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**DAY**

13 JAN 2017

**Friday**

# **DENR**

## **IN THE NEWS**

# INQUIRER

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## GINA: ORDER WAS APPROPRIATE

**T**his refers to the article, "DENR chief mislead on Bataan oil spill" (Business, 1/9/17).

I must take exception to claims that I was misled on the issue because what was issued was a cease and desist order on the ash spill and not the oil spill coming from SMC

Consolidated Power Corp. The order is appropriate to prevent the spread of skin diseases that have affected some 500 children and adults living in the area. The pictures of the affected residents were appalling.

Since I assumed office at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, it has been my

position that the pursuit of industrial development should not compromise the environment and, most importantly, should not cause human suffering.

REGINA PAZ L. LOPEZ,  
secretary,

Department of Environment  
and Natural Resources

## DENR to assist Petron on ash transfer

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Regina Lopez on Thursday said she would soon issue a permit to allow Petron Corp. to transfer an ash stockpile at its Limay Bataan refinery to a cement plant in the same complex.

Following a dialogue with residents near the refinery, Lopez said she would ask Ramon Ang, president of Petron's parent San Miguel Corp., to submit an application to transport the ash, which would be processed immediately.

"Right now it's the mountain. The mountain is causing all the health problems. The mayor didn't give the

►PetronA2

### ■ PETRON FROM A1

## DENR

permit. I'll give their permit and they are gonna take it out," Lopez was quoted as saying in a statement. "They're gonna silo it so it doesn't go out at all and we'll see it happening."

Residents had complained of the ash supposedly from the Limay refinery, prompting the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to issue notices of violation against the Petron refinery and SMC Consolidated Power Corp., which is building a coal plant in the complex.

Petron and SMC Consolidated are

subsidiaries of San Miguel, one of the country's biggest conglomerates.

Lopez said she would exert all efforts to ensure that Petron and SMC Consolidated would "comply with environmental laws and not cause people to suffer."

"I am sure that Mr. Ang would not do something that would jeopardize a billion-dollar operation. I commit and make sure that you (the community) would be okay," Lopez was quoted as telling Limay residents.

EMB Acting Director Jacqueline Caancan said the bureau would have to make sure the ash being released from the refinery complex is not toxic.

"If found non-hazardous, the materials could be dumped in a sanitary landfill or allowed to be disposed of through other equally safe means," Caancan said. "Oth-

erwise, the company would have to secure a permit to transport from the EMB," she added.

On Wednesday, Ang denied that Petron was causing environmental and health problems in Limay.

"We don't even need to dump anything, because whatever we generate everyday, we haul this to the cement plant—this becomes calcine limestone; with sulfur and everything, it's called gypsum powder," Ang told reporters.

He explained that the operations in Bataan mostly produced limestone powder, which is certified by the DENR as non-hazardous and is used as raw material for manufacturing cement.

**JAMES KONSTANTIN  
GALVEZ AND ABERON  
VOLTAIRE PALAÑA**

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## FIRM TO FOOT MEDICAL BILLS AMID ASH COMPLAINTS

By Jaymee T. Gamil  
@jaymeegamilINQ

Are the health problems of residents in Limay, Bataan, caused by ashfall or spill from a byproduct storage facility being used by San Miguel Corp. (SMC) subsidiaries?

That will be settled once and for all by a study to be conducted by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Environment Secretary Gina Lopez asked anticoal plant protesters and Bataan residents on Wednesday to give the DENR a week to coordinate with the health department to validate the complaints.

Limay residents, particularly those in Barangay Lamao, started complaining late last year of skin and respiratory diseases, as well as pollution in the air, rivers and coastlines, blaming them on windblown and soil-seeping ash allegedly from the stockpile of byproducts from the SMC Consolidated Power Corp. (SMCCPC) plant and a coal-fired plant of the Petron Bataan fuel refinery. Both are subsidiaries of SMC.

"We follow scientific processes committed to integrity. ... Give us one week. I have to follow due process but I want to tell you my heart is for you," Lopez told the protesters.

The DENR had earlier ordered the plants to stop dumping ash on the shared stockpile.

Derek Cabe, of the Nuclear-Free Bataan Movement and the Coal-Free Central Luzon, who has been coordinating closely with the affected communities, said the "best-seller" medicines of local drugstores were for respiratory ailments.

"We noticed that started when the plants started to operate, and now it's been getting worse. Where else would you attribute the diseases?" Cabe said.

SMC president Ramon S. Ang denied the illnesses had been caused by the plants. He said he visited the area this week and saw "no smoke, no pollution there."

"A lot of these things, like those pictures being shown of galis (scabies), are hearsay," Ang said, when Lopez called him up and put him on speakerphone to address the protesters' complaints.

"I will not allow anybody to suffer," Ang said. "Please tell them not to jump to conclusions. If it's scabies, don't blame it on us. Nevertheless, I will pay for it, whether it's scabies, whatever their illnesses are."

—WITH ALLAN  
MACATUNG, TONETTE OREJAS  
AND GREG REFRACCION INQ

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Firm to foot medical bills amid ash  
complaints

Industrial plants and shipyards, like those of Petron and other huge companies, are visible from the coves of Mariveles town in Bataan prov

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## ACQUISITION OF AIR QUALITY MONITORING STUFF ABOVEBOARD—EMB

**T**his refers to the article titled "DENR hit over 'costly, idled' air pollution monitors" (Metro, 1/7/17).

The Environmental Management Bureau, which is under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, welcomes the call of advocacy groups—Coalition of Clean Air Advocates of the Philippines (CCAAP) and the United Filipino Consumers and Commuters (UFCC)—for an audit on the purchase by the agency of air quality monitoring equipment.

Several articles have been published in various newspapers questioning the accuracy and cost-effectiveness of the acquired monitoring equipment. We would like to reiterate that the purchase of such

equipment was aboveboard and free of corruption, following step by step the procurement and bidding rules.

The procurement of the equipment went through the standard bidding procedures and through competitive public bidding in accordance with Republic Act No. 9184, or the Government Procurement Reform Act.

From 2011 through 2015, the EMB acquired air quality monitoring equipment for its central and regional offices. The purchase included both Open Path Differential Optical Absorption Spectroscopy (DOAS) and Particulate Matter Stations (PM<sub>10</sub>/PM<sub>2.5</sub>). The purchase cost was only around P290 million, and not P1 billion as CCAAP and

UFCC have claimed.

We would also like to stress that the monitoring equipment procured by the EMB falls under the equivalent methods certified by the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

The Open Path DOAS is one of the advanced technologies that can be used by the country for ambient monitoring. The technology offers spatial representation of a geographical area, with probable capability of capturing measurements of local sources of emissions.

JACQUELINE A. CAANCAN,  
in charge,  
Office of the EMB Director  
and concurrent assistant  
director, Environmental  
Management Bureau

# DENR rejects Coron, Palawan underwater theme park project

BY VANNE LAINE P. TERRAZOLA  
and CHARINA CLARISSE L. ECHALUCE

**T**he Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) yesterday said it will not allow the establishment of the 400-hectare underwater resort and theme park being proposed by an American children's television network off Coron, Palawan.

DENR Secretary Gina Lopez stressed that she will not permit the construction of Nickelodeon's proposed development off the waters of Coron, Palawan.

Lopez said she would not allow it even as the network promised to protect the ocean and conserve coral reefs.

"If it entails the destruction of corals, right away I'll say 'no way.' Fishes need corals. The corals are home of the fishes. And some of the corals have shells and sponges that could cure cancer," she explained.

"I would never allow our biodiversity to be killed for the money some people want to make. The Filipino people are much more important, and will always be more important than any business," the environment chief stressed.

In a related development, the Department of Tourism (DOT) said it will reach out to the parties involved in the planned project.

"The underwater park being planned by Nickelodeon has reached us at the DOT.... We will talk to all parties involved in the project,"

works, Nickelodeon's parent company, in a statement sent to AFP Tuesday announced it will build an underwater resort and theme park on an island in Coron which they said aimed to giving the fans a chance to "interact with the brand and the iconic characters they love."

Ron Johnson, executive vice president of Viacom, said they chose Palawan because it "is known to have some of the most beautiful beaches in the world today."

The Save Philippine Seas group initiated an online petition, which, to date, had gathered more than 160,000 signatures.

"Honestly, Coron is already beautiful in its natural state," De Castro stated.

In 2016, Palawan topped the New York-based magazine Travel + Leisure's list of World's Best Islands.

Travel + Leisure based the list on the results of its annual survey where it asked the readers rate destinations all over the world.

The participants rate the places according to their activities, sights, natural attractions, beaches, food, friendliness and overall value.

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## DENR firm on stand against Coral World Palawan resort project

By MADELAINER MIRAFLORES

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) stood by its position that local and foreign tourists will still flock around Coron, Palawan, one of the most beautiful islands in the Philippines, sans the presence of American children's television network Nickelodeon in the province.

This, after Coral World Park Undersea Resorts, Inc. confirmed on Thursday that it will indeed develop resort in the area, while denying that it will be an underwater development.

To build the resort, Coral World will partner with Viacom International Media Networks (VIMN), a unit of Nasdaq-listed media company Viacom, Inc., the company behind multimedia entertainment brands such as MTV, Nickelodeon, Comedy Central and Paramount Channel.

DENR Undersecretary for Legal Affairs Maria Paz Luna said in a text message that the agency is yet to receive any application from the joint venture.

"We can't pre-empt a decision on this until we see what they are proposing. But suffice

it to say that generally for now, our natural wonders are already there to see. The secretary is inclined to have the people onsite benefit from any interventions but ruining natural environments to highlight nature will not work," Paz told Business Bulletin.

"No application here yet so I cannot speculate; hence, general principles is all I can share with you. Proponents cannot ruin natural environments to highlight nature. Ecosystem disruptions to teach ecosystems will be denied," she added.

In a statement, Coral World Park Marketing & Communications Director Susan Lee said "there will be no theme park development in Palawan" only a "resort and attraction of which we are designing as an undersea attraction with an ocean conservation focus."

Palawan is now home to two UNESCO World Heritage-listed sites, a subterranean river and the Tubbataha coral reefs.

"I will never allow our biodiversity to be killed for money that some people want to make," Environment Secretary Gina Lopez said on Thursday.



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# YES OR NO sa Coron underwater theme park

Istorya sa Pahina 5

## DENR: No way! DoT: Usap tayo

DoT MAKIKIPAG-USAP SA NICKELODEON

### DENR chief sa underwater theme park: No way!

**Nina ROMMEL P. TABBAD**  
**at CHARINA CLARISSE L. ECHALUCE**

Hindi papayagan ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Gina Lopez na makapagtayo ng underwater theme park sa Coron, Palawan.

Aniya, hindi niya pahihintulatang matuloy ang anumang proyekto na makasisira sa kapaligiran at makaaapekto sa mga pamayanan sa lugar.

Ito ang reaksiyon ni Lopez sa plano ng Viacom International Media Works, parent company ng television network na Nickelodeon, na magtayo ng underwater theme park sa Palawan.

"That's our wealth. It's not allowed. You can't kill the corals. For a theme park? No. No way, man. The commitment of the government is first and foremost and always, always to the benefit of our people," ani Lopez.

Lunes nang ihayag ng nasabing kumpanya na magtatayo ito ng "themed attraction" na hango sa cartoon characters ng network, katulad ng "Dora the Explorer" at "SpongeBob Squarepants" bilang bahagi ng 400-ektaryang pagagandahin sa Coron, na bubuksan sa publiko sa 2020.

Labis naman itong ikinaalarna ng mga environmental group, at iginiit na ang Palawan ang tinaguriang "last ecological frontier" na hansa dahil

kagubatan na namumukod-tangi sa Southeast Asia.

Bukod dito, nasa Palawan din ang dalawang UNESCO World Heritage-listed site, na kinabibilangan ng isang subterranean river at ng Tubbataha coral reefs.

Samantala, handa naman ang Department of Tourism (DoT) na makipag-usap sa mga partidong nagpapalano ng underwater theme park.

Sa Twitter, sinabi ni Tourism Undersecretary Kat De Castro na

makikipag-usap ang DoT sa mga sangkot sa proyekto.

"The underwater park being planned by Nickelodeon has reached us at the DoT... We will talk to all parties involved in the project," ani De Castro.

Nilinaw naman ng opisyal na hindi siya kumbinsido sa nasabing proyekto.

"As a diver, personally, I have doubts," sabi ni De Castro. "Honestly, Coron is already beautiful in its natural state."



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Resort, not theme park, planned in Palawan

An official of resort developer Coral World Park Undersea Resorts Inc. clarified yesterday that the firm would not build a huge underwater theme park in Coron, Palawan.

Susan Lee, marketing and communications director of Coral World Park (CWP), said, "There has never been any form of

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

communication from our side mentioning a theme park. Our plan is to build a resort and attraction of which we are designing it as an undersea attraction with an ocean conservation focus."

"There will be no theme park development in Palawan," she added.

CWP noted that the "undersea-themed" park is land-based but is designed to meet the international standards required as a global destination, especially environment-related standards advocating conservation tourism, renewable energy and Category 5-proof

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## Resort

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architecture.

The developer also slammed news wire agency *Agence France Presse*, saying it did not clearly reflect the full details of the announcement of Coral World Park and Nickelodeon-owner Viacom International Media Networks.

After the announcement, several online petitions against the plan were launched by various environmental groups.

Palawan is home to more than 300 coral species or about half of all coral species in the world, as well as breeding ground of more than 1,500 fish species in the country.

CWP also clarified reports that a full 400 hectares are to be developed under water, saying this is inaccurate.

The firm pointed out that "only 100 hectares have been allocated for the Nickelodeon facility and up to 30 hectares is allocated for the attraction itself and not 400 hectares as indicated in earlier reports. And that this has not been finalized yet," Lee said.

"The only infrastructure to be built in the water is floating, and all developments are on land. The undersea-themed Coral World Park project is land based but is designed to meet international standards required as a global destination," read the CWP statement.

"The facility will be built on a private property and will be undergoing all the necessary approvals from government before construction starts. The Coral World Park owns eight global brands for the Philippines and all other countries."

"Within the parameters set by our founders, we have our own strict adherence to the environment. We aim to create a large-scale reef conservation program that is sustainable, together with sanctuaries for key species in the area. These are part of our blue-print besides the job creation opportunities. We aim to work with as many advocates as possible to create a world-class destination for tourism with an undersea theme."

She said that the CWP project will not only create jobs for locals, but will also provide the necessary funding to ensure protection of the area.

"The project will enable ongoing public education on ocean protection. CWP's location is situated where there are other existing hospitality developments around it," Lee said.

She explained that when completed, CWP will be the largest coral reef conservation program in Asia providing the largest marine sanctuary for five key species – dolphins, sea cows, sea horses, turtles and whale sharks.

With focus on philanthropy and ocean protection, CWP is about identifying the right projects that will create the right impact so as to ensure long-term conservation of a place like Palawan, the CWP said.

CWP and Viacom International Media Networks – owner of Nickelodeon – share a vision and commitment to make a positive impact on kids and families to help educate them on ocean conservation, while they enjoy a Nickelodeon entertainment experience.

Environment Secretary Gina Lopez will oppose the project if it is not

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## Coral World Park to build resort on land

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA @jonlmayuga

**C**ORAL World Park (CWO), the Philippine partner of Viacom International Media Networks, on Thursday said proponents of the project are planning to build a resort and attraction, including an undersea attraction with an ocean-conservation focus.

The resort will be constructed on land, not in marine or coastal areas, said Susan Lee, marketing and communications director of the Coral World Park, belying reports 400 hectares are to be developed under water.

"Only 100 hectares have been allocated for the Nickelodeon facility and up to 30 hectares is allocated for the attraction itself, which has not been finalized yet. The only infrastructure in the water is floating and all developments are on land. The undersea-themed Coral World Park is land-based, but is designed to meet the international standards required as a global destination, especially environment-related standards advocating conservation tourism, renewable energy and category 5 proof architecture," she said.

Lee said the facility will be constructed on private property and will be undergoing all the necessary approvals from the government before construction starts.

Monaco-based Dr. AB Monozca Foundation and its CWP Trust, which advocates ocean protection. Within the parameters by our founders, we have our own strict adherence to the environment. We aim to create a large-scale reef conservation program which is sustainable, together with sanctuaries for key species in the area. These are part of our blueprint, besides the job-creation opportunities. We aim to work with as many advocates as possible to create a world-class destination for tourism with an undersea theme," Lee said.

The development, she said, will help create jobs for local residents and will help provide the necessary funding to ensure ongoing protection of the area.

CWP's location is situated where there are other existing hospitality developments around it.

When completed, CWP will be the largest coral reef conservation program.

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### Coral World Park to build resort on land

protection, CWP is about identifying the right projects that will create the right impact, so as to ensure a long-term conservation of a place like Palawan.

"We take the petitions seriously, but sad to say, information has been misunderstood. We hope these points clarify all matters concerning this development," Lee said.

Environment Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez, reacting to reports of the proposed "underwater theme park," said she would not allow such destructive project to happen.

Environmental groups also issued strong statements opposing the project, branding the project proponents' claim of advocating ocean protection and coral-reef restoration as nothing but "greenwashing."

AA Yaptinchay of the Marine Wildlife Watch of the Philippines and Gloria Estenzo Ramos of Oceana Philippines lamented that such development—if constructed in marine or coastal areas—will definitely cause adverse impact to the marine and coastal ecosystem and marine wildlife.

An online petition launched by environmental advocates fixing the proposed underwater theme park in Palawan gathered 100,000 signatures within the first 24 hours, with some of the signatories citing as reason that the plan would cause massive damage to marine and coastal areas.

Meanwhile, in an official statement, Lopez said if the project would cause the destruction of corals, she would reject the proposal.

"The fishermen need corals. The corals are the home for the fish, and some of our corals have shells and sponges that can cure cancer. I will never allow our biodiversity to be killed for money that some people want to make," she said.

Lopez said the Philippines is a country of 7,000 islands, which has the highest endemism per unit area in the entire world.

"Palawan is the No. 1 island destination in the planet. It has rich biodiversity and lots of ecotourism potentials that should be primarily tapped by Filipino people for the Filipino people," the official said.

An environmental advocate, Lopez said, whatever decision the DENR will make "shall be filtered and anchored on social justice" and will benefit the greater majority.

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DENR, groups oppose construction of Palawan underwater theme park

# Daily Tribune

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## Atienza joins fray to oppose construction of underwater theme park in Palawan

By Charlie V. Manalo

A former secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), now a member of the House of Representatives, joined the growing number of Filipinos opposing the construction of a 400-hectare underwater theme park in Palawan, saying the disadvantage brought about by the destruction of the country's remaining coral reef far outweighs the benefits the proposed theme park would bring.

"The country's remaining coral reefs now stand at five percent. And to allow the construction of such underwater theme park will totally destroy whatever is left of our coral reef. It will be driven to extinction," Senior Deputy Minority Leader,

Buhay Rep. Lito Atienza told the *Tribune* in a telephone interview.

Early this week, it was reported that American children's television network Nickelodeon is planning to build underwater resort and theme park in Palawan, which would form part of the 400-hectare undersea development in Palawan.

"No amount of assurance coming from the proponents the project would promote environmental protection could convince us that the proposed underwater park will not destroy the fragile marine environment and aquatic life in Palawan," said Atienza, who was DENR secretary during the time of former President and now House Deputy Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

"I support the position of DENR Secretary Gina Lopez not to allow

the construction of the underwater theme park," Atienza said.

House natural resources committee chairman and Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Zarate also hit the proposal of Viacom International Media Networks, in collaboration with underwater resort developer Coral World Park Undersea Resorts Inc., to develop a Nickelodeon Resort and Attraction in Coron, Palawan.

The 400-hectare undersea-themed park, expected to be finished by the year 2020, will supposedly feature restaurants and lounges six meters below sea level.

"The construction of such an immense commercial establishment in Coron will clearly disrupt the ecosystem and biodiversity of the place," said Zarate, as he recalled that since 1967, through Proclamation

219, the unique ecological features of Coron Island and its surrounding islets have already been recognized.

Subsequently, Proclamation 1801 and Proclamation 212 further reinforced its protection as a marine habitat and forest reserve.

"Beyond being just a tourist attraction, Coron is a crucial habitat for unique wildlife, and, any disruption may cause grave effects on the environment and to the people whose livelihood depend on its rich land and waters," Zarate said.

Marine parks around the world have been met by opposition by environment groups and people's organizations because of its negative impacts to the ecosystem, even the animals held in captivity, and the violation of economic rights to fisher folk and indigenous peoples.

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## House panel nixes Nickelodeon underwater park in Palawan

By Jester Manalastas

THE House Committee on Natural Resources rejected the plan to put up a Nickelodeon theme park in Palawan.

Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Zarate, chairman of the committee, said he is not in favor of the project because it will affect the ecosystem and biodiversity of Palawan.

He said Palawan, being the last frontier of the country, should be preserved.

"It's a proposal coming from a goofy goober and totally insensitive developer," Zarate said.

The Viacom International Media Networks, in collaboration with underwater resort developer Coral World Park Undersea Resorts Inc., proposed to develop a Nickelodeon Resort and Attraction in Coron, Palawan.

The 400-hectare undersea-themed park, expected to be finished by the year 2020, will supposedly feature restaurants and lounges six meters below sea level.

One of Nickelodeon's famous characters is Spongebob Squarepants, who sang the song Goofy Goober, referring to someone who is a fool and obnoxious.

"The construction of such an immense commercial establishment in Coron will clearly disrupt the ecosystem and biodiversity of the place," Zarate said.

According to Zarate, since 1967, through Proclamation 219, the unique ecological features of Coron Island and its surrounding islets have already been recognized.

Proclamation 1801 and Proclamation 212 further reinforced its protection as a marine habitat and forest

reserve.

"Beyond being just a tourist attraction, Coron is a crucial habitat for unique wildlife, and, any disruption may cause grave effects on the environment and to the people, whose livelihood depend on its rich land and waters," he said.

"Coron Island is recognized as an ancestral domain of the indigenous Tagbanua people. In fact, a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim was given to the tribe as far back as 1998. This project may mean the displacement and eviction of our indigenous people from their ancestral land just to give way to this sprawling marine park," he added.

Marine parks around the world have been met by opposition by environment groups and people's organizations because of its negative impacts to the ecosystem, even the animals held in captivity, and the violation of economic rights to fisherfolk and indigenous peoples.

"Instead of mesmerizing our people about Spongebob Squarepants and Patrick Star, it would be well that we support development program that will bring about a more inclusive and lasting development for our fisherfolk and indigenous peoples," Zarate said.

### NO WAY FOR ANYTHING THAT WILL DAMAGE ENVIRONMENT - DENR HEAD

Environment Secretary Gina Lopez said she is not aware of any application from Nickelodeon, but she would not allow the building of the underwater theme park if it will damage the environment.

"I will never allow the corals to be harmed, that's what we have, that's our wealth. You can't kill the corals for a theme park, no way," she said.

"We will not allow anything that will damage the environment. No amount of money is worth the well-being of our farmers and fishermen," Lopez said.

Local environmentalists also expressed their opposition to the project, saying there is no need for artificial structures in Palawan.

### DOT CLUELESS OVER 'BIKINI BOTTOM' IN CORON

The Department of Tourism (DoT) is "clueless" on the reported "Bikini Bottom" in Coron, Palawan being planned by American children's television network Nickelodeon.

Tourism Undersecretary Kat De Castro said she only read about the plan for an underwater resort and theme park in Palawan on Facebook.

De Castro said that the DoT will look into it, especially since one of the agency's goals is to promote diving in the country.

"We don't even know. We are not aware if they are building it. Hindi namin alam sa DoT. Pero I'm sure, Secretary (Wanda Teo) would like us to look into it. As I've mentioned earlier, diving nga ang gusto nating i-promote dito eh. And Coron is already beautiful as it is," De Castro said.

The local government of Coron was also not informed of the project.

American television network Nickelodeon clarified that its planned resort in Palawan has not been finalized and is "not developed undersea," following uproar from environment groups.

Environment groups have launched a signature campaign to urge the network and local government officials to drop plans for the project.

With Ryan Ponce Pacpaco and Efrén Montano

# PEOPLES Tonight

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## House body nixes Nickelodeon park

By JESTER P. MANALASTAS

THIS early, the House committee on natural resources is firmly rejecting the plan to put up a Nickelodeon theme park in Palawan.

Committee chairman Rep. Carlos Zarate said he is not in favor of the project because it will affect the ecosystem and biodiversity of Palawan.

Palawan, being the last frontier of the country, should be preserved.

"It's a proposal coming from a goofy goober and totally insensitive developer," Zarate said.

Earlier, the Viacom International Media Networks, in collaboration with underwater resort developer Coral World Park Undersea Resorts Inc., proposed to develop a Nickelodeon Resort and Attraction in Coron, Palawan.

The 400-hectare undersea-themed park, expected to be finished by the year 2020, will supposedly feature restaurants and lounges 6 meters below sea level.

One of Nickelodeon's famous characters is Spongebob Squarepants, who sang the song Goofy Goober, referring to someone who is a fool and obnoxious.

"The construction of such an immense commercial establishment in Coron will clearly disrupt the ecosystem and biodiversity of the place," Zarate said.

He cited that since 1967, through Proclamation 219, the unique ecological features of Coron Island and its surrounding islets have already been recognized.

Subsequently, Proclamation 1801 and Proclamation 212 further reinforced its protection as a marine habitat and forest reserve.

"Beyond being just a tourist attraction, Coron is a crucial habitat for unique wildlife, and, any disruption may cause grave effects on the environment and to the people whose livelihood depend on its rich land and waters," he stressed.

"Additionally, Coron Island is recognized as an ancestral domain of the indigenous Tagbanua people. In fact, a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim was given to the tribe as far back as 1998. This project may mean the displacement and eviction of our indigenous people from their ancestral land just to give way to this sprawling marine park," he added.



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### 'Underwater theme park' tinutulan ng obispo

Tahasang tinutulan ng Apostolic Vicariate of Puerto Princesa Palawan ang planong paggawa ng "Underwater theme park sa Palawan".

Ayon kay Bishop Pedro Arigo, naniniwala itong dapat na pag-aralang mabuti ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang epekto ng pagkakaroon ng artificial construction sa ilalim ng dagat.

Giit pa nito na kahit walang underwater theme park ay maganda na ang Palawan at hindi na ito kinakailangang galawin pa ng tao.

"Kailangang i-weigh nang mabuti 'yung damage siyempre meron ng artificial construction sa ilalim niyan medyo mada-disrupt, 'yung underwater life, 'yung mga coral reefs ay mada-damage. Ako personally angitingin ko kahit na walang ganong construction sa ilalim, 'yung mga scuba diving sights sa Palawan, itself, untouched by human hands ay napakaganda na," paliwanag ng obispo.

Nauna nang nagpahayag ang Viacom International Media Network ang planong pagtatayo ng 100 ektaryang undersea-themed development sa Palawan. (NAbuel)

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# National Greening Program created 3.3 million jobs in 6 years – PIDS

THE National Greening Program (NGP) generated about 3.3 million jobs in the first six years of its implementation, but continued to miss its target survival rate for planted seedlings, the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) said.

"As of Nov. 30, 2016, the program has generated approximately 3.3 million jobs and employed 462,066 persons in upland and rural communities," PIDS said in a policy note.

In "Taking stock of the National Greening Program six years hence," PIDS said employment generated by the NGP increased from 2011-2014, slowing down slightly in 2015 and stagnated last year.

"The data revealed that the employment performance of the NGP may have significantly decreased in 2016 relative to its performance in the past years," said PIDS.

Meanwhile, the program continued to miss its target survival rates for seedlings planted in 2011-2015.

According to the PIDS, the survival rate of seedlings was only 83% in 2011-2014 and only 82% in 2015.

"While the program targets an annual survival rate of 85%, the actual figures have remained below it. From 2011 to 2015, for instance, the annual survival rate nationally has been 83% except in 2015 when the program regis-

tered a survival rate of 82%," the think tank said.

However, according to PIDS, the NGP will result in "favorable and increasing output effects in the economy" over the years.

Output is expected to increase 0.3% in 2020, 1% in 2030 and 2.5% in 2050 with forestry expected to reach as high as 5.5% of the total NGP output in 2050.

NGP also has the potential to increase household income and decrease poverty.

"The income effects are progressive, with the lowest decile having real household income improvement of 1.4% in 2030 and 3.3% in 2050, while the highest decile having positive real income

effects of 1.2% in 2030 and 3.0% in 2050," said PIDS, adding that poverty incidence will decrease 2.7% in 2030 and 6.34% in 2050.

While PIDS observed positive effects of the NGP on the environment, the design and tree species planted by the NGP are not always appropriate to the sites.

"These fast-growing (softwood) species may have been intended to help the people's organizations earn money in the shortest possible time and address their income and poverty concerns. However, on the environmental side, these species may be of less help as they are shallow rooted and vulnerable to landslides," said PIDS.

PIDS therefore proposes that the national government review the design of the program in terms of species planted, tree spacing and other technical matters.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) must also identify vulnerable areas in its mapping and planning stage in order to match species with sites.

PIDS also recommends that the government revisit its computation of the survival rate and other technical aspects in monitoring the program.

Additional incentives such as harvesting rights, livelihood support, long-term financing and correction of tenure issues must

be provided to communities to sustain plantations in the long-term.

PIDS also suggests additional funds for organizational development and capacity building of the people's organizations as well as strengthen the DENR to effectively carry out reforestation and rehabilitation.

"The national government should place the ultimate responsibility for all reforestation initiatives on the FMB (Forest Management Bureau)... Alternatively, the creation of a new agency tasked only with reforestation, possibly answering directly to the president, should be considered," said PIDS. — Danica M. Uy

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SER

## Ilocos bans coal use, production

BY LEANDER C. DOMINGO

**T**OUTED as the wind energy capital of the Philippines, the province of Ilocos Norte has shown its commitment to a cleaner and safer environment by banning the production and use of coal as energy source in the province.

Governor Imee Marcos on Thursday said the province is concerned by possible health hazards from coal waste as well as environmental consequences.

"This is the reason why we are intensifying our commitment to a coal-free Ilocos Norte," Marcos said.

Earlier, the provincial government

passed Resolution No. 017-2016, which declared Ilocos Norte as "clean, green and coal-free" and highlighting the province as "the undisputed wind energy capital of the Philippines."

Marcos said their initiative for a coal-free province is also in support of the national government's commitment to the United

Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to reduce carbon emissions from expected levels in 2030.

"Our vision for a 'livable, sustainable, and resilient' province, promotion of renewable energy and proper care of the environment has risen among our priorities in the province," she added.

The governor said the provincial government's vision includes the rejection of energy development using coal of any type.

"This is due to proven harmful effects [of coal] on the environment, impact on climate change and health menace to the people," Marcos added.

In her 2016 State of the Province Address, she said, "As a province of farmers,

ecological sustainability comes indeed naturally, but we have begun to take for granted even our environment."

Ilocos Norte is host to the Energy Development Corporation's (EDC) 150-megawatt Burgos Wind Power Project, the Northern Luzon UPC Asia Corporation's 81MW Caparispisan Wind Power Station and the Northwind Power and Development Corporation's 52MW Bangui Wind Power Project.

Recently constructed were the 5MW Agua Grande hydroelectric power plant in Pagudpud town and solar farms—the 20MW facility of Soleq Philippines Inc. and the 4.1MW and 2.6MW facilities of the EDC.

Meanwhile, the provincial government

is forming a task force to review the province's environment code and to incorporate stricter measures against coal energy.

Marcos said there is a need to reinforce ordinances and resolutions in support of provincial programs concerning the environment.

Citing her earlier policy direction, the governor added that there is also a need to retrofit old provincial and government buildings so they will be sustainable and efficient.

She said sustainability is the second pillar of provincial development "that is why we are aggregating power usage of public buildings to rationalize and save electricity, exploiting finally our provincial renewable sources."

NEWS

## PH EAGLE TO BE NAMED SAKURA IN ABE'S HONOR

DAVAO CITY—A 2-year-old female Philippine eagle will be officially named Sakura, the Japanese word for cherry blossoms, in honor of visiting Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Abe, who arrived in Manila on Thursday for a two-day official visit, will attend the naming rites on Friday at the Waterfront Hotel in Lanang, Davao City, President Duterte's hometown, which hosted thousands of Japanese immigrants before World War II.

It would be stressful for the bird to be moved from its sanctuary to the hotel for the ceremony, so Abe would not be able to see the eagle himself, according to Dennis Salvador, director of the Philippine Eagle Center in Davao's Calinan District. Instead, Abe will receive a framed photo of Sakura.

The eagle, which had a pellet wound in the abdomen, was rescued last month near a river in Talaingod, Davao del Norte province.



This Philippine eagle, which will be called Sakura, was rescued with a pellet wound in Davao del Norte. —PHILIPPINE EAGLE FOUNDATION PHOTO

A critically endangered species, the Philippine eagle is one of the rarest and largest of its kind in the world. An adult could grow up to one meter in height and a wingspan of more than two meters.

Abe is the first foreign head of state to visit Mr. Duterte's hometown. His trip will include

a meeting with the President and businessmen at a business forum at Waterfront, on Friday at the end of his official visit.

After taking an early lunch at the hotel's Garden Pavilion with his party and Philippine officials, led by Mr. Duterte, Abe will visit Mindanao Kokusai Daigaku, a Japanese-language school owned and operated by Japanese descendants.

Separately, Abe's wife, Akie, will visit the Japanese Cemetery at Tacunan in Barangay Mintal, 12 kilometers from the city center. The cemetery, where a shrine for the Japanese war veterans had been built, was part of what was then known as Little Tokyo.

Mintal was the business center for Japanese immigrants, who were mainly engaged in abaca production and trading in Davao in the early 1900s. Their numbers grew to more than 17,000 on the eve of World War II. —REPORTS FROM JEFFREY MAITEM AND ALLAN NAWAL INQ

## PH eagle named in honor of Abe

DAVAO CITY—A 2-year-old female Philippine eagle, rescued last month with a pellet wound in the abdomen, will be officially named Sakura, Japanese term for cherry blossoms, in honor of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe who is visiting this city, President Duterte's hometown, which hosted Japanese immigrants before World War II. —STORY BY JEFFREY MAITEM AND ALLAN NAWAL

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### Abe names Phl Eagle 'Sakura'

By EDITH REGALADO

DAVAO CITY – Like blossoming bilateral ties, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is set to name a young female Philippine Eagle after his nation's most popular floral attraction.

"Sakura" – Japanese for cherry blossom – will be formally named during ceremonies today at the Waterfront

Turn to Page 4

### Abe From Page 1

Insular Hotel Davao where Abe will also meet with local business leaders.

Based on official information, President Duterte will be joining Abe in the ceremonies, during which enlarged photos of the juvenile Philippine Eagle will be put on display for the event.

The naming of the Philippine Eagle that the Japanese government has adopted is part of the itinerary of Abe while in this city.

Abe arrived in Manila yesterday afternoon and was accorded state honors and a dinner later in the evening at

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### Abe From Page 4

Malacañang before flying here last night for the second day of his Philippine visit.

The name Sakura, a Japanese flowering cherry tree, was chosen by officials for the young Philippine Eagle that was rescued last month at the foot of the Pantaron Range, along the boundaries of Talaingod town in Davao del Norte and San Francisco in Bukidnon, as a tribute to Japan.

The giant raptor is now kept at the Philippine Eagle Center in Barangay Malagos, Calinan District, this city, which is run by the non-profit Philippine Eagle Foundation.

Sakura is among 37 Philippine Eagles being kept at the

Malagos Center.

According to PEF executive director Dennis Salvador, the young Philippine Eagle, estimated to be more or less two years old, was rescued after she suffered a bullet wound in her lower left abdomen caused by an air gun.

The bird weighed 5.2 kilograms, which was highly suggestive of her being female when she was found last month.

The giant raptor was discovered standing on the banks of a river by Ata Manobos, who were night hunting for frogs in the area. The young eagle was allegedly docile and did not resist capture.

The juvenile female was then turned over to a PEF team last month through Talaingod Mayor Basilio Libayao.

# THE STANDARD

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# LGUs

LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS



**DOLPHIN RESCUED.** Personnel of the Salcedo Municipal Police Station assist men from BFAR and MENRO headed by Danilo P. Duran in rescuing a lost dolphin on Wednesday. Barangay residents sought help after finding the weak dolphin, which was freed farther from the shoreline. Mel Caspe

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### US places patched bumblebee on endangered species list

MIAMI—The United States placed a bee on the endangered

species list for the first time, after the rusty patched bumblebee's population declined sharply due to pesticides, disease and climate change, officials said on Wednesday.

These once common bumblebees are now "balancing precariously on the brink of extinction," said a statement from the US Fish and Wildlife Service. "Abundance of the rusty patched bumblebee has plummeted by 87 percent, leaving small, scattered populations in 13 states and one province," down from 28 states in the 1990s.—AFP



The rusty patched bumblebee has become the first bee species in the United States to be declared endangered.—AP

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## Lake Lanao body formed

By Lance Baconguis

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—  
The provincial government of Lanao del Sur has created the Lanao Basin Management Council to ensure proper planning and implementation of the Integrated Natural Resources and Environment Management Project or INREMP for the Lake Lanao River Basin.

Meeting with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and different local government units on Tuesday, the provincial government created programs and a roadmap for the river basin's development.

Under INREMP, \$100 million (P5 billion) from Asian Development Bank and 13.25 million in Special Drawing Rights from the International Fund for Agriculture Development—worth about P884 million—will be used to bankroll the program.

Lake Lanao is in Lanao del Sur, covers 340 square kilometers and is the largest lake in Mindanao, the second largest in the Philippines, and is one of the 15 "ancient lakes" in the world. It used to be the sole source of power of Mindanao through hydroelectricity, now it provides roughly 30 percent of the region's energy, officials said.

Lake Lanao was named a watershed reservation in 1992



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Legislator: Duterte order to dismantle fishpens on Laguna de Bay ignored



**H**OUSE of Representatives Deputy Minority Leader Lito L. Atienza on Thursday called the attention of President Duterte on the nonimplementation of his order to immediately dismantle all fishpens from the Laguna de Bay by the second week of



**ATTENZA:** "The LLDA has allowed the proliferation of these fishpens. These fishpens and the waterlilies clog the Laguna de Bay, and prevent it from serving as a catch basin for the free flow of rainwater. This causes massive flooding in Metro Manila and Southern Tagalog."

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Legislator: Duterte order to dismantle fishpens on Laguna de Bay ignored

LLDA is the main reason the Laguna de Bay has been overrun by fishpens and illegal structures, leading to its steady degradation.

"The LLDA has allowed the proliferation of these fishpens. These fishpens and the waterlilies clog the Laguna de Bay, and prevent it from serving as a catch basin for the free flow of rainwater. This causes massive flooding in Metro Manila and Southern Tagalog. Moreover, they deprive the small fisherfolk of their livelihood, leaving our fisherfolk the poorest sector of society," Atienza added.

Atienza, a former three-term Manila mayor and environment secretary, earlier welcomed and expressed full support for Duterte's directive to dismantle fishpens and illegal structures in the Laguna de Bay. Since he was Manila mayor and until now as a representative, representing the Buhay party-list group, he has consistently advocated the cleaning and clearing not only of Laguna de Bay, but all other bodies of water, such as the Manila Bay, Taal Lake, Lake Buhi, Lake Sebu and the Lake Lanao, among others.

At the same time, Atienza pointed out that, clearly, the LLDA is not giving an accurate picture of the problem. According to the agency's records, only 13,000 hectares of the Laguna de Bay are occupied by fishpens, or about 12 percent of the lake's total area of 99,000 hectares.

"The truth is, one quick pass over the lake will give a clear picture—over 60 percent is occupied by fishpens, leaving

## Atienza slams LLDA inaction over fishpens

BUHAY party-list Rep. Lito Atienza, also senior deputy minority leader, called the attention of President Rodrigo Duterte on the non-implementation of his order to dismantle all fishpens on Laguna de Bay in December last year.

"It's been almost a month since the President gave the order for the immediate dismantling and clearing of all fishpens and illegal structures from Laguna de Bay. All we are hearing from the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) right now are alibis for failure. If the LLDA is the President's only source of information, his directive will go nowhere because the LLDA is the main culprit. Nothing was done for the past years under the watch of General Manager Neric Acosta," Atienza said on Thursday.

He pointed out that the LLDA is the main reason why Laguna de Bay has been overrun by fishpens and illegal structures, leading to its steady degradation.

"The LLDA has allowed the proliferation

of these fishpens. These fishpens and the waterlilies clog Laguna de Bay and prevent it from serving as a catch basin for the free flow of rain water. This causes massive flooding in Metro Manila and Southern Tagalog. Moreover, they deprive the small fisherfolk of their livelihood, leaving our fisherfolk the poorest sector of society," Atienza said.

The lawmaker, a former three-term Manila mayor and Environment secretary, earlier welcomed and expressed full support to Duterte's directive to clear all illegal structures on Laguna de Bay.

He said the LLDA is not giving an accurate picture of the problem.

Based on the agency's records only 13,000 hectares of Laguna de Bay are occupied by fishpens – or about 12 percent of the lake's total area of 99,000 hectares.

"The truth is, one quick pass over the lake will give a clear picture – over 60 percent is occupied by fishpens, leaving only a fraction of open water for thousands of fisherfolk," Atienza said.

# Remate

## ANG DIARYO NG MASA

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### OPINYON



## OPEN LINE

by BOBBY RICO HERMOSO

SINABI ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na sisimulan na nito ang pagbaklas sa mga higanteng fish pen at fish cage sa Laguna de Bay ngayong buwan.

Ipinaliwanag ni Environment Undersecretary Arturo Valdez na pupulungin na nila ang mga opisyal ng Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) para atasan na umpisahan na ang demolisyon sa lalong madaling panahon.

Yaman din lamang at nagsalita at nangako na si Valdez, dapat lamang na tuparin at panindigan niya ang

kanyang sinabi.

Ang problema nga lamang ay mukhang mahihirapan silang tuluyang ipagiba ang naglalakihang fishpens na iyan sapagkat mabibigat at malimpluwensya ang kanilang mga makakalaban.

Hindi ba alam ni Valdez na karamihan sa mga mayari ng mga fish pen diyan sa lawa ng Laguna ay mga bigat na personalidad at mataas na opisyal ng pulisya at militar?

Milyon ang kinikita ng mga fishpen owner diyan at milyon din ang kanilang nagiging puhunan kaya tingin ko

ay hindi ganoon magiging kadali ang misyon ng LLDA at DENR.

Kung iyon ngang mga informal settler sa ating mga kalunsuran ay pumapalag kahit walang kakayanang maipagtaggol lang ang kanilang tirahan, iyon pa kanyang mayayaman at malalakas ang hindi pumalag?

Sa totoo lang ay excited na akong makita kung kaya ba talaga ng mga taga-DENR at LLDA na gawin ang plano nilang paggiba.

Napakalaking tulong kasi noon sa maliliit na mangingisda na lubhang nahirapang buhayin ang pamilya dahil halos wala na silang mahuling isda sa lawa dahil sa mga naglalakihang palaisdaan o fishpen doon.

### MAKAKAYA KAYA?

Ipinagmamalaki ni Valdez na itingatung na nilang iligal simula sa Enero 1, 2017 ang mga fishpen dahil napaso na ang mga permiso nito noong Disyembre 31, 2016.

Pero sa totoo lang ay hindi naman kailangan ng mga fish cage owner ang permiso para mag-operate at lahat ng iyon ay pormalidad at compliance lamang.

Matagal nang okupado ng mga fishpen operator

ang halos 13,000 ektarya ng may 90,000 ektarya ng lawa na lubhang malaki kaysa sa itinakdang 9,000 ektarya para sa aquaculture. Lumalabas na may 1,018 lehitimong fishpen at cage operator sa lawa habang nasa 2,261 naman ang iligal ang operasyon.

Ang tanong, makaya kaya ng DENR na gibain ang mga fishpen at fish cage sa Laguna de Bay? Abangan natin!

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# Business World

**INCREASE YOUR BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE**

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### Nickel Asia says ore shipments fall in 2016

NICKEL ASIA Corp. on Thursday said shipments of nickel ore dropped 2% in 2016 amid lower volumes and lackluster world prices.

In a statement, the listed miner said it sold 19.3 million wet metric tons (WMT) of nickel ore last year, slightly lower than the 19.7 million WMT of shipments recorded in 2015.

"Lower shipment volumes coupled with the overall weakness in nickel ore prices led to a drop in the Company's estimated value of shipments from P14.4 billion in 2015 to P13.3 billion in 2016," Nickel Asia said.

Nickel Asia noted the estimated realized nickel prices on 11.7 million WMT of ore sales, mainly to Japanese and Chinese customers, last year averaged \$20.82 per WMT. This compares with an average of \$22.64 per WMT in 2015.

Of its four operational mines, the Taganito high-pressure acid leachate (HPAL) facility accounted for the bulk or 42% of total shipments. In 2016, the mine shipped 2.3 million WMT of saprolite ore, 8% lower than the 2.5 million WMT in 2015. It also shipped 5.7 million WMT of limonite ore for the full year, 10% up from 5.2 million WMT in 2015.

Meanwhile, the Rio Tuba mine accounted for 32% of the total shipments. Broken down, this consists of 2.3 million WMT of saprolite ore and 3.9 million WMT of limonite ore.

Shipments from the Hinatuan mine during this period fell 6% to 3 million WMT in 2016, from 3.2 million WMT in 2015, while its Cagdianao mine shipped 2.1 million WMT in 2016 from 2.2 million WMT in the prior year.

"The unfavorable weather conditions and the effects of sea swells during the first half of the year resulted to delays in the start of shipments from the Company's Hinatuan and Cagdianao mines, thereby translating to slightly lower shipment volumes in 2016," Nickel Asia said.

Shares of Nickel Asia remained unchanged on Thursday to close P8.49 apiece. — J.C. Lim

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**

## Nickel Asia 2016 exports down 2%

NICKEL Asia Corp. (NAC) yesterday announced that it exported 19.3 million wet metric tons of nickel ore last year, down two percent from the previous year's total of 19.7 million WMT.

NAC also expressed that lower shipment volumes coupled with the overall weakness in nickel ore prices led to a 7.6 percent drop in the company's estimated value of shipments from P14.4 billion in 2015 to P13.3 billion in 2016.

The company also stated that the estimated realized nickel price on 11.7 million WMT of ore sold mainly to Japanese and Chinese customers in 2016 also averaged \$20.82 per WMT compared to an average of \$22.64 per WMT realized in 2015.

NAC also realized an average of \$4.39 per pound of payable nickel on 7.6 million WMT sold in 2016, down from the average price of \$5.36 per pound of payable nickel

on 7.8 million WMT sold in 2015.

The company attributed the lower volumes due to remedial work conducted over a one month period at the Taganito HPAL plant, which reduced ore delivery. The work was completed in May 2016 and the plant has since resumed operations at full capacity.

"The year 2016 was challenging as we saw nickel prices hit a 13-year low early in the first half, a continuation of the downtrend that we experienced in 2015. However, prices in the second half have improved in line with improving fundamentals for nickel due to declining inventories coupled with some production cut-backs and closures, and a strong recovery in the Chinese stainless steel market. All these suggests higher nickel prices this year," NAC president and chief executive officer, Gerard Brimo said in a statement.