

**DATE** 13 MAR 2016  
**DAY** Sunday

# **DENR**

## **IN THE NEWS**

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## Mobile app para mabantayan ang protected areas, inilunsad ng DENR

Pinakinabangan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang kapangyarihan ng wireless communications technology upang palawakin ang conservation efforts nito sa mga protected area (PA) sa buong bansa.

Inilunsada ng ahensiya nitong Huwebes ang web-based mobile application na tinatawag na Lawin Forest and Biodiversity Protection System (LFBPS) na magkakaloob ng tumpak na impormasyon tungkol sa estado ng mga PA na sakop ng Republic Act No. 7586, o ng National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act.

Bibigyan ng kapangyarihan ng LFBPS ang mga park ranger at planner na makuha ang mahahalagang impormasyon sa mismong oras na ibahagi ito sa kanilang natagpuan sa field, at magpapahintulot sa wildlife authorities ng ng mabilis na pagkuha ng impormasyon sa daan-daang protected species at resources na maaari nilang gamitin sa pagkilala at pagpaparusa sa wildlife crime.

Ikinalugod ni DENR Secretary Ramon J.P. Paje ang application na isang paraan para mapabilis ang wildlife conservation efforts ng bansa.

"Technology and its applications, like the LFBPS, will surely allow us to cope with the different challenges the environment faces. We see it as a way for us to come up with better ways to reverse environmental degradation and biodiversity loss, and at a faster pace," aniya.

Ginanap ang debut ng mobile app sa Fuyot Spring National Park (FSNP) sa Ilagan City, Isabela, isa sa mga local government unit na sumasakop sa 360,000-ektaryang Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park (NSMNP), ang pinakamalaking protected area sa bansa.

Ang launching rites ay pinangunahan ni DENR Undersecretary for Field Operations Demetrio Ignacio at Isabela Gov. Faustino Dy, na sinaksihan din ang paglalagda sa guidelines at mechanics para sa pambansang pagpapatupad sa proyekto nina Forest Management Bureau Director Ricardo Calderon at Biodiversity Management Bureau Director Mundita Lim.

Ang Project Lawin ay dinebelop ng DENR at ng Biodiversity and Watersheds Improved for Stronger Economy and Ecosystem Resilience (B+WISER) Program ng United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Sinimulan ang pilot testing ng proyekto noong 2015 sa FSPN at pitong B+WISER project sites, na sumasakop sa total area na 442,000 ektarya.

Ang iba pang pilot sites ay ang NSMNP sa Region 2; Kaliwa-Upper Marikina Watersheds sa Tanay, Rizal at General Nakar sa Quezon province; Naujan Lake National Park sa Oriental Mindoro; Quinali "A" Watershed sa Albay; Bago Watershed Forest Reserve sa Negros Occidental; Mt.

Kitanglad Natural Park sa Bukidnon; at Mt. Apo Natural Park sa Southern Mindanao.

May 670 wildlife worker, na binubuo ng mga resource at data manager at community monitor na karamihan ay mga katutubo, ang sinanay sa panahon ng pilot testing.

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# BusinessMirror

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### Investment in RE needed to meet carbon-reduction target—Repower

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

**T**HE Philippines need to invest in renewable energy (RE) to achieve its target to reduce its carbon footprint by 75 percent between 2020 and 2030.

This was stressed by Repower Energy Development Corp. (REDC) CEO Dexter Y. Tiu as the company joins the celebration the World Sustainable Energy Day.

REDC is an RE company utilizing breakthrough technologies for energy production, through hydro-power that promote environmental sustainability.

The Philippines, under its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution submission to the secretariat of the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change prior to the 21st session of the Conference of Parties (COP) held in Paris, France,

last December promised to reduce carbon emission by 75 percent.

Under COP21, 196 countries, including the Philippines, agreed on the goal to cut carbon emission, which will reduce global warming under 2° Celsius and build a carbon-free world economy in the second half of the century.

Developed countries with existing RE plants have also committed to further investments in renewable technologies. The carbon-emission reduction target promised by the Philippines would come from the sectors of energy, transport, waste, forestry and industry.

Environment Secretary Ramon J.P. Paje earlier said that the government is looking at the Green Climate Fund (GCF) as a vital source of support for the country to achieve its commitment.

On the other hand, Environment

Undersecretary Jonas R. Leones said massive reforestation and waste-to-energy projects are potential projects in which the government can apply for GCF funding.

Expanding the forests and investing in waste-to-energy projects will enhance the country's carbon-emission capacity, while capturing methane to be converted into energy will reduce carbon emission, Leones said.

To achieve its ambitious carbon emission-reduction target, Tiu said that the Philippines need more investments in RE projects.

With the country's buoyant urban and economic growth, energy requirements grow at a rate that is difficult to fulfill, he said. REDC believes this can be addressed by increasing investments in RE to fill the gap and at the same time cut the country's carbon emissions.



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## A greener Asean for biodiversity

STORY &amp; PHOTOS BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

*First of two parts*

**W**ITH the annual estimated value of wildlife and wildlife resources being traded illegally reaching \$10 million, Southeast Asia's rich biodiversity is without doubt facing a very serious threat.

While there are serious efforts to address biodiversity loss in Southeast Asia, experts and resource speakers told participants during the recently concluded Asean Conference on Biodiversity (ACB2016) held at the Bangkok Convention Center and Centara Grand Hotel in Bangkok, Thailand, that much still needs to be done to protect and conserve these important life-giving natural resources.

With the theme: "Biodiversity for Sustainable Development," the meeting organized by Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) focused on biodiversity in Southeast Asia and tackled biodiversity's link to health, businesses and the ecosystem-based approach to conservation. The meeting also highlighted the importance of biodiversity to the survival of more than half-a-billion people living in the region.

### Costly undertaking

BIODIVERSITY conservation does not come cheap, according to Blakishna Pisupati, who represented the United Nation Environmental Program (UNEP), during a speech.

He told participants that around \$150 billion to \$400 billion a year is needed for biodiversity conservation. "There is a need to fully understand the global supply chain of illegal wildlife trade and identify better ways of monitoring species," he said.

Wildlife trafficking, however, is just one of the major drivers of global biodiversity loss, including Southeast Asia, which has one of the highest concentrations of flora and fauna. The 10 member-states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), being parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), are committed to work together to address biodiversity loss



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### A greener Asean for Biodiversity



ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity Executive Director Roberto V. Oliva (fourth from left) and Amy Fraenkel (fifth from left), director for Mainstreaming, Partnerships and Outreach of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, are flanked by representatives of the Asean member-states at the recent Asean Conference on Biodiversity 2016 held in Bangkok, Thailand.

by pursuing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, compliance of which is measured by progress in achieving a set targets called Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

Direct drivers of biodiversity loss in Asean, according to the ACB—the center based in the Philippines dedicated to promoting biodiversity conservation in Southeast Asia—are habitat change, climate change, invasive alien species, over-exploitation, pollution and poverty.

#### 'Biodiversity Outlook'

ACB Executive Director Roberto V. Oliva told the BUSINESSMIRROR in

an interview during the ACB2016 kick-off ceremony on February 15 that halfway through the 2020 deadline, most Asean member-states are "on-track" in achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

He said many countries, in their self-rated report to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD), earned the "yellow-light" tag, which means that policies have been put in place to achieve important biodiversity goals. This gave a glimpse of the soon-to-be released "Asean Biodiversity Outlook-2," a report that will show how Asean has fared in conserving biodiversity.

Oliva was referring to the fifth National Reports of the Asean member-states to the CBD.

#### More than just conservation

WHILE much have been done by Asean member-states according to Amy Fraenkel, SCBD's director for Mainstreaming, Partnerships and Outreach, "there is still much to be done."

She said, "The economic realities in Asean bring a high cost to biodiversity, driving extinction rates, and rapid loss degradation and degradation of habitats."

She pointed out that the challenge cannot be realized through

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conservation alone, adding that there is a need to integrate conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity resources, which includes mainstreaming, issues such as the Aichi Biodiversity Targets; access and benefit sharing; health; ecosystems-based approaches; effective management of protected areas (PAs), and the Asean Heritage Parks into development plans.

She added: "Biodiversity cannot be separated from development and the Sustainable Development Goals," and called on Asean member-states to step up conservation actions in Southeast Asia.

A more active partnerships, she said, is needed to ensure that biodiversity goals are achieved.

There are a total of 20 targets under five strategic goals, which aim to measure the level of accomplishment of individual member-states in implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

The goals are: 1) address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society; 2) reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use; 3) improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity; 4) enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services; and 5) enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity-building. **To be concluded**





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### DENR chief, pinagre-resign sa malawakang pagmimina sa Zambales

Pinagbibitiw sa posisyon si Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Ramon Paje kaugnay ng pagpapatuloy ng malawakang mining operations sa Zambales, na "sumisira sa kalikasan".

Halos 100 residente ng mga bayan ng Sta. Cruz at Candelaria sa Zambales, kasama ang mga miyembro ng anti-mining groups na kinabibilangan ng Concerned Citizens of Sta. Cruz (CCOS), ang lumusob sa central office ng DENR sa Quezon City upang igiit kay Paje na

"gumawa ng kaukulang aksiyon upang mapahinto ang talamak na mining activities" sa Zambales.

Binatikos din ng grupo ang pag-aresto ng mga pulis-Candelaria sa siyam na residente na tinangkang harangin ang mga hauling truck ng Benguet Nickel and Mines, Inc. (BNMI) na nagdadala ng nickel ore sa pantalan ng Binabalian upang ibiyahe patungong China.

Pebrero 9 ngayong taon nang kinasuhan ng mining company na Zambales Diversified Metals Corp.

(ZDMC) ang 12 residente, kabilang ang isang konsehal at dalawang barangay kagawad, kaugnay ng umano'y paglabag ng mga ito sa Mining Act of 1995, matapos maantala umano ng protesta ang delivery nila ng nickel.

Nauna nang hiniling ni CCOS Chairman Dr. Benito Molino kay Pangulong Aquino na kanselahin ang lahat ng permit ng mga mining firm sa Zambales, kasabay ng pagdedeklara ng moratorium ng pagmimina sa bansa.

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### CARITAS

#### PANANAGUTAN BILANG MGA KATIWALA

Fr. Anton Pascual

**M**GA Kapanalig, nakalulungkot malaman na ang mga balita sa telebisyon, radyo, at social media ay halos tungkol na lamang sa mga pulitiko, krimen, at tsismis. At marahil ay wala kayong nabalitaan tungkol sa barikada ng halos 400 katao, karamihan ay mga residente, para kahit papaano'y pilayin ang operasyon ng mga mining company sa mga bayan sa Sta. Cruz, Zambales.

Mula pa noong Enero, hinaharangan na nila ang pangunahing kalsada para pigilan ang pagdadala ng nickel ore mula sa nasabing lugar patungong pantalan kung saan naroon ang mga barkong maghahatid ng mina patungong China. Labing-isa sa mga nasa barikada ang inaresto noong nakaraang linggo dahil nakakaabala na umano sa trapiko ang kanilang ginagawa.

Bakit ganoon na lamang ang pagtutol ng mga taga-Sta. Cruz sa pagmimina? Kung inyong matatandaan, isa ang Zambales sa mga pinakasinalanta ng bagyong 'Lando' noong Oktubre 2015. Tinagurian ngang "red flood" ang nangyari sa bayan ng Sta. Cruz dahil sa kulay ng baha, na may kahalong putik at sanga ng puno. Pito ang nasawi habang 13,000 pamilya ang apektado. Maraming palaisdaan at dalampasigan ang nabalot ng hanggang tuhod na lalim na putik kaya't mahirap na rin ang paghuli ng isda. Tuyot na rin ang ilang sakahan.

Nitong nakaraang linggo rin, lumabas sa pag-aaral ng Center for Environmental Concerns, isang National Government Organization (NGO), na may kaugnayan ang malawakang pagbaha sa operasyon ng mga mining company sa lugar. Sa kasalukuyan, may apat na pangunahing nickel ore mining firm sa lugar: ang Zambales Diversified Metals Corporation, Benguetcorp Nickel Mines Incorporated, Eramen Minerals Incorporated, at LNL Archipelago Minerals Inc. Tikom ang bibig ng mga kumpanyang ito sa reklamo ng mga mamamayan ng Sta. Cruz.

Samantala, naglabas ng pahayag ang Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), isa sa mga sangay ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), na nagsasabing walang kinalaman ang operasyon ng mga mining company sa matinding pagbaha sa lugar. Hindi naman daw nasira ang silt traps at perimeter canals ng mga kumpanya kasagsagan ng bagyo. Pero, paano kaya naging mapula ang baha? Saan kaya galing ang mga putol na puno at ang makakapal na putik? Paano nagkakaroon ng nickel laterite ang mga bukirin, ilog, at dagat? Kusa bang lumitaw ang mga ito?

Mga Kapanalig, bilang mga nilikha ng Diyos, tayo pong lahat—hindi lamang ang mga mamamayang apektado ng pagmimina—ay mga "katiwala" ng kalikasan. Binigyan po tayo ng kalayaan at dunong para pakinabangan ang mga biyayang pinagkaloob sa atin ng Panginoon. Sumainyo ang katotohanan!





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### DoH, DENR raise alarm over Davao river's high coliform level

By Lee Ann Ducusin

**THE Department of Health and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources have raised alarm over the sharp rise in Davao river's coliform level content.**

The DoH said that the high coliform level of the river may cause diarrhea, skin rashes, sore eyes, cholera, typhoid fever and other bacterial and viral diseases.

Based on the DENR's latest water sampling result, the river's total bacterial count from human and animal fecal discharge reached 16 million most probable number per 200 millimeter.

The normal coliform level is 1,000 MPN per 100 millimeter.

Conrada Vinluan of the DENR's regional office in Davao also said heavy metal levels, particularly from phosphate and

zinc, of the river also increased from .02MPN to 1MPN per 100 millimeter.

Vinluan said that it may already be impossible to control the river's pollution, based on the latest results.

He said that coliform level is high in particular parts of the river, including the Crocodile Park, Bankerohan Bridge, Bolton Bridge and the mouth of Davao River.

The regional DENR office said that high coliform was monitored in populated areas, where residents have no toilets, subdivisions that do not have waste water treatment and small agricultural farms that have unregulated farm implement practices.

It also mentioned backyard piggeries and poultry and washing of clothes on the river as other causes of the river's pollution.

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## Wood firm in hot water after illegal lumber found in its plant

By MIKE U. CRIMMINS

**BUTUAN CITY** – A wood company is facing charges after government authorities discovered some 2,565.50 board feet of illegally-sawn lumbers of various species inside its plant in the southern tip town of Trento, in Agusan del Sur, environment officials yesterday said.

The Wood Station Corporation (WSC) is also facing closure after enforcement teams of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR 13) also found 86 pieces of lauan, gubas and binuang logs inside its compound.

Based on the findings, DENR-13 Regional Executive Director (RED) Nonito M. Tamayo said the illegal forest products were mixed among the planted species of Mangium, Bagrās, Marang and Durian that were delivered at the sawmill plant.

"The wood firm only explained that the lumber were from the trees felled by typhoon Pablo. But just the same, this must be thoroughly explained where they

got the cutting permit," Tamayo said.

The region's DENR chief said the company had already been informed of its violations and asked to explain its side. However, the company has yet to submit any explanation.

Because of this, Tamayo has in-

structed Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) based in Bunawan to compel the WSC to submit its valid explanation, or face sanctions that will be imposed by the DENR.

Meanwhile, the sustained intensive

operation of the DENR 13 Enforcement Teams, in coordination with the Philippine National Police and the Philippine Army, has brought down incidence of timber poaching activities in Caraga region, the official also reported yesterday.





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## 3 Phl cities make Earth Hour finals

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

Three cities in the Philippines have made it as finalists in the Earth Hour City Challenge (EHCC), the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) announced yesterday.

These are San Carlos City in Negros Occidental, Santa Rosa City in Laguna and Makati City.

One of these cities can become national Earth Hour capital and will have a chance to be hailed as the global Earth Hour capital, according to WWF.

Past global winners include Vancouver in Canada, Cape Town in South Africa and Seoul in South Korea.

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Launched by the WWF global network in 2011, EHCC is a year-long initiative to promote sustainable practices for cities to transition to a low-carbon future.

Seven Philippine cities joined EHCC in 2015. These were Cagayan de Oro, Makati, Naga, Parañaque, San Carlos, Santa Rosa and Quezon City.

A total of 124 cities from around the world joined this year's challenge.

"We commend the seven Philippine cities for promoting energy efficiency, renewable energy, recycling and green transportation," Earth Hour Philippines director Gia Ibay said.

Ibay said this year's theme, "Bridging the Gap to 2020" aims to inspire participants to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve the way food, water and

energy are produced and consumed.

"We believe that properly developed cities can lead the way to a sustainable future," she said.

The WWF will announce the winner during the international EHCC awarding ceremony in Quito, Ecuador in October.

Ibay said preparations for this year's Earth Hour are now in full swing.

Earth Hour uses the simple action of switching off lights for 60 minutes to deliver a message about the need for decisive climate change solutions.

Earth Hour will be observed across the globe from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on March 19. The Earth's most iconic landmarks are expected to join the event.

Earth Hour Philippines' main event will be held at the Quezon City Memorial Circle.

"It will feature stationary bamboo

bicycles connected to energy-harvesting generators. Supporters can ride these bicycles to light up the Philippine map. In effect, we're showing how human power can light up the world," Ibay said.

Renewable energy technologies as well as electric vehicles will also be on display to showcase low-carbon solutions.

"We are known as the Earth Hour hero country because more Philippine towns and cities participate in the movement than in any other nation. We hope to use EHCC as a platform to showcase urban solutions which other Philippine cities can emulate," Ibay said.

The movement has grown from a symbolic switch off event in Sydney, Australia to the world's largest open-sourced environmental campaign, mobilizing hundreds of millions of people in over 7,000 cities and 172 countries.





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## Bets urged: Ensure RH Law implementation

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

Reproductive health advocates yesterday challenged national and local candidates to ensure meaningful implementation of the Reproductive Health (RH) Law.

The Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development (PLCPD) stressed the importance of the RH Law in improving maternal health and promoting family planning and responsible parenthood.

"Implementing the law requires strong political will amidst relentless challenge from anti-RH forces, including the Catholic church," said PLCPD executive director Romeo Dongeto.

"The national and local governments should make the implementation of the RH Law a top priority. This means formulating programs that will provide access to RH information and services, including family planning commodities and age-appropriate sex education, and allocating sufficient budget for their implementation," Dongeto added.

Meanwhile, former health secretary Esperanza Cabral, convener of the Purple Ribbon for RH Movement, emphasized that reproductive health is a fundamental human right that the government must fulfill.

"It is primarily the government's responsibility to uphold RH as part of our country's commitment to various international agreements recognizing it as a fundamental human right.

Elected officials are bound by law to fulfill this commitment and meaningfully implement the RH Law," she said.



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## El Niño causes ₱5-B losses to agriculture

By MADELAINE R. BUAFLOR

The prevailing El Niño already incurred losses of more than ₱5 billion to Philippine agriculture as of this month, leaving the government completely helpless and highly challenged in terms of trying to bring more growth to the sector.

A data from the Department of Agriculture (DA) showed that as of this month, the damage caused by El Niño to the agriculture sector have already reached ₱5.32 billion since February last year.

Of the ₱5.32 billion, around ₱1.9 billion worth of damage were recorded over the last two months.

"A total of 237 thousand hectares of agriculture areas with an estimated production loss of 358.8 thousand metric tons have already been affected," DA official Christopher Morales said in a memorandum for the secretary.

The affected commodities are rice, corn, high value crops, and livestock.

Among these, rice was one of the most affected crops with ₱2.38 billion worth of losses, next to corn, which suffered losses of as much as ₱2.9 billion.

As part of the actions and interventions taken by the DA, the Regional Field Office (RFO) of DA already distributed and provided 3,059 bags of hybrid rice seeds, 24,066 bags of rice certified seeds, 150 bags of soil ameliorants (biozome), 166 units of crop insurance and 196 bags of multi-stress seed variety/ green super rice (GSR) to affected farmers.

For corn, the RFOs distributed 1,000 bags of hybrid seeds, 4,164 bags of OPV seeds and 550 bags of yellow corn.

As of this month, the other actions taken by the DA already include monitoring; irrigation network services; cloud seeding; construction of Small Water Impounding Project (SWIP); construction of Diversion Dam; Rehabilitation of SWIP; improvement of irrigation canal, shallow tube well, and pump irrigation system open source, among others.

As for livestock, the DA reported that 200 doses of vaccines and various vet drugs and biologics were provided thru the local government units to prevent the animals from acquiring diseases that are prevalent and devastating during dry season.

To address water scarcity in vulnerable areas due to low water levels in reservoirs particularly those that are at the tail-end of the irrigations systems, the DA had also distributed 284 units of pump irrigation equipment for open source/replacement for damaged/non-functional pumps and 600 units shallow tube wells (STWs) to eligible farmers' organizations and irrigators' associations.

Likewise, the Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM) has deployed contracted aircrafts to seed clouds for rain in identified vulnerable agricultural areas and watersheds to minimize the impact of El Niño to crop production.

"To date, a total of 146 sorties were conducted which has reached 184 flying hours covering the Provinces of Isabela, Bohol, North Cotabato, South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao and Sarangani," the data further specified.

Similarly, the RFOs already identified critical areas and intensified its cloud seeding operations in strategic locations nationwide to save crops.

It was also undertaken in areas of wide magnitude where the development of crop such as rice and corn becomes critical due to inadequate soil moisture.

In a related development, the Department of Trade and Industry on Friday declared a State of Calamity due to El Niño in Butuan, Zamboanga, General Santos cities as well as the provinces of Bukidnon, North Cotabato, Davao del Sur, Davao Occidental, Maguindanao, and Guimaras.

The DTI said that prices of basis commodities in areas declared in State of Calamity shall be automatically frozen at their prevailing levels.

### Declaration of State of Calamity due to El Niño

To date, the following regions and provinces are declared under state of calamity:



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# El Nido allows nature to weave its magic

More than the clear waters that offer glimpses of rich marine life, or the untainted horizon which is always a bright blue in good weather, the craggy limestone cliffs imbed in your consciousness that you are in Bacuit Bay, home of El Nido Resorts.

The cliffs are 250 million years old. They are: Miniloc, Lagen and Pangulasian — all named after the islands that host them. The fourth is Apulit Island in the next municipality.

Little changed in the bay over the last millennium or so until the '60s and '70s when commercial mining, fishing and logging became the area's main sources of revenues and threatened to upset the balance of nature in the area through dynamite fishing, poor waste disposal practices and unrestrained activities. Perhaps as a concession to the Japanese divers and tourists that frequented the place still teeming with fish, turtles and corral, the bay was first named a turtle sanctuary in 1984 and eventually a protected marine area in 1998. That distinction has helped preserve its biodiversity and has kept it a home for 855 species of marine fish, 400 species of corral, and five of the seven species of marine turtles in the world, among other creatures.

All these lend credence to the greeting of Lagen Island resort manager Jen Zafra: "Welcome to our piece of paradise." She enjoins you to be on the lookout for the plants and animals that thrive in this haven with the help of an eco-diversity checklist. At the same time, she points out just how important it is to keep the balance in the area by not littering, not feeding the monkeys and respecting the wildlife, including the water monitor lizards that can grow up to several feet long and are happy to share the island with visitors they generally ignore. When she hands you a reusable bag for your personal trash, you willingly tell yourself, yes, I will bring home my empty sachets of shampoo and conditioner as my contribution.

Joey Bernardino, ENR director of sales and marketing, said this keen understanding of the environment exhibited by the El Nido Resorts (ENR) frontliners



**Among the best El Nido treats are to witness marine turtle eggs hatch — and to cheer the hatchlings as they make their way back to the sea.**

make a visit to the four islands a rich and rewarding experience. "Most of our guides, who accompany guests to the activities offered in the islands, are locals and they inject freshness and vitality to the visitor's appreciation of his surroundings."

In addition to the facilities, accommodations and food and beverage, their interactions with clients have been significant in reaping a 95 percent guest satisfaction rating through the years.

Despite the fact that most of them were born and raised in Bacuit Bay and the surrounding municipalities, most of the guides and other frontliners, nevertheless, grew up oblivious to the uniqueness of their surroundings.

They are products of EL Nido's program called "Be GREEN" (Guard Respect Educate El Nido), which teaches different aspects of conservation to all new employees of the resorts. They also undergo intense training and refresher courses in Nature Interpretation defined by El Nido director for sustainability Mariglo Laririt as "the systematic ordering and weaving of observable and verifiable facts to create compelling stories."

According to Jamie Dichaves, Lagen environmental officer, the five-day Nature Interpretation program is composed of lectures on the geography and biodiversity of Palawan, the geology of the El Nido area, the marine turtles, terrestrial animals, birds and the like found there. This is supplemented by visits to relevant sites.

"The goal is for guests to leave with a solid picture of the El Nido experience — not with a smattering of pieces of trivia. We believe that a solid picture of the El Nido experience is a poster call to action for conservation, among many benefits. And this is why we train for Nature Interpretation," Laririt added.

Whether one is snorkeling in any of the four islands of El Nido Resorts, taking a boat tour of the Big or Small Lagoon, trekking through a hiking trail, or doing any of the other myriad activities tucked into the room rate, the guides see to it that focus is always on the environment.





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### Albay farmers receive land titles

More than 10 hectares of agricultural lands were distributed to members of eight farmers' organizations in Polangui, Albay recently, according to the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR).

The distribution of land titles was meant to remind new beneficiaries of the agrarian reform programs that the government is sincere in its efforts to support the farmers, provincial agrarian reform program officer Leo Miguel Ramos said.

"The government will provide support services so you can nurture the land and improve your way of living. You need to pay property tax and amortization for the land that you now own," Ramos told the beneficiaries.

One of the beneficiaries, Guillermo Portugal, thanked DAR for helping him and his fellow farmers own the land they had been tilling.

Aside from Ramos, the ceremony was attended by municipal agrarian reform program officer Lazaro Perillo, Land Bank of the Philippines agrarian operation center regional manager Narciso Villareal, Rolly dela Peña of LBP, Judge Blancaflor Salgado, Mayor Cherilie Sampal and Nelson Aquino, officer-in-charge of the municipal assessor's office.

- Rhodina Villanueva



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# PMAP Takes on Climate Change and Clean Air Challenge

CHRISTMAS TIME in tropical Philippines was always cold. But last December 2015, we experienced hot December days and nights. If you don't know it yet, climate change is here - and now. In the 1900s, global temperatures rose by 1.4 degrees Fahrenheit (0.8 degree centigrade). At the start of the millennium, temperatures already rose by a frightening 10.6 degrees F (5.9 C), or by roughly 750 percent. Scientists estimate that ecosystems can adapt to a temperature change of only 1.8 degrees F over a century.

### Facts, not predictions

For decades now, Environmental experts have gathered and analyzed vast amounts of climate and natural resource-related data. They agree that the way people voraciously consume these natural resources and the uncaring manner they treat Nature are largely responsible for climate change and the degradation of the Earth's land, water and air. It is no longer a question of whether there will be a climate change. It is a matter of how soon and how hard it will hit.

Temperature shifts have already resulted in massive drought, floods, blizzards, and cyclones. Scientists believe that by 2099, one-third of the Earth's land will be desert-like. As warmer waters expand, oceans will rise. When the ice in Greenland melts, coastal settlements and croplands will be submerged in many parts of the world. Imagine how worse it could be, if between 1991 and

### ASK YOUR CAREER COUNSELOR



*Ernie O. Cecilia*

2000 more than half a million lives were lost due to climate change.

The World Bank predicts that 66 percent of the global population will suffer from lack of access to freshwater by 2025. Carbon dioxide had changed the pH balance of the oceans, already destroying a great number of species. Polar bears and roughly 30 to 40 percent of all species are at risk of extinction, unless global warming is abated. (IPCC, Climate Change, 2007)

### Energy dependence

Sadly, it takes energy to make anything and everything. Developed economies continue to burn fuel fossil, natural gas, and coal to heat or cool homes, run factories and power transportation vehicles. As a result, some 30 billion tons of carbon monoxide go to the air we breathe annually. As developing economies transform forests into human settlement and farms, they cut down trees. Trees are the lungs of the Earth that suck carbon out of the air and breathe out life-sustaining oxygen.

Because of climate change and the degradation of our natural resources, life on Earth is at risk. According to the British Meteorological Office,

"fifty million additional people will be starving or facing severe food shortages by 2050. Others estimate that, on a hotter planet, hundreds of millions will starve. Particularly in Africa, one of the places most vulnerable to climate change, millions of people will face food and water shortages as early as 2020." (IPCC, Climate Change, 2007)

### Adverse effects

As countries move towards the verge of environmental bankruptcy, economies will tend to contract. Fossil fuel, natural gas and coal are non-renewable sources of energy and are not inexhaustible. As demand outstrips supply in the near future, the gap between energy-producing and energy-consuming economies will get bigger. Wealth will be concentrated at the top of the social pyramid. The disparity between the rich and the poor will be immorally large. As economies contract, joblessness and poverty incidence increase. Clearly, lives and careers are at stake.

### Green hope

Fortunately, environmentalism is now at its third wave. In the early 1900s, "conservation" of the best of the natural past was the focus. In the late 1960s, the second wave ("regulation") sought to manage the environmental problems of massive industrialization. Sadly, the need for both conservation and regulation are still felt today, more than ever before.

The third wave is the so-called "investment" wave. Investors and consumers will gravitate towards carbon-cutting solutions - solar power, hybrid technology, biofuels, wind turbines, tidal power, fuel cells, green construction, and energy efficiency. Venture capitalists should be pouring their investments into clean-tech and green-tech companies and projects. I'm sorry if I think that "clean coal" is an oxymoron or a contradiction in terms. I doubt if the technology for a truly clean coal is now available.

Environmental activism is on the rise. When I lately visited the small, five-town province of Guimaras, I was more fascinated not by the mangoes but by the 27 wind turbines serving Iloilo's needs.

### PMAP Summit

On April 12-13, 2016, the People Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP) led by President Jesse Rebutillo and the PMAP Foundation led by Chairman Orly Peña and President Pilar Nenuca Almira are holding the first PMAP Foundation Summit on Clean Air and Climate Change. With its theme "Clean Air: Our Life, Our Future", the Summit will be graced by the Keynote Speaker, DENR Secretary Ramon Paje, at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila.

The Summit shall feature:

- PMAP member-companies' contribution to clean air and climate change, issues, best practices, and future program
- New trends, innovative



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technology and BEST Practices for members to consider or adopt, showcasing an exhibition of users, suppliers, and innovations

- Non-traditional sources of financing for entrepreneurs and small businesses engaged in promoting clean air and climate change

- International agencies engaged in clean air and climate change

- ISO standards to guide companies, NGOs and communities engaged in clean air and climate change projects

- AWARDS to recognize leaders and achievers in clean air and climate change

For the first time in the Philippines, PMAP shall grant the PunongBayaningKalikasan (National Leadership) Award and the BayaningKalikasan Awards for individual, corporate, NGO, and community categories.

For inquiry or registration, please contact [pmapfoundation](mailto:pmapfoundation)

[2@pmap.org.ph](mailto:2@pmap.org.ph) or call 726-1532.

This is PMAP's answer to the global call for action on climate change, where the Philippines is a signatory to the recent Paris agreement on global warming and climate change. Also, this is pursuant to Republic Act 8749, the Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999, which needs more implementation.

Let's wave the green flag - for our children and their children's children.

*(Ernie is the 2013 Executive Director and 1999 President of the People Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP); Chair of the AMCHAM Human Capital Committee; and Co-Chair of ECOP's TWG on Labor and Social Policy Issues. He also chairs the Accreditation Council for the PMAP Society of Fellows in People Management. He is President and CEO of EC Business Solutions and Career Center. Contact him at [ernie\\_cecilia@yahoo.com](mailto:ernie_cecilia@yahoo.com))*



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## Selflessness shines as El Niño dries up crops, hope in village

**TWO BOYS** take a horseback ride on farms that had turned brown in the town of South Upi in Maguindanao province, which is suffering from the effects of the El Niño phenomenon. One of the villages suffering heavily from the drought is Tukanalipao in the town of Mamasapano, which has yet to recover from the bloodshed that led to the deaths of more than 50 people, including 44 elite policemen, in an operation to get international terrorist Marwan.

DENNIS JAY  
SANTOS/INQUIRER MINDANAO

MAMASAPANO, Maguindanao—Fatima Sandigan and her family are used to hardship in the village of Tukanalipao, which had been placed on the map by one of the bloodiest debacles suffered by the government in the war on terror.

They thought they had struck bottom and had been prepared to stay there for good when 44 elite policemen, 17 Moro rebels and four civilians were killed in the operation to capture or kill international terrorist Marwan.

But the depth of Fatima and her family's hardship has not settled yet. Things soon turned to worse.

Fatima's husband was among the civilians killed in the bloodshed that came with the operation to get Marwan and Fatima had to take his place in the corn fields.

"My husband used to take care of us," Fatima said. Work on the corn field doesn't pay much. Fatima earns P30 per sack of shucked

corn. Though small, it gave Fatima hope. Until El Niño started to dry this up, too.

"Now we are worried because the corn fields are dying," said Fatima, 30, mother of three.

Like most areas of Maguindanao, a province that prides itself with hundreds of kilometers of rivers and hundreds of hectares of marshland, this town was not spared from the onslaught of the dry spell.

Residents of Tukanalipao, like Fatima, have barely anything to survive on. But this did not stop them from giving.

"We give what we can to those who need it the most," said Warda Dagadas, 32, also resident of Tukanalipao.

"Sometimes we give rice, sometimes we give sugar, sometimes we take care of the children while the mothers are out to look for work," said Warda.

The London-based aid group Oxfam, however, warned that the worst is yet to come.

"As El Niño begins to peak, women fear that there will be nothing left to harvest from their rice and corn fields, as irrigation facilities are starting to dry up," said Lyca Sarenas, Oxfam



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conflict transformation programme manager.

"The drop in harvest will definitely push them deeper into poverty with no other source of food or income," said Sarenas.

"They can't afford to dwell on grief from last year's tragedy as they have to move on and survive," she added.

Farmers said it was as if nature is playing a cruel joke on them.

Farmer Zaharimim Amilil said whatever the dry spell left of their farms, rats have cleaned up.

Aliman Lintang, 65, has barely returned to his cornfield when the drought struck and rats ate crops in Tukanalipao and nearby villages.

Kulot Sarip, 60, a widow, said many farmers feed families on scarce provisions of staple food that villagers share among themselves.

For others, looking for jobs in other areas is the appropriate thing to do, even if they have to leave children behind.

"She felt that it was the only way that her children can have a better life," said Salama Masinggan of daughter, Sara Langayen, who sought work abroad.

Sarah, 20, has two daughters by husband Badrudin, one of the fatalities of the bloodshed in Mamasapano.

In other areas of Maguindanao, the Tukanalipao situation mirrors that of the entire town and province.

Wild monkeys, which are normally elusive and stayed out of human settlements in the past, have been showing up on the highway in Barangay Taviran in Datu Odin Sinsuat town as the thick green forest there had turned brown due to the dry spell.

*Nash Maulana, Edwin Fernandez and Charlie Senase, Inquirer Mindanao*





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## **It's still cold season even if it's hot—Pagasa**

IT'S HARD to believe that the cold season is not yet over.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said that extreme northern Luzon experienced a surge in the northeast monsoon on Friday even though the rest of the country was affected by the hot and humid easterlies.

Because of this, the weather bureau said it could not yet declare the end of the northeast monsoon season which brings cold weather.

But the end of the northeast monsoon is "imminent," Pagasa said. Its end would allow the weather bureau to officially declare the onset of the dry season even though temperatures have been rising since the start of the month.

With an ongoing strong El Niño episode, Pagasa warned of significantly reduced rainfall and warmer air temperatures, especially over the western section of Mindanao during the dry season.

So far, the hottest temperature this year was recorded in General Santos City on March 1 when the temperature reached 38.6 degrees Celsius.

In Metro Manila, the hottest day so far was March 7 when the temperature soared to 35.5 degrees.

Pagasa weather division chief Esperanza Cayanan said they would consider issuing an early warning system for extreme heat.

*Dona Z. Pazzibugan*



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## DIVE AND DINE IN PALAWAN

BY BERNARD L. SUPETAN

**A**N archipelagic province of some 1,700 islands, Palawan is a natural playground which goes by a host of monikers, most prominently "The Philippines's Last Frontier" and, most recent, "The World's Best Island" by the prestigious *Condé Nast Magazine*.

And having almost one-fourth of the country's total 7,500 islands, the province has an infinite coastline dotted with idyllic islands with powdery sand beaches, and a lush underwater world.

The northern town of El Nido, a Unesco Man and Nature Biosphere, is host to some 19 exciting dive spots, among them Twin Rocks, Polpukan underwater forest and North Dilumacad, a 40-foot tunnel which is home to various fish species.

A favorite spot is South Miniloc, located at the southern end of Miniloc Island Resort, is a site for watching the mesmerizing underwater spectacle of schools of yellow snappers running playfully in circles. Meanwhile, the house reef of Lagen Island Resort is sanctuary to diverse corals, barracudas, angelfishes, lobsters and clownfish, some of which you can encounter snorkeling in shallow water.

The Green Fins-awarded dive centers of Lagen, Miniloc and Pangulasian, run by El Nido Resorts group, can help you explore Poseidon's playground.

Moreover, Lagen has the densest forest over limestone among the El Nido island chain, which makes it home to very rich terrestrial biodiversity, thus, being named as an eco-sanctuary resort. It is habitat to over 100 species of birds, with frequent sightings of the endemic Palawan Hornbill and white-vented Shama, which make the island a natural aviary.

And after an exhilarating dive comes the hearty lunch, which divers look forward to after emerging from the seabed. The El Nido Resorts properties can pamper a hungry diver and his family with a gastronomic feast of healthy dishes from organically grown livestock and vegetables at its farm. All meals are served in buffets of all-time Filipino, Western and Oriental favorites.

Worthy of note is Lagen Island's bakeshop, which whips up special *empanada*, pastries, cakes and the finger-licking *ensaymada*, which you should never go home without.

A promising dive haven in northern Palawan is Taytay Bay, which



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has some 10 sites with remarkable rock formations, drop-offs and overhangs with clinging hard corals and sea fans. It is also a sanctuary to interesting creatures, such as seahorse, pipefish, baby black tip shark and sea slug, among others.

Apulit Island Resort is the exponent of scuba diving and aquasports in Taytay town, the Spanish-era capital of the province. Formerly known as Club Noah Isabelle, it is also owned by El Nido Resorts, and has been reviving tourism in Palawan's northeastern corridor.

Off the mainland is the Coron-Busuanga archipelago, famed for limestone cliffs, freshwater lagoons, and hidden coves and lagoons. To its western part is Club Paradise Resort, a 19-hectare island which traces its genesis to being a dive resort for the Western market. And while it is rebranding since being acquired by the Discovery World Resort group, its first love

doesn't die easily.

And how can it, when it is listed as among the world's top best scuba-diving sites by *Forbes Traveler Magazine* no less? Its House Reef, touted for an abundant marine life, has been nurtured for the last 15 years, and boasts of a healthy profusion of marine life, as well as "critters" dear to macrophotographers. It has various reef systems filled with soft and hard corals, where cephalopods come to mate and lay eggs during the cool months.

The reef also teems with varieties of damsel, parrot, flying gurnards, frogfishes and nudibranchs. The sighting of its school of jacks is a certainty, and the probability of interacting with a seaturtle or *dugong* (seacow) is high. If you do not dive, you can snorkel and view the thousands of jacks circling around.

Half an hour away is the Kyo-kuzan Maru, one of 12 diveable Japanese World War II wrecks around Busuanga. You can also do a day trip to Apo Reef Natural Park, the world's second-biggest contiguous coral reef and regarded as a diving mecca.

The dive center is operated by its sister firm, Discovery Fleet Corp., which also runs a sought-after live-aboard tour to the Tubattaha Marine National Park, a Unesco World Heritage Site and arguably among the world's must-see dive sites.

Despite the logistical challenges in the transport of food supply and ingredients, the resort's Ocean Restaurant can remarkably whip-up delectable dishes that are on a par with its metropolitan counterparts.

A typical day begins with a hearty breakfast spread of international and local delights to start on a bright note. At lunch, you can pore at the wide selection of à la carte tropical gourmet delights. Chefs



have built dinner buffets around a theme cuisine for the day, such as South Korean, Chinese, Filipino, Italian, Mediterranean and so forth, to make it more varied and exciting.

And if you want an out-of-the-box chowtime in a tropical setting, Club Paradise can go the extra mile to make lunch or dinner more creative by setting up a picnic by the beach, al-fresco casual dinner or boodle fight at a nearby island. There is also the sunset cruise with cocktails as the resort's resident string *cumbancheros* serenade you.

For in between meals, there is a wide array of pastas, sandwiches and pizzas cooked in a traditional brick oven. For a nightcap, the club has a bar where you can sip your favorite spirit and concoction by the beach and be caressed by the crisp sea wind.

The capital city of Puerto Princesa is known for the Saint Paul Subterranean Underground River, another Unesco World Heritage Site and among the newly proclaimed New 7 Wonders of Nature. While its dive spots at Honda Bay are of-



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ten overshadowed by this natural wonder, the city is putting back the spotlight to the charm of its underwater world.

Dos Palmas Island Resort & Spa, an upscale resort at the 20-hectare Arrecefi Island, is the exponent of watersports in Honda Bay. The vicinity takes pride in about a dozen lesser-known dive sites composed of sea grass beds, coral gardens, and a variety of marine and terrestrial fauna providing for rich biodiversity. Featured in the *Lonely Planet Book* as among the top diving and snorkeling sites in Puerto Princesa, the resort boasts of Helen's Garden, Henry's Garden and Airport, which is a small plane wreck.

Helen's Garden is a sunken reef with a shape of a cake approximately 50 meters, teeming with marine life. Soft and hard corals, like Table and Stag Horn, profusely cover the whole site, while 1-meter giant clams punctuate the area. Just off the reef lies a Taiwanese fishing boat wreck, home to lionfish, snappers and stingrays. If you're lucky enough, you may encounter its resident hawksbill turtles.

Henry's Reef, located on the eastern side of the island, is a fringing reef characterized by a small wall that drops off from 5 to 10 meters. It has diverse coral shapes and varieties of layered table corals, a home to many colorful fishes, like yellow stripe snappers, fusiliers, puffer and lionfishes.

The resort also offers island-hopping day tours to the Honda Bay chain, which includes the use of kayaks and a sumptuous native buffet lunch at the Kara-e-nan Restaurant. The adjacent Ereneman Bar offers a wide variety of wines, cocktails, alcoholic and other beverages.

This is Palawan, a haven for diving and dining.