

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DATE : 03 JAN 2017  
DAY : Tuesday

# DENR

## IN THE NEWS

# PEOPLES Tonight

## ECIJA TOP STORIES IN 2016

By STEVE A.  
GOSUICO

**CABANATUAN City** -- Nueva Ecija taking the center stage in President Duterte's bloody war against illegal drugs, former three-term Gov. Aurelio Umali's first election defeat in 18 years and former three-term Congresswoman Czarina Umali's landslide capitol victory which made her the first-ever female governor, calamities and the stay in the five execution of Filipina Mary Jane Veloso and the slew of charges against local officials marked 2016 in the province.

When he assumed power in the aftermath of the May elections, President Duterte buckled to work and launched a nationwide campaign against illegal drugs.

He readily made the province, where he won in only four towns as the showcase of his campaign by leading the ground-breaking of the first mega-rehab center inside the Fort Magsaysay Military Reservation on July 26.

Four months later -- on November 29 to be exact -- he was back to inaugurate the 60,000-square meter Mega Drug Abuse Treatment and Rehabilitation Center (DATRC) tipped to accommodate up to 10,000 patients.

The province, through its Philippine National Police, has contributed its share in the campaign with the surrender of over 22,000 drug pushers and dependents since July.

In its wake, cases of drug suspects killed were classified as DUILs or death under investigation on suspicion they could be the result of extra-judicial killings.

One of them was Israel Parael, the top drug dealer of Cabiao who was shot dead while inside a patrol vehicle bound for his town.

In June, the station commander of Cabanatuan City -- Supt. Joselito E. Villarosa -- was suddenly relieved from his post while six months later, the provincial director, Senior Supt. Manuel E. Cornel followed suit.

Cornel's sudden relief was ordered by PNP chief Director General Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa, who designated erstwhile Quezon provincial police command-

A total of 23 police officers, including 16 station commanders, had been relieved in June alone.

Police Regional Office 3 chief Chief Supt. Aaron N. Aquino has also called on local officials and the citizenry to locate a possible shabu laboratory in Nueva Ecija, echoing an earlier call of Umali.

A local official has been the subject of much speculation for being a drug dependent even as President Duterte initially released the names of narco-politicians, including two in Central Luzon.

The said official managed to escape getting identified although a police official said his being hooked to illegal drugs was an "open book."

Two Novo Ecijanos were named in the Duterte Cabinet: Emily Padilla as undersecretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Governments (DILG) and her brother Diosdado as deputy director general of the Technical Education Skills and Development Authority (TESDA).

In the political front, the biggest news that swept the province like a firestorm was the landslide victory of Czarina D. Umali in the gubernatorial race, the shocking defeat in the third district congressional race of her husband, Gov. Aurelio M. Umali and the ascension into Cabanatuan politics of former Board Member Emmanuel Antonio M. Umali.

Czarina, long in the shadows of Aurelio, set a record by defeating her rival Rodolfo W. Antonino by over 200,000 votes, losing only in Quezon town, in the becoming the first female governor in the five-year history of the province.

Aurelio, fresh from completing three terms as governor, lost by 2,500 votes to neophyte Rosanna Vergara, wife of Cabanatuan Mayor Jay Vergara.

Aurelio swept the polls in all towns and cities in the third district but lost big in the vote-rich Cabanatuan even as talks swirled Rosanna bought her way to victory with allegations of massive vote-buying.

He filed an election protest before the House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal (HRET).

Vergara's victory capped a campaign marred by the filing of disqualification charges against her by an

House, she delivered a privilege speech attacking the Umalis for political violence.

Emmanuel Antonio carved a name for himself by winning the vice mayorship against five contenders.

Later, he was elected president of the Vice Mayors League of the Philippines in Central Luzon while a relative, Peter Marcus Matias, was voted unopposed as regional president of the Philippine Councilors' League.

Emmanuel Antonio would pull off a surprise when he and Ramon Garcia, who ran for mayor against Vergara, filed electioneering charges against nine barangay chairmen in Cabanatuan. The Comelec hearing started in October.

The political landscape in the province changed considerably with five neophyte politicians assuming their posts, including the governor and six municipal mayors.

For the time in history, all four representatives in the House are females.

Then PNP Chief Ricardo C. Marquez commended the PNP for the successful -- peaceful and orderly -- conduct of the elections.

In September, four farmers were massacred in Sitio Minalkot, Laur allegedly by the military. Later on, a politician from Palayan City was implicated in the carnage.

The year marked the filing of charges against incumbent and past officials. On July 10, Eduardo Josen VII or EJ was tagged for shooting dead Christopher Libunao following an altercation inside a Cabanatuan subdivision.

Relatives of Libunao have sought the transfer of the murder trial in Manila which the Department of Justice granted.

A month earlier, Antonio was indicted by the Ombudsman for allegedly misusing his Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF).

In San Antonio, Mayor Arvin C. Salonga filed charges of plunder, graft and malversation against former Mayor Antonino Lustre and 11 others for P102 million in allegedly anomalous projects.

Towards the end of the year, Umali himself was indicted by the Ombudsman for alleged misuse of his PDAF.

The year also marked the filing of administrative

pension of officials of the National Food Authority (NFA) in connection with the palay procurement scam.

A bit of showbiz, Cedric Lee filed five counts of libel against Vina Morales before the City Prosecutor's Office.

Veloso, a native of this city, remains detained in Indonesia after his execution in 2015 was stayed by President Joko Widodo, following appeals by then President Benigno Aquino III.

Relatives of Veloso, who was arrested at the Yogyakarta Airport in 2010 for carrying 2.6 kilograms of heroin, held prayer rallies in this city and in the Indonesian Embassy.

In February, Florentino David, was named operations manager of the Upper Pampanga River Integrated Systems.

The year just passed was also marked by attacks on officials. On October 20, Gapan City Councilor Sonny San Jose was killed by gunmen inside a resort in Bgy. Mangino.

Gapan Mayor Emerson Pascual and his father Rodrigo were both linked to the attack but were never charged.

Neophyte Cabiao Mayor Ramir Rivera and Vice Mayor dela Cruz survived a gun attack in Arayat on November 5. Dela Cruz's driver, Ramon Agao was wounded.

In March, Amado Guevarra, chief of the 1st Nueva Ecija DPWH's construction division, also survived an attack by gunmen in Talavera town.

Nueva Ecija's most wanted man -- Jay Sungcag -- hunted for the murder of a sexagenarian couple in 2014, was finally arrested.

The province bore the brunt of Typhoon Karen, with crop losses of P.6 billion. Over 10,000 residents and 6,000 households were given assistance in Laur and Gabaldon alone.

In November, the Mines and Geo-Sciences Bureau (MGB) warned Novo Ecijanos of an Ormoc-like tragedy.

That same month, Alloy MTD, the Malaysian conglomerate, turned over the P1.5-billion government center-cum-information technology (IT) hub to the provincial government in Palayan City.

It is set for operation early 2017 with 15,000 jobs generated in two call cen-

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# BusinessMirror

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## Lopez orders audit of P1-billion air-quality monitoring devices

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

@jonlmayuga

**E**NVIRONMENT Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez has ordered an audit of the air-quality monitoring devices acquired by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

In a text message, Lopez said she was not happy with the performance of the machines because "it showed that polluted areas have clean air."

The audit came as the Coalition of Clean Air Advocates of the Philippines (CCAAP) and the United Filipino Consumers and Commuters (UFCC) reiterated their call to the DENR to probe the alleged anomalous purchase of the devices, which they claim was either obsolete or not working properly.

CCAAP and UFCC claimed that

the alleged anomalous acquisition resulted in the inaccuracies in the DENR's "real time" air-quality monitoring reports that are supposed to be issued regularly by the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB).

However, Lopez noted that the complaint was addressed to the previous DENR leadership "so we will check up on it, if there is corruption."

According to Lopez, "heads will roll" if there is proof or evidence of corruption on the part of the officials involved in the acquisition.

DENR-EMB Director Juan Miguel Cuna could not be reached for interview as of this writing. He also failed to respond to interview request made by the BUSINESSMIRROR to shed light on the issue.

"If there is corruption in getting the machines... that is evidence of

corruption because a lot of money is involved. I have zero tolerance for corruption. If there is proof of monkey business, people [will] go," she said.

In a news statement, CCAAP and UFCC said the recent New Year's eve revelry revealed "a very unhealthy and hazardous air-quality forecast for the entire Metro Manila based on EMB New Year's celebration aftermath air-quality monitoring."

"This is a clear case of graft and corruption. We are questioning a total of roughly a billion pesos worth of purchases of air-quality monitoring instruments or equipment by the DENR [in a given period of time] after discovering that these same air monitors were purchased at the gross disadvantage of the Philippine government," UFCC president Rodolfo Javellana said.

# Remate

## ANG DIARYO NG MASA

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### Pagbili ng monitoring equipment ng DENR, pinasisiyasat

**HINILING** ng consumer at commuters group kay Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Gina Lopez na imbestigahan ang pagbili ng air monitoring equipment ng nasabing kagawaran na tinatayang aabot sa bilyong piso subalit wala namang naitutulong sa bansa.

Ang panawagan na ito ay matapos madiskubre ng opisyal ng Coalition of Clean Air Advocates of the Philippines (CCAAP) at United Filipino Consumers and Commuters (UFCC) batay na rin sa inilabas na resulta ng monitoring ng Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) sa buong Metro Manila noong Bagong Taon.

"This is a clear case of graft and corruption. We are questioning a total of roughly a billion pesos worth of purchases of air quality monitoring instruments or equipment by DENR (in a given period of time) after discovering that these same air monitors were purchased at the gross disadvantage of the Philippine government," paliwanag pa ni Rodolfo "RJ" Javellana, presidente ng UFCC.

Kinuwestyon din nito ang motibo sa desisyon ng ilang opisyal ng EMB sa pagbili ng Differential Optical Absorption Spectroscopy (DOAS) ng air monitors kahit alam ng mga ito na may mga air monitor ng DOAS na phase out na.

May nakarating ding impormasyon kay Javellana na palpak ang mamahaling air monitors na binili ng DENR katulad na lamang sa Metro Manila na hindi kaya ng mga equipment na mabigyan ng eksaktong pigura ang air quality o polusyon na nakaapekto sa kalusugan ng mga Filipino.

Dahil dito, hinamon ng UFCC at CCAAP si Lopez na magkaroon ng isang independent na grupo na magsasagawa ng pagsisiyasat sa anomalya gayundin ang pagimbentaryo sa mga air monitor equipment.

Sa pahayag ni CCAAP technical consultant Errimanuel Galvez, ang EMB ay bumili ng depektibong DOAS system na ang klase ng air quality monitoring system ay makaluma at hindi na sapat para ma-monitor ang air pollution sa bansa.

Ayon pa kay Galvez, kahit sa Amerika ay hindi na gumagamit ng DOAS system dahil na rin sa kamahalan ng presyo at limitadong kakayahan sa monitoring ng air pollution.

JAN SINOCRUZ



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### Green group appeals to DENR over air monitoring apparatus

**ENVIRONMENTAL** consumer and commuter groups yesterday appealed to Secretary Gina Lopez for an immediate audit and investigation into roughly billion pesos worth of air monitoring equipment purchased by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Officials of the Coalition of Clean Air Advocates of the Philippines (CCAAP) and the United Filipino Consumers and Commuters (UFCC) said a very unhealthy and hazardous air quality had been monitored in the entire Metro Manila in the aftermath of the New Year's celebration.

The groups said some officials of the Environment and Management Bureau of the Department purchased the air monitors, which were either obsolete or phased out years ago.

UFCC president Rodolfo "RJ" Javellana said they found out that most of the expensive air monitor instruments being purchased were not properly working and some not functional anymore.

He said in Metro Manila, the air quality monitors being questioned lacked numbers to give a very cred-

ible and complete picture or results of the real air quality situation.

"We appeal to the DENR secretary that together, with an independent third party of experts, let us identify, locate and open one by one these supposedly delivered air quality monitors nationwide that the EMB reportedly purchased and subject them all to a comprehensive audit," Javellana said.

CCAAP technical consultant Emmanuel Galvez said that the DENR-EMB purchased a Differential Optical Absorption Spectroscopy or a DOAS system, which is a type of air quality monitoring system classified as long path devices (measures absorption along a path and not a specific point) in contrast to the commonly used worldwide point monitoring system.

"A DOAS system is not suited for use in the Philippine setting based on our country's unique needs in monitoring our air quality. Even in the United States, there are almost no installations that use a DOAS system for air quality monitoring due to the fact that it is expensive and limited in its usefulness," Galvez said.

Joel dela Torre

# Abante

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### **Air monitoring equipment ng DENR, Kinuwestliyon ng environmental group**

Hiniling ngayon ng grupong consumer at commuters group kay Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Gina Lopez na magsagawa ng imbestigasyon hinggil sa maanomaliyang pagbili ng air monitoring equipment ng nasabing kagawaran na tinatayang aabot sa bilyong piso subalit tila wala naman ito naitutulong sa bansa.

Ang panawagan na ito ay dahil sa naganap na pagdiriwang ng bagong taon na kung saan nadiskubre ng opisyales ng Coalition of Clean Air Advocates of the Philippines (CCAAP) at United Filipino Consumers and Commuters (UFCC) bunsod na rin sa inilabas na resulta sa buong Metro Manila na ang polusyon ay lubhang mapanganib sa mga makalalanghap nito base sa Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) sa kanilang isinagawang monitoring nitong pagsalubong ng bagong taon.

"This is a clear case of graft and corruption. We are questioning a total of roughly a billion pesos worth of purchases of air quality monitoring instruments or equipment by DENR (in a given period of time) after discovering that these same air monitors were purchased at the gross disadvantage of the Philippine government," paliwanag pa ni Rodolfo "RJ" Javellana presidente ng UFCC.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## DENR to start the year shutting down non-compliant mining firms

As if 2016 was not yet bad enough for them, mining companies will have every reason to be more cautious in 2017 as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) plans to start the year by suspending them.

If last year the DENR failed to suspend as many companies as Environment Secretary Gina Lopez wants, the DENR chief will make sure that within this month, more mining operations will close down.

Lopez said in an interview that the results on the nationwide audit on mining companies will be disclosed by the second week of January, adding that she expects more miners to be suspended in 2017.

Ever since Lopez officially took over the agency in July, she's already been eager to shut down mining companies that she believes are not compliant with environmental standards.

In the same month, she called for a nationwide crackdown on mining firms, which has ended in August.

By September, 20 mines faced possible suspension for environmental violations, unsystematic mining methods, and outstanding social issues. These are on top of the 10 suspended mining companies, eight of which are nickel producers.

The number of suspended mining operations plus those facing suspension represents about three quarters of the total operating mines in the country.

Of these 30 mines, 18 are nickel producers that account for 55.5 percent of the country's total nickel ore output based on 2015 production.

As of now, DENR is now more than three months behind its target schedule in announcing the list of mining firms that should be suspended.

Amid the delays, many industry sources doubted the agency's capability to ever come up with a final and

Philippines H.Y. Mining Corp., Agata Mining Ventures, Inc., Hinatuan Mining Corporation, Libjo Mining Corporation, AAMPHIL Natural Resources Exploration and Development Corp., Krominco, Inc., Carrascal Nickel Corp., Strongbuilt Mining Development Corp., Oriental Synergy Mining Corp., Wellex Mining Corp., Oriental Vision Mining Philippines Corp., CTP Construction and Mining Corp., and Adnama Mining Resources, Inc., Century Peak Corp., and SR Metals, Inc.

Prior to the final results, there are also other suspended mines namely Citinickel Mines and Development Corp. (CMDC), EMIR Mineral Resources Corp., Mt. Sinai Mining Exploration Corp., Claver Mineral Development Corp., Ore Asia Mining and Development Corp., and Zambales Diversified Metals Corp., LNL Archipelago Minerals, Inc., and Berong Nickel Corp.

### Factions at DENR

Even President Rodrigo Duterte knows that nothing can stop Lopez from intensifying her crusade against mining operations she believes do not comply with environmental standards.

This is why, according to some sources, he appointed Mindanao-based Mario Luis Jacinto as Environment Undersecretary and concurrent Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) director to establish a balance within the agency. MGB is an attached agency to the DENR tasked to regulate and develop the utilization of the country's mineral resources.

This has prompted another open issue circulating at the DENR now that needs to be resolved this year—the silent brawl between Lopez and the group of Mindanao-based officials recently appointed to the office, which includes Jacinto.

To recall, Lopez is one of the cabinet secretaries that was not yet confirmed by the Commission on Appointments (CA).

vestments in the country, which stands at ₱282 billion as of 2015, ₱78 billion of which belongs to those who are at risk of losing their permit to operate and those that are already suspended.

Jacinto even said that he is willing to see how much the mining sector could grow within this administration after having to contribute only 0.7 percent to Philippine GDP over the last six years.

"It should [grow more] so that it could contribute more in the total computation [of the overall GDP]. Most importantly, it should grow for the communities hosting them. [A positive growth in the sector will also] contribute to a more vibrant trade," the MGB chief said. "Whatever you produce in the vicinity of a mine, it will be consumed."

Jacinto is also more open to new mining projects compared to Lopez.

The MGB chief is now working towards the recommendation of policies that will allow new mining projects in the country.

### Not only mining firms

However, it is not only mining firms who will have a hard time dealing with Lopez this year.

Before the agency capped 2016, it also began its crackdown on companies from across different sectors that are environment critical, threatening to withdraw their environmental compliance certificates if their operations are found unsafe.

Lopez said she remains committed to get rid of companies who have spawned negative impact on the environment, adding that the agency won't hesitate to cancel even as much as 800 ECCs.

Withdrawal of the ECC will prevent any company to continue its operations or its certain projects.

Some of the sectors that will be affected are property, manufacturing, infrastructure, construction, and power.

Environment Undersecretary for Legal Ipat Luna said the agency is already finished drafting the set of

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DENR to start the year shutting  
down non-compliant mining firms

Reacting on the issue, businesses holding environmental permits from the DENR said they don't want to suffer the same "chaotic" fate as miners when the agency started a crackdown on the mining industry.

"There should be consultation first before implementing the audit," Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) president George Barcelon told Business Bulletin. "Otherwise it would be chaotic like what happened to the mining industry."

PCCI is currently the largest and most influential business organization in the country.

Makati Business Club executive director Peter Perfecto has the same appeal to the DENR.

"My call and appeal to the DENR is for constructive dialogue and consultation with the business sector so that we can hopefully agree on a mutually acceptable evaluation process so that we then are able to help each other achieve our shared goals towards a better Philippines," he said in a text message.

During the audit, the DENR will not just check the companies' compliance with the law and ECC conditions but also the overall impact of their operations to the environment through "Environmental Impact Assessment."

"We will look at companies whether they have caused irreparable damages to environment or whether there are a lot of complains on their operations. We will look at their compliance with the conditions of the ECC. We will be suspending with existing violations," Luna said.



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## Miners urged to review social dev't programs

The government has appealed to large-scale miners to review their social development and management programs (SDMPs) and adopt a more effective "Sustainable Integrated Area Development" (SIAD) approach to ensure their operations bring sustained economic and social benefits to their host communities.

In a recent dialogue with community relations officers (CROs) of some of the country's biggest mining companies, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Gina Lopez expressed hope that the mining companies would take a hard look at SIAD as a key to strengthening the SDMP.

"What I want to do with the SDMP funds is for the DENR to jointly manage it with the mining companies and the community. I want to use their funds in the area development approach for more impact," Lopez said.

"I want it to be used to achieve area development, not as dole out, but for improving the productivity of the area," she said.

Among those present in the meeting were CROs of OceanaGold Philippines, Philex Mining Corp., FCF Minerals, Holcim Philippines, and Lafarge-Holcim Aggregates, Inc.

The CROs are the mining firms' frontliners, conducting consultations with communities affected by their operations.

The dialogue was the first of a series of nationwide consultations with mining stakeholders being conducted by the DENR as it is currently in the process of reviewing the guidelines on the formulation and implementation of SDMPs by mining firms.

SDMPs are provided for in DENR Administrative Order No. 2010-21, which is the implementing rules and regulations of Republic Act 7942, also known as the Philippine Mining Act of 1995.

Lopez said a revision of the SDMP guidelines was necessary to address some concerns about the implementation of certain programs, including lack of community counterpart and weak coordination with local development plans, thus resulting in wastage of SDMP funds.

A precondition to starting a mining operation, SDMP is a five-year plan carried out during the life of the mine to bring about a sustained improvement in the living standards of the host and neighboring communities.

It serves as a partnership between the mining operator and its host and neighboring communities meant to provide alternative livelihood opportunities for mine workers and their families.

(Ellalyn B. De Vera)

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### SIDEKICK NI LOPEZ MAY RAKET

NAKADUDUDA nang lutos ni DENR Secretary Gina Lopez ang pagsasara sa ilang maliliit na mining company samantalang pinayagan niyang magpatuloy ang operasyon ng mga malalaking kompanya na talamak sa environmental violations.

Taliwas ito sa ipinangako ni Lopez nang hirangin siya ni Pangulong Duterte na maging kalihim. Nangako itong ipasasara ang mga minahan na matagal nang nang-aabusó sa ating likas na yaman.

Kaya may mga nagtatanong: May tililing ba itong si DENR Secretary o may iba pang dahilan kaya kaagad tinalikuran ang kanyang pangako?

Minarapat kong mag-imbetiga at nalaman ko nga mula sa DENR insiders na isang ranking official at adviser ni Lopez ang isang "silent partner" ng mga operator ng erring mining firms. No wonder now!

At heto nga ang ilang kompanya na tinukoy na hindi pumasa sa DENR audit and inspection ngunit pinapayagan na makapagpatuloy sa panggagahasa sa kalikasan:

Libjo Mining Corp; AAMPHIL Natural Resources and Development Corp; Krominco Inc; Carrascal Nickel Corp; Marcventures Mining and Dev. Corp; Filmenera Resources Corp; Strongbuilt Mining

### DEADSHOT

Ni ERWIN TULFO

Dev. Corp; Sinosteel Phil. Mining Corp; Oriental Synergy Mining Corp; Wellex Mining Corp; Oriental Vision Mining Phil. Corp; CTP Const. and Mining Corp; Agata Mining Ventures Inc; Hinatuan Mining Corp; Benguet Corp; Lepanto Consolidate Mining Company; Oceana Gold Phil. Inc; Adnama Mining Resources Inc; SR Metals Inc.

Nahalata-yata ito ng Commission on Appointments kaya hindi mabasbasan ang pagkakahirang dito sa palpak na pagkapili ni Manong Digong.

Manong Digong should think twice before extending Lopez as DENR chief. She doesn't care, anyway, if she is confirmed or not as long as the President keeps extending her term as DENR secretary.

Ano bang klase ang takbo ng pag-iisip nitong si Lopez? Tsk, tsk...

## 2 rockfalls monitored at Mayon

By AYTH DELACRUZ

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) monitored two rockfall events yesterday morning at the iconic Mayon Volcano in Albay, where an Alert Level 1 remains in effect owing to its abnormal condition.

In its daily Mayon Volcano bulletin, Phivolcs said no magmatic eruption was imminent but the public was cautioned against entering its six-kilometer radius permanent danger zone as "perennial life-threatening" hazards could follow.

The agency said there were possible risks of "rockfalls, landslides/avalanches at the middle to upper slope, sudden ash puffs and steam-driven or phreatic eruptions" from the Mayon Volcano's summit.

"Active stream/river channels and those identified as perennially lahar-prone areas on all sectors of the volcano should also be avoided especially during extreme weather conditions when there is heavy and prolonged rainfall," Phivolcs added.

Elsewhere in the Bicol volcanic belt, Mount Bulusan in Sorsogon seemed relatively peaceful after generating a phreatic eruption last week. Phivolcs said it only had three volcanic earthquakes yesterday but the Alert Level 1 (abnormal) was still raised.

# INQUIRER

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## FISH PENS S BAY

an illegal firecracker.

### Stray bullet

On Monday, Ubial main-  
that Emilyn Villanueva,  
old girl from Mal-  
w at the intensive  
Jose Reyes Memorial  
center, suffered injuries  
stray bullet and not from  
rate shooting as claimed  
the police.

"If it's a shooting incident,  
the trajectory of the bullet that  
hit the victim would not be like  
that. We still categorize it as  
stray bullet from indiscriminate  
firing because the bullet hit the  
child on the head at the trajecto-  
ry of a stray bullet, vertical,"  
Ubial told the Inquirer.

"In terms of the health indi-  
cator, the CT scan that we have

at  
o in  
this  
cade—  
Paulyn  
he decline  
of President

## DUTERTE NEEDS MORI

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ate President Aquilino Pi-  
mentel III said President Duterte  
should be given time to study a  
congressional resolution that  
would grant an increase in the  
pension of members of the So-  
cial Security System (SSS), but  
Sen. Richard Gordon said the

pension system for workers in  
the private sector should pro-  
ceed with the increase.

"We should always be caution-  
and be extra careful in spendin-  
money raised or collected unde-  
the mandate of the law (like tax  
and SSS premiums)," Pimentel  
said in a text message. "Hence,  
President Duterte needs time  
study the matter then let us gi

GASPING FOR LIFE Fish pens and water hyacinths have long

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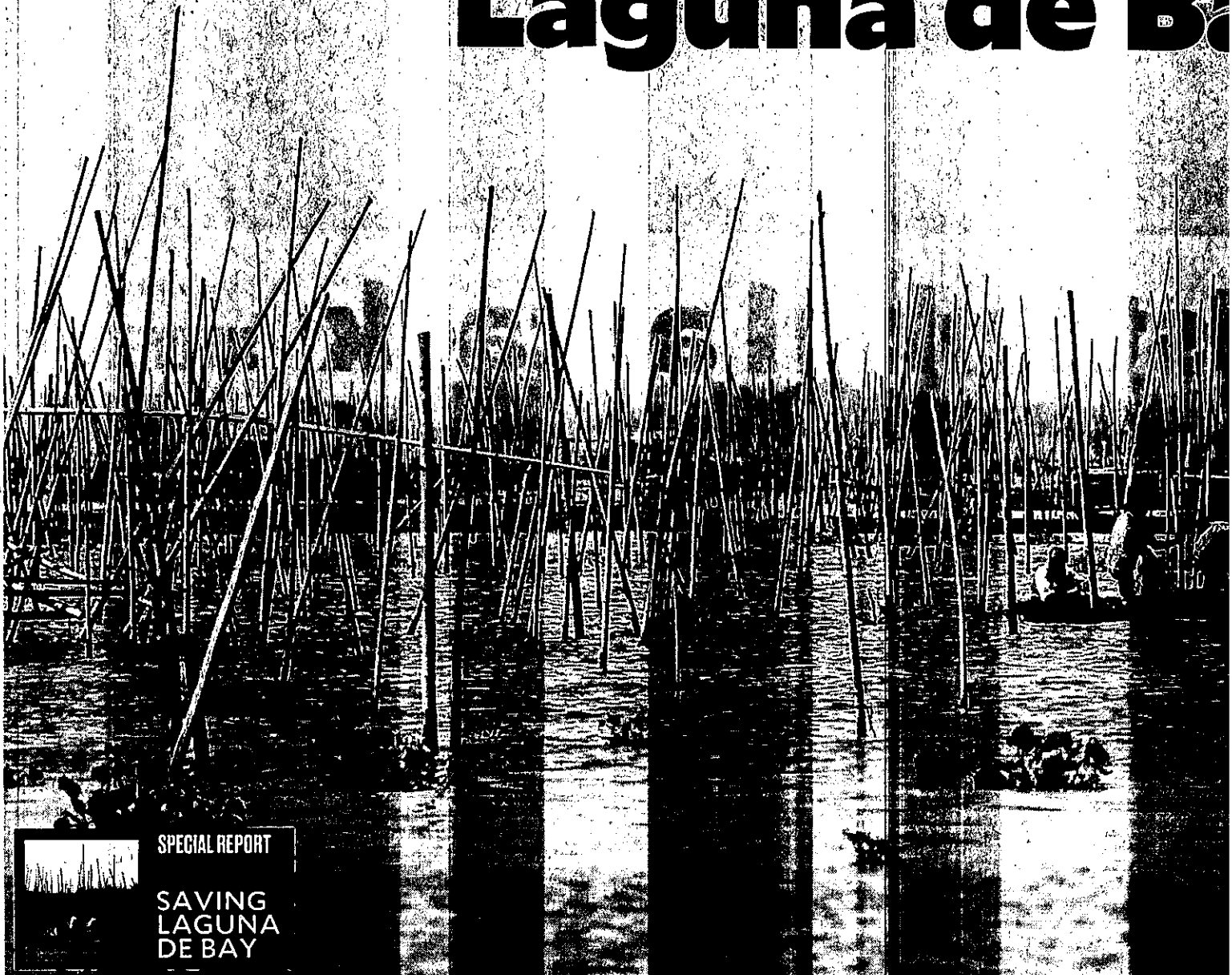
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SPECIAL REPORT

# Fish pens strain Laguna de Bay



SPECIAL REPORT

SAVING  
LAGUNA  
DE BAY

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By Maricar Cinco  
@maricarcincoINQ

(First of three parts)

**BINANGONAN, RIZAL**—Jovita Bariring, 75, has a vivid memory of Laguna de Bay from decades ago.

She was 16 when she married Remegio, a fisherman's son from Los Baños town in Laguna province. They did not have much for a honeymoon trip, so after the wedding, Remegio took her for a boat ride around Talim Island in the lake.

The view was an expanse of sky and water, "so clear you could actually see right through it," Bariring said.

It was 1958 and fish abounded in the lake, they did not worry where to get their meals.

Talim is an island community where film director Ishmael Bernal shot the 1970s classic "Nunal sa Tubig."

With 17 villages in the towns of Binangonan and Cardona in Rizal province, it truly is a "speck" in the middle of the 90,000-hectare (900-square-kilometer) lake.

Laguna de Bay is the largest inland body of water in the Philippines and the third largest in Southeast Asia, its size about 23 times bigger than the Philippine capital, Manila.

The lake region, composed of Metro Manila and the Calabarzon region (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon), serves as the country's "ecological heart," said Nereus Acosta, general manager of the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA).

## 60 percent of GDP

With 25 percent of the country's population dependent on the lake, this region generates almost 60 percent of the Philippines' gross domestic product.

On July 25, 2016, President Duterte, in his first State of the Nation Address, cited the lake as part of his administration's environment programs. He aims to transform the lake into a "vibrant economic zone showcasing ecotourism."

of the fishermen.

"The plane passes over that lake every time I go to Davao. I can see that there is no more space for small fishermen and they are complaining about their loss. Their fishing areas have been limited," he said.

He said his administration would deal with the "negative impact of watershed destruction, land conversion and pollution" in the lake.

"This is what I am telling you. The poor fishermen will have priority in its entitlements," he said.

## 'Choked'

Section 51 of the Fisheries Code of the Philippines (Republic Act No. 8550) states that "not over 10 percent of the suitable water surface area of all lakes and rivers shall be allotted for aquaculture purposes like fish pens, fish cages and fish traps."

RA 8550 also says that the "stocking density and feeding requirement shall be controlled and determined by the [lake's] carrying capacity."

The lake's carrying capacity therefore allows up to only 9,000 ha for aquaculture. But over the years, the area covered by fish pens and fish cages had grown to 12,315.80 ha (as of June 30, 2016).

Records from the LLDA showed that 358 fish pen operators, who own fishing structures, occupy a combined area of 10,438.74 ha. This means that even those operating "legally" exceed the limit by a little over 1,000 ha. This also means that structures occupying over 2,000 ha are illegal.

"It (Laguna de Bay) really is choked," said Acosta, who was appointed head of the LLDA by then President Benigno Aquino III.

Acosta, who served as presidential adviser for environment protection and served in the Aquino Cabinet for five years, continues to hold his position in the LLDA on a holdover capacity.

He likened the fishing structures to body fat saying too much of it makes it harmful to one's health.

"So you take some of that

The plane passes over that lake every time I go to Davao. I can see that there is no more space for small fishermen and they are complaining about their loss. Their fishing areas have been limited

Rodrigo Duterte  
President



## LAGUNA LAKE TRIBUTARIES

Code Station name

- 1 Marikina
- 2 Bagumbayan
- 3 Buli
- 4 Mangangate-downstream and upstream
- 5 Tunasan-downstream and upstream
- 6 San Pedro
- 7 Biñan
- 8 Sta. Rosa-down, mid, and upstream
- 9 Cabuyao
- 10 San Cristobal
- 11 San Juan
- 12 Los Baños
- 13 Bay
- 14 Pila

Source: lllda.gov.ph

Code Station name

- 15 Sta. Cruz
- 16 Pagsanjan
- 17 Pangil-downstream and upstream
- 18 Sta. Maria-downstream and upstream
- 19 Siniloan
- 20 Jala-jala
- 21 Pililia
- 22 Tanay-downstream and upstream
- 23 Baras
- 24 Morong-downstream and upstream
- 25 Sapang Baho
- 26 Manggahan Floodway

INFO GRAPHICS

1970s when businessmen, mostly from Malabon City in Metro Manila and Rizal, saw the lake's potential.

The government, through the LLDA, piloted commercial fish growing by putting up a 38-ha pen in Cardona, Rizal, in 1970.

By 1973, 993 private fish pens occupied 4,802 ha. The industry

Producers (ALLFP).

Phytoplankton serves as natural food for fingerlings, hence operators rarely use commercial feed that contribute to the lake's pollution.

The lake also has the capacity to naturally "cleanse" its water by the entry of saltwater, through the Pasig River, once a year.

This makes Laguna de Bay

# INQUIRER

"LAGUNA"  
DE BAY

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

the lake (P30 to P40 a kilogram for "bangus") stays half the price of those from other areas.

The ALLFP has more than a hundred members, most of them wealthy investors or corporations.

During the early years, retired military officers operated structures in the lake. In the 1980s, Taiwanese businessmen came in followed by Korean traders.

Foreign investors did not last long, because many lost millions of pesos to typhoons in the 1990s or had been cheated by Filipino caretakers.

### Selling rights

In an effort to regulate the growing fish pen industry, the LLDA, in 1983, drew up a zoning map. But it took the agency 12 years to fully enforce it due to strong opposition from fish pen operators.

The Fishery Zoning and Management Plan (also called Zomap) is like a subdivision plan, identifying fishing zones and navigational lanes.

The government is using the 2003 Zomap, known as the "Arroyo belt" or the "Cataquiz belt," as it was revised during the administration of then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, with Calixto Cataquiz as LLDA general manager. It restricts fish pens within a 10,000-ha area and smaller fish cages in a 5,000-ha area.

Over the past 10 years, the LLDA has stopped issuing permits to new investors, prompting other operators to build structures outside the map that eat up navigational lanes.

These "illegal" operators usually have connections to mayors of lakeshore towns or to LLDA field agents, Felix said.

Maureen Tolentino, LLDA information officer, said fish pen operators had been issued permits to "sort of lease space in the lake."

These permits are renewable annually for a fee of P6,000 per hectare for fish pens or P3,000 per hectare for fish cages.

Sixty percent of the total fee collection goes to the LLDA

### FAST FACTS

#### LAGUNA DE BAY

**900 sq km**

Total surface area (the largest lake in the Philippines and third in Southeast Asia)

**4**

No. of distinct bays (West Bay, Central Bay, East Bay, South Bay)

**2,980 sq km**

(or more than 17 times the land area of Quezon City)—

Watershed area (straddles the whole provinces of Rizal and Laguna, and some towns in Batangas, Cavite, Quezon)

**20 m**

Deepest point (in the Diablo Pass area)

**2.5 m**

Average depth

**2.25 million cu. m.**

Average volume

**8 months**

Average retention time

**8.5 pH**

Average water pH level

**285 km**

Shoreline (10.5 m elevation)

**14,000 ha**

Total shoreland area (at 12.5 m elevation)

**35**

No. of shoreland municipalities (20 in Laguna, 10 in Rizal, 5 in NCR)

**217**

No. of shoreland barangays (at 12.5 m elevation)

**22**

No. of major tributary river systems that flow into the lake aside from other relatively small rivers and streams

**9**

No. of water quality monitoring stations

COMPILED BY: ALMI LAGAN-ATIENZA,  
INQUIRER RESEARCH

Sources: Inquirer archives,

## *Businessmen bat for Laguna Lake fishpens' dismantling*

THE Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) fully supports the government initiative not to renew the permits of fishpen operators in Laguna Lake that expired in December 2016.

The announcement by Environment Secretary Regina Lopez that the government will dismantle big fishpens in the lake starting January 2017 was a welcome development, the chamber noted and promised to support the plan to convert Laguna Lake into an eco-tourism zone.

Such initiatives go a long way in preserving Laguna Lake as an important resource in the country, PCCI president George Barcelon said.

Laguna Lake provides fisherfolk with livelihood and serves as source of water for households and agricultural irrigation.

Felipe Gozon, PCCI director for environment and climate, noted that the government should look into the conditions of other lakes such as Taal Lake.

"We need to preserve these lakes as they are major sources of fresh water and are rich in biodiversity," Gozon said.

More than reducing the fishpens and cages to ensure the sustainability of aquatic resources, the PCCI officials said the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) should come up with a master plan addressing domestic waste, urban run-off and agricultural pollution.

LLDA data showed that 81 percent of pollution come from households and 19 percent from industries.

As the largest business organization in the country, the PCCI can help LLDA formulate the master plan.

The 90,000-hectare, freshwater Laguna Lake is the largest inland body of water in Southeast Asia.

As a watershed, some 21 rivers converge into it.

**RAADEE S. SAUSA**



# BULGAR

BOSES NG MANA MATA NG BAYAN

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Dear Chief Acosta,  
Nais ko sanang malaman kung mayroon ba akong malalabag na batas sa pagbebenta ko ng aking chain saw sa ibang tao? — Karlito

Dear Karlito,  
Ang batas na sumasaklaw sa inyong katanungan ay ang Section 4 at 7 (a) ng Republic Act No. 9175 o mas kilala bilang "Chain Saw Act of 2002," kung saan nakasaad ang mga sumusunod:

Section 2. Persons Authorized to Manufacture, Sell and Import Chain Saws. — Chain saws shall only be sold and/or imported by manufacturers, dealers and/or private owners who are duly authorized by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

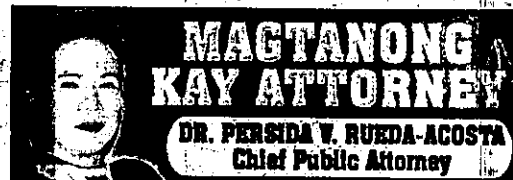
Section 7. Penal Provisions. —

(a) Selling, Purchasing, Re-selling, Transferring, Distributing or Possessing a Chain Saw Without a

Proper Permit. Any person who sells, purchases, transfer the ownership, distributes or otherwise disposes or possesses a chain saw without first securing the necessary permit from the Department shall be punished with imprisonment of four (4) years, two (2) months and one (1) day to six (6) years or a fine of not less than Fifteen thousand pesos (P15,000.00) but not more Thirty thousand pesos (30,000.00) or both at the discretion of the court, and the chain saw/s confiscated in favor of the government.

Malinaw sa nabanggit na batas na iligal ang pagbebenta ng chain saw na walang kaukulang permit na nakuha sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Bukod dito, maaari rin kayong maparusahan sa nabanggit na batas kung ang inyong pag-possess o pag-aaring naturang chain saw



## Kung may malalabag bang batas sakaling ipagbili ang kanyang chain saw

ay hindi nakarehistro sa DENR. Ito ay alinsunod sa Section 6 ng parehong batas na nakalahad ang sumusunod:

Section 6. Registration of Chain Saws. — Within a period of three (3) months from the effectivity hereof, all persons who own or are otherwise in possession of chain saws must register the same with the Department, through any of its Community Environment and Natural Resources Office, which shall issue the corresponding registration certificate or permit if it finds such persons to be qualified hereunder.

Every permit to possess and/or use a chain saw for legitimate purpose shall be valid for two (2) years upon issuance.

Provided, That permits to possess and use chainsaw issued to non-commercial orchard and fruit tree farmers shall be valid for a period of five (5) years upon issuance. For this purpose, the Department shall be allowed to collect reasonable registration fees for the effective implementation of this Act.

Sa inyong sitwasyon, maaari ninyong malabag ang nasabing batas kung walang kaukulang permiso mula sa DENR ang pagbebenta o pagmamay-ari ninyo ng chain saw. Samakatwid, kung kayo ay hindi tumupad sa mga alituntunin na nakasaad sa batas, mayroon kayong pananagutan at maaari kayong makulong o pagmultahin o pareho tungkol dito.

Nawa ay nasagot namin ang inyong mga katanungan. Nais naming ipaalala sa inyo na ang opinyong ito ay nakabase sa inyong mga naisalaysay sa inyong liham at sa pagkakaintindi namin dito. Maaaring maiba ang opinyon kung mayroong karagdagang impormasyong ibibigay. Mas mainam kung personal kayong sangguni sa isang abogado.

Kung kayo ay may katanungan o nais ihingi ng payong legal, sumulat sa MAGTANONG KAY ATTORNEY ni Persida Acosta, BULGAR Bldg., 538 Quezon Ave., Quezon City o mag-email sa magtanongkayattorni@bulgar.com.ph

## Bugkalot tribe receives land titles

**NAGTIPUNAN, Quirino:** For the Bugkalot tribe, it is a blessed New Year receiving their Certificates of Land Ownership (CLOA) as Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) from Agrarian Reform Secretary Rafael Mariano.

Covering some 4,600 hectares of resettlement area at Keat and Matmad in this town to be used productively, the CLOA was recently given to around 1,150 ARBs led by Bugkalot chief Rosario Camma, also former mayor of this town.

Camma said the beneficiaries are the actual occupants and tillers from the Bugkalot tribe, and who also forged a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), stating the obligations of each party.

The Bugkalots are Indonesian in origin and are recorded as being among the first people to come to the Philippines, also known as the Italon Tribe, Kadayakans, Egongots or Ipagis and Abacas or Tamsis.

Along with the Agta or Dumagat people, they were among the first inhabitants of the forests of Quirino, Nueva Vizcaya and Aurora provinces who initially built their houses on trees as protection from their enemies.

Until the 1970s, the Bugkalots were a tribe of head-hunters and known as the Ilongots and were more into fishing and hunting in the wilds than in agriculture.

In recent years, the Philippine govern-

ment has been making efforts to help the Bugkalot tribe resolve some of their problems, particularly in livelihood and inter-tribal relations.

In order to protect the ARBs, provincial agrarian reform officer Arthur Faeldon, said under the MOA, the land given to the Bugkalots will not be sold, transferred or conveyed except through hereditary succession, or to the government.

Faeldon added that the land may also be transferred to the Landbank of the Philippines or to other qualified beneficiaries in consonance with the provision of Republic Act (RA) 8371, or the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997.

"The issuance of the certificates is part of the DAR's mandate of land acquisition and distribution where excess lands of the landlords are being acquired for distribution to the landless," he said.

According to him, all excess private lands in Quirino province were already acquired and distributed.

The area has been covered by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program in 1991 wherein six collective CLOAs were issued to qualified ARBs at the time who were co-owners of the land.

As stated under the 1988 Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (RA 6657) amended by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension Reforms (RA 9700), collective CLOAs should be issued to individual ARBs.

**LEANDER C. DOMINGO**

# Duterte to award ₱60M to cleanest coastal areas

President Duterte is set to award ₱60 million in livelihood support funds to the cleanest coastal communities in the country this month as the government's campaign to stop illegal fishing and other destructive fishing practices kicks into high gear.

Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol said the selection of the cleanest coastal communities, dubbed "Malinis at Masaganang Karagayan" annual Presidential Awards, is a project of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.

MMK, the official said, aims to promote sustainable and responsible fishing in the face of continued illegal fishing activities resulting to

dwindling catch by marginal fisher folk.

He added that coastal towns must meet the five criteria set by the national selection committee of the MMK in order to qualify.

Piñol said the criteria is:

- The coastal town must have no reported cases of illegal fishing.
- The town must have a declared and protected marine sanctuary.
- There must be a well-managed and protected mangrove area.
- The town must have a self-imposed closed fishing season which would coincide with the spawning season of the fish species found in its fishing grounds.
- The coastal waters and fishing

grounds must be free of floating garbage and effluence flowing from factories or processing plants.

"Regional winners who will receive ₱2 million each have been selected while the five finalists will be announced during the awards ceremonies expected to be held in Malacañang," said Piñol.

₱20 million will be given to the MMK Presidential Awardee, while the first runner up will receive ₱8 million and the second runner up will get ₱5 million.

Piñol stressed that the prizes to be given to the winning towns "could only be utilized for livelihood programs for fisher folks especially during the closed season for fish-

ing, speed boats for the Bantay Laut members, and activities aimed at stopping illegal fishing."

Undersecretary Eduardo Gongona, BFAR national director, said the winning towns will also be supported by the bureau with fiberglass fishing boats, fish landing, and ice making facilities.

2016 MMK winners will no longer be qualified to compete in the future search for cleanest coastal communities under the program.

Piñol said the exact date of the MMK Awards will be announced as soon as Malacañang confirms the availability of Duterte in view of his very tight schedules. (Elena L. Aben)

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## More privileges for PWDs with expanded rules

Persons with disabilities (PWDs) should be aware of additional benefits and privileges already available to them under Republic Act (RA) 10754.

Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Secretary Judy Taguiwalo explained that there is no need for supplemental guidelines from implementing agencies because the law and implementing rules and regulations (IRR) are sufficient to grant additional discounts for the purchases of PWDs.

The IRR of RA 10754 or An Act Expanding the Benefits and Privileges of Persons with Disability was signed on Dec. 1, 2016 by DSWD, Department of Health, and National Council on Disability Affairs.

Availing of privileges commenced on Dec. 23, 2016.

"Our PWDs can now avail of the discounts. There should be no problem about availment as the IRR is sufficient basis for the grant of the discounts. If they encounter problems in availing of their privileges or they have further inquiries, they can contact the NCDA," Taguiwalo said.

The law grants PWDs with exemption from value-added tax (VAT) on the purchase of certain goods and services from all establishments subject to VAT for their exclusive use, enjoyment, or availment. This is on top of the 20 per-

cent discount they are already entitled to under existing laws.

It covers restaurants, recreation centers, such as theaters, cinema houses, and concert halls; and lodging establishments; such as inns, motorists' hotels, and dormitories. It also applies to the purchase of medicines and foods for special medical purposes; medical and dental services, including laboratory fees and professional fees of attending doctors; domestic air, sea, and land transportation travel; and funeral and burial services.

For this purpose, the law requires all establishments to place signages of the benefits and privileges of persons with disability within their premises so PWDs will know what they are entitled to.

It also declares that subsequent purchases made by the PWDs on the same day from the same establishment are still subject to VAT exemption and 20 percent discount.

Other salient features of the IRR include the reiteration of the rights of PWDs to social insurance through the Government Service Insurance System, Social Security System, PAG-IBIG; educational assistance; special discounts in the purchase of basic necessities and prime commodities; and express lanes in all commercial and government establishments.

It also includes the provision of tax incentives for those caring for and

living with persons with disabilities up to the fourth degree of affinity or consanguinity.

Its unique features include the inclusion of certain vitamins, minerals and herbs in the definition of drug or medicine as long as these are in accordance with the Food and Drug Administration's cut off as well as foods for special medical purposes, and making the benefits and privileges available to Filipinos who hold foreign passports but are registered as dual citizens and those who have re-acquired their Filipino citizenship.

It is important to note, however, that double discounts are not allowed.

This means that if a person with disability is a senior citizen, who is also entitled to a 20 percent discount under his/her valid senior citizen identification card (ID), the PWD should use either his/her Senior Citizen ID or PWD ID card to avail of the 20 percent discount.

Persons with disability will need to present a proof of entitlement to enjoy their expanded benefits and privileges such as an ID issued by the Persons with Disability Affairs Office or the City/Municipal Social Welfare Development Office of the place where the PWD resides, the passport of the concerned person with apparent disability, or an ID issued by the NCDA.