

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DATE : 28 AUG 2016

DAY : Sunday

# DENR

## IN THE NEWS



## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



### Rally backs DENR tack on responsible mines

DAVAO CITY—At least 500 members of different environmental and militant groups trooped to the Caraga regional office of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to express support for what some rally leaders said was the propeople and pro-environment thrust of the DENR under Environment Secretary Gina Lopez.

The rallyists also demanded

that mining firms which violated local and national laws be punished.

Groups which sent delegates to the rally included the Caraga Watch, an environmental watchdog in the Caraga region, and the Nagkahiusang Gagmay'ng Minero (United Small Scale Miners).

They expressed support for a policy declared by Lopez to allow the operations of only mining companies that had been

certified as responsible.

"You have to have the highest standards," Lopez said earlier, referring to ISO 14001 certification as her measure of mining companies that heed safety and environment protocols.

Recently, she ordered an audit of mining companies in the country to measure their adherence to technical, social, and environmental standards. Lopez had warned that companies found

to have committed violations would face the consequences.

Alilo Ensomo, director of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau in Caraga, said in a memorandum report on the rally that he had talked with the rallyists and assured them the agency is doing its best to promote responsible mining, as Lopez had wanted.

Ensomo said the rally was peaceful. *Allan Nawal, Inquirer Mindanao*



## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## DENR stops soil export to China by Surigao mining company



BY MANUEL T. CAYON  
Mindanao Bureau Chief  
@awimailbox

**C**LAVER, Surigao del Norte—The Department of the Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), backed by battle-clad soldiers and the police, nailed on Friday two signs “re-emphasizing the suspension order” against a nickel-mining operation

this month the DENR was suspending the operation of CMDC, after an audit found it to have erred on environmental protection.

The company claimed, however, it is a “responsible mining company that sets and upholds the highest ethical standards and business practices, focusing toward local community development and maintaining environmental and ecological balance.”

CMDC was established in 1995,

owned by Rep. Prospero A. Pichay Jr. of the First District of Surigao del Sur. The two 1.5-meter by 4-meter signs read: “Notice to the Public: The mining operation of Claver Mineral Development Corp. [CMDC] is hereby suspended.”

The signage was placed at the side of the entrance to the company’s field operation here near the mountain barangay of Cagdianao in the boundary with Surigao del Sur. There was no resistance from

taking over from the Shenzou Mining Group Corp. of China.

The regional Mines and Geosciences Bureau said there are 26 mining operations in the Surigao mountains, and the flattening of its mountains to ship the soil to China has generated public uproar. Photographs show copper orange-colored mountains made dusty by incessant diggings by several hundred bulldozers and trucks transporting them to barges,

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the guards, who witnessed it. ■

Environment Undersecretary Arturo T. Valdez said the putting up of the signs “only reemphasizes the authority of the government and to announce that the task force is ready to enforce the order.”

He said the company operation was suspended in 2012 over environmental issues, including siltation of the bay of Claver.

Environment Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez also announced early

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which transfer them to Chinese cargo ships waiting offshore. Valdez said 27 Chinese cargo ships were waiting for their soil loads on that Friday alone.

The local Coast Guard said that, for many years, several ships were regularly seen at the bay, and could reach as many as 50 at the peak season of hauling mountain soil.

The regional DENR said the local mining capabilities were unable to process the soil ores dug at deeper depths and had to be transported to China for further processing.

Valdez said the fate of the unabated practice of Chinese cargo ships would depend on the outcome of the national audit of all mining companies, which would be decided by September.

So far, they have not received any threat in the course of their auditing and described the posture of the mining companies as “cooperative.”

“Our work may be small, but it is like a wallop. What we would do in six years would surely have a deep and far-ranging impact for the next generation,” he said.



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# Pag-asa Island eyed as eco-tourism zone

By MARIA CARLO TUZON

**P**ag-asa Island, the second largest island in the Kalayaan Island Group (Spratlys) in the West Philippine Sea, is being eyed to be a tourist destination.

This is the intention of Senate Bill 944 filed by Sen. Juan Edgardo Angara yesterday, seeking Congress to declare Pag-asa Island as a special ecological tourism zone.

"With its impeccable beauty, the island is an ideal tourist destination," Angara said in filing Senate Bill 944.

Angara, chairman of the Senate ways and means committee, said the government should provide the necessary support to promote the island's rich biodiversity and Philippine heritage that the country should be proud of.

The bill seeks to create and mandate the Pag-asa Island Ecotourism Cluster Governing Board, in coordi-

nation with the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA), to prepare an ecotourism master plan to ensure the island's tourism promotion, employment generation, livelihood development, and the protection and preservation of its environment and ecosystem.

The Pag-asa Island and the adjoining islands of Parola, Kota and Panata, are collectively referred to as the Pag-asa Island Cluster, which is located in the municipality of Kalayaan in the province of Palawan. It is the only Philippine-occupied island in the Spratlys that is inhabited by civilians, Angara explained.

The bill aims to declare the islands of Parola, Kota and Panata as protected areas under the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS).

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) recently completed a humanitarian mission to Pag-asa Island, delivering provisions including clothes, rice,

canned goods, cooking oil, condiments, other grocery items, and fuel and various supplies to the Filipinos residing there.

The bill comes at the heels of the recent ruling on the West Philippine Sea (WPS) of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague. The decision refers to the conflicting territorial claims of China and the Philippines on some islands, islets and shoals in the WPS with the PCA favoring the Philippine claim.

Angara said Supreme Court Senior Associate Justice Antonio Carpio, a member of the legal team that prepared the Philippines' case before the PCA, believes that "the government should push for a peace agreement with China and other claimants in the Spratlys by declaring the area as an international marine park and protected area, as originally suggested by American marine biology professor John McManus."



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## Erap: Harbor expansion to unclog Pasig River

By Sandy Araneta

**A**SIDE from the economic gains it would provide to Manila, the planned P7.4-billion expansion of the Manila Harbour Centre will help unclog and clean up the Pasig River, where informal settlers and factories have been dumping their waste for decades, Mayor Joseph Estrada said on Friday.

Estrada said the Sangguniang Panglunsod ratified early this week the joint venture agreement of the city government and the consortium R-II Builders Inc. for the multi-billion-peso expansion of the 79-hectare North Harbor facility in Tondo.

"The developer told me that oil depots and many industries along the Pasig River will be transferring to the soon-to-be expanded port once it is completed, which means there will be less polluters in the river. This is good news, considering we, too, support the rehabilitation of our beloved Pasig River," the mayor said.

He lamented that the Pasig River has become a huge sewer system because industries and the thousands of informal settlers that have settled on its

banks pollute it.

Reghis Romero II, chairman of R-II Builders Inc., said a number of industries such as shoe manufacturers, textiles and oil depots on the Pasig River have expressed interest to transfer to the North Harbor port once the expansion is completed.

"They've been looking for a light industrial estate that can accommodate them since they've been clogging the Pasig River," Romero said.

Estrada said Manila stands to gain much from the multi-billion-peso project, including its share of a 15-hectare land with a market value of P2.7 billion that the city government intends to develop into a new industrial, commercial and cultural complex.

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Half of the 30-hectare reclaimed land will be given to the city government of Manila as its share once reclamation and construction works are completed in two-and-a-half years.

"This is what I've been envisioning, a huge piece of land where we could extend our local government offices and put up other useful facilities," the mayor said.

Romero said the city government can very well put up its own cultural center at the new site.

Estrada said the project would also provide thousands of job opportunities for Manilaños and millions of tax revenues for the city government, aside from boosting the country's economy.

"At the same time it will ease the congestion at the Port of Manila, which is being blamed for the rising cost of commodities," he pointed out.

Romero pointed out that the current congestion at the Port of Manila is blamed for rising logistical costs of the cargo companies and other major stakeholders in the shipping industry.

Romero said the port expansion is also badly needed to make the operation of Port of Manila at par with international standards; with the expansion

of the North Harbor further out to sea, the existing port facility will now be able to handle larger vessels, thus, reducing the costs of and speeding the process of cargo handling.

Romero said they see no more hurdles in the implementation of the port expansion project.

The 36-member city council led by Vice Mayor Honey Lacuna approved the JVA signed by Estrada and Romero on July 21. The council approval is a requirement to get the approval of the Philippine Reclamation Authority.

Once approved by the PRA, the project will then be submitted to the National Economic and Development Authority for President Rodrigo Duterte's approval.

Under the JVA, R-II will reclaim 50 more hectares of Manila Bay to expand the existing 79-hectare Manila North Harbour Centre, popularly known as North Harbor, in Tondo. The port is owned and operated by Harbour Centre Port Terminal Inc.

Phase 1 of the project involves the reclamation of 20 hectares, including a kilometer-long berthing apron and backup area for cargoes, while Phase 2 will be another 30 hectares for mixed-use development, including road utilities and other facilities such as warehouses and storage facilities.

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## Taguiwalo backs 'lumad' fight to reclaim their land

By DJ Yap

SOCIAL Welfare Secretary Judy Taguiwalo has expressed support for the *lumad* (indigenous peoples) struggle to reclaim their ancestral lands that had been taken over by mining and logging companies and large plantations.

In a message to the Solidarity Festival in Koronadal, South Cotabato, Taguiwalo said she supported the lumad in opposing destructive mining and logging that had led to the mass displacement of tribal communities.

Taguiwalo expressed support for the lumad's defense of their human rights. She said the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) was seeking to improve its services and assistance to lumad communities.

"Specifically, we are working with other government agencies such as the Department of Education to build more schools for lumad children and youth, and to ensure that the projects of the DSWD do not go against the welfare and culture of our lumad brothers and sisters," Taguiwalo said.

The secretary pointed out the DSWD's new slogan was "Maagap, Maipagkalinga at Malasakit na Serbisyo sa Publiko (Efficient, Caring and Compassionate

Public Service)."

Taguiwalo had announced on her first day as Social Welfare secretary that under her leadership, the department would exert every effort to address and remedy the impact of military operations on the livelihood, safety, security, schools and welfare of farmers and the lumad.

Taguiwalo assured the lumad of President Duterte's support in their plight. She said the President had made it clear he did not want a repeat of the Kidapawan City clash between lumad and law enforcers.

At least two people died on April 1 when some 3,000 drought-hit farmers asking the government for rice and food were violently dispersed by police.



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## Maayos na magtatapon ng basura, may libreng sardinas

**NI Mars W. Mosqueda, Jr.**

**CEBU CITY** - Upang maiwasang matambak kung saan-saan ang basura, sinabi ni Cebu City Mayor Tomas Osmeña na maglulunsad siya ng programa na magbibigay ng libreng de-latang sardinas sa sinumang direktang magtatapon ng basura sa mga garbage truck.

Plano ng alkalde na mamahagi ng mga de-lata ng sardinas sa mga

residenteng personal na magtatapon ng kanilang basura sa mga garbage truck na dumaraan sa bawat barangay, partikular na sa mga eskinita na hindi napapasok ng truck.

Sisimulang ipatupad ang programa sa mga sitio ng Alumnus at Alaska sa Barangay Mambaling, sa Bgy. Lahug at sa iba pang loobang lugar.

"This is only an experiment. We will be going to try it now. If it works,

we will just give out sardines to everybody," ani Osmeña.

Naniniwala ang alkalde na sa pamamagitan ng programa ay mahihimok ang mga residente na hintayin ang pagdaan ng mga garbage truck sa halip na basta na lamang iwan o itambak kung saan-saan ang kanilang basura.

Wala pang partikular na detalye kung kailan sisimulan ang programa.