

**DATE**

08 JAN 2017

**DAY**

**Sunday**

# **DENR**

## **IN THE NEWS**

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## DENR stops operations of coal-fired plant in Limay due to ash spill

By ELLALYN

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has ordered the suspension of activities inside a coal-fired power plant in Limay, Bataan due to the reported hazardous ash spill.

DENR through the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) in Central Luzon has ordered SMC Consolidated Power Corp. (SMCCPC) to stop any activity inside its coal-fired power plant in the wake of ash spill that has reportedly caused several residents to fall ill.

It also directed the nearby Petron Bataan Refinery (PBR) to "stop from dumping newly generated bottom ash" in the area while the ash spill incident is being investigated.

The two directives, both dated Jan. 6, 2017, were issued by EMB-Regional Director Lormelyn Claudio.

In a Notice of alleged violation issued to SMCCPC, the EMB wanted the power firm to explain why the environmental compliance certificate or ECC for its Limay facility should not be revoked or cancelled due to the ash spill.

"Notice is hereby served in connection with the dumping of bottom ash at (SMCCPC's) facility in Limay, Bataan. This allegedly caused unmitigated spread of ash which affected the health conditions of the residents in the host community," the notice read.

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# The Manila Times

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SEI

## Bataan coal plant stopped from dumping bottom ash

**LIMAY, Bataan:** The Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) on Friday night said it has ordered the coal power plant here to stop dumping the bottom ash unless neutralized of its alleged hazardous properties.

EMB Region 3 director Lormelyn Claudio told villagers at the PEX site in Barangay Lamao this town during a dialogue after meeting with Limay Mayor Lilvir Roque.

She said the bottom ash should be mixed with soil to make it less its corrosive before it is buried on a dump approved by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The EMB officials said the new dumpsite will be within the huge industrial area and the present sites - pier area and near the 600-megawatt plant undergoing construction.

Claudio stressed that only the dumping of the bottom ash was ordered stopped and not the operation of the 140-megawatt plant coal plant that has been operating for more than three years.

She added that she has ordered the coal plant management to sprinkle water on the ashes and set up a buffer zone by planting trees between the plant and the community.

However, affected residents are not convinced of the EMB assur-

ance and called for a long term palpable solution.

"Stoppage of dumping [of bottom ash] now, but what about in the long run?" Alvin Pura, one of the residents asked Claudio, adding that sanctions must be imposed for alleged company violations.

Claudio said the EMB will install CCTV cameras to monitor the activities of the plant.

On Thursday, about 200 families at the area near the Bataan Refinery here have complained of the volume of coal ash dumped from a 140-megawatt coal plant owned by an oil company caused difficulty in breathing and skin rashes to a number of them.

They said the ashfall has affected the soil, plants, houses and their livelihood since December 26.

Bottom ash is two of the by-products of coal in power plants. The other is fly ash used in the production of cement.

Derek Cabe of the Coal-Free Bataan Movement said they have written many complaints to EMB but the agency acted only recently upon instructions of Environment Secretary Regina Lopez.

Cabe said they still do not see positive action. "The management of the plant does not admit their violations. They said the ash does not come from them," she added.

**ERNIE B. ESCONDE**

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## Petron denies role in Bataan ash fall

By Tonette Orejas  
and Greg Refraccion  
@Team\_Inquirer

LIMAY, BATAAN—Petron Corp. said it played no part in the ash fall from its oil refinery here that has affected communities and polluted the coastline for which it was slapped with a Dec. 28 notice of violation.

The ash pond of a 150-megawatt (MW) coal-fired power plant operating inside the Petron Bataan Refinery (PBR) is secure and about a kilometer from the closest waterway, according to a Petron statement released on Friday.

Ash ponds sink plant waste like bottom ash (residues that form at the bottom of a coal furnace) in water to prevent these from spreading or from being

dispersed in the air.

But Lormelyn Claudio, Central Luzon director of the Environment Management Bureau (EMB), issued a notice of violation last month against the refinery for "bottom ash used as filling material" that allegedly drained into waterways.

On Jan. 6, EMB issued two more notices—one stopping Petron from dumping newly generated bottom ash from its coal-fired power plant to the ash pond of a 600-MW coal-fired power plant being built by the San Miguel Consolidated Power Corp. (SMCCPC), and the other ordering SMCCPC not to take the residue.

San Miguel Corp. has controlling shares in Petron. The refinery's power plant is at the left side of a complex, spanning

more than 100 hectares in Barangay Alangan here facing the bay.

SMCCPC is building its plant, with a 27.6-ha ash storage facility at a 47-ha lot in the same compound, according to its environmental and social impact assessment report.

The notices of violation issued on Jan. 6 cited "recent reports and information [about] alleged skin diseases caused by the dumping of bottom ash at [SMCCPC's] facility."

Claudio ordered Petron to "ensure adequate containment of bottom ash to avoid dispersion and draining of the same into nearby water bodies."

She said the ash pond was 500 meters from the Alangan River.

But Petron said EMB was

mistaken. "Ash from the pond, certified by DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) as nonhazardous, will be used as raw material for our cement manufacturing plant. Thus, reports of ash spill and tons of ash found along the coastline of a distant river, which is almost a kilometer away from our facility, is far from the truth," Petron said in a statement.

"Our ash pond is located within our facility and near our offices. It has the necessary regional and local permits from the DENR, is surrounded by dikes, and regularly watered to prevent dispersion...Nevertheless, we assure [regulators] that we will continue to assist the residents and work with the DENR and the municipality to do what is right and necessary," it added.

Claudio visited Barangay Lamao in this industrial town on Friday night to determine if plant operations had affected the health of families living near a buffer zone of the refinery.

The EMB conducted an inventory of Lamao households, taking note of children afflicted with respiratory and skin ailments. Claudio said the list would be transmitted to government health officials.

Anita Boliteres, 62, who lives there with 10 children, said she wanted the coal-fired power plant removed "because we don't think the local government is serious enough about relocating us."

She said her 57-year-old husband, a former Petron employee, died four months ago from lung cancer. INQ

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## Lopez not keen on approving new <sup>1/2</sup> Minahang Bayan sites this year

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

**T**HE government is not keen on approving any application for Minahang Bayan, the centralized program for processing of minerals within a specific area—where the government can better monitor gold production—this year, as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) steps up the campaign against irresponsible mining operations.

An environmental advocate, Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez said in a text message that if she would have it her way, she would rather see small-scale miners having alternative sources of income and livelihood to protect and conserve the environment, and promote sustainable development based on ecologically sound economic ac-

tivities—such as agri-forestry and ecotourism.

Small-scale miners, particularly in Mindanao, are appealing to Lopez to help boost the sector and to legalize small-scale mining, starting with the establishment of Minahang Bayan, where they can extract and process gold.

Bert Buniales, president of the Philippine National Coalition for Artisanal and Small-scale Mining (PNCASM), said Lopez's proposal to tap small-scale miners as the DENR's National Greening Program partners would be a big boost to the livelihood of artisanal and small-scale miners. However, the group is not keen on veering away from small-scale mining.

Buniales, founder of the Mindanao Federation of Small-scale Miners, said, in fact, artisanal and small-scale miners want to seek an

audience with the DENR chief to personally appeal for her help.

Established only last year, the PNCASM had asked President Duterte and Lopez in July 2016 to hear out the concerns of the artisanal and small-scale mining sector.

The group assists the sector that has been gripped by pressing issues, including poverty and human rights, and wants the Duterte administration to address its demand to legalize artisanal and small-scale mining, promote occupational health and minimize environmental impact.

Buniales maintained that the 15 artisanal and small-scale mining core group leaders from six major provinces in the Philippines belonging to PNCASM are ready and willing to cooperate with the Duterte administration in realizing common goals.

### Neglected

"We are hoping that Secretary Lopez will approve our request for a dialogue to talk about the future of artisanal and small-scale mining because we want to be part of the DENR's programs," he said, adding that tree-planting activities are, in fact, part of their group's advocacy to help promote a healthy ecology.

The PNCASM said artisanal and small-scale mining has often been neglected by the government.

"We want the sector to be legalized, so that we can also pay taxes and help contribute to the economy," he said.

While the DENR estimates

ing members of the family of an artisanal and small-scale miners, the number of people employed by the sector could easily reach at least a million.

### Earning enough

"ARTISANAL and small-scale miners are earning enough. That is why we really want to work with the government to legalize our operation," he said.

Artisanal and small-scale mining communities, particularly indigenous peoples, women and children, frequently lack valuable support from the government, said the group Ban Toxics, which helps



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# BusinessMirror

## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

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### Minahang Bayan... CONTINUED FROM A1

kilograms of gold compared to the 17,137 kg total gold output of large-scale mining during the same period, according to a report entitled "Health and Environmental Impact of Mercury in Small-scale Gold Mining in the Philippines," presented during the United Nations Environmental Programme and DENR Forum on Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining in December 2010.

#### Risks

IN the processing of gold by small-scale miners, gold extraction by amalgamation, which makes use of mercury during gold smelting, was highlighted. During gold smelting, an estimated 26 tons of mercury are dumped annually into bodies of water in Mindanao alone, posing serious environmental and health risks to people.

Under RA 7076, or the People's Small-scale Mining Act of 1991, the state is mandated to promote, develop, protect and rationalize viable small-scale mining activities to generate more employment opportunities and provide an equitable sharing of the nation's wealth and natural resources.

The law defines small-scale mining as mining activities that rely on manual labor using simple implement and methods and do not use explosives or heavy mining equipment normally used in large-scale mining or mineral extraction.

On the other hand, Executive Order 79, or the Measures to Improve Small-scale Mining Activities, mandates that small-scale mining operations shall be undertaken only within the declared People's Small-scale Mining Areas, or Minahang Bayan.

Small-scale mining activities

gold, silver and chromite as provided for in RA 7076, and the use of mercury is strictly prohibited. The government is also mandated to provide training and capacity-building measures in the form of technical assistance for small-scale mining cooperatives and associations.

#### 'Selective leniency'

MINING'S big players criticize Lopez for being lenient against small-scale mining, which also causes massive environmental degradation, including pollution of water bodies with the use of toxic heavy chemicals.

While there are around 300,000 small-scale miners operating in various parts of the country, there are only five declared Minahang Bayan. These include two that were approved in December 2015 for Banaybanay, Davao Oriental, and Lorente, Eastern Samar.

The other three existing Minahang Bayan are in Buenavista, Quezon, Dinagat Island and in Agusan del Sur. Last year the target was to establish 16 more Minahang Bayan, or at least one per region.

Asked of the chances of approving Minahang Bayan applications this year, Lopez said she "seriously doubt" it will happen under her watch.

#### Crackdown

THE DENR chief has been visiting mining communities to talk to people affected by mining. Under her watch, Lopez had caused the suspension of 10 large-scale mining operations and issued show-cause orders to 20 mining companies for various offense based on an audit criteria that includes social environmental and biodiversity.

Just last December, Lopez ordered the cancellation of existing environmental compliance certificates of six mining projects and a housing project within the La Mesa Watershed.

Lopez said almost all areas she visited so far gave her the impression that the community would have been much better off without mining.

She admitted that, partially, the government is at fault in allowing small-scale mining to happen.

"The fault is with the government," Lopez said, adding that she will address the problem as chief steward of the country's environment and natural resources.

"Mining kills the ecology. In this country of islands and rivers and streams and corals, open pits doom the community for life. There are better ways I want to show in the DENR while I am here," Lopez said.

Lopez, who is strongly against open-pit mining methods, said she is concerned of the pollution brought about by small-scale mining to rivers and other bodies of water, as well.

The DENR chief said through various programs and projects, the DENR will help provide alternative sources of income and livelihood for people who depend on mining.

She wants miners, who stand to lose their jobs because of her campaign to weed out irresponsible mining, to become DENR partners for development through the Enhanced National Greening Program.

This year the DENR will embark on the massive rehabilitation of mangroves and establishment of bamboo plantations.

"My commitment is to ensure

# THE PHILIPPINE STAR

## TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## NGO urges passage of new mining law

Non-government organization Alyansa Tigil Mina (ATM) is urging the government to endorse the passage of a new mining law that seeks to embody the administration's thrust of responsible mining in the country.

ATM national coordinator Jaybee Garganera is hoping to get the endorsement of President Duterte and Environment Secretary Gina Lopez on the passage of the Alternative Minerals Management Bill (AMMB).

"We are asking two things from Secretary Lopez, one is to issue an official statement (of the DENR) endorsing the bill

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

and her presence in committee hearings," Garganera told **The STAR**.

ATM said there is an urgent need to pass a new law as issues concerning mining stem from a "flawed and incorrect" law, which is the Philippine Mining Act of 1995.

The group is also recommending the inclusion of the bill in the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) to be crafted by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA).

"It is a huge thing if the executive (Duterte) itself will issue a statement, and if it will

be included in the legislative agenda plus the endorsement of Secretary Lopez," he said.

The bill, which was crafted with the help of different advocates, is anchored on land and natural resources management and human rights-based approach. It aims to regulate the rational exploration, development and utilization of mineral resources and ensure the equitable sharing of benefits for the state, indigenous peoples and local communities.

Ifugao Rep. Teddy Baguilat, one of the proponents of House Bill 113 or the Lower

House version of the AMMB, earlier said there was a need to change the government's policies if Lopez would want to implement changes in the mining industry.

The AMMB is centered on human rights as a major consideration in the issuance of mining permits. It will also include provisions on the formation of a multi-sectoral council to process permits, as well as areas considered as "no go mining zones," among others.

The bill also pushes for a strategic and rationalized minerals management plan anchored towards the country's industrialization roadmap.

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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS  
SINCE 1980  
**MANILA BULLETIN**  
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## FNI signs export deal, seeks reconsideration of ECC cancellation

By JAMES A. LOYOLA

Global Ferronickel Holdings, Inc. (FNI) has started the process of exporting nickel ore even as it asks the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to reconsider the cancellation by the Environmental Compliance Certificate for its Iplan Nickel Project in Brooke's Point, Palawan.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, FNI said its operating subsidiary, Platinum Group Metals Corporation, has just signed a supply contract for the delivery of a total of 2 million wet metric tons of nickel ore.

The ore will be shipped to Guangdong Century Tsingshan Nickel Industry Company Limited at spot price for the 2017 mining season.

Meanwhile, FNI said subsidiary Iplan Nickel Corporation (INC) has recently filed with the Office of the DENR Secretary a letter seeking to have the order of cancellation reconsidered.

INC chronicles on its letter the scores of significant programs and activities it implemented and continues to implement to pursue the Project as

well as the timeline of major approvals it obtained from different DENR offices and other pertinent agencies.

Its activities include the lodging of Community Development Programs with various beneficiaries, confirmatory drilling, preparation and submission of Definitive Project Feasibility Study, EPEP, SDMP, 3-Year Work Program, Survey Order, LGU endorsements and application for MPSA Operation, land acquisition for road lots and foreshore lease application, commissioning and completion of Environmental Assessment Update Studies and numerous meetings with the Mine Rehabilitation and Fund Committee.

On the other hand, major approvals obtained include its Operating Agreement, Change in Status of the MPSA to Construction and Operation, Partial Declaration of Mine Project Feasibility, Special Tree-Cutting Permit and Earth-Balling Permit.

Based on records, INC maintains that the lone basis for the cancellation of its ECC (i.e. that 'the Project was never implemented') has no factual basis," FNI said.





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AMIN NG KATOTOHANAN •  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

## IMBESTIGADOR SA ILLEGAL MINING OPS SINASANAY

ISINAILALIM pa rin masusung pagsasanay ng Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) ang mga miyembro ng pinagsanib na Fact Finding Committee (FFC) na nag-iimbestiga sa iligal na operasyon ng minahan sa bansa.

Nais ng MGB na lalo pang maging episyente ang mga miyembro ng komite sa pag-iimbestiga sa mga lumalabag sa Philippine Mining Act of 1995.

Dumalo sa workshop ang mga kinatawan ng Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Interior

and Local Government (DLLG), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) bilang mga anti-illegal mining enforcers.

Kasama sa mga tinatalakay ang mining at transport permits na inilisyu ng MGB; basic mineral identification techniques at ang identification of commonly transported minerals, ores at mineral concentrates.

Nagkaroon din ng pagkakataon ang mga dumalo sa workshop na makalibot sa MGB Metallurgical Laboratory para maobserbahan ang pangunahing proseso ng mineral, on-the-

spot lectures hinggil sa iba't ibang aspeto ng batol at mineral.

Aminado ang MGB na may ilang grupo o indibidwal ang patuloy na nagsasagawa ng iligal na pagmimina sa kabila ng matinding kampanya ng pamahalaan kayat lalo nilang pinaagibay ang kaalaman at kaalaman ng mga nagsasagawa ng imbestigasyon para hindi mapaligutan.

Nauna nito, may mga small-scale illegal mining operations na nadelibre ang MGB ang ipinasara na bagay na may mga nagtatatagapang magmina.

MONCHETILARANO

## EDITORIAL

### Squalor

**T**he first week of 2017 has just passed and prominent among the reports is the issue of pollution. The revelry held to welcome the new year resulted in not only the usual maiming, even killing, of revelers and sundry innocents but also the pileup of the detritus of firecrackers and other accompaniments of merry-making. Name it—food scraps, discarded food containers, juice packs and water bottles, etc., which revelers couldn't be bothered to dispose of properly, as though the street sweepers owed them. The public parks were reportedly a fine mess during the holidays, proving yet again that many Filipinos do not deserve this beloved season.

And the air we breathed? Dramatic photographs show Metro Manila choked by air pollution on Christmas Day and New Year's Day. The New Year's Eve photographs in particular were dangerously beautiful, indicating that even in our happiest moments, we are threatened by what we discard or use up.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources reported that the air pollution during New Year's Eve was worse than in the previous year despite government efforts to discourage the use of firecrackers and fireworks. The DENR's Environmental Management Bureau set up stations throughout the metropolis to monitor the dirt in the air from Dec. 31 to Jan. 1. The results? The air in Metro Manila during the 24-hour period was found to be "extremely dangerous," which meant it was "no longer deemed safe to go outside without wearing a face mask."

The stations were designed to measure particulate matter 2.5 microns or smaller, the cause of hazardous smog. Teresita Peralta of the DENR-EMB's Air Quality Management section reported the highest such quantity at the Timog-Edsa station in Quezon City, measuring 560 micrograms per normal cubic meter (µg/Ncm). Compare that to

graspable dirt, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority reported that 15 truckloads of trash were collected from popular holiday areas Rizal Park, Baclaran and Balintawak from Dec. 30 to Jan. 1. Much of the litter constituted empty plastic bottles, food containers and leftovers. Ironically, the 15 truckloads of waste are actually an improvement over last year, when the MMDA collected 20 truckloads from those same places.

So here we are, stewing in squalor. But for an even more frightening sign of deterioration and decay, consider the dying Laguna de Bay and the region around it that generates almost 60 percent of GDP—the "ecological heart" of the country, as Laguna Lake Development Authority general manager Nereus Acosta poetically describes it. In a 3-part special report, the Inquirer's Maricar Cinco discusses how uncontrolled commercial fishing over the last 50 years has led to the Philippines' largest lake becoming polluted and silted, effectively choking it and killing the industries that rely on it.

All these warning signs should reasonably shock Filipinos into collective action. We can start with small individual steps—sweeping our yards, segregating household trash, and disposing of litter properly, which means picking up after ourselves and our pets (dog poop on the sidewalk is a particular bane of the urban resident's existence).

As it is, another monster garbage day looms, with the Feast of the Black Nazarene and *traslacion* scheduled tomorrow. Last year the millions-strong procession generated a mind-blowing 35 truckloads, or 367 tons, of garbage gathered along the 7-kilometer *traslacion* route (that's 157 tons more than was collected in 2015).

Will we finally clean up our act? Let's hope the effort begins with the Black Nazarene procession, pointedly referred to as "*trash-lacion*." A ceremony marked by the sacred and profane, it bids well to again break records in garbage pollution—unless, by some miracle, we're in for a pleasant surprise.



**THE AIR IN METRO MANILA DURING THE 24-HOUR PERIOD WAS FOUND TO BE 'EXTREMELY DANGEROUS,' WHICH MEANT IT WAS NO LONGER DEEMED SAFE TO GO OUTSIDE WITHOUT**

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***Editorial***

**Grabeng air pollution  
dahil sa paputok**

**H**INDI lamang pagkasugat at sunog ang idinudulot ng paputok kundi pati air pollution. Noong Disyembre 31, 2016, lumubha ang air pollution sa Metro Manila dahil sa paputok bilang pagsalubong sa Bagong Taon. Tumaas ang lebel ng air pollution na umabot sa 2.5 PM (particulate matter). Mas mataas ito kumpara sa lebel ng air pollution noong Disyembre 31, 2015 habang sinalubong ang 2016. Ayon sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), mas mababa ang naitalang air pollution noong nakaraang taon dahil umulan at kakaunti ang nakapagpaputok. Hindi katulad ngayon na bagamat umambon, naging maganda rin naman ang panahon sa magdamag kaya nagpatuloy ang pagpapaputok. Ang usok mula sa mga paputok ang naging dahilan ng paglubha ng air pollution at magpapatuloy pa ito hangga't walang ngipin ang pamahalaan para maipatigil ang paggawa at pagbebenta ng paputok.

Ang DENR ang nararapat manguna sa kampanya para lubusang maipatigil na ang paggawa at pagbebenta ng paputok. Kung hindi gagawa ng aksiyon ang DENR, magpapatuloy ang pagkasira ng kalikasan dahil sa air pollution na pinalulubha ng mga paputok tuwing sasapit ang bagong taon.

Dapat lamang ang total ban sa paputok sapagkat bukod sa air pollution, marami ring napipinsala dahil sa insidente ng sunog, pagkasugat, pagkaputol ng daliri, kamay at pagkabulag.

Mahigpit ang pagtutol ni President Rodrigo Duterte sa mga paputok at naipasunod niya ito sa Davao City kung saan naging mayor siya sa mahabang panahon. Ganito rin ang dapat niyang gawin sa buong bansa. Ipagbawal ang paputok sa susunod na pagdiriwang ng bagong taon. Ito lamang ang paraan para lubusang mapigilan ang pagkalason sa hangin.

# TONITE

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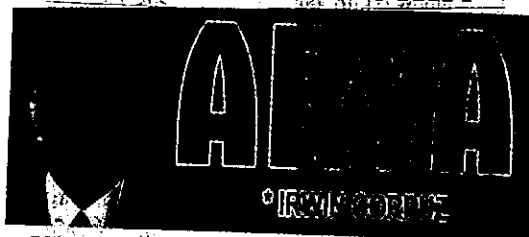
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## MONITORING AIR QUALITY NG DENR PAGLULUSTAY?



BILYONG piso pala ang tila mauuwi lamang sa paglulustay ng ating gobyerno sa pamamagitan ng DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES (DENR) kapag ipinagpatuloy ang pagbili pa ng AIR QUALITY MONITORS dahil hindi naman daw ito 'accurate' para masukat ang kalinisan ng hangin.

Dapat na pagtuunan ni DENR SECRETARY GINA LOPEZ ang idinudulog ng mga environmentalists na ser-yosohin ang pag-iimbestiga sa sinasabing anomalya sa pagbili ng bilyong pisong halaga ng air monitoring equipment, dahil palpak naman umano ang naturang mga equipment na dapat ay regular na sinisiyasat ng DENR-ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT BUREAU.

Inihayag nitong si COALITION OF CLEAN AIR ADVOCATES OF THE PHILIPPINES (CCAP) VICE PRESIDENT FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS DR. MIKE ARAGON, karamihan umano sa mga kagamitang kanilang kinukwestiyon ay hindi na umano gumagana o nagagamit pa at bago pa bilhin ng DENR ang naturang mga air monitoring equipment ay phased out na umano at hindi na pasado ang kalidad ng mga ito; subalit itinuloy pa rin umano ng nagdaang pangasiwaan ng DENR ang pagbili sa nasabing mga kagamitan.

Ipinunto naman ni UNITED FILIPINO CONSUMERS AND COMMUTERS (UFCO) PRESIDENT RODOLFO "RJ" JAVELLANA na ang ginawang pagbili ay maliwanag umanong kaso ito ng graft and corruption dahil ang naturang mga kagamitan ay malaking kalugihan sa ating gobyerno; kung saan ay dapat na mapanagot umano ang mga opisyal na namahala sa pagbili ng mga palpak na air monitoring equipments.

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# X-FILES

SAGAD SA SHOWBIZ

BULGAR SA BALITA

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**MONITORING AIR QUALITY NG DENR PAGLULUSTAY?**

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# The Manila Times

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SET

## Hit the head on the the nail

VP Leni Robredo said little had been done eight days after the typhoon battered the Bicol region. Bicolanos replied by singing Herman's Hermits' "Where, Where, Where When I Needed You."

VP Leni said she tried to get tickets for the return flight of her family, but "it was impossible."

These are the airlines listed with flights to Manila: Emirates, ANA, China Southern, Cathay Pacific, Malaysia Airlines, Kuwait Airways, Qatar Airways, Saudia, Delta, Etihad Airways, EVA Air, Qantas, KLM, Korean Air, China, Eastern, Singapore Airlines, Asiana Airlines, Royal Brunei, Turkish Airlines, Air China, Ethiopian Airlines, Thai Airways, Oman Air, Vietnam Airlines, Japan Airlines, Gulf Air, and Garuda Indonesia.

--Sorry, even with 2 or 3 stop-overs in neighboring countries around Manila, the word "impossible" does not fit. But the question lingers - did she really even try? The Marines are on a stand-by "waiting to be told."

Robredo claims she wasn't able to "concentrate" during her vacation, since she was attending to relief operations while she was in the United States. Is Typhoon Nina then expected to apologize?

150 inmates bolt Kidapawan jail - they are now enjoying "reclusion perpe-TUWA."

158 inmates freed. No sweat, all you have to do is bring in 100 expert locksmiths and off they go.

"You welcomed 2017 inhaling 'extremely dangerous' air," says DENR. Sir-yes-Sir! Thank you for telling us something we do not



MIRRORLESS

ROLLY G. REYES

know. We are very grateful.

SC told Comelec: Move faster on Marcos protest. One Bicolana is not ready for another devastating typhoon.

No more 'butanding' or whale shark swim for Miss Universe bets. Loan sharks and pawnshop owners are volunteering for substitutes.

News: Combative De Lima calls Aguirre a lying bastard. Calling somebody a "lying bastard" is a contradiction of her fantasy of projecting herself as "champion of human rights."

All department secretaries and heads of agencies should refrain from changing and bending the rules of government contracts, transactions and projects already approved and awaiting implementation. Changing the rules when the game is on-going is wrong. We have seen this violated consistently for the past 6 years.

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) said the country loses P3 billion daily to traffic. Too high a price for just standing still.

President Digong may need emergency powers to solve the traffic problem. Emergency response from everywhere is needed to complete the package.

Re-imposition of the death penalty is one of the top priorities of the Duterte Administration. BIR should start monitoring tax returns of funeral parlors and memorial parks.

Survey groups are not only being criticized for their figures but mainly for the word "random" -- "who" they are and "where" they're from. "Good Weather" depending on the "Money Pulse?"

A good concept is never a guarantee for success. The passion for details and timing gets the job done.

Economic gains should trickle down to the nation's poorest. We just hope it's a downpour and not just "drizzles."

Nowadays, one thing is sure. You will never get a ticket for speeding in EDSA. On the other hand, they may cite you for illegal parking in the whole stretch.

We all want to try so many things even without perfecting what we started. That is why we are neither here nor there.

With due respect to current DOT officials, tourism is not just about promoting the destinations thru advertising. The destinations should be able to promote itself by being attractive to visitors -- access, capacity, affordability, environment consciousness, cleanliness and safety, etc. No amount of advertising can pull off patronage for a bottle of beer if the content tastes awful. It's always the product,

Jose, and eventually using other promotion tools will be a breeze. Sad but neglect is happening to our major tourism spots. This is something serious that all stakeholders should consider. Surely we can do more.

Wish accreditation should be given back to the Department of Tourism and Tourism Congress. We all know that a mayor can give an undeserved rating if owned by relative or friend.

We paid so much for freedom. Until now, we have not seen the merchandise.

They say that a marriage is a union of a man who sees his wife as a cook, a slave and a sex object while the woman sees his husband as credit cards and a fat wallet. In reality, after the vows, it is called a compromise.

"Giving up smoking is the easiest thing in the world. I know because I've done it thousands of times." -- Mark Twain

NBI files second criminal complaint vs. De Lima. Expect another name calling from a "Human rights" awardee as her usual line of defense.

Some say that they are not addicted to alcohol and that they are just "social drinkers." The problem begins when they become "too" socialized and start to dislike being sober and start worshipping the bartender. One more round please.

Good work, good deeds and good faith to all.

# BULGAR

## BOSES NG MASA MATA NG BAYAN

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### Hiling ng mga taga-Indang, Cavite at ng buong mundo sa Tatlong Hari, tubig at tubig pa rin!

**MALIGAYANG** Pista ng Tatlong Hari! Ano kaya ang hihilingin natin sa Tatlong Hari para sa Bagong Taon? Mabuti na lang at muli nating nadalaw ang magandang bayan ng Indang, Cavite dahil biglang luminaw ang sagot sa naturang tanong. Hindi pa rin mawawala ang matinding kahilingang matapos na ang lumalaganap na kultura ng karahasan at kamatayan. Subalit, maliban sa tinatawag na karahasan laban sa tao, mayroon ding Environmental Violence, 2014. Nagulat ang mga taga-Indang na mayroon nang bagong istrukturang itinayo sa paligid at mismong sa ilog ng Ikloy. Natuklasan ng mga mamamayan ang naglalakihang tubo, filtration facilities, mini dam at ang biglang pinaliit na daluyan ng tubig sa ilog. Nagtaka ang taumbayan kung ano ito? Nagkaroon ng public consultations na naganap sa Cavite State University. Pagkatapos ng Public Consultation, isinilang ang SWIM (Save Waters of Indang Cavite Movement). Nang mabuo ito, nagsimula nang maghanap ng ebidensiya ang SWIM upang maghain ng kaso laban sa PTK 2, ang korporasyon na diumano'y nais humigop ang tubig ng Ikloy upang suplayan ng tubig ang Tagaytay City. Dagling naganap ang grupo ng abogado. Mabuti na lang at granted ng Court of Appeals ang Writ of Kalikasan. Ito ang pinakaunang desisyon na

permanenteng ipinatitigil ang mga gawain ng PTK 2. Napakahalagang tagumpay nito hindi lang para sa mga taga-Indang kundi para sa karatig-bayan na umaasa sa tubig para sa irigasyon at sa napakahalagang isyu ng tubig, para sa lahat.

Ito ang malaking problemang natuklasan ng SWIM: Nais ng PTK2 na mag-extract ng tubig sa Ilog Ikloy na eksklusibo para sa Tagaytay. Napakalaki ng pangangailangan ng Tagaytay sa tubig, wala na raw regulasyon ang maraming bagay sa Tagaytay. Kumalat na ang mga dambuhalang condo sa magkabilang panig ng daan. Oo nga't ang mga matataas na condo ay hindi sa Tagaytay Ridge itinayo. Subalit, tama bang magtayo na lamang ng mga dambuhalang istruktura na tila hindi mangat na pinag-aralan ang mga problemang lilikha nito? Dahil maraming tubig sa Ilog Ikloy; ito raw ang nakita nilang solusyon sa problema ng tubig sa Tagaytay at ang malaking epekto nito, mawawalan ng tubig ang mga taga-Indang.

Hindi pa rin tapos ang laban ng mga taga-Indang. Dumating naman ang Energy Wise at nakausap ng mga taga-SWIM ang isang Engineer Villafuerte. Ayon dito, naghahangad na magtayo ng Hydro Electric Plant ang Energy Wise. Ayon sa kanila, noong 2014 din nang mag-apply sila sa Department of Energy ng Check List of Requirements para makakuha ng permit na simulan nila ang Hydro Electric Plant. Nagkaroon ng Public Hearing noong nakaraang taon (Oktubre) pero walang naipakitang Feasibility Study; mga dokumento tulad ng ECC (Environmental Compliance Certificate). Ayon sa kanila, binigyan na raw sila ng permit ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB) at sa Public Consultation pa lang ay hinarang na ng SWIM ang panukalang Energy Wise.

Iisa lang ang Indang sa napakaraming bayan na hindi lang nanganganib mawalan ng tubig kundi masira nang tuluyan ang buong kalikasan. Napakalaki at napakalawak na problema nito subalit, malinaw na kung tutukan ang tubig, sasaklawin na nito ang lahat ng aspeto ng kalikasan dahil 'di ba, sabi nga sa kanta ni Joey Ayala, ang lahat ay magkakaugnay, magkakaugnay ang lahat.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Philippine Eagle rescued in Sarangani

By MANUEL T. CAYON | *Mindanao Bureau Chief*

**D**AVAO CITY—A Philippine Eagle (*Pithecophaga jefferyi*) was rescued this week from what appears to be another attempt at hunting the bird despite the stringent law prohibiting it.

Beth N. Ramos, information officer-designate at the Maitum municipal government in Sarangani province, said a farmer in Barangay Batian, about 19 kilometers from the town center, found the bird on Monday near his farm, standing still.

Surprised that it did not fly when he tried to approach the bird, resident Gibson Badal, 26, took the bird for safekeeping.

According to Badal, he saw the bird standing about a meter tall and appeared weak. The bird has blue-gray eyes, he added.

Ramos said her cousin, Alver Caasi, who happened to visit Batian on Monday, was told by residents they were selling the bird "but he [Caasi] advised them not to".

"I told them they will face the full force of the law if they

mobile phone and sent it to Ramos, who also informed the municipal government. He fed the Philippine Eagle with live chicken, which consumed half of it and the other half on the following day.

Some staff from the Maitum local government and personnel of the Davao City-based Philippine Eagle Center (PEC) brought the raptor to the PEC on Tuesday night, Ramos said.

Edgar Calderon, park maintenance foreman of the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office, said the eagle could be 1 year old, with a nest probably

within a 5-kilometer radius from where it was found.

Initially, the first team to reach the place found the bird with no injury but still took extra care in transporting the bird to the town

said the incident might have happened earlier because the wound may have healed.

The bird was sent to the eagle center in Malagos and appeared to be recovering, Ramos said. Camp authorities informed the Maitum town officials that it would release the eagle back to Barangay Batian when it would fully recover. Ramos said the camp authorities would not remove the pellet, saying it might endanger

the eagle that was not known to adapt to surgery.

"I am thankful with the rescue of the juvenile Philippine Eagle. This only proves that Maitum has still thick forest that we ought to preserve and protect," Mayor Alexander Bryan Reganit said in a statement issued later by its municipal information office. "I will do my best to protect the endangered species of Maitum as our legacy

to the future generations."

Dennis Joseph Salvador, executive director at Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF), told the Maitum authorities that the bird was a Philippine Eagle, based on the photographs sent to him.

He also said the PEF has confirmed the presence of a pair of



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Phil. Eagle rescued...



FARMER Gibson Badal rescued a Philippine Eagle near his farm in Maitum, Sarangani province. MAITUM INFORMATION OFFICE

The Maitum information office said Barangay Batian is within Mount Busa complex, a priority conservation and protection biodiversity-study area. It is one of the remaining forests in the province.

Mount Busa has an area of 114,144 hectares and was declared as a key biodiversity area (KBA 116) and an important bird area (IBA PH0105) in 2001. It harbors critically endangered, threatened, vulnerable and rare bird species and connects several conservation priorities, it added.

The Environmental Conservation and Protection Center (ECPC) of the provincial government has reported sightings of tarsier, wild deer, pigs, monkeys, bats, civets and endangered species of birds at the foot of Mount Busa.

However, Mount Busa, which straddles the towns of Maitum, Kiamba and Maasim in Sarangani province, "is threatened by conversion to farmland, *kaingin* or slash-and-burn, wildlife hunting, illegal logging and mining," according to ECPC.

# 114,144 ha

The area covered by Mount Busa, which was declared a key biodiversity area and an important bird area in 2001

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## Hunters become conservators of endangered turtles

**Y**ADUA ISLAND, Fiji—Pita Qarau pulled his boat next to a turtle, which was trying desperately to flee the buzz of the boat's noisy engine. The turtle, a female hawksbill, was surprisingly fast, capable of a top speed of about 15 miles per hour.

But Qarau knew he could win the sprint. He lost the turtle momentarily, then circled back. Finally, as the turtle slowed down, he positioned the boat near the fatigued animal. He threw his engine into neutral and dived into the water.

Seconds later, he reemerged, holding on to a chaotic mess of flapping flippers.

Not long ago, a catch like this would have meant turtle for dinner, but Qarau would let this one go. He checked the turtle's health, but he was unable to tag it, as he had intended, because he had run out of tags.

### Moratorium on harvesting turtles

FIJI has imposed a moratorium on harvesting turtles, and while the ban has been observed inconsistently around the island-nation, some people like Qarau have weaned themselves from eating turtle, which is considered a delicacy, and instead have dedicated themselves to conservation.

"The number of turtles were dropping and the size, you can't see any big ones, only small," he said later in the day. "That is why I change myself."

The skills for hunting turtles passed down through the generations in Fiji, come in handy for tracking and protecting them from illegal harvesting. Monitors like Qarau are known in Fijian as *Dau ni Vonu*, or guardians of turtles.

### Traditionally eaten

LIFE in Yadua is simple and close-knit. The island's only village,

Denimanu, has about 200 people, almost entirely related by blood or marriage. Most residents' income is from catching and selling fish. A hot shower is accomplished with a few cans of water left in the afternoon sun.

In Fiji, a South Pacific nation of more than 300 islands, communities play a central role in managing their immediate waters. As a result, community-based programs that try to increase awareness of declining turtle stocks and to expand monitoring efforts "are those with the highest probability of success," said Dr. Susanna Piovano, a senior lecturer at the School of Marine Studies at the University of the South Pacific.

Traditionally, turtles were eaten at major events, like a wedding or a chief's funeral. As traditions eroded in recent decades, some people began to think of turtles and their eggs as an everyday food

### Climate change

CLIMATE change and habitat loss have also placed pressure on the turtle population. The conservation status of the turtles common to Fiji's waters—green, olive ridley, leatherback, hawksbill and loggerhead—ranges from vulnerable to critically endangered, according to the Red List of Endangered Species published by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

The Fiji government imposed a temporary ban on turtle harvesting in 1995 to halt the decline. The 10-year moratorium is scheduled to expire next year.

Still, the moratoriums have not stopped many communities from continuing to harvest turtles.

Yadua was one of them—at least until the island experienced something of a road-to-Damascus conversion. In 2010 two organizations—the WWF and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, an inter-governmental group—organized a workshop on the island. They presented a somber vision of the

turtles' potential extinction and discussed ways to prevent that.

It was there that Qarau realized future generations might never see or taste a turtle if harvesting continued. He said he was not thinking

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### Island chief's decision

THE island's chief, Ratu Jone Cakautavata, decided that Yad-

ua's residents should no longer consume turtles, and people began to wean themselves off what many considered a favorite food. "It was really hard to stop," he said, "but I follow the law."

Cakautavata described the old days of hunting turtles in a fiberglass boat and spearing them through the shell. Gesturing to the harpoon in his hand, Cakautavata said, "I keep the spear until the government says, 'Yes, we can kill turtles.'"

### Search for tracks

QARAU'S commitment to replenishing the turtle stock involves monitoring them twice a week. He walks the beaches searching for turtle tracks, which could indicate a nest. He and others are trained to dig into nests and record their contents: hatched eggs versus duds.

Counting turtles is best done at night when turtles sleep under the coral, he said, or during the day when they feed at high tide on a shallow reef. A minute into a monitoring round on a recent

morning, the shadowy shapes of six turtles jetted across a reef.

"You won't see that sight anywhere else in Fiji," said Laitia Tamata, a coastal fisheries officer for the WWF who manages the monitoring program.

When the program began in Yadua in 2010, only six turtles nested on its beaches. Four years later there were 29 nests. At a monitoring site in Kavewa Island, no turtle nests were found in 2010; almost 70 were identified four

### Dead turtles

NOT every Fiji community shares Yadua's commitment to conservation. Barry Hill, 27, a Yadua monitor, recently came across divers heading away from the island with two dead turtles in their boat. An argument turned into a brawl, he said.

"I tell them it is not allowed, but they can't control themselves," Hill said. "They want to eat turtles every day."

Even though the ban was first imposed more than 20 years ago,

it has been enforced only sporadically, and few, if any, violators have been fined or sent to prison, according to Kiji Vukikomoala, a lawyer at the Environmental Law Association.

"The general feeling is these are low-priority cases, because the penalties are so low," Vukikomoala said. Someone convicted of killing a turtle faces a maximum fine of about \$240 and up to three months in jail.

The endorsement of a chief is often crucial to involving communities in conservation, said Michael Donoghue, an adviser on threatened and migratory species at the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme.

"If communities don't want to do it, it doesn't matter what the law says," Donoghue said. "Especially in remote areas, it is unlikely to happen."

The World Wildlife Fund plans to press for an extension of the 10-year moratorium when it runs

# 29

The number of turtle nests on Yadua Island in 2010 from only six four years ago

### Sustainable harvest

CONSERVATION efforts in Yadua and other islands have demonstrated that turtle populations can expand significantly if the moratorium is observed. But in 2014 the monitoring program ran out of financing, as the WWF put those funds toward saving species in greater danger of extinction.

And so, while participants used to get reimbursed for expenses, like boat fuel and phone calls to report their data, now the monitors themselves have to absorb these expenses. "I guess that is what makes it successful," Tamata of the WWF said. "It is from the heart rather than for money."

Qarau hopes that his conservation work will create a sustainable harvest, enabling Fijians to eat turtles again. He said he wanted future generations to see turtles and be able to taste them. "When they grow up," he said, "they will see the number of turtles is still good in the village."

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Hunters become ...

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PITA QARAU catches a hawksbill turtle to monitor its health on the Fijian Island of Yadua. A moratorium on harvesting turtles and a World Wildlife Fund program have helped replenish Fiji's turtle population after decades of decline. LAM YIK FEI/THE NEW YORK TIMES

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**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**

## Freed 12 Chinese fishermen remain under BI custody

The 12 Chinese fishermen who were freed by a Court of Appeals (CA) ruling will not be deported yet due to discrepancy in their names, the Bureau of Immigration (BI) said yesterday.

"There's no update yet except the deportation order has already been issued but it would not be implemented yet due to discrepancy in the named," said BI spokesman Antoinette Mangrobang.

With this, she noted that the BI would coordinate with the Chinese Embassy to identify the fishermen, who were jailed in Palawan after being caught for allegedly poaching pangolins and encroaching in the Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park in 2013.

"It is the embassy that is helping to identify them because it is the

one that will issue the travel documents," she added.

Mangrobang added that she has no idea if all the 12 Chinese have discrepancies regarding their identities.

Last month, the CA overturned the decision of a regional trial court, which found them guilty of violating Section 27 (Poaching) and Section 26 (Possession of Protected Species) of Republic Act 10067 or the Tubbataha Act of 2009; Article 212 (Corruption of Public Officials) of the Revised Penal Code of the Philippines, and administrative cases in the Tubbataha Protected Area Management Board.

It was reported that the freed Chinese fishermen are now in the custody of BI in Palawan.

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## MAGUGUTOM NA BA SI BABY JUAN?

**S**EMENTADO na ang mga bukirin. Sa halip na palay at mais, sumibol ang mga nagtataasang mga gusali. Nagsulputang parang mga kabute ang mga housing project, at nauso ang mga condominium. Natabunan na rin ang mga bog, kaya nangamatay ang mga isdang dating inaasahang pang-ulan ng maliliit na magsasaka, at natuyo na ang mga putikang dating pinagpapasasan ng kalabaw na si kalakian at binabaunan ng mga hito at dalag. Nasaan na ang mga magsasaka? Nasaan na si Juan de la Cruz? Ano ang ipakakain niya kay Baby Juan?

### NASAAN NA NG BA SI MAMANG MAGSASAKA?

Nagtatanim pa ba siya - o baka naman napilitan nang magtungo sa Saudi, sa Japan o sa New Zealand dahil sa kawalan ng pag-asang mapakakain pa niya at mapag-aral ang kanyang mga anak, kasabay na rin ng paglalahong tuluyan ng mga palayan sa iilang taong nagdaan ay naging pangmayamang subdibisyon. Ang kanilang berdeng hinlalaking may mahika ng pagbibigay-buhay ay nawawalan na ng kapang-yarihan, o kaya naman ay pinakikinabangan na ng ibang bansa. Sa nangyayaring ito, nakatatakit isiping baka wala nang kakainin ang susunod na henerasyon, na hindi iimportahin sa mga karatig-bansa.

Sa kakapiranggot na lupaing patuloy na natataniman, umaasa ang iilang nananatili pang tapat sa pagsasaka na kakayanin pa nilang suportahan ang pagkain ng mahigit isandaang milyong Filipino sa bansa. Kundi man palay, may mga alternatibo pa tulad ng mais, kamote, gabi at iba pa, sa pasubaling huwag lamang sanang babagyuhan.

**GAYUNPAMAN, IYAN AY ISANG DASAL NA HINDING-HINDI**

Pilipinas kada taon, at hindi sila basta bagyo lamang na may dalang ulan at hangin kundi mga super bagyo, lalo na sa panahon ng tag-ulan.

Dahil sa pagbabago ng panahon, napakatitindi ng mga kalamidad kung saan ang mga simpleng pag-ulan ay kayang magpadapa ng mga puno at magpaguho ng mga bundok. Sino ba ang makalilimot sa trahedyang dulot ng bagyong Ondoy noong 2008 at sa Habagat noong 2011, na nagpaapaw sa lahat ng mga kanal at estero sa Metro Manila, at nagpalubog sa mga mga establisimiyento, na ikinasawi ng napakaraming mga tao.

Isama pa natin ang ka-

hindik-hindik na epekto ng super bagyong Yolanda sa Kabisayaan, kung saan libo-libo ang nasawi, na ang mga bangkay ay sumabit pa sa mga nati-rang nakatayong puno. Hanggang ngayon ay nananangis pa rin ang mga kaluluwa ng mga nasawi, at karamihan sa mga nakaligtas ay nagdurusa pa rin sa evacuation center.

Bukod sa mga taong nasawi, bilyong halaga rin ng mga hayop at pananim ang nawala, hindi pa kasali ang mga tahananang nawasak na hanggang ngayon ay hindi pa naitatayo. Nagmumulto pa rin ang alaala ng mga bangkay na tinangay ng baba na hindi na matagpuan. Wala na! Tuluyan na silang nawalan na ng pag-



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# NAMRIA to help locate sunken ship

By RAYMUNDO A. TORO

A vessel equipped with a sonar sensor will help the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) to locate the sunken "M/V Starlite Atlantic" in Batangas and hopefully solve the puzzle of the ship's 18 missing crewmen.

PCG Station Batangas Commander Raul Belesario said they requested use of the hi-tech vessel of the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA) to assist in their search for the roll-on, roll-off (RO-RO) ship where its missing crew could have been trapped.

Belesario said the sonar sensor of NAMRIA ship is capable of tracing the location of Starlite Atlantic

underwater at a depth of 200 to 500 meters.

"A 500 meter depth is very low (deep) already; it is like 1,500 feet," Belesario, also the chairman of PCG's Board of Marine Inquiry (BMD), said. "The (NAMRIA) ship can detect it (M/V Starlite Atlantic) that's why we requested for it," he added.

The PCG official noted that they tapped the services of NAMRIA vessel because of the "limited capability" of the divers searching for survivors.

Last December 26, the M/V Starlite Atlantic sank in waters off Tingloy, Batangas at the height of typhoon Nina's onslaught. Only 14 of the ship's 33 crew members were

rescued.

Last Friday, the PCG conducted an organizational hearing on the on the incident and revealed that subpoenas had been issued to the 14 survivors, and officials of Starlite Ferries Inc., the owner of the sunken vessel.

PCG spokesman Lt. Commander Armand Balilo said the findings of the hearing would only be for recommendation of filing of administrative charges and for prosecution.

Balilo said no pressure has been exerted on the PCG's investigation despite Starlite Ferries being owned by Francis Cusi, the son of Department of Energy (DOE) Secretary Al Cusi. (With a report from Argyl Cyrus B. Geducos)

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asa. Paano magsisimulang muli ang mga nagluluksang bukod sa inagawan ng kabuhasan ay inagawan pa ng pamilya, tahanan at kaligayahan?

## BAGONG PAG-ASA

Sa isang banda, may iilang nagtatangkang bigyan ng panibagong pag-asa ang mga magsasakang nalugmok sa kadiliman. Hindi sila iyong "wento-wento wa wenta" (kuwento ng kuwento ng walang kuwenta), kundi mga taong may prinsipyo. Iilang mga taong sa nais ipaggiitang sa kabila ng dinaranas nating mga trahedya, ang lahat ay pagsubok lamang, at kakayannin nating umangat sa tulong ng isa't isa.

Halimbawa na lamang ay si Senator Cynthia Aguilar Villar. Isinilang mang may gintong kutsara sa bibig, itinayo niya ang proyektong "Sipag at Tiyaga," — isang

modernong paraan ng agrikulturang kung tawagin ay "urban gardening" — kung saan tinuturuan niya ang mga taong mabuhay sa tulong ng pagtatanim at pag-aalaga ng isda, gamit ang mga plastic na bote at drum ng tubig, kahit pa sa siyudad sila naninirahan. Sa ganitong paraan, nagagamit ang mga recyclable material. Nakababawas na sa itatapon basura, nasisiguro pang may kakainang gulay at isda ang mga taga-lungsod, kahit pa wala nang espasyo sa kanilang mga tirahan.

"Kahit pa sa condominium sila nakatira, puwede pa rin silang gumawa ng vegetable garden," ani Villar. "Hindi na sila magrereklamong wala silang pambili ng pagkain dahil pipitasin na lamang nila ito sa mga paso ng libre dahil sila mismo ang nagtanim nito."

Upang patunayan ang tagumpay ng kanyang proyekto, dalawang ektaryang lupa sa Las Piñas ang pinataniman niya at tinawag na "Bahay Kubo Project."

Aniya, kapag nais nila ng gulay, aani lamang sila at tiyak maluluto na ang paborito nilang pinakbet.

Ngunit hindi lamang si Villar ang nag-iisang nagsusumikap na palaging magkaroon ng pagkain ang bawat hapag ng pamilyang Filipino. Tulad ng mga nauna sa kanya, hangarin din iyan ng kasalukuyang kalihim ng Department of Agriculture na si Emmanuel Piñol. Bagama't tinagurian siya ng media na Mr. Pambara dahil sa madalas niyang pambabara sa mga katanungan ng makukulit na

reporter, nananatili siyang "Darling of the Press" dahil sa husay niyang makisama.

"Trabaho kong siguring may kakainin ang lahat ng Filipino na naninirahan sa bansa," ayon sa Agri chief.

At balik na naman tayo sa naunang dasal na hindi naman pinakikinggan. Hayst! Ang ibig lamang sabihin ni Piñol ay ganito: limampung porsiyento ng tagumpay ay mula sa pagsisikap at ang kalahati pang natitira ay nakasalalay sa suwerte. Inaamin ni Piñol na mahirap kalaban ang climate change. Sa Pilipinas, bumabagyo ng signal Number 4 kahit pa sa tag-araw. At sa tag-ulan naman, minsan ay nagsisimula ang El Niño o tagtuyot na inaabot ng hanggang sampung buwan. Sundan naman ito ng La Niña o walang tigi na pag-ulan.

Onli in da Pilipins! Kung sana lamang ay may kapangyarihan si Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Gina Lopez na utusan ang panahon, wala na sanang problema! Pero hindi siya diwata ng kalikasan. Kalihim lamang siya ng DENR. Ang kapangyarihan niya ay limitado sa kakayahang ng tao.

Sa ganitong sitwasyon, paano na ang susunod na henerasyon? Mahirap kalabanin ng sabay ang mga problemang likha ng tao at mga problemang dala ng malupit na tadhana. Paano na si Baby Juan? May kakainin pa ba siya sa mga darating na panahon, o aasa na lamang tayo sa tulong ng mga bansang may mabubuting loob? Ano kaya ang solusyon Ginoong Magsasaka? Sagot naman ni Piñol, "So help me God!"

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