

DATE 02 MAR 2016
DAY Wednesday

DENR

IN THE NEWS



The only paper you read from cover to cover!

02 MAR 2016

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

PAGE 1

City of the Cursed Gold

With depressing regularity, the mountains of Monkayo town in Compostela Valley bury individuals who eke out a living by manually digging for gold ore. Last Saturday night, a section of a mining tunnel in Barangay Ulip collapsed, trapping 12 people. Six of the miners were rescued, but three were found dead, with another body recovered yesterday. Among the fatalities was a rescuer.

The search for the three who remained missing last night was hampered by the mud and water from 10 days of incessant rains that had inundated the tunnel. Heavy rains have also caused many of the disasters in the mining area, with at least 36 killed in 2012 alone. The deaths have earned the area, particularly Mt. Diwalwal, the moniker "City of the Cursed Gold."

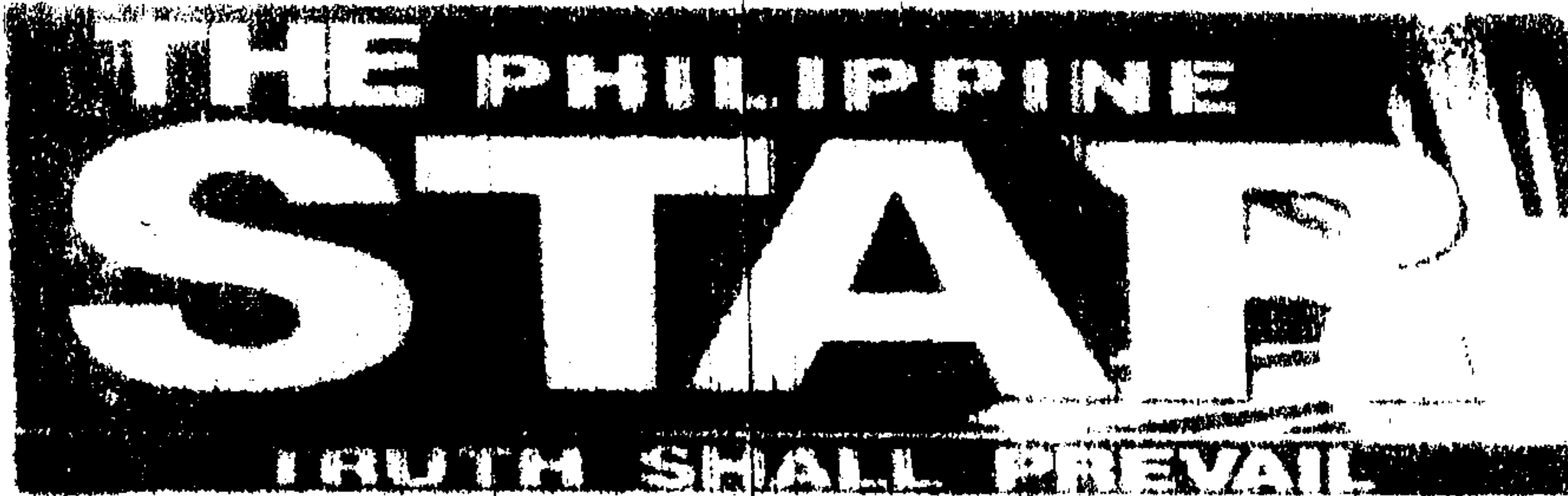
Despite the regular accidents, little has been done to regulate small-scale mining. Major mining companies have decried the failure to regulate small-scale miners, whose unsafe and irresponsible

practices have tarnished industry efforts to clean up its act.

The country has suffered the consequences of irresponsible mining. Marinduque is still feeling the impact of the 1996 Marcopper disaster, which destroyed its main river and caused illnesses in the affected communities. Environmental groups believe responsible mining is an oxymoron.

Several mining companies have moved to clean up their operations while arguing, amid calls for a total mining ban in many areas, that the world can't do without extractive activities. Efforts by the major players to improve safety and environment records are set back each time a disaster occurs in small-scale mining sites.

Against opposition from environmental groups, the government has moved to encourage mining. If the government wants the industry to thrive, it must not only enforce safety rules at major mining sites, but also start tightening the reins on small-scale mining. The curse on the City of Gold need not be permanent.



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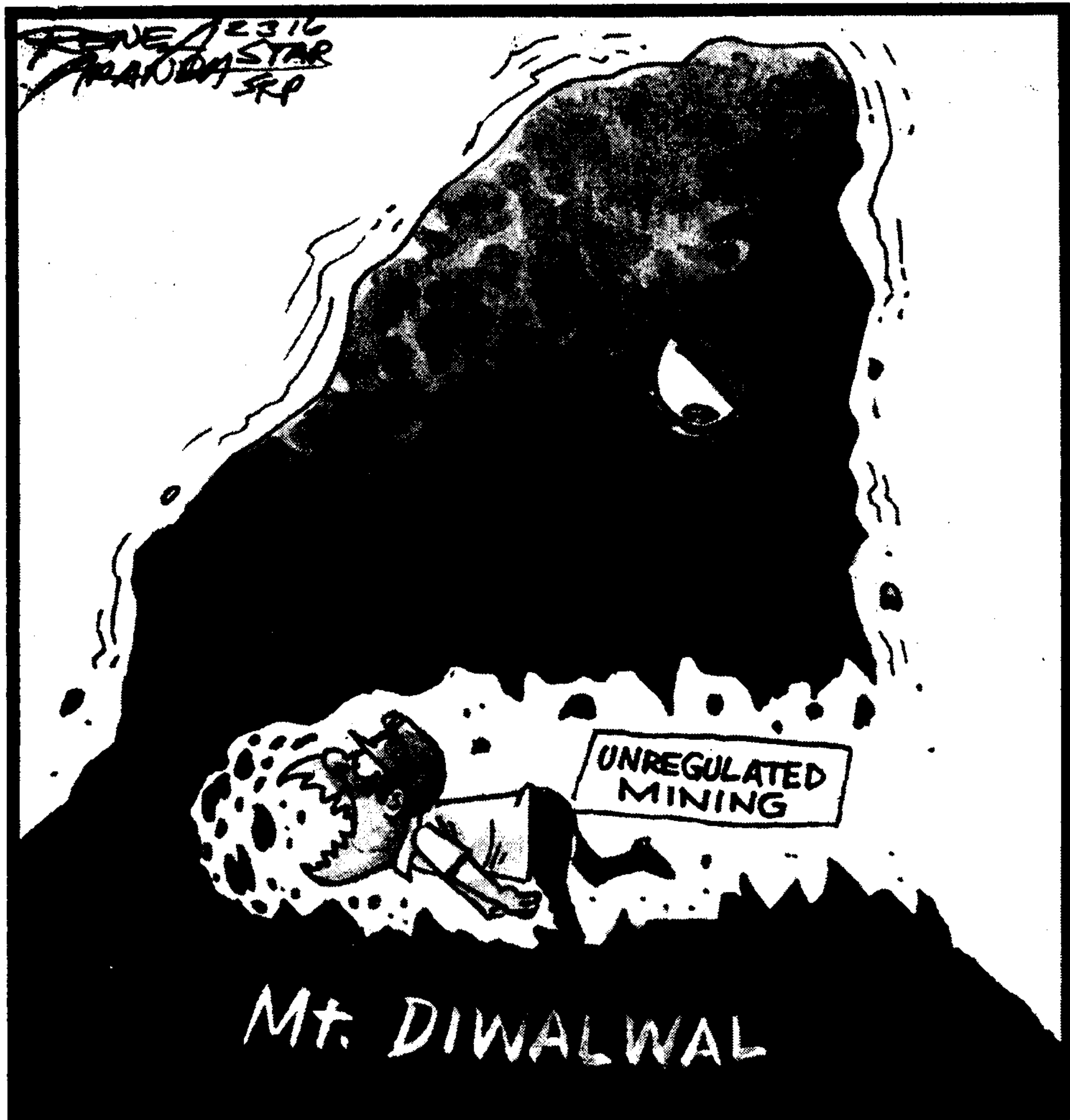
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

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EDITORIAL



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PAGGUHO NG MINAHAN SA COMVAL ISINISI SA LGUs

IBINUNTON ng pamahalaan sa local government units ang pagguho ng minahan ng ginto sa Sitio Uno, Compostela Valley na ikinasawi ng apat katao at tatlo pa ang nawawala.

Base sa tugon ni DENR Sec. Ramon Paje, sinabi ni Presidential Communications Sec. Sonny Coloma, Jr. na hindi dapat pinahihintulutan ng lokal na pamahalaan ang iligal na operasyon ng minahan.

Ayon kay Paje, karamihan sa minahan sa Sitio Uno ay iligal ang operasyon sa kabila na mahigpit na ang mga batas laban dito.

Partikular na tinukoy ng kalihim ang Executive Order no. 79 na nagma-mandato sa pag-iisyu ng Small Scale Mining guidelines/Minahang Bayan permits na inaprubahan ng Mining Industry Coordina-

ting Council.

Iginiit ni Paje na karamihan sa small mining operations sa Compostela Valley ay walang permiso mula sa LGUs, DENR AT

MICC.

“We believe EO no. 79 is already strict. In fact, it mandated the issuance of the Small Scale Mining Guidelines/Minahang Ba-

yan which has been passed by the MICC. Unfortunately, most of the operations in that area, particularly in sitio Uno, are mostly illegal. They are not covered by

Minahang Bayan permits. LGUs should not allow their operations,” ayon kay Paje.

FLORANTE RO-SALES

MANILA BULLETIN

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICES

6 nabbed for mining protest in Zambales

By JONAS REYES

CANDELARIA, Zambales — Authorities here arrested six protesters during an anti-mining rally against Benguet Nickel Mines, Inc (BNMI) on the national highway last Monday.

More than 200 protesters picketed at the highway, blocking trucks from hauling nickel ore from the mine site to the port of Barangay Binabalian, Candelaria.

The police broke up the blockade and arrested Marlo Murciano, Elmer Manamtam, Bitoy Ednalan, Roy Edejer, Baba Edejer, Jojo Excio, and Charm Jad Barrera in the process.

The six are residents of the town and were sick and tired of the devastation brought about by rampant mining in their area. One of the protesters said that mining has destroyed most of the flora in the municipality.

Police officers warned demonstrators that they will be arrested if they become unruly. Both the police and the security officers of the mining firm escorted the trucks through the anti-mining blockade.

These trucks were enroute to Binabalin Port, an area where trucks that haul nickel ore, laterite and black sand transfer their cargoes to a ship bound for China.

Residents/protesters said that they will continue to conduct a human barricade to stop mining operations in Candelaria. This is the second protest against mining in Zambales this year, with the first being staged in the town of Sta. Cruz.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Palace tells local leaders: Do not allow illegal mining

By Sandy Araneta

MALACAÑANG on Tuesday urged all local government units not to allow illegal mining operations, amid the rising death toll in the mining mishap in Compostela Valley. Four people were killed when a mining tunnel collapsed Saturday night.

"Government is determined to enforce safety rules and regulations in the mining industry and to prevent a recurrence of the reported incident in Compostela Valley," said Communications Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr., in a statement.

Coloma quoted Secretary Ramon Paje, secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, as saying: "...We believe that Executive Order No. 79 is already strict. In fact, it mandated the issuance of the Small Scale Mining Guidelines/Minahang Bayan which has been passed by the Mining Industry Coordinating Council."

"Unfortunately, most of the operations in the area, particularly in Sitio Uno, are mostly illegal. They are not covered by Minahang Bayan permits. Local Government Units should not allow their operations..." Paje also said.

The four miners had been working in Australia Tunnel in Sitio Depot, Barangay Upper Ulip in Monkayo.

The three other fatalities earlier confirmed by the police were identified as Ernesto Loquena, 46, Gelbert Bayot and Reynante Gemino. Authorities have yet to identify the latest confirmed fatality.

Three more miners identified as Bryan Monsoon, Roel Dacaldacal and Richard Monsoon remained trapped inside the collapsed tunnel.

Those who have been rescued were Pepe Mendoza, Aljun Dumalaga, Oliver Uganap, Carlito Morado, Alberto Agyang and Angelito Tonio.

Authorities have yet to determine the cause of the mining tunnel's collapse. Rescue efforts continue.

Business World

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BRIEFS

Philex Mining declares property dividends

PHILEX MINING Corp. on Tuesday said its board of directors has approved a property dividend in the form of shares in Philex Petroleum Corp., a move that will reduce the former's stake in the latter to 19%.

In a disclosure to the stock exchange, Philex Mining said it will offer 17 Philex Petroleum shares for every 100 shares in the mining company.

Philex Mining shareholders, as of record date March 15, are entitled to the property dividend. Payment to US shareholders will be done in the form of cash.

The distribution of property dividends will still need the approval of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). The property dividends and the cash payment to US shareholders will be given 15 trading days after the SEC approval.

"The Company will seek exemptive relief from the applicable payment periods for dividends under relevant SEC regulations," Philex Mining said.

The transaction will reduce the mining firm's shares in Philex Petroleum from 64.7% to approximately 19.4%.

"[This will] allow Philex Mining to leverage on its key strengths and focus its resources on its core businesses of metals mining, particularly with respect to the extension of Padcal's life of mine, commercial operations of the Silangan project and development of other Company mining tenements," the company said.

Shares in Philex Mining inched up 0.70% to P5.79 on Tuesday.

Philex Mining is one of three key Philippine subsidiaries of Hong Kong's First Pacific Co. Ltd., including Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT). Hastings Holdings, Inc., a unit of PLDT Beneficial Trust Fund subsidiary MediaQuest Holdings, Inc., has a majority stake in *BusinessWorld*. — **Janina C. Lim**

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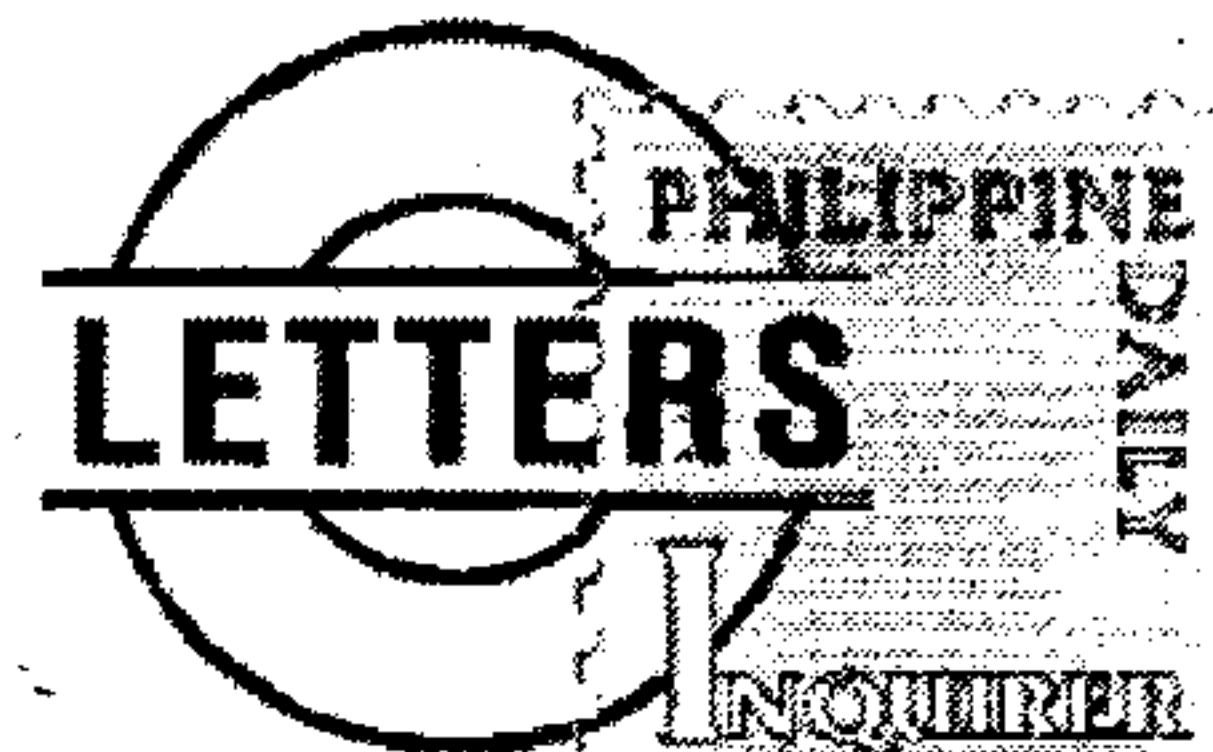
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Sand can't be compacted, worst for reclamation



THIS REFERS to the news item "Quake drills all for naught if land reclamation continues, says expert" (News, 2/28/16). The report included a rebuttal by Joselito Gonzales, Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA) assistant general manager for reclamation and regulation, of a scientific presentation I made regarding the dangers of reclamation.

This is a case of "I say, he (Gonzales) says." Whose statements can be trusted?

My credentials on the issue include a doctorate in marine geology and numerous peer-reviewed articles on that discipline (published in international journals); numerous years of research and teaching marine geology and sedimentology (which includes all the many facets of sand and its properties); numerous studies regarding natural hazards in the Philippines; and membership in the National Academy of Science and Technology conferred by years of respected science.

Gonzales' qualifications? He may be an excellent lawyer. But can he claim expertise in geology, engineering, hazard mitigation? For that matter, no one in the PRA board can claim much expertise in the science and engineering of reclamation, except perhaps Floro C. Urcia; the expertise he claims consists of eight days of trainings and seminars.

Gonzales admitted he spoke for the Manila Goldcoast Development Corp.

I have critiqued that absurd project in a lengthy, profusely documented article published in 2014 in Philippine Science Letters: "On the geological hazards that threaten existing and proposed reclamations of Manila Bay" (<http://philsciletters.org/2014/PSL%202014-vol07-no01-p228-240%20Rodolfo.htm>). In that article, I invited reclamation proponents to make their rebuttal and commentary. No one did.

Gonzales stated that sand can be used for reclamation "if properly compacted." Sand cannot be compacted; and saturated with water, it is absolutely the worst material for reclamation, in terms of its ease of liquefaction.

Gonzales claimed that sand used in reclamation can be treated and made impervious to liquefaction. This might be true for materials near the surface, but the sediments underlying Metro Manila's nearshore areas, coastal Central Luzon and Laguna de Bay include sand layers hundreds of feet deep, which can liquefy and cannot be treated.

Yes, as Gonzales pointed out, the Laguna Lake Development Authority and the Department of Public Works and Highways are in charge of the Laguna Lakeshore Expressway Dike.

But the DPWH record on dike building does not inspire much confidence. In the 1980s, it built flimsy lahar dikes at Mayon Volcano despite my scientific

objections. The building of these dikes, designed to contain water floods and not lahar, continued until Super typhoon "Reming" breached them all in 2006, killing 1,266 people who had sought safety behind them.

In the 1990s, the DPWH's lahar-dike builders repeated the mistakes on a much larger scale at Pinatubo despite scientists' objections. The dikes were all quickly breached. In October 1995, Tropical Storm "Mameng" triggered lahar overflows that breached the Gugu dike and totally destroyed Barangay Cabalantian in Bacolor, Pampanga, killing many people.

Since the early 2000s up to the present, the DPWH has built numerous, costly, ineffective flood-control structures in Central Luzon and Camanava (Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas and Valenzuela) area. The objections of academician Fernando Siringan, director of the Marine Science Institute at UP Diliman, have made no difference. And year after year, more money is being spent on cosmetic repairs.

—KELVIN S. RODOLFO,
professor emeritus of earth and
environmental sciences,
University of Illinois at Chicago;
senior research fellow,
Manila Observatory;
corresponding member, National
Academy of Science and Technology

The Manila Times

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

ENFORCE STRICTER MINING RULES – PALACE

MALACAÑANG on Tuesday ordered local government units to strictly enforce safety rules and regulations on mining after a tunnel collapsed killing at least four miners in Compostela Valley on Sunday.

Presidential Communications Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr. said safety rules and regulations on mining should be strictly followed to prevent a repeat of Sunday's tragedy.

In 2012, President Benigno Aquino 3rd issued Executive Order (EO) 79 implementing reforms to ensure responsible and sustainable mining in the country. At least 78 eco-tourism sites have been declared no-mining zone under the new presidential directive.

Quoting Environment Secretary Ramon Paje, Coloma said that safety regulations on mining are already in place but the problem

lies with the enforcement by some local executives.

"We believe EO 79 is already strict. In fact it mandated the issuance of the Small Scale Mining Guidelines/Minahang Bayan which has been passed by the MICC [Mining Industry Coordinating Council]," Paje said in a text message relayed by Coloma to reporters.

"Unfortunately, most of the opera-

tions in that area, particularly in Sitio Uno, are mostly illegal. They are not covered by Minahang Bayan Permits. LGUs should not allow their operations," he added.

Four people were reportedly killed after a mining tunnel collapsed in Mt. Diwata, Compostela Valley last Sunday. Five persons were reported missing inside the flooded gold mine site.

CATHERINE VALENTE

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Rescuers cling to hope 3 men in flooded mine alive

TAGUM CITY—Rescuers are clinging to the hope that the three miners trapped inside a gold tunnel in Mount Diwata in Monkayo, Compostela Valley province, are still alive even as search-and-rescue operations for them have been unsuccessful more than 48 hours after flood filled the shaft on Sunday.

"We are still hoping we can locate and pull them [out] alive," said Supt. Jay Dema-ala, Monkayo police chief, adding that the search-and-rescue op-

erations are continuing.

"We are still hoping for a miracle," Dema-ala said, admitting that rescuers have not found any traces of life for miners Bryan and Richard Monson, and Roel Dacaldacal.

Dema-ala said flooding inside the 650-foot-deep shaft had subsided but rescuers had yet to find the three miners.

The three men were among 12 miners trapped inside the tunnel when flooding swamped the area on Sunday

amid heavy rains.

Four people, including another miner who attempted to rescue them, were killed, but six others have been successfully pulled out alive, said Raul Villacino, the provincial disaster chief.

Dema-ala identified the fatalities as rescuer Ernesto Loquinia and miners Gilbert Dayot, Reymart Pegaret and Reynante Gemino. Those pulled out alive were Aljun Dumalaga, Oliver Uganap, Carlito Morado,

Albert Agyang, Angelito Tanio and Pepe Mendoza.

Dema-ala said rescuers from the local police, the village and the Army used submersible pumps to drain the shaft of rainwater.

"They will continue until the miners are found," he said, adding that the water level inside the tunnel has subsided to about 3 feet.

Disaster is common in Mt. Diwata since gold was found there in the 1980s.

In March last year, at least five houses were destroyed and dozens of families were displaced following a string of landslides in several areas of Diwata.

In 2014, relentless rains also triggered landslides in the mountain and six people were killed.

Authorities blamed mining in Diwata for the landslides because trees were being cut in the process. *Friston Lim, Inquirer Mindanao*

BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

PhilCCAP supporters want to extend project

BY MARY GRACE PADIN

PROPONENTS of the Philippine Climate Change Adaptation Project (PhilCCAP), a joint initiative which aims to develop technologies and strategies that will improve the country's resiliency to climate change, said on Tuesday they are eyeing the possibility of implementing a second phase for the project.

Wilbur Dee, project manager of PhilCCAP, said during the news briefing the agencies involved in the implementation of PhilCCAP are finalizing the concept paper for the second phase.

"We are looking into the possibility of a second phase for PhilCCAP. The World Bank and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources [DENR] management is supporting this. They are seeing that there is a need to continue this project," Dee said.

PhilCCAP is a \$4.97-million project funded by the World Bank and is managed by the DENR, together with the departments of Agriculture and Science and Technology, and the Climate Change Commission.

The six-year project seeks to improve the Philippine agriculture and natural resources sectors' ability to adapt to the effects of climate change. It will end in December.

The involved agencies launched the products they have developed under this project, all of which are designed to promote the climate-resiliency of agriculture and natural-resources management in the country. These products are being pilot-tested in Regions 2, 6 and 13.

Among the products launched include the Community of Practice online knowledge management system; manuals on the retrofitting of irrigation systems and on climate-smart farming; a feasibility study on the weather index-based crop

insurance scheme; a climate smart, web-based and SMS-advisory system for rice and corn farmers; a report on climate scenarios; and the updated management plans for protected areas.

Dee said the second phase will seek to address the gaps and limitations seen in the first stage of the project and upscale its coverage to include other regions, as well.

"[The second phase's focus] can be a combination of more products to be developed, existing products to be enhanced or adjusted and the application of the products in different regions," Dee said.

Meanwhile, Dee emphasized that once PhilCCAP ends in December, the challenge will be on how the national government agencies will institutionalize the strategies developed during the duration of the project, so that they can be adopted and applied in the field.

Bureau of Soils and Water Management Director Silvino Tejada said the Department of Agriculture (DA) will be drafting an administrative order which will authorize the use of the manual on climate-smart farming in training farmers, fishermen and trainers. This will be implemented under the DA's Climate Change Adaptation Program, he said.

The Philippine Crop Insurance Corp. also said it is already offering its weather index-based crop insurance for rice in Regions 2 and 6.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Canada's waste trade policy: a global concern

THE GLOBAL community should be alarmed at the recent statement of the Canadian Environment and Climate Change Ministry that the "wastes that ended up on Philippine shores were not illegal under Canadian rules." With that hands-off policy to illegal waste trade, what measures are there to stop private Canadian firms from continuing to ship waste to poorer countries?

Canada's weak waste laws that lack mechanisms to recall illegally shipped waste and consider legal exports of municipal waste for disposal, puts poor countries at risk. The case involving the Philippines is a stark example. In the course of several months in 2013-2014, Chronic Inc. from Ontario systematically shipped 103 containers of Vancouver's garbage to Manila. The shipments, misdeclared as recyclable plastics, were mixed waste that included rotting food and used diapers.

Canada has repeatedly disowned responsibility. Claiming that the importation was a matter between private firms, it has refused to take back the waste and prosecute the exporting company and individuals. And the Philippines, recipient of several million Canadian dollars worth of grants for tourism development and more than 20 million in typhoon aid, declined to file a formal protest. The two Philippine importers are facing charges in local courts, but their Canadian counterpart, Jim Makris, owner of Chronic, remains uncharged, insisting that his shipment was not illegal—a line now adopted by his government.

This is the sort of unequal relationship that prevents poorer countries from putting up a fight when it comes to waste trade. With equally weak waste laws and high unemployment and poverty levels, poor nations are hesitant to file formal protests to international bodies or treaties for fear of damaging trade relations and development aid. Economic and political

COMMENTARY

Richard Gutierrez

bullying comes into play.

It is convenient to label waste shipments as household or municipal waste and call these nonhazardous because poor importing countries often lack technical equipment to scientifically determine that such wastes are indeed hazardous. In Manila all the authorities could do was a cursory eyeball inspection before declaring the garbage nonhazardous (despite the bacteria and contaminants building up in the dirty diapers and rotten food and the toxic chemicals leaching out of the odd battery or e-waste in the trash).

This is why the illegal transport of both hazardous and other wastes across international borders is classified as an international crime, and why waste trade is regulated by a treaty known as the Basel Convention. Waste trade capitalizes on the unequal relationship between rich and poor countries, turning developing nations into trash repositories, without adequate resources to deal with imported waste (let alone their own) and unable to use legal recourse for fear of losing aid money and investments.

The Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Committee of the Interpol monitors illegal transnational disposal of waste, whether hazardous or nonhazardous, as these "can significantly damage a community's livelihood, undercut legitimate treatment facilities and permit the loss of recoverable raw materials, thereby threatening long-term economic sustainability and national stability." The Canadian waste case is an international crime, and both the Philippines and

Canada must treat it as such.

A 2014 report published by the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment cites Canada's poor waste record. The report cited data from 2008 where Canada ranked bottom among 17 other developed nations, producing more municipal waste than any of its peer countries. In 2010, Canada's municipal waste generation decreased by only 4 percent. With growing populations and rapid urbanization, municipal waste will increase.

At the 2015 Philippine Apec Summit, while declining to commit action on the trash shipments, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau committed to fix his country's waste laws. No progress has yet been made. A review is underway but with no mention nor any provision rectifying the loophole that justified Canada's waste dumping in the Philippines. Trudeau's much-touted environmental plan dedicated to "undoing the damage done by [the] Harper [administration]" makes no mention of how to manage Canada's growing waste stream. And now Canada has come out with a policy that condones illegal transboundary shipment of wastes to poorer countries, effectively coddling illegal waste exporters and condemning poorer countries to embrace its waste exports.

Canada's hands-off stance on illegal waste trade is not merely a Philippine problem but a global concern. Unless Trudeau steps up and strengthens his country's compliance to the Basel Convention, and unless countries, including the Philippines and Canada, ratify and implement the Basel Ban Amendment that additionally prohibits the export of hazardous waste for any reason, including recycling, the Philippine case will certainly not be the last.

Richard Gutierrez is the chief executive officer of Ban Toxics.

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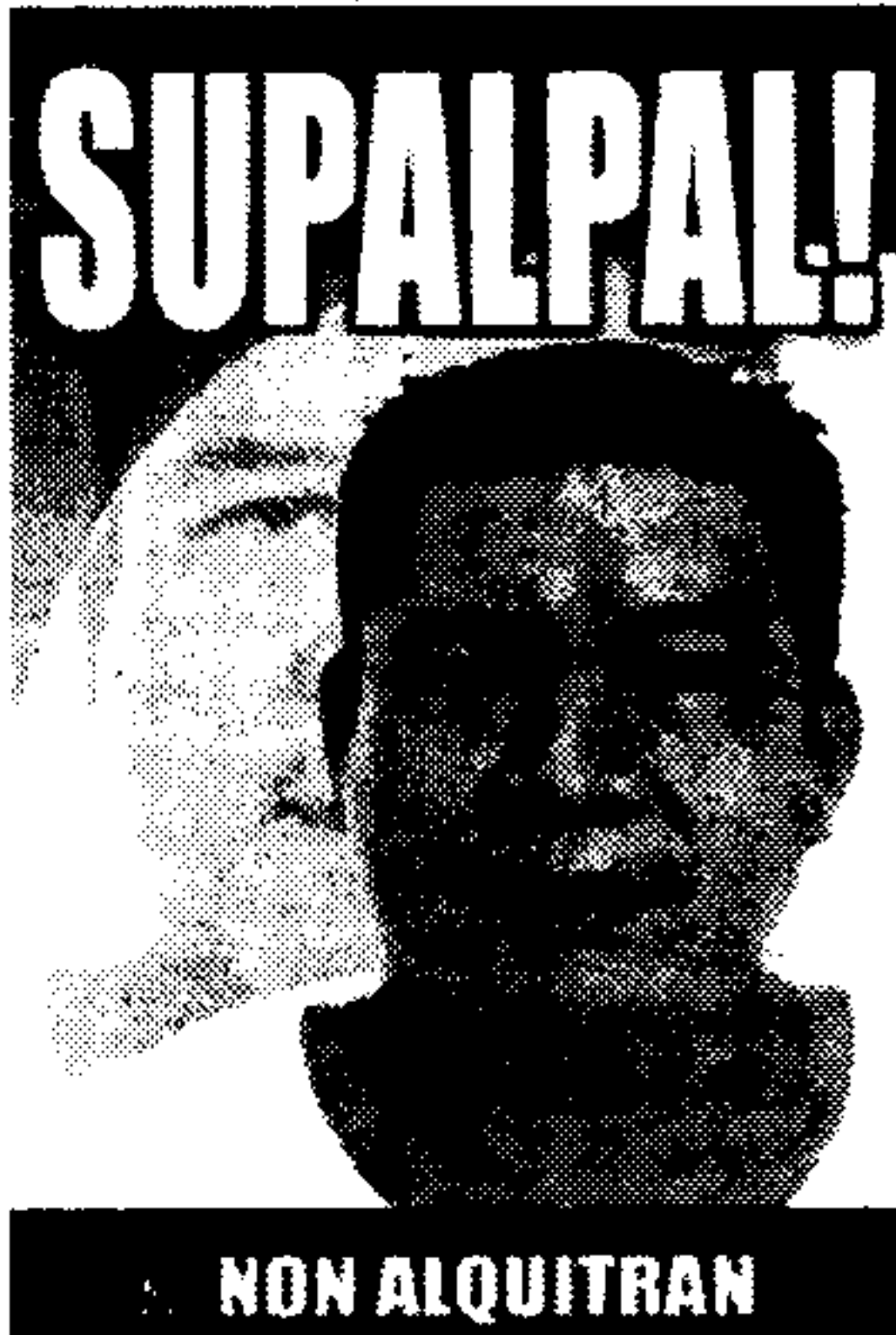
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PUBLIC AFF

Minahan ng ginto sa Paracale, bukas na muli!

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NON ALQUITRAN

MAAGANG Christmas para sa mga local government units (LGUs) at kapulisan sa Camarines Norte bunga sa pagbukas na muli ng small-scale mining sa bayan ng Paracale. Itong small-scale mining ay ipinasara noong 2012 mga kosa matapos malunod ang tatlong minero nang pasukin ng tubig ang pito nilang butas para maghanap ng ginto. Itong pagmina kasi ng ginto ang sinasandalan ng ekonomiya ng Paracale at sa pag-sara nito madaming residente ang apektado. Subalit nagsimula na namang maghukay ang mga minero nitong nagdaang mga araw bunga sa pagkakutsabahan ng mga LGU at kapulisan sa Bicol. Siyempre, nakarating sa Camp Crame ang grasya ng ilegal sa Paracale at ewan ko lang kung abot ito ni PNP chief Dir. Gen. Ricardo Marquez? Halos nakabuka ang palad ng mga LGUs at kapulisan sa small-scale mining at, ayon sa mga kosa ko, isang alyas Hector Honasan ang bagman o taga-abot sa kanila ng kanilang lingguhang payola. Dapat kumilos si Pres. Aquino at tuldukan na itong operation ng small-scale mining sa Paracale dahil t'yak babalandra ito sa liderato n'ya kapag maulit ang disgrasya doon, lalo na kapag madami din ang masawi dito. O di kaya'y gibain o hatakin nito pababa ang tsansa ng manok n'ya na si Liberal Party standard bearer Mar Roxas para maipagpatuloy ang "Daang Matuwid" slogan n'ya sa darating na May election. Punyeta! Kailangan ding kumilos itong si vice presidential bet Rep. Leni Robredo laban dito sa small-scale mining bunga sa taga-Bicol s'ya at mga supporters n'ya ang tatamaan kapag magkaroon uli ng disgrasya doon, di ba mga kosa? Tumpak!

Sinabi ng mga kosa ko na isang alyas Col. Santos ang nagsilbing timon para mapabuksang muli ang small-scale mining malapit sa karagatan ng bayan ng Paracale. Siyempre, kakutsaba ni Santos itong si Sr. Supt. Rudolf Dimas, ang provincial director ng Camarines Norte, ayon sa mga kosa ko. Halos tatlong linggo nang nag-ooperate ang small-scale mining kaya't kanya-kanyang butas na ang mga local na minero sa Paracale para makakuha ng ng ginto at kung anu-anong pang mina na mapapakinabangan nila. Sinabi ng mga kosa ko na aabot sa P1.3 milyon weekly ang parating na payola sa Camp Crame at hindi masabi ng mga kosa ko kung pati si Gen. Marquez ay naambunan dito. Pero abot-langit na ibinabando ng mga kosa ko na BOKYA sa payola si CIDG chief Dir. Victor Deona, na dating RD ng Bicol. Hehehe! Bukol sa small-scale mining si Gen. Deona? Boom panes!

Madali lang naman na ipasara itong small-scale mining bunga sa, hindi tulad ng sugal na jueteng na puedeng itago, ito ay tambad sa mata ng madlang people sa Camarines Norte. At t'yak, hindi kikilos itong sina governor, mayor at barangay chairman, lalo na si Dimas at iba pang operating unit ng PNP sa Bicol bunga sa pasok sila sa payola ni Honasan, di ba mga kosa? Ipinaabot ng mga kosa ko sa kaalaman nina Pres. Aquino, Gen's. Marquez at Deona na ang payola para sa RD ay P250,000 weekly; PD P250,000 din; R2 o intelligence P150,000; CIDG regional at provincial ay P200,000; chief of police P100,000; provincial intelligence P75,000; Intelligence Group director P75,000; Martime at Coast Guard P20,000; MGB5 P150,000; governor P200,000; mayor P100,000, at barangay chairman sa P100,000. Ang laking pera, no mga kosa? Merry Christmas sa Marso para sa LGU at PNP d'yan sa Bicol! At kung rerebisahin mong maigi parang ipinagtrabaho na lang ng mga local na minero itong mga LGUs at kapulisan. Ano sa tingin n'yo mga kosa? Punyeta! Kailangan pa bang may mamatay muna sa naturang minahan bago kumilos ang gobyerno at kapulisan natin? 'Wag kayong kumurap mga kosa! Abangan!

THE EXPONENTIAL GROWTH OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS SINCE 1900

MANILA BULLETIN

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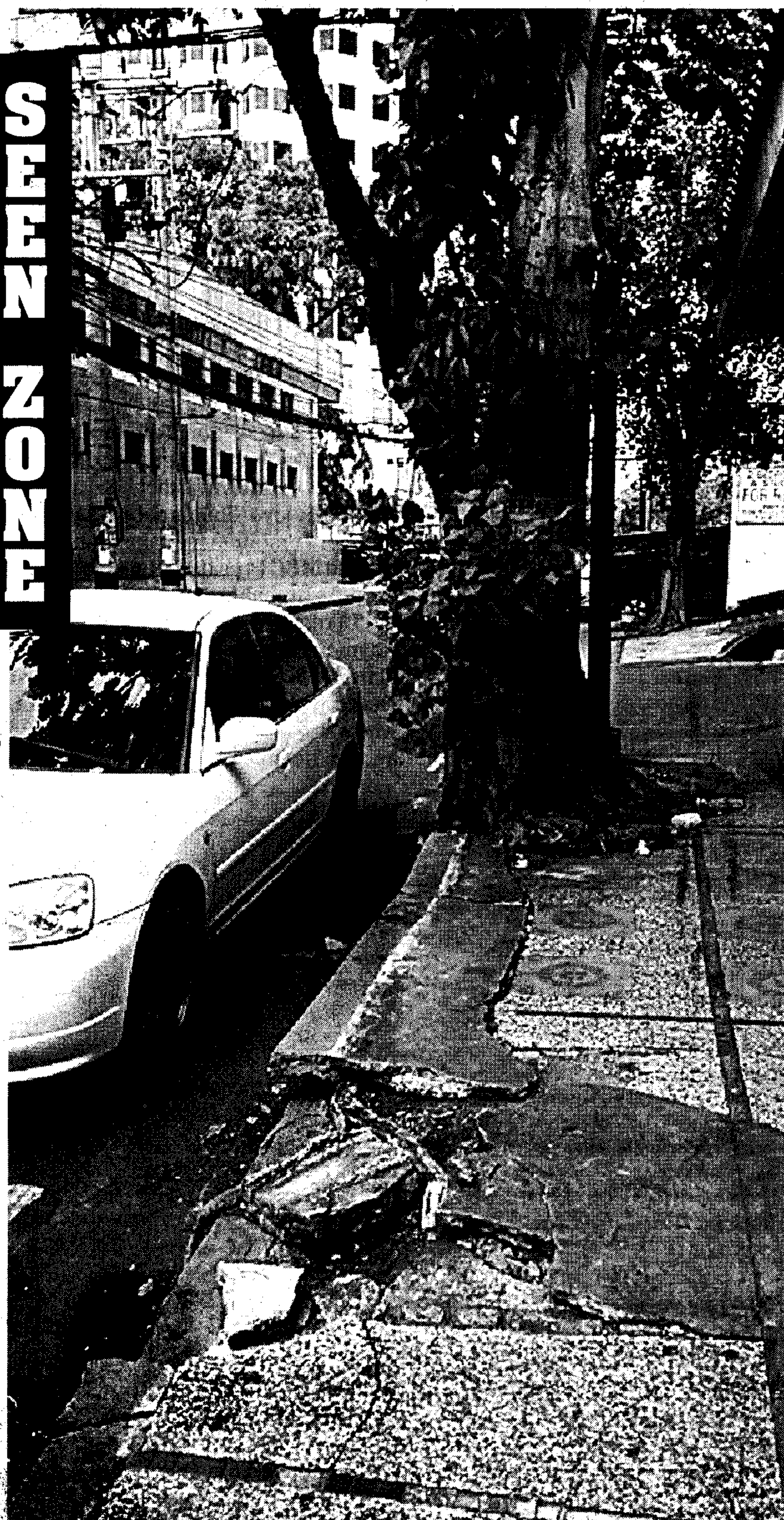
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SERVICES

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ZONE



SIDEWALK REPAIR FAILS — The roots of this tree on M.H. del Pilar Street in Manila have broken through the sidewalk. Since it is illegal to cut trees, the local government tried to solve the problem by simply pouring concrete around it. The solution failed and the sidewalk is damaged again. (Carlo S. Suerte Felipe) #BeFullyInformed

(SEEN ZONE welcomes contributed photos showing extraordinary scenes that can inspire readers and encourage government action. This column is for readers who have photos of interesting signs on ordinary places, projects that obstruct development, and images of the usual made unusual by human nature. Please e-mail contributions to seenzone@mb.com.ph. State the contributor's name and contact number, the location of subject in the photo, date and time the photo was taken.)

BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

Wildlife trafficking in Vietnam poses risks to public health

HANOI, Vietnam—Wildlife trafficking in Vietnam and the high demand for exotic meat, jewelry, medicine and even pets is a threat, not only to biodiversity, but also to public health, environment experts said.

Experts said the illegal trade of products, which has both domestic and international origins, increases the risk of spreading diseases because trafficked animals are not quarantined.

The Forest Protection Department under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development said about 5,400 violations related to wildlife management and protection were reported across the country over the last five years. Nearly 60,000 endangered wildlife species were seized.

In February customs officers at Noi Bai International Airport and other agencies detected 180 kilograms of ivory hidden in personal luggage from Angola to Vietnam.

In November 2015 customs officers at Hoanh Mo Bordergate in the northern Quang Ninh Province found about 3 tons of ivory and pangolin hidden in perch-carrying boxes.

In August 2015 customs and police found 593 kg of ivory and 142 kg of rhino horns at Tien Sa Port in central Da Nang. Further investigation helped them to find an additional 2,181 kg of ivory and 4,000 kg of pangolin, that had been illegally imported from Nigeria and Malaysia by the Hung Huy Bao Ltd. Co.

In December 2015 police in HCM City caught a pet-store owner in the process of delivering nine water rats

and a black-shanked douc langur to his clients who buy exotic animals to raise as pets.

The owner, Huynh Anh Khoa, 23, admitted to police that he had bought the animals in Thailand and that none of the animals in his store had been quarantined.

According to the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), there is a trend among young people to raise wild species as pets.

The WCS warns that rodents, like squirrels and rats, carry the potential risk of plague. Reptiles often carry Salmonella, the name of a group of bacteria that causes food poisoning and diarrhea, and imported birds can carry the flu virus.

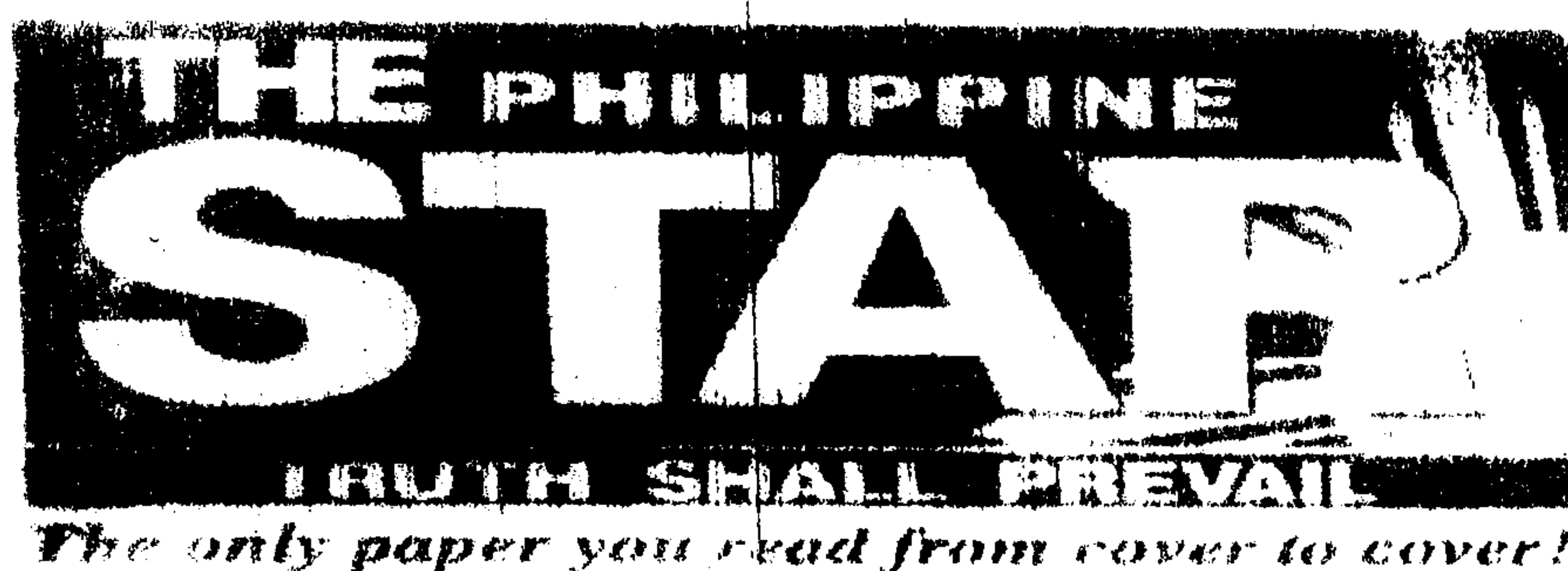
Nguyen Duy Giang, an official from Supreme People's Procuracy, said that in the last five years,

his office investigated and prosecuted about 40 criminal cases, mostly in Hai Phong, Quang Ninh and HCM City.

Most of the wildlife-trafficking cases were detected during the customs processing procedure at sea-ports, but recipients of the goods denied their involvement when contacted by investigators.

However, it is difficult to identify goods senders overseas because of the limitations of international judicial assistance, Giang said.

Nguyen Hung Anh, deputy head of Anti-Smuggling Investigation Department under the General Department of Customs, said that trafficked wildlife products are rarely sent back to overseas senders because of the lack of information. **PNA/VNS**



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Binay, Roxas are mining advocates, environmentalists say

Environmentalists named yesterday United Nationalist Alliance standard bearer Vice President Jejomar Binay and Liberal Party presidential aspirant Manuel Roxas II as advocates of large-scale mining in the country.

Environmental groups under the Green Vote 2016 Campaign called on the public to deliver a zero vote for national

candidates promoting the mining industry.

"Roxas has proven himself as a protector of big mining interests among the presidential candidates," Clemente Bautista, national coordinator of the Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment said.

According to Bautista, Roxas is a shareholder in seven mining companies.

He claimed that Roxas received millions of pesos in campaign contributions from mining firms, including the San Roque Metals Inc. (SMRI).

Roxas reportedly declared in his 2012 Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net worth P120 million worth of shares in Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co., Manila Mining Corp., Phillex Mining Corp., Marinduque

Mining and Industrial Corp., Mindanao Mother Lake Mines, Samar Mining Co. and Western Minolco Corp.

Bautista said Binay is also an advocate of mining operations.

"He received campaign funds from mining companies during his campaign in 2010. Binay's platform aims to give more economic incentives to mining firms," Bautista said.

Sens. Ferdinand Marcos Jr., Alan Peter Cayetano and Gringo Honasan are supporting large-scale mining in the country, according to Bautista.

The three are running for vice president in the May 9 elections.

The environmental group named two senatorial bets who are allegedly promoting large-scale mining.

They are Leyte Rep. Martin Romualdez, former chairman of Benguet Mining Corp., and Richard Gordon, a director in Atlas Mining.

The impact of the mining industry on the environment has been a public concern, with increasing awareness of the harmful effects that the industry's activities can cause.

— Artemio Dumlao



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ISINUSULONG ANG MGA PROYEKTONG MAGBIBIGAY NG PROTEKSIYON SA MUNDO LABAN SA PANGANIB NG METHANE

MAGDARAOS ang World Bank ng isang \$20-million subasta para sa carbon credits mula sa mga proyekto na layuning mabawasan ang methane emissions, nag-aalok ng hanggang sampung beses ng halaga nito sa merkado.

Gagawin ang subasta, na itinakda sa Mayo 12, sa panahong nananamlay ang pamumuhunan sa mga proyektong magbabawas ng carbon emissions, alinsunod sa mga programa ng United Nations, habang pinagdedebatehan ng mga bansa ang disenyo ng bagong pandaigdigang climate pact na ipatutupad sa 2020.

Ang methane ang itinuturing na pinakamapanganib na greenhouse gas na ang potensiyal sa pagpapataas sa pandaigdigang temperatura ay 25 beses na mas mataas kaysa carbon dioxide.

Ang tinatawag na Pilot Auction Facility ay mag-aalok ng presyo na maaaring isailalim sa negosasyon, o kaya naman ay strike price na \$3.50 kada tonelada para sa pagbabawas sa carbon dioxide emission, kumpara sa kasalukuyang presyo na nasa 0.35 euros (\$0.38).

Magtatakda ng bid ang mga partisipante sa premium na handa nilang bayaran para sa mga kontrata at ang premium bid ay magsisimula sa \$0.06 kada tonelada.

Noong nakaraang taon, nagkasundo ang mga negosyador mula sa halos 200 bansa na dumalo sa makasaysayang climate talks sa Paris, France, na susuportahan ang pandaigdigang kalakalan ng carbon credits bilang bahagi ng bagong kasundua.

Gayunman, hindi ipapagkakasunduan ang mga gagamiting patakaran, gayundin ang uri ng proyekto na maaaring saklawin nito.

Sa unang subasta ng World Bank noong Hulyo ng nakaraang taon, 12 nanalo ang nagseguro ng \$2.4 per credit para sa kabuuang 8.7 milyong credits.

Reuters

The Standard

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



3-in-1 cleanup. Crewmen of the Metro Manila Development Authority clean the Estero de Mapua along Antipolo street corner Blumentritt in Manila as the MMDA embarks on a '3-in-1' cleanup program in flood-prone areas and public market in Metro Manila. The campaign ranges from fumigation to extermination of dengue-causing mosquitoes in barangays and conducting lectures regarding solid waste management. **DANNY PATA**

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

First day of estero cleanup yields 21 truckloads of trash

By Maricar B. Brizuela

A TOTAL of 21 truckloads of garbage—consisting of car spare parts, silt, plastic containers, styrofoam and cable wires—were collected from the Antipolo open canal in Sta. Cruz and Estero de Kabulusan in Tondo, both in Manila, on the first day of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority's "Estero Blitz" this year.

MMDA flood control office chief Baltazar Melgar said that the 1.8-kilometer-long stretch of waterways in these areas were full of accumulated silt and garbage that had clogged the estero leading to Vitas and Tecson Streets in Tondo.

However, they have yet to clear the entire stretch since some roads leading to the waterways were too small to accommodate their backhoe.

During yesterday's cleanup drive, the MMDA also recovered car bumpers and other vehicle parts from the estero covered by Barangay 359 Zone 36 in Sta. Cruz.

Asked for an explanation, barangay chair Jeff Ian Cabiltes told the INQUIRER that these came from car repair shops in the area. The

dumping of spare parts is done at night or early in the morning to avoid detection by barangay officials, he said.

"Another problem is that we cannot control the [entry] of garbage from other barangays," Cabiltes added, noting that the most of the waste collected on Tuesday were from other barangays in Sta. Cruz and Tondo.

He said they would monitor the estero round the clock to maintain its cleanliness and prevent garbage throwing.

The MMDA earlier announced that it would ask the Office of the Ombudsman to help it go after barangay officials who neglect the waterways in their area after repeated clearing operations conducted by the agency.

It warned that should it find the waterways full of trash again, it would file a report with the Ombudsman and ask it to "determine the liability of the negligent barangay officials."

MMDA Chair Emerson Carlos said they would continue clean-up operations for Metro Manila's 273 esteros before the rainy season. Next on their list were Estero de Quiapo, also in Manila, and the waterways in Pasay City.

The Manila Times

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

PhilCCAP rolls out climate change products

THE Philippines Climate Change Adaptation Project (PhilCCAP), a foreign-funded program jointly implemented by several national government agencies, including the environment and agriculture departments and state weather bureau, launched its products at the Grand Ballroom of the Century Park Hotel, Manila.

The products cater to different sectors and aims to vastly improve the country's ability to adapt to the effects of climate change.

Launched today were the Community of Practice online knowledge management system, manuals on the retrofitting of irrigation systems and on climate-smart farming, a feasibility study on the weather index-based crop insurance scheme, a climate smart, web-based and SMS advisory system for rice and corn farmers, a report on climate scenarios, and updated management plans for protected areas.

The Community of Practice (CoP), is an online knowledge management system developed by the Climate Change Commission

(CCC). It is intended to be the government's official repository of all climate-related information and practices, from forecasts to general research.

Several government agencies, including the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), have access to the CoP. The CCC, through PhilCCAP, is working towards encompassing all relevant government offices, as well as research and academic institutions with the CoP.

The CoP will facilitate the exchange of climate information and related documents, which will be guided by a protocol, also developed by the CCC.

Manuals on the redesign and retrofitting of river irrigation systems, and on climate-smart farming were also rolled out. These were created by the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) and the Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM) in line with their experiences in implementing the project's activities.

The NIA improved the operations manual of the agency, based on the lessons learned in redesigning for retrofitting of two river irrigation systems, in Cagayan and Iloilo, which were completed last year. The retrofitting works will enable both facilities to improve its water distribution mechanisms, reducing the effects of seasonal climate change on water supply.

The climate-smart farming manual is a compilation of lessons derived from the practical courses on climate change. It is being shared with the project's farmer-beneficiaries under an enhanced version of the Agricultural Training Institute's (ATI) climate-smart farmers' field school extension program.

The Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC) also launched its products and interim report on weather index-based crop insurance. The insurance products make use of a weather index, particularly rainfall, as basis for payouts. This ensures the rapid delivery of funds to rice and corn farmers in pilot areas affected by abnormal rainfall, regardless of

the actual damage sustained.

The DA also launched the Climate-Smart Decision Support Tool (CS-DSS). It is a web- and mobile phone-based application that integrates climate information into crop management practices. Developed in close collaboration with the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), the tool provides recommendations to enhance the ability of rice and corn farmers in the pilot sites to adapt to climate variations and consequently increase their yield.

The DENR updated the management plans for two protected areas – the Peñablanca Protected Landscape and Seascape in Cagayan and the Siargao Island Protected Landscape and Seascape in Surigao del Norte.

PAGASA, the state weather bureau, released its Climate Change Report, which includes long-term rainfall and temperature forecasts and climate scenarios. Information from PAGASA's forecasting activities was also used in the project's other activities, such as the agricultural extension program.

JAMES KONSTANTIN GALVEZ

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Commonsense

By **MARICHU A. VILLANUEVA**

Hollywood spiels for climate change

Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio finally got his colleagues' approval for his acting craft. He won as best actor of this year's Academy Awards. The popular actor also got to pitch for climate change after embracing the role of a frontiersman in the movie "The Revenant" that won him the award.



In his acceptance speech after winning his first Oscar, DiCaprio took the opportunity to speak about the issue of climate change as an issue for the most vulnerable sectors of society – from indigenous communities to future generations.

"Climate change is real. It is happening right now. It's the most urgent threat facing our entire species and we need to work collectively together and stop procrastinating," the actor said in his speech. "The Revenant" is a case in point.

"We need to support leaders around the world who do not speak for the big polluters, but who speak for all of humanity, for the indigenous people of the world, for the billions and billions of underprivileged people out there who would be most affected by this," DiCaprio pointed out.

The UN Environment Program (UNEP), in its official Twitter account, hailed DiCaprio for this message he delivered to the world at the live telecast of the Academy Awards at Hollywood in Los Angeles, California: "Congrats to @UN Messenger of Peace & Environmentalist @LeoDiCaprio on his #Oscars win!"

We have our own climate change champion here in the Philippines, Sen. Loren Legarda who was among the people in this part of the world to congratulate DiCaprio through her official Twitter account: "Climate change is real. Congrats #LeoDiCaprio! #oscars2016 #bestactor #Revenant. A former broadcaster before she turned to politics, and multi-awarded as a journalist, Legarda has taken to heart the issue of climate change. As someone who grew up in flood-prone Malabon, she was exposed early to the importance of taking care of one's environment. She saw for herself how irresponsible garbage disposal added to the problem of low-lying areas in Metro Manila and contributed to severe flooding, especially during typhoon season.

So, we don't need any Hollywood spiels to tell us about 'politics of greed' adding to the degradation of our environment and that climate change is for real. We live on it.

On her second and last term as senator, Legarda, in her continuing single-minded dedication and advocacy for this reality check on climate change not only in the Philippines but also on global scale, was recently acknowledged by no less than French President Francois Hollande.

In conferment rites held last Feb. 18 at the French embassy in Makati City, ambassador Thierry Mathou bestowed upon Legarda the title of *Chevalier dans l'Ordre National de la Legion d'Honneur* (Knight in the National Order of the French Legion of Honor). The Legion of Honor is a French order established by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802 and is one of the most prestigious French distinctions.

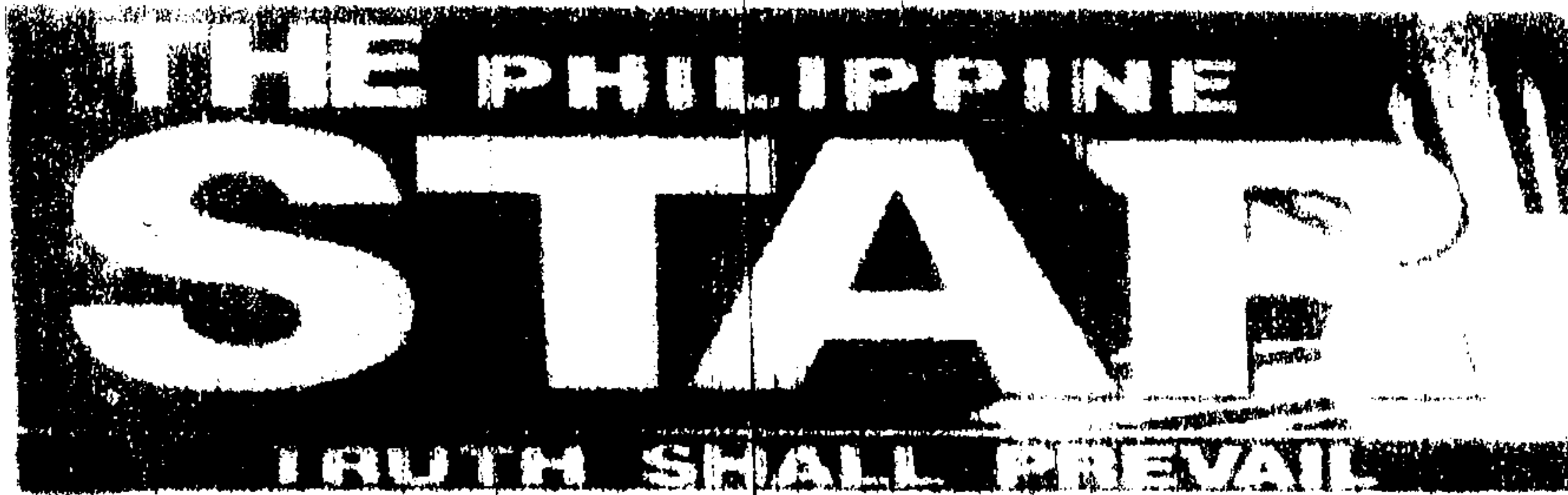
"There have also been many opportunities for cooperation in the field of cultural and heritage preservation; but nothing can be more pronounced than our joint initiative on climate action," Legarda said after accepting the award. "My journey as a 'legionnaire' has begun. I recognize that as in any award, there are responsibilities. I intend to fulfill these by serving as a vanguard of our countries' great alliance," Legarda vowed.

Legarda, who chairs the Senate committee on climate change, helped in crafting the Manila Call to Action for Climate Change, which was signed by President Benigno "Noy" Aquino III and President Hollande during the latter's state visit here last year. President Hollande invited Legarda as the Philippines' representative to the Summit of Conscience for the Climate last year as part of the 2015 Paris Climate Change Conference.

Legarda was also recently designated by United Nations secretary-general Ban Ki-moon as UN Global Champion for Resilience. Previously, she served a pro bono job as the Regional Champion for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation for Asia-Pacific of the UNISDR (UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction).

When climate change was not even given much attention, Legarda embraced this role for the UNISDR despite its being regarded as some strange terminology during those days. It was not even regarded as a gut issue when she espoused climate change in her campaign when she ran for the second time in May 2010 for the vice presidency. She lost the VP race as voters did not appreciate what climate change was she talking about after Typhoon Ondoy severely inundated Metro Manila and Central Luzon in 2009. At that time, the words "storm surge" were alien to us.

Still fresh in our minds was the devastation brought by tsunami that wiped out Fukushima after the magnitude 9 earthquake that shook Japan in April 2011. Then came Super Typhoon Yolanda in November 2013 unleashing the worst damage in the Philippines in years. This was a month after the magnitude 7.2 earthquake crushed many churches in Bohol.



The only paper you read from cover to cover!

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Incidentally, former Vice President Al Gore, one of the global leaders among climate change advocates, is coming again to our country later this month. Gore is bringing The Climate Reality Project for the next Climate Reality Leadership Training in Manila. For this year, organizers announced the training project intends to focus "not on the destructive impacts of climate change but rather why Vice President Gore is optimistic about humanity's efforts to combat it."

As in past years, Vice President Gore outlined the long list of challenges presented by the climate crisis – he famously says, "...every single night on the TV news now is like a nature hike through the Book of Revelation."

But us here in the Philippines, climate change has actually altered drastically the pattern of typhoon season in our country. Usually, typhoon season in our country is from June to September. Now, an average of 20 typhoons sporadically visit us throughout the year.

So, we don't need any Hollywood spiels to tell us about "politics of greed" adding to the degradation of our environment and that climate change is for real. We live on it.

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Metro Manila 'di pa tuyo

Walang dapat ipangamba ang publiko na baka magkaroon ng kapusan ng tubig sa Metro Manila ngayong summer makaraang ipahayag ng Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) na titindi pa ang init na maranasan dahil sa El Niño.

Ayon kay National Water Regulatory Board (NWRB) Director Seville David, sapat ang supply ng tubig sa Metro Manila at maging sa mga irigasyon sa Pampanga at Bulacan.

Kahapon, nasa 205.49 meters ang tubig sa Angat Dam na mas mataas ng isang metro kumpara noong nakaraang taon.

Dagdag pa ng NWRB, nakatulong umano ang ulan na dulot ng bagyong Nona at Lando upang makarekober sa kakulangan ng tubig sa Angat Dam.

Pero sa kabila nito, ipinalala ng NWRB na gawin pa rin ang pagtitipid sa tubig at kung maaari ay gawin na itong isang uri ng pamumuhay. (Lhean Angeles)

THE EXPONENTIAL GROWTH OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS SINCE 1900

MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICES

El Niño weakens to moderate levels – AWB

El Niño is easing to moderate levels as water temperatures cool, and the weather phenomenon is expected to end in the second quarter of 2016, the Australian weather bureau (AWB) said Tuesday.

"Although the 2015-16 El Niño is weakening, it will continue to influence global climate during the southern hemisphere autumn," the bureau said in its update published every two weeks.

"In Australia, the breakdown of strong El Niño events has historically brought average to above-average rainfall to many locations. However, northern Australia typically sees less rainfall than usual," it added.

El Niño occurs when winds in the equatorial Pacific slow or reverse direction. That warms water over a vast area, which can upend weather around

the world. It typically reduces rainfall across parts of Southeast and South Asia, and brings precipitation to western US and parts of South America.

El Niño events can lead to severe drought in parts of Southeast Asia and heavy flooding in North America, posing challenges for farmers.

Its severity is measured by ocean temperatures and atmospheric convection activities.

The Australian weather bureau said short-term fluctuations in the various El Niño Indicators will continue, particularly during the southern tropical cyclone season.

The bureau's climate models and history outlooks indicate that neutral conditions are slightly favored ahead of La Niña for the second half of 2016.

La Niña occurs when easterly trade winds strengthen, cooling water across the central and eastern Pacific. It typically brings drier-than-usual weather to some states in the US and South America, while causing wetter-than-normal conditions for much of Australia, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and Central America. It also increases the likelihood of tropical cyclones in the Pacific. (WSJ)

BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

Farmers warned: La Niña seen to follow El Niño

IN its monthly forecast, the National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center (CPC) is expecting the country to face La Niña after the recent experience of El Niño.

The country is expecting continuous shortfall in rice inventory and will not be able to meet its rice-sufficiency target before the end of the Aquino administration.

With the occurrence of El Niño, to be followed by La Niña, it will be another blow, as the inventory and production is expected to continue to go down further. The agri sector has posted a negative-growth rate year-on-year, resulting in a spike of the prices of basic commodities.

Recently, locally listed agricultural company AgriNurture Inc. (ANI) enters into a joint venture with Phoenix Commodities Ltd., one of the world's top 3 players in the global rice-trading industry.

ANI will distribute well-milled rice for Phoenix in order to meet the self-sufficiency targets of the country. The Philippines will not be able to meet its rice-sufficiency target before the end of the current administration and is aiming to import 500 metric

tons (MT) of rice. Due to El Niño, supply from other rice-exporting countries is also expected to decline. The entry of Phoenix-ANI will give the country's rice supply a big boost.

ANI has hybrid rice-seedling production with China's biggest agricultural company Bei Da Huang under a local joint-venture company Beidahuang Agro Industrial Development (Philippines) Inc.

Hybrid rice seedlings are widely used in rice-producing nations to increase yield by an average 7.5 MT per hectare during the wet season and 9 MT during dry season.

Phoenix is one of the top 3 players in the global rice-trading industry today, trading close to 1,000,000+ MTs of rice annually, and is now among the top 5 exporters from India. Its business model is based on upstream integration and is now in the process of duplicating the Basmati experience across other origins of premium rice, including Thailand, Vietnam and the United States. At any given time, it has enough inventory to augment part of the country's shortage.

BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

El Niño destroys P110M worth of agri crops in Maguindanao

COTABATO CITY—The damage to agricultural crops brought about by the long dry spell and rat infestation in Maguindanao rose to P110 million, officials said on Tuesday.

With this, the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) will increase its support to affected farmers, according to Secretary Alexander Alonto of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF).

He said to date, dry spell and rat infestation in the province destroyed more than P110 million worth of agricultural crops.

Alonto cited a report from his office, which showed that 18,831 hectares of rice and corn farms in 18 of 36 municipalities in Maguindanao, with roughly 22,000 farmers, have been affected by the adverse weather condition now felt not only in ARMM but also in many parts of the country.

On January 28 the Maguindanao provincial board placed the entire province under a state of calamity due to rising drought damage figures.

Alonto said his office is expecting higher loss figures in the near term as municipal officers further validate updated reports on the extent of crop damage.

As immediate response, Alonto said DAF-ARMM has already provided 4,400 bags of open-pollinated corn seeds and 3,000 bags of palay to affected farmers.

"It is part of the region's intervention to farmers affected by the

drought," Alonto said, adding that DAF-ARMM is still waiting for updates from municipalities hit hard by the dry spell.

Alonto identified the towns hardest hit by dry spell and rat infestation as Datu Abdullah Sangki, Datu Anggal Midtimbang, Datu Montawal, Datu Unsay, Guindulungan, Kabuntalan, North Upi, South Upi, Sultan Kudarat, Sultan Mastura, Talayan, Ampatuan and Datu Piang.

Emma Ali, provincial social welfare officer, said the local office of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has distributed relief packs to affected residents, noting her office is still validating latest reports.

"We will immediately respond to their humanitarian needs as long as we get the complete data assessed by the municipal officers," Ali said.

Based on a report from the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration, the dry spell, referred to as El Niño, is expected to be felt until the second quarter of this year.

El Niño is an abnormal warming of surface water in the eastern tropical sections of the Pacific Ocean, generally observed once in three to five years.

The phenomenon, the weather agency said, usually occurs during the last quarter of the year and lasts until the first half of the following year. **PNA**

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

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ZAMBO CITY DROUGHT

Cloud seeding fails

ZAMBOANGA CITY—It was a lesson about not learning a lesson.

Officials, were warned against wasting funds on artificially generating rain, declared cloud seeding a failure in easing the effects of the El Niño phenomenon in the city.

For 12 days until Feb. 28, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) and the Philippine Air Force conducted cloud-seeding operations at a cost of P1.3 million.

But Teotimo Reyes Jr., department manager of water production of Zamboanga City Water District (ZCWD), said the effects of the drought brought by El Niño had not eased.

"We did not see or experience any increase in the water stream, the ground [remains] very dry," Reyes said.

In January, while the cloud-seeding operations were still being planned, vegetable farmers in the city already urged authorities to abandon the idea, citing past cases and amid an admission from a weather specialist that it might actually do more harm than good.

Annaliza Pabayos, a vegetable farmer in Barangay San Roque here, said that in the past, cloud seeding killed vegetables.

"I prefer to fetch water from the river to my field," Pabayos said.

Celestiano Ahamad, a farm caretaker in Barangay Dita, agreed with Pabayos. "Cloud seeding dries up the leaves of corn, cassava and sweet potato," he said.

Instead of spending for cloud-seeding operations, he

said, the government should allocate fuel to farmers so they can use their water pumps to draw water from rivers.

Maribel Enriquez, Pagasa chief meteorologist here, said cloud seeding, indeed, increases the salt concentration in rain.

"If (cloud seeding-induced) rainwater falls on farms and through osmosis, the leaves will wither," Enriquez said.

She said the problem could be avoided if the rain would go directly to water reservoirs or rivers because the unwanted salt could be eliminated by natural filtration.

Leonardo Ray Vasquez, general manager of ZCWD, also agreed that cloud seeding could be harmful to farms.

Vasquez, however, said cloud seeding could help raise the water level in the dam that ZCWD was using.

"Cloud seeding is not a sure hit due to wind movement but we have to fill the dam," he said.

Enriquez said the weather bureau did its best to generate rain that could restore moisture in farms and bring water to households.

The amount of rain brought by 12 days of cloud seeding, however, was insufficient to bring relief to farmers and residents suffering from the drought.

Engineer Lorenzo Moron, Pagasa project coordination officer, said at least 100 sacks of salt had been used for the 12-day cloud-seeding operation.

Air Force Capt. Von Ryan Timbang, who led and supervised the seeding sorties, said they flew for an average of four two-hour sorties each day.

But Reyes said the situation had not improved.

He said water level at a dam in the Tumaga River, which the ZCWD uses, continued to decline and was now below the normal operating level of 74.2 meters. At least 80 percent of the water that ZCWD supplies comes from the river.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

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Cloud creding fails

"We can't really prevent it. At best, we are telling farmers to brace themselves [for the disaster] and understand what the government can offer," he said.

He said that at least 27,000 farmers in the provinces of Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao,

"Right now, I hope for the rain to come," he said. **Reports from Julie Alipala and Dennis Santos, Inquirer Mindanao**

Business World

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

Roxas Boulevard traffic in Manila rerouted for Shell Eco-marathon

MOTORISTS and the general public are advised of a traffic rerouting scheme affecting certain portions of Roxas Boulevard in Manila during the Shell Eco-marathon Asia to be held in Rizal Park.

The Shell Eco-marathon is an annual racetrack competition that brings together student teams from all over the world to design, build and run their very own fuel-efficient vehicle creations using the least amount of fuel. The event is also held in Europe and in the Americas.

The Philippines has played host to the Shell Eco-marathon Asia since 2014. This is the final year the regional event is being held in Manila.

From March 1 to 7, the southbound lane of Roxas Boulevard will be closed to traffic from Katigbak Drive to T. M. Kalaw. Heavy vehicles coming from the Manila port area shall turn left to P. Burgos, right to Ma. Orosa, and right to T. M. Kalaw to reach Roxas Boulevard.

Light vehicles, meanwhile, can utilize one lane on the northbound side of Roxas Boulevard, which will be designated for counter-flow traffic.

For more information on the Shell Eco-marathon, visit shell.com/ecomarathon.