

DATE 27 JAN 2016
DAY Wednesday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

DENR okays Minahang Bayan application for E. Samar, DavOr

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has approved two applications for the operation of Minahang Bayan in Davao Oriental and Eastern Samar, Director Leo Jasareno of the DENR-Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) said on Tuesday.

He said the Minahang Bayan applications, as endorsed by concerned Provincial Mining Regulatory Boards (PMRBs), were approved by Environment Secretary Ramon J.P. Paje last December 17 and 18.

This brings to five the number of Minahang Bayan dedicated for small-scale mining operations.

The two new Minahang Bayan are in Barangay Maputi, Banaybanay town, Davao Oriental, which covers a total land area of 81 hectares, and Barangay Waso, Lorente town, Eastern Samar, with a total land area of 83 hectares.

The three existing Minahang Bayan are in Buenavista, Quezon, Dinagat Island and in Agusan del Sur. This year the DENR targets the establishment of 16 Minahang Bayan, or at least one per region.

The Minahang Bayan operation in Banaybanay was granted to the Development Community Mining Livelihood Cooperative while that in Lorente was granted to two cooperatives namely the Waso Small-scale Mining Producers' Association and the Binalay Small-scale Miners' Association.

"They now have to apply for small scale mining contract with the PMRB [Provincial Mining Regulatory Board]," Jasareno said. PMRB is led by the provincial governor.

The Minahang Bayan applications in Banaybanay for small-scale gold mining and Lorente for small-scale chromite mining are the first to be approved under Department Administrative Order 2015-3, which revises the implementing rules and regulation of Republic Act

7076, or the People's Small-Scale Mining Act of 1991.

Under the law for small-scale mining, only three metallic minerals are allowed. These are gold, silver and chromite.

Under the new guideline for small-scale mining, the DENR designates the Minahang Bayan upon the endorsement of the PMRBs.

Jasareno also said the MGB has turned down and returned the applications for 10 Minahang Bayan, mostly for the operation of small-scale mining in Mindanao.

"They were returned to the regions [MGB regional offices]," he said.

"Mostly, the applications lack notice or consent from holders or previous applicants of mining in the areas," Jasareno said.

The Minahang Bayan application should have the approval of the holder or mining applicants in the area, otherwise the MGB will return them to the proponents, Jasareno said.

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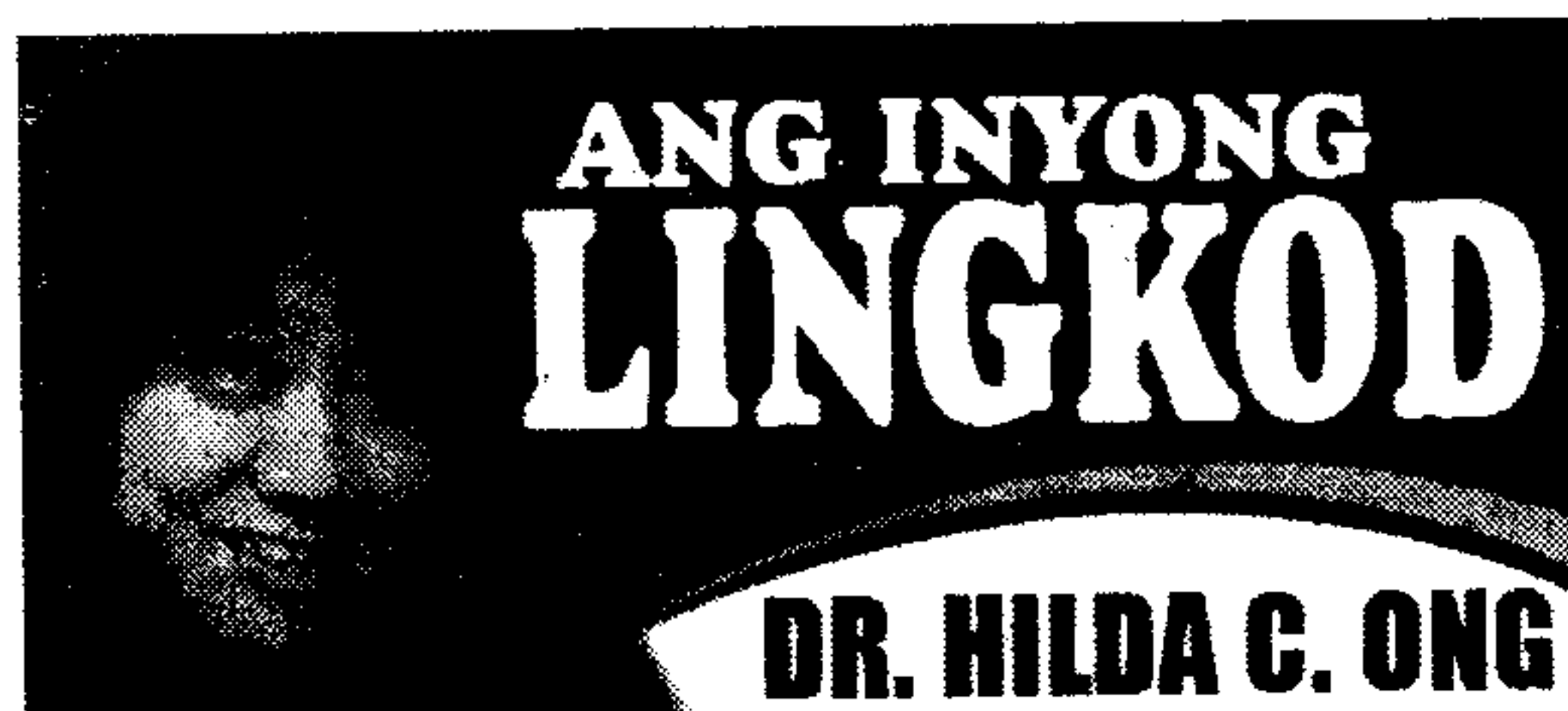
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AYON kay Executive Director Dr. Seville D. David ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB), "Kung titignan natin ang sitwasyon ng nakaraang taon 2015, walang naiulat ng pagkaantala ng tubig mula sa gumagamit ng tubig sa Metro Manila, pero nanawagan kami sa publiko na kinakailangan na nating gamitin ang ating water supply nang may kalakip na pagtitipid dahil nasa unang buwan ng taon pa lang tayo ngayon, pero ang bilis na ng pagbaba ng lebel tubig sa Angat Dam."

Base sa ulat ng Bulacan Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (PDRRMC), ang lebel ng tubig noong Enero 20 ay nasa 211.51, ngunit pagkalipas ng anim na araw (Enero 26), ito'y naging 210.23 na lamang. Sa ngayon, kulang ng 1.77 meters base sa 212 normal high water level (NHWL).

Ang mungkahi ng inyong lingkod sa NWRB na sana bawasan muli ang paglalaan ng tubig para sa domestic consumption dahil hindi naman makaaapekto ang low pressure sa Metro Manila.



DR. HILDA C. ONG

WALA NA NAMAN SA NORMAL LEVEL ANG TUBIG SA ANGAT DAM

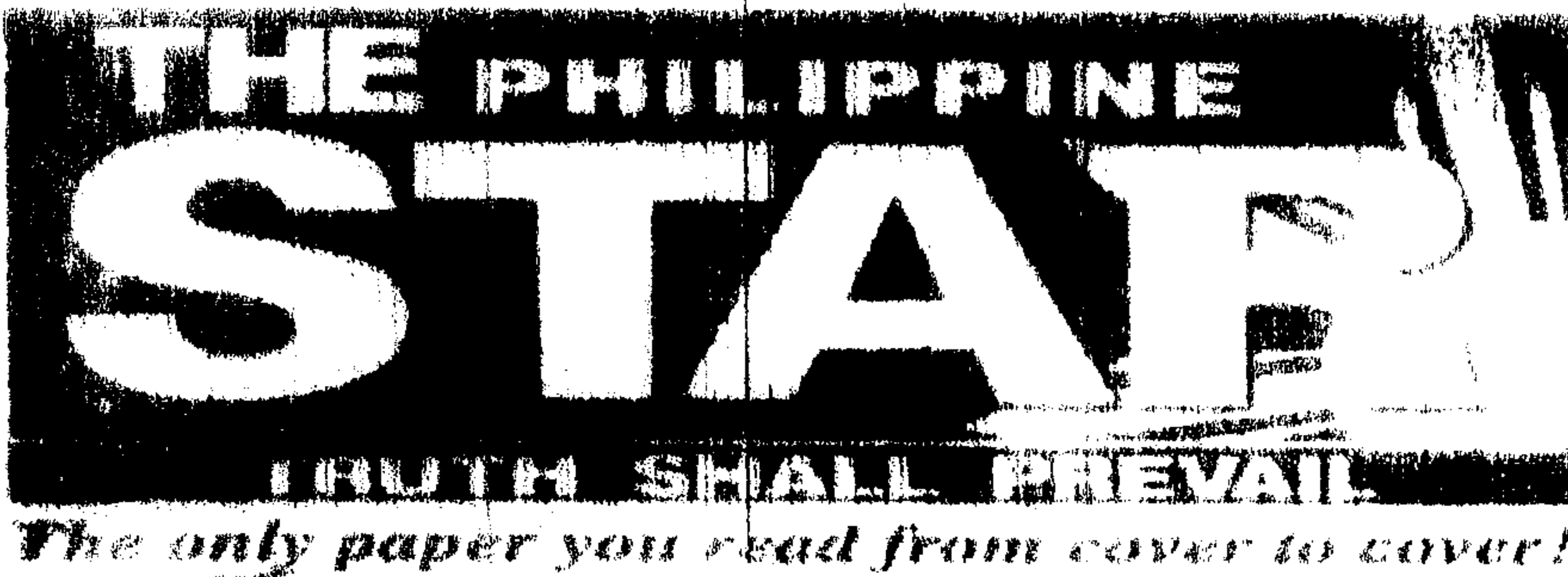
Ang hakbang na ito ay isang estratehiko upang makapagtipid ng tubig.

Kung babawasan ng NWRB ang alokasyon ng tubig, hihina ng kaunti ang pressure ng tubig, mas kakaunting masasayang o matatapon at hindi naman naramdaman ng publiko noong nakaraang taon.

Maaaring maapektuhan ang mga water concessioner dahil liliit ang kanilang kita pero sana isipin ng lahat kung ano ang mangyayari pagkalipas ng Chinese New Year at papasok ang buwan ng tag-init.

Hindi na mapipigilan pa ang paparating na 'El Niño' kaya kinakailangan ang ibayong paghahanda upang

malabanan ito at malaki ang maitutulong dito ng publiko. Isa sa mga rekomendasyon ng NWRB ay ang pagbaba-was ng paggamit ng tubig mula sa mga gripo, kailangang ang pagtitipid kapag kayo'y naghuhugas, sa paglilinis, at pandilig sa mga pananim.



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

El Niño to affect 60 M people this year – WHO

El Niño will affect some 60 million people worldwide this year and many of them will suffer health problems, according to the World Health Organization.

It warned that severe drought, flooding, heavy rains and rising temperature can lead to food insecurity and malnutrition, disease outbreaks, acute water shortages and disruption of health services.

Health implications are usually more intense in developing countries with fewer capacities to reduce the health consequences, Richard Brennan, WHO Emergency Risk Management and Humanitarian Response Department director, said.

"From Ethiopia to Haiti to Papua New Guinea, we are seeing the damage from El Niño," he said. "We believe the impact on public health is likely to continue throughout 2016, even after El Niño winds down."

Brennan said governments must invest now in strengthening their preparedness and response efforts to prevent unnecessary deaths and illnesses.

El Niño is a warming of the central to eastern tropical Pacific Ocean, which affects rainfall patterns and temperatures in many parts of the world but most intensely in the tropical regions of Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America, which are particularly vulnerable to natural hazards.

Typically, some places receive much more rain than normal while others receive much less.

El Niño from 2015 to 2016 is predicted to be the worst in recent years, and comparable to El Niño in 1997-1998, which

had major health consequences worldwide.

In Eastern Africa, as a result of El Niño in 1997-1998, WHO found that rainfall patterns were unusually heavy and led to serious flooding and major outbreaks of malaria, cholera and Rift Valley Fever.

The health costs of El Niño have reached \$76 million.

This is based on the reported requests for financial support from seven high-risk countries: Ethiopia, Lesotho, Kenya, Papua New Guinea, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda.

WHO expects more countries will seek financial support to respond to El Niño effectively.

Meanwhile, Leyte Rep. Ferdinand Martin Romualdez urged yesterday the government to conduct a nationwide inventory of emergency structures and stocks of food and medical supplies in preparation for El Niño.

"Disaster preparedness is largely a matter of infrastructure readiness," he said.

"When disasters and natural calamities strike, our facilities should be both pre-positioned and

multi-use, always ready for relief, medical and evacuation operations.

"The first quarter of the year isn't normally typhoon season but that's not an excuse to be lax. The heavy rains we experienced last December should give us fair warning about how unpredictable the weather has become."

dictable the weather has become."

El Niño actually triggers more destructive typhoons like Ondoy in 2009 and Lando and Nona last year, he added.

Romualdez said the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council needs to make public what systems are in place when disasters strike, because sooner or later, these disasters are sure to happen.

"The NDRRMC should be active all year round," he said.

"During those times it doesn't manage and coordinate actual disaster relief, it should always engage the public in disaster education and coordinate with the government and private sectors on disaster readiness."

Romualdez said an estimated 6,300 people died and half a million were left homeless in his home province in November 2013 when Super Typhoon Yolanda struck.

"Food and medicine were inexistent during the most critical first few days after Yolanda struck because these weren't prepositioned in strategic areas at or near the province," he said.

Ideally, separate and dedicated multi-use evacuation centers must be constructed in disaster-prone areas, he added.

Romualdez is running for a Senate seat in May. – **Sheila Crisostomo, Paolo Romero**

MANILA BULLETIN

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Pangasinan braces for effects of El Niño with irrigation projects

By LIEZLE BASA INIGO

LINGAYEN — Wary over the adverse effects of the El Niño phenomenon in the province, the Sangguniang Panlalawigan (SP) has authorized Gov. Amado T. Espino Jr. to enter into a memorandum of agreement with

irrigation project beneficiaries for the implementation of communal and pump irrigation systems and shallow tube well irrigation projects in the province.

The approval of Provincial Resolution No. 1758-2016 came during the SP's regular session held last January 18 which tackled the irrigation develop-

ment program of Pangasinan to create additional irrigated areas.

Resolution author Board Member Antonio F. Sison said the MOA will serve as a vehicle for collaboration efforts between the provincial government and irrigators association project beneficiaries to promote and develop

the sustainability of irrigation developments of the province.

Meanwhile, the SP has also moved for the approval of a resolution seeking to invite the governor into a special session on February 10 for his last State of the Province Address on his last term as governor.

The Manila Times

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

NPC saves Lanao water amid El Niño

THE National Power Corporation (NPC) is conserving the water supply of Lake Lanao by reducing its water discharge amid low rainfall due to the El Niño phenomenon affecting most parts of the country.

Dadelio Cruz, vice president for NPC's Mindanao Generation Group, in a briefing with NPC president and CEO Ma. Gladys Cruz Sta. Rita, said that as of January 21, the water elevation of Lake Lanao was 699.633 meters above mean average sea level.

This is only 3.30 centimeters above the 2016 seasonal drawdown limit of 699.600 meters and 48.3 centimeters above the minimum operating level of 699.150 meters.

Forecasters at the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Climate Prediction Center in the United States noted that the effects of El Niño on the Philippines are projected to last until June or July 2016 in terms of warming sea surface temperature.

Likewise, the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said reduced rainfall in the country due to El Niño would be felt until the end of April to early June 2016.

With the national elections scheduled on May 9, 2016, the NPC is mandated to have all generating power plant units running one week before and after the election.

ABERON VOLTAIRE PALAÑA

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60M face health risks due to El Niño: WHO

BY GERARD NAVAL

SIXTY million people around the world are expected to feel the impact of the El Niño phenomenon on public health this year alone, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

"According to a new report by WHO, severe drought, flooding, heavy rains and temperature rises are all known effects of El Niño that can lead to food insecurity and malnutrition, disease outbreaks, acute water shortages, and disruption of health services," Dr. Richard Brennan, director of the WHO- Emergency Risk Management & Humanitarian Response Department, said.

Among the diseases expected to be caused by El Niño are cholera, measles, malaria, diarrhea, as well as malnutrition.

The health consequences, Brennan added, are usually more intense in developing countries, among them Ethiopia, Lesotho, Kenya, Papua New Guinea, Somalia, Tanzania, and Uganda, all of whom have already sought financial support from the United Nations (UN).

"From Ethiopia to Haiti to Papua New Guinea, we are seeing the damage from El Niño, and we believe the impact on public health is likely to continue throughout 2016, even after El Niño winds down," said Brennan.

The El Niño from 2015 to 2016 is widely predicted to be the worst in recent years.

The WHO has urged member-states to start preparing emergency measures to help address the adverse health impact of El Niño.

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Lake Lanao on conservation mode

IN order to make the 728.1 megawatts (MW) Agus hydro-power plants fully operational until the summer season, the National Power Corp. (NPC) said it is now conserving water supply in Lake Lanao.

NPC said the elevation level of the lake reached 699.63 meters above sea level last week, which is above the minimum operating level of 699.15 meters.

Ma. Gladys Sta. Rita, NPC president and chief executive officer, said operation of the Lake Lanao reservoir is now on conservation mode done by reducing the outflow and discharge of water from the lake.

"(Conservation) is implemented to deter the fast declining water elevation of Lake Lanao and to ensure enough power will be generated by the Agus plants during the election period and to have a comfortable operating year-end Lake Lanao water elevation," Sta. Rita said.

Government has mandated to have all generating power plant units running one week before and after the elections.

The Climate Prediction Center of the United States-National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration earlier warned the effect of El Nino in the country will last until June or July this year based on the warming of sea surface temperature.

The Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration meanwhile forecasts the impact of El Nino in the Philippines will likely be felt until end of April to early June based on rainfall reduction.

The Agus hydropower plants together with the 255 MW Pulangi hydropower plant are among the largest power plants still being operated by the government.

However, the Mindanao Development Authority opposes the privatization of the plants saying these contribute a large supply to the Mindanao grid and distribute pro-rated electricity to various cooperatives.

Last year, the Agus and Pulangi hydropower plants provided 65 percent of Mindanao's 1,502 MW peak demand.

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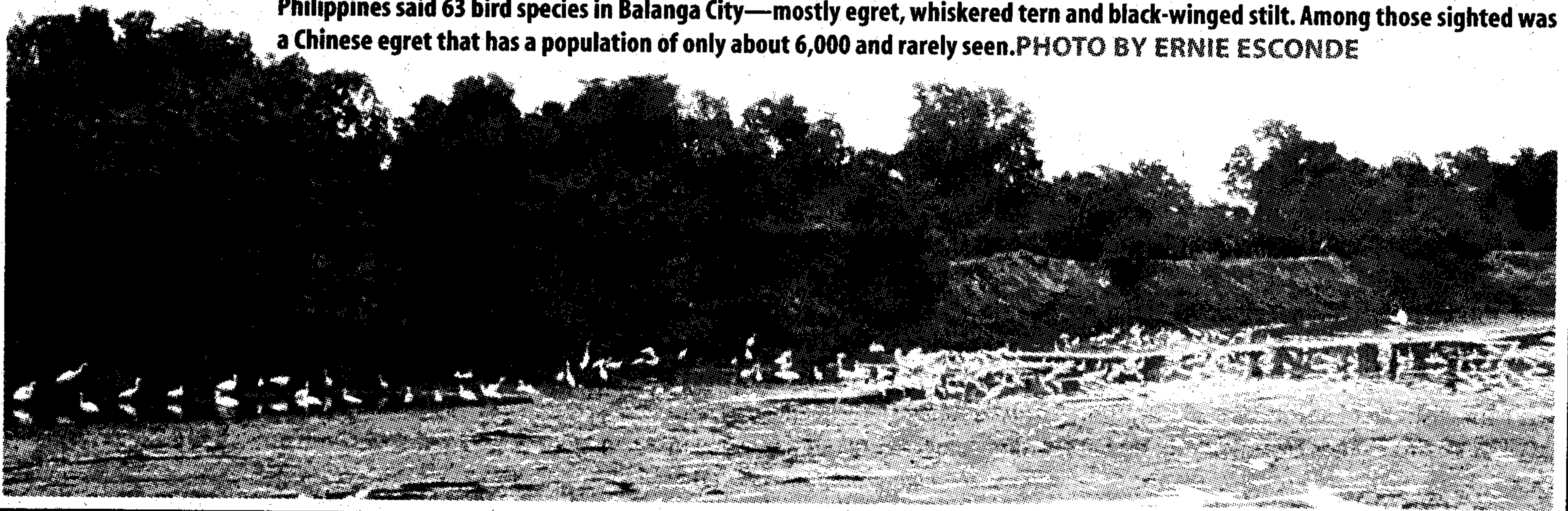
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The Manila Times

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

FLOCK FOR A DAY A flock of egrets feed on dry fishpond in Balanga City, Bataan as about 29,384 migratory water birds were counted for one day during the Asian Waterbird Census in wetlands here, the highest number ever recorded since the census started in 2010. The number ballooned from last year of 12,999 taken in the bird watching villages of Lote, Puerto Rivas Ibaba, Tortugas and Sibacan. It surpassed the 25,000 birds counted three years ago. Wild Bird Club of the Philippines said 63 bird species in Balanga City—mostly egret, whiskered tern and black-winged stilt. Among those sighted was a Chinese egret that has a population of only about 6,000 and rarely seen. PHOTO BY ERNIE ESCONDE





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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

EDITORIAL

Progress vs red tape

People who have dealt with the government may be puzzled by news reports that 99 percent of several agencies delivering frontline services had passed the latest test on red tape conducted by the Civil Service Commission. Of the 1,114 offices in the CSC study, 353 even obtained "excellent" ratings while 697 received "good" marks, with only 15 failing the test.

The release of the list can serve as an encouragement to strive for excellence in rendering public service. The ratings reward exemplary service and, if sustained, the encouragement can plant the seeds of a meritocracy in a culture where connections often trump performance.

The CSC, however, may have to explain better its rating methodology. The commission has been conducting the Anti-Red Tape Act Report Card Survey, and those who fail the test undergo workshops and orientation for service improvement under its Service Delivery Excellence Program. Offices that fail the survey can pass subsequent tests. Assessments were based on reports from the public lodged through the Contact Center ng Bayan, a call center managed by the CSC.

Covered by the latest survey were the Bureau of Internal Revenue, Government Service Insurance System, Home Development Mutual Fund or

Pag-IBIG, Land Registration Authority, Land Transportation Office, Philippine Health Insurance Corp., Professional Regulation Commission, Philippine Statistics Authority-National Statistics Office and the Social Security System, 46 first-class cities and 51 branches of the Land Bank of the Philippines.

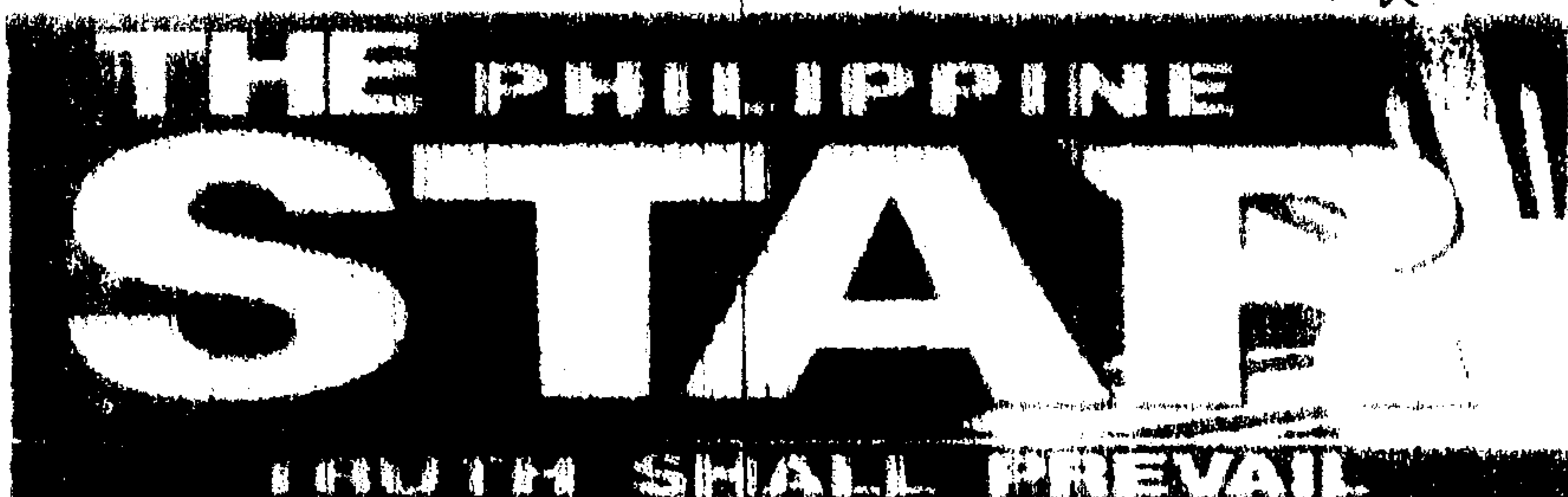
Perhaps all the drivers who have waited for months for their license cards and the motorists still waiting for vehicle license plates did not submit inputs to the Contact Center. Neither did the businessmen, including micro-entrepreneurs, who have shut down operations or given up trying to operate by the rules after running through a gauntlet of red tape in certain city governments.

Red tape opens opportunities for corruption, and eradicating it has been a tough challenge even for the administration that has vowed to tread the straight path. In recent years, the Philippines has seen some improvement in its ranking in international surveys on ease of doing business, but the country still trails many of its Asian neighbors. It's no coincidence that those neighbors are more prosperous and attract more investments than the Philippines.

Among the biggest disincentives to business is red tape. Getting a pat on the back through the CSC program is a welcome carrot for cutting red tape, but more must be done to eliminate this blight.

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The only paper you read from cover to cover!

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On the shore of Laguna de Bae...

DAHLI ASPILLERA



'My community is back to our post-Christmas normal quiet by the shores of Laguna de Bae. One of us awaiting absolution...'

A DECADE before national hero, Jose Rizal, was born, the largest alligator ever recorded was caught right here in the waters of Laguna de Bae, at the foot of Mount Makiling.

The ice mountains melting in Europe have raised the level of the Pacific Ocean, the excess spilling over to the lake, named after Laguna's old capital, Bae. Three decades ago, from my house, we could walk half a mile lake-ward before touching water. Now, the largest lake in all of Southeast Asia has its edge under my house.

The 2015 Christmas parols and decors have been put away from the homes in my barangay road. A Xmas tree is dragged, discarded on its side at the garbage pick-up spot at the intersection of ours and the main street. I noticed it as I came through before dark. I don't know from whose house the tree came.

By Christmas tree, I don't mean a costly pine tree imported from Baguio, nor the more expensive, elegantly decorated plastic tree that one admires, looks over, but can't afford from the malls.

It is illegal—one can get handcuffed—if caught by a Barangay tanod leaving household refuse at this corner before 6 p.m. The garbage truck comes daily at about 7, playing wild music at a volume one can hear two blocks away. But that is the idea, so people who forgot that their garbage is still in their kitchen, can chase after the truck.

Ours is a mixed community of Classes 3, 4, 5. Three, being school teachers, working or retired, and 4 and 5 being less privileged. Therefore, Xmas tree is dried tree twigs, tied together, painted white to resemble snow or green to look fresh, serves as a holiday center piece set up in the most prominent corner of front room, kept upright in a clay pot filled with mud.

At about the last week of November, when the radios and department stores non-stop play I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas, Jingle Bells and such beloved carols, this "tree" slowly gets decorated.

Decors (whatever the kids didn't play with last year, broke, thrown away) are unpacked from a cardboard box retrieved from under a bed or the upper-most kitchen cabinet. What is not demolished by roaches, termites and such critters, are washed, wiped clean, and hang on the twigs with the same tired-looking but washed and ironed red ribbons from last year. Through the month of December, a lot more prettier items are hung, as household goes shopping and bring back a new decor or two, ribbons, trimmings.

Up the street in that big house, Caucasian-looking teenagers are in residence. The barangay passageway has this constant delightful lake breeze. Those foreigners escape the indoor stuffy air, drag chairs outdoors. They are the children of Lola's Senyang's son and daughter who both worked in Canberra and ended up marrying Australians. The families are here from Australia, to visit a very sick Lola.

I had stopped while on my way out, to introduce myself and get acquainted with the youngsters and their parents. Delightful kids, some looking very white Australian, their other siblings looking very Filipino. Makes me think of my own, who looks very American when with Filipinos, but looks Filipino when among his blond haired, blue-eyed American friends.

Nice exchanging pleasantries with them and their unfamiliar Australian pronunciation and expressions right there in our barangay road. Although the occasion is gloomed by the terminal condition of their Lola, who is the reason those two couples and their children canceled all they wanted to do back home during Christmas vacation. They used their year's savings to come to Laguna de Bae to say goodbye to a dying parent.

Dahliaspillera@yahoo.com

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Bill allowing LGUs to acquire lands for housing OK'd

The House of Representatives approved on third and final reading on Monday night a bill seeking to authorize local government units (LGUs) to acquire lands for informal settler families.

Negros Occidental Rep. Alfredo Benitez, chairman of the House committee on housing and urban development, said House Bill 6342 grants LGUs the power to identify lands to be acquired as sites for social-

ized housing.

Under the measure, the acquisition of lands to build housing projects for the poor shall be through community mortgage, land swapping, land assembly or consolidation, land banking, donation to government joint venture agreement negotiated purchase and expropriation.

The bill allows the expropriation of lands, including those

By **PAOLO ROMERO**

whose ownership are subject of pending cases in court.

Lands owned by the government, alienable lands of the public domain, unregistered or abandoned lands, areas of priority development as well as zonal and slum improvement and resettlement program sites are among the areas that can be used as socialized housing sites.

Private lands or BLISS (Bagong Lipunan Improve-

ment of Sites and Services) areas that have not been awarded may also be converted for socialized housing program.

Prioritization of areas to be developed into socialized housing areas will also depend on concerned government agencies.

The bill was authored by Reps. Walden Bello, Felix William Fuentebella, Winston Castelo, Joaquin Chipeco Jr., Barry Gutierrez and Eric Olivarez.

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'PH sea level rise 5 times higher'

THE amount of sea level rise that comes from the oceans warming and expanding has been underestimated, and is likely about twice as much as previously calculated, German researchers said Monday.

Sea level rise was also found to vary substantially from place to place, with the rate around the Philippines "five times the global rate."

The findings in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, a peer-reviewed US journal, suggest that increasingly severe storm surges could be anticipated as a result.

Sea level can mount due to two factors—melting ice and the thermal expansion of water as it warms.

Until now, researchers have believed the oceans rose between 0.7 to one millimeter per year due to thermal expansion.

But a fresh look at the latest satellite data from 2002 to 2014 shows the seas are expanding about 1.4 millimeters a year, said the study.

"To date, we have underestimated how much the heat-related expansion of the water mass in the oceans contributes to a global rise in sea level," said co-author Jurgen Kusche, a professor at the University of Bonn.

The overall sea level rise rate is about 2.74 millimeters per year, combining both thermal expansion and melting ice.

Meanwhile, sea level on the US West Coast is largely stable because there is hardly any ocean warming in that area, said the findings.

According to the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, there is strong evidence that global sea level is now rising at an increased rate and will continue to rise during this century.

While studies show that sea levels changed little from AD 0 until 1900, sea levels began to climb in the 20th century.

Records and research show that sea level has been steadily rising at a rate of 0.04 to 0.1 inches per year since 1900.

This rate may be increasing. Since 1992, new methods of satellite altimetry (the measurement of elevation or altitude) indicate a rate of rise of 0.12 inches per year. **AFP**

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THE PHILIPPINE STAR

TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

The only paper you read from cover to cover!

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Baguio City is seen from Mt. Sto. Tomas in a photo taken on Jan. 24. Temperatures in Baguio dipped to 10.8°C yesterday. Story on Page 16.

ARTEMIO DURLAO