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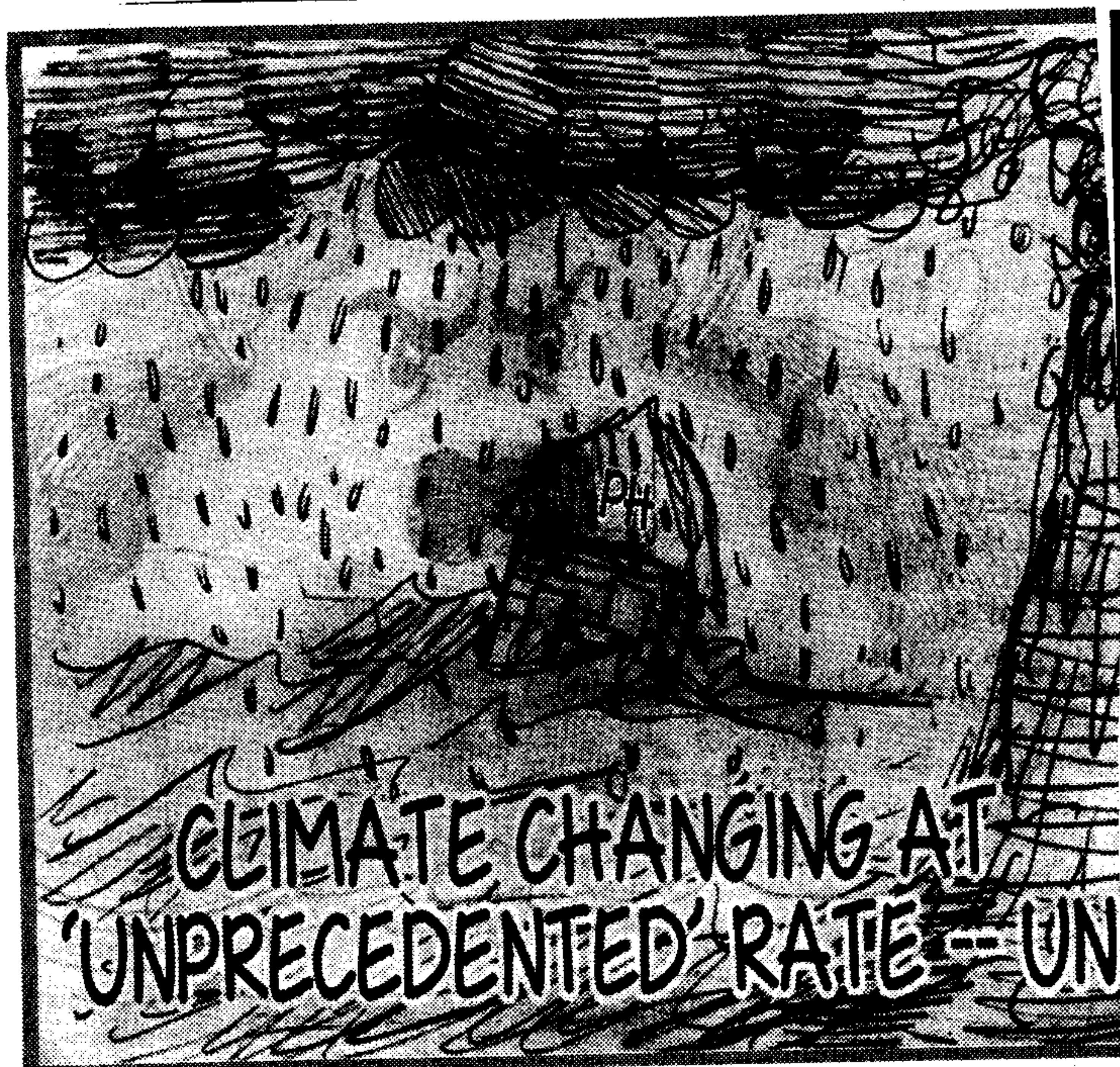
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EDITORIAL

Water of life

LENT is about the salvation of mankind.

But it could also be about the conservation of man's world. After all mankind's survival depends on the preservation of the planet or on Earth's maintain ability to sustain life.

The Good Book teaches us that we are not merely beneficiaries of natural resources; we are supposed to be also their good custodians.

"Hurt not the earth" it instructs us.

And so during this week-long season of spiritual reflection, let us listen to the wise counsel of an environmentalist lady lawmaker.

Senator Loren Legarda stressed on the importance of conserving the country's forests and other protected areas that are vital to improving water and food security and alleviating poverty.

Legarda, UNISDR Global Champion for Resilience, made the statement in celebration of the International Day of Forests (March 21) and World Water Day (March 22).

"Water is a vital source of life and our forests are key to the Earth's supply of freshwater. That is why we have been eagerly pushing for stronger measures that will protect our protected areas because this is not only an environmental issue, but also a gut issue. Our forests and protected areas are crucial to food security, water security and poverty alleviation," she explained.

According to the United Nations, forested watersheds and wetlands supply 75 percent of the world's accessible freshwater, but almost 80 percent of the world's population is exposed to high levels of threat to water security.

The senator noted that many protected areas are vital source of freshwater, which is important in agriculture. A study of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) showed that agriculture uses as much as 50% of freshwater in many countries and up to 90% in some developing countries.

The Agusan Marsh in Agusan del Sur and the Aliwagwag Falls in Davao Oriental are examples of protected areas that are vital sources of water. The Agusan Marsh holds around 15% of the country's fresh water resources and parts of the marsh are used for traditional fishponds and rice paddies; while the Aliwagwag Falls supports about 17,000 hectares of rice land.

Legarda has fervently pushed for the passage of the proposed Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System Act (ENIPAS) to actively help areas that remain under-protected, including open seas, coastal areas, wetlands and tropical forests.

The Senate has approved the proposed ENIPAS, which will strengthen conservation of about a hundred protected areas in the country, but the counterpart measure in the House of Representatives is yet to be passed.

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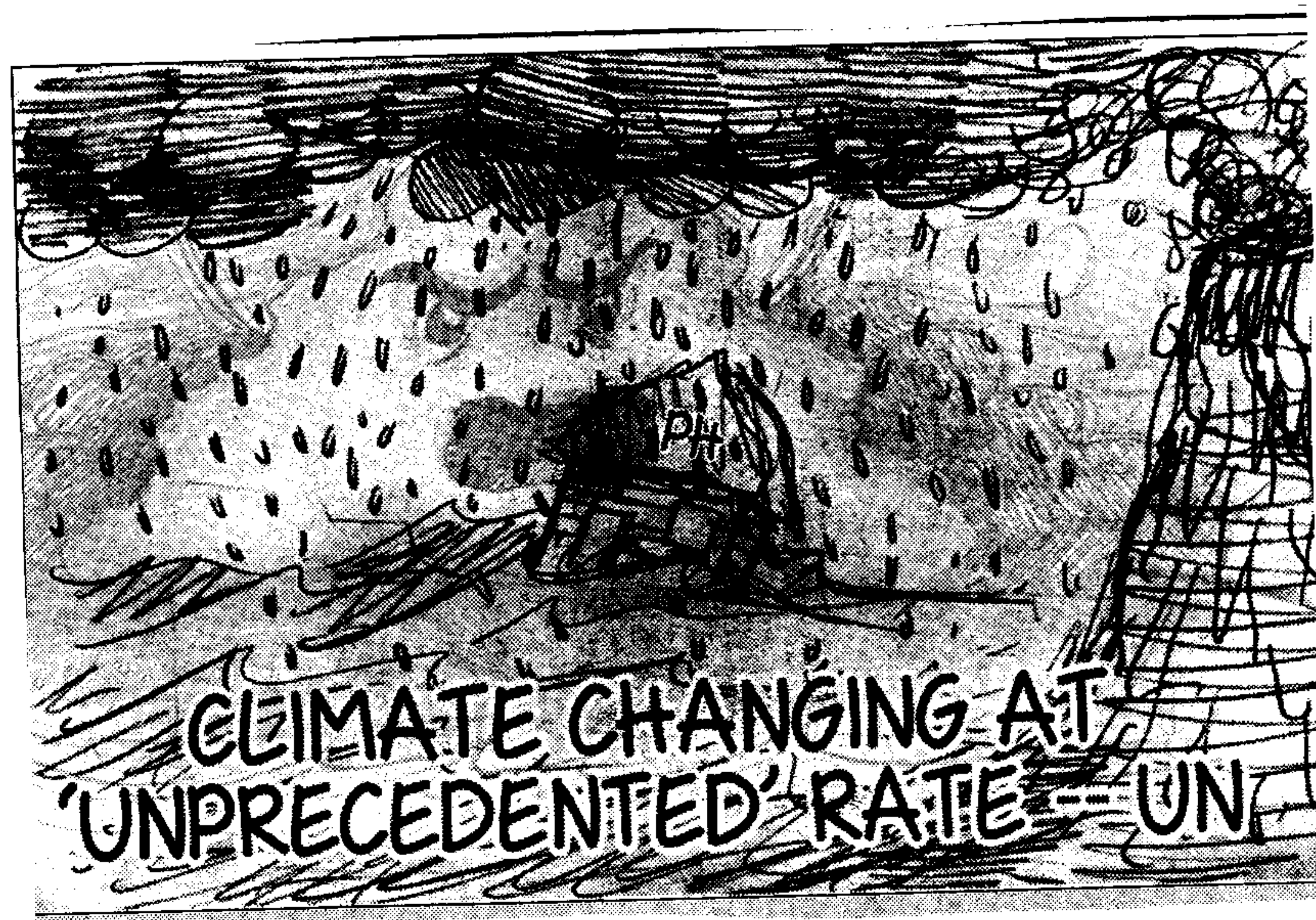
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

PNoy creates task force for unified action on West Philippine Sea issue

With less than 100 days in office, President Aquino has created a high-level task force that would synchronize a "unified" government action in protecting the country's sovereignty in the West Philippine Sea.

In Memorandum Circular No. 94, the President assigned the National Security Adviser to chair the National Task Force for the West Philippine Sea with several government departments and security agencies as members. ►6

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PNoy creates task force...

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The formation of the high-level task force came amid the country's protest against China's aggressive reclamation activities to assert its claims in the West Philippine Sea. Manila is still waiting for a decision of the UN tribunal on its petition asserting maritime entitlements in the disputed territory.

"Consistent with the Constitution, the Philippines' interests in the West Philippine Sea include the maintenance and protection of Philippine sovereignty, preservation and defense of territorial integrity, and promotion of the welfare and well-being of the Filipino people," the circular read.

"Given the country's national interest, national policies and evolving strategic lands, a more deliberate and coherent approach in addressing the West Philippine Sea issue is needed for the purpose of orchestrating the national effort on achieving unified action in the West Philippine Sea," it added.

The President acknowledged that the issues and actions required in the WPS transcend maritime security domain since these extend to other areas of con-

cern such as "diplomatic, politico-legal, information, military and law enforcement, and socio-economic fields."

Task force members

Members of the new task force include the Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of National Defense, Department of Justice, Department of Interior and Local Government, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Energy, Department of Agriculture, Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Transportation and Communications, Department of Finance, and National Economic and Development Authority.

Other task force members are National Coast Watch System, Armed Forces of the Philippines, Philippine National Police-Maritime Group, Philippine Coast Guard, and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.

In the MC 94 signed last March 17, the new task force will receive guidance from the President through the Cabinet Cluster on Security, Justice and Peace.

It will also be responsible in orches-

trating and synchronizing the employment of the different national government agencies' capabilities to achieve the national objectives in the WPS. Regular reports will be submitted to the President through the cabinet security cluster.

The same circular created an Area-level Task Force that will coordinate the efforts of the different government agencies at the area level. Tactical-level Task Forces (TTs) may also be organized to perform mandates with the direction from the ATF.

The President also directed government agencies and local government units to render support and cooperation to the new task force.

Taiwan's Taiping island

Meanwhile, on an island named Itu Aba in the Spratly archipelago of the South China Sea, a Reuters story told of Taiwanese coast guard officials proudly hauling a small wooden bucket of water from one of several simple concrete wells on the coral outcrop. The water is key to Taiwan's argument that Itu Aba is legally the only island among the hundreds of reefs, shoals and atolls scattered across the hotly disputed region.

Itu Aba, which the Taiwanese call

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

PNoy creates task force for
unified action on West

Taiping, is coming into focus as the Philippines challenges the legality of China's claims to most of the South China Sea.

As part of a case now being considered by an international court in The Hague, the Philippines has argued that no feature in the Spratlys could be legally considered islands because they lack the ability to sustain human habitation or economic life.

But if Itu Aba is determined to be an island it is entitled to a 200 nautical mile (370 km) exclusive economic zone under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Such a ruling would complicate territorial disputes across the vital trade route and resource rich region, where Malaysia, Vietnam and Brunei also have claims.

The Philippines presented its case to the judges' panel of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in November and a ruling is expected in the next few months.

China says case valid

China has refused to participate in the case, saying it is invalid and the panel has no jurisdiction. Taiwan, which China deems is a breakaway province, is not a member of the UN and not a signatory to UNCLOS.

Taipei is instead waging a propaganda campaign on Itu Aba, including a high-profile visit by President Ma Ying-jeou in January and Wednesday's first ever visit by international journalists.

The group, which included Taiwanese journalists and local scholars, were shown vegetable gardens and plantations of coconuts, sweet potatoes and papayas.

According to an AP report, Wednesday's trip for journalists was led by Deputy Foreign Minister Bruce Linghu, who says the intent is to demonstrate that Taiping is an island capable of sustaining human habitation, and not simply a rock as the Philippines claims in a case brought before the Permanent Court of Arbitration.

Serviced by a 1,200-meter airstrip, other features on Itu Aba include a hospital, solar generators, a temple, wharf and a lighthouse.

While Taiwan has occupied the 46-hectare outcrop almost 2,000 km south of Taipei for decades, China, the Philippines and Vietnam also claim it.

Wang Mao-lin, a senior coast guard official, said Chinese fishing vessels and Vietnamese fishing vessels are sometimes seen in the seas around Itu Aba. (Genalyn D. Kabiling, Reuters, and AP)



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Task Force sa West Phil. Sea, binuo

Bumuo si Pangulong Aquino ng National Task Force for the West Philippine Sea (NTF-WPS) sa pamamagitan ng isang Memorandum Circular.

Sa nilagdaang MC no. 94 ni Pangulong Aquino, ang mga bumubuong kasapi ng task force ay ang National Security Adviser, DFA, DND, DOJ, DILG, DENR, DOE, DA, DTI, DOTC, DOF, NEDA, National Coast Watch System, AFP, PNP-Maritime Group, PCG at BFAR.

Binuo ang Task Force upang ipagtanggol ang interes ng Pilipinas sa WPS sang-ayon sa nakasaad sa Konstitusyon.

"Whereas consistent with the Constitution, the Philippines interests in the West Philippine Sea transcend the maritime security domain and coherent approach in addressing the West Philippine issue is needed for the purpose of orchestrating the national effort and achieving unified action in the West Philippine Sea," nakasaad pa sa memorandum circular.

Ginawa ng Pangulo ang MC na ito sa gitna ng mga ginagawang illegal na construction ng China sa inaangkin nitong mga teritoryo sa West Philippine Sea.

Naghain ng reklamo sa permanent court of arbitration ng UN sa The Hague dahil sa ginagawang pananakop ng China sa teritoryo ng Pilipinas sa West Philippine Sea. (Rudy Andal)

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Zambales to implement stricter mining rules

IBA, Zambales -- Governor Hermogenes E. Ebdane Jr. yesterday announced the Zambales provincial government will set a stricter mining policy by requiring mining companies to comply with international standards before they can operate.

Ebdane said they will require mining companies to conform with ISO 14001 and OHSAS 18001.

"From now on, 'No ISO certification, no mining operation' will be our policy," stressed Ebdane during his "Ulat sa Bayan" province address.

He said the provincial government sought a moratorium on mining in Zambales because of damages caused by mining operations to the environment and communities near mine sites, requiring miners to comply with international safety standards is the logical next step to pursue.

ISO 14001 sets out the criteria for an Environmental Management System (EMS). It maps out a framework that a company or organization can follow to minimize how their operations negatively affect the environment; comply with applicable laws, regulations, and other environmentally oriented requirements; continually improve in the above.

On the other hand, OHSAS 18001 or the Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems is an internationally applied British standard for occupational health and safety management systems. It provides a framework that helps to identify and control health and safety risks; reduce the potential for accidents; aid legal compliance; and improve overall performance.

Ebdane noted the adherence to strict international standards would help prevent environmental disasters that may be caused by irresponsible mining operations.

In his report to the people, Ebdane cited the accomplishments of his administration in the last five years such as extensive public service programs -- employment, health and welfare, infrastructure, agriculture, education, disaster readiness, peace and order and elderly welfare.

Ebdane's "Ulat sa Bayan" also served as the first event in the opening program for the 2016 Dinamulag Mango Festival, a three-day celebration that highlights the best of Zambales products and culture, including the "dinamulag" mango, considered one of the sweetest mangoes in the world.

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Tourists urged to preserve Kalanggaman Island's beauty

By **RESTITUTO A. CAYUBIT**

TACLOBAN CITY, Leyte – Governor Leopoldo Dominico L. Petilla made an appeal to visitors of famed Kalanggaman island to practice sound environmental practices while in the tourist spot so as to preserve the beauty of the place.

The Leyte governor aired his plea during an interview with reporters here saying that the influx of tourists to the famous Island will crowd the tourist spot and if tourists will not observe appropriate environmental practices it could damage the

island.

It has been observed since this Monday that more tourists on vacation have been trooping to the island this Holy Week. The peak is expected on Easter Sunday with the usual tradition of entire families going to the beach for a picnic or swimming on that day.

In another interview, Regional Director Leonardo Sibbaluca, Regional Director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Eastern Visayas (DENR-8), sounded out the same concern.

"DENR-8 has been conducting an

information, education and communication campaign on Kalanggaman Island to preserve the beauty of the tourist spot," Sibbaluca said.

Sibbaluca advises tourists visiting the island to take care of their trash and not to litter while on the island. He added that tourists should carry with them their trash when they leave the island.

The DENR-8 director reminded that people are prohibited to take shells, stones or the like considered as souvenir items, from the island. "Fishing and similar activities are also prohibited there," he added.

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GLOBAL VIEW

Al Gore's message in Manila



By BETH DAY ROMULO

WHEN presidents and vice presidents leave office, they generally rest on their laurels, making occasional speeches, traveling, attending political events. But former US Vice President Al Gore is different. He has turned his energies to the problem of Climate Change and the importance of creating renewable energy sources to replace fossil fuels, such as coal and gas, which heat the environment.

On his three-day visit to the Philippines March 14-16, Gore spent four hours in Tacloban which bore the brunt of super-typhoon Yolanda, escorted by climate activist Senator Loren Legarda and welcomed in Tacloban by Mayor Alfred Romualdez. In November, 2013, when typhoon Yolanda hit the city, over 6,000 residents were killed and 22 million pesos worth of property was destroyed.

Gore is in the Philippines for a Climate

Change Training Workshop. He praises the Philippines for having two of the best Climate Laws in the world – the Climate Change Act of 2009 and the People's Survival Fund. On Monday, March 14, he started training 700 "climate warriors" from all over Asia who came to Manila for the "Climate Reality Leadership Training Corps." Loren Legarda, who is chair of the Senate Committee on Climate Change, Environment, and Natural Resources, helped Gore and his group organize the Manila leg of the climate training. Legarda also called on local government units to begin crafting their strategies to address environmental changes, as is required by the Climate Change Act. "All LGUs should follow the law and have their own local climate action plans," Legarda said. "We can no longer delay climate action. For a vulnerable nation like the Philippines, delayed action means loss of lives, livelihood, ecosystems, and biodiversity. Each community has its own vulnerabilities, risks, and hazards."

It is hoped that Al Gore's visit will help get the Philippines back on track in the development of more renewable energy sources. This island country is blessed with a wealth of potential solar, wind, and geothermal power, some of which has been developed as a source of energy, such as the wind farms in Northern Luzon, the solar power centers near Manila, and the geothermal plants in the Visayas.

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EcoWaste stages 'Lenten Walk' to press for closure of polluting dumpsites

By Melnie Ragasa-Jimena

ADVOCATES of chemical safety and zero waste staged a "Lenten Walk for Mother Earth" to dramatize the adverse impacts of garbage dumping on the ecosystems.

On Holy Wednesday, members of the EcoWaste Coalition and 'running priest' Fr. Robert Reyes took a solemn walk from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to the Office of the Ombudsman in Quezon City.

A volunteer carrying a big wooden cross on his shoulders led the walk under the scorching sun, followed by over 80 participants, many of whom donned black veils and held banners and placards with pro-environment messages, including excerpts from Laudato Si of Pope Francis that says: "The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth."

"The cross symbolizes the suffering of our dear Mother Earth due to the failure of many localities to close, clean up and rehabilitate polluting dumpsites across the country," said Father Robert Reyes, OFM.

"The cross also represents our collective hope that ecological stewardship will triumph over the culture of waste and apathy that is defiling and killing God's creation," the priest added.

"Open dumping goes against Republic Act 9003, the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, burying communities with wastes and poisoning humans and other creatures with harmful chemicals," said EcoWaste Coalition national coordinator Aileen Lucero.

"By staging this walk, we proclaim the need to end

this daily 'crucifixion' of Mother Earth in our throw-away society by closing the dumps and adopting practices that prevent and reduce the generation of trash," she stressed.

"Specifically, we hold this walk to urge the Filipino nation to rally behind the Office of the Ombudsman in its earnest efforts to protect the environment from open dumping by holding erring officials accountable," she added.

In response, Ombudsman Conchita Carpio-Morales assured the group that "the Environmental Ombudsman team of investigators and prosecutors are working double time to ensure that the complaints filed by the National Solid Waste Management Coalition (NSWMC) are acted upon to protect our ecosystems from the negative impact of illegal dumping activities."

Last March 11, Deputy Ombudsman for Luzon and Environmental Ombudsman Gerard A. Mosquera ordered over 300 local government officials to submit an explanation on the complaints.

The local officials were given a non-extendible period of 30 days to reply and submit their Safe Closure and Rehabilitation Plan that must include a proposal to immediately close open dumpsites.

The order came after the filing of 50 complaints by the NSWMC for violation of R.A. No. 9003 last February 10 against 600 local government officials from 13 administrative regions. The law mandated the closure of open and controlled dumpsites from 2004 to 2006.

The complaints were signed by NSWMC Commissioner Romeo Hidalgo, a representative of civil society in the commission and a member of EcoWaste Coalition.

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Diwata-1 journey into space a historic feat for PH-Cuisia

By Jovic Yee
and Niña P. Calleja

THE FIRST Filipino-made and co-developed microsatellite, aptly called Diwata-1, began its "momentous" journey into outer space on Wednesday morning, marking the start of the country's venture into space technology.

Diwata-1 was included in the 3,375-kilogram cargo of food,

crew supplies, vehicle hardware and 20 nanosatellites on board Orbital ATK's Cygnus spacecraft that took off at exactly 11:06 a.m. (Manila time) from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida.

The Cygnus spacecraft—nicknamed SS Rick Husband in honor of the shuttle commander who died in the 2003 Space Shuttle Columbia accident—was propelled into space

as part of the fifth resupply mission to the International Space Station (ISS).

The spacecraft was expected to dock at the ISS on Saturday evening (Manila time), where it would release its cargo, including Diwata-1, into orbit as early as April 20.

Once Diwata-1 goes into orbit, it will stay in space for around 20 months at 400 kilo-

meters from earth, during which time the microsatellite will use its four specialized cameras to take an average of 3,600 high-resolution images of the country that will be used for imaging its land and water resources, and for studying changing weather patterns, agricultural productivity, as well as disaster response and mitigation.

Space technology

"All this time we've been looking at other countries venturing into space, celebrating with them even though we have no part in it. We may not have launched the rocket, but now a piece of equipment there belongs to us," declared Carlos Primo David, executive director of the Philippine Council for Industry, Energy and Emerging Technology Research and Development.

David told reporters yesterday that the successful launch into space of Diwata-1, officially named the Philippine Earth Observation Microsatellite (Phil-Microsat), was the "first step (in) the challenge (of) venturing into space and developing our own space technology."

Control of the microsatellite will be transferred sometime in May to the Philippine Earth Data Resources Observation (Pedro) in Subic, Zambales province, he added.

Among the government agencies expected to benefit the most from Diwata-1's data are the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration, Department of Agriculture and even the Department of Tourism.

The launch, viewed via live feed at the University of the Philippines' Electrical and Electronics Engineering Institute in Diliman, Quezon City, was welcomed with applause and shouts of excitement among officials and staff of the university and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST).

In Japan, Filipino scientists and engineers who developed Diwata-1 nervously watched in silence as the spacecraft carrying the microsatellite they had worked on for a year left the earth's atmosphere. Watching the live feed of the launch at Tohoku University and Hokkaido University were Ariston Gonzales, Juan Paolo Espiritu, Benjamin Magallon, Gerwin Guba, John Leur Labrador, Julian Marvick Oliveros, Kaye Kristine Vergel, Delburg Mitchao and Harold Paler.

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Diwata - 1 journey into space a historic

The group of Filipino scientists and engineers in the two universities in Japan is now developing Diwata-2, a successor to the first microsatellite, which was expected to be launched into space by April 2017.

Gay Jane Perez, one of Phil-Microsat's project leaders, said the second microsatellite will be deployed at a higher altitude of 500 kilometers from Earth, a distance that would give Diwata-2 a longer life span of around five years.

UP Diliman Chancellor Michael Tan said the microsatellites launched into space will further develop the country's knowledge base and "massively improve the data we (get), in areas such as climate and topography."

Unmanned aerial vehicles

Apart from the microsatellites, which are part of a three-year P840.82-million program seen to lay the foundation for a possible Philippine Space Agency, David said a program on unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) that will be used "for military research" was also being started, with a memorandum of agreement signed with the Department of National Defense "before the end of the Aquino administration."

In a statement, Philippine Ambassador to the United States

Jose L. Cuisia on Wednesday hailed the launch of Diwata-1, as it could "provide policymakers in the country with scientific data and information needed to formulate policies relating to disaster mitigation, agricultural productivity and management of land and water resources."

Orbital ATK's Cygnus capsule holds 8,000 pounds of food, equipment and scientific research for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Nasa), including a commercial-quality 3-D printer, as well as experimental robotic grippers modeled after thousands of sticky hairs on geckos' feet. The technology could one day be used on the hands and feet of robots that would move along the exterior of spacecraft to carry out inspections and repairs.

Fire experiment

There's also a fire experiment that will remain on the Cygnus, as researchers plan to ignite a large-scale blaze in a contained box, to see how it spreads in weightlessness. The fire will not be set until the Cygnus departs the space station in May, full of trash for a destructive reentry.

Named after the swan constellation, the Cygnus is one of two commercial vehicles used to stock the 250-mile-high space station. Both haulers have lost shipments to rocket failures over the past one and a half years and are still working to catch up. A Russian shipment also ended up destroyed.

Nasa contracted out space station cargo deliveries—and beginning as early as next year, crew taxi flights—to concentrate on getting humans to Mars in the 2030s. Earlier this month, US astronaut Scott Kelly returned from a yearlong stay at the station, helping to push that goal forward.

With reports from AFP and AP

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Break free from coal, fossil fuels

EASTER SUNDAY, the most important celebration in the calendar of the Catholic Church, is fast approaching. But as we commemorate the resurrection of Jesus Christ and trust in God's promise of life everlasting, very urgent concerns give us less cause for glee.

Last month was both Care for Creation month in the Catholic Church and the hottest February on record globally. In the same month, Cyclone "Winston" cost the lives of over 40 people in the Pacific island-nation of Fiji; it was the strongest tropical cyclone ever to make landfall on that country. It brought painful reminders to many in the Philippines of the devastating Typhoon "Yolanda" (international name: Haiyan), which killed more than 6,000 people in 2013.

These events cannot be acts of God. They are circumstances that can be explained. The continued emissions of greenhouse gases contribute to climate change and increase the frequency and intensity of extreme weather disturbances. It must be everyone's concern that even countries most vulnerable to the effects of global warming, such as the Philippines, continue to build coal-fired power plants. Coal is one of the sources of energy that contribute the most greenhouse gases emissions that lead to global warming and climate change.

Last year, Pope Francis, in the encyclical "Laudato Si," called upon all Catholics to act on climate change and protect the Earth; he urged solidarity for the poor and the most vulnerable, for it is they who suffer foremost and most severely the effects of global warming.

That encyclical helped to build momentum toward the landmark climate change agreement reached at the COP21 summit in Paris last December. There, world leaders agreed to end their countries' addiction to fossil fuels

COMMENTARY

Archbishop Ramon Arguelles

and to keep global warming at least below 2 degrees centigrade above preindustrial levels. The agreement included an aspiration to meet a 1.5-degree ceiling, on the grounds that even a 2-degree rise risks dangerous impacts on natural systems.

The Paris Agreement has given the Philippines a clear timeline for action. The next major milestone on that timeline is the Paris Agreement signing ceremony on April 22 in New York. The whole world will be watching the leaders that would gather to sign on the dotted line and renew their commitment to the Earth.

The Philippines has played a crucial role in those climate talks over recent years, arguing passionately for action as supertyphoon after supertyphoon ravaged our country. The Paris climate negotiations last December succeeded in including the more ambitious 1.5-degree aspiration in the agreement, in large part thanks to the efforts of the Climate Vulnerable Forum chaired by the Philippines.

But ratification of the agreement will mean nothing without concrete action. We cannot champion environmental integrity internationally if we don't practice environmental integrity locally.

Last year, the Philippine government approved the construction of an additional 25 coal-fired power plants. The continued reliance on this most polluting of fuels must cease. The use of coal is a major contributor to climate change. Coal mining and coal plants cause extreme harm to local communities and

ecosystems, as we in the province of Batangas know only too well. It is also economically unattractive: The Philippines imports around three-quarters of the coal we use, costing us precious foreign reserves.

The Philippines is blessed with enormous renewable energy resources. It is second only to the United States in the amount of geothermal power it produces. Hundreds of renewable energy projects are in the pipeline. The Paris Agreement is set to unlock billions of dollars in investment in clean energy projects—flows of finance that can benefit our country.

More industrialized nations, such as the United States and those in the European Union, are taking increased decisive action. However, the scale of the climate challenge requires action from all countries, including the Philippines. As this country prepares for general elections in May, let this question be raised and reflected: Does not our country deserve a government that will do everything to protect Filipino families from the ravages of dirty energy and climate change? A government willing to call for an immediate moratorium on new coal plants, a total stop to coal mining, and a speedy transition to renewable and clean energy? It is immoral to burden future generations with pollution and the cost of mistaken energy choices made today. Let us show one another and the world that we are serious about reaching the global goals our people worked so hard to encourage world leaders to set in Paris. It is time to end the age of coal.

Let us have a true and lasting national renewal. May this Easter bring this country and our people a real transfiguration for the better. Happy Easter!

Ramon Arguelles is archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Lipa.

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High cost of cheap coal

HE CAN'T even stop his own country from producing greenhouse gases, and now he's bullying us to stop using coal as a source of energy? That was how presidential candidate Rodrigo Duterte twitted former US vice president Al Gore, who was in the country earlier to talk about climate change and global warming.

EDITORIAL

Gore had called on the Philippines to use other sources of renewable energy instead of coal-fired power plants as these burn greenhouse gases and stoke climate change, the effects of which are aberrations in weather patterns that unleash ultradestructive typhoons like "Yolanda."

"But the country contributes so little greenhouse gases compared to developed countries that are the biggest offenders," Duterte protested when reminded at the second presidential debate of the country's commitment to cut its carbon emissions by 70 percent by 2030.

According to former energy secretary Jericho Petilla, 23 new coal-fired power plants will have been established in the country by 2020; two new 300-megawatt plants will open in Davao City in 2016 and 2017—plans that Duterte fully supports. The coal-fired plants are necessary to meet the nation's growing energy needs, President Aquino said in January. And yet, just a month earlier in Paris, he forcefully spoke out for the Philippines and other developing nations as highly vulnerable to rising sea waters as a result of global warming!

Local officials fearful of public outrage over expected power outages due to limited energy supply often turn to coal as a convenient alternative. After all, it is cheap, easy to transport and easy to burn. It is by far cheaper than nuclear, natural gas or oil, is relatively stable and immune from fluctuating prices because of political embargoes, and provides jobs that involve its removal from the earth, its transport, conversion to fuel, and disposal.

And yet there are hidden costs that make coal the most exorbitantly priced energy source. For one, it is devastatingly dirty and leaves a black patina on everything it touches. The prolonged inhalation of coal dust also causes black lung disease, or pneumoconiosis, which is characterized by long-term

coughing and shortness of breath. In 2013, the disease killed 25,000 workers, according to the UK medical journal Lancet.

Mining, transporting, storing and burning coal are as messy and fraught with danger as well, as deep mines expose coal workers to intolerably filthy and hazardous conditions, including high temperatures and the threat of explosions.

Open cast mining, now the source of much of the world's coal, rips away topsoil and gobbles water, and thus contributes to the "desertification" of land. Digging out coal ruins forest lands and animal habitats, and harms biodiversity and existing ecosystems. Burning coal produces harmful byproducts and gas emissions such as sulfur dioxide, carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxide that pollute the environment.

Although widely available at present, coal deposits are a nonrenewable and limited resource; future generations can't rely on it alone.

With other countries taking heed of the risks and environmental costs of coal and weaning themselves away from it, why does the Philippines insist on using it as a preferred energy source? (At 27 percent in 2005, coal has the highest contribution to the power generation mix in the country.) The choice is even more puzzling given that the country is the world's second largest producer of geothermal energy, behind Indonesia. It also has other largely untapped renewable sources of energy: solar (freely available), wind and hydropower.

Expectedly, business leaders and entrepreneurs might balk at the initial capital outlay these power investments will entail, but over the long term, these will pay off in terms of a more stable power supply and clean energy.

And why should initial costs be a problem? Shouldn't the government subsidize the development of alternative energy sources? It should provide incentives to encourage entrepreneurs to go into power generation using sustainable and clean sources, as in tax breaks, tariff-free importation of machinery, entry of foreign technical personnel, even the recovery of operating expenses—incentives that, per the Department of Energy website, are already being given to energy producers under the current coal operating contract system.

Indeed, how can we talk of economic growth when we keep a tight and parsimonious grip on funds that could develop renewable power sources to oil the cogs and wheels of industry and keep them going?

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

SPECIAL REPORT:

Millions continue to suffer from climate change

These days in some parts of the Bicol region, hitherto regarded as the country's typhoon belt, farmers can hardly predict the shift in wet and dry seasons.

In Luzon's western seaboard, stories of drought abound among those living near Tabtaban Lake in Mindoro Occidental. In 2010, for instance, the area had little rainfall, and the lake dried up.

In northern Mindanao, land tillers in Misamis Oriental now find it difficult to foresee the onset of the dry and wet seasons.

Changing weather patterns have been "scrambling" the country's calendar, particularly in agriculture.

Several years ago, when "climate change" was an "abstract" idea for ordinary Filipinos, then University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) chancellor Rex Victor Cruz declared at an international science forum in Los Baños: "Climate change is real, it is serious, it is urgent, and it threatens the security and economy of nations, however large or small, wealthy or poor."

An average of 326 climate-related disasters had been taking place from 2000 to 2004, affecting 262 million people or one in 19 of the world's population, the United Nations Environment Program-Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery (UNEP-BCPR) reported.

The UNEP-BCPR report was cited in a science conference held recently at the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA), based in UPLB.

Devastating typhoons, particularly Yolanda in 2013, showed that the typhoon belt had shifted from

By RUDY FERNANDEZ

its traditional path (Bicol and northern Luzon, particularly Batanes) to the Visayas and outlying areas, according to the analysis of the Climate Change Commission (CCC).

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) had also concluded that the manifestations of climate change observed over the years pointed to "increasing air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice, and rising global average sea level," Cruz said in an international conference held at SEARCA.

Cruz was among the scientists, five of them Filipinos – Jett Villarin, Rosa Perez, Rodel Lasco and Juan Pulhin – who composed the IPCC technical committee. Together with former United States vice president Al Gore Jr., the IPCC won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007. Gore's documentary film "An Inconvenient Truth" has generated global interest in the impacts of climate change.

The IPCC was established in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) to build up and disseminate knowledge about climate change and to lay the foundations for measures needed to counteract climate change.

Several global scientific studies have noted that, among other things, the Philippines' geographic landscape features stand to be considerably altered in light of rising sea levels triggered by the world's warming temperatures.

By 2020, the country's average temperature is projected to increase by one degree Celsius. By 2050, the average temperature will be two degrees more than the current normal: 32 degrees Celsius.

Battle at grassroots

Agriculture, which is the most vulnerable to climate change due to its heavy reliance on the weather, "remains to be the backbone of the global economy as it also bears the responsibility of feeding a population that has grown by leaps and bounds while production continues to diminish due to losses in our natural resources," SEARCA director Gil Saguiguit Jr. said.

He stressed that the battle for climate change "is either won or lost in the grassroots level where localized interventions will play a big role."

The Los Baños-based International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) has also assessed that for every one degree Celsius increase in temperature, a 15-percent reduction in rice yield follows.

"The impact on rice is simple arithmetic: a three-degree Celsius increase means a 45-percent reduction in rice harvest. That's a reduction of almost half of what would be available for food," the CCC said.

Globally, the impact of climate change will be "most disastrous to the semi-arid tropics, home to two billion people and most of the world's poor," former agriculture secretary William Dar once said.

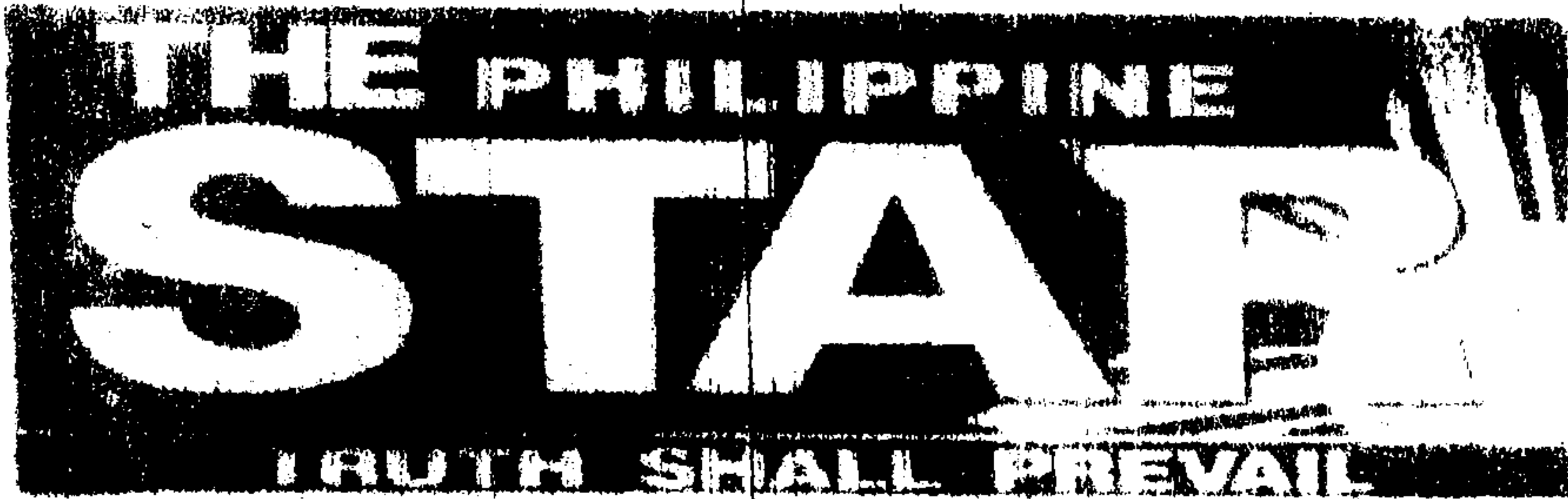
Stronger typhoons

In the Philippines, while the frequency of typhoons remains the same – about 20 a year – five or six of them are now much stronger, reaching wind speeds of 220 kilometers per hour compared to only two or three in previous years.

"And they bring a lot of rains," the CCC stated as it cited a Philip-

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The only paper you read from cover to cover!

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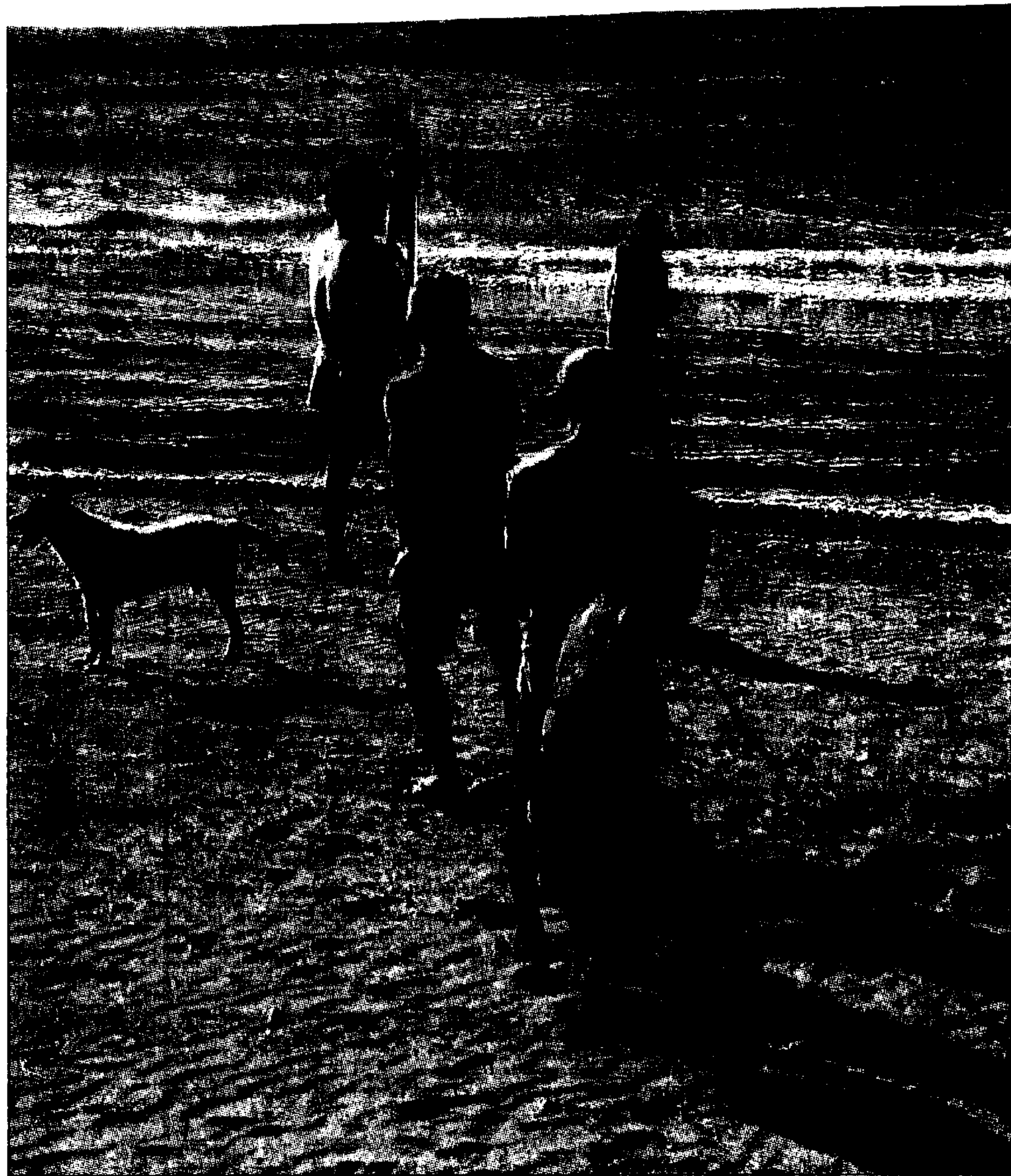
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Millions continue to suffer from climate change



pine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration projection, based on global computer models, that the rainy season will be up to 60 percent wetter than now and the dry season will be 60 percent dryer.

Other studies have also turned out chilling results for Filipinos.

For instance, the International Institute for Environment and Development has estimated that more than 634 million people live in low elevation coastal zones and will be severely affected by climate change. The Philippines is among 10 countries (including China, In-

dia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Japan and the United States) with the highest population densities in LECZ.

Another study stated that 81 to 90 percent of Filipinos, now numbering about 104 million, are coastal inhabitants who are also among the country's "poorest of the poor."

The IPCC has also projected that 90,000 to 140,000 hectares of coastal land will go under water if the sea rises in the coming decades. Another study has warned that if much of the world's ice caps melt owing to climate change, at least 171 Philippine coastal towns in 10 vulnerable provinces will go under water.

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SINDIKATO SA REGISTRY OF DEEDS PESTE SA CALAPAN



MASAlamin
ni Ed Cordevilla

KAMAKAILAN ay napabisita ako sa Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro at ating napag-alaman na marami sa ating mga kababayan doon na nangangarap na magkaroon ng sariling tahanan ay nasa bingit ng alanganin. Kaawa-awa naman po ang marami sa Calapan City na nakabayad na sa lupang kinatitirikan ng kanilang bahay ngunit hindi naman maisyuhan ng sariling titulo. Ang dahilan po kasi, peke ang mga titulong pinanghahawakan umano ng mga

nagbebenta ng ilan sa mga lupa roon.

Kung paanong nang-yayaring nagkakaroon ng titulo ang ilan sa mga nangangamkam ng lupa sa Calapan ay kagagawan na rin umano ng pang-lokal na Registry of Deeds. Sa totoo lang, hindi lamang sa Calapan naganap ang anomalyang ito kundi maging sa lalawigan ng Rizal at nani-niwala akong maging sa iba't ibang parte ng bansa dahil na rin sa sindikato sa Registry of Deeds, kaya hindi na rin tayo magtataka kung isang araw ay marami sa mga

kawani ng Land Registration Authority ay pagdadamputin ng National Bureau of Investigation, matatawag na rin kasing 'syndicated crime' ito, mga kamasa.

Sa panayam natin kay Ginang Teodora Quizon Badilla, residente ng Calapan, kinumpirma niyang resulta ng sindikato ng kawani ng RD sa Calapan na ngayon ay marami ang nakabayad na ng hinuhulugang lupa sa Calapan ang hindi maisyu-isyuhan ng titulo dahil peke ang pinanghahawakan ng mga nagpupusturang may-ari ng isang subdivision doon.

Nalaman din natin

kay Ginang Badilla na mayroon pa ngang isang heredero ng mga San Agustin na nakikipaglaban para sa karapatan ng kanyang angkan sa may 100 ektaryang lupain na kinamkam sa tulong ng sindikato ng local RD. Ayon naman sa isang source natin sa LRA mismo, gawain na ng ilang korap na local RD ang itago ang mga orihinal na dokumento na pagmamay-ari ng ilang piling lupain at gumawa ng pekeng titulo kapalit ang salapi o kung hindi man ay parte sa lupaing kinakamkam.

Ayon kay Ginang Badilla, isang Char-

lemagne San Agustin, na apo ni Fernando San Agustin at apo rin ng mag-asawang Harrison Fletcher at Carmen San Agustin, ang nag-aasikaso upang mapabalik sa kanilang angkan ang nasabing lupain sa Calapan na ginawan umano ng pekeng titulo ng sindikato sa RD matapos ang isang sunog na tumupok sa Calapan Registry of Deeds noong Agosto 1977.

Ayon sa ulat na nalathala sa pahayagang ito, ang nasabing sunog ay ginawang dahilan upang ang 'registration decrees' at orihinal na 'certificates of titles' ng

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• SALAMIN NG KATOTOHANAN •

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*Sindikato sa Registry of Deeds
Peste sa Calapan*

mga ninuno ni San Agustin ay maisantabi nang hindi nalalaman ng mga tagapagmana.

Sinasabing ang reconstituted title RT-28 (T-6375) na nasa pangalan nina Erlinda Espiritu at Rosita Arce Ignacio ay ipinalit sa Registration Decree No. 1494 and OCT No. 19 na nasa pangalan ni Fernando San Agustin, lolo ni Charlemagne San Agustin, na sumasakop sa lupaing may sukat na 68.8 hektarya. Samantala, ang reconstituted title RT-29 (T-13350) na nasa pangalan naman ni Arturo Arce ay ipinalit sa Registration Decree No. 90904 (OCT 141) na nasa pangalan ng mag-asawang Fletcher at San Agustin na sumasakop sa lupaing may sukat na 55.48 hektarya.

Sa mga sertipikasyon

naman mula sa Land Registration Authority at Land Management Bureau ng DENR, ang mga 'reconstituted title' ay mula sa mga non-existing survey plan at nagpapatungkol sa lupain na ang lokasyon ay sa Guimba, Nueva Ecija at hindi sa Calapan City. Napag-alaman pa sa LRA na ang mga 'reconstituted title' ay pawang peke dahil hindi umano dumaan sa anumang korte. Ang korte lamang kasi ang may karapatang magutos sa RD na gawan ng titulo ang isang lupain. Nararapat lamang na mapahinto na ang ganitong maanomalyang kasanayan ng mga RD, hindi lamang sa Calapan kundi maging sa buong bansa.

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1898

MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Newsbits

• Clean, green pilgrimage

RIZAL PROVINCE- The provincial government here is reminding participants in the annual Holy Thursday 'Penitential Walk' of their role in protecting the environment by keeping the surroundings trash free. In his message of appeal to the public sent through Manila Bulletin, Antipolo City Mayor Casimiro 'Junjun' Ynares, III, reminded the millions of pilgrims who will join today's Penitential Walk also known as 'Alay Lakad' towards Antipolo City, to observe discipline by keeping the streets free of trash. "May I appeal to our devotees to make their 2016 pilgrimage, an environment-friendly one. We call on their help in preventing littering and in keeping Antipolo clean," Ynares said. (Nel B. Andrade)

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1908

MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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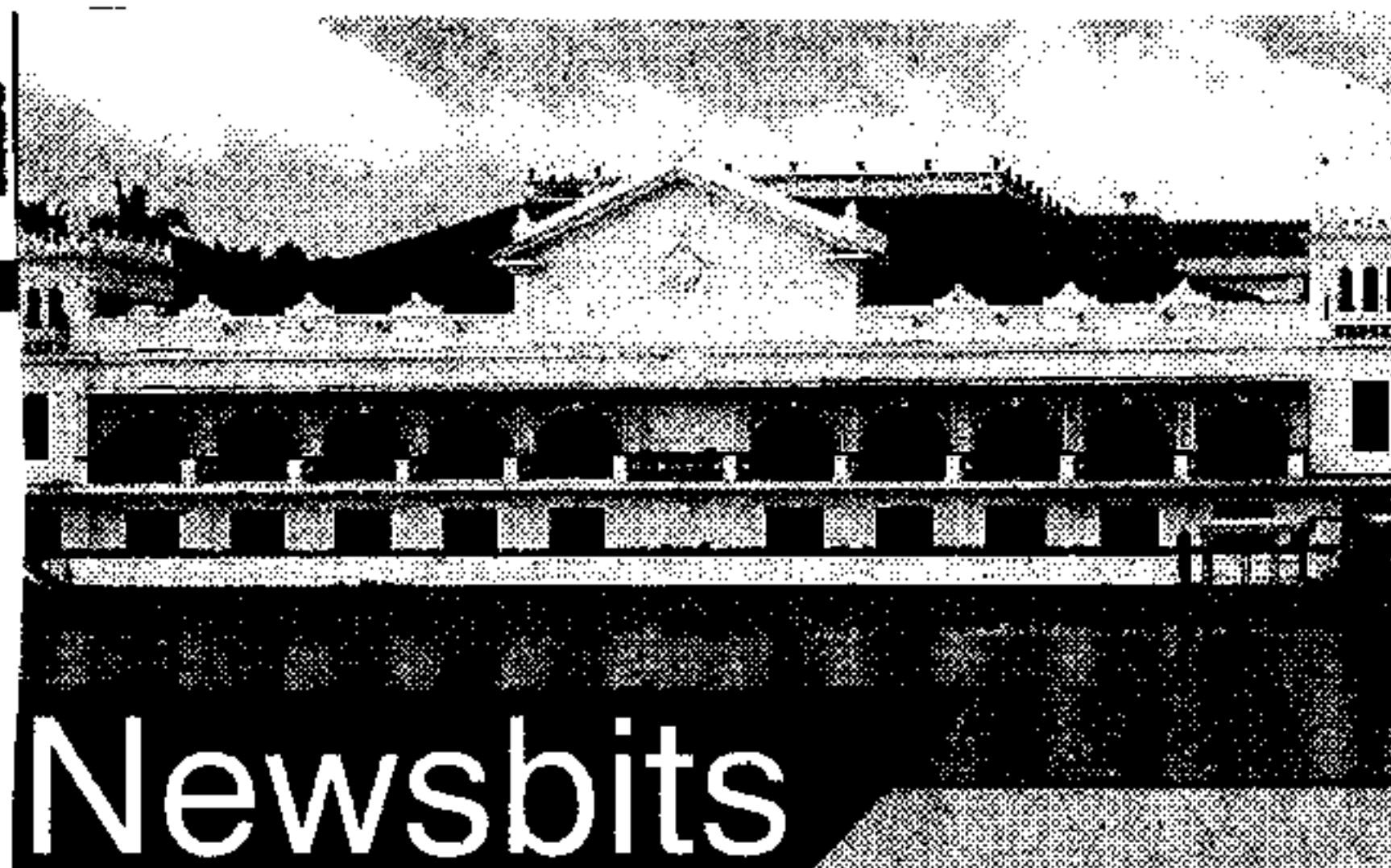
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STRATEGIC COMM

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Newsbits

• Clean, green Palaro 2016

Overwhelmed with the positive results in terms of maintaining cleanliness and orderliness in billeting areas of participants in previous stagings of the Palarong Pambansa, the Department of Education (DepEd) will once again implement a "clean, green and eco-friendly" policy this year. Education Secretary Armin Luistro said that the Palaro, also known as "National Games" will showcase not only the skills of student-athletes in various sports events but also their discipline when it comes to preserving the environment. This year's Palaro will be conducted simultaneously from April 10 to 16 at the Albay Sports and Tourism Complex in Albay. To ensure the conduct of an eco-friendly Palaro, Luistro issued implementing guidelines contained in DepEd Memorandum No. 46 series of 2016 which states that "all participants, athletes, members of the executive, working, technical and other related committees are enjoined to clean, green, and eco-friendly measures." (Merlina Hernando - Mailpot)



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'ENDO SYSTEM', LULUTASIN NI BONGBONG**MAGKAISA PARA SA BAYAN****ATTY. JAY DE CASTRO**

HINDI maipagkakailang malaking problema ng Pilipinas ang kontraktuwalisasyon o higit na kilala sa tawag na "endo system" (end of contract system).

Ayon sa Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), Associated Labor Unions (ALU) at Federation of Free Workers (FFW), tinatayang 20 milyon ang contract workers sa kasalukuyan.

Batid ni Senador Bongbong Marcos ang suliranin kung saan ay tinawag niya itong "opresibong kontraktuwalisasyon."

Ang kontraktuwalisasyon ay pagtatrabaho nang hindi umaabot sa anim na buwan sa trabaho dahil tinatangal na, paliwanag ni Bongbong. Aniya, hindi nareregular ang mga manggagawa at mababa ang tinatanggap na sahod kada buwan at walang mga benepisyo mula sa kumpanya at gobyerno na mahigpit na ipinagbabawal ng mga

batas-paggawa.

Tiniyak ni Bongbong na kung siya ay manalong bise-presidente, tutulong siya sa pangulo upang resolbahan ang "endo system" sa bansa.

Kung hindi man tuluyang mawala, mabawasan man lamang dahil "ang opresibong kontraktuwalisasyon ay patuloy na dumarami," sabi ni Bongbong.

Si Bongbong ay katapat na ni Chiz Escudero sa unang puwesto sa survey ng mga tumatakbong bise-presidente.

Naniniwala si Bongbong na ang kailangan lang ay sundin at ipatupad ang batas-paggawa na nagbabawal sa kontraktuwalisasyon o limang buwang pagtatrabaho.

Sang-ayon ako sa punto ni Bongbong dahil bilang abogado, nakita kong may sapat na batas laban sa kontraktuwalisasyon. Ang kailangan lang ay sundin at ipatupad ang mga ito.

Ako'y naniniwala na tutulong si Bongbong kung siya ang magiging bise-presidente sa susunod na anim na taon, dahil malapit sa puso niya ang mga manggagawa. Kita n'yo naman, sa lahat ng tumatakbong bise-presidente, tanging si Bongbong lang ang nagsabing "opresibo ang kontraktuwalisasyon."

Nangangahulugang kabisado ni Bongbong ang lalim ng problema sa kontraktuwalisasyon dito sa ating bayan.

* * *

PEOPLES JOURNALS

Everybody's Newspaper

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Nang ipako sa krus ang Inang Kalikasan

TILA hindi alintana ng mga "nagdebateng" kandidato sa pagka-presidente noong nakaraang araw ng Linggo ang mainit na mainit na panahon. Siyempre, naka-aircon sila sa pinagdausan ng "debate o bangayan."

Back in 2007, the United Nations Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) appealed to all countries of the world to reduce carbon emissions drastically, dramatically, and significantly.

After nine years, IPCC raised the alarm to all countries that global warming is reaching its dangerous level which could prevent people from going out of their houses to go to school or place of work due to intense heat and flooding during the summer and rainy seasons.

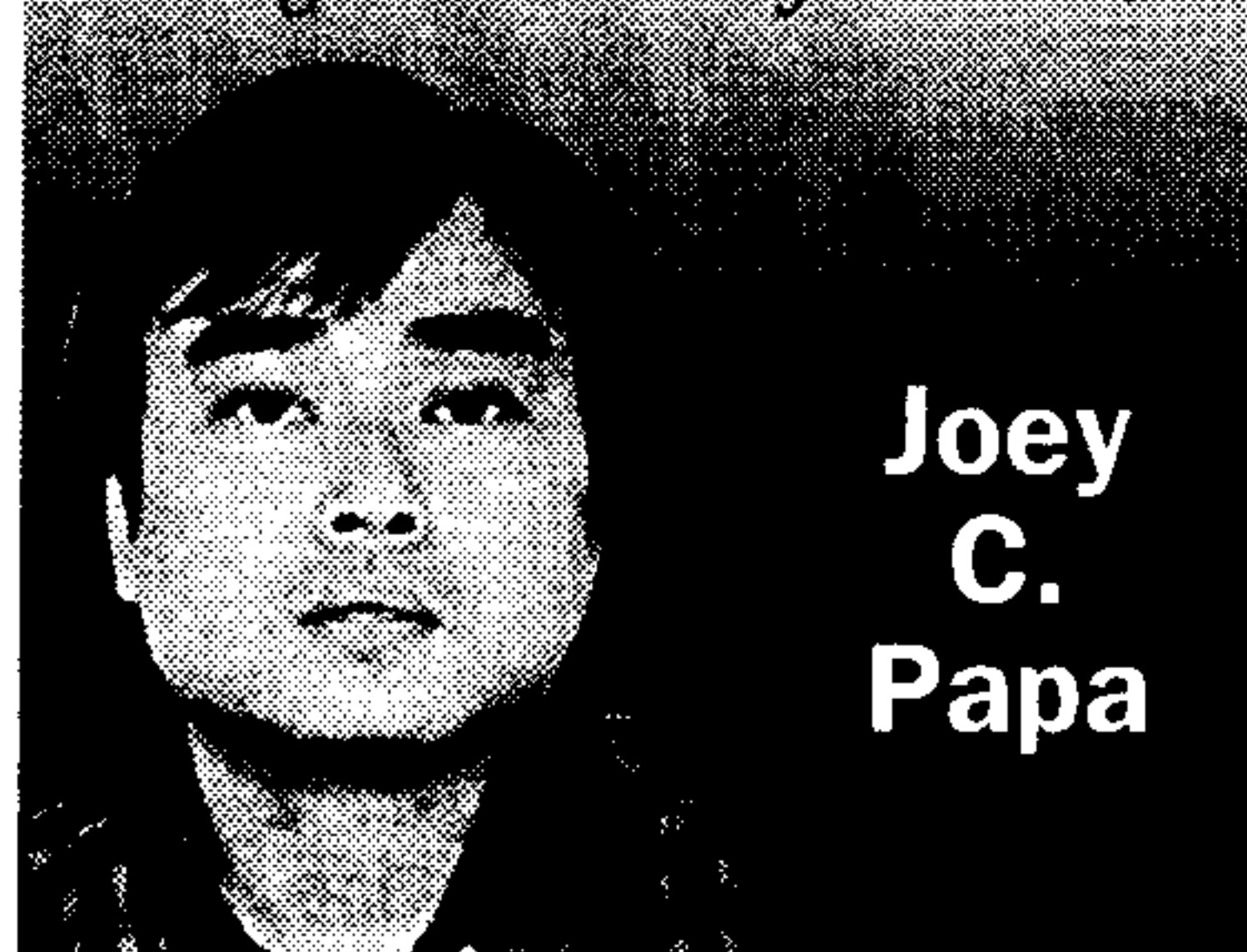
Saan pa tayo pupunta kung gano'n?

Nitong nakaraang linggo, ang isinagot ni Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, presidential candidate sa paksang climate change ay payag siyang magtayo ng coal-fired power plants sa bansa tulad nang itinayo sa boundary ng Davao City at Davao del Sur. Sa kabuuan ay may 25 coal-fired power plants ang itinayo at itatayo pa sa ating bansa.

Ang coal ay minimina sa ilalim ng lupa o kabundukan at nabibilang sa maruming fossil fuel. Kasing dumi ng coal ang krudong langis na kinukuha rin sa ilalim ng lupa at ginagawang gasoline at diesel.

BANGON KALIKASAN

(bangonkalikasan@yahoo.com)



Joey
C.
Papa

Nanatiling tahimik sa isyu ng climate change si Vice President Binay at mga "motherhood statement" naman ang inilahad nina Poe at Roxas tungkol sa pagpapababa ng presyo ng kuryente. "Pumitik" lang si VP Binay ng mga paborito niyang salitang "analysis by paralysis" na laging patungkol sa kasalukuyang pamahalaan.

Sabi ni Duterte, maliit lang naman ang kontribusyon natin sa carbon emissions. Tama! Pero may kontribusyon pa rin kahit gaano kaliit. Tama rin siyang sabihan si Al Gore na ang dapat daw pagsabihan ni Gore ay ang US dahil malakas itong gumamit ng coal. Tama rin!

Ngunit ibig bang sabihin dahil gumagamit ng coal ang US ay gagayahin na natin kahit na patuloy na sisirain nito ang Inang Kalikasan at mangyayari muli ang delubiyong

Ondoy at Yolanda sa ating bansa? Malabo!

Bakit hindi binanggit ng mga kandidato ang renewable sources of energy mula sa hangin, araw at tubig? Malilinis na pagkukunan ito ng enerhiya at hindi nauubos. Nauubos ang coal at crude oil. Kaya nga ginigyera ng US ang Gitnang Silangan ay dahil sa yaman nito sa langis at hindi sa terorismo.

Walang kahihinatnan ang mga debate kung ganito ang laging maririnig natin sa mga kandidato. Wala ang Laudato Si. Walang malasakit sa Inang Kalikasan.

Binanggit ni Roxas ang natural gas. Ito ay galing rin sa ilalim ng lupa. Fossil fuel pa rin ito. Marumi at nauubos.

Malaki talaga ang pagtataka ko (o hindi na marahil nagtataka) hanggang ngayon kung bakit ayaw isulong ng mga naging administrasyon ng Pilipinas ang renewable sources of energy na malinis at hindi nauubos sa ating bansa. Marahil ito ang tinatawag na corporate greed o kasakiman. Hawak ba sa leeg ang mga pinuno ng mga administrasyong ito ng mga US oil refineries? Nagtatanong lang naman.

Pagpalain at patawarin nawa tayong lahat ng Panginoong Maylikha ng mundo lalo na ang ilang mga ganid na tao na sumasalaula at sumisira sa likha ng Diyos.

(bangonkalikasan@yahoo.com)

Gold-copper processing plant up soon in Compostela

NABUNTURAN, Compostela Valley – The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) broke ground recently on a 2,500-square meter property where a pilot environment-friendly integrated gold-copper processing plant for small-scale miners will soon stand in this town of gold-rich Compostela province.

Antonio Sales, DOST Region 11 director, said the integrated processing plant uses a "green" ore technology employing flotation and gravity concentration, removing the need for toxic chemicals such as mercury and cyanide, which are harmful to the soil and the miners themselves.

The technology was developed by engineers and researchers from the University of the Philippines' Department of Mining, Metallurgical, and Materials Engineering (DMMME) at the College of Engineering in Diliman, headed by professor Herman Mendoza.

Sales said they expect the pilot plant to be completed before yearend. Its construction is being funded by the DOST's Philippine Council for Industry, Energy and Emerging Technology Research and Development (PCIEERD), headed by executive director Carlos Primo David.

The project is being pursued in partnership with private proponent and beneficiary, the Nabunturan Integrated Miners Development Cooperative (NIMDC), whose 66 small-scale miners mine a "Minahang Bayan" concession of around 400 hectares in the town.

The pilot plant is the fourth funded by DOST, after the plants in Itogon, Benguet; Del Pilar, Agusan del Norte for the Caraga region, and in Jose Panganiban in Camarines Norte. The DOST has allotted a P120-million budget for the construction of the four pilot plants.

Sales said the Better Mines project, aside from promoting responsible, and environment-

friendly mining, also aims to help the country's small-scale miners.

Currently, the country's small-scale miners are faced with the challenge brought by expensive ore processing fees charged by mill operators that range from P50,000 to P60,000 per ton.

The traditional mills are carbon in pulp (CIP) plants that use cyanide and mercury, and where operators do not accept small volume batches of ore for processing, requiring a minimum of around 20 tons.

PCIEERD said the high processing fee and the requirement of a minimum 20 tons of ore for each batch forces the country's small-scale miners to turn to predatory financiers.

"These are old technologies which we just made functional, or operational specifically for our small-scale miners," Mendoza told **The STAR** in an interview at the groundbreaking ceremonies in mid-March.

"We have designed the plants based on the ore and the characteristics of a particular area like this one in Nabunturan," he added.

Mendoza said the processing

fees the DOST-UP Better Mine processing plant will charge have yet to be determined, but assured the miners these would be lower than the CIP plant charges.

Mendoza said the pilot plant's design includes a tailings containment pond, where the water can be reprocessed and recycled again for use in ore processing.

The Philippines is estimated to sit on about \$1 trillion worth of minerals such as gold, copper and nickel, but is prevented from tapping into this vast wealth due to the huge capital requirement to conduct large-scale mining and a vocal anti-mining lobby.

– Rainier Allan Rond

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