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DAY

Friday

DENR

IN THE NEWS



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Philippine serpent eagle rescued in Kalinga

By VICTOR MARTIN

TABUK CITY, Kalinga – A Philippine serpent eagle caught in a bird trap in the forest in Pinukpuk town, has been rescued.

Pinukpuk Mayor Jimmy Dasayon said Ruben Padilla, who has been hunting birds using traps, told him that he caught the eagle on Monday.

"My only concern is to save the bird, so I gave him P500 as reward so he will not sell the bird or have it for *pulutan*," Dasayon said.

He said they named the eagle – which has a wingspan of almost 20 inches – Mutal, which means sharp, big eyes in Kalinga.

Dasayon said they would coordinate with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Philippine Eagle Foundation to save the endangered bird species from extinction.

"Unfortunately we don't

have sanctuaries here...we can't just release Mutal into the forest because we can't guarantee its safety from possible indiscriminate hunting and other dangerous traps," he said.

Dasayon said there are other reports of sightings of the Philippine serpent eagle in their town.

"Their number has been decreasing because of the destruction of their natural

habitat due to *kaingin*, forest fire and hunting. Some people are still unaware that hunting, selling, killing and mere possession of endangered species like the serpent eagle is punishable by law," he said.

The Philippine serpent eagle thrives in forest clearings, open woodlands and cultivated lands with scattered trees. It has also been spotted in Kalinga, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino and Isabela

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2.1-M sasakyan, pangunahing sanhi ng polusyon sa Metro Manila

Ang pagtatayo ng mga bagong gusali, ng mga hindi sementadong daan, at ang buga ng usok ng mga sasakyan, ang nagpapalala sa polusyon sa Metro Manila.

Ayon kay Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Ramon Paje, tinatayang 80 porsiyento ng air pollution sa bansa ay nagmumula sa mobile sources. Samantala, 20-30 porsiyento ng pollutants ay nagmumula sa lugar o stationary sources, gaya ng mga industriya, open burning at iba pang aktibidad sa kabahayan.

Sinabi ng DENR na ang alikabok mula sa konstruksiyon ng mga gusali malapit sa mga kalsada, alikabok mula sa mga hindi sementadong daan, at ang dumaming sasakyan sa Metro Manila ang nagbunsod sa pagtaas ng antas ng polusyon sa metropolis.

Inihayag ng Land Transportation Office na sa tala noong Enero 2014, mayroong halos 7.7 milyong behikulo sa buong bansa, at 2.1 milyon dito ay nasa Metro Manila.

Gayunman, sinabi ni Paje na ang

monitoring sa kalidad ng hangin sa Metro Manila ay naging "very effective" dahil lahat ng lokal na pamahalaan sa Metro Manila ay may sariling monitoring station.

"We can now compare the air quality in various areas in Metro Manila," dagdag ni Paje.

Binanggit ni Paje na noong 2010, ang total suspended particulate (TSP) ay nasa 166 micrograms per normal cubic meter at nanatili ito sa 120-130 micrograms per normal cubic meter nang mga sumunod na taon.

Ang TSP ay ang pinakamaliit na airborne particles gaya ng alikabok, singaw, at usok na may lawak na hindi aabot sa 100 micrometers.

"In 2015, we have recorded 101 micrograms per normal cubic meter. This is the lowest we have recorded," sinabi ng DENR chief kasabay ng pagpapahayag ng pag-asa na "we are not far from reducing the TSP to 90 micrograms per normal cubic meter, which is the standard level."

Ellalyn B. De Vera



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DEMAND AND SUPPLY

Pollution alert!

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VES SERVICE

I woke up to the sound of Viber announcing a message on my iPhone. It was from my friend, Ed Yap who is now busy spearheading a private sector effort to monitor air pollution in Metro Manila. It is as if his other concern, managing EDSA traffic mess, is not frustrating enough.

Anyway, here is Ed's message: "Air monitoring public service project of Makati Rotary at Ayala Ave cor Parkway. Realtime 24/7 reading 6:45am Wednesday - Poor! PM2.5 reading is 44.9 whc is above WHO's 25. Use your face mask!"

So... what else is new? My doctors have long told me I have to live with my chronic sinusitis and the post nasal drip problem that has given me a chronic cough as well. It is all due to the dirty air we breathe.

Just go up Sumulong highway in Antipolo and somewhere after the Valley Golf gate, you can easily get to a vantage point to see for yourself how polluted Metro Manila's air is. You will see a sinister cloud of gray almost covering the metro area below. We wouldn't put dirty food into our mouths but we have no choice but to breathe all that dirty air into our lungs.

Other than factories, the major culprit is the large motor vehicle population perpetually idling in metro traffic jams. The older vehicles like jeepneys are powered by discarded diesel engines from Japan. While LTO is required to test vehicles for emissions at least once a year, compliance is a joke.

We all breathe into our bodies the proof of failed governance, possibly reducing our life expectancy. Los Angeles was able to clean its air with tougher enforcement and strong political will.

Ignorance of the true state of air quality breeds complacency. What people don't know, they can't complain about. And the public is not being provided with daily air quality readings, much less health advisories when air quality is bad. In contrast, such information is provided daily and routinely as part of the weather report by media in cities abroad.

DENR used to have air pollution monitoring stations all over the metro area, but that was so long ago. I guess the machines all gave up. And as is the case in China, there is incentive for our bureaucrats not to have functioning pollution monitoring equipment that will validate their failure.

In Beijing, the local population has been looking up to the US Embassy for a true reading of their pollution level. Here, we have nowhere to turn to until Ed Yap initiated this Rotary Club project with the cooperation of UP president

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THE PHILIPPINE STAR

TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

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Fred Pascual.

The air quality monitoring system (AQMS) project of the Rotary Club of Makati (RCM) was launched late last year with the signing of a MOA between RCM and UP.

The agreement will provide RCM access to the technical expertise of UP's Institute of Environmental Science and Meteorology (IESM). The academics will ensure the sound operation of the system, including data collation, management, interpretation and dissemination, and development of website and mobile app software.

The system will use German made GRIMM EDM365C air and meteorological monitoring units capable of automatically and continuously measuring and recording airborne particulate levels for PM10, PM2.5 and PM 10-2.5. It is equipped with meteorological sensors to measure temperature, humidity, wind speed and direction. The PM2.5 sensors conform to US EPA standards.

The monitoring equipment was installed and tested in time for its official commissioning tomorrow, March 12, which is the 50th charter anniversary of the club. Ed said they hope they could get other sponsors to finance future expansion.

The pilot phase of the project will provide air readings from three strategically located stations. Two are owned by the club in Makati and EDSA, Project 7 in QC. The third is operated by the Lung Center in QC and its readings are fed into the system under a tie up with the club.

Air quality readings with precautionary health advice may be accessed 24/7 in real time through the project website or mobile app. Bad air quality can be lethal to people with asthma and other respiratory diseases.

Thanks to Ed, we will now at least know how bad the pollution level is in three Metro areas. Then again, we will validate what we already know... that our pollution level remains high. It is only after a big storm that we get a relief from all that bad air around us. Unless our officials act, mere monitoring will only get us angrier and sicker.

Retirement

The Department of Trade and Industry is to complete a roadmap for the retirement industry. The roadmap outlines the course of action needed for the industry to be more globally competitive, a BOI official said.

According to the BOI, the retirement industry has made considerable contributions to the economy as reflected in revenues from visa deposits of Special Resident Retiree's Visa

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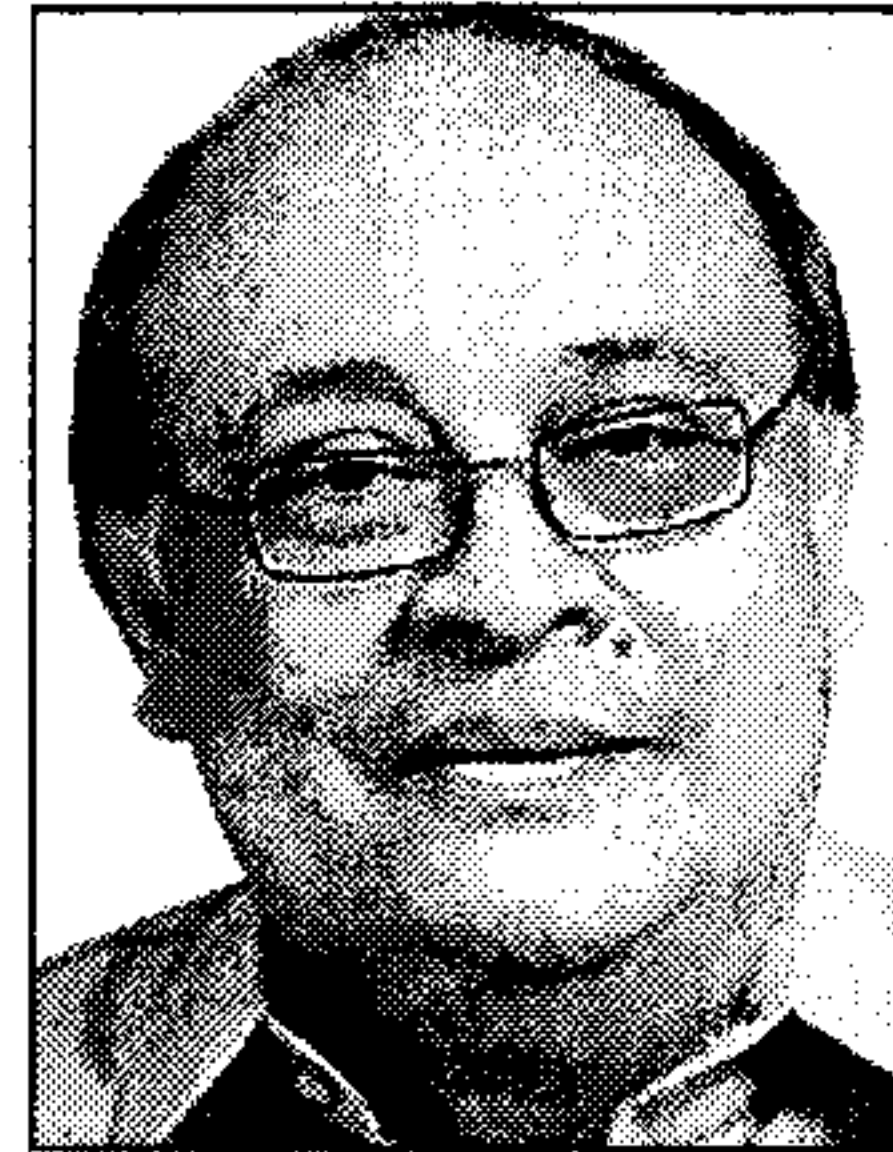
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Pollution alert !

By BOO CHANCO



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(SRRV) holders. Total visa deposits of SRRV holders as of end-2014 amounted to \$452 million or about P19 billion.

Building a retirement industry here is a natural for our country. The climate and the hospitable people are basic attractions. The Global Retirement Index 2016 of International Living Magazine ranked the Philippines 17th out of the 23 best countries to retire in.

The annual index bases its rating on a number of factors, namely, real estate costs, special benefits for retirees, cost of living, leisure amenities, healthcare services, infrastructure and climate.

Meanwhile, another foreign retiree reacted to a previous column on our visa and current retirement program. He said: "I do agree in general with your comments regarding tourist visas being shorter than they ought to be in general... I think 60 days would make sense... I liked your article overall..."

But he said the complaints of Grandpa Peter are misguided. "Grandpa Peter said he doesn't want to avail of the retirement benefits offered by PRA that theoretically gives unlimited visa free access for five years. This is incorrect to my understanding-it is ongoing- not five years. Maintain the deposit or hold the condo you buy under the program and the visa is on going.

"Grandpa Peter said that our retirement program 'is not as good as advertised! It is costly and involves a lot of unnecessary paperwork and many delays and interviews.' The one time application fee is \$1,400, the annual cost of renewal is \$360. Grandpa is throwing away money on air fare and visa extensions."

This retiree praised the PRA for facilitating "my required medical with an escort and driver to an approved medical facility. They helped me get a required NBI clearance. They handled my paperwork punctually in every respect.

"I had to get a police clearance from my home country which seems to me to be a reasonable request before allowing a foreigner to stay long term in the country. You can't really expect to get a resident visa as foreigner in any country with out some paperwork. Grandpa Peter bought a condo so he could have easily availed of the program."

Oh well... maybe the PRA has done a poor job of communicating to its target markets, like Grandpa Peter. That should be easy enough to remedy if the product is right.

Boo Chanco's e-mail address is bchanco@gmail.com. Follow him on Twitter @boochanco.

MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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PH miners to trim nickel ore output

Nickel ore producers in the Philippines have agreed to slash output and shipments this year by as much as 20 percent, responding to a slide in the price of the metal to its lowest in over a decade on weak Chinese demand.

The Philippines became the top supplier of nickel ore to China, the world's biggest consumer of the metal used in stainless steel, after Indonesia banned exports of unprocessed minerals in 2014. But slumping prices have meant the Southeast Asian country has not fully benefited from the increased sales volumes.

The Philippine Nickel Miners Association, which accounts for 60 percent of domestic nickel ore output, has agreed to reduce ore output this year by as much as 20 percent over 2015 volumes, Ramon Peter Adviento, senior vice president for investor relations at Global Ferronickel Holdings, Inc., told Reuters. The combined

exports of the group members, including Global Ferronickel, are also expected to drop by 20 percent, Adviento said.

"Miners are slowing down or delaying production. Some have even implemented retrenchment programs to reduce costs," he said.

Global Ferronickel itself is looking at exporting close to 5 million wet metric tons (wmt) this year, down from 5.4 million wmt in 2015, said Adviento.

The Philippine miners' group does not include top nickel ore producer Nickel Asia Corp., which accounts for more than 25 percent of ore exports from the country. There are 27 nickel mines in the Philippines, including Nickel Asia's four. Emmanuel Samson, chief financial officer of Nickel Asia, told Reuters the company has "no plans" to limit exports this year.

Benchmark nickel on the London Metal Exchange tumbled to \$7,550 a ton on Feb. 11, its lowest since 2003, as China's demand slows with its economy and the global outlook for stainless steel consumption remains weak. (By Enrico Dela Cruz and Manolo Serapio Jr./Reuters)

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3 workers buried alive in Antipolo landslide

By NON ALQUITRAN

Three workers were buried alive in a landslide at a construction site in Antipolo City yesterday.

Cousins Darwin, Teten and Rene Villegas, all residents of Marikina City, were installing a cement post in a two-story building owned by Jacinto Catipay in Barangay Sta.

Cruz when the soil collapsed around 8:30 a.m.

Using a backhoe and a hydraulic cutter, rescue workers retrieved the bodies of the victims after several hours.

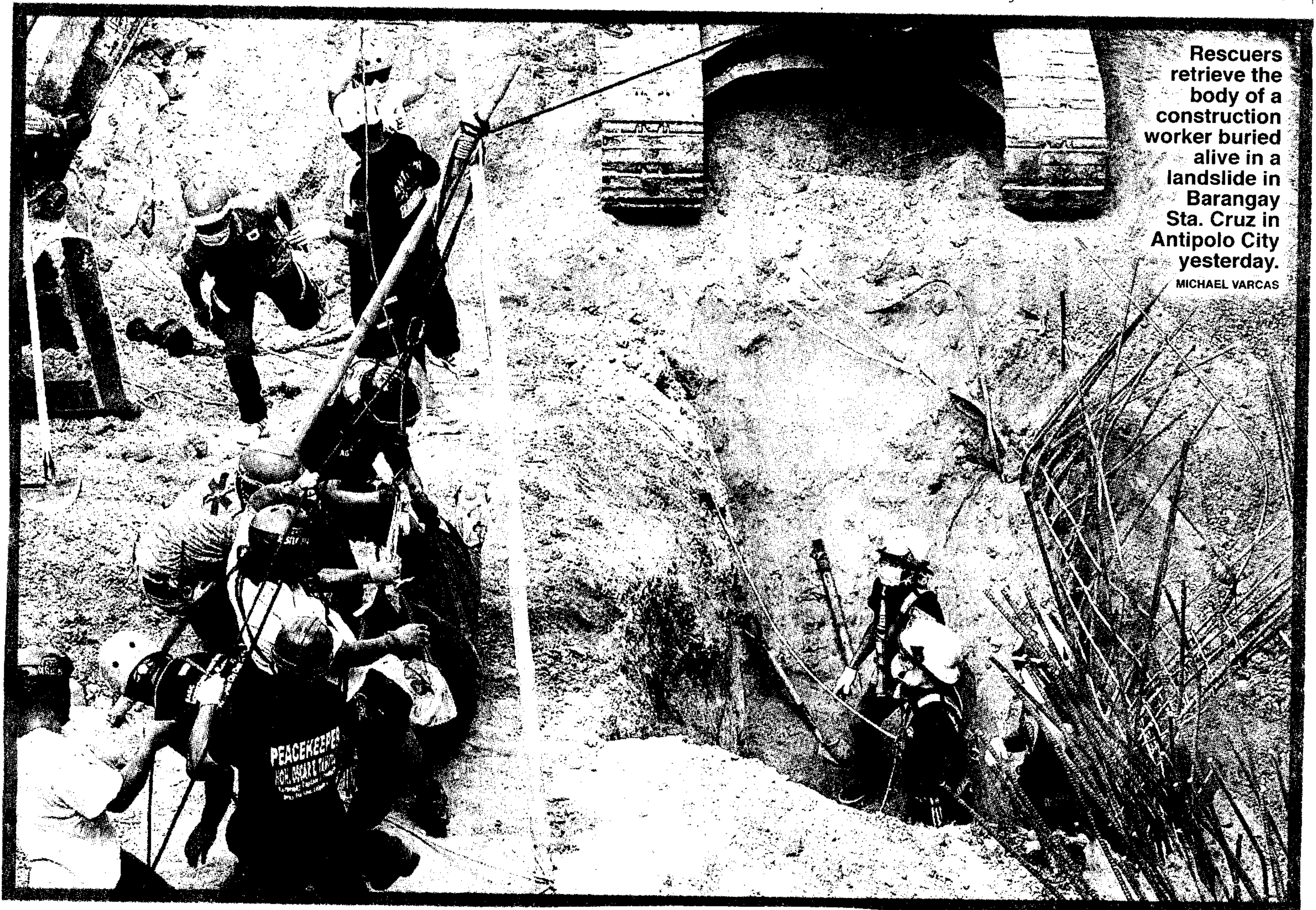
One of the workers, Jessie Lorica, was rescued and brought to a hospital for

treatment of minor injuries.

Engineer Frederick del Rosario said the workers were buried in at least 12 cubic foot of soil or an equivalent of a dump truck. He said the soil could have loosened because of wastewater flowing from nearby houses.

Residents near the accident were evacuated while the city government of Antipolo is conducting an investigation.

The management of the construction firm said they would shoulder the funeral and other expenses incurred by the families of the victims.



Rescuers retrieve the body of a construction worker buried alive in a landslide in Barangay Sta. Cruz in Antipolo City yesterday.

MICHAEL VARCAS

The Standard

DEFINING THE NEWS

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Tragedy in Rizal. Rescuers retrieve the body of four people who were buried alive after a construction site collapsed in Cogeo in Antipolo, Rizal, on Thursday. **MANNY PALMERO**

The Manila Times

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3 buried alive in Antipolo cave-in

THREE construction workers died on Thursday morning after a soil caved in and buried them alive in a construction site in a village in Cogeo in Antipolo City, Rizal province.

The fatalities were identified as siblings Darwin and Teten Villegas and their cousin Reiny, all residents of Marikina City (Metro Manila).

Another construction worker – Jessie Lorica – was hurt in the accident. He was brought to a nearby hospital for treatment.

Rescuers said the victims were working as laborers in the two-storey residential building along Marcos Highway in Barangay Sta. Cruz, Cogeo.

Reports said the victims were installing a post at around 8:30 a.m. when the soil around its hole collapsed and buried them. While the victims were wearing safety gears, one of the victim's hard hat was broken.

According to Frederick del Rosario, sub-contractor engineer to the project, the equivalent of about one dump truck of soil crushed the victims.

Based on the information



ANTIPOLO TRAGEDY Rescuers retrieve the body of one of the three workers who were buried alive in a cave-in at a construction site in Antipolo City on Thursday. PHOTO BY MIKE DE JUAN

from a building permit, the house is owned by Jacinto Catipay.

The construction firm owner said they will pay for the funeral expenses of the

fatalities and will give cash assistance to their families.

NEIL A. ALCOBE

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Fisherfolk blame El Niño for big drop in fish catch

By Orlando Dinoy and Richel Umel
Inquirer Mindanao

SANTA CRUZ, Davao del Sur—Fisherman Virgilio Abe could only shake his head in dismay while staring at his banca and its load of only 4 kilograms of fish.

"This is a far cry from the 15-kilogram daily average I had before the dry spell," Abe, 46, a father of three and a resident of Barangay Poblacion here, said in the vernacular.

In his small motor-driven banca, he would go to as far as Santa Cruz's fishing boundaries to seek a better harvest—only to return to shore with a just a third of what he used to catch.

"I think the fishes swim deeper these days because of the extreme heat. I could also not use a longer line for my net because it is prohibited," he said.

A fisherman from Barangay Bato, who

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SPECIAL REPORT

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RICHEL LUNEL/INQUIRER MINDANAO

LOST BOUNTY Fishermen have noticed that even the hardy swordfish is now hard to find in Iligan Bay in Mindanao because of El Niño.

Fisherfolk blame El Niño

From page A1

gave his name only as Dodong, is struggling more than ever.

He did not own a motorized banca and could fish just a few kilometers from the coastline of his village, particularly in the nearest coral reefs.

"It would be lucky if I can get 2 kilograms of fish," Dodong said.

Species, such as grouper and parrot fish, have become scarce compared to last year's, he noted.

Fish has also become less abundant in deeper seas, said Victor Abdullah, who operates a larger fishing boat.

"We used to catch about a ton by just sailing 27 kilometers into Davao Gulf," Abdullah said. "Now, we could hardly catch 200 kilograms even if we sail farther."

Diverse ecosystem

The 308,000-hectare Davao Gulf is considered one of the most diverse marine ecosystems in the world, according to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

It is Southern Mindanao's major fishing ground and the 10th in the country where such species as sardines, tuna and mackerel thrive.

The Davao Gulf Management Council (DGMC) has considered the gulf "a critical resource supporting the economies of six coastal cities and 18 coastal municipalities."

Like Abe, Abdullah blames the extreme weather condition, brought about by the El Niño phenomenon, for the dwindling catch.

"Fish species like cooler temperatures so they tend to go deeper into sea or migrate to colder areas when the temperature here gets hotter," he said.

In January, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) projected that at least 100,000 fisherfolk in 58 provinces will suffer from the effects of El Niño.

In its mitigation plan, it said the rise in temperature in the Pacific Ocean could drive down the country's annual fish catch by 20 percent.

The BFAR also urged fishers to find alternative sources of livelihood as the situation continues to get worse. It has earmarked at least P673 million from its 2016 budget to fund measures to mitigate the effects of El Niño on the domestic fishing industry.

Like the Sta. Cruz fishermen, Ricardo Rabaya Jr., 48, of Barangay Poblacion in Linaon, Lanao del Norte province, could only scratch his head.

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Fisherfolk blame El Niño

Iligan Bay, too

Iligan Bay, one of Northern Mindanao's major fishing grounds, has lost its bounty.

Rabaya said he would be lucky to catch swordfish these days, even when he would sail more than 10 km from the shoreline.

Swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) is among fish species known to be heat tolerant and can thrive in waters with a temperature of 27 degrees Celsius. It is highly migratory and would move toward areas with lower temperature.

Rabaya said the effect of the extreme weather condition was also being aggravated by pollution and dynamite fishing at Iligan Bay.

Abdullah noticed the decrease in fish catch at Davao Gulf as early as January, but the situation started to worsen in February.

Prices of marine products have spiked in public markets in Davao del Sur due to low supply.

For example, mackerel, which used to sell at P110 per kg in December last year, now sells between P150 and P180. Tuna is priced at P400 per kg from P250-P280 more than two months ago.

State of calamity

Sta. Cruz Mayor Joel Ray Lopez said the recent declaration of the state of calamity could also speed up assistance to the fishermen.

"We are finding ways to lessen the suffering of our fishermen and our farmers," he said.

For Mayor Rommel Arnado of Kauswagan, Lanao del Norte, the local government, in coordination with the BFAR, will be distributing fish cages, floating devices (*payao*) and fingerlings to boost the fish stock in the town's coastal areas.

In the meantime, fishermen have to contend with the dwindling catch as government-run weather forecasting agencies project the dry spell to probably extend beyond the wet months.

The Australian Bureau of Meteorology said that while climate indicators showed that El Niño could be weakening, the return to neutral conditions could yet happen in the second quarter of the year.

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'Enormous' impact of drought on palm seen fueling 17% rally

PALM oil may surge to the highest since 2012, as the strongest El Niño in almost two decades "ravages" production and squeezes inventories in the world's largest growers, according to Godrej International Ltd.'s Dorab Mistry.

Prices in Kuala Lumpur, the global benchmark for the world's most used cooking oil, will jump to 3,000 ringgit (\$730) a metric ton as world supply trails demand, Mistry said in remarks prepared for a conference on Wednesday. Futures last traded above the 3,000 ringgit level in September 2012, and would be 17 percent above 2,555 ringgit on Wednesday.

The tropical vegetable oil used in everything, from chocolate to soaps and biofuel, bucked a commodities rout last year, as the dry weather caused by the worst El Niño since 1997 and 1998 parched major palm-growing regions in Southeast Asia.

Palm-oil production in 2015 and 2016 season ending in September may shrink by 3 million tons, Mistry said.

"I believe we must now cast aside all ideas of crude palm-oil futures at 2,600 ringgit or 2,700 ringgit," Mistry said. "We have to take prices to levels where demand does not expand and is made to shrink somewhat in price-sensitive markets like India. That will

mean BMD futures trading with a three rather than a two," he said, referring to the contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives.

Bullish view

NINE out of 13 analysts, planters and traders in a Bloomberg survey were bullish on prices to the end of the first half. Futures may climb to 2,700 ringgit by June 30, according to the median estimate of bullish respondents. Prices rallied to a 21-month high of 2,648 ringgit last month.

Prices are seen in a range of 2,700 ringgit to 3,000 ringgit until June, as output drops and as Indonesia and Malaysia fail to meet their biodiesel-usage targets, said Thomas Mielke, executive director at Oil World, an industry researcher. Production losses to dry weather may be further exacerbated if La Niña later this year triggers heavy rains, James Fry, chairman of LMC International Ltd., told the conference.

Output from Malaysia, the world's largest producer after Indonesia, may see a "violent" drop of 1.5 million tons to 18.4 million tons in 2015 and 2016, said Mistry, who's traded the vegetable oil for more than three decades.

He cut the Indonesian output estimate by 1.2 million tons for the 2015 and 2016 season. Malaysian production will fall by 1

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'Enormous' impact of drought -



HARVESTED palm oil fruit sit in a pile in front of the biogas plant at the Bell Eco Power Sdn. palm-oil operations in Batu Pahat, Johor, Malaysia. BLOOMBERG

million tons this calendar year to just under 19 million tons, while it will total 31 million tons in Indonesia, Mistry said.

Supply gap

GLOBAL edible oil supplies will increase only 0.2 million tons in 2015 and 2016, compared with 3.6 million tons a year earlier and 7.5 million tons in 2013 and 2014, Mistry said. Total demand will expand by 4.5 million tons from 2.5 million tons a year earlier, he said.

"The gap between incremental supply and incremental demand will turn out to be almost a record 4.2 million tons. World stocks will be drawn down dramatically" in countries including Malaysia and Indonesia, as well as in top consumers India and China, Mistry said. "This will have a profound impact on veg oil prices during

the rest of this year."

Shrinking inventories

MALAYSIAN stockpiles slid to an 11-month low of 2.11 million tons in February from a month earlier, according to a Bloomberg survey of planters, traders and analysts. Inventories may tumble to as low as 1.7 million tons in June, according to Mohd Emir Mavani Abdullah, CEO of Felda Global Ventures Holdings Bhd.

World energy demand for palm oil will expand more than the previously estimated 1.5 million tons, as the Indonesian biodiesel program is "now functioning well," Mistry said.

Food demand, on the other hand, may be tempered by higher prices and may expand by 3 million tons in 2015 and 2016, less than the 4 million tons a year earlier, he said. *Bloomberg News*

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

PH set to become world's next tourism hub

TOURISM has become one of the major economic drivers in the Philippines, marked with strong, continued, and uninterrupted growth in both visitor arrivals and receipts, making the country ripe to become the world's next tourism destination.

According to the Department of Tourism, tourism remained profitable and accounted for an estimated \$5.0 billion or P227.62 billion worth of international visitor receipts in 2015.

This is 5.92 percent greater than the 2014 total earnings, with the month of December 2015 yielding the peak of all tourism activities at P23.47 billion and the month of September 2015 registering the highest growth of 24.24 percent.

Korea continued to be the top spending market with visitor spending amounting to P66.55 billion for the year 2015. The United States ranked second with P42.31 billion, followed by Australia with P12.83 billion, overtaking Japan which provided P12.20 billion to take the fourth spot. Completing the top five spending markets is China with visitor spending of P10.19 billion.

For the year 2015, tourists spend an average of P4,888.82. They also spent heavily last year, with an average per capita expenditure of P48,350.44. Their average length of stay in the country is registered at around 10 nights.

In terms of visitor arrivals, the industry also marked another milestone as, for the first time in history, total inbound tourists surpassed the five million mark, with the Philippines welcoming 5,360,682 visitors in 2015.

Korea is the biggest source market with the year 2015 marking another milestone by providing 1.34 million visitors - the first country market to surpass the 1.3 million mark - accounting for 25 percent of total arrivals and posting a significant growth of 13.97 percent. The United States of America supplied the 2nd biggest influx of tourist arrivals, followed by Japan, China, Australia, Singapore, Taiwan, Canada, Malaysia, and United Kingdom to round up the top 10 countries.

"The strong performance of the industry may be attributed to the aggressive branding and promotional activities launched in key and emerging markets such as the Visit the Philippines Year (VPY) campaign in 2015," Tourism Secretary Ramon R. Jimenez, Jr. said. "At the rate that the industry is growing, tourism has proven that it is an important pillar in the country's economic growth."

To further boost the growth of local tourism, the Department of Tourism, through its marketing arm Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) launched the Visit the Philippines Again (VPA) 2016 campaign to drive urgency and excitement among foreign travelers to visit the Philippines and return for more fun, friendship, feel-good adventures and fabulous memories to cherish in 2016.

Foreign travelers will be treated to many new and exciting attractions and spectacular travel destinations that showcase the beauty of the Philippine islands and the warmth of its people. Returning visitors will also be given exclusive travel deals and special incentives. They can avail special discounts on flights, hotel accommodations and tour packages after simply presenting proof of previous visits.

Aside from various perks and privileges, tourists and returning Philippine residents can also enjoy worry-free connectivity during their stay in the country as TPB renewed its partnership with Globe Telecom, as the telco is once again offering its Globe Traveler SIM to millions of tourists and returning OFWs for free. Globe Traveler SIM is a local prepaid SIM that offers affordable local rates for mobile data, calls, and SMS services. Users can also receive calls and texts from abroad for free and cut costs on mobile data by subscribing to TravelSurf, which allows them to surf the Internet on mobile for an affordable rate of \$11 for seven days or \$23 for 30 days. Users can also call abroad for as low as US\$0.40 per minute.

"We are privileged to once again partner with the TPB to help boost the travel experience with affordable call, text and data services, enabling them to stay in touch as well as share the beauty of the Philippines to the rest of the world through social media. With Globe, we ensure that even travelers get to live and embrace their digital lifestyle as their connectivity partner while in the country," said Nikko Acosta, Senior Vice President for International Business Group at Globe.

Starting March 15, Globe is also launching Relive Wonderful Philippines, a video contest where international visitors (Non-Philippine residents and OFWs) can submit a video showcasing why they love the Philippines and what they want to do in the country again. The winner of the best video will win a ticket to fly back to the Philippines with a companion to their destination of choice complete with hotel accommodation and allowance from Globe.

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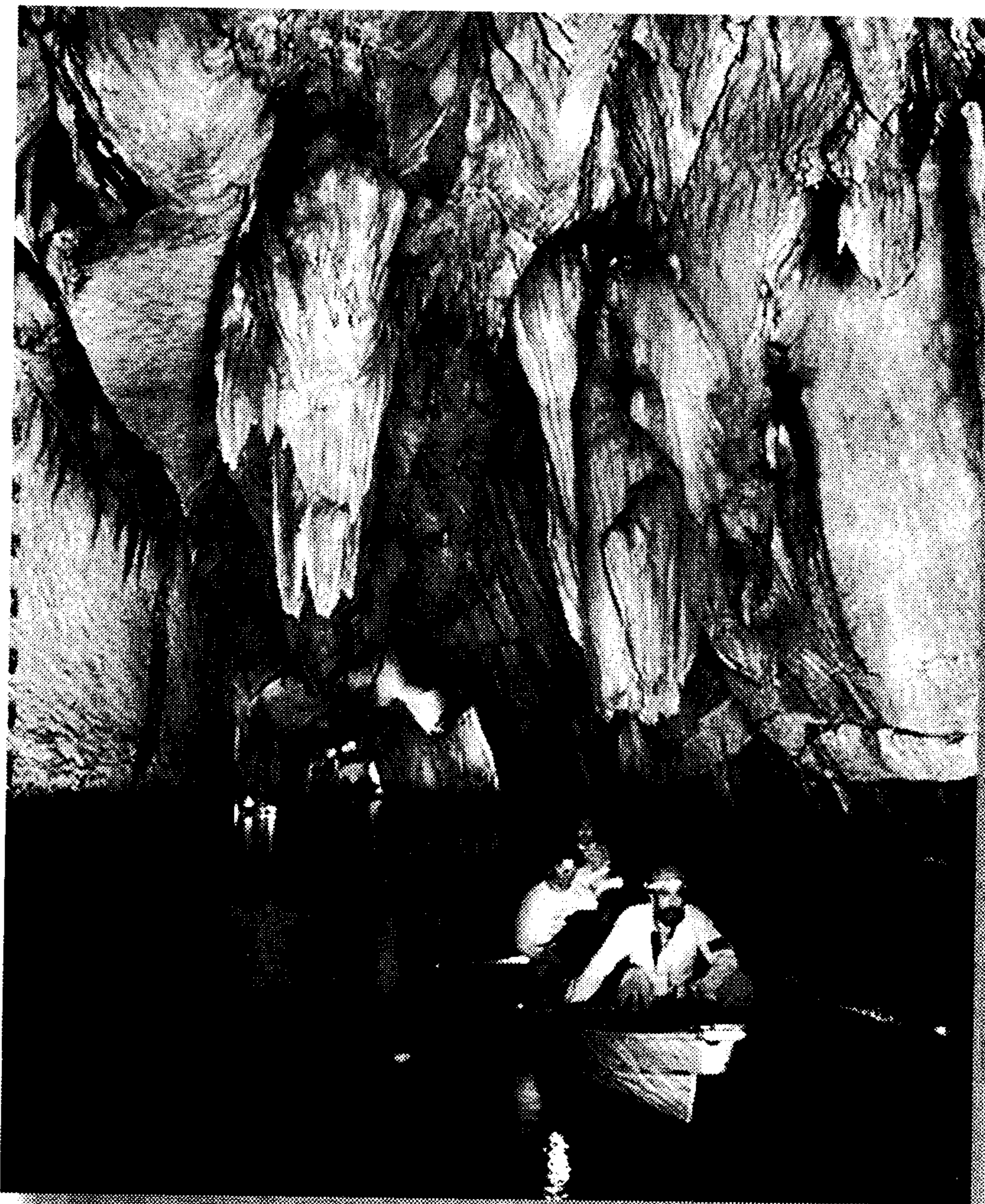
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PA set to become world's next
tourism hub



The Underground River in Palawan.

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1900

MANILA BULLETIN

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STUDY

Climate change poised to hurt food supplies



PARIS, France (AFP) — The effects of climate change on food production could cause 500,000 extra deaths by 2050 compared to a world without global warming, according to a study released Thursday.

If greenhouse gas emissions continue at current rates, this would cut projected increases in food availability by about a third before mid-century, the study found.

As of 2015, some 800 million people in the world are undernourished, meaning they cannot meet daily minimum dietary energy requirements, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization has said.

With the global population set to increase from seven to nine billion by 2050, food production will have to expand even more rapidly if all the world's people are to have enough to eat.

But global warming — on track to boost temperatures three degrees Celsius (5.4 degrees Fahrenheit) by 2100, compared to pre-Industrial-Era levels

— is threatening to make that difficult or impossible, experts warn.

"Climate change effects are expected to reduce the quantity of food harvested, which could lead to higher food prices and reduced consumption," according to the study, published in the medical journal *The Lancet*.

Even these grim projections may be overly optimistic, it warns, because they only count calories and fail to anticipate a likely worsening in the balance of future diets.

"Our results show that even modest reductions in the availability of food could lead to changes in the energy content and composition of diets," said Marco Springmann, a researcher at the Oxford Martin Programme on the Future of Food at the University of Oxford, and leader of the study. "These changes will have major consequences for health." The proportion of fruits and vegetables in diets, for example, will almost certainly decline in a climate-change-addled world, he said.

MANILA BULLETIN

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICES

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Over 30 countries need food aid due to drought, flooding, civil conflicts

UNITED NATIONS (PNA/Xinhua) – Thirty-four countries, including 27 in Africa, are currently in need of food assistance due to drought, flooding and civil conflicts, a UN spokesman said here Wednesday, citing a report released by the UN food agency.

The Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) released its the new edition of the quarterly Crop Prospects and Food Situation report early in the day.

"Drought associated with El Niño has sharply reduced 2016 crop production prospects in Southern Africa, while expectations for the harvest in Morocco and Algeria have been lowered due to dry conditions," Farhan Haq, the deputy UN spokesman, said at a daily news briefing.

"Also in areas of Central America and the Caribbean, ongoing dry conditions linked to El Niño may affect sowings of the main season crops for the third consecutive year," Haq said. "The re-

port also warns that last year's reduced production would negatively impact the food security situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea."

Swaziland is the country newly added to the list which included 33 countries last December.

"Elsewhere, the outlook for the 2016 crops already in the ground is generally favorable," Haq said. "Early forecasts indicate large 2016 wheat crops in most countries of Asia."

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is expected to release a new global analysis of the humanitarian impacts of the El Niño phenomenon, he said.

The number of major droughts recorded globally in 2015 was more than double the ten-year average, due to a severe El Niño weather event, Robert Glasser, the special representative of the UN secretary-general for disaster risk reduction, told reporters here in mid-February.

The effects of the droughts are still being felt with millions of people who are experiencing hunger from Ethiopia, in Eastern Africa, to Papua New Guinea, in Oceania, Glasser said,

El Niño – which means the Little Boy in Spanish – and its sister La Nina – the Little Girl – are weather events, which contribute to changes in climate and weather.

"While the 2015-2016 El Niño has now passed its peak, according to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), it will continue to have very serious impacts on vulnerable people for months, including through droughts, flooding and an increased chance of tropical cyclones," Haq said.

"The four regions most in need of humanitarian support are East Africa, Southern Africa, the Pacific Islands and Central America," the spokesman said. "Countries across each of these regions have declared states of emergency."

The FAO report said that drought associated with El Niño has "sharply reduced" 2016 crop production prospects in Southern Africa, while expectations for the harvest in Morocco and Algeria have been lowered due to dry conditions.

Also in areas of Central America and the Caribbean, ongoing dry conditions linked to El Niño may affect sowings of the main season crops for the third consecutive year.

OPINION

[EDITORIAL]

EXOTIC SOURCES OF ENERGY

SOLAR, wind and other renewable sources of energy are slowly joining the country's power supply mix. Some of them have been in the electricity grid for quite a while, powering many residential homes, buildings and factories. They are the wave of the future and preferred by many in the population, especially those who have been forewarned by the disastrous effects of climate change.

A renewable energy company just this week announced the completion of four new solar farms with a combined power generating capacity of 98 megawatts in the Visayas. Bronzeoak Philippines said all four were fully tested by

transmission operator National Grid Corporation of the Philippines and their output ready to be sold in the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market.

The first of such solar power plants operates in Bais City, Negros Oriental, while the other three are generating electricity from La Carlota City and in the municipality of Manapla, Negros Occidental.

In all, the four solar power plants are now partly supplying the daytime electricity requirements of Dumaguete City and Cebu through the Cebu-Negros undersea cable and seven million people in Negros Occidental and Panay's four provinces.

Here in the Luzon grid, Ilocos

Norte's wind farms have been supplying the main Philippine island with the exotic form of energy, generating power from the wind. Hydro-electric dams and geothermal energy plants were actually the first to supply clean power to the Philippines back in the 60s, 70s and 80s, or way before green energy became the vogue in the new century.

Renewable sources of energy, indeed, are the future sources of power amid the worldwide call to reduce carbon emissions into the atmosphere and put an end to the depletion of the earth's natural resources.

But renewable forms of energy entail higher production cost. They are costlier to produce

compared to the traditional fuel sources, such as oil, and natural gas. As a result, government agreed to give preferential electricity rates to producers of wind, solar and biomass energy to make the projects viable.

Thus, the electricity bill of a typical household with a peak consumption of 200 kilowatt-hours will increase by P2 in April, after the government approved the collection of the so-called feed-in-tariff allowance for renewable energy projects.

Consumers will ultimately decide if they want cleaner energy but higher electricity rates. It is a dilemma faced by every consumer in the world.



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RED TIDE ALERT MULING ITINAAS SA 6 BAYBAYING DAGAT SA VISAYAS

ANIM na baybaying dagat ang muling isinailalim sa shellfish ban ng Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR).

Sa Shellfish Bulletin No. 08, sinabi ni BFAR Director Asis Perez na mataas ang red tide toxins sa mga sample ng shellfish na nakuha sa mga baybaying dagat ng Dauis sa Bohol, Daram Island sa Daram, Cambatutay Bay sa Western Samar, Leyte, Naval Blihan Island at Pilar sa Capiz.

Ayon kay Perez, muli silang nakipag-ugnayan sa mga lokal na pamahalaan para maabisuhan ang kanilang mga residente na iwasan munang manghuli, magbenta at kumain ng mga shellfish na nagmumula sa mga apektadong lalawigan.

Ang mga apektadong shellfish ay tahong, talaba, tulya, halaan at maging ang alamang.

Maaari namang kainin ang mga isda, alimango, alimangag at hipon ngunit kailangang linising maigi bago lutuin.

Ani Perez, agad silang magpapalabas ng shellfish bulletin kung mababawasan o madaragdagan ang mga lugar na may red tide batay sa magiging resulta ng kanilang regular monitoring.

MONCHET LARANO