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**DAY**

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**Saturday**

# **DENR**

## **IN THE NEWS**

# 2 more mining operations shut down

By VANNE RAY, JESSICA ALVAREZ, BEN R. S. and LESLIE ANN Q. C.

**T**he government has closed down two more mining operations as it continued its crack-down on mining firms violating environmental laws.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Thursday announced that Benguet Corporation has been ordered to cease operations in Benguet province and the Ore Asia Mining and Development Corporation in Bulacan.

The two firms join the list of 21 operations ordered stopped by DENR Secretary Gina Lopez, mostly for operating near functional watersheds.

Lopez has ordered 41 metal mines around the country, audited for violations.

Five companies -- Oceana Gold Philippines, Inc., Lepanto Consolidated Mining, Citinickel Mines and Development Corp., Berong Nickel Corp., and Strong Built Mining Development Corp. -- remain suspended.

The DENR said it started issuing suspension and closure orders to the mining firms Thursday. It said the com-

panies can appeal the orders.

On Friday, Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez led congressional leaders in assuring Lopez they fully support her decision to shut down or suspend mining firms, some of which are allegedly owned by influential politicians.

Alvarez said a radio interview Lopez's decision is justified despite warnings from the mining industry that the crackdown will trigger massive unemployment and worsen poverty in mining communities.

Alvarez said the DENR chief is correct in penalizing mining firms that violate environmental laws, saying it must be done no matter who gets hurt.

He said he has not been approached by anyone for help to stop Lopez, but stressed that he would reject such requests.

He said there is no lobby for the rejection of Lopez's confirmation as DENR secretary before the Commission on Appointments.

Bayan Muna Rep. Isagani Zarate, chairman of the Committee on Natural Resources, called for the swift enforce-

ment of the DENR suspension and closure orders of companies that have caused massive damage to the environment and the livelihood of people.

"The constant monitoring of the five suspended mines should also be done for them to strictly comply with environmental laws," Zarate said in a statement.

"All the concerned companies should now also be ordered to pay for the damages and compensation for those affected by their destructive operations and for the rehabilitation of the areas," he said.

He added: "Massive environmental destruction can be stopped or at least drastically minimized by overhauling environmental and mining laws through the junking of the Mining Act of 1995. Now is the time to replace the current mining regime with a new one, like House Bill 2715 or the People's Mining Bill now being deliberated in Congress."

Lopez has also earned the backing of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP).

Father Edu Gariguez, executive secretary of the CBCP's social action arm, the National Secretariat for Social Action

Justice & Peace, lauded the decision of the DENR for choosing to protect the environment over business interest.

"No administration in the past had seriously address this issue of ecological protection," Gariguez said in an interview.

"By keeping Secretary Gina Lopez at the helm of DENR, the administration is making a clear statement in favor of the protection of the environment over business interest," he added.

Even the order of President Duterte for a total log ban earned praise from the priest.

"We affirm and commend Duterte's administration for its policy direction that protects our fragile ecosystems threatened by large scale mining and logging," Gariguez said.

He urged the government to find jobs for mining workers displaced by the closure and suspension orders.

"But we just can't continue the distorted policy of destroying the environment in order to provide jobs," Gariguez said.

Duterte ordered the total log ban following the massive flooding in Mindanao last month.

## AFTER LOPEZ ORDERED SHUTDOWN, SUSPENSION OF MINING OPERATIONS Miners seek govt intervention, threatens to sue DENR chief

BY JAMES GALVEZ

**T**HE Chamber of Mines of the Philippines called for the immediate convening of the interagency Mining Industry Coordinating Council (MICC) to look into the basis of what the group claimed as arbitrary mine closure and suspension orders issued by Environment Secretary Regina Paz Lopez.

The group also claimed that her decision "has been undertaken without due process."

In a February 3 letter to MICC co-chairperson and Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez, COMP Chairman Artemio Disini alleged that publicly announcing the closure and the suspension of 28 mining operations without due process will have detrimental and far-reaching

impact on the economy, the mining industry and the country.

Lopez called for a press conference on Thursday and announced the conclusion of a months-long audit of mining companies and the accompanying penalties against mining operations that supposedly violated mining and environmental laws.

"The executive branch has been advocating transparency in its

policies and programs, and on this basis we feel that we have the right to know the process involved and the results of the audit," Disini told Dominguez.

Disini also questioned Lopez's move to ban Mines and Geosciences Bureau personnel from attending the press conference, considering that it is the agency directly regulating the mining sector.

"The questions were not justifiably answered during the press conference and this leaves a lot of doubt in the fairness of the entire process," he said.

On Thursday, Lopez ordered the closure of some 23 mines and suspended five other companies due to alleged environmental violations. In the process, she ignored recommendations by the mining audit review committee, which she created for the task.

Lopez, who conducted aerial in-

spections of mining operations, declined to reveal how she came up with the decision, when asked by members of the media for a copy of recommendations by the review committee.

She also refused to release the complete results of the audit, saying that it is "too complicated. I am in no obligation to let you know what's happening here. MGB took six months to review the audit. MGB has been really, really slow and I'm not happy with them at all," she said.

In a press conference on Friday, COMP executive vice president Nelia Halcon questioned anew the "bias and partiality" of the audit and Lopez's statements early on—after she was appointed to the Cabinet position by President Rodrigo Duterte—that she does not like mining and would like to see mines closed.

"It is hard to convince someone who has a mindset against mining,"

# The Manila Times

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SEP

Cont. MINERS SEEK govt intervention, threatens to sue DENR Chief

Halcon said, pointing her index finger her temple in an apparent disgust over the latest DENR decision.

"Social justice, whatever that means, you are looking at a fairy tale situation, which never happens even in an industrialized country," she added.

Miners are now considering filing cases against Lopez even if she is no longer the DENR Secretary, Halcon said.

"Writing to the MICC is the first option. To pursue filing cases is another option," Halcon said, recalling President Duterte's pronouncement that Lopez may not be confirmed by the Commission on Appointment.

COMP Spokesperson Ronald Recidoro said, the affected miners would definitely seek legal action if President Duterte rejects their appeal to overturn Lopez's orders. "She summarily issues the order of closure. It's a summary execution," Recidoro claimed.

COMP also claimed that 1.2 million people will be affected, directly or indirectly, by the closure of mining operations. In fact, several mining companies, including Eramen Minerals Inc., earlier suspended by the DENR has already trimmed down their workforce.

On Friday, listed mining companies asked the Philippine Stock Exchange for a voluntary trading halt.

Global Ferronickel Holdings Inc. (FNI), the second largest nickel producer in the country and the largest single lateritic mine exporter in the world, is seeking clarification from the DENR following news reports that Platinum Group Metals Corporation (PGMC) is included on the list of companies that have been closed.

"FNI immediately contacted the office of Sec. Gina Lopez and her staff sent an email containing the list of companies recommended for closure and suspension. PGMC's name was not on the list but that of Platinum Development Corporation. Platinum Development Corporation is not a subsidiary of FNI and is not related to PGMC," the company said.

"Any closure of a mine, especially of those operating under valid mineral agreements and permits, entails at least a prior notice of alleged violation, a right to explain, a meaningful investigation and a written decision based on scientific study and empirical proof. These are basic legal requirements," FNI said.

The noted it has not yet received an official letter from the DENR.

Lawyer Dante Bravo, president of FNI, said the DENR has not issued any show-cause order, let alone the adverse findings against PGMC to warrant even the lightest of penalties such as a reprimand.

"At no time has DENR accused PGMC of destroying the waters in the mine site (with naturally silted water sources owing to its rich laterite deposits) or operating in a watershed area," he said.

"Instead, on September 28, 2016, the official website of the DENR announced that PGMC is among those who passed the mining audit and whom the audit team did not find compelling reasons to suspend," Bravo noted.

FNI is seeking clarification with the DENR, and the company reserves all rights to exhaust available remedies to protect its stakeholders, he added.



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Miners appeal to gov't econ team

## URGE REVIEW OF DENR CLOSURE ORDER

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

Mining industry players have sought the intervention of President Duterte's economic team to reverse the recent order issued by Environment Secretary Gina Lopez shutting down the operations of 23 mining firms.

In a briefing yesterday, the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) said it has written a letter to Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III asking him to step in and save the fledgling industry.

"Being one of the members of the economic team of the President, he will be in a position to see the likely implications of the closure and suspension and the impact it will bring about in the basic

services and livelihood programs provided in the communities," COMP chairman Artemio Disini said.

Dominguez, co-chair of the Mining Industry Coordinating Council, said the DOP is

now assessing the impact of the closures and suspension of mining operations on employment and the finances of the affected local government units.

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### Miners appeal... From B-1

President Duterte, meanwhile, reiterated his support for Lopez. "I support her and there was never a time I called her to slow down a little bit," he said.

Mining firms are questioning the way the audit was done, saying the results were compromised.

"After the first audit, the results showed that some were not favorable to the DENR's wishes and since then no actual reports ever came out because they said it's too complicated," Disini said.

COMP said there was an urgent need to look into the basis of the arbitrary closure and suspension of mines.

"The executive branch has been advocating transparency in its policies and programs and on this basis, we feel we have the right to know the process involved and the results of the audit," Disini said.

"It is hard to convince a person who has a mindset against mining. When Gina talks of social justice whatever that means, you're like looking at a fairytale situation, it never happens even in an industrialized situation," she said.

"It's not only the local stock exchange that will see a decline in the price stock but also international exchanges and that will not bring a good impression about how we invite investors in the country," Halcon added.

For his part, Mindanao Business Council chairman Vicente Lao said more than 50 percent of the mines to be closed are in Mindanao and this will have a serious threat to communities in the area.

"There's a lot of things that need to be addressed, the Secretary has a very critical balancing job; you have to look at the cost and benefit of what you are doing. It's not just protecting the environment, it's also about the jobs that will be lost and the revenues that will not be generated," Lao said.

COMP estimates almost P70 billion in gross production value and close to P20 billion in taxes will be lost if the DENR decision will not be overturned. About 67,000 jobs are also at risk.

"If that's the policy of the government who are we to argue with that, but since there's a contract between government and investors, there has to be a due process, that's what the industry is just asking," Lao said.

"That's not the way to conduct an audit, the audit has to be unbiased and has to be fair. At the end of the day, we just want due process in all these things," he added.

Among the 23 firms covered by the closure order are Benguet Corp. Nickel Mines, Zambales Diversified Metals Corp., LNL Archipelago Minerals, Eramen Minerals Inc., AAMPhil Natural Resources Exploration & Development Corp., Krominco, Sinosteel Philippines HY Mining Corp., Oriental Synergy Mining, Wellex Mining, Libjo Mining, Oriental Vision Mining Philippines, Benguet Corp., Ore Asia Mining and Development Corp., Adnama Mining Resources, Claver Mineral Development, Platinum Development Corp., CIP Construction and Mining, Carrascal Nickel Mining, Marcventures Mining and Development Corp., Hinatuan Mining, Mt. Sinai Exploration Mining & Development, EMIR Resources. - With reports from Mary Grace Padin.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Miners appeal to economic team

# DENR order to cause ₱66-B annual loss, mass layoff

**M**iners had sought for the support of President Rodrigo Duterte's economic team to overturn the decision of Environment Secretary Gina Lopez to padlock more than half of the operating mines in the country and suspend five of them.

A day after Lopez announced the long-delayed result of her nationwide audit on mining companies, Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP), which is comprised of the country's biggest miners, wrote to Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez, seeking for possible intervention.

COMP particularly called on the Mining Industry Coordinating Council (MICC), co-chaired by the Department of Finance (DOF), to convene and review the policies and arbitrary actions of Lopez.

The organization believes that the drastic action of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) of publicly announcing the closure and suspension of 28 mining operations without due process will have detrimental and far-reaching impacts

on the economy, the mining industry, and the country.

For one, it could cause the mining industry to suffer from an annual loss of ₱66 billion in profits, based on COMP data.

"We have been supportive of government's policies and programs as investors. We feel there is an urgent need for convening the MICC to look into the basis of the arbitrary mine closure and suspension orders which we believe was undertaken without due process," COMP Chairman Artemio Disini told Dominguez in a letter.

"Being one of the members of the economic team of the President, you will be more in a position to see the likely implications of the closure and suspension and the impacts it will bring about in the basic services and livelihood programs provided in the communities," he added.

Meanwhile, COMP Vice President for Legal and Policy Ronald Recidoro said that some of the affected miners will definitely seek legal action if Duterte would just ignore their appeal to counter Lopez's decision.

To recall, Duterte expressed his support to the Lopez's decision on the

same day she announced the result of the audit.

In its final list, it turned out that instead of 21 mines like it earlier said, the DENR closed down 23 mining firms and suspended five companies.

The companies that were suspended were Berong Nickel Corp., Citinickel Mines and Development Corp., Lepanto Consolidated Mining Corp., OceanaGold Phils., and Strong Built Mining Development Corporation.

Those that are for closure are Benguet Corporation, Ore Asia Mining and Development Corporation, Benguet Corp Nickel Mines, Inc., Eramen Minerals, Inc., Zambales Diversified Metals Corporation, LNL Archipelago Minerals, Inc., Mt. Sinai Mining Exploration and Development Corp., Emir Minerals Corp., TechIron Mineral Resources, Inc., AAMPFIL Natural Resources Exploration, Kromico, Inc., SinoSteel Philippines H.Y. Mining Corp., Oriental Synergy Mining Corporation, Wellex Mining Corporation, Libjo Mining Corp., Oriental Vision Mining Phils. Corp., ADNAMA Mining Resources Corp., Claver Mineral Development Corp., Platinum Development Corp., CTP Construction and Mining Corp.,

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS  
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DENR order to cause P&G-B annual loss, mass layoff

Carrascal Nickel Corp., Marcventures Mining and Development Corp. and Hinatuan Mining Corporation.

The DENR has yet to issue its decision for Filiminera Resources Corp.

Among these firms, COMP members are Benguet Corp., Eramen, LNL Archipelago, Platinum Group Metals, CTP Construction, Marcventures Hinatuan Mining, Filiminera, Oceana Gold and Lepanto.

"Mining companies were invited by government to invest in the Philippines and signed contracts with them as partners in mineral resource development. By entering into these contracts, government is bound to observe due process. Secretary Lopez cannot just shut down mines without due process," Disini said.

According to him, the planned closure of 23 Philippine mines, mostly nickel producers, and the suspension of five others will affect about 1.2 million people.

"We have a total of 1.2 million people affected including family members," Disini said.

Enrique Fernandez, president of suspended nickel miner Eramen Minerals, Inc., which has also been ordered

to shutdown, said from 1,000, their staff levels had already fallen to 150.

"By the end of the month, we might have to let go of some more," Fernandez said.

"The problem is the relationship between the government and the industry. The government is more of a regulator rather than a partner in development," he added.

The DENR is yet to provide the recommendation reports of Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) — tasked to review the initial reports of the audit — for each mining companies that were recommended for suspension.

When asked for them, Lopez declined to provide them, saying the reports of MGB is in contrast with the decision of DENR.

This led COMP to think that Lopez's decision "may not have been even based on the review conducted by MGB."

Vicente Lao, who owns chromite producer Mt. Sinai Mining Exploration and Development Corp., which has also been ordered to close down, said Lopez took it upon herself to be the judge and the executioner of the mining industry.

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## DENR order... ◀B-1

"I am in no obligation to let you know what's happening here," Lopez earlier told reporters. "But MGB has been really really slow and I'm not happy with them at all. MGB just recommends and at the end of the day, I make the decision."

"If I'm not happy with it (MGB's recommendations), why would I give it to you? If I don't agree with it, why would I give with you? I don't want to show you the recommendations whatever reasons there may be," she added.

On Friday, the Philippines Stock Exchange halted the trading of several mining shares, involving listed mining companies and their subsidiaries that were either suspended and

closed down by the DENR. This includes nickel ore producers Nickel Asia Corp. and Marcventures Holdings, Inc.

The Philippines is the world's top nickel ore supplier yet the mining sector still contributes less than 1 percent to the economy.

Lopez said she "doesn't care" about the growth of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as long her fight for social justice is intact.

"Social justice.. Whatever that means. You are looking at fairy tale situation, which never happens even in an industrialized country," Nelia Halcon, COMP executive vice president, also said on Friday.



STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# MINE FIRMS FIGHT

STORY BY RONNEL W. DOMINGO

**The Philippine mining industry has challenged the planned closure of  
would affect an estimated 1.3 million people. It has also repeated its  
of the mining audit report of the Department of Environment and N**



**TUNNEL TRAP** This miner in  
nguet province and his family are  
ong the hundreds of thousands  
people who would suffer from  
closure of 23 mines in the  
untry.—INQUIRER FILE PHOTO

# Mining firms challenge closure

**FROM A1**

By **Ronnel W. Domingo**  
@ronwdomingoINQ

The Philippine mining industry challenged on Friday the planned closure of 23 mines, mostly nickel producers, and the suspension of at least five others, saying it would affect an estimated 1.3 million people.

Artemio Disini, chairman of the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines, said miners to be affected by the order could appeal to President Rodrigo Duterte "before going to the courts."

He said the closure and suspension placed 67,000 jobs at risk, with about P66.6 billion worth of annual production expected to be lost. The financial impact was also likely to be huge, with government seen to lose P16.7 billion in taxes.

Disini said the environment department had not sent the Chamber copies of the complete audit report despite repeated requests.

## Complicated

"We have done this repeatedly—verbally and in writing—but we get no response," Disini said, adding that Environment Secretary Gina Lopez had told them the report "is too complicated."

Lopez in July last year ordered an immediate review of the operations of all 41 metallic mines in the country. Three months later, she announced that only 11 mining companies "passed" the audit and 30 firms were either ordered suspended or recommended for suspension for failing to meet environmental safety standards.

But on Thursday she said that of the total, 23 mines had been told to close after illegally encroaching on watersheds,

leaking waste into rivers and destroying trees. A further five mines have been ordered to suspend their operations, while the decision on another mine has been deferred.

Most of the mines targeted for closure produce nickel, and account for half of the Philippines exports of the raw material used to make steel.

"There should be freedom of information here," protested Enrique C. Fernandez, president of Eramen Minerals Inc., operator of a nickel mine in Zambales. "We have never received any report. All we got was a set of questions that we should answer."

Eramen's mine has been idle for the past two and a half years, having been placed under suspension during the Aquino administration, which was maintained by Lopez.

## Facing closure

The Chamber was reaching out to the inter-agency Mining Industry Coordinating Council, chaired by Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III, before the group would consider going to court, Disini said.

Of the mines facing closure, seven are operated by Chamber members Eramen, Benguet Corp., LNL Archipelago Minerals Inc., Platinum Group Metals Corp., CTP Construction and Mining Corp., Marcventures Mining and Development Corp., and Hinatuan Mining Corp.

A subsidiary of Benguet Corp.—Benguetcorp Nickel Mines Inc.—is also facing a closure order.

Also, the operation of mines owned by members Oceanagold Philippines Inc. and Lepanto Consolidated Mining Corp. are facing suspension. A verdict on another member, Filminera Resources Corp., was "deferred" by the environment department.

Disini noted that none of the affected members received any communication from the department about the latest audit results.

## Appeal to the President

But Lopez said notices were sent out to concerned companies earlier this week.

"They (mining companies) can make an appeal to the President," Lopez said. "Finality of the order would depend on the President."

Disini said the results of the probe should have been communicated to the firms concerned rather than announced through the press.

It also came in trickles, with Lopez initially just listing 14 mines ordered closed and six others suspended. She added a 15th mine for shutdown as the briefing was ending. A further list of 21 mines for closure was later handed out to reporters.

It was only in the evening that the department submitted a final list that named 23 mines for closure and only five for suspension.

The list also misspelled company names and was inconsistent with Lopez's presentation slides.

Disini said the report was also "compromised" because the audit teams included anti-mining activists.

The Philippines is the world's top supplier of nickel ore and the main exporter to China, and the move is expected to fuel a rally in global prices. In 2015 the Philippines produced about 24 percent of the nickel consumed worldwide, according to Morgan Stanley.

The move risked sending signals out to the market and to mining investors that they are not welcome here," said Ronald Recidoro, the chamber's vice president for legal and policy affairs.

Mining stocks fell on Lopez's announcement, including Nickel Asia, one of the world's largest nickel producers, which fell 0.58 percent to P6.81, up slightly from the day's low of P6.61.

## Wanton violation

"While the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is on track in policing mining companies found to have wantonly violated the Philippine Mining Act, affected companies, however, can make an appeal and ask for reconsideration from the DENR," Presidential Spokesperson Ernesto Abella said.

The politically influential Catholic church joined anti-mining advocates in praising the move, which they claim caused "irreversible" damage to the community and environment.

Josephine Ignacio, coordinator and convenor of the Defender of the Environment for Genuine Development of Zambales, said that among those included in the list were mines that were located in the Zambales watershed.

"We've been protesting the destructive mining activities in our province and we're glad that our appeal did not fall on deaf ears," Ignacio said. —WITH REPORTS FROM AFP, REUTERS, LEILA B. SALAVERRIA AND ALLAN MACATUNO INQ.

# PEOPLES JOURNALS

Everybody's Newspaper

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# MINES SHUTDOWN PROBE URGED

Closure order  
denounced  
as 'illegal'  
and arbitrary

STORY ON PAGE 2

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## MINES CLOSURE PROBE URGED

By Ryan Ponce Pacpaco

FOR allegedly being "illegal and arbitrary," Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay yesterday sought a congressional investigation into the closure of 23 big mining companies and the suspension of 5 others for supposedly violating environmental laws.

"I will be filing a resolution investigating the announcement of the illegal suspension and closure orders," said Pichay who earlier hit the alleged absence of due process in the issuance of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) order.

Pichay scored anew Environment Secretary Gina Lopez for her alleged ignorance of the law following her harsh order against some mining firms, warning her not to "abuse and misuse powers" to "get her way at all cost."

"Ang problema kay Gina, nagmamamarunong siya eh, hindi nga siya marunong. She has no legal basis at all to close down mining firms. Wala siyang alam. She is obviously ignorant of the law and simply closes down serious business at her whim and caprices," Pichay said. "Gina Lopez doesn't know what she's doing. She does not know her job."

Hereiterated that the decision of Lopez will result in the national government losing billions of pesos in revenues yearly, adding that at least 10,000 direct workers and 50,000 indirect workers from his district alone will be displaced.

"The closure order is illegal and arbitrary," stressed Pichay as he explained that Lopez issued the closure order purportedly without according all mining firms "due process" and supposedly without regard to thousands of mine workers and their families that would be adversely affected by her arbitrariness.

Pichay accused Lopez of violating all pertinent laws about mining, including the Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA) that the mining firms signed with the government.

"We have entered into a contract with the government and without Lopez even conferring with us, she abrogated the contract. Contracts are signed by two parties. Two parties should agree whether to abrogate or honor the contracts. Now, she is using the government against us, misusing her powers and prosecuting us for alleged violations that she all had imagined," said Pichay.

"In the first place, the mining areas in Mindan-

ao are well within the areas that President Manuel Quezon declared as mineral reservation. Meaning, the areas are intended for mining, not for agriculture or other purposes. There is no watershed in these mining areas," Pichay pointed out.

Pichay insisted that under the MPSA, once an audit of the mining firm was decided, the government should inform the firm about the intention to audit and the firm is allowed to appoint an official to join the audit team.

After the audit, he said, the team would come up with a report and discuss the findings, including the supposed violations that were committed to allow the firms to "rectify" the violations.

"Nothing of that sort was done here. There is no such thing as a surprise audit. That's baloney. Injustice is obviously committed by Lopez here and we will not allow that," Pichay said.

Pichay also argued that mining firms are allowed to contest the findings that would lead to an "arbitration" that would give the firms one year to settle the issue with the government.

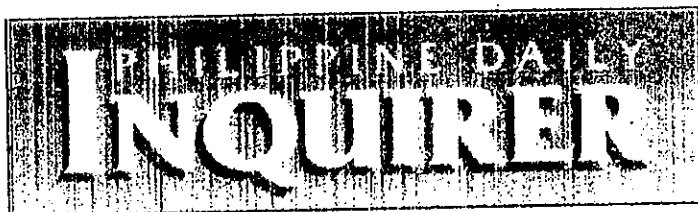
"If both parties—the government and the mining firms—failed to agree during the arbitration, that's when the mining firms could go to court," Pichay said.

Ordered closed were the Benguet Corp. Nickel Mines, Inc.; Benguet Corporation in Benguet; Eramen Minerals Inc.; Zambales Diversified Metals Corporation and LNL Archipelago Minerals Inc., all in Zambales; Mt. Sinai Mining Exploration and Development Corp.; Emir Minerals Corp. and Techiron Mineral Resources Inc., all in Homonhon Island, Eastern Samar.

Others are AAMPFIL Natural Resources Exploration; Kromico, Inc.; SinoSteel Philippines H.Y. Mining Corp.; Oriental Synergy Mining Corp.; Wellex Mining Corporation; Libjo Mining Corporation and Oriental Vision Mining Philippines Corp., all in Dinagat Islands.

Also ordered closed by the DENR were the ADNAMA Mining Resources Corp.; Claver Mining Development Corp.; Platinum Development Corp.; CTP Construction and Mining Corp.; Carrascal Nickel Corp.; Marcventues Mining and Development Corp. and Hinatuan Mining Corporation, all located in Surigao del Norte.

On the other hand, the DENR suspended the Berong Nickel Corporation; Oceanagold Phils., Inc.; Lepanto Consolidated Mining Corp.; Citinickel Mines and Development Corp.; and Strong Built Mining Development Corp.



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SMALL-SCALE MINING AREA

# ANTAMOK OPEN PIT MINE TAPPED FOR 'MINAHANG

## BAYAN' IN BENGUET

BAGUIO CITY—Environment Secretary Gina Lopez tapped the Antamok open pit mine in Itogon town on Friday as the pilot area for Benguet province's first Minahang Bayan (small-scale mining area), a day after she announced the shutdown of 23 mining operations.

Meeting with miners of Barangay Loacan in Itogon, Lopez said the communities surrounding the open pit mine have thrived solely on small-scale mining.

The mine used to form part of the grand Antamok project of

Benguet Corp., the country's first and oldest mining firm.

Lawyer Froilan Lawilao, head of administration of Benguet Corp.'s operations in Itogon, said converting a portion of the Antamok mine into a Minahang Bayan was part of the company's mine rehabilitation plan.

He said the company intended to have the Minahang Bayan share the area with an engineered sanitary landfill where it proposed to put up a waste-to-energy facility.

"We have submitted our

mine rehabilitation plan before the secretary's pronouncement and we are waiting for the decision of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau as to whether the plan was acceptable," Lawilao said.

Lopez flew aboard a Philippine Air Force helicopter to inspect the Liang River on Friday, which was polluted with mine waste attributed to leaks from a tailing facility.

She later met with members of the Loakan-Itogon Pocket Miners Association and Antamok-Loakan Miners As-

sociation.

Vergel Aniceto of the Itogon Inter-Barangay Alliance said, "She was amazed that even farmers engaged in small-scale mining."

### Only conditions

Lomino Kaniteng, president of the Benguet Small-Scale Mining Federation, said Lopez's only conditions were for the miners to create their own tailing pond and to work using traditional mining instruments.

He said several applica-

tions for Minahang Bayan in Benguet have been filed since 2004 but these have not been addressed by government regulators.

In August last year, Lopez stopped all small-scale mining operations outside the designated Minahang Bayan. Only five Minahang Bayan sites operate in the provinces of Quezon, Agusan del Sur, Davao Oriental, Eastern Samar and Dinagat Island.

Fay Apil, MGB Cordillera director, said the agency has been instructed to process the Mina-

hang Bayan application in Benguet.

She asked the applicants to secure the prior and informed consent of the indigenous community or their certification allowing the conversion of the area into a pocket mining site.

In 2004, a Minahang Bayan was proposed for Bakun town in Benguet but the application was never resolved by the provincial mining regulatory board. —REPORTS FROM VINCENT CABREZA AND KIMBERLIE QUITASOL INQ

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## MINES CLOSURE VERY COSTLY— CABINET MEN

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TRADE SECRETARY RAMON LOPEZ

By Julito G. Rada, Othel V. Campos and Anna Leah E. Gonzales

THE country's economic managers expressed concern that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' decision to close down 21 mining companies could cost not only thousands of jobs but also hurt local government finances and the national economy.

Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez said the closure of the mining companies will not only deprive jobs to thousands of people across the country but also affect the finances of local governments and also the national government.

"In Surigao alone, one company employs 10,000 people. That's my

primary concern—the impact on employment in these rural areas," Dominguez said.

"My next concern is the impact on the local government finance because they pay a lot of taxes to the local governments. We are still assessing how different municipalities will be affected. We will check with local treasurers to give us a potential impact on the local communities," Dominguez said.

On the national front, Dominguez said, the mining closures could lower the projected growth of gross domestic product.

As part of contingency planning, Dominguez said he already asked other members of the Cabinet if they have in place emergency employment programs to cushion the impact of job losses.

He said the Social Welfare and Development and Public Works and Highways are looking at emergency programs to create jobs, as are the Trade and Industry and Labor departments.

Duterte's economic managers, however, have not reached a unified position on the mining issue, he said.

Dominguez said he has not yet spoken to President Duterte regarding the mine closures and said he might seek an audience with the chief executive.

Trade Secretary Ramon Lopez admitted Friday that the closure of 21 mining companies would hurt exports and the economy.

"Despite the small contribution to exports, the industry is still a dollar-earner," he said.

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FINANCE SECRETARY CARLOS DOMINGUEZ III

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## Mines...

From A1

The department is looking for ways to offset what will be lost if the mining companies are shut down, he said.

But Lopez also acknowledged that some companies were not following the government's mining regulations.

"They need to level up, acquire technology that will allow them to do value-adding processes and refrain from exporting ore alone," Lopez said.

He said the companies could be back in operations soon with a few adjustments to their systems and procedures.

The Chamber of Mines of the Philippines said Friday the government will lose about P 16.7-billion taxes annually once the 21 mining companies will be closed down and five others will be suspended.

In a press conference, chamber chairman Artemio Disini said a total of 1.2-million indirect and induced jobs are also at risk.

"The mining industry is found to have a multiplier effect of at least four depending on the location of the operations," Disini said.

Some P66.6 billion in gross production value of large-scale mining operations will also be lost annually, the group said.

National Economic and Development Authority director-general Ernesto Pernia said his agency has not yet reached an official position on the mine closures.

"Ideally, it should be responsible mining but it's easier said than done," he said.

Bangko Sentral Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said they would continue to monitor the potential impact of the mine closures.

"We have a very resilient economy and great potential capacity to grow beyond 7 percent. Infrastructure, both hard and soft, is therefore critical and the tax reform pack-

age should make this more manageable to navigate without blowing our fiscal space," Guinigundo said.

Environment Secretary Regina Lopez announced Thursday that out of the 41 metallic mines in the country, 21 will be closed down, six companies will be suspended and only 12 passed a mining audit.

She drew support from President Rodrigo Duterte, who said he was elated by the decision to close 21 mining companies that failed the mining audit.

Also on Friday, two listed mining companies requested for a halt in the trading of their shares as they seek additional information about the closure and suspension orders.

Marceventures Holdings Inc. and Global Ferronickel Holdings Inc. both asked that the trading of their shares be suspended from Feb. 3 to Feb 6.

Marceventures's unit Marceventures Mining and Development Corp. was among the 21 mining companies ordered for closure by Environment Department.

On the other hand, Global Ferronickel is still trying to get clarification from Environment Department if its unit Platinum Group Metals Corp. is also among the companies ordered for closure.

Presidential Spokesman Ernesto Abella said Friday that mining companies affected by the closure orders could still appeal the decision.

"The Duterte administration promotes inclusive prosperity and responsible mining--which means adhering to standards that are sensitive to environmental and social issues," Abella said. **With Jenniffer Austria and John Paolo Bencito**

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### BNMI denies it's in watershed area

BENGUET CORP NICKEL MINES, INC. (BNMI) takes strong exception to the announcement by DENR Secretary Gina Lopez in a press conference on the result of the mine audit review that a Closure Order will be issued against its nickel project in Sta. Cruz, Zambales.

While it has not yet received a copy of the Closure Order, it appears the basis of the Closure Order is the allegation that BNMI is operating in a watershed area.

The Company disputes this. In fact, its nickel project is located within a declared mineral reservation (Zambales Chromite Mineral Reservation) and for which the company is paying 5% royalty fee to the government in addition to excise tax and others. Moreover, its Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA) prior

to approval was given the requisite area clearance by the DENR.

In its response to the mining audit report on October 24, 2016, BNMI maintained that its operation is fully compliant with environmental standards.

The lifting of the suspension order last August 24, 2015 confirms that it has performed all the remediation conditions set by DENR.

The latest suspension order issued on July 7, 2016 was not for environmental violations but for alleged filing of Kalikasan case, provincial moratorium on mining and complaints of anti-mining groups, which are premature and insufficient grounds for suspension.

The Company will avail of various legal options available to it to nullify the baseless Closure Order upon its receipt.



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### BNMI complies with environmental standards

**BENGUET Corp. Nickel Mines Inc. (BNMI) yesterday maintained that its operation is fully compliant with environmental standards.**

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#### BNMI...

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BNMI stressed this in a statement after Environment Sec. Gina Lopez ordered 21 mining firms closed and five others suspended the other day.

The full statement reads: Benguet Corp. Nickel Mines, Inc. (BNMI) takes strong exception to the announcement by DENR Secretary Gina Lopez in a press conference held today (February 2) on the result of the mine audit review, that a Closure Order will be issued against its nickel project in Sta. Cruz, Zambales.

While it has not yet re-

ceived copy of the Closure Order, it appears the basis of the Closure Order is the allegation that BNMI is operating in a watershed area.

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### Solons back DENR chief

House Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez yesterday led congressional leaders in assuring Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Gina Lopez of solid backing in her decision to close down 23 mining firms and suspension of five others, some of which are allegedly owned by influential politicians.

Alvarez told a radio interview that Lopez's decision is justified despite warnings from the affected mining industry that the closure

or suspension of firms will trigger massive unemployment and contribute to worsening poverty in the affected localities.

"Totoo 'yan na may mga malilit na trabaho na mawawala, kaya lang po ay kung papalitan naman ito ng pagsira ng kalikasan at ang magdudusa rin sa mga panahon ng kalamidad ay iyong mga tao din mismo sa lugar na iyon, mahirap kunin ang argumento na 'yun," he said. (Ben R. Rosario)

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# SOLOON WANTS PROBE ON MINING FIRMS' CLOSURE

**Gov't to lose billions of pesos with Lopez order -- Pichay**  
FOR allegedly being "illegal and arbitrary," Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay yesterday sought a congressional investigation into the closure of 23 big mining companies in the country and the suspension of 5 others for supposedly violating environmental laws. **/Page 6**

By RYAN  
PONCE  
PACPACO

## Solon...

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"I will be filing a resolution investigating the announcement of the illegal suspension and closure orders," said Pichay who earlier hit the alleged absence of due process on the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) order. Pichay, scored away Environment Sec. Gina Lopez for her alleged ignorance of the law following her harsh order against some mining firms, warning her not to "abuse and misuse powers" to "get her way at all cost."

"Ang problema kay

Gina, nagmamamunong siya eh, hindi nga siya mamunong. She has no legal basis at all to close down mining firms. Wala siyang alam. She is obviously ignorant of the law and simply closes down serious business at her whim and caprices," Pichay said. "Gina Lopez doesn't know what she's doing. She does not know her job."

He reiterated that the decision of Lopez will result to billions of pesos in lost revenues yearly to the national government, adding that at least 10,000 direct workers and 50,000 indirect workers from his district alone will be displaced.

"The closure order is illegal and arbitrary," stressed Pichay as he ex-

plained that Lopez issued the closure order purportedly without according all mining firms the "due process" and supposedly without regard to thousands of mine workers and their families that would be adversely affected by her arbitrariness.

Pichay accused Lopez of violating all pertinent laws about mining, including the Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA) that the mining firms signed with the government.

"We have entered into a contract with the government and without Lopez even conferring with us, she abrogated the contract. Contracts are signed by two parties. Two parties should agree whether to abrogate or honor the contracts. Now,

she is using the government against us; misusing her powers and prosecuting us for alleged violations that she all had imagined," said Pichay.

In the first place, the mining areas in Mindanao are well within the areas that President Manuel Quezon declared as mineral reservation. Meaning, the areas are intended for mining, not for agriculture or other purposes. There is no watershed in these mining.

Pichay insisted that under the MPSA, once an audit of the mining firm was decided, the government should inform the firm about the intention to audit and the firm is allowed to appoint an official to join the audit team.

After the audit, he said, the team would come up with a report and discuss the findings, including the supposed violations that were committed to allow the firms to "rectify" the violations.

"Nothing of that sort was done here. There is no such thing as a surprise audit. That's baloney. Injustice is obviously committed by Lopez here and we will not allow that," Pichay said.

Pichay also argued that mining firms are allowed to contest the findings that would lead to an "arbitration" that would give the firms one year to settle the issue with the government.

"If both parties -- the government and the mining

firms -- failed to agree during the arbitration, that's when the mining firms could go to court," Pichay said.

Ordered closed were the Benguet Corp. Nickel Mines, Inc.; Benguet Corporation in Benguet; Eramen Minerals Inc.; Zambales Diversified Metals Corporation and LNL Archipelago Minerals Inc., all in Zambales; Mt. Sinai Mining Exploration and Development Corp.; Emir Minerals Corp. and Techiron Mineral Resources Inc., all in Homonhon Island, Eastern Samar.

Others are AAMPIL Natural Resources Exploration; Kromico, Inc.; SinoSteel Philippines H.Y. Mining Corp.; Oriental Synergy Mining Corp.; Wellex Mining Corporation; Libjo

Mining Corporation and Oriental Vision Mining Philippines Corp., all in Dinagat Islands.

Also ordered closed by the DENR were the ADNAMA Mining Resources Corp.; Claver Mining Development Corp.; Platinum Development Corp.; CTP Construction and Mining Corp.; Carrascal Nickel Corp.; Marcventures Mining and Development Corp. and Hinatuan Mining Corporation, all located in Surigao del Norte.

On the other hand, the DENR suspended the Berong Nickel Corporation; Oceanagold Phils., Inc.; Lepanto Consolidated Mining Corp.; Citinickel Mines and Development Corp.; and Strong Built Mining Development Corp. **RPR**

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## Environment, climate advocates laud DENR closure of mining operations

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Environment and climate advocates, as well as members of grassroot communities, lauded the Department of Environment and Natural Resource's (DENR) closure of 23 mining operations situated in functional watersheds and suspension of five mining firms, as of January 31, 2017.

"This action by the government has finally brought into the forefront the long history of suffering inflicted by the country's large-scale mining industry on our environment and our mining-affected communities," Concerned Citizens of Sta. Cruz (CCOS) chairman Dr. Benito Molino said.

Molino referred to DENR Secretary Gina Lopez's findings on the grave environmental degradation and disruption of community lives that have been occurring in the mining capital regions of the country.

"The campaign that calls for holding accountable destructive mining firms and for the halt of these recently closed mining operations has been left unheeded for years until now," Molino said.

"It takes bold and concrete actions to put an immediate stop to the environmental degradation and community life destruction that have long been the mark of large-scale mining industries in this country. The DENR amply stepped up to this challenge with its closure of a number of mining operations," Molino added.

Sanlakas secretary general Aaron Pedrosa hoped that this paves the way for more empowered communities in their fight to reclaim their home and their proper way of life from destructions caused by the large-scale mining industry.

In lauding the DENR closure of a number of mining operations, Pedrosa expressed the need for continuous action, both by the state and its citizens, against possible retaliatory measures to be undertaken by huge mining companies.

"Stronger safeguards need to be installed in our institutions to truly break away from the current state of affairs of our environment where

only a handful from the mining industry dominate in extracting and benefitting from the country's natural resources," stated Pedrosa.

In concurring with the observance of Secretary Lopez during the DENR mining audits, Center for Energy, Ecology and Development (CEED) National Convenor Gerry Arances noted that farmers and fishers from mining-affected communities are often stripped of their health and their livelihood due to the disruptive presence of mining operations in affected areas.

According to Arances, compounded with statements from Molino, in Sta. Cruz, Zambales alone, the visible environmental impacts of mining operations by Benguet Corp Nickel Mines Incorporated, Eramen Minerals Incorporated, LNL Archipelago Minerals Incorporated, and Zambales Diversified Metals Corporation, included air pollution, biodiversity loss, floods, food insecurity, loss of landscape/aesthetic degradation, soil contamination and erosion, waste overflow, deforestation and loss of vegetation cover, and surface water pollution.

CCOS, Sanlakas and CEED have long supported the passage of bills like the Alternative Minerals Management Bill (AMMB), a bill that champions the adoption of a sustainable, rational, needs-based minerals management, geared towards effective utilization of mineral resources for the goal of attaining an ecologically-sound national and modernized agriculture.

A leader of the House of Representatives also backed the decision of DENR to shut down 23 mining firms and the suspension of five more.

In a statement, House natural resources committee chairman and Bayan Muna Rep, Carlos Isagani Zarate also called for the immediate enforcement of the said DENR order and the permanent closure of companies that caused massive damage to the environment and people's livelihood. **PNA**



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**Pagpapasara sa mga**  
**minahan, pinun**  
Pinaling Simbahang Katoliko ang  
Administrasyong Department of Environmental and Natural  
Resources (DENR) na ipasara ang 21  
matatag na bansa.  
Sa Inhabas na pahayag, Kailala  
ng Bishop Conference of the  
Pinaling ang matapang na kailangang  
Environment Secretary Gina Lopez para  
ilang illegal mining na nagdara  
sa bansa.  
Sa Fr. Edwin Garibay, Executive  
Secretary National Secretary  
Ang BCP, Ikinatutuhan ang  
pangangalaga sa bansa  
sa bansa.

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### LOPEZ NG DENR PALABAN

Nasa fighting mood si Environment Secretary Gina Lopez laban sa mga irresponsableng mining firms na pinatawan ng closure order ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Ayon kay Lopez, kapakanan ng mamamayan ang uunahin nila sa usapin ng mining sa bansa at wala umanong makakabali sa kanyang utos maliban kung ito ay babawin ng Malakanyang.

Pero ayon sa kalihim, malinaw ang direktiba sa kanya ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na walisin ang mga pasaway na minahan na dahilan ng matinding pagkasira ng ka-

likasan at sa huli ay perwisyo sa kalusugan at kabuhatan ng mamamayan.

Bukas din ang DENR sa inihahandang legal action ng Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) at ang plano ng grupo na kumbinsihin ang Pangulo na bawiin ang closure order sa 23 minahan na inilabas ng DENR.

Giit ng COMP, hindi dumaan sa due process ang audit ng DENR sa 41 mining firms sa bansa dahil hindi sila binigyan ng pagkakataon na sagutin ang mining audit report ng kagawaran.

Nababahala rin ang grupo sa epekto ng anila'y padalus-dalos na

desisyon ng DENR dahil magreresulta ito ng pagka-dismantle o mass lay-off ng tinatayang nasa 1.2 milyong minero at empleyado ng mga mining firms.

Sa pinal na listahan ng mining audit report ng DENR, 23 ang kumpanyang ipinasasara ng kagawaran. Nadagdag dito ang Benguet Corporation mula sa Benguet at Ore Asia Mining and Development Corporation mula sa Bulacan.

Samantala, pinuri ng Simabahang Katolika ang DENR dahil napanahon ito dahil mataagal nang inaabuso ng mga mining firms ang

kalikasan.

Sinabi ni Fr. Edwin Gariguez, executive secretary ng National Secretariat for Social Action (NASSA)/ Caritas Philippines labis itong natutuwa sa ginawa ng ahensya kasabay ng pagsasabing hindi lahat ng ginawa ng administrasyon ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte ay masama.

Suportado rin ni House Speaker Pantaleon "Bebot" Alvarez ang DENR subalit ang inaala-la nito ay ang kapakanan ng 75,000 mining workers na mawawalan ng trabaho dahil sa pagpapasara sa mga minahan. (Jun Tadios/Bernard Taguinod/Noel Abuel)

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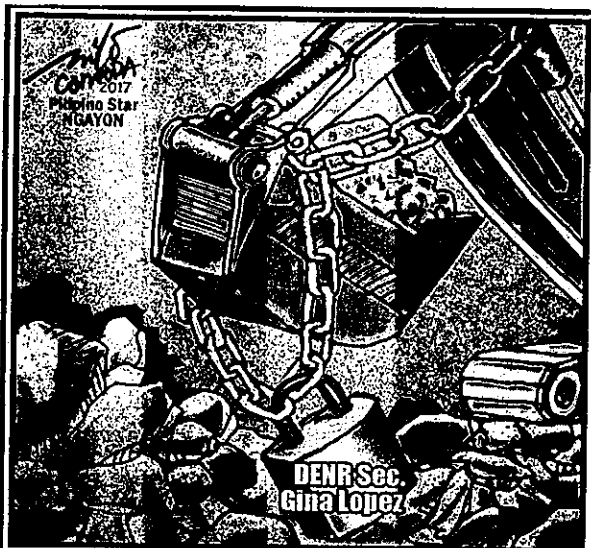
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**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**



***Editorial***

**Mga iresponsableng minahan**

**D**ALAWAMPU'T tatlong minahan ang ipinasara ni Environment Sec. Gina Lopez sapagkat sinisira ng mga ito ang mga kabundukan at watershed areas. Pinapatay ang mga ilog at tinatabunan ng mga latak ang mga kabukiran. Dahil sa kairesponsablehang gawaing ito, naaapektuhan ang pinagkukunan ng ikabubuhay ng mga magsasaka at manglingisda.

Sinuportahan ni Pres. Rodrigo Duterte ang ginawa ni Lopez na pagpapasara sa 23 minahan na ang karamihan ay nasa Mindanao. Lima pang minahan ang sinuspende ng DENR secretary. Ang ginawa niya ay ikinatuwa ng mga sector na nagmamalasakit sa kalikasan. Ang mga minahan na ipinasara ay nasa Surigao del Sur, Surigao del Norte, Dinagat Islands, Homonhon Island, Benguet, Bulacan at Zambales.

Nang hirangin ni Duterte si Lopez noong Hulyo 2016, ipinahayag niya, "I don't like mining, the foreigners and the rich are the only ones benefitting from it but the farmers and the fishermen suffer."

Maraming iresponsableng minahan na sumisira sa kapaligiran. Hinuhukay at binubutas ang mga bundok nang walang pakundangan. Wala silang pakialam kung mawasak man ang mga bundok. Gaya nang ginawa sa kaburidukan ng Compostela Valley at ilang bahagi ng Davao Oriental. Nakunan ng picture ang mga kabundukan doon noong 2012 at nakapanghihilakbot ang makikita sapagkat butas-butas na ang mga bundok sa mga nasabing lugar. Nang manalasa ang bagyong "Pablo" noong 2012, gumuho ang bundok na maraming hukay. Napuno ng tubig ang mga butas at iyon ang naging dahilan para magkaroon ng landslides. Tinangay ng putik ang mga bahay kasama ang mga troso. Nasa 314 katao ang namatay.

Ganito rin ang nangyari sa St. Bernard, Southern Leyte noong Peb. 17, 2006, kung saan naguho ang bundok at tinakpan ang isang barangay.

Sino ang makalilimot sa ginawa ng Marcopper Mining Company sa Marinduque noong Marso 24, 1996. Nasira ang kapaligiran at kalikasan doon. Nalason at namatay ang Boac River dahil sa tailings ng Marcopper.

Kahanga-hanga ang ginagawa ni Secretary Lopez. Nararapat siyang suportahan sa kanyang adbo-kasiya na mapangalagaan ang kapaligiran at likas na yaman.

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

**JOEY G. VENANCIO**

Sumbong at Reaksyon...

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### Grabeng logging at mining sa Agusan at Dinagat

ANG grabeng mga pagbaha sa Agusan ay malikha sa kanilang walang patungay na pagtatagpuan sa mga malaking puno sa kabundukan at sa mga mining sa rehiyon.

Ito ang nangyari sa mga panahon ng Sec. Gina Lopez ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa kanilang annual inspection sa probinsya.

Kaya nito review ngayon ni Lopez ang mga pagtatagpuan ng banyaga sa kumpanya ng pagmamimuna sa Agusan.

Ang maraming barangay nasa sa Agusan del Sur ay ilang linggonang lubog sa baha ng mga dalang putik.

Panay din ang land use sa kabundukan dahil wala nang malalaking puno na mababaw ang lupa na bumibigay pagbaha tuwing babagsak ang malapag na ulan.

Matagal na ang problema ng ita, panahon pa ni Gloria M. Arroyo (9 years) at Noynoy C. Aquino (9 years) ay ganito na ang nangyayari tuwing tag-ulan sa baha ng ita ng Mindanao.

Sa panahon ngayon ni Rodrigo Roca Duterte, sa pamamagitan ni Lopez ay asahan maging maayos ang tala ng mga pagtatagpuan at mining hindi lang sa Agusan kundi maging sa Lanao del Sur/ Norte, Dinagat Island, etc.

Oo, Salitanon del Sur, kung magkaroon ng malakas na pag-ulan ay tiyak na lubog ang Iligan City at Cagayan de Oro City.

Naalala nyo ba nung panahon ni Arroyo nang magkaroon ng grabeng pagbaha sa Iligan at Cagayan? Malalaking problema na nod mula sa kabundukan ang sumira sa mga kabahayan at maging humupa ang baha ay puro putik ang kapaligiran ng mga naturang lungsod?

Kamakailan lang ay nangyari uli ito sa Cagayan de Oro. Ilang araw lumubog sa baha ang ilang barangays. Grabeng!

Kaya panahon na para higpit ang gobyerno ang pagmamimuna sa logging, kundi ay darating ang panahon na tuluyang lubog sa baha at putik ang mga naturang lungsod. Mismo!

### Mga minahan pinasara ng DENR

Sir Joey, maraming minahan na ngayon ang pinasara ni Sec. Gina Lopez. Kaya bilib kami dito sa tapang ng babang ito. Malalaking kumpanya ang pagmamimuna ang binangon nito. Dapat kasuhan ni Lopez ang mga may-aring mining companies. Dapat makulong ang mga morderong ating kalikasan. Salamat po. - Jing Bautista ng Dinagat Island

### Mga Kolorum sa Baclaran

Sir Joey, grabeng po ang mga kolorum dito sa tapang ng Max's Baclaran, mga byaheng Paliparan po. May ID po nakalagay 'POFOY' hanggang Metro Manila po hawakan nila. Wala po silang huli sa LTRB, LTO at MM DA. Sana mapasa aksiyunan ito ni Pangulong Duterte. Salamat po. - Concerned citizen

### Kapitan na adik sa Caibiran, Biliran

Gud day po, Mr. Venancio. Alam kong wala pa po akong karapatan sa him ito dahil mordero dad pa po ako. Meron po dito sa aming lugar na mga sa magamit ng shabu. Isa na po dito kung 'Kapitan' nati... sa lalim ng Caibiran, Biliran. Sana po ay magsiyunan agad ito. Wag po labas ang numero ko. Delgado. - Concerned citizen

### Talamak parin ang droga sa Malibay, Pasay City

Sir Joey, marami parin droga dito sa Bay 157, Apelo Cruz st., Malibay, Pasay City. Pulis day po ang pagbabagsak dito. Sana naman magsiyunan at maging ita ito. Kawawa po ang mga biktima na nalululong sa droga. - Concerned citizen

### Walang direktor ng LTRB sa R-8

Sir Joey hanggang ngayon ay wala pang direktor sa LTRB Region 8. Paano nakamaging na P.A. lang? Kung mag-apply uli kami ng P.A. walang pipinalat ulungan mo kami matparating ito sa pamunuan. Salamat po. - Concerned operator



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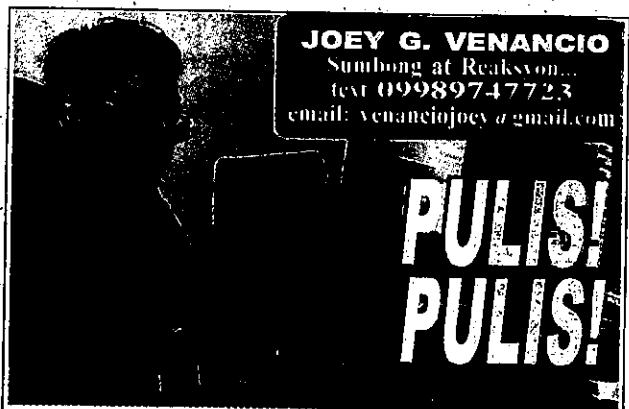
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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



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**PULIS!  
PULIS!**

### GRABENG LOGGING AT MINING SA AGUSAN AT DINAGAT

ANG grabeng mga pagbaha sa Agusan ay maliwanag na sanhi ng walang patumanggang pagputol sa mga malalaking puno sa kabundukan at talamak na mining sa rehiyon.

Ito ang natuklasan ng tanggapan ni Sec. Gina Lopez ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa kanilang aerial inspection sa probinsiya.

Kaya nire-review ngayon ni Lopez ang mga papel ng mga banyagang kumpanya na nagmimina sa Agusan.

Ang maraming barangay ngayon sa Agusan del Sur ay ilang linggo nang lubog sa baha, baha na may dalang putik.

Panay din ang landsides sa kabundukan dahil wala nang malalaking puno na makapitan ang lupa, na bumibigay pababa tuwing babagsak ang malakas na ulan.

Matagal na ang problemang ito. Panahon pa ni Gloria M. Arroyo (9 years) at Noyonoy C. Aquino (6 yrs) ay ganito na ang nangyayari tuwing tag-ulan sa bahaging ito ng Mindanao.

Sa panahon ngayon ni Rodrigo Roa-Duterte, sa pamamagitan ni Lopez ay asahan nating matigil na ang talamak na illegal logging at mining hindi lang sa Agusan kundi maging sa Lanao del Sur/Norte, Dinagat Island, etc.

Oo. Sa Lanao del Sur, kapag nagkaroon ng malakas na pag-ulan ay tiyak lulubog ang Iligan City at Cagayan de Oro City.

Naalala nyo ba nung panahon ni Arroyo nang magkaroon ang grabeng pagbaha sa Iligan at Cagayan? Malalaking troso na inahod mula sa kabundukan ang sumira sa mga kabahayan at nang humupa ang baha ay puro putik ang kapaligiran ng mga naturang lungsod?

Kamakailan lang ay nangyari uli ito sa Cagayan de Oro. Hangaraw lumubog sa baha ang ilang barangays. Grabeng...

Kaya panahon na para higpitan pa ng gobyerno ang pagmimina at logging, kundi ay darating ang panahon na tuluyan nang lulubog sa baha at putik ang mga naturang lungsod. Mismo!

#### Mga minahan pinasara ng DENR

Sir Joey, maraming minahan na ngayon ang pinasara ni Sec. Gina Lopez. Kaya bilib kami dito sa tapang ng babaeng ito. Malalaking kumpanya ng pagmimina ang binangga niya. Dapat kasuhan ni Lopez ang mga may-ari ng mining companies. Dapat makulong ang mga murderer ng ating kalikasan. Salamat po. - Jing Bautista ng Dinagat Island

#### Mga kolorum sa Baclaran

Sir Joey, grabe po ang mga kolorum dito sa tapat ng Max's Baclaran, mga byaheng Paliparan po. May ID po nakalagay 'POPOY' hanggang metro manila po hawak nila. Wala po silang huli sa LTRFB, LTO at MMDA. Sana mapaaaksiyunan ito ni Pangulong Duterte. Salamat po. - Concerned citizen

#### Kapitan na adik sa Caibiran, Biliran

Gud day po, Mr. Venancio. Alam kong wala pa po akong karapatan sabihin ito dahil menor de edad pa po ako. Meron po dito sa amin lugar na mga gumagamit ng shabu. Isa na po dito iyong "Kapitan" na si ... sa lugar na Looc, Caibiran, Biliran. Sana po ay maaksiyunan agad ito. Wag po ilabas ang numero ko. Delikado. - Concerned citizen

#### Talamak parin ang droga sa Malibay, Pasay City

Sir Joey, marami parin drugs dito sa Brgy. 157, Apelo Cruz st., Malibay, Pasay City. Pulis daw po ang nagbabagsak dito. Sana naman maaksiyunan at matigil na ito. Kawawa po ang mga biktima na nalululong sa droga. - Concern citizen

#### Walang direktor ng LTRFB sa R-8

Sir Joey hanggang ngayon ay wala pang director sa LTRFB Region 8. Paano na kaming maka-P.A. lang? Kung mag-apply uli kami ng P.A. walang pipirma. Tulungan mo kami maiparating ito sa pamunuan. Salamat po. - Concerned operator

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## Editorial

### PAGMIMINA NG MARMOL AT SEMENTO, SIYASATIN DIN

MAGANDA ang hakbang ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na ipasara ang 21 mining firms at isuspinde ang pitong large-scale mining company sa bansa na napatunayang nakasisira sa kapaligiran base sa anim na buwang pag-awdit ng kagawaran.

Magandang hakbang ito dahil walang napipinsala ang mga kompanyang ito kundi ang kabuhayan ng mahihirap na mamamayan na nagdurusa kapag nasisira ang bukirin, palaisdaan at bahura sa karagatan katulad ng nangyari sa Zambales.

Masayang-masaya ang Concerned Citizens of Sta. Cruz sa pamumuno ni Dr. Benito Molino dahil nagkaroon ng katarungan ang kanilang matagal nang kampanya laban sa mga kompanyang sumira sa kabuhayan ng mga mamamayan ng Sta. Cruz.

Bagamat suportado si DENR Secretary Gina Lopez ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte, may masa-

mang ulat na ilang tiwaling opisyal ng Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) ang magkakampanya upang hindi makalusot sa Commission of Appointments ang kalihim. Ibig sabihin,

maglalabas ng lobby money ang grupo, madiskaril lamang ang pagkatalaga ni Lopez sa kagawaran.

Ngunit dapat ding pag-ukulan ng pansin ni Lopez hindi lamang ang mga nagmimina ng mineral kundi pati ang nagmimina ng marmol at semento, lalo sa malapit sa watershed sa Bulacan. Ang halos araw-araw na pagpapaputok ng dinamita at iba pang pampasabog doon ay nakaaapekto na sa mga bahay at kalsada kaya delikado

maging sa estruktura ng Bustos at Angat Dams. Napakamapanganib nito kaya dapat ding pag-ukulan ng pansin ng DENR na magkaroon ng awdit sa lahat ng nagmimina ng semento at marmol sa Bulacan, Rizal at iba pang panig ng ating bansa.



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### Sa pagpapasara sa 23 minahan **1.2M MAGIGING TAMBAY**

UMALMA ang industriya ng minahan sa bansa sa pagpapasara ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Gina Lopez sa may 23 minahan at pagsuspende sa operasyon ng limang iba pa.

Ayon sa Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP), hindi paging parehas si Lopez sa pag-imbestiga sa operasyon ng may 41 metallic mines sa bansa.

Sinabi ni COMP Chairman Artemio F. Disini na umapelá na sila kay Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez na pulungin ang Mineral Industry Coordinating

Council (MICC) para talakayin kung may sapat na basehan ang DENR sa pagpapasara at pagsuspende sa naturang mga minahan.

"We have been supportive of government's policies and programs as investors in government agreements and as partners, we feel there is an urgent need for convening the MICC to look into the basis of the arbitrary mine closure and suspension orders which we believe was undertaken without due process. The results of the audit has not been released by Sec. Lopez saying that it is too complicated," wika ni Disini sa liham kay Sec.

Dominguez.

Aminado si Disini na malaki ang epekto ng aksiyon ng DENR sa kanilang industriya lalo na't abot sa 1.2 milyon ang mawawalan ng trabaho.

Ang mga miyembro ng COMP na ipinasasara ang operasyon ay ang Benguet Corporation, Benguet Corp Nickel Mines, Eramen Minerals, LNL Archipelago, Playinum Group Metals, CTP Constructions, Marcventures at Hinatuan Mining habang suspendido naman ang Oceanagold at Lepanto Consolidated Mining.

**MONCHET LARAÑO**



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## DOF reviews P800-M fine for scrapping lake dredging

By MARY GRACE PADIN  
and RHODINA VILLANUEVA

The Department of Finance (DOF) is reviewing the ruling made by a World Bank (WB) body ordering the Philippine government to pay P800 million in compensation for the cancellation of the P18.7-billion Laguna Lake Rehabilitation Project during the Aquino administration.

Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III said the International Center for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) favored the Belgian dredging firm Baggerwerken Decloedt En Zoon (BDZ).

Sought for comment, former president Benigno Aquino III said he has yet to read the decision.

But he noted the Belgian firm was the same one that dredged the Pasig River before his tenure as president and the Department of Science and Technology determined that

at most, only 40 percent of the project was done and the allocation had all been used.

ICSID ordered the Philippine government to pay P800 million plus interest to BDZ for all the losses incurred by the firm for the project's cancellation.

"We just got the documents a few days ago so we'll go over it carefully and we'll see what legal remedies there are. If we have to pay, we will pay," Dominguez said.

He said the Philippine government has a track record of paying its obligations from decisions and rulings made against it.

"As President Duterte has said, we will always honor all our obligations," he said.

In April of last year, the Supreme Court affirmed its September 2015 ruling for the government to pay \$521 million in compensation and interest to the Philippine International Air Terminals Co.

Inc. for building the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3.

"The payment of the decision against us with regard to the NATA 3, that's already been paid," Dominguez said.

For his part, Environment and Natural Resources Undersecretary Demetrio Ignacio said government lawyers would have to intervene since the decision is a legal issue.

"It would be prudent to consult the right people first so we'll know what is the next thing to do," said Ignacio, former undersecretary for policy and planning and now undersecretary for staff bureaus of the department.

Meanwhile, the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA), an agency under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, (DENR) refused to comment on the matter.

LLDA public relations officer Mureen Tolentino said the

LLDA is not the best agency to make a statement on the recent ruling by the ICSID.

In scrapping the project, Aquino said the P18.7-billion project would involve the removal of silt from one portion of the lake to another and that if the objective was to increase the water holding capacity of the lake, this would not do the job.

BDZ filed a P6-billion lawsuit for breach of contract against the Philippines after the deal was scrapped unilaterally by the government in 2010 after the Aquino administration identified it as a "midnight deal" of the previous administration.

Earlier, then Laguna Rep. Dan Fernandez asked Aquino to immediately investigate the alleged "midnight deal" of the Arroyo administration. Fernandez said the project was awarded without competitive bidding by the DENR.

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### BAGO NA ANG NAMAMAHALA SA LLDA

ITULOY natin ang pagtalakay sa korapsyon na kinasangkutan ng mag-inang Dr. Nereus Acosta at Socorro Acosta.

Nasangkot ang dalawa sa P5.5 milyong iskan ng kanyang Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) noong 2002.

Natagpuan ng Sandiganbayan ang mag-ina na sangkot ang mga ito sa nasabing iskan.

Dahil dito, tinanggal na rin ni Pangulong Rodrigo Roa Duterte si Dr. Nereus na general manager ng Laguna Lake Development Authority.

Bukod sa 10-taong pagkakakulong, bawal na ring humawak ng anomang posisyon sa pamahalaan si Acosta habambuhay.

Palagay ko, maging kagawad sa barangay ay bawal na rin.

Ganoon din si Socorro—habambuhay na ring bawal na magkaroon ng posisyon sa anomang organo ng pamahalaan, bukod sa pagkabilanggo dahil "guilty" rin siya sa kaugnay na kaso ng korapsyon.

Pangulo noon si Benigno Cojuangco Aquino III nang ilabas ng Sandiganbayan

### BADILLA Ngayon

NI NELSON S. BADILLA

ang desisyon, ngunit hindi niya sinibak si Acosta.

Kung bakit, si Acosta kasapi ng Liberal Party (LP).

Ang banggit sa akin ng mga kaibigan natin sa LLDA, napakatalamak ng korapsyon sa nasabing ahensya.

Napakaraming kompanyang nakikipagtransaksyon sa LLDA na obligadong magbayad dahil sa kanilang 'basura' na makaaapekto sa Lawa ng Laguna.

Napanood ko si Medina sa telebisyon na pinangunahan ang pagbaklas sa mga baklad.

Sana tuluy-tuloy, seryoso at tapatsi Medina sa paglilinis ng Lawa ng Laguna. Sana seryoso at tapat si Joey Medina sa pagpapatigil ng korapsyon sa LLDA.

Babantayan ko ang LLDA at si Joey Medina.

Problema at hinaing n'yo, itawag, o i-text sa: 0998-5650271.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SER

## Implementing the rules on the prevention of pollution from ships

IN August 2016, I wrote about the need to protect the marine environment and the impact of not fully implementing the International Convention on the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973 as modified by the Protocol in 1978 (MARPOL). The Philippines ratified MARPOL and its Annexes I to V in 2000. I remember quite well how the Senate in conducting public hearings, prior to giving its concurrence to the proposed ratification, asked pertinent agencies i.e. Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) and the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) on why it took more than twenty years for them to work on the ratification of a very important maritime convention as was propounded by these agencies during the hearing.

17 years after ratifying MARPOL and its Annexes I to V, no law has been passed to implement its provisions, a necessary step for the Philippines to make good its commitment when it signed as a Party to the convention. Initiatives to get Congress to pass legislation to implement MARPOL were unsuccessful. Without attributing blame to any one agency, it may be more judicious to determine the reasons for the long drawn-out efforts.

- MARPOL is considered one of the four pillars of maritime regulations together with the International Convention on the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), the International Convention on the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) and the International Maritime Labor Convention (MLC).

As a concerned citizen of this country, I feel obliged to take the matter up again with no intention of giving up on this advocacy of making government and maritime stakeholders realize that environment protection from ship-generated wastes is a matter that needs urgent attention in this archipelago of ours.

I recognize the focus given to the protection, preservation and rehabilitation of the country's



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PIMENTEL

lush vegetation and thick forests seen in the mountains, plains and islands are wiped out either by the incessant destructive logging-mining and "kaingin" activities. This week the Department of Environment and Natural Resources announced the closure of at least 21 mining companies after failing the agency's audit, an effort which hopefully will find its parallel in preventing pollution from ships.

As before, bills dealing with the prevention of pollution from ships were filed at the 17th Congress, with at least two of such bills reflecting the same provisions as those filed in previous Congresses. It is mind-boggling that these bills which aim to implement MARPOL and with analogous texts have to undergo the same process every time, only to be passed over until the next Congress. But should Congress be made responsible for the impasse in enacting MARPOL legislation or have the pertinent agencies and stakeholders done enough to rally support for the bills to get through the legislative process?

The requirements of MARPOL though providing a logical framework in preventing pollution from ships, could be complex; therefore, maritime agencies such as MARINA, PCG, PPA and port authorities together with the Department of Transportation (DOTr) and the DENR must take the lead in convincing Congress to enact a MARPOL law. These agencies should at least act as champions for the MARPOL law. After all, these are the agencies expected to be conferred specific roles in the implementation and enforcement of the law.

As we track the progress of the MARPOL bills in Congress, let us not forget every Filipino's entitlement to the Constitutional guarantee of the right to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony



Mangroves once thrived in this area in the village of San Manuel in Puerto Princesa City. —PHOTO FROM SECRETARY GINA LOPEZ'S FACEBOOK ACCOUNT

## MANGROVES CLEARED FOR PALAWAN SUBDIVISION

By Redempto D. Anda  
@demptoandaINQ

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Environment Secretary Gina Lopez on Wednesday ordered the demolition of structures in a 5-hectare property illegally carved out of a mangrove area along the coastal outskirts of the city center.

Lopez also called out local officials for allowing the rampant cutting of mangroves in Barangay San Manuel and accused acting city police chief, Supt. Ruben Sarmiento, of allegedly "coddling" the developer of the property, where a subdivision would be built.

Lopez, in a post on her Facebook account, said a team from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) removed fences and other structures in the area, including at least 100 houses.

Palawan province is covered by a special proclamation as a mangrove reservation, making any type of development or conversion of mangrove areas illegal.

Lopez railed at the inaction of city officials and the police

on the destruction of swaths of mangroves by illegal occupants that had gone unabated in the last five years, even after complaints have been filed by local barangay officials.

Sarmiento, however, denied Lopez's accusation he was coddling the group that built houses in San Manuel's mangrove area.

He said the local police failed to grant the DENR's request for assistance because it did not receive a clearance from the Philippine National Police headquarters.

Lopez led the demolition after the matter was brought to her attention by barangay officials and local DENR officials raising concern on the rampant cutting of mangroves in San Manuel.

"We found [remains] of mangroves and corals piled up as a foundation for the subdivision they were building. This is unacceptable," Lopez said.

Ramon Dagot, a village council member, said they reported the destruction of the mangroves to the city government, "but the city... did not lift a finger." INQ

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**

## **DENR UNDERSECRETARY UNDERSCORES "GREEN PRODUCTIVITY" IN SCHOOLS**

Department of Energy and Natural Resources (DENR) undersecretary for International Affairs, Atty. Jonas Leonesen joined educational institutions and community leaders to imbibe the Green Productivity Techniques during the conference hosted by Southville International School and Colleges (SISC) for the Consortium of the South (CotS) schools and the Barangay and Homeowners Association Officials of Las Pinas, Paranaque and Muntinlupa Cities.

Representing DENR Secretary Gina Lopez, Leones emphasized the importance of green productivity in effectively managing the environment which is one of today's most exigent global issues in the face of the accelerating rate of depletion of the earth's natural resources. This situation has been noted as the cause of global warming and climate change, and green productivity is an effective measure in mitigating this. He reiterated the responsibility of schools in educating the students to become the green productivity ambassadors of the next generation. He likewise, enjoined the officials of the barangays and the villages to lead their constituents in practicing green productivity in their respective spheres of influence.

The conference was facilitated by green productivity practitioners from the Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP), Tess Solomon and Dorothea Navarro, articulating the best practices to protect the environment, save on operational costs for the proponents and improve aesthetics of the landscape. Host school SISC president, Dr. Marl Fernal, lauded the DAP ambassadors for sharing their expertise to the participants of the CotS schools representing Lyceum of the Philippines Laguna, University of Perpetual Help Las Pinas, San Beda College Alabang, Olivarez College and PATTS College.

The event culminated in the investiture of the new set of officers of the CotS with Undersecretary Leones as the inducting officer.



DENR Undersecretary Jonas Leones (far left) inducting the new officers of the Consortium of the South, from left, Dr. Flora Javier of LPU Laguna, Dr. Marl Fernal of SISC, Rev. Dom Clement Roque of San Beda Alabang and Mr. Anthony Tamayo of UPHR Las Pinas





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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Stocks end flat on thin trading

By IRIS GONZALES

Share prices firmed up at the close of trading yesterday although volume turnover remained lackluster due to the lack of leads, particularly on corporate earnings.

The benchmark Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi) ended at 7,226.70, inching 0.01 percent or 0.79 point after

trading in the red for most of the session.

The broader All Shares index gained 9.32 points or 0.21 percent to finish at 4,375.03.

Other counters, meanwhile, were a mixed bag once again, with some finishing higher —

Financials, Industrial and Services — while Holding Firms, Property and Mining and Oil closed in negative territory.

The Mining and Oil sub-sector is still reeling from the order of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary

Gina Lopez to close 23 mining companies.

Among those affected by the DENR order are the following listed firms: Benguet Corp., Nickel Asia Corp., Marcventures Holdings Inc., Lepanto Consolidated, Oriental Pen-

insula Resources and Global Ferronickel Holdings.

Total value turnover during yesterday's session reached P5.67 billion. Decliners outnumbered gainers, 103 to 81, while 48 stocks were unchanged.