communication, in a test message, said: "We are waiting for the DENR to schedule the audit of the HMC stockpile-removal operations on Manicani as soon as possible, so that the loading can resume leading to the removal of an environmental hazard and the generation of much needed income for the residents."

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Semirara sinks in the abyss; Dengue test kits developed

THE fortunes of Semirara Mining and Power Corp. are fast changing, like the hot desert climates that can rapidly drop to freezing level in the nighttime.

Semirara's share price sank to a year low of P95.50 last week from a 12-month high of P143, after Environment Secretary Gina Lopez threatened to shut down the coal mine for polluting the environment. Semirara, from a purely coal mining concern when it was formerly known as Semirara Coal Corp. to a power company, has definitely seen better days when its shares were first offered to the public in 1983 for P1,000 apiece.

It has undergone ownership restructuring after finding itself caught in the Philippine debt crisis in the 1980's. And after stabilizing its financial condition with its expansion into the lucrative power generation business, Semirara has become one of the stock market darlings in the last two years.

Lopez's assumption of office, however, ended Semirara's stock market streak. The mining and power company is again on a familiar defensive pose. It is buying back shares from the market in a bid to stop the drop in stock prices after the government's threat to close down the coal mine.

Semirara's board approved a 60-day share buyback program involving 20 million shares starting Aug. 18 based on the prevailing market price. The stock rebounded to P108.10 Tuesday, following the announcement of a share repurchase program, and retreated to P103.70 Wednesday.

The Environment Department in a show cause letter on Aug. 12 asked Semirara to explain and comply within seven days why its environmental compliance certificate should not be canceled. Environment, which conducted an inter-agency fact finding and field visit on May 23 to 27, claimed that the company did not comply with one of the conditions provided in the ECC relative to the Molave coal mine expansion project in Barangay Semirara, Caluya, Antique province.

The letter noted that there was no proper stockpiling and disposal of the materials scooped out from the settling ponds, stable areas to avoid pollution of any water body and drainage systems to keep them in safe and non-polluting conditions.

Environment Undersecretary Leo Jasareno also cited complaints against Semirara, including massive clearing affecting the island ecosystem, degradation of water quality and siltation of the marine environment.

"The problem with Semirara is the open pit mine is now below sea level. How would DMCI

[Holdings Inc.] rehabilitate the area?" Jasareno asked.

RAY S. EÑANO



P1

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Amid crackdown, miners urged to 'walk the walk'

TOE the line. That's the call from the mining association in the world's biggest nickel-ore supplier, where members are facing a crackdown led by President Duterte, who said the Southeast Asian nation can live without the industry's contribution entirely if need be.

Members are being urged to "walk the walk" as far as environmental compliance is concerned, according to Ronald S. Recidoro, vice president for legal and policy at the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines. "As a professional association, that's basically what we can do," Recidoro said in an interview.

Nickel has climbed after the nationwide audit began last month, with prices rallying to the highest in a year as some mines have been suspended. The interruptions to supply—as well as the potential for more dislocation—have boosted the bullish case for the metal, with Goldman Sachs Group Inc. and UBS Group AG seeing scope for gains. Most of the cargoes from the Philippines, which accounts for about 20 percent of global mined supply, are sold to buyers in China to feed the

“As a professional association, that's basically what we can do.”

—RECIDORO

nation's stainless-steel industry.

"Pricing will depend on Chinese demand, especially given their slowing economy," Recidoro said. "Prices will also depend on how buyers perceive the impact of the latest suspensions in the Philippines and the environment department's decision not to issue any new permits."

Price gains

NICKEL traded at \$10,205 a metric ton on the London Metal Exchange at 3:51 p.m. in Singapore, after falling on Tuesday to the lowest close in five weeks as the Philippine Environment Agency said the checkup would be finished by the end of the month. Prices are still 16 percent higher in 2016, after sinking 42 percent last year.

CONTINUED ON A2

P. 2

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Amid crackdown, miners urged to 'walk the walk'

CONTINUED FROM A1

Duterte, who took office on June 30, and Environment Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez want to ensure that all mines comply with environmental and welfare standards, and so far eight nickel-ore mines have been suspended. UBS estimated that these accounted for about 10 percent of the country's nickel output, or 2 percent of worldwide supply, according to an August 12 report.

The future of the Philippine mining industry will depend on the audit, which will be fair and transparent, Leo L. Jasareno, en-

vironment undersecretary, told reporters in Manila on Wednesday.

The Duterte administration has had a paradigm shift on mining, and the challenge for the industry is to show that it's still relevant for development, Jasareno said, adding that stop orders against small-scale miners were being issued on a weekly basis.

Local processing

THE chamber—which has more than 20 members, at least one of which, Berong Nickel Corp., has been suspended—is also raising concerns about a proposal to ban ore shipments entirely, in favor of

mandatory local processing. House Speaker Pantaleon D. Alvarez backed the move in his inaugural address in July.

"There is no problem with developing our industries but we need enormous capital," said Nelia Halcon, executive vice president at the chamber. "I don't think banning nickel-ore exports can be a step toward immediately building smelters and refineries. This has to be planned and programmed and there has to be a feasibility study that can be packaged and promoted to investors."

UBS has forecast nickel will rally, describing the metal as one

of its most-preferred commodities, amid projections for rising demand and a shift to global deficits. The impact of the Philippine crackdown may become apparent only next year should exports fail to pick back up after a seasonal lull, it said.

Jinchuan Group, China's biggest producer of the refined metal, is also bullish on nickel. Tightening global supplies because of the clampdown in the Philippines and rising demand from the stainless-steel industry in China will push prices higher, according to Chairman Yang Zhiqiang. *Bloomberg News*



18 AUG 2016

DATE

UPPER HALF

D-5

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DENR starts audit of coal power plants

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is expected to start within the month the audit of coal-fired power plants to determine their compliance with environmental standards.

Environment Undersecretary Leo Jasareno said the agency was already crafting

the guidelines and criteria for the audit of coal-fired power plants, with focus on the conditions given to firms that obtained environmental compliance certificates (ECCs).

"We'll start to audit coal-fired power plants. We are just finalizing the guidelines and we'll start within this month," Jasareno said.

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

Although applications of new coal plants are coursed through the Department of Energy (DOE), they must first secure an ECC from the DENR before commencing operations.

Coal accounts for about a third of the country's current total energy mix.

There are currently 13 operating coal-fired plants, 12 under construction and 13 existing new applications.

First on Environment Secretary Gina Lopez's list is the Consunji-led Semirara Mining and Power Corp., the country's largest coal mine, which was directed to explain why its

ECC for its Molave expansion plant in Antique should not be cancelled.

Lopez has been firm on her stand against coal projects and continues to push for renewable energy as base load power.

Meanwhile, the DENR is on track to complete its separate audit on all 42 mines in the

country within the month as part of its crackdown on illegal mining.

To date, the DENR has suspended 10 mining companies for violation of environmental standards.

"When the smoke clears, after the review, what we will have is a roster of responsible miners," Jasareno said.

The Manila Times

DATE

B-D

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

P-1
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

-Mining is not a sunset industry – expert

BY JAMES KONSTANTIN GALVEZ

THE mining industry will always remain a major pillar of the Philippines economy, a management consultancy firm specializing on mining said.

Challenging President Rodrigo Duterte's recent remark that minerals development sector is already a sunset industry, the president and CEO of Amdgy Consultancy, Deogracias Contreras, said that there will never be a sunset in the local mining industry.

Speaking at a roundtable discussion at Lido, Contreras cited the country's increasing need for both metallic and non-metallic resources to keep the economy moving forward.

"Since the dawn of time, we have been mining. Mining is not just metallic, it also includes non-metallic and energy," he pointed out.

President Duterte had vowed to limit mining operations in an effort to preserve what is left of the country's natural resources.

The Philippines is the fourth mineral-rich country in the world. However, the government has yet to harness the full potential of these resources, both metallic and non-metallic mineral, which at current market prices is estimated

at about P73.47 trillion.

Duterte stressed that the government can do away with the billions

of pesos collected from the mining industry, which is often perceived as environmentally destructive.

In defense of the large-scale mining companies, Contreras said that poor governance either due to an absence of a regulatory framework or a lack of capacity to enforce existing frameworks remains to be the biggest hurdle for the minerals development sector.

He also blamed the negative perception on the mining industry to artisanal and small-scale mining sector, which often poorly regulated by local authorities.

"The culture of corruption still exists [in the sector]," Contreras said.

"It's sad to say, but where there is large-scale mining, there's always small-scale mining activities," he said, adding that this situation may have played a role in the negative perception of large-scale miners.

The sector is also often viewed as contributing to social conflict, human rights violations, environmental degradation, and commonly lacks adequate health and safety practices.

At present, there are about 300,000 to 400,000 small-scale miners operating in 40 mineral-rich provinces nationwide. All of them are operating illegally.

But unlike ASM activities, Contreras large-scale mining is governed by a wide range of regulatory controls and permits, requiring them to meet various international standards for them to operate in their host communities.

Contreras' statement was echoed by Philippine Mine Safety and Environment Association (PMSEA) President Louie Sarmiento, saying that safety remained within mining concession areas and their host communities remained to be the top priority for large-scale mining companies.

"They are governed by very strict standards," Sarmiento said, adding that large-scale miners have to meet international standards.

The Manila Times

DATE

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

PMSEA, as mandate by Presidential Order No.399, is an award-giving body, which recognizes mining companies with exemplary performance in environmental management, safety and health, and social development and management programs.

The awards included the 2015 Presidential Mineral Industry Environmental Award, the highest award conferred to mining companies as evaluated by an eight-member selection committee from the government and the private sector.

Asked whether PMSEA award-

ees will be able to pass the ongoing mine audit, Sarmiento said that they are confident with their selection of winners, adding that "it is a very prestigious and we don't want it to be tainted with any irregularities."

"However, we have to qualify the suspension. Because, like in any other audit, there are certain levels of conformity, audit period, and criteria to be followed," he added.

He stressed that PMSEA, the forerunner in the promotion of occupational safety and health, sound environmental management and social responsibility in the minerals industry, remains committed to its "responsible mining" mantra.

Environment Secretary Leo Jasareno, citing previous meetings between two mining executives and DENR Secretary Regina Paz Lopez, said that mining companies will have to submit to the audit to earn the "responsible miner" badge.

"Secretary Lopez asked 'Is there really a responsible miner? Can there be poster boys?'"

The former Mines and Geoscience Bureau director also said that the audit will be fair, and has a transparent criteria.

"There is also enough mechanism for grievance," he said, that suspended mining companies can file an appeal.

HATAW!

D'YARYO NG BAYAN

18 AUG 2016

2
PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

Sa unang 50 araw ng Duterte admin **ACHIEVEMENTS IBINIDA NI ANDANAR**

IPINAGMALAKI ni Presidential Communications Office Secretary Martin Andanar, ang mahigit sa 15 mahahalagang bagay na maituturing na nagawa ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte sa loob ng unang 50 araw ng kanyang panunungkulan bilang presidente ng bansa.

Sa weekly news forum na Kapihan sa Manila Bay sa Café Adriatico sa Malate, Maynila kahapon ng umaga, binigyang-diin ni Presidential Communications Office (PCO) Secretary Martin Andanar ang ilang nakamit ng pangulo bilang inidikasyon ng pagtupad niya sa mga ipinangakong gagawin mula noong panahon ng kampanya.

Una sa listahan ni Andanar, ang sumukong 600,000 umiiskor at nagtutulak ng ilegal na droga, maging ang mga opisyal ng local government units (LGU) na sangkot sa proteksiyon at pagpapakalat nito na sumuko at iniharap ang sarili sa mga awtoridad.

Ngayon lamang ito naganap simula nang lumaganap ang ilegal na droga sa buong bansa.

Ani Andanar, ito ang sukatan ng pag-abot ng pangulo sa target niyang pababain ang kriminalidad sa bansa sa loob ng anim na buwan.

Sa tala ng Philippine National Police (PNP) 40 porsiyento ang ibinaba ng crime rate versus property mula sa 11,106 noong Hulyo ng nakaraang taon kompara sa 4, 476 nitong Hulyo 2016.

Binanggit ng kalihim ang ilang minahan na naipasar sa pangunguna ni DENR Secretary Gina Lopez.

Ikaapat sa listahan ang pag-apruba ng pangulo sa Executive Order para sa Freedom of Information (FOI) noong 23

Hulyo, na nag-uutos na maging bukas sa publiko ang records ng mga opisina sa ilalim ng ehekutibong sangay ng pamahalaan o mga ahensiya na direktang nakapailalim sa tanggapan ng Pangulo.

Ipinagmayabang ni Andanar ang pagtaas ng stock market, at ang pagtukoy sa ilang 'oligarchs'.

Maging ang pagtaas ng allowance ng atletang Filipino na ipinadala sa Brazil para sa RIO Olympics. Mula \$1,000 ay naging \$3,000 ang badyet para sa mga naturang atleta.

Isinama ng kalihim sa listahan ang mas maayos na personnel ngayon sa New Bilibid Prison.

Ayon kay Andanar, PNP Special Action Forces ang inilagay sa Bilibid at tuluyang tinutukan ng Department of Justice ang paglilinis sa Bilibid.

Ang mga matagumpay na pakikipag-usap ng gobyerno sa National People's Army at Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), ay isa rin sa nais ipagmalaki ng bagong kalihim.

Hindi lamang mga rebelde ang matagumpay na nakausap ng gobyerno, kundi pati mga magsasaka.

Maging ang pagdagdag sa bilang ng peace panellists ay itinuturing ni Andanar na senyales ng matagumpay na peace talks na naisagawa sa ilalim ng administrasyon ng Pangulong Duterte.

Mula sa 15, umabot na sa 21 ang pannelist na binubuo ng 10 mula sa gobyerno at 11 mula sa MILF.

Malaking achievement din, ayon kay Andanar, ang P97 bilyong pondo na nilagdaan ng Japan para sa railway project na magmumula Tutuban at aabot ng Bu-

lacan.

Isinailalim sa cabinet portfolio ang 12 ahensiya sa ilalim ng pamamahala ni Cabinet Secretary Jun Evasco, ito ang Cooperative Development Authority, Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, National Anti-Poverty Commission, National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, National Commission on Muslim Filipinos, National Food Authority, National Youth Commission, Office of the President-Presidential Action Center, Philippine Commission on Women, Philippine Coconut Authority, Presidential Commission on the Urban Poor, at Technical Education and Skills Development Authority.

Bukod sa mga ahensiya, ilang progresibong aktibista ang nabigyan ng puwesto sa gabinete. Tulad nina DOLE Secretary Silvestre Bello III, DENR Secretary Gina Lopez, DAR Secretary Rafael Mariano mula sa Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, Cabinet Secretary Leoncio "Jun" Evasco Jr., DSWD Secretary Judy Taguiwalo, DepEd Secretary Leonor Briones at si NAPC Lead Convenor Liza Maza.

Bilang dating broadcaster, ipinagmalaki rin ni Andanar ang Task Force

USIG na susugpo sa media killings. Ang nasabing task force ay pamumunuan ni Chief Superintendent Augusto Marquez Jr., hepe ng PNP DIDM.

Itinuturing na kabilang sa makabuluhang nagawa ng administrasyon ang paglulunsad ng dalawang hotlines: Emergency Hotline 911; at Complaint Hotline 8888.

Huli sa listahan ni Andanar ang malalaking drug lord na pinangalan-an. Aniya, may pangalawang listahan na rin na ilalabas ang administrasyon. Hindi man niya masabi kung kailan, naniniwala siya sa timing ng pangulo sa paglalabas nito.

Ilan ito sa mga tagumpay na nakamit ni Duterte, sa loob ng 50 na araw niyang pagkakaupo bilang presidente ng bansa.

Sa datos ng Philippine National Police, sinasabing 92 porsiyento ng kabuuang bilang ng mga barangay sa kapuluan ay apektado ng droga at pinaghihinalaang sangkot dito maging ang mga hukom, politiko, pulisya at ilang kilalang personalidad sa lipunan.

(Mula sa mga ulat nina ROSE NOVENARIO, TRACY CABRERA, JOANA CRUZ AT KIM-BEE YABUT)

Public urged to help fight wildlife trafficking in Eastern Visayas

By **RESTITUTO A. CAYUBIT**

TACLOBAN CITY – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources regional office 8 (DENR-8), has renewed its call for the public to help its intensified drive to stop the trafficking and illegal possession of wildlife in Eastern Visayas.

DENR-8 Regional Director Leonardo R. Sibbaluca made the appeal following with the rescue last August 13 of 15 pythons kept as pets by Albuera, Leyte, Mayor Rolando Espinosa and his son Kerwin in their residence.

The Espinosas were in the public limelight after they were named by President Duterte as drug lords in the Visayas.

Sibbaluca said an anonymous caller had tipped off his office last August 12 on the pythons in the custody of the Espinosas.

Sibbaluca said a DENR team found the pythons weak and hungry. Another python was

already dead when the team arrived.

He said the animals would have died in their cages if they were not rescued.

Sibbaluca said that he is appealing and encouraging the public to report to his office or to the field offices in the region the collection, possession or selling of wildlife.

The recovered animals are brought to the DENR-8 Regional Wildlife Rescue Center in Palo, Leyte.

At present the center is taking care of birds, snakes, monkeys, wild cats and other animals.

Sibbaluca told reporters that the rescued animals are released to a new habitat in any of the DENR-protected areas in the region once they are healthy enough.

Illegal trade and possession of wildlife is punishable under Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act of 2001 with imprisonment or fines.

18 AUG 2016

DATE

UPPER HALF

6-8

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

p2



NEW LIFE - A giant clam in the Phoenix Islands Protected Area. (Craig Cook/Undersea Medical/New York Times/Manila Bulletin)

10 AUG 2016

DATE

9

PAGE

UPPER-HALF

LOWER-HALF

ANG napapansin ng inyong lingkod, tila abala ang mga Local Government Unit (LGU) sa Metro Manila sa walang katapusan sa pagsisira sa maaayos na kalsada, paghuhukay, pagpapalit ng malalaking sementadong tubo na umaabot ng mahigit isang taon pero sa panahon ng tag-ulan, tayong mga motorista, hindi makauwi dahil lubog pa rin sa baha kahit tapos na ang proyekto.

Nakalinis!

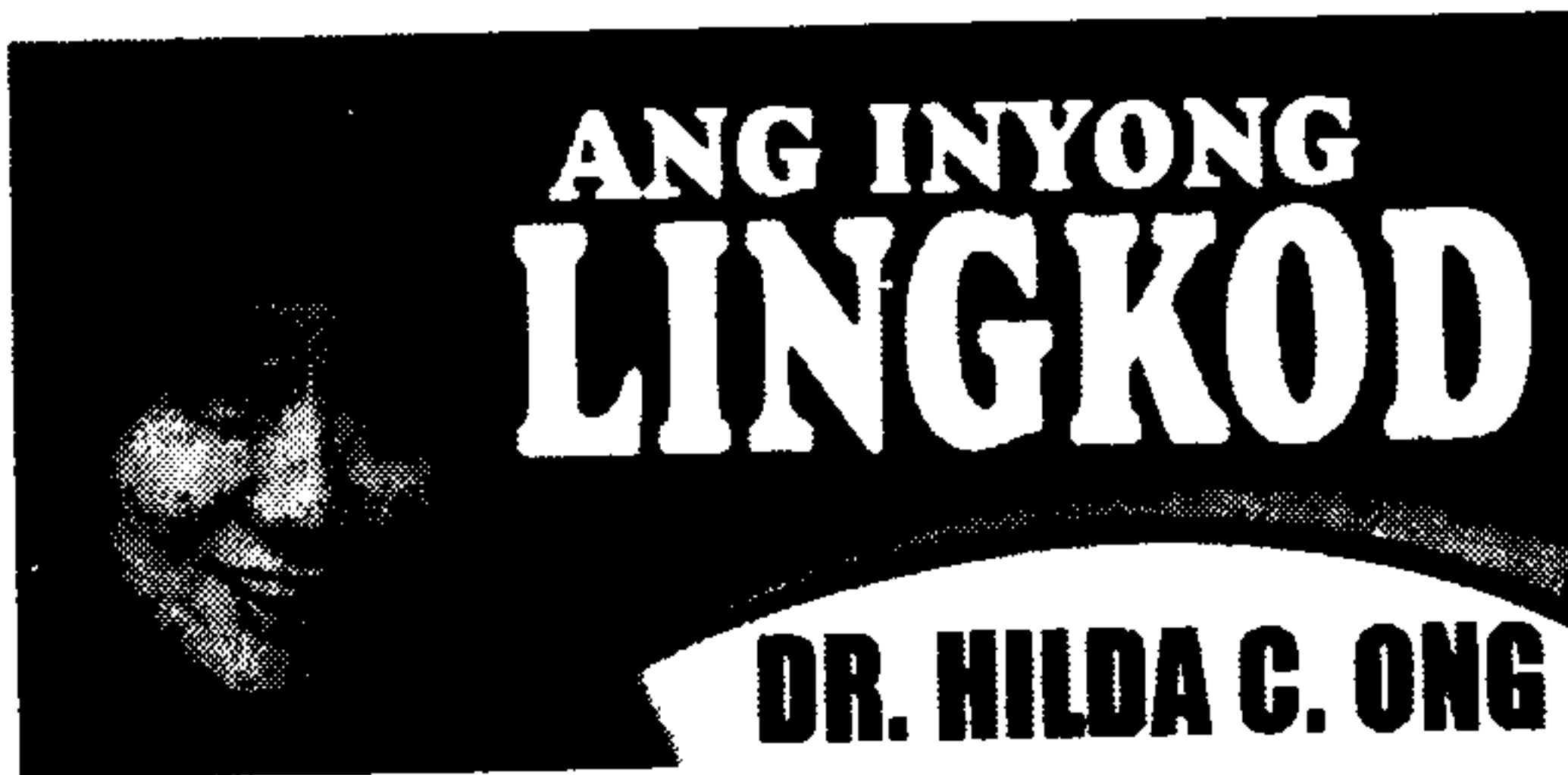
Maraming saradong kalsada, hindi naman maasahan ang "Waze" sa panahon ng tag-ulan dahil GPS navigation, maps at social traffic ang kayang ituro sa motorista.

Mas masahol pa ang kasalukuyan, hindi lang baha ang nagdudulot ng matinding trapiko, pati na rin ang mga sirang kalsada, kaya walang ibang alternatibong ruta!

Nagpapaalala muli ang pamunuan ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB) sa publiko na mag-umpisang magtipid sa paggamit ng tubig, kahit araw-araw nang umuulan.

Maging alisto tayong lahat, huwag mag-aksaya, dapat ituro ng mga magulang at guro sa mga bata ang kahalagahan ng pagtitipid at sa paggamit ng tubig sa bahay at sa opisina.

Base sa ulat ng Hydro-



ANG INYONG LINGKOD

DR. HILDA C. ONG

MAGTIPID AT SIGURADUHING LIGTAS ANG NAIMBAK NA TUBIG

logical Information ng Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (PDRRMC) noong Agosto 15, ang antas ng tubig sa Angat reservoir ay nasa 181.45 meters, kulang ng 30.55 meters base sa 212 normal high water level (NHWL). Ibig sabihin nasa critical level ang lebel ng tubig sa Angat Dam, makabubuti na ngayon pa lang ay umpisahan na ng mamamayan ang pagtitipid sa paggamit ng tubig.

Ipinapaalala ni Dr. Sevil-lo D. David, Jr., executive director ng NWRB, ang tamang pagtitipid ng tubig at hindi tamang pag-imbak ng tubig ay maaaring magdulot ng peligro at sakit, siguraduhing sapat at ligtas ang pag-imbak ng tubig:

"Huwag iwanang nakabukas ang gripo habang nagsisipilyo.

"Huwag hayaang umaagos ang tubig kapag naghuhugas ng mga prutas, o gulay, sa halip ay gumamit ng

palanggana sa paghuhugas ng mga ito. Pagtapos ay itabi ang tubig na nagamit at ilaan sa iba pang paglilinis sa bahay o kaya ng pagdidilig ng halaman.

"Gumamit ng mga malinis na baunan at lalagyan ng pagkain para makaimbak ng tubig pangluto at pang-inom. Bago inumin, pakuluan muna ang tubig.

"Huwag mag-imbak ng tubig sa mga lalagyan na dating pinag-imbakan ng mga nakalalasong kemikal.



18 AUG 2016

DATE

13

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

40 Cavite execs ordered to explain illegal dumpsites

**By Joel
dela Torre**

THE Office of the Ombudsman has ordered some 40 local officials of Silang, General Trias and Kawit, Cavite to explain the existence of illegal dumpsites in their respective areas.

According to investigators from the Environmental Ombudsman (EO) team, these officials were directed to attend a series of clarificatory hearings on August 15 and 16 at the Ombudsman's office to save themselves from charges of violation of the law.

The EO was tasked to conduct an in-depth fact-finding investigation into the illegal dumpsites in Cavite as part of the national campaign to ensure compliance with Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

Last May, the Ombudsman environmental team successfully caused the closure of three open dumpsites in the municipalities of Hindang and Bato in Leyte, and the municipality of Catarman in Northern Samar.

Upon receipt of the complaint filed by the National Solid Waste Management Commission on Feb. 10, 2016, the EO gave local officials a non-exextendible period of 30 days to submit their explanation and a Safe Closure and Rehabilitation Plan (SCR), which must include a proposal to immediately close the open dumpsite.

The EO also ordered the local officials to detail the specific tasks, activities and legislative action to be completed within six months of SCR implementation.

The EO team will monitor post-closure activities of the LGUs concerned and ensure that the provisions of Republic Act 9003 and other environmental laws are fully implemented.

Under its mandate, the EO team headed by Deputy Ombudsman for Luzon Gerard Mosquera shall investigate complaints filed against any environmental protection official and employee and recommend the imposition of appropriate penalties and/or filing of criminal indictments.

18 AUG 2016

DATE

UPPER HALF

13-8

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Angono residents plant trees in former dumpsite

ANGONO, Rizal – The municipal government here continues to embark on eco-tourism programs to encourage more tourists to come and see one of the town's major attractions, the Lakeside Eco Park.

Municipal government officials and employees initiated a tree-planting event recently at the Lakeside Eco Park located in Barangay San Vicente in this town.

Volunteers coming from various sectors based in this town joined Mayor Gerardo Calderon and local government employees in planting hardwood trees such as narra, mahogany and

caballero along the lakeside areas of the park that used to be a dumpsite. The area has since been rehabilitated and now serves as a promenade park for joggers, cyclists, and tourists who want to see the beauty of Laguna Lake in this part of the province.

Calderon said the tree-planting activity, which is also in conjunction with the capitol's Ynares to Eco System (YES) to Green Program, also aims to protect the town against flooding, which has been a perennial problem especially in low-lying areas here especially during the monsoon season.

The continuous greening and reha-

bilitation of the park here is also being done to encourage more tourists, local and foreign, to appreciate the beauty of the place which is a favorite place where families gather for other sports activities including zip lining, go karting, biking, and boat riding around Laguna Lake, especially during weekends and sunny days.

Prior to the tree-planting activity, the town government also offered free medical and dental services to some 1,500 indigent residents courtesy of the medical team from the barangay, municipal, provincial health offices. (Nel B. Andrade)

18 AUG 2016

DATE

UPPER HALF

B-8

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Mangrove program nurtures Siargao's ecosystems

Things are certainly looking up in the rustic southern town of Del Carmen in Surigao del Norte which has been experiencing a dramatic turnaround in negative environmental practices.

Thanks to the growing ecological awareness brought about by Shore It Up, a comprehensive marine ecosystem and coastal resource program of the Metro Pacific Investment Corp. (MPIC) which commenced in 2013.

The program's centerpiece is the Mangrove Protection and Information Center, a hub for the rehabilitation and nurture of the coastal ecosystem.

Located in Siargao Island, the coastal town is home to a 4,000-hectare contiguous mangrove forest, the biggest of its kind in the archipelago.

The program has been working closely with various agencies and organizations across the country to preserve the mangrove forests, which protect coastal communities against storms and serve as habitats for aquatic life.

According to Del Carmen Mayor Alfredo Coro II, the program brought about a 95% threat reduction of mangrove cutting from 2014 up to the present has been noted, based on visual observation and bio-physical assessment conducted by SIKAT.

Moreover, the municipal Bantay Dagat and police recorded a 70% reduction based on visual observation for the same period, due to the law enforcement agencies' regular apprehensions of violators of marine environmental laws.

Coro also disclosed that there is an 85% average survival rate for the 800 hectares of mangroves planted under the Shore It Up program.

Del Carmen's vast mangrove forest



Mangrove forest in Del Carmen, Surigao del Norte (Photo courtesy of pttcf.org / Manila Bulletin)

has also become a major tourist destination in Siargao with 21 boat operators making 3-4 trips per day, which has generated income for the local economy. Four of the mangrove tour ecoguides underwent intense week-long training.

He said these statistics prove the effectiveness of the program and shift in the mindset that mangroves are simply used as ornaments or firewood.

In its first run in 2013, the area yielded 526.5 kilograms of non-biodegradable wastes of underwater and 1,363 kgs. of trash from the coastal areas.

In its recent staging in July, the program conducted the Junior Environmental Scouts, Shore It Up's educational component for 80 schoolchildren to heighten public opinion against illegal marine activities.

Coro said the municipal council has declared through an ordinance the first week of March as "Shore It Up Week" to keep the momentum which includes cleanups and the Run for the Mangroves marathon which has heightened public awareness on the importance of the mangroves.

As a result of its efforts, Del Carmen

has been given the Environmental Hero Award by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

"Since its inception in 2009, Shore It Up has mustered over 75,000 volunteers from Metro Pacific firms, the government sector, academe and civil society groups in activities such as mangrove and tree planting, giant clam rearrangement, artificial reef restoration and environmental education for schoolchildren, and livelihood for coastal villagers," says MPIC vice president for PR and corporate communications Melody Del Rosario.

She added that conglomerate has also embarked on the infrastructure ends of marine environmental restoration with the construction of another mangrove center in Alaminos City, Pangasinan, and a marine laboratory at the dive sites in Mabini, Batangas, the first of its kind in the country.

She noted that in addition to Siargao's mangrove center, MPIC is also looking at the rehabilitation of Sugba Lagoon to make it a potential spot for eco-friendly aqua sports such as kayaking and scuba diving.

The Manila Times

18 AUG 2016

DATE

8B

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

WWF-PH and ComCo SEAsia join forces for conservation

WWF-Philippines, the country's leading conservation organization, recently inked a partnership with ComCo Southeast Asia, a coalition of premier brand architects and communication trailblazers in the region.

WWF-Philippines is a conservation organization dedicated to building a future where people and nature thrive. For 20 years, WWF-Philippines has tirelessly endeavored to bring together stakeholders from various sectors to collaborate for environmental sustainability. By designing, implementing and managing science-based projects from grassroots to policy levels, WWF-Philippines has positively transformed the lives of thousands of Filipinos while conserving some of the richest habitats in the Philippines.

"We're excited to be working with partners that share the same vision and passion as WWF-Philippines in conserving the environment and addressing climate change," said WWF-Philippines President Joel Palma. "Together with our communications partner ComCo Southeast Asia, we will creatively communicate our environmental solutions and transform more lives."

ComCo Southeast Asia is a communications agency offering integrated marketing solutions, from insights mapping and strategic planning to seamless executions in relevant communications touch-points.

"WWF is one of the most active and trusted conservation organizations in Philippines and around the world. We are proud and excited to be their communications partner. We look forward to this collaboration and the opportunity to engage and mobilize people and

organizations behind a shared desire to address these conservation challenges," said ComCo Southeast Asia Regional Managing Director Ferdinand Bondoy.

ComCo Southeast Asia aims to deliver creative and compelling campaigns while providing strategic communica-

tions advice to drive more support for WWF-Philippines' conservation programs. Members of ComCo have been helping WWF-Philippines through such events as Earth Hour, the WWF Stewardship Campaign, the Bright Skies program for Tubbataha and Apo

Reefs, the TAMS-2 tamaraw conservation program, a dolphin mural painting marathon and most recently, the Reefstrokes Campaign, which aimed to promote the conservation of the Verde Island Passage.

WWF-PHILIPPINES

The Manila Times

18 AUG 2016

DATE

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

SME lender joins tree nursery program

"NURTURING a tree involves a lot of processes, It's not as simple as everyone thinks", said Marie, a volunteer from Esquire Financing Inc. (EFI).

EFI, a lending company focused on providing additional capital to growing small and medium enterprises (SMEs), once again partnered with Haribon Foundation where the volunteers participated in the organization's native tree nursery and learning center, Buhay Punlaan in Brgy. Lumban, Laguna. They learned how seedlings were tended and nurtured until such time that they would be ready for tree planting activity. This involved soil potting, re-bagging, soil hardening, and weeding.

Doing the work in a plant nursery was not exactly an easy job. "It's exhausting, but seeing my colleagues who belong from different departments work together, this time, for a different cause makes participating in activities like this worthwhile," Angie, EFI's Customer Relationship Management Associate (CRMA) shared. "It's a good consolation that these efforts lead to something noble," Mark, Information Technology/Management Information System Department (IT/MIS) added.

Volunteers accomplished the activities and learned a lot about the benefits of native trees in sustaining the country's biodiversity and providing many other benefits too. "Despite the short amount of time, we still felt fulfilled knowing that the nursery is after all, about ensuring the continuity and sustainability of the combined efforts of all partners of Haribon," said Wenie, member of the Credit Operations team.

"This activity reminds us to not take things for granted especially those who are working on these tasks full time," Eloida, one of EFI's in-house Loan Specialists, reflected. "It provided me a different and fulfilling work outside my usual workstation," mentioned Renie, a volunteer from Credit Operations team.

"Reinforcing the idea that natural conservation goes beyond the mere notion of tree planting, we are just scratching the surface; but we're on the right path nonetheless," concluded by Byron, EFI's Marketing & Sustainability Officer.

When asked if the volunteers would participate again in a similar effort such as this, "yes" was a unanimous response.

EFI's participation in Buhay Punlaan is one of its many initiatives in becoming not only as a trusted financing partner for small, but growing businesses, but also as a responsible stakeholder in the bigger society we all live in.

HARIBON FOUNDATION



The Manila Times

18 AUG 2016

DATE

8B

PAGE

UPPER HALF

✓
LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

WWF and HSBC team up

P-1

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for 'Rain Campaign'

WITH the onset of the rainy season, the Rain Campaign, a cooperative effort between the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and banking giant HSBC has gone into high gear in the Philippines,

according to a statement from WWF-Philippines.

The Rain Campaign raises awareness on the importance of freshwater supplies while making people more

conscious of their water footprint through programs organized at local schools. The campaign promotes the use of rainwater collectors as an alternative source of water for

8B - Time Love



WATER CONSERVATION IS FUN Happy WWF and HSBC teachers with their students pose with a freshly-painted rainwater collector during the 'Rain Campaign' at Fort Bonifacio Elementary School. PHOTO WWF/ALEXA CANCIO

The Manila Times

18 AUG 2016

DATE

8B

PAGE

UPPER HALF

✓
LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

WWF and HSBC team up for "Rain Campaign"
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households.

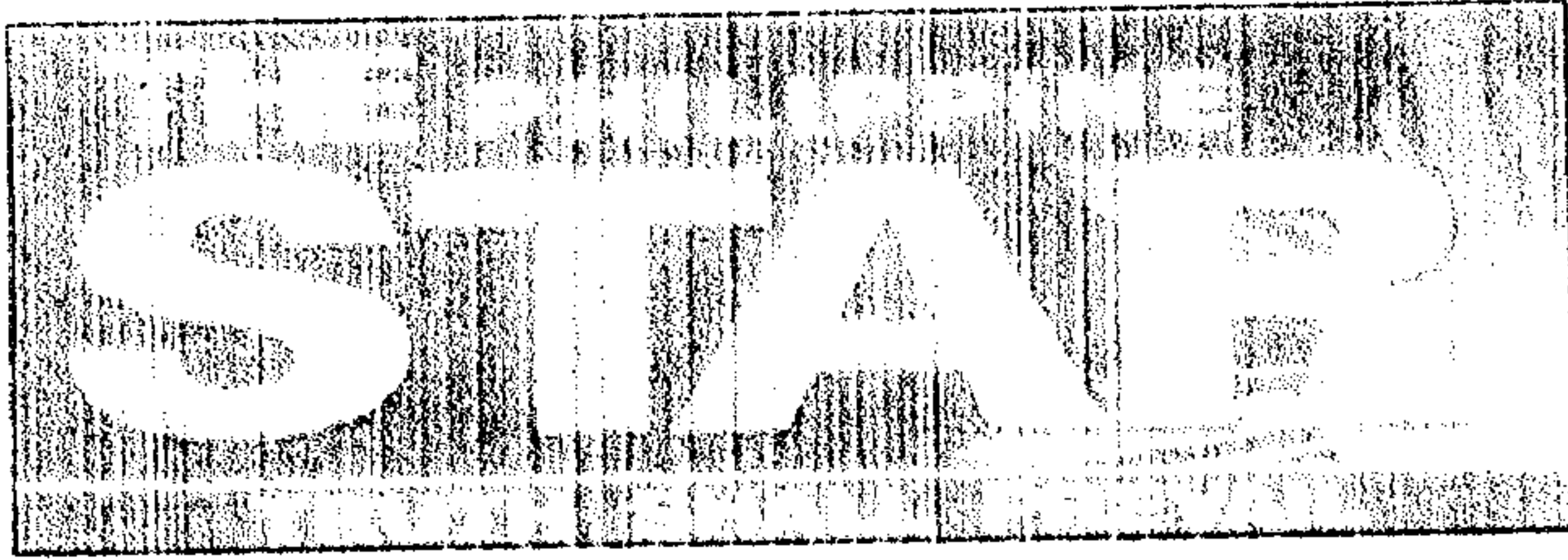
The campaign began in 2012 and has now reached seven schools in Pasig and Donsol, educated more than 1400 students, and helped more than 100 families, WWF-Philippines said.

HSBC volunteer employees have helped the WWF in teaching students to be more discriminating in using water. Volunteers took part in the collection of water samples to test water quality, such as measuring the level of alkalinity and the presence of bacteria in both tap water and collected rainwater. HSBC volunteers also mentored students about simple household solutions for ensuring safe drinking water, while joining students in painting drums that can serve as rainwater collectors.

Selected teachers from numerous schools underwent training on climate change, water conservation, and environmental education. The campaign also presented household challenges that aimed to involve parents in creating rainwater collectors for their families, while assessing their household water use habits.

As the country braces for the monsoon season, the knowledge and awareness that the Rain Campaign provides students, teachers, and families will be more useful than ever.

WWF-PHILIPPINES



18 AUG 2016

DATE

UPPER HALF

B-8

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Marine scientist eyes R&D on ocean energy

By RAINIER ALLAN RONDA

A marine scientist based in academe is urging the Philippines to pour investments into ocean energy resource research and development.

Laura David of the University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute (UP-MSI) said that being an archipelago with more than 7,100 islands, the country can harness ocean energy as a clean and renew-

able source that can greatly contribute to solving the current power supply problem.

During a presentation at the recently held 38th Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) of the National Academy of Sci-

ence & Technology (NAST), David said that waves or tides from the ocean can provide an infinite supply of electricity if local scientists develop the technology.

"It's more reliable than wind and solar. As long as the moon is there, it can be a source of power," David said.

She noted that sites of tidal energy facilities would be in islands or coastal areas with

poor electricity services.

David pointed out that there were promising advances in ocean energy technology development in the Orkney islands in Scotland, proving that power can be produced from ocean waves.

The R&D on ocean energy in the Orkney islands has led to the establishment of the European Marine Energy Center where scientists are perfect-

ing the technology needed to convert wave and tidal energy into electricity.

David is one of MSI's scientists and researchers venturing into ocean renewable energy (ORE) technology development. Other colleagues of David into ORE research and development are engineer Ma. Rosario Ang, and professors Allan Nerves and Michael Pedrasa.

A recent study conducted by the Mindanao State University showed that ocean energy can provide an estimated 17,000 megawatts of electricity.

David said that in studies to be conducted on the ideal energy mix in the Philippines, the potential of ocean energy production should be considered and given grants for R&D if tapped.