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Sunday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

THE STANDARD

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DENR URGED TO SHOW AUDIT REPORT

By John Paolo Bencito

MINING groups on Saturday urged Environment Secretary Regina Lopez to release the results of the review conducted by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau which became her basis to order the closure of 21 mining operations in the country.

In a statement, the Philippine Mine Safety and Environment

Association said that while it remains firm in its commitment to support responsible mining as espoused by the DENR secretary, Lopez should dispel speculations within the mining industry that the closure order was made without due process.

"It appears that full details of the results of the Mining Audit is yet to be furnished to the concerned companies. The closures/

suspensions, if affirmed, will have far reaching effect especially in mining communities that play host to these mines—employees and their dependents, contractors, and mine-dependent small businesses will be the biggest losers," the PMSEA said.

"In the spirit of transparency and due process, the PMSEA exhorts the DENR to release the

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results of the mining audit to clear any doubts and air of suspicions," the group added.

The PMSEA is an organization of mining companies, quarries, cement plants, suppliers, service contractors, professional organizations and government agencies which that promote occupational safety, improved health standards and environmental protection in mining-related operations.

Mining groups raised their concern after Lopez refused to present the recommendations made by the MGB that led her to order the closure of 21 mining operations in the country and the suspension of five others.

Following Lopez's decision, only 12 mining firms passed the mining audit that started seven months ago.

During her press conference last Thursday, Lopez refused when asked if they could get a copy of the MGB's recommendations on mining operations.

"I'm gonna think about it, because if I don't agree with it then I'm not gonna give it to you. Because I don't agree with it, so why will I give it to you? If it's not resonant with the principles on which DENR runs, and it's not consonant with my own observations of my going [to mining sites], why will I give it to you if I don't agree with it," Lopez was quoted by online news site Rappler.

"I don't have to have you privy to the processes on which I make my decisions. What I'm sharing with you are the principles on which I stand by, and I truly hope you share the same principles because you're Filipino."

"I'm not going to show you... because I don't want anything complicated, and I don't want to rock the boat. Just leave it already, I've made my decision and accept it. That's what you write about, don't try to make things complicated."

Lopez insisted that she still calls the shots in the end and that the MGB re-

port would be shown only to President Rodrigo Duterte.

"I'm under no obligation to let you know what's happening," she told reporters. "If the President asks me, I am under obligation to give it to him."

The Philippine Nickel Industry Association meanwhile, lamented Lopez' decision to proceed with the suspension and closure of majority of the operating mines in the country, saying that all of its member-companies have complied with existing mining and environment laws.

"Knowing that our member-companies are compliant with existing laws and operate with the highest industry standards, we are deeply disappointed with this recent development," the PNIA said.

"PNIA assures all stakeholders of the nickel industry, especially our workers and beneficiary host communities, that we will seek clarification with DENR on this matter and exhaust all avenues to save our industry."



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DFA to study ruling on Laguna Lake dredging

By JANVIC MATEO

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) will study the ruling made by a World Bank body ordering the Philippine government to pay P800 million to a Belgian firm following the cancellation of the P18.7-billion Laguna Lake Rehabilitation project during the previous administration.

"We have to first study the ruling carefully," DFA spokesperson Charles Jose said in a text message when asked if the Philippines would pay the fine or appeal the ruling made by the International Center for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID).

Jose said the Philippine embassy in Brussels has not received a communication from the government of Belgium regarding the matter.

The ICSID reportedly issued the ruling in favor of Belgian firm Baggerwerken Decloedt En Zoon (BDZ), the contractor for the lake dredging project that former president Benigno

Aquino III cancelled upon assuming office in 2010.

Aquino identified the project as among the midnight deals made by the administration of his predecessor, former president and now Pangasinana Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

He alleged that the project would not achieve its objective of increasing the water holding capacity of the lake, as the silt would only be moved from one part of the lake to another.

BDZ filed a P6-billion lawsuit for breach of contract against the Philippines after the scrapping of the deal.

Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III also said they will review the ruling.

"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 was quoted as saying. The Belgian embassy in the Philippines has yet to comment on the matter.



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

ANG MGA FISH PEN SA LAGUNA DE BAY

(Unang Bahagi)

PAHINA SIYETE

Clemen Bautista

PINAKAMALAKING lawa sa buong Asia ang Laguna de Bay na kilala rin sa tawag na LAGUNA DE BAY na may lawak na 90,000 ektarya. Saklaw nito ang mga bayan sa Rizal, Laguna at ilang bayan ngayon sa Metro Manila na dating sakop ng Rizal, tulad ng Pasig, Pateros, Taguig, Muntinlupa, at Las Piñas.

Sa Noli Me Tangere ng ating pambansang bayaning si Dr. Jose Rizal, imortal na ang Laguna de Bay sapagkat ginamit itong tagpuan sa dalawang kabanata ng nobela.

Una ay sa Kabanata 23 na may pamagat na "Ang Pangingisda". Binanggit ang baklad (fish trap) sa Laguna de Bay na ang nahuhuling mga isda sa lawa ay mga biya, ayungin, dalag, buwan-buwan,

kanduli, bangus, ulang, banak at iba pa na kasama sa agos ng tubig-alat mula sa Ilog Pasig patungo sa lawa. Ang ikalawa ay sa Kabanata 61 na may pamagat na "Pamamaril sa Lawa". Inilarawan ng ating pambansang bayani ang pagtakas nina Elias at Ibarra sakay sa isang bangka. Hinahabol at binabaril sila ng mga guwardiya sibil. Ang paspas na pagsagwan ni Elias sa kanilang bangka ay patungo sa Binangonan at Isla ng Talim.

Noong dekada '50 hanggang dekada '60, ang mga mangingisda sa Rizal at Laguna ay sa mga biyayang dulot ng Laguna de Bay kumukuha ng kanilang ikinabubuhay. Walang fish pen. Sagana sa mga isda at hipon, suso at tulya sa lawa. Malayang nakapangingisda gamit ang mga lambat ng kitid, pante, sakag, pukot, suklob at pahuran (gamit sa

pagkahig o pagkuha ng mga suso). Ipinagbibili sa mga nag-aalaga ng mga itik sa Rizal at Laguna. Suso ang pangunahing pagkain ng mga inaalagaang itik sa Rizal at Laguna. Maraming mangingisda at may-ari ng pukot ang gumanda ang buhay. Napagtapos ng pag-aaral sa kolehiyo at unibersidad ang kanilang mga anak.

Ngunit nagbago ang takbo ng panahon. Nang sumapit ang dekada '70, nagbago rin ang takbo ng buhay ng mga mangingisda sa Laguna de Bay sapagkat unti-unting kumonti ang mga isda sa lawa. Dahil dito, ipinagbili na ng mga may-ari ng pukot ang mga lambat at mga bangka na gamit sa pangingisda. Namasukan ang ibang tauhan ng pukot at mangingisda sa mga pabrika. Nagpundar naman ang ibang tauhan ng sariling bangka at mga lambat ng

kitid at pante.

Isa sa pangunahing dahilan ng pagkaunti ng mga isda sa lawa ay ang konstruksiyon ng Hydraulic Control Structure na mas kilala sa tawag na Napindan Channel sa may bukana ng Ilog Pasig sa Barangay Napindan. Sa pagkaunti ng mga isda itinayo ang mga fish pen sa Laguna de Bay.

Ang mga may-ari at operator ay mga retiradong opisyal ng pamahalaan at mga heneral ng militar, mga tusong negosyante, mga sirkero at payaso sa pulitika at iba pang masalapi at maimpluwensiyang negosyante.

Sa lawak ng sakop ng mga fish pen, parang nabakuran ang lawa. Mahigpit ang mga guwardiya. Malupit ang iba na armadong mataas na kalibre at binabaril ang mga mangingisda kapag napadaan sa binabantayang fish pen.



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Governance in a time of complexity

The one thing, I think, President Duterte is learning in the seven months he has been in office is that the government will not instantaneously abide by everything he says whenever he speaks. His officials will increasingly insist that presidential instructions, particularly those that could be questioned on legal and constitutional grounds, be put in writing.

The national government is not only larger than the city government of Davao. It is also far more complex, and more functionally differentiated in its operations. Unlike the comprehensive power and influence Mayor Duterte wielded as Davao City chief, state authority is not a monopoly of the president. It is, rather, disaggregated and assigned to various departments and agencies, all of which have mandates defined by law.

All this should be of common knowledge, especially to the President, who is a lawyer. But, he often seems unaware of the functional limits that define his role as the nation's chief executive. Given his penchant to speak freely on a wide range of issues without the benefit of a script, it has not been easy for his Cabinet to tell when he is enunciating a policy shift or merely thinking aloud.

A few examples might illustrate this problem. Mr. Duterte recently instructed the chief of the Armed Forces to take the lead in arresting rogue policemen who have committed crimes under the cover of the campaign against illegal drugs. The AFP chief has correctly asked for a written order specifying its parameters. Not only is this assignment not part of the usual function of the military, it could also trigger a firefight between policemen and soldiers.

The other day, the President told an audience in North Cotabato that he was recalling the government ceasefire he had unilaterally declared at the start of his term to jump-start the peace talks with the CPP-NPA. He was reacting to the recent killing and abduction of soldiers by the New People's Army. The NPA earlier announced the withdrawal of its own ceasefire, effective Feb. 10. "I tried my best," Mr. Duterte said, "but I guess it wasn't good enough... There will be no peace in this land



PUBLIC LIVES

RANDY DAVID

vis-à-vis the Communist Party. *Ipagpatuloy natin ang giyera.*" (Let's resume the war.)

The announcement has left the ongoing peace negotiations in limbo. Before this, the talks had been moving toward a firmer joint ceasefire declaration. The communist rebels demanded, as a condition for the bilateral ceasefire agreement, the release of some 400 of their comrades being held in government custody. Having previously freed top leaders of the armed communist movement to enable them to participate in the peace negotiations, the President balked at the idea. He could not ignore the military's staunch objection to this new demand.

A third example is Environment Secretary Gina Lopez's order to close 23 mining companies that have been found to have illegally encroached on watersheds. To his credit, the President has made known that he was supporting Lopez's position on this issue. But another member of the Cabinet, Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III, has expressed strong reservations about the wisdom of this move, pointing to its negative impact on jobs and government revenues.

It is natural for departments of government to view policy questions through the prism of their respective mandates. It is not always easy to reconcile the resulting policy differences, reflecting as they do the reality of competing norms and priorities. A wise president would thus be well advised to listen to his key officials before he speaks his mind.

We can cite further examples of the complexities of decision-making at the level of the president. Take the personal pivot to China that Mr. Duterte has repeatedly declared in the same breath he has expressed his antagonism toward America. This self-indulgent rhetoric has, understandably, yielded little by way of binding decisions.

Even a leader like Mr. Duterte who is given to speaking forcefully will have a hard time selling this idea to a nation that has known China only as a threat, and that has long felt secure in the military embrace of the United States. A quick look at the AFP as an organization will show how much it has been molded in the image of the US military. Moreover, it is not mere coincidence that the biggest segment of the Filipino diaspora is to be found in America. The heritage of pro-Americanism in this country is so deep and durable that one cannot expect to erase it overnight. But much can be done to loosen its grip on our institutions, even as we explore new friendships and enter into nontraditional alliances.

What a modern government cannot afford is to see its way through this complexity as though the issues were an either-or proposition. For example, that we must alienate America in order to befriend China. That the preservation of the national sovereignty requires ignoring the voice of the international community. That we cannot win the war on drugs without violating human rights. That we cannot tap our mineral wealth without sacrificing our watersheds. That we must stop negotiating peace because active war has resumed.

Decision-making at the level of the national government has never been more complex. Modernity has brought about a sharp differentiation of functional spheres, testing the government's capacity to integrate at the level of the nation-state. But, more than this, the government finds itself groping for solutions in the context of a global environment it does not control. This is the formidable challenge facing the former Davao City mayor who now sits in Malacañang.

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NATURE'S NEWSMAKERS

ALONG WITH the recent mania that has swept the Philippines, two significant issues that would have made headlines got a little sidelined – a plan to create an underwater resort somewhere in Palawan and the “takeover” of Project NOAH. Despite this, they have found refuge in social media, with advocates seeking to share their thoughts on such issues. Online petitions and hot commentaries have kept the flames of interest alive in an otherwise “non-showbiz” related issue.

In a country blessed with natural resources and prone to weather disturbances, such issues that would have mattered little in terms of entertainment would actually have an immense impact on the lives of so many people.

The first issue comes at a time when the Philippines is getting a lot of attention in the tourism map – and how Filipinos could temper the hunger for attracting investments that could potentially bring bane to our ecology.

The second issue comes at a time when climate change is already a factor in how we deal with the disasters that have plagued us in recent years.

As FOCUS FEATURE gives space to these important issues, let us remind ourselves that beyond our need to be entertained, we also have to give voice to the necessity to protect not only our natural environment from potentially damaging economic activities but also how useful programs that benefit us in dealing with disasters need to be institutionalized and be freed from political interference and manipulation.

May our nature's newsmakers remind us of past mistakes as we decide the fate of our future.

Text by **RAYMUND MAGNO GARLITOS**

Additional text by **JOHN CHRISTOPHER Q. RAFOLS**

Portraits and videos by **SHEREEN CENAS**

Underwater photos courtesy of **HARIBON FOUNDATION**

Layout by **ELIAS GUERRERO, JR.**

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

HOUSE PUSHES FOR PHILRUBBER BOARD

THE House committee on agriculture and food has approved the creation of a technical working group that will finalize the bill seeking to create a Philippine Rubber Industry Development Board.

Officials said this would be responsible mainly for the promotion, development and growth of the rubber industry by improving its quality and productivity, and expanding its markets.

The TWG creation was agreed upon during a recent hearing of the committee chaired by Rep. Jose Panganiban Jr. (Party-list, ANAC IP).

The TWG shall be headed by Rep. Isagani Amatong (3rd District, Zamboanga del Norte) who is also the author of the proposal embodied in House Bill 2912.

Panganiban said the proposed PhilRubber shall be an attached agency of the Department of Trade and Industry and would require an initial funding of P200 million.

Panganiban stressed the proposed PhilRubber should not duplicate the functions of the existing Philippine Rubber Research Institute created under Republic Act 10089 and the Philippine Rubber Industry Development Authority being proposed under House Bill 4064, now pending at the committee on government reorganization.

Amatong gave an assurance the PhilRubber would not duplicate or

be in conflict with the functions of other agencies.

Director Sitti Amina Jain of the DTI National Rubber Industry Cluster Coordinator explained the difference between RA 10089 and HB 2912.

"RA 10089 is centered on the upstream or concentrated mainly on rubber production while the PhilRubber under HB 2912 will serve as an umbrella organization that would protect and promote the rubber industry as a whole, from production down to manufacturing then to exporting," said Jain.

Jain added the PhilRubber would oversee the implementation of programs and projects to ensure the rubber industry would grow not just on the upstream (production) but as well as downstream which consists of rubber processing, manufacturing and marketing.

Pursuant to RA 10089, an advisory board was created composed of representatives from the Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Research, Bureau of Plant Industry, Philippine Rubber Research Institute, and a representative each from the sectors of rubber producers and processors.

The advisory board is mandated to develop policies and programs aimed at improving the state of technologies needed for the rubber industry to meet global standards for competitiveness and product quality.

Meanwhile, Rep. Makmod Mending Jr. (Party-list-Amin) said his House Bill 4064, now pending at the committee on government reorganization, was seeking to create a Philippine Rubber Industry Development Authority to address all concerns of the rubber industry and make it more competitive in the world market.

It will act as an executive office and will also regulate the industry because right now the price of rubber is being manipulated.

Under Amatong's HB 2912, the PhilRubber shall be composed of the secretaries of DTI, DA, Department of Agrarian Reform, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Science and Technology, Department of Labor and Employment, and Department of the Interior and Local Government; Director General of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority; President/CEO of the Land Bank of the Philippines; two representatives from the Academe; two representatives from the Philippine Rubber Industries Association, Inc.; two representatives from the National Lumber Processors; two representatives from the Small Holders Association;

and two representatives from the Federation of Rubber Cooperatives. The representatives from the Academe; Rubber Association, Rubber Processors, Small Holders Association and Federation of Rubber Cooperatives shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines upon the recommendation of the DTI secretary and shall serve in the PhilRubber for three years reckoned from the date of appointment.

The representatives may be reappointed by the President for another term.

The Philippines is a known rubber-producing country but has contributed only a dismal one percent of the world's rubber supply, according to Amatong.

The absence of an industry-focused government support, compounded by the lack of testing facilities both in government and private sectors greatly contributed to its low quality, less productive and good access to the market.

Amatong said the demand for natural rubber in the world market was steadily progressing.

In 2013 alone, the expected volume of the world's demand for natural rubber reached up to 11.3 million metric tons.

To date, the IMF has projected the demand to reach 11.9 million.

By 2020, the IMF predicts the market to reach 15.4 million metric tons.

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SAVING OUR SEAS

The world's last ecological frontier faces threat of commercialization



SHARE

IMAGINE THE world's most beautiful marine area, with its thousands of kilometers of living, breathing, moving expanse of fish, coral, crustacean and all forms of life – all suddenly turned into a fancy resort that includes an underwater restaurant that resembles a popular cartoon setting – wouldn't that be so ridiculously fun?

Not to the environmental groups, who have since fought for its stoppage.

Trouble in Paradise?

Early this year, an international media group together with a resort developer announced that it would open an underwater resort just off the coast of Palawan.

The 400-hectare master-planned project will be developed on the island of Culion, a few hours away from the globally acclaimed Coron Island and part of Palawan. It was touted to be the first resort of its kind in Southeast Asia. Expected to open in 2020, the proposed development that was first conceptualized in 2011 touted itself to address the conservation of coral reefs and ocean protection.

But for Gregorio "Ditto" Dela Rosa, Jr., officer-in-charge for conservation and science and research department of the environmental organization Haribon Foundation, the project would be disastrous not only to Palawan but to the entire natural environment that is home to about 10,000 species of marine flora and fauna.

"If this pushes through, its construction alone will remove at least hundreds of hectares of coral reef," he said.

Coral Entanglement

According to Dela Rosa, the developer's master plan must also include safety nets to protect the pristine condition of Culion and the seas surrounding it. He added that while the developer has approached the local government unit of Coron, it has yet to consult the Tagbanua tribe

(said to have ancestral domain rights over many of the islands of the Calamianes archipelago, including that of Culion) and the environmental groups that included Haribon.

"Practically there was no consultation that involved the community and the environmental groups who are monitoring the areas," he said. "The developer did not approach the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development, which is the province's main arm in managing all economic activities of Palawan and its islands."

He also revealed that the mega-coral park project will affect the lives of the indigenous people, specifically the Tagbanua community, who fish for livelihood. The community will be in peril as the project will ravage marine and coastal biodiversity in the protected sanctuary.

"The first thing that will suffer is the fish corals and then the fisherfolk [who harvest] in that area will not be allowed to fish anymore," said Dela Rosa.

He also divulged the marine attraction would have potential negative effects on the ridge and affect the settlement of coral reefs that could threaten tens of thousands of marine species.

A Quest to Protect

Environmental advocates like Dela Rosa and Haribon Foundation have always espoused for community-based coastal resource management (CBCRM) in the Philippines for the past 40 years. While they do not oppose development, especially in pursuit of tourism, he said the word "ecotourism" has become tainted by unscrupulous groups and companies who rake in money at the expense of the environment.

According to him, an intervention need not be a big-scale, large-investment scheme to showcase "the largest coral reef ecosystem conservation project." It should consider the needs and plans of the local government through consultations and involve different stakeholders to achieve success.

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1900

MANILA BULLETIN

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"With Haribon's assistance, the LGUs are also keen to integrate tourism in their marine-protected area (MPA) plans. They want to ensure that each municipality and MPA showcases a different experience so there will be no competing interests within the bay for tourism," he said. "It may not be as high-end or with a tag price of P60 billion worth of investments but it does the job of improving the well-being of the many, not just a few."

Petition for Protection

Just recently, Environment Secretary Gina Lopez who was unaware of the project until its recent media buzz, reiterated that she would not allow the proposed theme park at the expense of amusement and marine attraction. Social media has also made the call to stop the project viral, led by the Save the Philippine Seas head Anna Oposa, who started the hashtag #CoronIsNotBikiniBottom and has gathered thousands of signatures in its online petitions.

Various groups have called on to the people of Palawan to be vigilant and alert and urged the public to be keen on 'development' touted as 'eco-tourism.' Once the environment of Palawan gets affected like what had happened in Boracay and other islands subjected to commercial development, it will no longer be as "fun" as everyone thinks it would. And suddenly, cartoon characters that we love would only turn into villains out to exploit the beauty of the world's last ecological frontier.



THE LGUS ARE ALSO KEEN TO INTEGRATE TOURISM IN THEIR MARINE-PROTECTED AREA PLANS. THEY WANT TO ENSURE THAT EACH MUNICIPALITY SHOWCASE A DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE SO THERE WILL BE NO COMPETING INTERESTS WITHIN THE BAY FOR TOURISM. IT MAY NOT BE AS HIGH-END OR WITH A TAG PRICE OF P60 BILLION WORTH OF INVESTMENTS BUT IT DOES THE JOB OF IMPROVING THE WELL-BEING OF THE MANY, NOT JUST A FEW.

— Ditto Dela Rosa, Jr.,
DIC for Conservation
and Science and Research
Department,
Haribon Foundation

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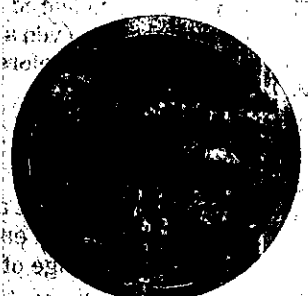
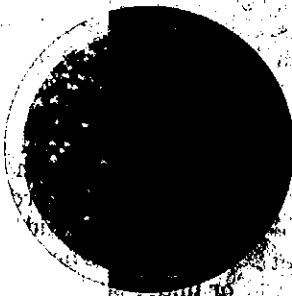
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CENTER OF BIODIVERSITY

The Philippines is the "center of the center" of marine fish diversity. We have 2,983 fish species compared to the other countries within the Coral Triangle, the center of marine biodiversity of the world.



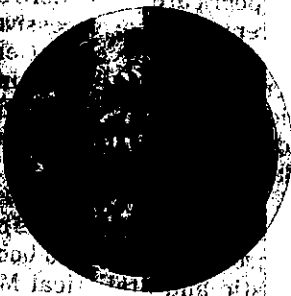
We have 29 of the 50 Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered (EDGE)

Coral Reef species! The mushroom coral (*Heliopora actiniformis*), elegance coral (*Catalaphyllia jardinei*) and the pearl bubble coral (*Physogyra lichtensteini*) are just some of EDGE Coral Reef species found in the country. They are home to several marine

biodiversity such as flatworms, crabs, shrimps and fishes. They are threatened by collection for the aquarium trade, coral bleaching and sedimentation.

The Big 3 fishes have been heavily depleted by overfishing and habitat destruction.

These are the humphead wrasse (*Cheilinus undulatus*), humphead parrotfish (*Bolbometopon muricatum*) and the giant grouper (*Epinephelus lanceolatus*). They are long-lived large fishes that heavily depend on healthy coral reefs for food, home and nursery ground.



We have 7 of the 9 giant clams of the world! We have one of the largest of the giant clams, *Tridacna gigas*, that can grow up to 1.5 meters. They live in healthy coral reefs with clear waters and also provide home to fishes and shrimps.



We have a Vegetarian marine mammal, the dugong (*Dugong dugon*), that eats only seagrass. They used to live all over the Philippines. Due to hunting and reclamation (for resorts) of its main habitat, they have dwindled in numbers. They are now mostly found in the Polillo Islands, Davao del Sur, Guimaras, Busuanga and Coron.

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ENVIRONMENT SUMMIT HELD

The 3rd Environment Summit with theme "Engaging Response to the Changing Environment" was held last Jan. 26 to 29 at the Quezon City Memorial Circle with Sen. Cynthia Villar giving the keynote speech.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary Sylvia Ordoñez and National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) executive director Eligio Ildefonso also graced the event and gave inspiring speeches during the opening of the event.

The four-day Environment Summit spearheaded by the DENR presented to the public initiatives, best practices and emerging technologies which would help save the environment. Lectures and presentations by experts on varied subjects were conducted while the Fashion Designers Association of the Philippines



Sen. Cynthia Villar delivers the keynote speech during the opening of the Environment Summit last Jan. 26.

(FDAP) and Yes-O Manila also showcased their fashionable pieces made from recycled materials.

One of the highlights of the event was the "Walkthrough the Environment," an interactive activity with 10 stations which allowed visitors to experience what the environment is going through

right now and which also possibly helped them reflect on what they can do to save Mother Earth.

An Eco Concert "Tugtugan Para sa Kalikasan" was held during the event's third day with guest Filipino bands such as True Faith, Kwan, Spongecola, Sasaya, Alchemy, GNGBND, Where's Ramona?,

Avalon Beyond, Banna Harbera, and Papapeta. The summit culminated last Jan. 29 with Eco-Bike Ride and Free Zumba with John Arcilla.

The event was made possible by the ff. major sponsors LG Lopez, JFE, Landbank, Cemex, Development Bank of the Philippines, Maynilad, JJ Esteban Enterprises, Cleanway, Metroclark, Waste Management, Plantex, LG Lopez Industrial Sales and Services Inc., Eco-system Technologies Inc. and EEI Corp.; minor sponsors Malabon Soap, Full Advantage Phils. International, and official media partners WhenInManila.com and Buhay Pinoy at PTV4.

For more information, visit its website at www.environmentsummit.ph, follow on Facebook (EnvironmentSummitPH2017), or on Twitter (@Esummit2017).

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APPEALS MOUNT FOR 'RESPONSIBLE TOURISM' IN MT. PULAG

By Abe Almirol

A WEBSITE promoting mountain adventure proclaimed that Mt. Pulag is one of the "most well-maintained premier national parks" in the country.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources regulations placed it under a National Integrated Protected Area System (NIPAS) but the accolade could turn out to be a risky overstatement.

And just recently, there are sectors that have actively calling to allow the park to have some 'rest.'

Reason: Conditions not favorable to the conservation of the national park have intensified as more tourists are lured to Mt. Pulag's charm.

'Come for the adventure, Go home an advocate'

Environmental groups in Nueva Vizcaya and Benguet appealed to those promoting Mt. Pulag tours to package it as something beyond sheer excitement and fun.

Tour organizers were advised to design a "learning experience among climbers so that they would take home a pow-

erful advocacy" that supports the local economy around Mt. Pulag.

Local tour guides worry about non-biodegradable waste disposal inside the park. Climbers should be given a chance to enjoy a fresh meal of organic vegetable salad or buy something to take home pick-and-pay style.

Most climbers eat canned goods the whole time of their stay, even on their way out of the national park.

DENR park authorities are faced with the challenge of delineating a clear line where livelihood activities could still be permitted so that the 528 documented plant species, 33 bird species and several mammals belonging to the threatened categories would not be disturbed.



Scan this icon to view the PDF

WELCOME TO MT. PULAG: Environmental groups in Nueva Vizcaya and Benguet have appealed to tour organizers to package Mt. Pulag tours as something beyond sheer excitement and fun.

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DOUBTS CAST ON ORDER VS MINES

**Ex-DENR exec sacked
by Duterte picked
by Environment
secretary to head
audit of mining
firms -- Barbers**

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DOUBTS CAST ON MINES ORDER

By Ryan Ponce Pacpaco

SURIGAO del Norte Rep. Robert Ace Barbers yesterday raised serious doubts on the supposed regularity of the order issued by Environment Secretary Gina Lopez to close some mining firms and suspend others.

Barbers revealed that Lopez allowed an official with alleged questionable track record after being dismissed by President Rodrigo "Rody" Duterte from his post to head the audit team that rendered adverse rulings against some mining firms.

Barbers was referring to the audit team headed by former DENR Undersecretary Leo Jasareno, who had been dismissed by President Duterte.

While he welcomed Lopez's running after violators in the mining industry, Barbers lamented the fact that Lopez puts the blame entirely on the erring mining companies without looking at the root cause of the problem.

"I urge Secretary Lopez to turn her attention to the contributing factor for these environmental violations. I am referring to the corrupt Mines and Geosciences Bureau under its former head Leo Jasareno, the Malacañang-dismissed DENR Undersecretary," Barbers stressed.

"It is very sad and unfortunate for the country that despite being dismissed by no less than the President, Secretary Lopez still retained Jasareno as her confidante and consultant. Equally disturbing is the fact that she appointed Jasareno to head the audit of the mining firms, when Jasareno knew all too well that the violations were happening under his watch for several years—but he deliberately turned a blind eye on these violations," Barbers lamented.

The four-term congressman and vice governor of Surigao del Norte pointed out that the problem did not happen overnight.

He urged Lopez to open her eyes if she really wants to reform the mineral industry.

"Gross negligence at the very least, gross incompetence at worse, and con-

nivance at worst, which one is it, Mr. Jasareno? And how about those mining companies which were not closed and whose owners are known friends of Mr. Jasareno?" Barbers asked.

Barbers urged Lopez to be fair and investigate her confidante with the same zeal and vigor.

"Jasareno is not an innocent bystander in this masquerade. He is the protagonist. He MGB was supposed to police the mining activities in the country but now he is saying that these companies committed environmental violations. Such hypocrisy coming from the one who was supposed to make sure that mining laws are followed and implemented," Barbers said.

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Lopez scored
Earlier, Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay sought congressional investigation into the closure of 23 mining companies in the country and the suspension of 5 others for supposedly violating environmental laws for being "illegal and arbitrary."
"I will be filing a resolution investigating the announcement of the illegal suspension and closure order," said Pichay who earlier hit the alleged abuse of the process in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) order.
Pichay scored anew, Lopez for her alleged ignorance of the law following the harsh order against some mining firms, warning her not to "abuse and misuse powers" to "get things done at all cost."

Gina, nagmamamunong siya eh, hindi nga siya mamunong. She has no legal basis at all to close down mining firms. Walasiyang 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 in 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 explained that Lopez issued the closure order purportedly without accorded 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 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; Brañmen Minerals Inc.; Zamboales Diversified Metals Corporation and NIAAR Chupelago Minerals Inc., all in Zamboales Corp. and Technon 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 AD-NAMA Mining Resources Corp.; Claver Mining Development Corp.; Platinum Development Corp.; CTP Construction and Mining Corp.; Carrascal Nickel Corp.; Mareventures 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.

do jobs

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SOLON TO LOPEZ: PROBE CORRUPTION AT MGB

By RYAN
PONCE
PACPAGO

Audit team behind mining firms' closure led by sacked DENR Under

SURIGAO del Norte Rep. Robert Ace Barbers yesterday raised serious doubts on the supposed regularity of the order issued by Environment Sec. Gina Lopez to close and suspend mining firms. /Page 6



Surigao del Norte Rep. Robert Ace Barbers urged Secretary Lopez to turn her attention to the contributing factor for these environmental violations. I am referring to the corrupt Mines and Geosciences Bureau under its former head Leo Jasareno, the Malacañang dismissed DENR Undersecretary. It is very sad and unfortunate for the country that despite being dismissed by no less than the President, Secretary Lopez still retained Jasareno as her confidante and consultant. Equally disturbing is the fact that she appointed Jasareno to head the audit of these mining firms when Jasareno knew all too well that the violations were happening under his watch -- for several years -- but he deliberately turned a blind eye on these violations.

Barbers noted that Lopez allowed an official with an alleged questionable track record after being dismissed by President Rodrigo "Rody" Duterte from his post to head the audit team that rendered adverse rulings against some mining firms.

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The four-term congressman and ex-governor of Surigao del Norte pointed out that the problem did not happen overnight.

He urged Lopez to open her eyes if she really wants to reform the graft-laden

agency.

"Gross negligence at the very least, gross incompetence at worse, and connivance at worst, which one is it, Mr. Jasareno? And how about those mining companies which were not closed and whose owners are known friends of Mr. Jasareno?" Barbers asked.

Barbers urged Lopez to be fair and investigate her confidante with the same zeal and vigor.

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Earlier, Surigao del Norte Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay sought a congressional investigation into the closure of 23 big mining companies in the country and the suspension of five others for supposedly violating environmental laws for being "illegal and arbitrary."

"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 DENR order.

Pichay scored anew 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 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."

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NGOs laud DENR move on mining shutdown

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

Environment groups lauded the decision of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to close down several mining operations, as interest groups called for continuous action against possible retaliatory measures that affected firms will soon undertake.

"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 indus-

try dominate in extracting and benefitting from the country's natural resources," party-list group Sanlakas secretary-general Aaron Pedrosa said.

Non-government organization Alyansa Tigil Mina (ATM) is already expecting that mining stakeholders will question and appeal the decision of Environment Secretary Gina Lopez to close down 23 and suspend five large-scale mining companies in the country.

"We know that they will not take these developments lightly and we anticipate that they will question the legality of these orders and the competence of the Secretary," ATM national coordinator Jaybee Garganera said.

"We are ready to confront the mining industry and expose more violations and non-compliance. Their pitch for 'responsible mining' has been unmasked as mere rhetoric," he said.

Likewise, the Center for Energy, Ecology and Development (CEED) emphasized the visible environmental impacts of mining operations such as air pollution, biodiversity loss,

floods, food insecurity, loss of aesthetic degradation, soil contamination and erosion, waste overflow, deforestation and loss of vegetation cover, and surface water pollution.

"It is high time that we realize that we put so much burden on our environment and our fellow Filipinos in mining-affected areas for the sake of accommodating a large-scale mining industry that damages our resources without having ever contributed to our economic growth as a country," CEED national convener Gerry Arances said.

Arances noted how the country's current legal framework allows the entry and the large-scale destruction to communities in exchange for "few and insignificant portions of the revenue gained by corporations."

"In order to instigate a full stop to the destruction caused by mining operations, we have to shift our way of appropriating our natural resources and make it fully attuned to the needs of our own communities rather than that of corporations," he said.

LAWMAKERS BACK MINING PURGE

CONGRESSIONAL allies of President Rodrigo Duterte have thrown their support behind the decision of Environment Secretary Regina Paz "Gina" Lopez to shut down 23 mining operations.

Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez of Davao del Norte and House natural resources panel chairman Carlos Zarate hailed Lopez's move, noting that it would be beneficial for residents near mining areas in the long run.

"We need to take care of our environment, and Secretary Lopez did the right thing. Yes, there are jobs which will be affected by the closure, but it is also worth noting that most of these mining companies are in Caraga region which is one of our poorest regions," Alvarez said in a

radio interview.

"Yes, there are jobs [provided by mining companies] but the cost of that is environment degradation which would also leave our people suffering when natural calamity strikes," Alvarez added.

Zarate, for his part, called for the immediate enforcement of Lopez's order, the permanent closure of companies that caused massive damage to the environment and livelihood of the people, and the constant monitoring of five suspended mines.

"All the concerned companies should now also be ordered to pay for the damage and compensation for those affected by their destructive operations and for the rehabilitation

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LAWMAKERS

of the areas," Zarate said in a statement.

Zarate also called for the junking of the Mining Act of 1995 that allowed foreign ownership of mining operations.

His sentiments were echoed by Rep. Ariel Casilao of Anakpawis party-list.

"The suspension should be executed immediately to rid of any

maneuvering firms could engage in...we urge the department to impose damage payments on these firms to compensate for the destruction of the environment and impact on affected sectors," Casilao said.

"We urge the Duterte government to put more value in protecting the environment, rights of indigenous people to ancestral land and self-determination, and farmers' rights to land, than in foreign-dominated mining and logging operations, and immediately order a stop to their destruction and violations," Casilao added.

LLANESCA T. PANTI

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Pagpapasara sa 23 minahan ipatupad agad-Kamara

INUDYUKAN ng Kamara ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources na agad ipatupad ang pagpapasara sa may 23 minahan sa iba't ibang bahagi ng bansa at pagsusuri.

Iginiliit ni Bayan Muna Rep. Isagani Zarate na makatwiran lamang ang kautusan ni DENR Secretary Gina Lopez sa pagpapasara sa 23 minahan dahil inabuso ng mga ito ang kapaligiran na dapat sana ay pinagbubuti upang maibsan ang epekto ng climate change sa bansa.

Sinabi ni House natural resources committee chairperson at Bayan Muna Rep.

Carlos Isagani Zarate na hindi lang ang kapaligiran ang winawasak ng mga minahan na abusado at hindi tumutop sa batas na pinatira kundi sinisira rin ng mga ito ang ikinabubuhay ng maraming Filipino.

"The constant monitoring of the 5 suspended mines should also be done for them to strictly comply with environmental laws."

Bukod sa pagpapasara sa lalong madaling panahon, hinihikok din ni Zarate ang DENR na pagbayarin ng danyos ang nabanggit na mga minahan para gugulin sa rehabilitasyon ng mga nasirang kagubatan at natural resources.

"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."

Ito na aniya ang magandang pagkakataon upang agad na pag-aralan at pagdebatehan ng mga mambabatas ang nakabinbing House Bill 2715 o ang People's Mining Bill.

Naunang nagpahayag ng suporta si House Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez sa desisyon ni Lopez na ipasara ang 23 minahan.

Si Alvarez ay lantarang tumutulong sa pagmimina sa bansa. MELIZA MALUNTAG

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Escudero urges due process in mines shutdown

By MARVIN SY

Sen. Francis Escudero has urged the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to observe due process in its audit on the mining industry by allowing the affected parties to respond to the findings before coming out with orders to shut them down.

Interviewed over DWIZ radio, Escudero aired his concern over the reported irregularities in the conduct of the audit by the DENR, which have been disputed by the mining industry as a whole.

"They probably should have furnished the affected firms and even to the Senate the audit findings to see if there is basis to the closure orders," Escudero said.

"It appears that the mining companies were not given a copy of the audit findings so that they could respond, correct dis-

pute or come up with remedies if necessary," he added.

Escudero said this is all part of due process, a right which is guaranteed under the Philippine Constitution.

The Chamber of Mines of the Philippines has cried foul over the closure orders issued by DENR Secretary Gina Lopez on 23 firms due to various violations.

Mining firms questioned the manner in which the audit was done, saying the results were compromised.

It was also revealed that the actual audit reports never came out, thus denying the affected firms the ability to respond.

"Due process dictates nothing less. It seems that the DENR fell short in this aspect if what the mining firms are saying are true," Escudero said.

He observed the DENR under Lopez has targeted the mining firms with legitimate

licenses to operate and not those that are operating illegally in the country.

"She could've started with

the illegal operations before the legal ones who are trying to comply (with environment laws)," he said.



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Probe of DENR execs behind mining permits pushed

By JESS DIAZ

Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Regina Lopez should

investigate DENR personnel for the destruction of the environment by mining companies, Surigao del Norte Rep. Robert Ace Barbers said yesterday.

"She puts the blame entirely on the erring mining companies. Her people at the department should share the blame and responsibility," Barbers said.

"I urge Secretary Lopez to turn her attention to the contributing factors for these environmental violations. I am referring to the corrupt Mines

and Geosciences Bureau under its former head Leo Jasareno, the dismissed DENR undersecretary," he added.

Barbers said despite being fired by President Duterte, Lopez retained Jasareno as consultant and head of the team that audited mining companies.

"Mr. Jasareno knew all too well that the violations and the destruction of the mountains and pollution of rivers did not happen overnight. They took place during his watch as head of the mines bureau, but he turned a blind eye," he said.

Lopez has ordered the closure of 21 mines in Zambales, Eastern Samar, Dinagat Islands and Surigao provinces and the suspension of seven others for destroying mountains and watershed, and polluting rivers.

Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez has supported Lopez's order.

"I support Secretary Lopez. I think she's doing the right thing. I myself am against destructive mining. We have to protect the environment for our people and future generations," he said.

He admitted that hundreds of mining workers would lose their jobs with the closure of the mines.

However, Alvarez said mining activities have not enabled people to improve their lives.

"Look at Caraga (Agusan and Surigao provinces, and Dinagat Islands). It is still one of the poorest regions in the country. When rains pour and there is flooding, it is the poor in Caraga and other mining areas who suffer," he said.

Alvarez said he doesn't know the businessmen and politicians who own the mining companies Lopez has ordered closed.

"To me, whoever own these companies, what we have to consider is the destruction of the environment and its effect on the people and their communities," he added.

Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Zarate, chairman of the House committee on environment and natural resources, said mining firms should be required to pay for the damage their activities have caused on communities, and to rehabilitate the mountains and rivers.

Mines' closure welcomed

Tribal group Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA) welcomed DENR's closure of 23 mining operations including Benguet Corp. (BC), saying it was long overdue.

Although the Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. is among those recommended for suspension, the CPA is pushing for the closure of this firm for allegedly destroying the people's lands and polluting and silting the Abra River and its tributaries for the past 80 years.

"The over 100 years of BC's open-pit mining in Itogon has flattened whole mountains and removed entire villages from the land surface. After exhausting the gold ore, the open pit in Itogon is now abandoned as the company has shifted to other economic ventures like water privatization, small-scale contract scheme and housing," the group said.

According to the CPA, which has been organizing community groups when BC was operating in Benguet, the company denuded the pine forests of Itogon, Baguio, Tuba and Tublay.

When they ran out of timber, the mining company expanded their logging to Bobok in Bokod.

Apart from denuding the forests, the company also allegedly ruined the groundwater system of Itogon.

BC reportedly polluted surface water channels and land surfaces aside from destroying watersheds and groundwater systems.

With Artemio Dumlao

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VIVA DENR

DALAWAMPUT TATLONG minahan, lokal at dayuhan, ang ipinasa-ra ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) dahil nakita ng ahensiya ang napakasamang dulot ng nasabing mga minahan sa ating bansa.

Ilang bundok na ang halos napatag, nawala ang mga puno na dapat ay protektor ng bansa at mamamayan laban sa malalakas na bagyo at baha.

Kung hindi ititigil ang mga ito, tiyak wala nang katiyakan ang kaligtasan ng taumbayan sa kalamidad!

Tiyak, gaganti ang mga politiko na ilan sa kanila ay direktang sangkot bilang may-ari o kabakas sa mapanira ng kalikasan na pagmimina.

Tiyak na maglalabas ng malaking halaga ang mga pribadong negosyante na sangkot sa pagmi-

mina sa bansa para hindi makalutasot sa Commission on Appointment si SECRETARY GINA LOPEZI!

Ilang porsyento na nga lang ba ang natitirang puno sa ating mga bundok?

Sa sandali lamang ay napakalaki na ang kanilang napanot katulad sa Mindanao na dati naman ay hindi binabaha, walang dausdos ang lupa mula sa bundok at hindi nasisira ang ganda ng kalikasan.

Iyan ay noong hindi pa nagsisimula ang mga malahayop na ilegal logger at mga politiko sa pagputol ng mga puno at pagmimina.

Kung hindi mapigil ang kanilang operasyon sa lalong madaling panahon, tiyak na mapapatag na ang buong Pilipinas! Maski nga sa Sier-



BAILETODO

by ED VERZOLA

ra Madre, hindi na rin ligtas sa mga ilegal logger at

mayroon na rin mga nagmimina.

Hindi pa nga lamang halata pero kapag gumamit ka ng helicopter o eroplano, makikita ang pulu-pulutong na nakalibong bahagi ng Ilang Bundok!

Sana ay hindi matinag si Environment Secretary GINA pati na ang lahat ng mga tauhan niya sa DENR.

Nito lang nagdaan na administrasyon ni Pangulong Benigno Aquino III, halos napatag ang dalawang bundok sa Sta. Cruz, Zam-

bales dahil sa korapsyon at katiwalian; hindi lamang ng mga opisyal ng DENR kundi ng lokal na lider ng kanilang pamahalaan.

Kailan mamumulat ang mga suwapang na negosyante't politiko?

Kailan nila matisip ang kabutihan ng bansa at kaligtasan ng mamamayan?

Narapat lang na kumpiskahin ang kanilang kita at yaman mula sa pagsira ng ating kalikasan!

Sa iyo, Sec. GINA, we support you like how President Rodrigo Roa Duterte supports you.

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DUTERTE JACKPOT KAY GINA LOPEZ

MASASABI kong si Gina Lopez ang pinaka-the best na miyembro ng gabinete ni Pangulong Digong Duterte.

Tulad ni Digong, si Gina ay wala ring paki-alam kung sino ang kanyang masagasaan sa kanyang trabaho bilang kalihim ng Department of Environment ang Natural Resources (DENR).

Ang pagkakaiba lang nina Digong at Gina ay pabagô-bago, palamura at may pagka-imoral ang una, habang ang huli ay magalang, tuwid at nasa lugar kung magsalita.

Dahil walang balak sa politika kundi concerned lang talaga sa kahalagahan ng kalikasan, pinasara ni Gina ang maraming malalaking minahan, na karamihan ay pag-aari ng mga politiko, mai-impluwensiyang tao sa Mindanao.

Ngayon lang nangyari ito sa pamunuan ng DENR. Na walang sinasanto ang kanilang kalihim.

Bago paman, italaga ni Digong si Gina sa DENR, matagal nang nakikipaglaban ang huli sa mga sumisira sa kalikasan.

Kaya jackpot si Digong kay Gina.

Mabuhay ka, maa'm Gina Lopez!

Oo nga pala, Sec. Gina, paki-check ang stone crusher sa Brgy. Luksuhin, Calatagan, Batangas. Pag-aari raw ito ng Lebanese at walang kaukulang mga permit. Ilang tiwaling politiko raw ang kasangga nito. Aksyon!

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Consultant ni Lopez pinasisibak

HINAMON ni Surigao del Norte Rep. Ace Barbers si DENR Secretary Gina Lopez na imbestigahan at kung maaari ay patalsikin ang dating Mines and Geosciences Bureau chief Leo Jasareno na ngayon ay consultant pa mismo ni Lopez.

Iginhiit ng mambabatas na si Jasareno ay una nang pinatalsik ng Malakanyang bilang DENR Undersecretary ngunit sa halip na palitan ay ginawa pa itong consultant ni Lopez.

Naniniwala si Barbers na isang tiwaling opisyal si Jasareno dahil sa kabila ng mga irregularidad at pag-abuso ng maraming minahan ay hinayaan itong mamayagpag sa lalim ng pamumuno niya.

Makabubuti ngayon sa kongresista na siyasatin din ni Lopez ang kanyang bakuran kaalinsabay ng pagpasara ng may 23 minahan na ayon kay Barbers ay makatarungan lamang dahil sa pagsira sa kapaligiran.

"I urge Secretary Lopez to turn her attention to the con-

tributing factor for these environmental violations. I am referring to the corrupt. It is very sad and unfortunate for the country that despite being dismissed by no less than the President, Secretary Lopez still retained Jasareno as her confidante and consultant."

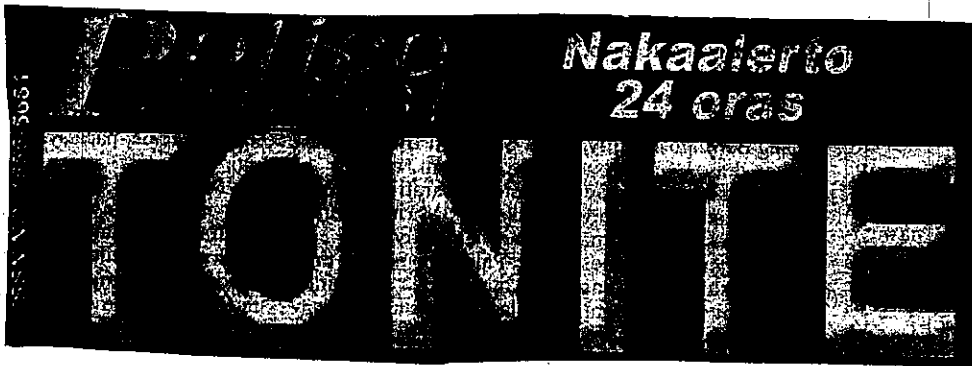
Ang higit aniyang nakaaalama ay ang paghirang ni Lopez kay Jasareno na pamunuan ang pag-imbestiga sa mga ipinasasaring minahan.

Hindi aniya lalala ang pag-abuso ng mga minahan kung sa simula pa lamang ay sinawata na ito ni Jasareno.

Kailangan aniyang papagutin din si Jasareno sa kapabayaang nito a pakikipagsabwatan sa mga mga ipinasasaring minahan ngayon.

"Jasareno is not an innocent bystander in this masquerade. He is the protagonist. His MGB was supposed to police the mining activities in the country, but now he is saying that these companies committed environmental violations."

MELIZA MALUNTAG



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JOEY G. VENANCIO
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Duterte jackpot kay Gina Lopez

MASASABI lang si Gina Lopez ang pinaka-the best na miyembro ng gabinete ni Pangulong Digong Duterte.

Itulad ni Digong, si Gina ay wala ring pakikibagong sine ang kanyang masasabi sa kanyang trabahol ng kailalimang Department of Environment ang Natural Resource (DENR).

Ang pagkakaribalang nina Digong at Gina ay palago-bago palamitra at may pasko-moral ang una, habang ang huli ay magalang tuwid at nasa lugar kung magsalita.

Dahil walang balaksa politika kundi concerned ang talaga sa kahalagahan ng kalikasan pinasara ni Gina ang maraming malaking minahan, na karamihan ay pag-aari ng mga politiko maiimpluwensiyang tao sa Mindanao.

Ngayon lang nangyari ito sa pamunuan ng DENR. Nawalang sinasanto ang kanilang kalihim.

Bago pamanitagan ni Digong si Gina sa DENR, matagal nang nakikipaglaban ang huli sa mga sumisira sa kalikasan.

Kaya jackpot si Digong kay Gina.

Mabuhay ka, masamang Gina Lopez!

Oo nga pala, See, Gina, paki-check ang stone crusher sa Brgy. Luksuhin, Calatagan, Batangas. Pag-aari raw itong Lebanese at walang kaukulang mga permit. Ilang uwalang politiko raw ang kasangga nito. Aksyon!



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Econ managers assess impact of mines closure

By CZERIZA VALENCIA

Economic managers will assess the potential impact of the massive closure order on mining firms to economic output and employment, Socio-economic Planning Secretary Ernesto Pernia said.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Thursday ordered the closure of 23 mining firms

and the suspension of five other large-scale miners following a six-month industry-wide audit.

Environment Secretary Gina Lopez said these companies will be closed down because they were found operating in functional watersheds.

The mining industry currently has a 0.7 percent contribution to the country's gross domestic product (GDP). Per-

nia said a widespread closure is seen to have lesser impact on economic output than the damages sustained by the agriculture sector from various weather disturbances.

The contraction of the farm sector in 2016, for instance, shaved off 1.1 percentage points from GDP growth during the year.

"Well, we did not expect that it would be this massive,"

he said of the closure order.

Pernia said, however, that NEDA has already reached out to the labor department about emergency programs that may be implemented for workers that would be affected by the closures.

"We have already asked DOLE if they have an emergency employment program," he said.

Lopez appears to be firmly

on top of the decision to stop the operations of a large number of mines.

"The President has not been interfering, none of the Cabinet members have been interfering," Pernia told reporters yesterday when asked if Lopez's decision to implement a massive suspension order is supported by the Cabinet.

A collective position by the

economic managers on this development, he said, has not yet been reached. Policy recommendations for the mining industry will still have to be discussed at the Cabinet-level meetings.

"We still haven't come up with a collective, official position," Pernia said. "It (policy recommendations) has to be an agreed position by the Cabinet."

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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DOF to assess DENR's mining ban's impact

The Department of Finance (DOF) said Friday that it is set to assess the impact of the closure and suspension orders on several mining operations nationwide. Finance Secretary Carlos G. Dominguez III said the economic team and other cabinet members will assess the potential impact of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) mining ban on jobs, revenue collection and the economy. "I have to consult with other economic managers [regarding the DENR order, but] my primary concern is the impact on employees. Secondary concern is the impact on municipal finances because municipalities collect a lot of taxes," Dominguez told reporters. The finance chief cited that in one mining company alone in Surigao, about 10,000 people will be displaced. For this reason, Dominguez said the government has to put in place emergency employment programs for displaced employees. "I have asked members of the Cabinet if they have in place emergency employment programs," Dominguez said. The Department of Social Welfare and Development is now looking into the mining case, while the Department of Public Works and Highways plans to accelerate projects implementation to accommodate more employees, he said. Likewise, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) will initiate emergency employment programs, Dominguez said. He also said the government will convene next week the Mining Industry Coordinating Council (MICC), a body tasked to formulate the implementing rules and regulations for Executive Order 79, also known as the new mining policy. (CSL)