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14 JAN 2017

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IN THE NEWS

14 JAN 2017

DATE

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PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Duterte and Trump: a close call

I accept that this is very small and narrow-minded of me, but I must say that I would rather be in the Philippines contending with a narcissistic-personality-disordered man like Rodrigo Duterte than in the United States contending with a narcissistic-personality-disordered man like Donald Trump. What are the odds of the two countries electing similarly afflicted personalities? I cannot venture to say.

It is a close call, but in the end, Trump loses. How or why? Read on.

First, on the choice of Cabinet members and advisers. This is where Mr. Duterte appears to be better than Trump. Of course, there are cases where it is close, as, for example, his choice of justice secretary compared with Trump's choice of attorney general (the rough US equivalent), Sen. Jeff Sessions, the nominee, reportedly has "a nasty civil rights record" and has been "dogged by claims of racism and bigotry throughout his career." His "history and present positions make it undeniably clear that he cannot be entrusted to uphold equal justice, civil rights, or the right to vote." Wow.

Trump has exposed himself to charges of nepotism, with the appointment of his son-in-law as senior adviser. Mr. Duterte's two sons and daughter are nowhere in sight as far as positions in his administration are concerned. Good.

Further, his choices have not met with nearly as much criticism as Trump's choices (especially from civil society, since the Democrats seem to have lost their tongues... Does that sound familiar?). And rightly so. I agree with those who think that Mr. Duterte's



GET REAL

SOLITA COLLAS-MONSOD

choices (especially of the Cabinet members who deal with the economy and social justice) are the saving grace of this administration.

Take, for another example, Trump's choice of Scott Pruitt as administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Pruitt is considered a "climate change denier" and does not seem to believe in global warming or its effects. Plus he has sued the EPA on its Clean Power Plan and on its regulations on methane emissions. And Trump chooses him to be EPA administrator. Good grief. Contrast that with Mr. Duterte's appointment of Gina Lopez as environment secretary. See the difference?

Next, let's talk about their relations with the media. Both men have at some point accused the media of biased or false reporting. And Mr. Duterte has been known to be boorish and insulting to the media. But he has accommodated reporters, and never followed up on his threats to limit his accessibility. Trump, on the other hand, is extremely

reluctant to meet with the media, relying mostly on tweets and such social media devices (no face-to-face interaction). And when he finally met with reporters, he refused to answer questions from CNN's senior correspondent Jim Acosta, and his press secretary threatened to have Acosta ejected if he persisted in asking questions. I don't think Mr. Duterte has done that. Point for him.

The third point of comparison has to do with their exaggerations, their outrageous statements, their lashing out at others, which, experts say, are an indication of the personality disorder.

Mr. Duterte has lashed out at Sen. Leila de Lima, calling her the Philippines' drug queen, or words to that effect. De Lima's error? When she was chair of the Commission on Human Rights, she called him to task for the Davao Death Squad activities (which he had publicly admitted, by the way, as he had admitted to various killings).

Trump's latest lashing out is at Meryl Streep, whom he called "one of the most overrated actresses in Hollywood"—which shows how disordered people can totally ignore facts in making their conclusions. Streep has been nominated for and has won more Academy Awards than any other actress, plus Cannes Film Festival awards, Emmys, and Golden Globe Awards. She has been called, by experts, as the "best actress of her generation." Overrated?

What was Streep's "sin"? She called him to task for using his power and position to bully others.

But isn't that what Mr. Duterte does? That's why it is a close call.

14 JAN 2017

DATE

UPPER HALF

B 3

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Japan agency lends P2.1B to boost Mindanao agri

By Ben O. de Vera
@bendeveraINQ

Aid agency Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) has granted state-run Land Bank of the Philippines (Landbank) a 4.9-billion yen (over P2.1 billion) loan to support the agriculture sector in the war-torn areas of Mindanao.

In a statement, Jica said the official development assistance (ODA) under its yen loan scheme was launched this week through a project dubbed "Harnessing Agribusiness Opportunities through Robust and Vibrant Entrepreneurship Supportive of Peaceful Transformation" or "Harvest."

The project would be assisting agriculture enterprises as well as farmers' cooperatives, among other related organizations, in Mindanao, Jica said.

It would also provide human resource training and technical assistance to Landbank, agriculture cooperatives, and other relevant institutions, Jica added.

"'Harvest' presents opportunities to help ordinary Filipino farmers in Mindanao and related institutions grow the agriculture sector. Through the project's financial inclusion of farmers' cooperatives, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and related organizations, more investments and jobs will be created in Mindanao's conflict-affected areas," Jica chief representative Susumu

Ito said.

Government data showed that in 2013, agriculture, fishing and forestry accounted for over three-fifths of Mindanao's regional economy, employing 68.4 of its population.

Poverty incidence, however, remained at over half of the population due to the decades of conflict in several parts of the island, Jica noted.

The Japanese aid agency and the Bangsamoro Development Agency had worked on the proposed Bangsamoro Development Plan (BDP) 2, the medium- to long-term plan that will guide development in Mindanao.

Jica had been wanting to help roll out under the BDP 2 a total of 26 anchor projects spanning a wide array of socioeconomic sectors in order to lift Bangsamoro people out of poverty by 2028.

If fully implemented, the BDP 2 would create about 550,000 additional jobs by 2022, while the region's economy could grow as fast as 7.4 percent annually, according to Jica.

The anchor projects earlier identified by Jica and BDA under the BDP 2 were as follows: support for agricultural cooperatives; road rehabilitation and upgrading; ports and airport improvement; Greater Cotabato City urban infrastructure; communal irrigation; economic corridor development; economic zones; as well as abaca, coco coir and sugar industrial clus-

ter development.

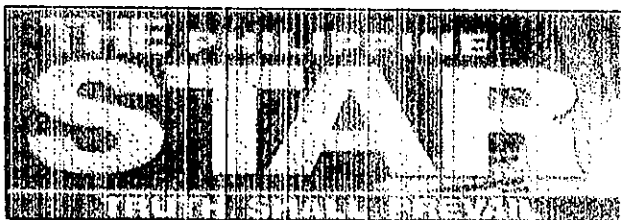
Also among the BDP 2 initiatives were agri-based projects (such as goat farming and mixed field crop production); seed production center; halal industry promotion; open market; cold chain facilities; community-based forest and coastal management; mini hydropower development; and Mindanao river basin integrated watershed as well as flood management projects.

A 2005 study of the Human Development Network noted that the underdevelopment of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) is linked to the long history of armed conflict in the area. According to the said report, the war in Mindanao costs around P5 to 7.5 billion annually, which could have been used instead to fund development projects.

The poverty incidence in ARMM was at 55.8 percent in 2012—much higher than the national average of 25.2 percent and 39.1 percent for the whole of Mindanao, government data showed.

Since 2002, Jica has been extending assistance to about 30 programs and projects in Mindanao under the Japan-Bangsamoro Initiatives for Reconstruction and Development or J-BIRD.

A total of 20 billion yen in development aid has been provided by Jica as well as Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 2003 to 2015, it added. INQ



14 JAN 2017

DATE

UPPER HALF

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Rody gov't gets top marks on 11 of 12 nat'l issues

The Duterte administration enjoyed majority approval ratings on key national concerns, except for the issue of controlling inflation, Pulse Asia said in its fourth quarter survey. Most Filipinos remained appreciative of the government's handling of criminality (84 percent), disaster response (80 percent), corruption (76 percent), OFW welfare (75 percent), peace (72 percent), environment (69 percent), rule of law (69 percent), territorial defense (65 percent), jobs (58 percent), workers' pay (57 percent) and poverty (51 percent). The government, however,

Rody From Page 1

failed to obtain a majority approval score on the issue of controlling inflation – considered urgent by 34 percent of Filipinos – which was only at 44 percent.

According to Pulse Asia, the only significant movements during the period were the decline in approval ratings for administration efforts to increase the pay of workers (-7 percentage points), control inflation (-7 percentage points) and reduce poverty (-8 percentage points).

"For the most part, public assessment of the administration's performance remains constant between September and December 2016," it said.

The survey was conducted from Dec. 6 to 11, using face-to-face interviews with 1,200 adults.

It has an error margin of plus or minus three percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

– Helen Flores



14 JAN 2017

DATE

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PAGE

LOWER HALF

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First Person

By ALEX MAGNO

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Fake

Fake news is usually associated with the prevalence of social media.

In that ungoverned space, it is easy for the unscrupulous or the reckless to pass on fake news. In this space, there is no editorial supervision to ensure truthfulness. It is easy to spread false information under the cover of anonymity. This is why this age of social media spawned "post-truth" politics.



But how do we explain the infiltration of fake news into the mainstream media?

Take the case of the supposed coal ash adversely affecting residents in Limay, Bataan. The town is the site of the sprawling state-of-the-art refinery facility of Petron Corporation. A power plant is also located in the facility.

One broadcast organization broke the news that residents in the vicinity of the "coal plant" were suffering from skin diseases because of the ash pile. Environmental groups, always primed to demonize big corporations, picked up the story and began organizing pocket protest actions.

As soon as the story broke, San Miguel Corporation president Ramon Ang dispatched a team by helicopter to Limay to find out what was happening. He was sure this was fake news. When all the facts were gathered, Ang himself faced the media to dispute the broadcast account.

Firstly, said Ang, this could not possibly be a coal spill. There is no coal in the entire complex. The power plant under construction is being test run using diesel fuel. That plant will not be operational until next year.

The video carried by the broadcast group was not coal ash as claimed. It is limestone powder, a by-product of oil refining certified by the DENR as non-toxic. The broadcasters did not bother to correct this.

Furthermore, the limestone powder is not "dumped" as the television station claimed. It is stored in a specifically constructed ash pond surrounded by dikes far away from the river. No river pollution happened.

Were it not for the refusal of the local government to permit transport of the limestone powder to a sister company producing cement the limestone powder would have been trucked out. The powder is valuable commodity. It is worth \$100 per ton when transported for use as cement.

Local health officials, meanwhile attested that the skin rashes affecting residents close to the complex was actually scabies. It cannot be attributed to limestone powder but to tick bites and infected domestic animals.

DENR Secretary Gina Lopez, based on the fake news, initially wanted to impose a cease and desist order on the Limay plant. After being briefed by Ang himself, she immediately issued a permit for Petron to transport the limestone powder to the cement plant. She was also briefed on Petron's programs to care for the communities surrounding the facility.

In the end, there was really no basis for the alarm caused by irresponsible reporting.



14 JAN 2017

DATE

✓
UPPER HALF

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

PCG personnel take an inventory of pangolins, seahorses and sea dragons seized from a ship that arrived at the North Harbor in Manila before dawn yesterday.

EDD GUMBAN

Pangolins, seahorses seized at North Harbor

Boxes of pangolins, seahorses and sea dragons were seized by the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) at the North Harbor in Manila yesterday morning.

The PCG said its personnel recovered 58 pangolins, 14 boxes of seahorses and a box of sea dragons from a 10-wheeler truck (WDZ-726)

By EVELYN MACAIRAN

on board the *M/V St. Francis Xavier*.

Authorities believe the shipment, valued at around P1 million, is meant for export to other Asian countries. Many Asians believe the bodies of these animals can cure illnesses and have aphrodisiac

properties.

PCG spokesperson Commander Armand Balilo said the shipment arrived at Pier 4 of the North Harbor at around 3 a.m. yesterday.

The PCG's board and search team told the vessel's skipper about the shipment and re-

quested the help of truck driver Sueta Marjun and helper Benjio Estrella in searching the ship.

The shipment was declared as scrap plastics in the cargo manifest.

Representatives of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources examined and identified the species of the animals.

DATE _____

UPPER 4

2

PAGE

LOWER H

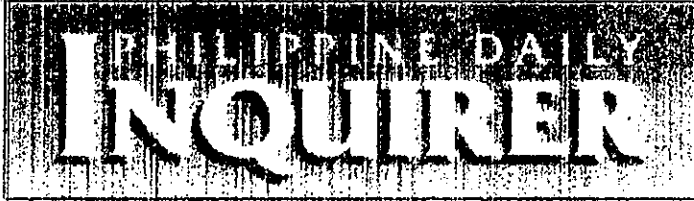
B/ARGILL CYRUS E. GIBBONS

A team from the Coast Guard found seven styro boxes containing 60 pangolins or scaly anteaters, 13 sacks of seahorses and a box of sea dragon in a truck aboard the MV St. Francis Xavier, owned by ZGO Group Inc.

A team from the Manila Coast Guard Station, PCG K-9 unit, Sea Marshal Group and the Philippine Air Force (PAF) Intelligence Unit that boarded the vessel found a truck loaded with the dead and preserved animals.

The truck was listed in the ship's

The cargo and the truck driver and his helper were held at the Coast Guard Station in Manila and will be brought to the Manila Prosecutor's Office, Balilo said.



14 JAN 2017

DATE

✓
UPPER HALF

A9

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Coast guard seizes shipment of dried seahorse, pangolins

The Philippine Coast Guard on Friday seized early Friday a mis-declared shipment of dried seahorse and pangolins aboard a passenger and cargo ship M/V St. Francis Xavier docked at the Manila North Harbor. PCG spokesperson Commander Armand Balilo said 13 sacks of dried seahorse, 60 pieces of pangolins or anteaters and a box of sea dragon were found aboard a 10-wheeler truck on the ship owned by the 2Go Group docked at Pier 4. The contraband was declared as scrap plastic. —JULIE M. AURELIO

THE STANDARD

DATE

UPPER HALF

PAGE

✓
LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



CONTRABAND SEIZED. Members of the Philippine Coast Guard seize 58 pangolins, 14 boxes of seahorses and 1 carton of sea dragons at the anchorage area of Pier 4 at North Harbor in Manila; with the animals, costing millions of pesos in the contraband trade, allegedly being exported to other Asian nations and sold there as aphrodisiacs. **Norman Cruz**

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

Smuggled dried seahorses seized

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) confiscated early yesterday morning large quantity of dried seahorses on board a vessel in North Harbor, Manila.

PCG spokesman Commander Armand Balilo said boxes of the smuggled marine species were found inside MV St. Francis Xavier docked at Pier 4, North Harbor, at around 3 a.m.

He said the vessel, plying the Iloilo/Bacolod - Manila route, is owned and operated by 2GO Group Inc..

Upon docking at 2:56 a.m., the search team composed of Coast Guard Station (CGS) Manila, PCG K-9 unit, Sea Marshal Group (SMG), and the Philippine Air Force (PAF) Intelligence Unit boarded the vessel and located a 10-wheeler truck where they discovered the dried sea horses.

The truck's contents were originally declared in the cargo manifest as scrap plastics.

The team also discovered other cargoes onboard they also suspect to contain other endangered species.

PCG, as of press time, was still inspecting the other cargoes.

Representatives from the De-

partment of Natural Resources (DENR) also arrived at Pier 4 to examine and identify the other seized smuggled marine species.

Balilo said the PCG will file appropriate cases against the shipper of the cargo. (Argyll Cyrus B. Geducos)



THE PHILIPPINE Coast Guard seizes 58 pangolins, considered as critically endangered mammals, 14 boxes of sea horses, and a carton of sea dragon with a total market value of around P1 million, in a vessel docked at Pier 4, North Harbor, Manila. (Ali Vicoy)

14 JAN 2017

DATE

4
PAGE

✓
UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

PM Abe to adopt PH Eagle

DAVAO CITY – Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will be adopting one of the Philippine Eagles which is under the care of the Philippine Eagle Foundation, according to sources from the nonprofit group.

Dennis Salvador, executive director of the PEF, said the agency is hoping for improved partnerships between the foundation and its Japanese counterparts for further research efforts especially with endangered raptors such as the one in captivity in Davao City.

The PEF is a nonprofit organization in charge of the care of endangered species such as the Philippine Eagle, at its facility in Malagos, Davao City.

According to Salvador, the eagle was captured in the Pantaron Range in Talaingod, Davao del Norte, last December after being found limping in the forest.

The eagle could not fly and had a pellet gun wound in the groin.

However the eagle won't be at the ceremonial naming with Prime Minister Abe and President Rodrigo Duterte, as it is still recovering in the facility.

At the moment, conservation efforts of the PEF are mostly voluntary, with the academe and the private sector taking the lead.

There are 36 Philippine Eagles at the PEF facility in Malagos, with each of the eagles already adopted by a benefactor.

Each eagle costs around ₱125,000 (¥289,600) in terms of upkeep per year.

Salvador clarified that the ceremonial naming involved mostly a goodwill message with no talks yet of the financial aspect of the adoption of the eagle.

The eagle will be named "Sakura," after the popular Japanese flower which blossoms once a year. (Yas D. Ocampo)

14 JAN 2017

DATE

UPPER H.

PAGE

LOWER H.

Atienza: Probe LLDA for defying Duterte's demolition order

By BEN R. ROCARDO

A House leader yesterday urged President Duterte to place the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) under investigation for openly defying his order to get rid of illegal fishpens and illegal structures that have occupied nearly 70 percent of the Laguna Lake.

Assistant Minority Leader and Buhay Partylist Rep. Lito Atienza aired the appeal as he noted that LLDA is still headed by one of the few remaining holdouts of the Aquino administration, former Bukidnon Rep. Nereus Acosta.

Atienza, who used to head the Department of Environment and Natural

Resources (DENR), said Acosta should be asked to explain why he failed to comply with Duterte's order to dismantle fishpens and illegal structures at the Laguna de Bay.

"Perhaps the most effective solution is for Duterte to get rid of Acosta and appoint a person of unquestionable integrity and a team player to get rid of the fishpens and other obstructions," the opposition solon said.

Duterte, Atienza stressed, gave the LLDA one month since early December to clean up the lake but the agency apparently did not touch any part of it.

The former Manila mayor said fisherfolk and residents in the two provinces bound by the lake are losing hope in seeing the lake cleared of obstruction, especially the fish pens and fish cages owned by highly influential individuals and families, including former military officials.

14 JAN 2017

DATE

13

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DUTERTE ORDER TO DISMANTLE FISHPENS ON LAGUNA DE BAY IGNORED -- SOLON

AN opposition House leader yesterday called the attention of President Rodrigo "Rody" Duterte to the non-implementation of his order to immediately dismantle all fishpens on Laguna de Bay.

"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) 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," said Buhay Party-list Rep. Lito Atienza.

Atienza blamed the

LLDA for the proliferation of fishpens and illegal structures on Laguna de Bay.

"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.

Atienza, a former three-term Manila mayor and Environment secretary, had earlier welcomed and expressed full support for Duterte's directive to dismantle fishpens and illegal structures in Laguna de Bay.

Since he was mayor and now Buhay Party-list representative, he has consistently advocated

the cleaning and clearing not only of Laguna de Bay, but all other water bodies such as Manila Bay, Taal Lake, Lake Buhi, Lake Sebu and Lake Lanao.

He said the LLDA is not giving an accurate picture of the problem. According to their records, only 13,000 hectares of Laguna de Bay are occupied by fishpens, which is about 12 percent of the Lake's total area of 99,000 hectares.

Ryan Ponce Pacpaco

PEOPLES Tonight

14 JAN 2017

DATE

5

PAGE

UPPER HALF

✓
LOWER HALF

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

By RYAN PONCE
PACPACO

AN opposition House leader yesterday called the attention of President Rodrigo "Rody" Duterte on the non-implementation of his order to immediately dismantle all fishpens from Laguna de Bay by the second week of 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," said Atienza.

Atienza pointed out that the LLDA is the main reason why 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 water lilies 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 added.

Atienza, a former three-term Manila Mayor and Environment Secretary, had earlier welcomed and expressed full support for President Duterte's directive to dismantle fishpens and ille-

gal structures in Laguna de Bay.

Since he was mayor and until now as BULHAY Partylist Representative, Atienza has consistently advocated the cleaning and clearing not only of Laguna de Bay, but all other water bodies such as Manila Bay, Taal Lake, Lake Buhi, Lake Sebu, 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 their records, only 13,000 hectares of Laguna de Bay are occupied by fishpens — which is 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," he added.

THE STANDARD

14 JAN 2017

DATE

UPPER HALF

As

PAGE

✓
LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Davao City, Biliran mining free-zones

By Maricel V. Cruz

A PANEL in the House of Representatives has approved measures declaring Davao City and Biliran province as mining-free zones to protect their local residents and the environment from the adverse effects of mining.

The House committee on natural resources, chaired by Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate, passed House Bills 3166 and 872, declaring Davao City and Biliran Province, respectively, as mining-free zones.

The bills recognize the constitutional provision which states that "it is the policy of the State to protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and har-

mony of nature."

Davao Rep. Alberto Ungab, author of HB 3166, or "An Act Declaring the City of Davao as a Mining-Free Zone," explained that "if opened to mining operations, a world-class city like Davao City would unnecessarily be endangered by deforestation and the risks attributed to mining since the place is traversed by Davao River from the highlands to the lowlands."

Ungab said the fresh waters of Davao City, considered as one of the best waters in the world, must be protected from any form of pollution or degradation, to include the surroundings and environs of its sources underneath the ground or above the ground.

PEOPLES JOURNALS

14 JAN 2017

DATE

12

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

QC gov't acts on air pollution problems

THE Quezon City government is set to purchase an air quality monitoring system to measure the volume of air pollutants and other particulate matter emitted by vehicles and establishments in the city.

The city council has approved a resolution No. SP 6905 Series of 2016 authorizing the city government to allocate P19.5 million for the purchase of the equipment.

The city's Environmental Protection and Waste Management Department (EPWMD) will oversee the project.

Based on a recent study conducted by the University of the Philippines - Institute of Environmental Science and Meteorology (UP-IESM), Katipunan Avenue and Ortigas Avenue have been identified as having the highest concentration of pollutants in the city.

Cory Martinez

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1900

MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

14 JAN 2017

DATE

✓
UPPER HA

6

PAGE

LOWER HA



**ENVIRON-
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Disaster Risk
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ment Office
personnel
of Dagupan
City help out
firefighters
in putting out
a fire that
has spread
through the
city's dump-
site last
Thursday.
Winds have
carried the
hazardous
smoke to
nearby areas.
(Jojo Riñoza)

14 JAN 2017

DATE

UPPER HALF

B2-4

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

ENHANCING LAND VALUES

URBAN PLANNERS' PRESENCE A MUST IN EVERY DEVELOPMENT

By Theresa S. Samaniego
@teksamaniegoINQ

Creating livable and sustainable communities entails more than the use of high grade bricks and mortars.

Every developer knows that for a project to be truly successful, there should be proper planning involved.

It may be tempting sometimes to take short cuts and deviate from the tedious method of planning for a particular development, but no trustworthy developer would do such thing.

As such, every responsible developer understands the significance of employing the services of urban planners to ensure that every project will not harm the environment and will benefit not only those living within the community but also those within neighboring areas.

Professional designers

"Urban planners are professional designers of a town, a city, a region or even a community. They give these places a face or an identity," explained Arch. Ma. Karmela Bayot, an in-house master planner for Sta. Lucia Land Inc. (SLLI).

A graduate of BS Architecture at the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila, Bayot explained to Inquirer Property about the crucial role that an urban planner plays in the success of every development.

According to Bayot, the holistic approach for the development of a community is usually based on the urban planner's design and programs.

"We are the macro' designers who would dictate the land use and transportation plan of a developer's projects. We are the first to be on the site to analyze and study an area's physical condition and its potential for development," Bayot related.

An urban planner's work can in fact go beyond the design, and extend to the study of



BAYOT

the socio-economic profile of a certain town. It is normally the urban planners who suggest the possible jobs that can be offered to the community.

"We cannot force business process outsourcing related projects if the population is used to fishing or farming. We need to determine how to make the best use of available spaces and the how else can we revitalize the area," Bayot noted.

Enhancing environment

According to Bayot, urban planning has long been a part of real estate development in the Philippines.

"Even before the real estate industry started to develop subdivisions, urban planning already exists in the country. In the history of urban planning, architects, engineers and even scientists have become urban planners or masterplanners because of their ideas to enhance the living environment and in-

troduce innovations to their town or their city," she said.

Master planning referred to the fundamental stage of design development. It covers the study of the slope, terrain, and orientation, and puts into consideration the existing facilities and natural environment.

"Planting trees, providing open spaces, having the proper width of sidewalks for convenience, ensuring the right locations of loading and unloading docks, and respecting natural resources like rivers and creeks and the hundred old trees, are just among the primary considerations of an urban planner," she further explained.

Indeed, urban planners must have a presence in every development. And while it is true that a developer can still implement a project without an urban planner, there is that risk that it can fail due to lack of proper study.

"We all aim to provide a better community. Other than the physical design, I believe we have the social responsibility not only to our clients but to the community as well," Bayot said.

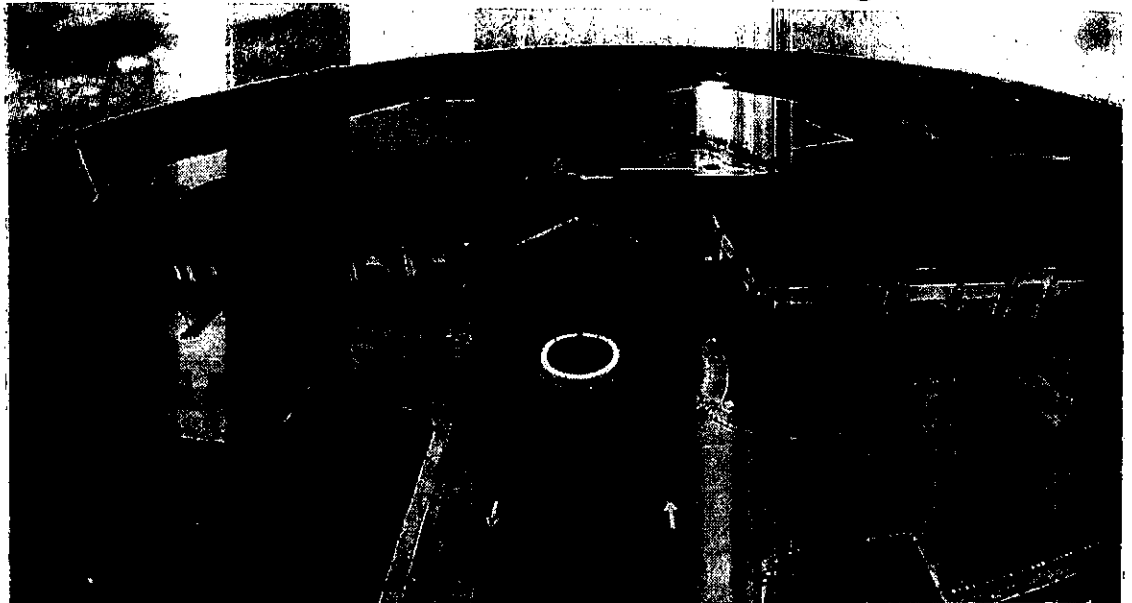
Building a character

Creating a community, according to Bayot, is like building the character of the people who will live there.

"If we could only apply these to all the future developments, we may be able to revitalize our city and even avoid man-made calamities," she claimed.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Urban Planner's Presence A Must in Every Dev't.



A responsible developer understands the significance of employing the services of urban planners.



An urban planner's work must go beyond design and extend to the study of the socio-economic profile of a certain town

In the Philippines, much has yet to be done when it comes to urban planning, as evident in the massive damage wrought by strong typhoons in certain areas that may be considered as "no plan cities".

"The congestion of the metro has brought butterfly effect. From overcrowding, traffic, shortage of job opportunities and even crimes. When people started to ask whose responsibility should it be that was when urban planners became known," Bayot added.

In the country, one developer knows all too well the importance of having an urban planner on board—trusted property developer Sta. Lucia Land Inc.

According to Bayot, she was hired in 2005 by Sta. Lucia Realty Inc. as a planning consultant. But even before she came on board, there were already others who have taken on the tasks of an urban planner. It was in 2013 that Bayot became an in-house planner for the company.

"Hiring or getting a professional planner for Sta. Lucia has been their practice ever since," Bayot concluded.



THE STANDARD

14 JAN 2017

DATE

UPPER HALF

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PAGE

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LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Trouble brews over land dispute in former friar estate

ANOTHER dispute is brewing in what used to be known as Hacienda de San Pedro de Tunasan in Laguna with residents urging San Pedro City Mayor Lourdes Cataquiz to investigate several armed men who claimed to be her men and are harassing residents of the area.

Community resident Levi Lobo Jr. made the appeal after several armed men, who claimed to be Cataquiz' men, entered the area brandishing their guns and started harassing residents.

"We don't know the mayor's interest in the talks over these lands but

many are wondering why these men are claiming to be from the office of the mayor," Lobo said in Filipino.

Lobo said the men repeatedly entered the area and appear to be intent on sowing fear among residents with some of them firing their rifles armed with grenade launchers.

On Jan. 5, Lobo said the men fired their rifles at a group of male residents. On Jan. 9, they again fired their weapons and even fired three grenades to scare residents.

Lobo said residents suspect that the harassment may be connected to the

decades-long dispute over what used to be known as the Hacienda de San Pedro de Tunasan, which used to be owned by the Society of Jesus.

Various lawsuits have arisen from the hacienda which was "awarded" to Spanish conquistador Esteban Rodriguez Figueroa, a one-time governor of Mindanao, in the 16th century.

Rodriguez bequeathed the hacienda to the Order of Saint Augustine and later transferred to the Society of Jesus for the establishment of the Colegio de San Jose.

The hacienda was later transferred

to the Colegio de San Jose, which is now known as the San Jose Seminary. However, the hacienda was transferred to the Agustinian and Dominican orders after the expulsion of the Society of Jesus from Spanish possessions in the 18th century.

In the following century, ownership of the land shifted from the Catholic Church and the government along with various third parties who also laid claim to portions of the hacienda in partnership with the church or the government.

One of such private parties was Carlos Young, a registered owner un-

der Original Certificate of Title No. 656 and Transfer Certificate of Title No. 166689, who was in partnership with Colegio de San Jose in the 1930s.

Young apparently agreed to donate to a portion of the land to the then Municipality of San Pedro in exchange for a waiver over accumulated property taxes.

However, Young later discovered that the parcel he agreed to donate to the town was being claimed by one Oliver Laperal, who presented land titles that was later found to cover lands in Taytay, Rizal.

BULGAR

BOSES NG MAMA MATA NG BAYAN

14 JAN 2017

DATE

4

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

KUNG mayroong Seven Wonders of the World, mayroon ding Seven Wonders of Nature. Ito ang bagong timpalak na dinaluhan sa siyudad ng Puerto Princesa noong 2011 at isa sa mapalad na nahirang na Seven Wonders of Nature ay ang Puerto Princesa Underground River o PPUR. Sa nakaraang anim na taon, dinagsa ng mga turista ang Underground River.

Muli nating dinalaw ang PPUR noong nakaraang Martes. Ibang-iba na ang maraming bagay. Una, mayroon nang malinaw at episyanteng

sistema mula sa pagsundo hanggang pagbiyahe sa Sabang at ang biyaheng bangka mula Sabang hanggang Underground River. Noon ay maraming daan ang hindi pa sementado kaya mahigit dalawang oras ang inaabot ng biyahe. At sa pagdating sa Underground River, sasakay ang bisita sa mga bangka na dalawa ang gawain ng bawat bangkero; una, siyempre kailangan niyang magsagwan hanggang at pabalik ng PPUR. Pangalawa, kailangan niyang maging mahusay na tour guide.



FR. ROBERT P. REYES

Pagbibigay-pugay sa likas na ganda ng Puerto Princesa Underground River

Ngayon, isa't kalahating oras na lang ang biyahe. Maganda at maayos na ang Tourist Information Office. Marami nang makakasap at mapagtatanungan. Maayos na rin ang daloy ng pasahero sa mga bangka at tuluy-tuloy na rin ang biyahe ng mga ito mula Sabang hanggang PPUR. Pagdating ng PPUR, sasamahan na ng guide ang bawat grupo ng mga pasahero sa mga bangka na mayroong kanyang bangkero. At bago sumakay ng bangka, aabutan ng headset at ng audio set na magpapaliwanag sa lahat ng makikita sa bawat bahagi ng PPUR. Napakahusay ng timing ng pagsagwan at ng mga paliwanag sa audio set. "Synchronized" ang sagwan at ang paliwanag.

Bagamat pangatlong ulit na nating naranasan ang pagbisita sa PPUR, masasabi nating kakaiba ang pangatlong pagkakataong ito. Marahil dahil na rin sa mga nangyari sa ating buhay

sa nakaraang anim na pu't dalawang taon bilang tao at halos tatumpu't limang taon bilang pari, naiiba na ang pagtingin natin sa maraming bagay.

Madilim ang pagpasok sa kuweba, paalala sa mga naging madilim at mabigat na yugto ng buhay. Subalit, naroroon ang nagsasagwan na siya ring mayroong ilawang tinatanglawan ang daraanan ng bangka. Sa mga panahon ng kadiliman at pagsubok, naroroon lagi ang tanglaw ng ating pananam-palataya na nagbabalik sa atin sa Panginoon na walang sawang tumutulong sa atin. Aanyahan tayo ng tinig na tingnang maigi ang mga stalactite at stalagmite. Magugulat ka na lang sa mga hugis na tugmang-tugma sa paliwanag ng tinig. Naroroon ang iba't ibang hugis. Kasama na rin ng mga banal na hugis ng mukha ni Hesus ng Shroud of Turin; ang Sagrada Pamilya at ang Mahal na Birhen. Habang

pinakikinggan natin ang tinig at tinitingnan ang mga hugis na ipinaliliwanag nito, kusang bumabalik ang ating isipan sa mga panahon ng pansamantalang kabulagan na sa halip na makita ang totoo, ipinipilit makita ang gusto o ayaw hanggang sa tuluyan nang lumabo o mawala ang dapat makita.

Salamat at buhay pa ang PPUR, buhay pa ang mahiwaga at makasaysayang ilog na humahamon na buhayin din natin at pasiglahin ang pagdaloy ng ilog ng buhay.

Ayon sa mga tour guide, hindi bumababa ng lima hanggang pitong daan ang dumadalaw sa PPUR sa mga karaniwang buwan. Umaabot ang bilang ng mga bisita sa isa't kalahating libo sa mga "peak month." Masigla at buhay ang turismo sa PPUR.

Nang kumustahin natin ang isang naging kasabay sa bangka, sabi nito: "Isang malalim na karanasang espirituwal ang aking pagbisita sa PPUR. Subalit, napansin ko lang ang isang bagay sa maraming nakasalubong na bangka. Maraming natutulog."

Sayang lang kung tutulugan natin ang mga hiwaga at kagandahan ng kalikasan, sayang lang talaga kung tutulugan din natin ang pagdaloy ng ilog ng buhay,