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Tuesday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

PEOPLES Tonight

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BANNER STORY

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

COMP TO REHAB MINED-OUT AREAS

**Assures Duterte of
responsible mining**

THE Chamber of Mines of the Philippines, in a statement yesterday, stressed that it agrees with President Rodrigo Duterte that responsible mining is vital to national development and the Duterte 10-point socio-economic agenda. /Page 6

COMP...

From Page 1

COMP members are ISO 14001 certified, a seal of excellence in environmental management, and upheld nationwide. We assure the President that COMP members in Caraga and nationwide are committed to rehabilitate mined out areas to comply with existing mining laws," COMP said.

"Areas being cited by Gina Lopez are active mining areas. These already have comprehen-

sive mine rehabilitation programs, including mechanisms for funding. We assure that after utilizing the minerals, these areas will be converted into lands productive for the communities even long after the mines are gone," said COMP chairman Art Disini.

Years before closure, mining companies set up a Final Mine Rehabilitation Decommissioning Fund deposited in government accredited banks to be utilized in the mine's rehabilitation as determined by careful

studies and approved by the DENR, local government units and all the affected communities and stakeholders.

COMP also remains confident its member companies will be given the opportunity to address their alleged violations raised during the audit review.

"The President and the Mining Industry Coordinating Council, co-chaired by Department of Finance Sec. Sonny Dominguez III, vowed to follow due process in the audit review," Disini noted.

However, COMP still reiterates its demand to see the full audit results.

In the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry-COMP joint stakeholders forum last Friday, COMP president Philip Romualdez also expressed optimism for the minerals industry under the Duterte administration, citing the President's adherence to the rule of law.

According to Disini, mining firms identified for closure or suspension have yet to receive their orders from the DENR.

X-FILES

SAGAD SA BALITA, BULGAR SA KATOTOHANAN

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



JOEY G. VENANCIO

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**PULISI!
PULISI!**

Surigao: sinira ng mining, logging, binaha, nilindol...

TUMATANGIS ngayon ang mamamayan ng probinsiya ng Surigao sa sunud-sunod na kalamidad nilang nararanasan.

Tuwing bumabuhos ang ulan sa kabundukan, binabaha sila ng putik sa kapatagan. Minsan may mga inaanod pang malalaking troso na sumisira sa kanilang tahanan.

Ang mga troso ay gawa ng illegal loggers na sa ilog idinadaan ang pagpupuslit. Pagkatapos ng malaking pagbaha, heto naman ang malakas na lindol. Nawalan ng kuryente at tubig ang mainamayan. Maraming imprastraktura ng gobyerno sa probinsiya ang nawasak, pati ang runway ng airport nabakbak at nagputukan ang semento.

Sa pagbisita rito ni Pangulong Rody Duterte nung Linggo, nakita niya sa aerial view ang napakasanang lagay ng mga bundok na minimina. Napailang nalang daw ito.

Sabi ng Pangulo, dapat na talagang ipatigil o ipasara lahat ng mina sa Surigao. Mismo!

Bagama't nasa P70 billion daw ang kinikita ng gobyerno sa mina, kailangan itong isakripisyo para hindi tuluyang mawasak ang kabundukan pati ang kapatagan at dagat na nagkulay putik na sa paligid ng isla. Sa sinasabing marami ang mawawalan ng trabaho sa pagpasara ng mga minahan, hindi totoo yan.

Maraming trabaho ang naghihintay sa mga minero. Sana'y sila sa mabibigat na trabaho... maraming trabahador ang kailangan ngayon sa construction, doon sila ipasok. Mas malaki ang kikitain nila sa constructions kesa pagminina.

Kaya salduhan natin si DENR Sec. Gina Lopez, na suportado ng Presidente, sa kanyang buong tapang na pagbangga sa mga dambuhalang mining companies na protektado o pag-aari ng mga politiko.

Save Surigao and other parts of Mindanao from mining!

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



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Save Surigao and other parts of Mindanao from mining!

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

ORA MISMO

NI BUTCH M. QUEJADA



DENR Sec. Lopez huwag kang bibigay

SINUSUPPORTAHAN ng mga asset ng mga kuwago ng ORA MISMO, ang matapang na decision making ni DENR Secretary Gina Lopez na isara ang mining operations ng 23 companies at lima pang kampana este mali kumpanya pala pa ang pina-suspendi.

Ayon sa mga asset ng mga kuwago ng ORA MISMO, nakara-ting sa grupo ng Katribu Kalipunan ng Katutubong Mamamayan of the Philippines my Philippines o Katribu ang aksyon ni Lopez kaya naman binatikos nito ang balak ng ilang taga - Malacaniang na huwag ipatupad ang decision making ni Gina.

Sabi ng mga asset ng mga kuwago ng ORA MISMO, ang pagsasara nang mga mining companies ay mabibigyan ng pag-asa ang madlang people na maayos muli ang mga sinirang lupa na ginawa ng mga dambuhalang mining companies.

Sabi nga, tama na, itigil na ang pagwasak sa kabundukan!
'Kapos ang kolum ng Chief Kuwago.'

Abangan,

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

MINING SITES *P.2*

MINING SITES REHAB VOWED

THE Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) yesterday assured President Rodrigo Duterte its members practice responsible mining and pledged to fully rehabilitate mined out areas.

COMP said it agrees with the President that responsible mining is vital to national development and the Duterte 10-Point Socio-economic agenda.

COMP members are ISO 14001 certified, a seal of excellence in environmental management, and upheld nationwide. The President was assured that COMP members in CARAGA and nationwide are committed to rehabilitate mined out areas to comply with existing mining laws.

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retary Sonny Dominguez III, vowed to follow due process in the audit review," Disini noted.

However, COMP still reiterates its demand to see the full audit results.

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

**P2-B ni Duterte para raw
sa mawawalan ng trabaho
sa minahan - Andanar**

Nilinaw kahapon ng Malacañang na ang pangakong P2 bilyon ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte ay para sa mga mawawalan ng trabaho sakaling ipasara ang mga minahan sa Surigao del Norte, ayon kay Presidential Communications Sec. Martin Andanar.

Magugunita na nangako si Pangulong Duterte ng P2 bilyon na tulong ng personal itong nagtungo kamakalawa sa Surigao City upang alamin ang kalagayan ng mga biktima ng 6.7 magnitude na lindol noong Biyernes.

Ipinaliwanag pa ni Andanar, ang nasabing P2 bilyon na ipinangako ni Duterte ay para sa mga mawawalan ng trabaho sa minahan sa sandaling ipasara niya ang mga ito matapos niyang makita ang sitwasyon ng nakalibong kabundukan dahil sa minahan habang papunta siya sa Surigao City.

Wika pa ni Andanar, nagkaroon lamang ng kalituhan dahil binanggit ito ng Pangulo sa wikang Cebuano ng harapin niya kamakalawa ang mga biktima ng lindol sa Surigao City.

"Hain na man tong usa ganina nga nagpalingkod nako? Tua ra o! Ayaw og likay-likay diha... ahhh. Taga-ngari ka? Ayaw og lingi-lingi, wala'y babayi diha sa likod. Ikaw ba, taga-ngari ka? Gusto mong magtrabaho? Og jobless ka ngari, uban to didto sa Malacañang. [audience laughs]. Lingaw-lingaw og sekretarya. Kana bitaw nga... tabi ra wala'y binuang. Kadaut ninyo, ayaw pud og seryoso kaayo diha pero kanang... Naa Buhang kuwarta gamay. So sultihan gyud nako tong mga nawad-an og panginabuhì. Kuwan ra to gamay. Mga two billion, tama na siguro. 'Di ninyo na mahuro 'no [audience applause]. Na hala paliti na lang sila og subdivision og house and lot na lang. [where is the one that offers me the seat? There you are! Do not avoid me... were you from here? Do not turn your face, there's no woman behind you! You there! Were you from here? If you are jobless here, come with me in Malacañang. We will play with a secretary. That's it..., foolishness aside. That's the problem with you, you tend to be too serious but that I have released a small amount of money. So I will tell you, those who have lost their livelihood, it's only small. About two billion, I think that's enough. You won't be able to spend it! Go on, just buy them a subdivision or a house and lot maybe]," wika pa ng Pangulo sa kanyang mensahe ng nagtungo sa Surigao City kamakalawa.

Nagbanta pa ang Pangulo na ipapasara niya ang mga minahan sa Surigao del Norte na patuloy na sumisira sa kalikasan. (Rudy Andar)

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

**Palace:
P2B
for mine
workers**

PAGE 2

P2B aid for mining workers — Palace

By Efren Montano

MALACANANG yesterday clarified that the P2 billion aid President Rodrigo Duterte mentioned in a speech during his visit in Surigao City on Sunday was meant for mining workers who will be affected by closures and suspensions of mines.

In a radio interview, Presidential Communications Secretary Martin Andanar said he already discussed Duterte's statement with Special Assistant to the President Secretary Christopher "Bong" Go.

"I would like to clarify that the President was saying that in the context of the mining. Sabiniya kung isasara iyong mining, mawawalan ng trabaho iyong tao. Okay. Kung mawawalan ng trabaho iyong tao eh magbibigay

siya," he said.

Andanar also said that in a cluster meeting with Duterte, the chief executive only reiterated the P1 billion he gave to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). He also quoted the President as saying that another P1 billion will be released for further assistance.

"Sabi ni Bong, 'Wala naman akong narinig na ganoon.' Merong binanggit si Presidente doon sa meeting, doon sa cluster sa baba, pagdating mismo namin nag-meeting kaagad. Sabiniya, 'Merong P1 billion akong binigay kay DSWD para sa mga gamot. Another P1 billion para sa kailangan pa ng iba pang tulong,' he said.

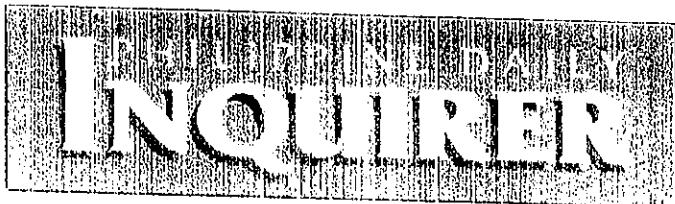
It was not clear, however, if the funds that will be used for the relief efforts in Surigao del Norte will be taken from the total P2 billion given by Duterte

to the DSWD.

"Iyong P2 billion, ang sinabi, 'Iyong P2 billion okay na ba?' Ito iyong binanggit ni Presidente, when he was talking in the context of mining problem, na kapag naisara ito mangangailangan ng trabaho iyong tao," Andanar explained, referring to the speech made by Duterte during his visit to Surigao City.

During the same speech, Duterte said that he could not stop Environment Secretary Gina Lopez from ordering suspension and closure of 28 mining firms. He said this after an aerial inspection that showed the destruction left by some mining companies in Surigao.

"Iyon ang pagkakatindig ko. Kasi iyon ang pinag-uusapan ng Presidente, he was talking about the mining problem all throughout, tapos insert niya iyong 2 billion," Andanar added.



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PALACE CLARIFICATION

P2-B AID FOR DISPLACED MINERS, NOT QUAKE SURVIVORS

By Marlon Ramos
@MRamosINQ

Malacañang on Monday clarified that the P2 billion in financial assistance that President Duterte promised to release was intended for people who would be affected by the closure of 23 mines and the suspension of five others and not for the earthquake survivors in Surigao del Norte province.

Presidential Communications Secretary Martin Andanar made the clarification a day af-

ter Mr. Duterte spoke to the victims of the 6.7-magnitude earthquake that hit Surigao City late on Friday.

"The President was saying that in the context of the mining [controversy]," Andanar said in a radio interview.

"He said if the mining (companies) would be closed down, many people would lose their jobs. If the people would be left unemployed, then he would give something," Andanar added.

It was not clear, however, if the P2-billion aid would be allo-

cated only for residents of Surigao del Norte, which has several mining sites, or for all miners who would be affected by Environment Secretary Gina Lopez's order to shut down 23 mining companies and suspend five others.

The President, who spoke in Cebuano, spent much of his 30-minute speech discussing the effects of mining than talking about the government's response to the quake, which damaged public infrastructure and private establishments and homes. INQ

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#MINDANAO

Tough times for Mindanao's drug pushers and earthquake victims, and more on mining



By JOHN TRIAS

Mining issues won't just go away. To its credit, however, the current government has chosen to veer away from the oft repeated tendency to leave mining to politics by reactivating the Mining Industry Coordinating Council (MICC), a body to coordinate the resolution of concerns surrounding mining.

With this, the government has taken the initiative to build resolutions based on more rational studies of issues surrounding specific mining projects. The dialogue and technical verification that we hope takes place in the MICC and the bodies to which further study is delegated will hopefully be productive means of settling the often emotionally spiced conflicts.

That said, if certain mines need to be closed, then it should be the outcome of reasoned study that puts the people's welfare and benefit, environmental sustainability, and the nation's interest over the minerals

before the political positioning of certain groups, superstitious beliefs or the fear of making tough decisions.

This leadership's strength to squarely face mining issues is refreshing, compared with the kid gloves of its predecessor that did little to confront the often dramatic impasses that leave opposing sides emotionally scarred and politically hardened—playing into local political wrangling that practically permitted the continuous growth of illegal mines, and kept badly run ones untouched.

After 6 years of practical inaction in the 22 years since the 1995 mining act, we now need to move forward studying the current mines, and dealing with the illegal ones, either by helping them comply with regulations or banning them entirely to prevent the unnecessary poisoning of many rivers from, and the needless death of artisanal miners in tunnels from mining accidents.

For now, expect more people to now monitor mining in their areas, read up on the Mineral Production Sharing Agreements and Environmental Compliance Certificates (ECCs) and their attendant conditions, to understand the law and check how it is applied. After all, the DENR website ought to contain all these.

It is time that many in the industry, the regulators, and the public, mature in its view of mining. As I've written before, thousands of rural poor obtain their livelihood from mining, and that if we don't get proper mines to utilize these god-given resources, illegal miners will, creating a bigger problem.



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

EDITORIAL

What green economy?

DO green jobs magically grow at her slightest wish or sheer will? Is the economic landscape so rich or fertile that a single seed of government initiative could generate millions of jobs in so short a time?

And we are talking here of employment in the so-called green economy—environmental conservation or ecological preservation.

Currently, work opportunities in this sector of the economy are few and far between.

The issue, therefore, that must be addressed is: How fast can these green jobs be made available for those who would be displaced by the closure of mining companies?

Thus, Surigao del Norte Rep. Robert Ace Barbers challenged Environment Sec. Gina Lopez to start developing her "green economy" first as he welcomed the Duterte administration's decision to put on hold the closure and suspension orders on 28 mines purportedly to give way to due process.

Barbers, whose constituents are affected by the closure and suspension order, urged Lopez to first put up and develop her "green economy" and show that it can be done to employ mining workers under responsible mining.

"Put up your 'green economy' first, develop it and employ these people, then you can tell the mining companies to stop," the Mindanao lawmaker said.

At the same time, Barbers lauded President Duterte and his Cabinet for collectively deciding to observe the right to due process of the affected mining firms.

"We welcome the move of the President and his men because this will provide due process and justice," Barbers stressed, explaining that tens of thousands of workers are expected to be affected should the DENR implement the order to close 23 mining firms and suspend five others without giving them the opportunity to respond.

The lawmaker acknowledged the legitimate grievances of the affected sector, explaining the order would bring more harm than good because mining has been very important to the economy.

He also joined House Deputy Minority Leader and Buhay Partylist Rep. Lito Atienza, a former DENR secretary, in calling for Lopez to make a full public disclosure of the audit report against the mining firms.

"This is a very serious matter, the immediate full public disclosure of the report will provide answers to our basic questions and for the sake of transparency and accountability," Barbers said.

Earlier, Barbers assailed Lopez for her decision, explaining the audit results were purportedly made secret and many of the firms affected by the ruling are legitimate and responsible in their operations.

He said Lopez could have been misled by one of her alleged consultants, former DENR Undersecretary and Mines and Geosciences Bureau chief Leo Jasareno, who headed the audit team but was later on sacked by President Duterte.

According to Barbers, the so-called environmental violations, if true, could be the result of years of alleged neglect or tolerance of former Environment Secretary Ramon Paje and the Jasareno-led MGB.

The lawmaker said there was no alleged transparency in the audit of mining firms and Lopez was "apparently fed highly-technical information that only Jasareno et al could understand and interpret."

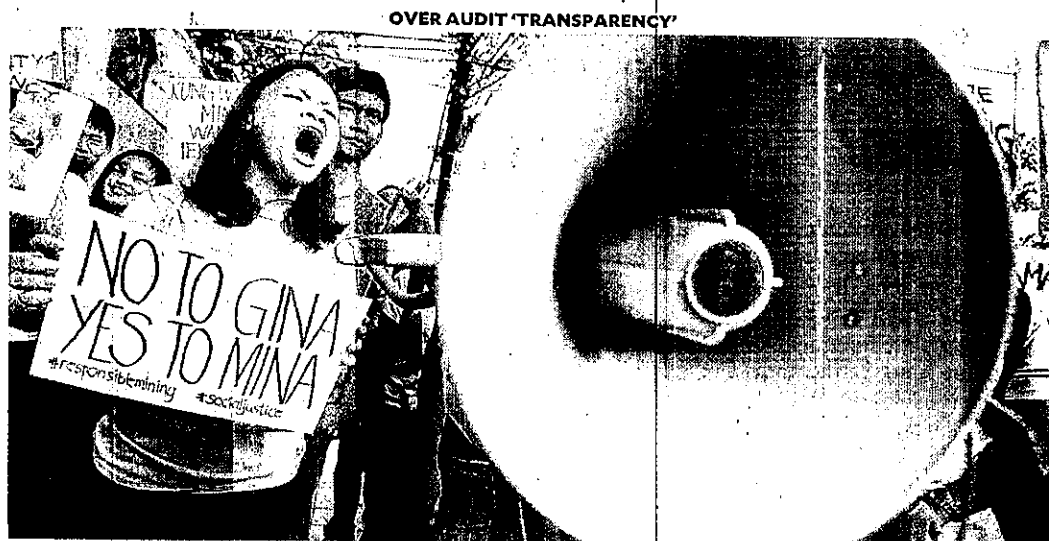
NEWS



Confirmation of Gina opposed

Environment Secretary Gina Lopez's confirmation won't be a breeze after large-scale miners filed their opposition in the Commission on Appointments in protest against her order shutting down 23 mines and suspending five others. The Chamber of Mines of the Philippines argued that it was President Duterte who had the final say on the matter, not the secretary. —STORY BY CONNELL W. DOMINGO

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UNCERTAIN FUTURE Geology and Metallurgy students from various schools picket at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources office in Visayas Avenue, Quezon City, to protest the closure of 23 mines. They say their future as mining professionals is uncertain as a result. —NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

LOPEZ FACES OFF WITH PRO-MINING STUDENTS

By Jaymee T. Gamil
@jaymeegamilINQ

Supporters of responsible mining and miners confronted Environment Secretary Gina Lopez on Monday and demanded the release of an audit on which she based her decision to close down 23 mines and suspend the operations of five others.

In a statement read as the protesters, mostly students, waited for Lopez at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) central office, the University of the Philippines Mining Engineering Society said: "For as long as the transparency of the mining audit remains inaccessible, as future engineers, we shall keep invoking our right to access detailed information regarding the mining audit in order for us to know what needs to be improved in the industry and to aid in the advancement of the profession toward environmental protection so as to avoid the suspension of more mining companies, compromising jobs

and Filipino families."

When Lopez arrived to face the protesters, a student asked her: "Where's the evidence related to massive corrosion and landslides in watersheds for each particular mine? Unless we see the detailed mining audit, how can we know for sure that your assessments are valid?"

Lopez stood her ground, saying they "have followed the law in every single step. And we have the documents to prove it."

"I didn't want to give it (the audit results) before because their (the committee's) penalties were fines, but I didn't agree with them on the penalties," she said.

The review committee's recommendations were uploaded to the DENR's website on Thursday.

Asked why she did not follow the review committee's recommendations and instead proceeded to order closures and suspensions, Lopez said she had the prerogative to make decisions based on her policy "that there should be no

mining in watersheds."

"If there's a violation, the Cabinet secretary is within full rights to make a decision," she said.

"The study of the MGB (Mining and Geosciences Bureau) agreed that there are violations. Where we didn't agree were the penalties. They just wanted to fine. But when you fine, the money doesn't go to the people. It goes to the national treasury. What kind of penalty is that? Because I saw there were violations in watershed, I wanted them closed. Because you really cannot and must not do mining in watersheds," she said.

Another student pressed Lopez for a definition of "watershed."

Lopez responded by showing slides of the mines she had ordered closed because these were located in watersheds.

Lopez also told the protesters that as of 2015, only two mining companies had placed money in a legally required rehabilitation fund. INQ

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Mining firms block Lopez appointment

By LOUISE
MAUREEN SIMEON

The mining industry has filed an opposition to the confirmation of Environment Secretary Gina Lopez due to her alleged bias against large-scale players.

"Lopez's recent actions and pronouncements as DENR secretary show an undeniable bias against and antagonism towards

large-scale mining, rendering her unfit and incapable of a responsible, fair, just and balanced implementation of the Constitution, the Philippine Mining Act and related laws and regulations, and of upholding personal interest and advocacies over public interest," the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) said in a resolution filed with

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Mining From Page 1

the Commission on Appointments (CA).

Lopez has failed to get the nod of the CA and has just been re-appointed by President Duterte. COMP chairman Artemio Disini, legal and policy vice president Ronald Recidoro and executive vice president Nelia Halcon led the filing of the appeal.

One of the points raised by the Chamber against Lopez was her non-transmittal of final audit results on which she based her closure order on 23 mines and the suspension of five others.

"I am expecting that. Especially after the issuance of the closure order, that is to be expected," Lopez said, reacting to COMP's opposing her appointment.

"The companies concerned were never accorded due process. The companies concerned were vilified on national television without any prior notice of suspension or closure, nor the requisite show-cause letter," COMP said.

"Lopez's actions have been unfair and violative of due process and caused damage to the 28 named companies, their contractor-partners, their financial lender and investors and the capital markets here and abroad," it added.

The COMP also pointed to Lopez's vehement opposition to the Tampakan project covered by Financial and Technical Assistance Agreement (FTAA) with the government.

Furthermore, industry players said the environment chief does not have administrative competence to lead and that there is conflict of interest in her appointment, considering her family's involvement in the energy sector.

The Chamber also slammed Lopez for depending on former Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) director Leo Jasareno, who has been removed from office by the President.

"Jasareno has been holding on to his space in DENR, without any official position other than consultant, and has proven to be a very loyal and dependable ally to Lopez. He was present during the Feb. 2 press conference, where MGB officials had been prevented entry for not being invited," it added.

Moreover, stakeholders claimed that Lopez has a poor track record for leading and managing environmental and ecotourism projects, citing her alleged tendency to ignore procedural rules and disregard regulations on the handling and custody of public funds.

- With Rhodina Villanueva

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COMP opposes Gina Lopez's CA confirmation as DENR chief

By **MADELAINE B. MIRAFLOR**

Some of the country's biggest miners stepped up efforts to block the reappointment and Gina Lopez as the Secretary of the Department of Environment of Natural Resources (DENR), following her decision to issue closure and suspension orders to 28 mines as the result of her nationwide audit on the mining sector.

Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) just formalized its appeal to contest Lopez' reappointment, filing on Monday a two-page opposition paper to the Commission on Appointments (CA).

COMP ultimately based its appeal on Lopez's recent actions and pronouncements as DENR Secretary, which, according to them, "show an undeniable bias against and antagonism towards large-scale mining, rendering her unfit and incapable of a responsible, fair, just and balanced implementation of the Constitution, the Philippine Mining Act and related laws and regulations, and of upholding personal interest and advocacies over public interest."

"In the pursuit of her agenda to discredit and marginalize the mining industry, Lopez has shortcut legal and administrative processes, disregarded vested rights, and even ignored the sanctity of contracts between the government and its Mining Con-



GINA LOPEZ

tractors," the organization told CA.

"Lopez is grossly unfit and does not have the administrative experience and competence to lead the DENR,"

it further said, adding that the DENR chief shortcuts legal and administrative processes to disregard vested rights and sanctity of contracts.

Lopez is one of the cabinet secretaries that were not yet confirmed by the CA.

After the news that Lopez's reappointment has been bypassed by the CA came out in November last year, President Rodrigo Duterte was quoted saying: "I do not think she would ever get the confirmation."

"But Gina, in the meantime, let us just concede good faith in her. I hope she would listen to Jacinto," Duterte earlier said. Jacinto serves as DENR undersecretary and concurrent Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) Mario Luis Jacinto.

A few days after that, Lopez cleared the issue on her reappointment and said she is still the Secretary of the DENR and that her fight against destructive mining operations in the country will continue.

THE STANDARD

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PROTEST ACTION. Workers and families benefiting from the Zambales and Benguet mines hit their small gongs while others perform a native ritual dance at the date of the DENR in Quezon City on Monday in a protest action while nearby geology and metallurgy students from different schools (inset) also gather as well to protest the penalties of 28 mining firms. **Manny Palmero**

Students, workers blast mining audit

By Rio N. Araja and Anna Leah E. Gonzales

PLACARD-BEARING students from the University of the Philippines trooped to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Quezon City Monday to seek full disclosure of its min-

ing audit that led to the closure and suspension of 28 big mining companies.

The students, members of the UP Mining Engineering Society (UP Miners) called on Environment Secretary Gina Lopez to lift her order to shut down 23 mining companies and suspend five oth-

ers, saying this would mean unemployment for new graduates of mining engineering, geology, metallurgical engineering and other affected fields.

"We, the University of the Philippines Mining Engineering Society, reiterate our stance and

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Students,...

From A1

advocacies toward responsible mining and call for transparency in the process of the mining audit done by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources," the group said in a statement.

"For as long as the transparency of the mining audit remains inaccessible, as future engineers, we shall keep invoking our right to access detailed information regarding the said mining audit in order for us to know what needs to be improved in the industry and to aid in the advancement of the profession towards environmental protection so as to avoid the suspension of more mining companies compromising jobs and Filipino families."

Krist Jan Separa, a graduating UP mining student, said DENR's closure and suspension orders could mean the loss of employment opportunities for future miners.

"As students of the University of the Philippines, we uphold honor, excellence, and the values of responsible mining. We thus challenge the government to do the same," UP Miners said.

The UP students challenged the credibility of the agency's audit, led by Undersecretary Leo Jasareno, former Mines and Geosciences Bureau director, noting that even mine sites with an international ISO-14001 certification acquired after over almost a year of audit did not pass with the DENR audit team, which included non-experts and anti-mining advocates.

Some students from the Adamson University, and members of the Coalition of Mine Workers, Lepanto Consoli-

dated Mining Co. and Benguet Corp. joined the rally.

Darilo Calimlim, 63, a mining worker for Benguet Corp. and president of the Mine Workers League, said he cannot stand to see fellow miners suffer social injustice.

"We are supervised by mining engineers in our operations. We are bona fide residents near the mine sites. Why would we allow irresponsible mining? The mining audit team Lopez tasked to audit was composed of anti-mining advocates. She should allow us to be represented to strike a balance," he said.

About P10.1 billion in taxes was generated from the mining industry in 2015.

The mining operations ordered closed down or suspended account for 46 percent or P4.6 billion of these tax revenues, according to the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines.

The chamber said Monday it would file its opposition against Lopez's appointment as Environment secretary.

The group said its opposition to her confirmation is based on her recent actions and pronouncements, which showed "undeniable bias against and antagonism towards large-scale mining, rendering her unfit and incapable of a responsible, fair, just and balanced implementation of the Constitution, the Philippine Mining Act and related laws and regulations, and of upholding personal interest and advocacies over public interest."

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Big miners oppose Gina confirmation

By Ronnel W. Domingo
@ronwdomingoINQ

Large-scale miners on Monday moved to block the confirmation of the appointment of Environment Secretary Gina Lopez, who had ordered the closure of 23 mines and the suspension of five others.

Insisting she had the power to close the mines, Lopez last week said the interagency Mining Industry Coordinating Council (MICC) could only make recommendations and that it was she who made the decisions.

Officials of the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) said they were fully aware of the MICC's nature, but that it was President Duterte who had the final say and not Lopez.

The Commission on Appointments confirmed receiving a copy of COMP's opposition to Senate reporters.

Last week, COMP chair Artemio Disini told the Inquirer there were several ways to

counter Lopez's orders.

Disini said the mining firms could go to court or appeal to the President. "But there is also the Commission on Appointments," he said.

The COMP refers to Lopez as "secretary-designate" instead of simply "secretary."

Also on Monday, the COMP said its members—particularly those operating in the Caraga region—were committed to rehabilitate mined-out areas to comply with existing mining laws.

Nonrehabilitation of mine sites is one of the violations that Lopez has been citing to explain her decision to close or suspend mines.

"[The] areas being cited by Gina Lopez are active mining areas. These [cannot yet be rehabilitated but] already have comprehensive mine rehabilitation programs, including mechanisms for funding," Disini said.

"We [give assurance] that after [extracting] the minerals, these areas will be converted in-

to lands productive for the communities even long after the mines are gone," Disini added.

He explained that years before the end of a mine's life, companies set up a final mine rehabilitation decommissioning fund deposited in government-accredited banks "to be used in the mine's rehabilitation as determined by careful studies and approved by the DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources), local government units and the all the affected communities and stakeholders."

Disini reiterated that the mining companies identified for closure or suspension had yet to receive their orders from the DENR, despite Lopez's statement that she would sign the papers and have these sent to the concerned companies.

The COMP has also invoked freedom of information, asking the DENR to provide the companies with full audit results and not just a summary of findings. INQ

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This Contract entered into by and between the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) with principal office at 600 Veterans Drive, Quezon City, Philippines, and the Second Party, a natural person, hereinafter referred to as the

Miners call Lopez 'grossly unfit,' lobbying to derail DENR confirmation

LORRAINE D. CRONADO of legal age, with residence address at 11 Hango Street, San Roque II Bagong Pagasa, Quezon City hereinafter referred to as the

By Janina C. Lim Reporter

THE Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (CoMP) said it hopes to present its case against the con-

firmation of Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary-designate Regina Paz L. Lopez before the Commission on Appointments.

In a position paper sent to reporters on Monday — filed by CoMP

Chairman Artemio F. Disini, Executive Vice-President Nelia T. Halcon, Vice-President for the Legal and Policy division, Ronald S. Recidoro, the signatories designated by the CoMP board — the officials said that Ms. Lopez's "recent actions and pronounce-

ment work performed by regular personnel of the First Party

ments as DENR Secretary show an undeniable bias against and antagonism towards large-scale mining."

Such positions, the paper added, make Ms. Lopez "grossly unfit" and "incapable of responsible, fair, just and balanced" implementation of

existing laws including the Philippine Mining Act of 1995.

In a text message on Monday, Mr. Disini confirmed the paper's submission to the Commission on Appointments Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.

Read the full story by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or by typing the link



<https://goo.gl/zFZL21>

WHEREAS, the Second Party hereby attests that he is not related within the third degree of consanguinity or affinity to the (1) hiring authority and/or representative of the First Party; that he has not been previously dismissed from government service by reason of an administrative offense; that he has not already reached the compulsory retirement age of sixty-five (65);

WHEREAS, it is understood that this contract does not create an employer-employee relationship between the First Party and the Second Party; that the services rendered hereunder are not considered and will not be accredited as government service; and that the latter is not entitled to benefits enjoyed by the regular personnel of the First Party

WHEREAS, the Second Party shall perform work at a time and schedule to be agreed upon by both parties

NOW, THEREFORE, both parties agree to the following

Section 1. This contract shall cover the period from July 1 to December 31, 2017, subject to Section 5 hereof

Section 2. The second Party is hereby contracted to INFORMATION OFFICER and shall perform the following:

- Write releases, feature articles, press statements and web materials for public dissemination;
- Conduct regional coordination on the media relations program;
- Undertake coverage of events;

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE
OFFICE

Miners oppose confirmation of DENR chief

NAME: JOSHUA MARC BY JESMACAPASAL TIN# 203-004-202 DATE/PLACE ISSUED

THE Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) has filed a petition against the confirmation of Regina Lopez as secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) accusing her of being biased against large-scale mining operations. COMP officials, Artemio Disini (chairman); Nelia Halcon (executive vice president); and Ronald Recidoro (vice president) told the Commission on Appointments (CA) that "Lopez' recent actions and pronouncements as DENR secretary show an undeniable bias against and antagonism towards large-scale mining, rendering her unfit and incapable of a responsible, fair, just and balanced implementation of the Constitution, the Philippine Mining Act and related laws and regulations, and of upholding personal interest and advocacies over public interest."

"In the pursuit of her agenda to discredit and marginalize the mining industry, Lopez has shortcut legal and administrative processes, disregarded vested rights, and even ignored the sanctity of contracts between the government and its mining contractors," the COMP said in a document filed with the CA.

The group also said "Lopez is grossly unfit and does not have the administrative experience and competence to lead the DENR" and "has a poor track record in leading and managing environmental and eco-tourism projects."

Last November, the CA passed Lopez' appointment. She was then reappointed as DENR secretary by President Duterte.

The CA website said deliberation for the ad interim appointment of Lopez which was set tomorrow for February 15 was moved to March 1.

In a separate statement, COMP said it agrees with President Duterte's pronouncement that responsible mining is vital to national development as well as to his administration's 10 point socio-economic agenda.

"Areas being cited by Gina Lopez are active mining areas. These already have comprehensive mine rehabilitation programs including mechanisms for funding. We assure that after utilizing the minerals, these areas will be converted into lands productive for the communities even long after the mines are gone," Disini said.

COMP also remains confident its member-companies will be given the opportunity to address their alleged violations raised during the audit review.

"The President and the Mining Industry Coordinating Council, co-chaired by Department of Finance Sec. Sonny Dominguez III vowed to follow due process in the audit," Disini said.

Meanwhile President Duterte said he would not stand in the way Lopez's decision to close several mines in Mindanao after he saw the damage they had done to the environment.

Duterte flew by helicopter from Butuan to Surigao City on Sunday to inspect areas hit by Friday's powerful earthquake that killed six and damaged some infrastructure.

Of 102 mines ordered shut by Lopez for good, seven are in nickel-rich Surigao del Norte and another seven in nearby Dinagat Island, nearly all of them producing nickel.

"I told the (Surigao del Norte) governor there is nothing that I can do if Gina closes down mining companies," Duterte said in a speech in the city.

"There is nothing that I can do because when I passed by the area, I really saw... Surigao City is the most-mined city... They will never be able to restore nature to what it was before. So I really will shut them all down," Duterte said.

Mines ordered for closure include those run by Hinatuan Mining Corp, a unit of top Philippine nickel ore producer Nickel Asia Corp, and Benguet Corp Nickel Mines Inc. Lopez also suspended five others.

The Philippines has been the world's top supplier of nickel ore since 2014, when Indonesia banned exports of unprocessed minerals.

Lopez said the mines ordered closed have caused siltation of coastal waters and destruction of watersheds.

Duterte's support of Lopez's latest action suggests miners may be forced to go to courts to overturn her ruling. -with Reuters



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**Palace: P2B
not for
quake relief**

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Palace: P2-B aid for mine workers, not quake relief

The P2-billion assistance package pledged by President Duterte in Surigao City is intended for the communities that may be affected by the closure of irresponsible mining operations, not for the rehabilitation of places hit by the magnitude-6.7 earthquake last Friday, Malacañang clarified yesterday.

"I would like to clarify that. The President was saying that in the context of the mining," Presidential Communications Secretary Martin Andanar said in a radio interview.

Andanar explained the President offered the financial package for livelihood programs in the event mining operations are shut down and people lose their jobs.

In his visit last Sunday to Surigao City that was hit by the earthquake, the President promised to extend financial assistance for livelihood

programs. He also assured the residents that housing and medicine assistance would also be provided for them.

"I will release money for you so prioritize those who lost their lives and source of living. I'll release a little. Is two billion enough for you?" Duterte said in a local dialect. "You won't really be able to spend all that, will you? Why don't we just buy them all a subdivision and house and lot," the President added.

Media agencies reported the President's P2-billion financial assistance would go to relief and rehabilitation efforts in Surigao del Norte.

Andanar said he conferred with Duterte's special assistant Christopher Go to "decipher" the President's financial pledge in Surigao.

"Sabi ni Bong wala naman akong narinig na gandon," he said.

Instead, Go told Andanar that the President allotted P1 billion for the Department of Social Welfare and Development's free medicine program and another P1 billion for other needs during a meeting.

"Yung P2 billion, ang sinabi, 'Itong P2 billion okay na ba?' Ito iyong binanggit ni Presidente, when he was talking in the context of mining problem, na pag naisara ito mangangailangan ng trabaho iyong tao," Andanar said.

In the same speech last Sunday, the President warned the irresponsible mining companies to clean up their mess or risk closure. He promised to provide alternative livelihood for people affected by the mine closure. (Genalyn D. Kabiling)

Daily Tribune

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Palace: Rody's P2-B pledge for quake victims intended for displaced miners

By Ted Tuvera

It looks like President Duterte committed a blunder in his promise to earthquake victims in Surigao City on Sunday, Communications Secretary Martin Andanar clarified yesterday.

In an interview over dzRIL radio, Andanar said that the President's P2-billion worth pledge to the victims and survivors of the 6.7 magnitude earthquake is not exactly for them, but is instead intended for displaced mining workers affected by Environment Secretary Gina Lopez's closure order.

"The President was saying that in the context of the mining. *Subi niya kung isasara iyang mining, mawawalan ng trabaho iyang tao. Okay. Kung mawawalan ng trabaho iyang tao eh magbibigay siya, 'ito para pakilagbuhi P2 billion. Okay na ba sa inyo yan?'*" Andanar said, adding that he himself had a hard time understanding what Duterte meant by his statement.

Andanar added that he had to consult to Presidential Special Assistant Christopher "Bong Go" as to whom did the President made the promise.

In his speech on Sunday in Surigao City, the President said in the Cebuano dialect: "*So sultihan gyud nako tong mga nawad-an og panginabuhi. Kuwara ra to gamay. Mga P2 billion, tama na siguro. 'Di ninyo na makuro 'no. Na hala paliti na lang sila og subdivision og house and lot na lang'*" which, in the official English transcription made by the Presidential Communications Office-New and Information Bureau, means: "I have released a small amount of money. So I will tell you, those who have lost their livelihood, it's only small. About P2 billion, I think that's enough. You won't be able to spend it! Go on, just buy them a subdivision or a house and lot maybe."

Meanwhile, after surveying quake-hit Surigao, Duterte said that he backs Lopez's move to shutdown mining operations in the region.

"I saw the mining operations from air. I want them to restore the original form of the mining sites. Surigao is the most mined province in the country," the President said.

"I have told (Surigao del Norte) governor (Sol Mafugas) that if (Lopez) orders the closure of a mine, I won't do anything," Duterte added.

Notably, Lopez's closure order of 23 mining operations throughout the country was heavily criticized by a lawmaker from the magnitude 6.7 quake-hit region, Surigao del Sur Rep. Prosperous Pichay.

Moreover, Duterte consoled with the families of the casualties of the earthquake, promising the survivors immediate relief operations.

"We are still lucky that the quake is not as strong as what has happened in other places. If it reached (magnitude) 7, it could have been worse," Duterte said, urging the survivors to count their blessings and quoting scriptures saying: "there is time for happiness, there is time for sadness."

Daily Tribune

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

E D I T O R I A L

Lopez should engage miners

Candor should have prevented the huge commotion brought about by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) decision to suspend or shut 28 mining operations.

The companies covered by the DENR order are among the biggest operating in the country.

A compromise was somewhat reached only after practically the whole economic cluster of the Cabinet held a meeting to discuss the unyielding position of Lopez on the mining operations.

The abrupt order of Lopez was also assailed by stock market officials as being irresponsible as it resulted in mining stocks prices to nosedive while disturbing the global metals market as prices of nickel shot up since most of those affected are nickel producers.

The country is one of the biggest sources of nickel ore and the second largest supplier of nickel to China.

Lopez may have her reasons for shutting down the mines due to violation of environmental laws since, with the amount of profit that the mining companies are generating, they should have invested in assuring that their operations do not disturb the ecological balance.

Still, it was incumbent for Lopez, as part of the government, to have continually engaged with those affected since her decision has a strong impact on the economy and even in the world market.

The Mining Industry Coordinating Council (MICC) which consist of the Department of Trade and Industry, the DENR, the Department of Finance (DoF), the National Economic

and Development Authority, the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines and representatives of the business, civil society, and the academe which met on the DENR order approved a resolution that calls for the creation of technical working group that will in effect review the outcome of the DENR audit.

Mining firms had accused the audit team of the DENR to be composed mainly of anti-mining activists who have no other point of view but to end all mining operations.

In the end, it was agreed, Lopez including, that Rody would have the final call on the fate of the mining operations which would add another layer to the problems to which Rody needs to personally attend.

According to the DoF, the DENR order will cost affected local government units (LGUs) in 10 provinces over P650 million yearly in foregone revenues.

Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez said based on a report of the Bureau of Local Government Finance, losses such as taxes, fees and other charges directly collected by the local governments from mining firms are estimated at P441.92 million, while the LGUs' share from mining taxes collected by the national government account for another P211.72 million.

The provinces that will take a direct hit from the closure or suspension order are Benguet, Nueva Vizcaya, Palawan, Cebu, Bulacan, Zambales, Eastern Samar, Dinagat Islands, Surigao del Norte and Surigao del Sur.

LGUs directly collect from mining firms operating in their municipalities real property tax, local business tax, mayor's permit fee, regulatory and administrative fees, and occupation fees.

The provinces where mining operations are found also collect governor's clearance, verification fee, environmental fees, soil depletion tax and processing permits for vessels.

The resolution of the problem regarding Lopez's order through the MICC, however, did not offer any permanent solution since it may be the same route that all orders of Lopez going forward may have to take which is very cumbersome as a result of something which is not even needed.

Rody should also be spared of having to assume all responsibility that his subordinates should take.

Lopez should open up to the miners who are her main constituents instead of shutting the doors on their face.

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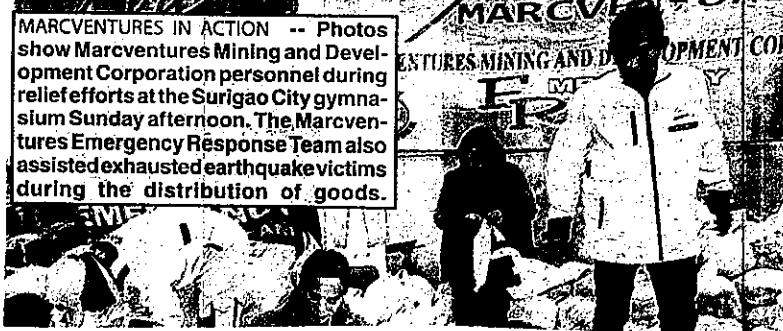
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Mine firms at forefront of Surigao search, rescue ops P. 13

MARCVENTURES IN ACTION -- Photos show Marcventures Mining and Development Corporation personnel during relief efforts at the Surigao City gymnasium Sunday afternoon. The Marcventures Emergency Response Team also assisted exhausted earthquake victims during the distribution of goods.



Mining companies at forefront of Surigao search, rescue ops

This is the industry that Lopez wants to shut down

AT the forefront of the search and rescue operations yesterday in the aftermath of the Surigao earthquake were mining companies in Surigao, Agusan and Dinagat.

Together with MGB Caraga personnel, they mobilized their Emer-

gency Rescue Teams (ERTs), ambulances, water trucks and transport vehicles and were deployed by the City DRMC.

Fire trucks and water trucks from PGMC, TMC, CNC, GRC, Marcventures, CTP, SRMI and Agatha Mining de-

livered water to areas in the city in coordination with the Water District. Relief goods, boxes of medicines and boxes of bottled water were also turned over to the City Social Welfare Office and City Health Office respectively.

ERTs of OceanaGold in

Didipio, Cagayan Valley; Carmen Copper and Apo Cement in Cebu; HOLCIM Davao and Lugait were even on standby alert ready for deployment, when needed.

This is the industry that Gina Lopez wants to shut down, and put to extinction.



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Save mines, protesters clamor at rally

By Joel dela Torre

DOZENS of geology students joined by mining workers yesterday morning staged a rally in front of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) office in Quezon City demanding that Environment

Secretary Gina Lopez lift the suspension orders she slapped on 23 mining firms.

Numbering around 200, the protesters said the recent events of mine suspensions and closures are without legal basis.

"We, the University of the Philippines Mining Engineering Society (UP

MINERS), reiterate our stance and advocacies toward responsible mining and call for transparency in the process of the mining audit done by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources," the group said in their statement.

The group brought placards that said "Gina

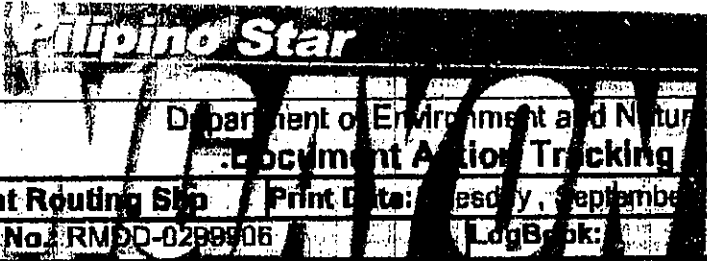
ibalik ang Mina" and "No to Gina, Yes to Mining."

Other students from Adamson University, an institution known to produce top geology engineers, also joined the protest action along with members of the Coalition of Mine Workers, Lepanto Mining Company and Benguet Corp.

According to 63-year-old Danilo Calimlim, of Benguet Corporation and president of Mine Workers League, although he is nearing retirement, he could not bear seeing his co-workers "suffer social injustice."

"We are supervised by mining engineers and we are also legitimate residents, why would we allow irresponsible mining. The mining audit team Lopez tasked to do the audit is composed of anti-mining advocates, she should allow us to be represented to strike a balance," Calimlim said.

Another rallyist, Ralph Abarisa, a mining engineering student, said the action by the DENR has caused employment panic and dilemma for future engineers and scientists of the industry, aside from the questionable mining audit itself.



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Department of Environment and Natural Resources
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Document Routing Slip / Print Date: Tuesday, September 1, 2015
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Addressee: SECRETARY

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**Suspension sa 23 minahan
Geology students at mga minero nag-rally sa DENR**

FROM	DATE/TIME RECEIVED	TO/FOR	DATE/TIME RELEASED	REMARKS/STATUS
RMDD-ADMIN SERV	9/1	protesta ng mga manggagawa ng DENR.	9/1	pagpapalawig ng protesta ng mga manggagawa ng DENR.
cc: [initials]	9/1	Bitbit ang mga placard na nagsasaad na "Gina Ibalik ang Mina"	9/1	hindi niya umano maganggap na ang kanyang mga kasamahan ay magdurusa ng kawalan ng hustisya.
for [initials]	9/1	ay "No to Gina, Yes to Mining" ang mga estudyante na karamihan mula sa Adamson University, isang institution na kilala sa pagpoproduce ng top geology engineers.	9/1	"Kami ay inaala-layan ng mga mining engineers at kami ay mga lehitimong residente, bakit namin nahayaan ang mga irresponsableng pagmimina? Ang mining audit team ni Lopez na naatasang gumawa ng audit ay kinabibilangan ng anti-
		Ayon kay Danilo Calimlim, 63 anyos, manggagawa sa minahan sa Benguet Cor-		Samantala, sa pahayag ng UP Miners, ang suspensyon ng 23 minahan ay maaaring mag-resulta sa kawalan ng trabaho ng mga bagong graduate ng Mining Engineering, Geology, Metallurgical Engineering at pangapiktadong larangan. (Ricky T. Tulipat)
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P2B para sa kabuhayan ng miners, 'di sa nilindol

Nilinaw kahapon ng Malacañang na ang P2 bilyon ayuda na ipinangako ni Pangulong Duterte sa Surigao ay para sa mga maapektuhan ng pagpapasara sa mga minahan, at hindi bilang ayuda sa mga nilindol.

"I would like to clarify that. The President was saying that in the context of the mining," diin ni Presidential Communications Secretary Martin Andanar sa isang panayam sa radyo.

Ipinaliwanag ni Andanar na nag-

alok ng tulong-pinansiyal ang Pangulo para sa livelihood program kaugnay ng pagpapasara sa mga minahan na magiging dahilan ng pagkawala ng hanapbuhay ng mga minero.

Sa kanyang pagbisita sa Surigao City nitong Linggo, ipinangako ni Pangulong Duterte na tutulong siya sa paghahanap ng alternatibong mapagkakakitaan ng mga minero.

Genalyn D. Kabiling

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Possible log-ban order sends chills to wood producers

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez said she is waiting for President Duterte's marching orders on the possible declaration of a total log ban "with no exceptions" that would possibly include forest plantations.

Asked about Duterte's marching orders, Lopez said in a text message, "None yet. But there will be no cutting of trees in natural forests and protected areas. That is clear."

Lopez, however, told the BUSINESSMIRROR that she has no problem with logging "if it is done with the prescribed way," adding that the wood industry should not "take off more than we can produce."

"There has to be designated areas [for logging]," she said.

Lopez, an environmental advocate, continues to enjoy Palace support on the issue of mine closures and suspension orders, even as the Chief Executive assured mining companies affected by the closure of "due process".

Duterte's directive during the Climate Change Commission and Advisory Board en banc meeting in Malacañang forming a tripartite convergence committee to study current logging policy "with no exception" is sending chilling effects on the local wood industry.

The directive came after parts of Mindanao, particularly Surigao del Norte, went under floodwaters after days of heavy rains in January. Experts blame mining and logging for degradation of the forests that led to the severe flooding.

Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel F. Piñol, in one of his Facebook posts, quoted Duterte as giving Lopez full authority to implement the total log ban.

The tripartite committee composed of the departments of Envi-

ronment and Natural Resources, Agriculture and Local Government (DILG) was supposed to meet on February 6.

Imposing a total log ban that would prohibit cutting of trees, including in areas covered by special permits from the government, as well as private forest plantations, would yet again land a serious, possibly fatal blow to the country's \$5.03-billion wood industry.

The private sector can access public lands and establish plantation forest through Integrated Forest Management Agreement (Ifma) and Socialized Industrial Forest Management Agreement (Sifma).

There are around 140 Ifmas covering 1,005,000 hectares; 1,529 Sifma covering around 32,000 hectares.

The government also has a total of 1,884 Community-Based Forest Management Agreements with various non-governmental organizations, people's organizations and community-based groups covering 1,615,000 hectares.

Maila Vasquez, executive director of the Philippine Wood Producers Association Inc. (PWPA) said the local wood industry is still reeling from Aquino administration's total log-ban policy, which bans harvesting of trees from natural and residual forests, with the signing of Executive Order (EO) 23 in 2011.

Vasquez expressed hope that the Duterte administration will consult various stakeholders, particularly the local wood industry, before issuing a national logging policy that will deter the industry's growth.

"Imposing a total log ban, including private plantations, will definitely hurt the industry," she said.

"We are not sure whether the government is planning to ban cutting in commercial tree planta-

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Possible log-ban order send chills
to wood producers

tions. But definitely, it will affect not only owners of commercial tree plantations but tree-farmers, as well," she said.

Vasquez said the local wood industry is already importing more than half of the supply from other countries. Prohibiting commercial tree plantations to cut trees, she said, would make the country totally dependent on imported wood.

To meet the local demand for wood, the Forest Management Bureau (FMB) said at least 60,000 hectares of mature forest plantations. This also requires a forest expansion of 300,000 annually.

"If the government will ban logging even in tree-plantations, the local wood industry will be severely affected," she said.

Vasquez said the PWPA has been battling for a business-friendly policy environment for the local wood industry to flourish through the establishments of more commercial tree plantations.

PWPA is the national asso-

ciation of corporations, partnerships and individuals involved in forest management; logging; forest-plantation development; manufacture of lumber, veneer and plywood, pulp and paper, and other wood products, as well as in trading, shipping and sales of these products.

She said the only way for the wood industry to survive and grow is by continuously planting more trees for commercial and industrial use in private.

The DENR is currently implementing a nationwide reforestation program called Enhanced National Greening Program (ENGP) in partnership with various sectors.

Various programs of the DENR is anchored on forest protection and expansion through Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) program.

She said the issue of deforestation should not be an emotional issue, saying the establishment

of commercial tree plantations is not the problem, but the solution to deforestation.

"Wood is renewable. If you cut wood, you can always plant to replace the trees. It is renewable. What we need is to plant more trees," she said.

The use of wood, she said, is, in fact, environment and climate friendly, because wood is a carbon sink, unless burned or destroyed, she said using wood for construction and other purpose, such as making furniture, preserves carbon sink, thus preventing greenhouse gas emission into the atmosphere.

Even now that the local wood industry is allowed to operate and cut trees from commercial tree-plantations, the Philippines is already importing more than half of the required wood supply.

She stressed that the local wood industry rely on legal wood grown in commercial-tree plantations.

Jonathan L. Mayuga

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DENR UNDERSECRETARY UNDERSCORES "GREEN PRODUCTIVITY" IN SCHOOLS

Department of Energy and Natural Resources (DENR) undersecretary for International Affairs, Atty. Jonas Leones, ably representing secretary Gina Lopez who had to attend to pressing matters in Malacañang, enjoined educational institutions and community leaders to imbibe the Green Productivity Program during the seminar hosted by Southville International School and Colleges (SISC) for the Consortium of the South Schools (CotS) and the Barangay Officials of Las Pinas.

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 edu-



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 Piñas.

cating 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 seminar was facilitated by green productivity practi-

tioners from the Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP), Tess Solomon and Dorothea Navarro, the best practices to prevent the depletion of natural resources, save money for the proponents and improve aesthetics of the landscape. Host school SISC president, Dr. Marl Fernal, lauded the DAP ambassadors for shar-

ing 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 set of officers of the CotS with Undersecretary Leones as the inducting officer.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DENR leads ecotourism efforts

ILOILO CITY — The Department of Environment and Natural Resource (DENR) will face a new set of challenges in ecotourism in Western Visayas.

This is after Helen Catalbas, regional director of Department of Tourism (DOT), recently turned over to DENR Regional Director Jim Sampulna the responsibility in heading the Regional Ecotourism Committee (REC).

"Under our leadership, DENR-6 has a big responsibility in promoting sustainable ecotourism," Sampulna told Manila Bulletin.

"This is an industry that is sup-

posed to be ecologically sustainable, responsible, participative, culturally sensitive, and ethically and socially equitable for all," Sampulna added.

Western Visayas is home to Boracay Island, the country's premier beach destination.

Aside from Boracay, there are other ecotourism destinations in Aklan, Antique, Capiz, Guimaras, Iloilo, and Negros Occidental provinces.

Sampulna reiterated the need to balance the preservation of the environment with developments that cater to the region's tourism industry. (Tara Yap)

THE STANDARD

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Dismantle fish pens, fishers demand

THE militant fisherfolk group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya), together with environmental alliance Save Laguna Lake Movement, on Monday staged a picket in the offices of the Laguna Lake Development Authority and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to demand the immediate and unconditional dismantling of wide fish pens owned by large corporations and individuals in Laguna de Bay.

Vast tracts of fish pens in the 90,000-hectare brackish lake are now illegal after the government ceased issuing permits in line with its campaign to dismantle fish pens in Laguna de Bay to give way for the utilization of small fishers who have been deprived of their common fishing grounds for years due to fish pen proliferation and congestion.

Pamalakaya said data from the LLDA showed there were approximately 13,000 hectares of private fish pens in Laguna de Bay.

But deeper study conducted by Pamalakaya and SLLM claimed that 60 percent of the size of Laguna de Bay is occupied by private fish pens.

Pamalakaya and SLLM welcomed the government's anti-fish pen campaign.

But it said it should be done hastily for the small fishers eagerly await their fishing zone to be reopened again for common use.

Pamalakaya said in a statement: "Getting rid of wide fish pens in Laguna de Bay is a good riddance. It is a welcome development towards reviving the dying lake because it contributes to the lake's pollution through its chemical-based feeds used to culture fish.

Sandy Araneta

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NI LUCKY BOY ALCALA

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MUNTI LGU, LLDA, MAYNILAD TO PLANT 15,000 TREES IN LAGUNA LAKE SHORELINE

The local government of Muntinlupa partners with the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) and Maynilad Water Services Inc. in rehabilitating Laguna Lake by planting 15,000 trees along its shoreline starting February 10.

Muntinlupa LGU, LLDA, and Maynilad executives signed a memorandum of agreement at Baywalk, Brgy. Bayanan for the launching of Plant for Life: Muntinlupa Tree Growing Project, a reforestation program in sub-watershed areas that need rehabilitation due to land cover degradation and high soil erosion.

The agencies will be planting Mangrove, Camille, and local tree species Putat to help minimize sedimentation and siltation of Laguna Lake and its tributary rivers. The Plant for Life project aims to promote and implement watershed reforestation and riverbank and lakeshore stabilization. Local officials and private sector leaders had their fingerprints inked in a Pledge Wall to signify their commitment to the said project.

Maynilad president and CEO Ramonito Fernandez vowed to fully support the preservation of Laguna Lake and other related environmental programs from the city government. Fernandez said that Muntinlupa is the only LGU in the region that Maynilad serves using Laguna Lake as its source.

He added that the Plant for Life project in Muntinlupa is the water concessionaire's second project, having its first run in Cavite. Muntinlupa City Administrator Engr. Allan Cachuella said in the MOA signing ceremony that the city government will continue to strengthen its Environmental Cluster in assistance to the tree planting endeavor.

Cachuella added that the cluster will intensify information campaign to help educate people of the advantages of planting and maintaining the seedlings to the rehabilitation of Laguna Lake and as mitigation to flooding. He noted that Mayor Jaime Fresnedi envisions to plant over

one million of trees in the shoreline.

The local government pushes for environmental protection projects for the city's waterways, in cooperation with national agencies and private sector. Last February 8, the LLDA turned over the Trash Trap project in Tunasan River.

PANGULONG DUTERTE BUMISITA SAMGANGASALANTA SA SURIGAO

DINALAW ni Pangulong Duterte ang mga nasalanta ng lindol matapos namang tumama ang magnitude 6.7 na lindol sa Surigao del Norte noong Biyernes ng gabi.

Sinabi ni Communications Secretary Martin Andanar sinabihan ni Duterte ang mga mining companies maging responsable sa kanilang pagmimina sa Surigao.

Mining companies should clean its own wastes while extracting minerals simultaneously. President Duterte asked the miners to replace the trees that were cut. In other words if they cannot be responsible, government will have to close mining operations in Surigao," sabi ni Andanar. Sa kanyang pagbisita, nag-inspeksyon si Duterte sa Surigao para makita ang tindi ng epekto ng lindol sa lalawigan.

"If Miners cannot clean and fix their act, it will lead to their eventual closure and the local communities will have to shift to agriculture, from mining, particularly in planting rice, rubber trees and coffee," ayon pa kay Andanar. Idinagdag ni Andanar na kabilang ang inuming tubig sa kinakailangan ng mga apektadong residente ng Surigao.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DOF, Italy launch PPUR eco-tourism project in Palawan



L-R: Ms. Beth Maclang, Protected Area Superintendent of PPSRNP; Mr. Marco Spada, Program Expert from the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation; Puerto Princesa City Mayor Lucilo Bayron; Italian Ambassador H.E. Massimo Roscigno; Mr. Anthony Abaya, President of TagBalay Foundation



L-R: Mr. Marco Spada, Program Expert from the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation; Mr. Anthony Abaya, President of TagBalay Foundation; Mr. Antonio De Vivo of La Venta; Italian Ambassador H.E. Massimo Roscigno; Mr. Paolo Forti of La Venta

Puerto Princesa City--A community-based initiative supported by the Italian government to preserve the Puerto Princesa Underground River (PPUR) and promote sustainable eco-tourism initiatives in Palawan was officially launched here recently by the local government of the city and the Embassy of Italy in Manila.

Italian Ambassador to Manila Massimo Roscigno and the TagBalay Foundation, in partnership with the Puerto Princesa city government, led the recent launching of the "Support for Sustainable Eco-Tourism at the PPUR Area," a two-year project of TagBalay Foundation, in collaboration with the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park-Protected Area Management Board (PPSRNP-PAMB) and the La Venta Esplorazioni Geografiche, a group of Italian cave explorers, under the Philippines-Italy Debt for Development Swap Program (PIDDS).

Under the PIDDS, which was formalized between the governments of Italy through the Italian Embassy, and the Philippines through the Department of Finance (DOF), the country's debt obligation of 2.9 million Euros (about \$3.7 million or P160 million) was converted into a grant for the implementation of development projects in the Philippines' poorest areas.

These projects, one of which is the PPUR initiative, focus on environmental protection and poverty reduction with the participation of local communities.

Italian Ambassador to Manila Massimo Roscigno, describing the Underground River as "a fantastic jewel of the country," expressed confidence that the PIDDS-supported project will help sustain the natural beauty of the PPUR and promote it not only as a United Nations Educational, Scientific and

Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Natural Heritage Site but also as a top global tourist attraction.

Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III lauded the project for its potential to provide sustainable eco-tourism opportunities in Palawan and alternative livelihood options that are attuned to good environmental practices.

"This project supports inclusive growth and development by strengthening the partnership between nongovernment and government organizations in undertaking community-based tourism and livelihood opportunities," Dominguez said.

He said the project is in sync with the Duterte administration's 10-point socioeconomic agenda, which aims to ensure inclusive growth by, among others, enhancing rural productivity and tourism development.

"It is close to my heart since almost 30 years ago, [I was a young diplomat in Manila then]. I came to discover the beauty of Palawan and visited the Underground River. It impressed me so much. That is why I am particularly proud that we can leave today the name of our country with the future success of this great natural attraction," Ambassador Roscigno said.

The PIDDS awarded TagBalay and its partners with a grant of P14.2 million with an additional P2.3 million provided as counterpart of TagBalay.

To further preserve the Underground

River, the project aims to support the communities surrounding the protected area through sustainable eco-tourism by providing them with alternative tourism sites.

The project utilizes Italian cave expertise, in collaboration with local cave experts, to further explore the cave and find ways to preserve it, and also provides assistance to local stakeholders on cave management.

Some 100 partners and stakeholders representing the PPSRNP-PAMB, La Venta, Gaia Exploration Club, the academic, tourism services, the Association of Banca Operators, and community leaders attended the official launching of the project.

Local leaders present during the event included City Councilor Nancy Socrates representing Mayor Lucilo Bayron; and Maribel Buñi, Provincial Tourism Officer, representing Governor Jose Alvarez.

The project launching also included a pre-expedition forum where the TagBalay Foundation, La Venta, the Gaia Exploration Club presented their programs and activities to preserve the PPUR area.

Paolo Forti from La Venta explained the scientific expedition to be done as part of the project.

This project started last September and is expected to end in the first quarter of 2018.

For more details about the project launch, please visit www.dof.gov.ph/ph_italydebtswap.



H.E. Massimo Roscigno with the project implementers and partners from TagBalay, PPSRNP-PAMB, and La Venta, DOF, and project stakeholders.

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Philippine eagle has guardians in Leyte

By **RESTITUTO A. CAYUBIT**

BARANGAY MAHAGNAO, Burauen, Leyte – The Mamanwa tribe living in barangay Kagbana, this town, is helping protect the national bird.

Bernal Managbanag, the chief of the tribe, interviewed during the second Mahagnao outdoor festival held here recently, confirmed the presence of the Philippine eagle (*Pithecophaga jefferyi*) in his barangay, saying that the big bird “can carry a wild piglet weighing 10 to 15 kilos.”

Managbanag said they observed that the eagle also eats snakes, monkeys, weasel and other animals.

The members of the Mamanwa participated in the festival that promoted environmental conservation, protection and ecotourism of the Mahagnao Volcano Natural Park, here.

Managbanag said they recognize the bird as the Philippine eagle when personnel from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, regional office (DENR), based in Tacloban City, this province, introduced to them the bird before Super Typhoon Yolanda hit in 2013.

Managbanag said they have been observing the presence of the bird in their area many years ago and there were people hunting the bird for food.

Managbanag said his tribe is protecting the bird on the request of the DENR.

DENR Regional Director Leonardo Sibbaluca told reporters that based on their initial assessment the Philippine eagle roams the forests in the Anonang-Lobi mountain ranges on the boundaries of the towns of Burauen, Jaro-Albuera and Ormoc City.

Sibbaluca said his men in the field are conducting further studies on how far the Philippine eagle ranges in the island of Leyte.

Leyte Governor Leopoldo Dominico L. Petilla said that when the confirmation about the existence of the Philippine eagle in his province reached him sometime in 2014, his office spread information for the protection of the bird and should not be harmed or shot as the bird is protected by law.

Petilla and Sibbaluca are appealing for support from the public, local government units, private organizations, stakeholders and other concerned government agencies to help preserve the Philippine Eagle.

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Man nabbed for selling wildlife online

The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) arrested on Thursday a man who allegedly sold endangered species online, an official said yesterday.

The NBI's Environmental Crime Division caught Rey Asiodche in a sting at a store along Recto Avenue in Manila Thursday night and presented him to the media yesterday, said NBI-EnCD chief Czar Eric Nuqui.

Asiodche sold to NBI agents 24 animals – tarantulas, scorpions and baboons – worth P15,000 during the sting. He was arrested when he failed to present any permit to possess and sell the animals.

In a test buy on Jan. 19,

he sold two Asian forest scorpions (*Heterometrus longimanus*), a kind of scorpion found only in Palawan, for P1,000 each to NBI agents.

Nuqui said Asiodche would use social media sites to sell the animals, which he would either send via courier services or deliver by meeting with clients in person.

The animals would be stuffed in speakers, PVC pipes or socks for delivery, he added.

The NBI charged Asiodche with illegal possession and trading of wildlife, in relation to the anti-cybercrime law, with the Department of Justice. He faces up to eight years in prison if convicted.

– Ghio Ong

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SMC says coal plant emission lower than DENR, WB limits

SMC Global Power, the power generation subsidiary of conglomerate San Miguel Corp. (SMC), reported that continuous testing since last month of its new clean coal technology power plant in Limay, Bataan yielded emission results that were way below government and World Bank (WB) standard limits.

SMC Global said based on the most recent results of government-mandated daily testing, Unit-1 of the Limay plant consistently produced low levels of sulphur oxide, nitrogen oxide, carbon monoxide and particulate matter.

Sulphur oxide was only at 41 parts per million (ppm), which is way below the 245 ppm limit set by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the 700 ppm limit set by the WB.

Nitrogen oxide was at only 92 ppm, against the DENR's 365 ppm limit and the WB's 487 ppm threshold.

Carbon monoxide was at a mere 4 ppm during the latest testing against the DENR limit of 400 ppm. The WB does not have any standards on this measure.

In terms of opacity or clearness of the air, the Limay plant registered 0.8 percent, with dust at only 2.4 milligrams per cubic meter (mg/Nm³). The WB standard for particulate

matters is 50 mg/Nm³ and the DENR's is 150 mg/Nm³.

"These results are way, way below our government standards and even World Bank standards... When people say coal power plant, they immediately associate it with high levels of pollution; but coal remains the most affordable and accessible fuel source today," said Ramon Ang, SMC president and chief operating officer.

"As such, using it (Limay plant) is key to sustaining our country's power security and keeping the price of electricity down, for the present. What these new and modern facilities we've built do is to give us the benefits of using coal while dramatically cutting pollution levels," Ang said.

SMC said circulated fluidized bed (CFB), the technology it is using to produce energy from coal, is cleaner and more efficient than the old system of burning coal.

Unlike the old, conventional system where coal was burned in high temperatures to produce steam to generate power, CFB technology utilizes a process of fluidization where fuel is mixed with limestone.

In this process, limestone acts as an absorber of about 95 percent of sulphur pollutants and the limestone can be recycled

and used multiple times in the operation.

Meanwhile, Unit-2 of the Limay Plant is still being test-run on diesel and will be operational by the second quarter of this year.

Ang earlier said the Limay power plant will save SMC subsidiary Petron Corp. P3 billion in energy cost as it is designed to produce low-pressure and high-pressure steam which will be used to operate the refinery.

He said the savings in power cost will allow the company to be profitable as this will lower operational expense.

Ang was earlier quoted as saying that while most refineries are not making money, "Petron refinery is making lots of money."

SMC reported it will invest in renewable energy (RE) through SMC Global Power as it shortlisted two Asian firms, one of which could be its strategic and technical partner on the green venture.

SMC Global Power is currently the largest independent power producer in the country by installed capacity with a total of 2,903 megawatts (MW) from five power plants including 1,200 MW Ilijan power plant; 2x500 MW Sual coal power plant; 4x35 MW Limay cogeneration power plant; 345 MW San Roque hydro plant and the 218 MW Angat hydro power plant.

Daily Tribune

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Tree-planting activity Students and local officials from Quezon Province join in a PTT Foundation tree planting of 2,000 bamboo trees at the riverside forest in Barangay Apasan, Sampaloc in Quezon.

ANALY LABOR

Daily Tribune

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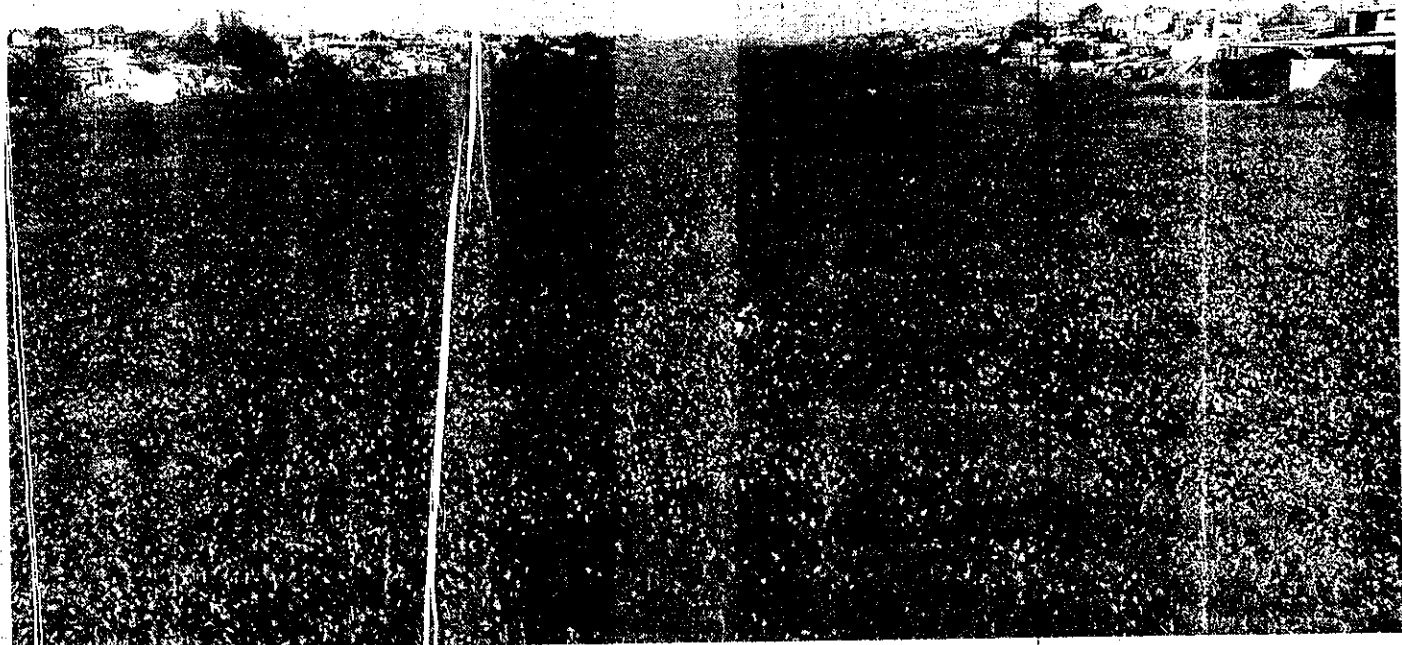
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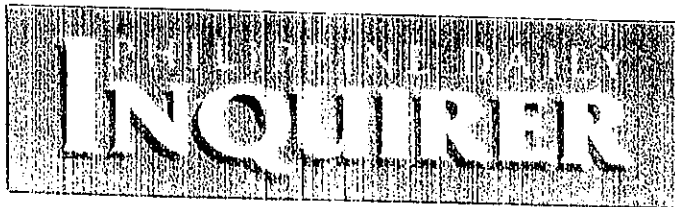
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Farm land? From a distance this stretch of Pasig River — as seen from the Barkadahan Bridge in Pasig City — appears just like an open field. It's time of the year once more when this free-floating weed from Laguna Lake accumulates in the Pasig River before eventually flowing out into Manila Bay.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Coalition seeks overhaul of land governance policies

By Matthew Reysio-Cruz
and Krixia Subingsubing
@Team_Inquirer

To address the combined pressures of land disputes, climate change, massive housing backlog and lack of land security, the government must adopt a sustainable land governance policy that would allow for its rational and equitable allocation among competing uses.

This was the call by a multi-sectoral coalition for sustainable land use launched on Feb. 9 at the end of a two-day conference on land governance organized by the US Agency for International Development (US AID). The coalition included

leaders from national and local governments and international development and civil groups.

During the conference, several leaders underscored the need to overhaul current land governance policies.

Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III depicted Metro Manila in his keynote address as an "urban nightmare" and harbinger of a national "land governance crisis" needing immediate action.

The country's urban areas, home to half of the population, risked turning into "choked" cities like the capital if obsolete land policies were not updated, he said.

A finite yet vital resource,

land, estimated to be at 30 million hectares in the Philippines, is beset by several issues due to poor land governance, Environment Undersecretary Analiza Teh said in an interview.

This included overlapping mandates of key land agencies, lack of land security and tenure, and massive titling problems involving 11 million parcels of land.

"It's high time to pursue land reforms especially now [in the absence of] a harmonized land agency," Teh said. "Sustainable land governance will allow us to tap into the full potential of land as an economic resource."

The coalition was facilitated by USAID's Strengthening Urban Resilience for Growth with

Equity, a five-year project seeking to elevate cities' role in economic development. Its signatories include city mayors, government agencies, members of the academe and representatives from the United Nations and World Bank.

Among the coalition's key calls to action were the development of policies directed at the update and harmonization of land information across agencies, expediting the resolution of land-related cases and increased protection of women's rights to land ownership, said Lourdes Reyes, general manager of Land and Governance Innovations Consultants Inc. and coalition member. INQ

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS



Puwersa ng kalikasan

NAKITA na naman kung gaano tayo kahina, na walang magawa kapag ang mga puwersa ng kalikasan ang kumikilos. Isang Magnitude 6.7 na lindol ang tumama sa Surigao City noong Biyernes. Malakas 'yan. Sa ngayon, pito ang kumpirmadong patay, higit 100 ang sugatan at malawak ang pinsalang idinulot sa imprastraktura tulad ng mga gusali, tulay, kalsada, pati ang paliparan ng Surigao. Napilitang isara ng CAAP ang paliparan dahil sa malalaking bitak sa runway. Malaking hadlang ito sa pagdala ng mga mabilis na ayuda sa mga apektado ng lindol.

Problema na nga ang tubig sa Surigao, na lumala pa dahil sa lindol. Ang tubig na inaaasahan ng mga residente ngayon ay nanggagaling pa sa mga ibang lungsod o lalawigan. Wala pang kuryente sa maraming lugar, sa kabila ng pagsasaayos ng mga linya. Kailangan na kailangan ng mga taga-Surigao ang tubig at pagkain. State of calamity ang idineklara na sa Surigao, para mapigilan ang pagtaas ng presyo ng bilihin, at para mas mabilis ang pagbigay ng pondong kailangan para sa tulong. Kailangang bantayan kung may mga mananamantalang mga negosyante. Kapag nahuli, multahan, ikulong at kasuhan.

Ayon sa Phivolcs, ang malambot na lupa ang dahilan kung bakit malawak ang pinsalang dulot ng lindol sa Surigao. Liquefaction ang tawag diyan, na karaniwan sa mga lugar na malapit sa dagat o lawa. Nagiging walang saysay ang mga pundasyon ng mga gusali at kung ano pang mga istraktura. Higit 100 taon na rin ang lumipas nang gumalaw ang Surigao fault line. Tila nagparamdam ang fault line ngayon na aktibo pa rin. Ipinakita muli ng lindol kung gaano hindi kahanda ang ating imprastrak-

(Sundan sa pahina 5)