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Bilyong piso na air quality monitors ng DENR pinasisilip kay Pres. Duterte

UMAPELA ang grupo ng consumers, commuters at environmental advocates kay Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na agad na aksyunan nito ang umano'y naganap na anomalya na

tinatayang aabot sa bilyong piso hinggil sa pagbili ng Air Quality Monitors ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na siyang kasangkapan na nagmomonitor

ng polusyon sa bansa.

Ang panawagan na ito ng mga grupo ay bunsod na rin sa naganap na pakikipagpulong ng multi-sector Coalition of Clean Air Advocates of the Philippines (CCAAP) noong August 27, 2016 kay DENR Secretary Regina L. Lopez para pag-usapan ang nasabing isyu.

"Air pollution poses a clear and present danger to public health and even threatens the lives of our countrymen. The particulate matters emitted from firecrackers, motor vehicles, and industrial sources not only hits gravely our respiratory system but also goes to our cardiovascular system causing hypertension, heart attack, strokes and even sudden death," pahayag ni CCAAP Chairman, lawyer at medical doctor Dr. Leo Olarte.

Napag-alaman na noong nabanggit na petsa nagtungo ang CCAAP sa tanggapan ni Lopez para ireklamo ang kuwestyunableng pagbili ng air quality monitoring equipment ng Environmental Management Bureau (EMB).

"We did this in great confidence because Secretary Lopez is not only perceived as an staunch environmentalist but she was formerly also a CCAAP Trustee herself. We ask her how can we clean the air if we cannot accurately measure it? She promised us its immediate investigation.

sa ginawang pagbili ng EMB noong 2003 na umaabot umano sa halagang bilyong piso ng air quality monitors subalit naniniwala ang grupo na agrabiyado ang gobyerno bunsod na rin sa hindi ito angkop na gamitin sa Pilipinas para i-monitor ang polusyon gayundin ang karamihan sa mga ito ay hindi maayos na gumagana.

Samantala naniniwala naman si United Filipino Consumers and Commuters (UFCC) president Rodolfo RJ Javellana sa sinseridad ni Duterte nang sabihin nito na kanyang lalabanan ang corruption sa gobyerno kung kaya't ibig nila mismong iparating ang naturang anomalya sa pangulo upang agad niya itong maaksyunan.

"Our collective groups and partners repeatedly raised the problem to the highest leadership of the DENR but our valid complaints remains not acted upon by the DENR secretary to the extreme detriment of consumers, commuters and the Filipino people as a whole," ayon pa kay Javellana.

Sinabi pa ni Javellana na kung totoo na ang adbo-kasiya ni Lopez na maitaguyod ang malinis na hangin dapat lamang ito na lumikha ng independent na magsisiyasat sa isyu na kinabibilangan ng international at lokal expert.

"We challenge the DENR secretary that together with the media we will identify locate open and

Abante

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Anomalya sa DENR, pinabusisi

Umapela ang grupo ng consumers, commuters at environmental advocates kay Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na agad na aksyunan ang umano'y naganap na anomalya na tinatayang aabot sa bilyong piso hinggil sa pagbili ng Air Quality Monitors ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na gamit sa pagmomonitor ng polusyon sa bansa.

Ang panawagang ito ng grupo ay bunsod sa naganap na pagkikipagpulong ng multi-sector Coalition of Clean Air Advocates of the Philippines (CCAAP) na naganap noong Agosto 2, 2016 kay DENR Secretary Regina L. Lopez para pag-usapan ang nasabing isyu.

"Air pollution poses a clear and present danger to public health and even threatens the lives of our countrymen. The particulate matters emitted from firecrackers, motor vehicles and industrial sources not only hits gravely our respiratory system but also goes to our cardiovascular system causing hypertension, heart attack, strokes and even sudden death," pahayag ni CCAAP Chairman, lawyer at medical doctor Leo Olarte.

Napag-alaman na noong nabanggit na petsa nagtungo ang CCAAP sa tanggapan ni Lopez para ireklamo ang kuwestyunableng pagbili ng air quality monitoring equipment ng Environmental Management Bureau (EMB).

Samantala naniniwala naman si United Filipino Consumers and Commuters (UFCC) president Rodolfo RJ Javellana sa sinseridad ni Duterte nang sabihin nito na kanyang lalabanan ang corruption sa gobyerno kung kaya't ibig nila mismong iparating ang naturang anomalya sa pangulo upang agad niya itong maaksyunan.

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Environmentalists kumilos

UMAPELA, ang grupo ng consumers, commuters at environmental advocates kay Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na imbestigahan ang posibleng anomalya sa bilyong pisong halaga ng biniling air quality monitors ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Ang panawagan ay kasunod ng pakikipagpulong ng multi-sector Coalition of Clean Air Advocates of the Philippines (CCAAP) noong August 2, 2016 kay DENR Secretary Regina L. Lopez para pag-usapan ang nasabing isyu.

"Air pollution poses a clear and present danger to public health and even threatens the lives of our countrymen," ang paalala ni CCAAP chairman, lawyer at medical doctor Leo Olarte.

Nabatid na noong nabanggit na petsa, nagtungo ang CCAAP sa tanggapan ni Lopez para ireklamo ang kuwestyunableng pagbili ng air quality monitoring equipment ng Environmental Management Bureau (EMB).

Matatandaang bumili ang EMB noong 2003 ng bilyon pisong halaga ng air quality monitors subalit naniniwala ang grupo na agrabyado ang gobyerno dahil ang mga monitor ay hindi angkop para i-monitor ang polusyon sa Pilipinas bukod pa sa karamihan sa mga ito ay hindi maayos na gumagana.

Samantala, naniniwala naman si United Filipino Consumers and Commuters (UFCC) President Rodolfo RJ Javellana sa sinseridad ni Duterte nang sabihin nito na kanyang lalaban ang korapsyon sa gobyerno kaya ibig nila mismong iparating ang reklamo sa Panguo.

"Our collective groups and partners repeatedly raised the problem to the highest leadership of the DENR but our valid complaints remains not acted upon by the DENR secretary to the extreme detriment of consumers, commuters and the Filipino people as a whole," ani Javellana. JAN S.

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Indoor air pollution worse than outdoor

INDOOR air pollution, said nitrogen monoxide is and elderly, those with asthma, is worse than outdoor air, more prevalent at home, and even healthy individuals, according to an article in and at work place than outdoors. Others are at risk through chronic exposure. The Green Magazine, a science publication circulated in the United States and Canada, report the research shows even at low levels.

Citing results of a research by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Helke Ferrie, a science writer, said one cause of indoor air toxicity are gas appliances which produce carbon as well as nitrogen monoxide, a reddish-brown gas with acrid odor. According to the same report, the research shows conclusively that nitrogen monoxide inhibits respiration by attacking the mucous membrane of the lungs, decreasing brain activity by interfering with the transport of oxygen. This causes oxidation of unsaturated fatty acid of cell membrane. Many Filipinos have found it a lot safer cooking with Green Charcoal. Green charcoal technology involves a process of converting forest wastes into green charcoal in the form of fire logs, pellet and briquettes. Besides, it reduces indoor pollution and promotes healthy cooking. It reduces dependence on imported cooking fuel, thus save millions of dollars.

The article headlined "Stop Cooking With Gas" those with reduced cardiovascular activity, children

X-FILES

SAGAD SA SHOWBIZ

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MM MAY PINAKA-MARUMING HANGIN - DENR

PINAKAMATINDI ang polusyon sa hangin sa Metro Manila sa pagsalubong ng Bagong Taon noong De-cember 31, 2016.

Ayon ito sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) batay sa isinagawang air monito-ring ng DENR sa kalidad ng hangin noong New Years Eve.

Ayon sa Environmental Management Bureau ng DENR, ang air pollution sa Maynila ay umabot sa 448 micro gram per under normal level, 433 microgram sa Parañaque, 324 micro-

gram sa Taguig, 285 microgram sa Valenzuela at 175 microgram sa Muntinlupa.

Ayon kay Asst. Dir. Jacqueline Caangan ng Environmental Management Bureau, di hamak na mas mataas ang air pollution sa pagsalubong sa bagong taon kung ikukumpara ito sa mga nagdaang taon.

Sinabi ni Caangan, mas maraming gumamit ngayon taon ng mga fountain o pailaw dahil na rin sa matin-ding kampanya ng pamahalaan kontra paputok kaya't mas tumindi naman ang usok na likha nito na nagpatingkad sa polusyon sa hangin.

Dahil dito, pag-aaralan ng DENR na irekomenda sa DILG na isama rin sa mga ipagbabawal at kampanya ang paggamit ng mga pailaw tuwing New Year para sa kapakanan ng kalusugan ng mamamayan.

Militant fishers tell PCCI: Hands off Laguna de Bay

By Sandy Araneta

THE country's largest business group Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry has earned the ire of the militant fisherfolk group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas over the former's meddling in the Laguna de Bay rehabilitation and master plan.

"Thanks, but no thanks, to these businessmen. Laguna lake fishers and settlers don't need their backing. PCCI has nothing to do with the master plan and development of Laguna de Bay for no less than the municipal fishermen and settlers, who are the user-manager of the lake, are the ones who know and are capable to revive the dying lake.

[The] past administrations' projects and programs [had] put the lake at its dying stage in the first place," Fernando Hicap, Pamalakaya chairperson, said in a statement.

The PCCI supports the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' order to dismantle fish pens in the 90,000-hectare brackish lake which will commence

this year, saying it could also help in transforming the country's largest lake into an eco-tourism and business hub.

But the fisherfolk group casts doubt about the business group's intention over Laguna de Bay.

Pamalakaya denied the PCCI's statement that domestic wastes were the primary reason behind Laguna de Bay pollution, saying industrial, commercial and government projects through widespread reclamation activities were the overall culprits behind the destruction of the lake.

Thousands of factories and commercial establishments along the lake have been irreverently dumping its various wastes in the lake for years now.

Rampant reclamation activities in several parts of Laguna de Bay have also aggravated the worsening condition of the lake.

"Blaming the residents as the main factor behind Laguna de Bay pollution might lead to their displacement in the guise of preserving the lake. We fear that letting this group of businessmen intrude into Laguna de Bay affairs would lead to total conversion of our productive fishing zone into their money-making ventures that could also put the lake at its final death bed," Hicap said.

The PCCI is backing the government's move to stop issuing fishing permits for Laguna Lake.

In a statement, the country's largest business group said it fully supported the initiative of the government not to renew the permits to operate fish pens at Laguna Lake, which expired this month.

PCCI also welcomed the announcement made by the Secretary of the Department of the En-

vironment and Natural Resources that the government would dismantle other big fish pens starting January next year.

The group likewise supports the plan to convert Laguna into an eco-tourism zone.

PCCI president George Celon said the government initiatives would go a long way in preserving Laguna Lake which serves as an important resource in the country.

Laguna de Bay is a shallow freshwater lake of about 90 hectares. Not only does it provide livelihood to fishers, it also serves as source of water for domestic use and for agricultural irrigation.

Data from the Laguna Lake Development Authority show 80 percent of pollution in the lake comes from the domestic sector, while 20 percent are from industries.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SE

Fisherfolk want businessmen out of Laguna lake rehabilitation

THE militant fisherfolk group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) told the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) on Thursday to stop meddling in the Laguna de Bay master plan and the rehabilitation of the lake located in the town of Bay in Laguna province, south of Manila.

Laguna is Spanish for lake.

The PCCI, the country's largest business group, has expressed its support to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) order to dismantle fishpens in the 90-thousand hectare brackish lake, saying they could help transform the country's largest lake into an eco-tourism and business hub.

Dismantling of the fishpens will commence this year.

The fisherfolk group, however, cast doubt on the business group's intention.

"Thanks but no thanks to these businessmen. Laguna de Bay fishers and settlers don't need their backing. The PCCI has nothing to do with the master plan and development of Laguna de Bay for no less than the municipal fishermen and settlers who are the user-managers of the lake are the ones who know and are capable to revive the dying lake. It's the past administrations' projects and

programs that [push] the lake [to the] dying stage in the first place," Fernando Hicap, the group's chairman, said in a statement.

Hicap's group disputed the PCCI's statement that domestic waste is the primary reason behind Laguna de Bay pollution, saying industrial, commercial and government projects through widespread reclamation activities are the overall culprits behind the destruction of the lake.

Pamalakaya said thousands of factories and commercial establishments situated along the lake have been irreverently dumping their garbage into Laguna de Bay for years now.

Meanwhile, rampant reclamation activities in several parts of Laguna de Bay have aggravated the worsening condition of the lake.

"Blaming the residents as the main factor behind Laguna de Bay pollution might lead to their displacement in the guise of preserving the lake. We fear that letting this group of businessmen intrude into Laguna de Bay affairs would lead to total conversion of our productive fishing zone into their money-making ventures that could also put the lake at its final death bed," Hicap said.

NEIL A. ALCOBER

ALTERNATIVE 'BANGUS' SOURCE

DA SAYS PANGASINAN TO FILL FISH SUPPLY GAPS AS DEMOLITION OF PENS CONTINUES IN LAGUNA DE BAY

LINGAYEN, PANGASINAN—With a fish sufficiency level of more than 200 percent, Pangasinan province could fill the fish production gap that would result from the demolition of fish pens in Laguna de Bay by 2018.

The province has been supplying 140 metric tons of fish, mostly "bangus" (milkfish), to Metro Manila each day, which account for 60 percent of the total volume of fish being traded in the area, said Nestor Domenden, Ilocos region-director of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.

Last week, Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol said Pangasinan would be tapped as an alternative source of fish supply for Metro Manila, as the demolition of fish pens in Laguna de Bay begins.

The lake produces 400,000 MT of milkfish and tilapia annually, supplying 70 percent of the fish requirements of Luzon and parts of the Visayas, government records showed.

Of the 160,000 MT of fish produced yearly in Pangasinan, about 90,000 MT are bangus, Domenden said.

According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, Pangasinan produced an annual average of 106,857.37 MT of bangus from 2013 to 2015, making it the coun-



A worker sorts newly harvested "bangus" (milkfish) at the Magsaysay fish market in Dagupan City. —WILLIE LOMIBAO

try's leading bangus producer. The province also produces 10,820.81 MT of tilapia every year.

Stabilizing prices

Without the bangus and tilapia from Laguna de Bay, Pangasinan's share in the total fish volume traded in Metro Manila is expected to increase, Domenden said.

This, he said, will benefit

fish farmers because prices of their produce will also increase.

At present, bangus has an average wholesale price of P105 a kilogram and an average retail price of P125 a kg. Tilapia has a wholesale price of P80 a kg and a retail price of P106 a kg.

Piñol said bangus grown in Pangasinan would easily sell because of its distinctive taste. "When you say [Pangasinan] bangus, people love it. Even for-

eigners look for it because it made its name not only here but also abroad," he said during a recent visit here.

There are unoccupied areas in the province's mariculture areas which could serve as new production areas, Domenden said, adding that one investor wanted to relocate its 200 fish cages to Pangasinan. "And this is only one corporation," he said. —GABRIEL CARDINOZA INQ

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

THE government will be pushing for a more comprehensive Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative report to ensure companies comply with the law in spending their social development and environmental protection funds.



BW FILE PHOTO

EITI harnessed to ensure compliance in use of environmental, social development funds

THE government will be pushing for a more comprehensive Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) report to ensure companies comply with the law in spending their social development and environmental protection funds.

Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) Assistant Director Danilo U. Uykieng said that the agency will stipulate that environmental protection spending of a company be included in the EITI report.

"They're claiming that spending on environmental protection but we haven't seen much of that," said Mr. Uykieng in a Tuesday phone interview.

Cielo D. Magno, an Assistant Professor at the University of the Philippines School of Economics

and a member of the Philippine Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative multi-stakeholders group and its international board, welcomed the initiative, adding that government officials have a significant role to push for a more transparent report.

"We need high-level participation. There is a problem of validation... What is disclosed is the balance of these funds but how they are spent is not disclosed... It's difficult to implement unless MGB issues AO (administrative order) making compliance mandatory," Ms. Magno said in a text message on Thursday.

She added that the group has been seeking for the government's support to bring out a more comprehensive EITI report that will include how a company

spends its funds for environmental protection and social development, among others.

"For the environmental program funds the law requires that, but the accounts are in complete control of companies, implemented by MMTs (multi-partite monitoring teams) but with no system of accounts," Ms. Magno added.

The 2017 report, which will cover companies' 2015 operations, intends to include a section on company funds for these programs and their use.

"We continue to push for accounting of all the funds," said Ms. Magno, noting that the group is also pushing to include non-metallic/cement and big quarry

operations. The EITI was created by Executive Order No. 147 signed by

President Benigno S. Aquino III in 2013 to ensure greater transparency and accountability in the extractive industries, specifically in the way the government collects, and companies pay taxes from extractive operations.

According to the 2nd PH-EITI Country Report published in December which is the 2014 edition covering the mining industry's 2013 performance, the government has received P40.7 billion as payment for minerals, oil and gas in 2013.

In total, local government units which are threatened by the environmental impact of mining companies received P1.2 billion in 2013 while national govern-

ment retained 73% of total mining revenue, the report added.

Janina C. Lim

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BusinessMirror

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

SoKor firm pulls out from Pangasinan golf-course project

BY ORLY GUIRAO
Correspondent

LINGAYEN, Pangasinan— Leaders of a pro-environment group here are bracing to pull out the snags that have stalled the development of an 18-hole world-class golf course within the 300-hectare ecotourism zone here.

A South Korean business consortium, JJGPK Co. Ltd., headed by Kang Hee-jung, had offered to invest in the golf-course project, but it backtracked as a result of a series of bad reports.

One major snag in the project, as pointed out by the Aroen Mo AK

Sambayanan (Aromas), a movement on protecting and preserving the environment, is the repeated bad publicity about black sand, a big volume of which was allegedly extracted to allow the needed turf grass to grow in the golf-course area.

The grass now crawls on a wide swathe of land on both banks of a man-made lagoon built as an "obstacle" in a golf game.

Aromas is led by Vicente Oliquino, a barangay *kagawad* of Sabangan of this capital town which is host to the project. The group, along with the provincial government, said the whole 300-hectare development zone is covered by Proclama-

tion 1258, issued by then-President Fidel V. Ramos which "empowered the provincial government to pursue development in the area".

The South Korean businessman had clarified, however, in an interview that his firm will come back and renegotiate once the issue is settled.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources later issued an environment compliance certificate for the golf-course project.

Oliquino is one of the eight original complainants in the alleged black-sand mining project, but had long stopped pursuing the case before the Office of the Ombudsman, as they realized the case was being

used as a political issue. "The hill of black sand remains intact in the area where the extracted minerals were unloaded," the Aromas leaders said in a joint affidavit. The group's testimonies were corroborated by Environmental Management Bureau Regional Director Ma. Victoria Abrera, who inspected the area, a provincial government property where the extracted mound of black sand was stockpiled.

"Based on our observation during the inspection, there was no activity of any earth movement," Abrera said. "The stockpile is intact, and is now under the care of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau."

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Eastern Samar

TACLOBAN CITY — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources Eastern Visayas regional office 8 has inducted and deputized 115 forest rangers in Eastern Samar. DENR-8 Regional Director Leonardo Sibbaluca said that 31 forest rangers were assigned in Maydolong town and 84 in Borongan City. Sibbaluca said that these new deputized forest rangers will be of great help in the forest protection and conservation in the two locations. He said the training of the new forest rangers was supported by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH of the Federal Republic of Germany. Maydolong and Borongan City were likewise assisted in the formulation of their respective forest land use plans (FLUP) under the GIZ program "Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, as well as conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (REDD+)." (Restituto A. Cayubit)

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

YELLOW PAINT INSTEAD OF TAG

NEWBIE VOLUNTEERS DEFACE SEA TURTLE

By Carla P. Gomez
@carlagomezINQ

BACOLOD CITY—Members of a group of volunteers guarding against poaching in the seas have learned a valuable lesson on handling green sea turtles—don't paint on their carapace.

Bantay Dagat (sea watch) volunteers in Silay City, Negros Occidental, were reprimanded for marking the carapace of a sea turtle with paint instead of tagging the animal. The sea turtle was rescued by a fisherman.

Joan Nathaniel Gerangaya, community environment and natural resources officer, said the volunteers would be required to attend an orientation seminar on the Wildlife Conservation Act after they had been reprimanded.

The green sea turtle, locally known as *pawikan*, was spotted by fisherman Rodrigo Giguera in the waters off Barangay Balaring in Silay City around 5 a.m. on Tuesday.

It was 33 inches long and 25 inches wide, Gerangaya said.



This sea turtle, its carapace vandalized, has been returned to the waters of Silay City in Negros Occidental. —CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The fisherman turned the turtle over to the Bantay Dagat members who were apparently new volunteers, Gerangaya said.

Gerangaya said the men were apparently unaware of standard operating procedure in handling endangered animals.

The volunteers, said Gerangaya, should have turned over the animal to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources which would attach a metal tag on the turtle's flipper.

The tag would help scientists track the turtle's migration pattern, Gerangaya said.

But the volunteers did not have a metal tag so they instead painted the words "Silay Bantay Dagat" on the turtle's carapace in yellow.

Gerangaya said what the volunteers did is considered as a form of maltreatment, a violation of the Wildlife Conservation Act.

The volunteers, however, were just reprimanded because they meant the turtle no harm and released the animal back to the sea shortly after getting it from the fisherman. INQ

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TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

6 more Calabarzon ecotourism sites up for DOT accreditation

The Department of Tourism plans to accredit six more ecotourism sites in the CALABARZON region under the government's National Ecotourism Strategy (NES) within the first quarter of 2017.

DOT Region 4a director Rebecca Villanueva-Labit told

The STAR the region is considering adding six more accredited ecotourism sites into the region's portfolio before the agency's term as chairman of the National Ecotourism Steering Committee ends this March.

"We have five sites approved under the regional

ecotourism plan, but we will be approving another six by the first quarter after our assessment," Labit said.

The sites to be accredited include the Wawa-Pamitinan Protected Landscape in Rodriguez, Rizal; Kilangin Falls in Liliw, Laguna; Buruwisan Falls in Simulao, Laguna; Mount Daraitan in Tanay, Rizal; Tikub Lake in Tiaong, Quezon; and the Quezon Protected Landscape in Atimonan, Quezon.

Villanueva-Labit said the accreditation of the ecotourism sites is pursuant to the provisions of the NES 2013 to 2022.

By MARY GRACE PADIN

The 10-year plan, which was officially launched during the 5th World Ecotourism Conference in Cebu City in 2014, was envisioned to provide integrated mechanisms and strategies to bring together the government, private sector, local communities and the tourists to advance ecotourism's viability and competitiveness in the Philippines.

It was formulated by the National Ecotourism Steering Committee and its regional counterparts. The DOT and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources

(DENR) take turns manning the council every three years.

"It is a shared responsibility between the DENR and the DOT. In March, we will be making the turn over back to DENR," Labit said.

"So, if we approve six more sites, we will be able to turn over to the DENR a total of 11 ecotourism sites, all compliant to the provisions of the NES," she added.

The five ecotourism sites approved by the Regional Ecotourism Committee of CALABARZON include Masungi Karst in Tanay, Rizal; Pansipit River and Volcano Island Bird

Sanctuary in San Nicolas, Batangas; Mount Makiling Forest Reserve in Los Baños, Laguna; Tayak Nature and Wildlife Park in Rizal, Laguna; and the Lobo Agro Ecotourism Site in Lobo, Batangas.

Labit also highlighted the role of ecotourism to ensure sustainable and inclusive growth in the country.

"Ecotourism is very inclusive. You develop the community, protect the natural environment, provide livelihood, sustainable source of income, and immediately, that community becomes the vanguards of the environment," she said.

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NAMRIA ship to search for sunken ferry's crew

A vessel of the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA),

which is equipped with a sonar sensor, is expected to arrive today in Batangas to help the

Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) locate the ferry *Starlite Atlantic* that sunk on Dec. 26.

"We would focus our search near the Balahibongmanoc Island since it was where *Starlite Atlantic* made last contact before it sank. It is also where the life jackets were found. We intend to limit our search in that area," Cmdr. Julius Caesar Victor Marvin Lim,

The 1,497 gross ton roll-on and roll-off ferry is owned by Starlite Ferries.

The PCG is not discounting the possibility that the 18 missing crewmen were trapped inside the ship.

Cmdr. Armand Balilo, PCG spokesperson, said the NAMRIA ship could help pinpoint the exact location of the ship.

Balilo raised the possibility that the ship is lying on a shallow part of the sea and could be reached by technical divers.

- Evelyn Macairan

Malaya

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Eco friendly boats for sustainable fishing

SN Aboitiz Power-Magat Inc. turned over 15 fiberglass boats to fisherfolk organizations in Isabela, Ifugao and Nueva Vizcaya to promote sustainable livelihood.

The boats were the result of a fiberglass boat making training held in August by Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Region (BFAR) Region II. The materials for the boats were provided by SNAP-Magat under its corporate social responsibility program.

The project aimed to train fisherfolk on the design, construction and maintenance of fiberglass fishing boats. This would enable them to develop boat-building as a skill and potential source of alternative income.

The project also promotes eco-friendly practices as use of fiberglass boats will reduce dependence on wood from trees for boat materials. Boats made of fiberglass have the advantage of withstanding the elements under heat and cold, and have corrosion-resistant properties that allow them to last for around 30 years.

The project was granted through the Magat Task Force (MTF), a multipartite advisory council responsible for sustainable aquaculture in the Magat reservoir, among others.

SNAP-Magat and BFAR Region II are members of the MTF along with BFAR-Cordillera Administrative Region and National Irrigation Administration-Dams & Reservoir Division, which also provided support to the project; National Freshwater Fisheries Technology Center; the provincial governments of Isabela and Ifugao; Community Environment and Natural Resources Office-San Isidro, provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office-Nueva Vizcaya and the Fisherfolk Sector Council.

SNAP-Magat owns and operates the 360-megawatt Magat Hydroelectric Power Plant at the border of Ifugao and Isabela. It is a joint venture of SN Power of Norway and AboitizPower.

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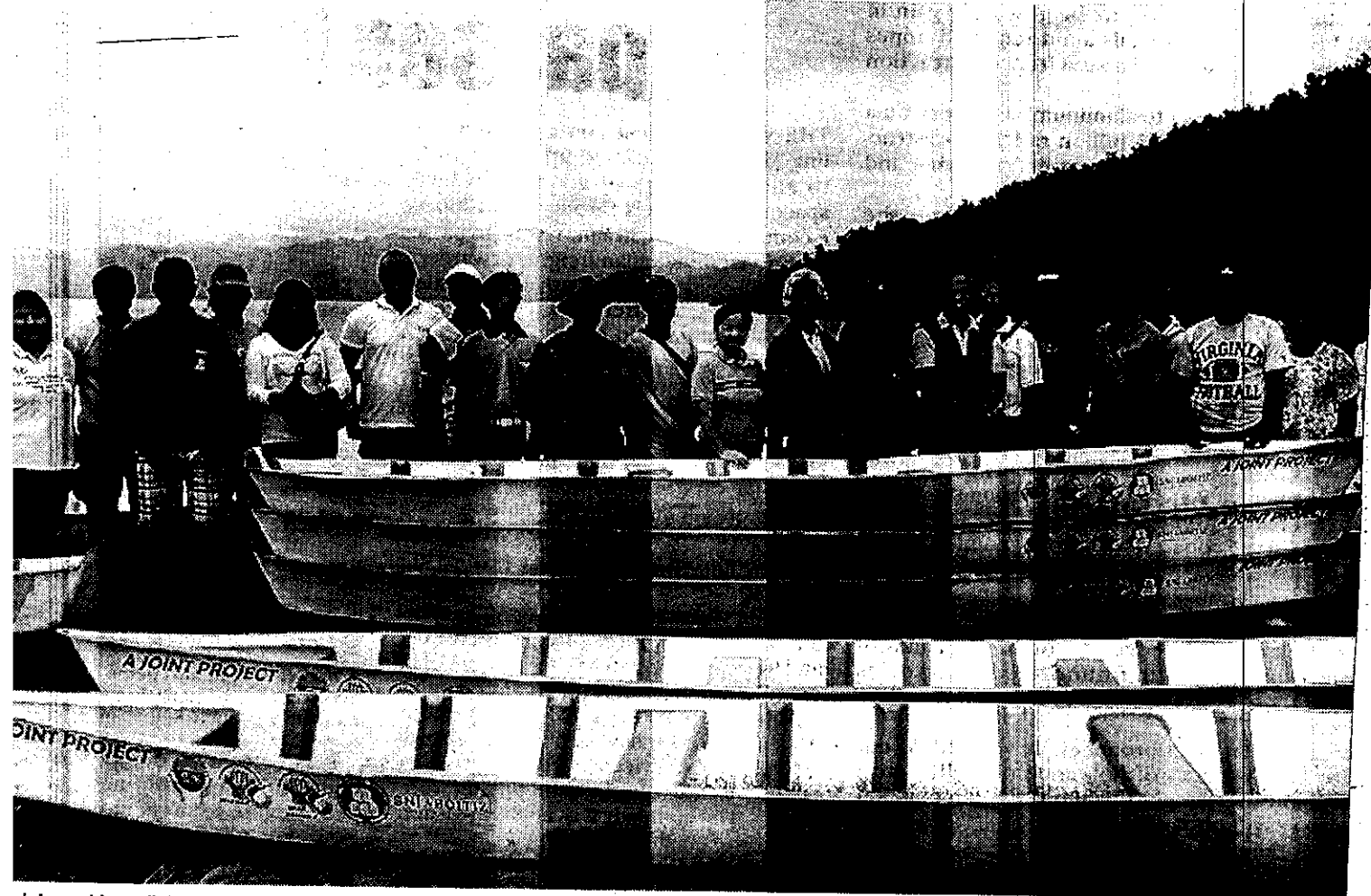
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Eco-friendly boats for sustainable fishing



Officials and beneficiaries pose at the turnover of the fiberglass boats.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Grading Duterte. Environmental watchdog Green Thumb Coalition weighs in on "hits and misses" of the Duterte administration in its first six months in power. The group also reminded the President of his promise of change as it also urged the public to continue to exercise vigilance and criticisms in the government policies, especially on environmental issues.

ANALY LABOR