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DENR

IN THE NEWS

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SINCE 1900

MANILA BULLETIN

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● DOST, DENR seal ARB partnership

SAN FERNANDO CITY, La Union — In a move to strengthen the advocacy on rehabilitation, preservation and protection of the Agno River Basin (ARB) in Pangasinan, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) 1 and Department of Science and Technology (DOST) 1 signed agreements the other day. The agreements commit DOST to assist in planning, implementation and technical expertise for the river basin research studies, while the DENR will capacitate stakeholders in the implementation of sustainable environmental natural resources management interventions within the ARB. (Erwin G. Beleo)



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DENR: 500 hectares of grass fire in Mt. Kanlaon put out

BACOLOD CITY — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Negros Island Region said the three successive fire incidents in Mount Kanlaon since the Holy Week have been contained Thursday.

The third blaze, monitored after the volcano's eruption Tuesday night and affected more than 300 hectares, was put out Thursday noon.

DENR-18 Director Al Orolfo said the three fire incidents were reported in Canlaon City, Negros Oriental and in La Castellana, Negros Occidental.

The last one was reported in Barangay Cabagna-an in La Castellana supposedly triggered by the incandescent materials emitted

by Mount Kanlaon and set the bushes on fire.

Supt. Rodolfo Denaga, chief of Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP)-Negros Occidental, said the responders came to the area at around 4 a.m. Thursday to set up a fire line to prevent the blaze from spreading to the forest areas of Mount Kanlaon Natural Park.

Denaga said 69 personnel, including those from the DENR, BFP, Provincial Disaster Management Program Division, and Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Offices of various local government units, put out the fire.

A group of 41 volunteers was also on standby.

Denaga added that they have declared a fire out at noon, but the group remained at the site

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Kanlaon fire put out, but danger zone still off-limits

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

LA CASTELLANA, Negros Occidental—The fire that ate up 400 hectares of grassland near the crater of Kanlaon Volcano was put out on Thursday, authorities said.

Supt. Rodolfo Dinaga, Negros Occidental fire marshal, said at least 60 firefighters worked the whole day on Thursday to ensure that the blaze would not reach the forest land located 4 kilometers away.

After putting out the fire, firefighters were advised to immediately pull out since they were within the 4-km radius permanent danger zone of the volcano.

"It is a dangerous place to be in since Kanlaon might have another phreatic explosion," he said.

Kanlaon, an active volcano on Negros Island, erupted on Tuesday, releasing ash, fiery rocks and other volcanic materials, triggering a grass fire on the La Castellana side of the volcano.

Ash fell on several villages in the towns of La Castellana, La Carlota and Bago City, according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs).

The volcano was calm after Tuesday's phreatic explosion.

The Phivolcs advisory on Thursday said four volcanic earthquakes had been recorded from 5 a.m. Wednesday to 5 a.m. Thursday.

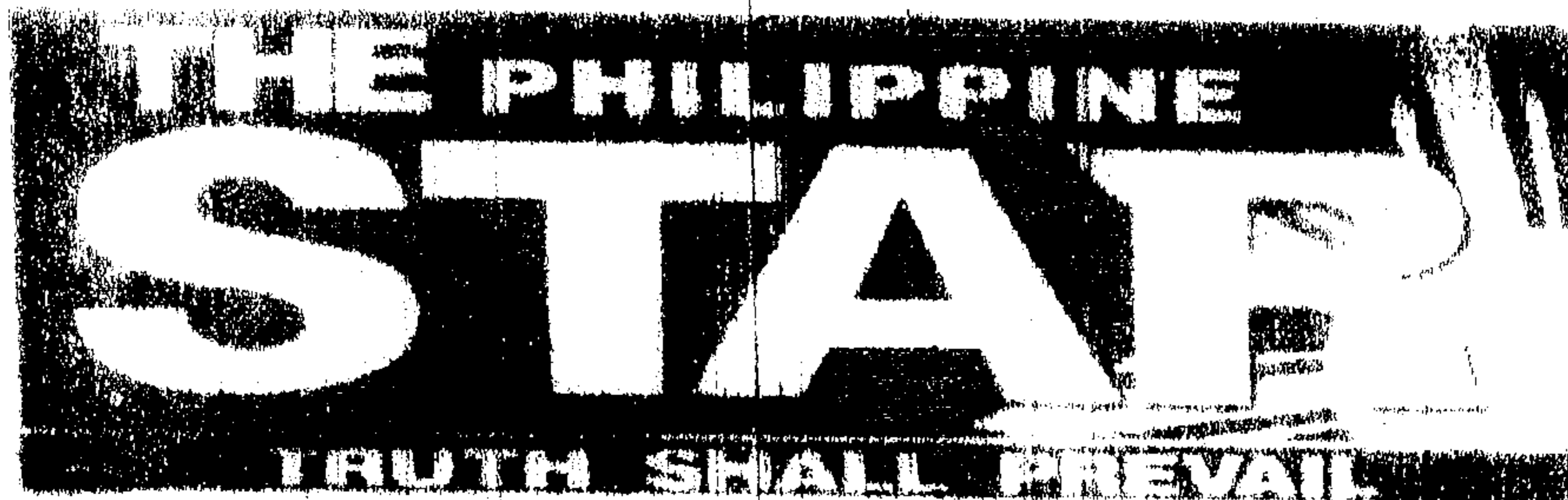
Steam is still seen coming out of the volcano.

Phivolcs has raised alert Level 1, which meant the volcano is in a state of unrest.

Entry into the volcano's permanent danger zone is prohibited as volcanologists said Kanlaon might erupt again.

Kanlaon is one of the country's active volcanoes although it has not erupted for some time.

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Kanlaon grass fires put out

BACOLOD CITY – The grass fires caused by the eruption of Mt. Kanlaon on Tuesday night has been put out.

Superintendent Rodolfo Denaga of the Bureau of Fire Protection in Negros Occidental said fire out was declared around noon on Thursday, but firefighters and personnel of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council stayed until 5:45 p.m. to secure the area.

Al Orolfo, DENR-Negros Island region director, said more than 300 hectares of grasslands were razed.

The DENR will continue to monitor the area from its substation in Barangay Biak na Bato, said Negros Occidental provincial environment and natural resources officer Andres Untal.

– Danny Dangcalan



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Mt. Apo fire threatens Phl Eagle breeding, nesting site

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DAVAO CITY – The forest fire razing parts of the slope of Mt. Apo since Saturday is threatening the nearly extinct Philippine Eagle, the national

bird.

Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF) chairman Carlos Dominguez expressed concern

By EDITH REGALADO

that if the ongoing forest fire continues to rage, the habitat of the Philippine Eagle would be affected.

The forest fire, which started in the Kidapawan City trail of Mt. Apo, has spread to other parts of the highest mountain

in the country.

Mt. Apo is home to the Philippine Eagle. Nests of the giant raptor can be found in the

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remaining 7,000-hectare forest of the mountain.

"The population of the Philippine Eagle is already near-extinct and now we have this problem of the Mt. Apo fire. It is really threatening the survival of our national bird," Dominguez said.

The population of the Philippine Eagle is less than 500 pairs, which were seen in the forests of Mt. Apo, Samar, Leyte and the Cordilleras.

The non-profit PEF runs the Philippine Eagle Center in Barangay Malagos, Calinan District in this city, located at the foot of the Mt. Talomo range where at least 35 captive-bred eagles are kept.

Malacañang assured the public yesterday the national government is addressing the fire breakout at Mt. Apo.

Presidential Communications Operations Office Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr. said the

Department of the Interior and Local Government, Bureau of Fire Protection and the Philippine Air Force have been working with the local governments of Davao del Sur and Davao City to prevent the fire from spreading.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has deployed at least 40 technical personnel to assist in containing the forest fire.

Environment Secretary Ramon Paje directed DENR Region II Director Joselin Marcus Fragada to discuss with concerned local executives the plan to temporarily close the country's highest peak to campers to prevent a repeat of the fire incident.

"Upon hearing about the incident, we lost no time mobilizing our personnel from our provincial and community environment and natural offices in Digos City to help

prevent the spread of forest fire in nearby areas," Paje said.

The DENR regional office in Davao City has been providing equipment and technical support to composite teams of concerned local government units, the Bureau of Fire Protection, and the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council (PDRRMC).

"Each of the seven composite teams now up in Mt. Apo has DENR personnel providing technical assistance, particularly in the use of geographical position system or GPS and control maps, including the establishment of fire lines to prevent the fire from further spreading," Paje said.

A fire line is a gap in vegetation or other combustible materials that will act as barrier to slow down or stop the fire from spreading.

A Super Huey chopper from the Philippine Air Force was also deployed in the area on Tuesday to conduct water

bucket operation.

"Water dropping commenced at 9 a.m. on Tuesday but ended at 11:30 a.m. due to poor visibility. A total of 10 buckets equivalent to 30 drums have been dropped," Paje said.

He also noted that the risk of fire had increased as the long dry spell and high temperatures left large amounts of flammable debris in forest areas.

The Palace also said the Department of Agriculture was ready to conduct cloud seeding over the Mt. Apo grassfire site if favorable cloud formation was present and if wind direction was conducive for such operation.

The Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) overseeing Mt. Apo yesterday passed resolutions to indefinitely close Mt. Apo to trekkers and to use the Integrated Protected Area Fund (IPAF).

The grassfire was reportedly triggered by trekking malpractices but authorities brushed aside any speculation

on the cause of the fire because the investigation is still ongoing.

Funds generated from trekking fees and other local government income raised through Mt. Apo tourism activities will be tapped for urgent operation use to douse the grassfire.

Authorities are appealing for more assistance, particularly water and food and more fire volunteers, as the grassfire

is seen to last for about five to 10 days.

Office of Civil Defense XI regional director Liza Mazo said the agency had requested for additional helicopter from the Armed Forces of the Philippines to beef up forces conducting the "heli-bucket" operation manned by the Eastern Mindanao Command of the Armed Forces.

— With Aurea Calica

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

National govt leads efforts to stop Apo forest burning

By Sandy Araneta,
Sara Susanne D. Fabunan

MALACAÑANG on Friday said the national government is working to put out the fire in Mt. Apo even as a church official from Davao emphasized the importance of protecting Mt. Apo and other forests instead of just putting out fires when they happen.

The Department of the Interior and Local Government, Bureau of Fire Protection and the Philippine Air Force have teamed up to contain the fire, said Communications Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr.

"All the LGUs are united in Davao del Sur and Davao City in their action in order to prevent the spread of the fire," Coloma said.

Despite these efforts, the fire continues to devastate more areas, said Davao Archbishop Romulo Valles.

Several forest fires have already erupted in the past five days but the terrain has made it difficult for firefighters to completely put them out.

Digos City disaster risk reduction and management chief Harry Camoro said the trails leading up to the fire are difficult to climb, the vegetation too thick, and the source too near the cliffs for firefighters to get close.

He reiterated the call for donations, saying they needed logistical support, tools—bolos, machetes, shovels, and pikes in particular—and other utilities like gloves and chainsaws.

Since Saturday, hundreds of firefighters and volunteers have surrounded the forest fire that has affected some 300 hectares of areas around the mountain.

Local authorities have already ordered the closure of Mt. Apo to trekkers for a period of three to five years.

"This sad situation brings us again to the truth: we must work together to preserve, protect, and help sustain God's gift of nature and environment, his gift which is in fact our very home," Valles said in a statement.

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Mt. Apo to be closed indefinitely

DIGOS CITY—Authorities decided to close Mt. Apo for an indefinite period to mountaineering and related activities amid a fire that continues to rage in the country's tallest peak.

In a meeting called by the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) of Southern and Central Mindanao, officials were unanimous in the decision to keep Mt. Apo off limits to human activity, according to Harry Comoro, provincial disaster risk reduction and management officer of Davao del Sur province.

At the meeting were mem-

bers and leaders of PAMB offices in the two regions and incident management teams of two provinces—North Cotabato and Davao del Sur—and Davao City.

Comoro said those who were at the meeting also passed a resolution urging local government units that have jurisdiction on Mt. Apo to provide

funds, to be taken from income they generate from permits to climb the mountain, for the rehabilitation of the mountain after the fire has been put out.

At the meeting, an agreement was also reached to allow a body called Davao Region Incident Management Team to plan operations and handle resources needed to battle the fire which continued to rage yesterday.

According to Nestor Jimenez, incident commander, the fire intensified anew on Thursday night as operations to dig fire lines continued.

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Mt. Apo to be closed indefinitely

A military helicopter also continued to jump water into the burning areas, said Jimenez.

He said a new aerial survey showed the fire has spread from the northeast side of the mountain to its east and southeast sides.

Volunteer firefighters are working round the clock, said Comoro.

Porters, who earn a living serving as guides to the mountain, expressed worry about losing income as a result of the decision to close the mountain.

Miguelito Laing, one of the porters in the village of Kapata-

gan here, said his job as a porter is a big help to his family. During peak season, he said he could earn up to P3,000 in about two days.

Donald Palilino, another porter from Kapatagan, said he hoped the government would provide alternative livelihood.

There are at least 100 porters based in the Davao del Sur side of the mountain alone, many of them living in Kapatagan.

"We are happy that it is now summer and we thought we could start making more money already, but then, this incident,"

said Nonoy Lopez, a porter from North Cotabato who came here to help put out the fire.

Joey Recimilla, tourism officer of Kidapawan City, said the plight of the porters and those who depend on mountaineering and tourism campaigns centered around Mt. Apo has been considered during the meeting where the decision to close the mountain was made.

"We are working on plans on how to replace the income lost," Recimilla said. **Orlando Dinoy and Eldie Aguirre, Inquirer Mindanao**



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Mount Apo closed to trekkers – PAMB

KAPATAGAN, Davao del Sur – A resolution mandating the indefinite closure of the Mount Apo Natural Park from trekkers was unanimously approved by the members of the Protected Area Management Board on Thursday.

The resolution also approved the utilization of the Integrated Protected Area Fund for the on-going efforts to quell the on-going wildfires in the area.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources Davao Region 11 Director Joselin Marcus Fragada, who presided over the PAMB meeting here, emphasized the importance of the decision reached by the members of PAMB as it will allow the firefighting efforts to continue and the park to be able to recover fully from the effects of the recent tragedy.

Representatives from Kidapawan City, Makilala, and Magpet in North Cotabato and Bansalan,

Digos City, Sta. Cruz, and Davao City, including those from the concerned national government agencies led by the DENR, converged here on Thursday to assess the situation in MANP and came out with the decision to close all trails leading to the park.

Fire fighting that involved more than 300 volunteers and personnel from the DENR and the Bureau of Fire Protection, the local government units, and the Philippine Air Force continued as bushfires escalated Thursday morning.

The fire that started on Black Saturday has affected nearly 400 hectares of grasslands and forested areas inside the MANP.

Fragada said that PAMB is now investigating the cause of the fire but emphasized that their focus at the moment is still on containing and putting out the grassfires.

(Alexander D. Lopez)

THE DAILY Tribune

Without fear or favor

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Mt. Matutum closed indefinitely after grass, forest fires

GENERAL SANTOS CITY — Mt. Matutum, South Cotabato province's highest peak, has been closed down indefinitely to trekkers following a series of grass and forest fires that already destroyed more than 10 hectares of its declared protected area.

Tupi Mayor Reynaldo Tamayo, Jr. said yesterday the Mt. Matutum Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) ordered the total closure starting on Thursday to ensure its protection in the wake of the continuing long dry spell triggered by the El Niño Phenomenon.

He said the board issued the decision following an assessment of the forest and grass fires that hit at least two critical sites in Mt. Matutum in the last two weeks.

"All trekking activities in Mt. Matutum are temporarily banned while the El Niño is raging," he told reporters.

The mayor, who sits in the PAMB, said the move is mainly aimed to prevent the occurrence of more grass and forest fires, and at the same time ensure the safety of the climbers or trekkers.

He said the closure order will

stand for the entire 14,000-hectare Mt. Matutum Protected Landscape, which straddles the towns of of Tupi, Polomolok and Tampakan in South Cotabato, "until we correct the problem there."

The PAMB is composed of officials and representatives from the three municipalities, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, provincial government of South Cotabato and non-government groups.

Based on PAMB's investigation, the first major grass and forest fire in Mt. Matutum started last March 23 in Purok 7 of Barangay Kinilis

in Polomolok.

The fire, which raged for several days, affected around 10 hectares of mostly grassy portions of the protected area.

Another fire erupted last Sunday, March 27, in Purok Bong, Datal of Sitio Glandang, Barangay Kablon in Tupi, destroying about one-fourth hectare of a forest area.

The board noted that the fires appeared to be man-made and likely caused by the illegal activities of forest poachers and "kainigineros" or slash-and-burn farmers.

Agustin Valencia Jr., Municipal

BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business

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Mt. Matutum closed to climbers, trekkers after grass, forest fires

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Mount Matutum, South Cotabato province's highest peak, has been closed indefinitely to trekkers following a series of grass and forest fires that already destroyed more than 10 hectares of its declared protected area.

Tupi Mayor Reynaldo Tamayo Jr. said on Friday the Mount Matutum Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) ordered the total closure starting on Thursday to ensure its protection in the wake of the continuing long dry spell triggered by El Niño.

He said the board issued the decision following an assessment of the forest and grass fires that hit at least two critical sites in Mount Matutum in the last two weeks.

"All trekking activities in Mount Matutum are temporarily banned, while El Niño is raging," he told reporters.

The mayor, who sits in the PAMB, said the move is mainly aimed to prevent the occurrence of more grass and forest fires and, at the same time, ensure the safety of the climbers or trekkers.

He said the closure order will stand for the entire 14,000-hectare Mount Matutum Protected Landscape, which straddles the towns of Tupi, Polomolok and Tampakan in South Cotabato, "until we correct the problem there."

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The board noted that the fires

appeared to be man-made and likely caused by the illegal activities of forest poachers and *kaingineros*, or slash-and-burn farmers.

Agustin Valencia Jr., Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office (Menro) head of Polomolok town, said grass and forest fires in Barangay Kinilis have been totally put out and the situation in the area is now under control.

"Based on our assessment, it appeared intentional as there are claim-anti-residents near the site," he said.

Through assistance from the Bureau of Fire Protection and Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office personnel and barangay volunteers, he said they dug up trenches to serve as barriers from the affected areas.

He said they also deployed at least 30 enforcers to the area to monitor and prevent the occurrence of fire incidents.

In Tupi, Menro's forest protection officer in charge Maulvi Bajunaid said the fire that hit a portion of Barangay Kablon is also under control but has not yet been declared a total fire out as of Friday morning.

"There are still burning embers underground in some portions but we're continually monitoring the situation there on a daily basis," he said.

Citing their investigation, he said they earlier found a camp site of suspected forest poachers within the area. He said they specifically discovered a cooking area with traces of burnt firewood, improvised kerosene lamps and a pile of peeled rattan poles.

Mount Matutum, an active volcano that has an elevation of 2,286 meters above sea level, is listed as the country's 14th highest peak.

It hosts the headwaters of five major rivers in Central Mindanao that drain into the Sarangani Bay and the Liguasan Marsh.

Declared as a protected landscape on March 20, 1995, through Proclamation 552, Mount Matutum is also home to a number of rare and threatened wildlife species, among them the Philippine Eagle and the tarsiers. **PNA**

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Mt. Apo, Mt. Matutum closed to trekkers

By ALEXANDER D. LOPEZ and PNA

KAPATAGAN, Davao del Sur – Mt. Apo Natural Park (MANP), where the country's highest peak stands, and Mt. Matutum, the highest peak in South Cotabato, have been closed down indefinitely to trekkers.

The closure orders were approved

by the respective Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) of Mt. Apo and Mt. Matutum yesterday following a series of forest fires that destroyed some 400 hectares of grasslands and forested areas in Mt. Apo and 10 hectares in Mt. Matutum.

The resolution mandating the indefinite closure of the Mt. Apo Natural

Park (MANP) from trekkers was unanimously approved by the PAMB members Thursday. The resolution also approved the utilization of the Integrated Protected Area Fund (IPAF) to quell the ongoing wildfires in the area.

The closure order for Mt. Matutum will stand for the entire 14,000-hectare protected landscape, ►6

Mt. Apo, Mt. Matutum...

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which straddles the towns of Tupi, Polomolok and Tampakan in South Cotabato, "until we correct the problem there," Tupi Mayor Reynaldo Tamayo Jr., PAMB member, said. The fire in Mt. Matutum started March 23.

Mt. Apo National Park

Department of Environment and Natural Resources Davao region (DENR-11) regional director Joselin Marcus Fragada presided over the PAMB meeting. He said the closure will allow the fire-fighting efforts to continue, and after that, it will give time for the MANP to recover fully.

Representatives from the areas of Kidapawan City, Makilala and Magpet in North Cotabato, Bansalan, Digos City, Sta. Cruz and Davao City from region 11, and from the concerned national government agencies also met Thursday to assess the situation in MANP. They also agreed with PAMB's decision to close all trails leading to the park.

As of Thursday, more than 300 volunteers and personnel from the DENR and the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), the local government units (LGUs) and the Philippine Air Force (PAF) continued to fight the bushfires which had escalated earlier. The fire in Mt. Apo started on Black Saturday, March 28.

Fragada also told reporters that PAMB is investigating the cause of the fire but emphasized that their focus at the moment is still on containing and putting out the grassfires.

Firefighters are still focusing their efforts on establishing fire lines to prevent it from spreading to other areas in Mt. Apo, he said.

Cloud seeding

Cloud seeding also started Thursday, conducted by the North Cotabato provincial government.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) reported that three sorties of cloud seeding operations were conducted Thursday around the areas in Mt. Apo. The first sortie dropped 15 bags of salt at the northeast and west portion of Mt. Apo. The second dropped 15 bags of salt over the eastern and northeast portions of Mt. Apo. And the third sortie sprinkled 15 bags of salt in the areas of Kabacan, Carmen and President Roxas in North Cotabato.

Based on the DENR's latest assessment, the grassfires will last for five days at the shortest, or up to 10 days.

Mt. Matutum advisory

Tupi Mayor Tamayo said yesterday that the Mt. Matutum PAMB board issued the decision to close the mountain to trekkers following an assessment of the forest and grass fires that hit at least two critical sites in Mt. Matutum in the last two weeks.

"All trekking activities in Mt. Matutum are temporarily banned while the El Nino is raging," he told reporters.

The mayor said the move is aimed at preventing the occurrence of more grass and forest fires, and at the same time ensure the safety of the climbers

or trekkers.

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14th highest peak

Considered as an active volcano, Mt. Matutum has an elevation of 2,286 meters above sea level is listed as the country's 14th highest peak. Mt. Apo, the Philippines' highest peak stands at 2,954 MASL.

It hosts the headwaters of five major rivers in Region 12 that drain into the Sarangani Bay and the Liguasan Marsh.

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The Manila Times

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Vizcaya stops entry of mining firms

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya: The provincial government here is pursuing its advocacies to stop the entry of more large scale mining companies in collaboration with allied organizations.

Gov. Ruth Padilla said she will continue to collaborate and tap the support of organizations such as ABS-CBN Foundation, Alyansa Tigil Mina, Tanggol Kalikasan and Bantay Kita-Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative to stop the entry of more large scale mining in the province.

At least two foreign large scale mining companies in the province - Australian OceanaGold Corporation with its Didipio Gold and Copper Project in the mountain town of Kasibu and British FCF Minerals, awaiting approval of its commercial operation with its Runruno Gold-Molybdenum Project in the town of Quezon.

Padilla said that one of her major courses of action is the lobbying for national support on the proposed Mining Free Zone Bill that will stop further destruction of the environment.

The governor's husband, Rep. Carlos Padilla, who is finishing his three terms as congressman and now running for governor filed House Bill 1298 that seeks to prohibit "all mining operations" in the province and to declare the province as "mining free zone."

The bill was originally filed in the 15th Congress as House Bill 5800 which was approved by the House on Nov. 28,

2012. However, the Senate failed to act on this measure and was refiled in the 16th Congress.

In the proposed bill, the congressman cited Alyansa Tigil Mina (ATM) report on the mining situation in the country which described the experience as "has been more debilitating and scaring" and that "mining operations have always been equated with environmental destruction-deforestation."

He said that the organization's report showed that mining have resulted in slope destabilization, soil erosion, desertification, water resource degradation, defertilization, crop damages, siltation, alteration of terrain and sea bottom, increased water turbidity and air pollution.

Meanwhile, the provincial government reported an increased collection of mineral tax among small-scale miners in the previous year under the Revised Revenue Code (RRC).

Padilla said the RRC amendments redounded to the implementation of stricter regulation on the extraction of minerals improved its collection of mineral tax from more than P3.3 million in 2012 to more than P6.6 million in 2015.

"We have also apprehended 146 violators of mining laws and policies and the issuance of cease orders to illegal small scale mining activities in the province," she said.

LEANDER C. DOMINGO



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20 minero huli sa illegal mining

CAMARINES NORTE - May 20 minero ang bumagsak sa kamay ng pinagsanib na elemento ng Regional Intelligence Division-5, Criminal Investigation and Detection Group-Camarines Norte at lokal na pulisya matapos na mahuli sa aktong ilegal na nagmimina sa Sitio Bulaay, Paracale, sa Camarines Norte kamakalawa.

Sa ulat na ipinarating ni P/ Sr. Insp. Malu Calubaquib, tagapagsalita ng Camp Simeon Ola-PNP, dakong ala-1:30 ng hapon nang sopresang salakayin ng mga awtoridad ang nasabing lugar.

Ang mga naarestong suspek ay sina Benedicto Padua, Almario Espanol, Billy Flores, Arvin Boticario, Roger Deoneda, Edwin Marvilla, Jensen Pelonio, Rodolfo San Juan, Noli Batalero, Mark Anthony Bacurin, Vincent Collao, Antonio Furuc, Alexis Lapso, Renato Dimas, Romeo Pardo, Domingo Delino, Dennis Valenzuela, Dante Aranges, Elmor Dilao, Rodito Moca, Joseph Brencis, Richard Reyesa, Elmer Padua at Jeremy Clores.

Nakumpiska ng mga awtoridad sa grupo ang isang cal. 45 pistol XD ACP, 11 pirasong bala ng cal 45, sako na naglalaman ng mineral ore at assorted illegal mining equipments.

May posibilidad umano na may taong nagpoprotekta sa illegal mining sa kabila ng mahigpit na pagbabawal ng pagmimina sa Sitio Bulaay.

Nahaharap sa kasong paglabag sa RA 7942 and Violation of RA 10591 ang mga suspek na ngayon ay nakakulong sa Paracale Municipal Police Station. **Francis Elevado**

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LOOKS IRONIC -- Amid government's stepped-up campaign against illegal logging and timber poaching, some residents of Quezon province felt bothered by this unpleasant scene at the middle of Perez Park along the compound of the Provincial Capitol Building of Quezon in Lucena City. This was first noticed by local residents who attended the local proclamation rally of the Liberal Party at Quezon Convention Center (QCC) that was graced by its standard-bearer Mar Roxas and his senatorial slate last March 29. This was also noticed by some members and participants of Regional Multisectoral Forest Protection Council during its quarterly meeting held at the conference room of QCC, a few meters away from this site. Janet Buelo, the provincial government's public information officer, said the stump and sawn pieces of wood were part of an old tree that was toppled by strong winds.

Photo by GFMI FORMAPANI

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

TRO stops registration of 'spurious' land titles following LRA turnabout

A regional trial court judge in General Santos City has issued a temporary restraining order (TRO) stopping the Register of Deeds in this southern Mindanao city from registering the sale of a 707-hectare government property based on land titles that the Land Registration Authority (LRA) had previously declared to be fake.

Acting on a motion filed by plaintiff Alsons Development and Investment Corporation (Aldevinco), Panambulan M. Mimbisa, presiding judge of RTC Branch 37 in General Santos City, issued a Status Quo Ante Order on March 22, 2016 to "allow a full ventilation of the conflicting claims of ownership" involving this government-owned land that has been the subject of a long-simmering dispute that began 13 years ago. The defendant is the local Register of Deeds and Jimmy T. Tang.

A Status Quo Ante Order is a TRO that restores the situation in question to the state where it was before the LRA, in a sudden turnabout, recently issued an undated LRA resolution allowing transactions on a batch of Original Certificates of Titles (OCTs) that allegedly covers parcels of land adjacent to the General Santos City airport to continue.

This was a complete change of position from the LRA's long-standing ruling in February, 2004 when, after an investigation conducted by its Task Force Titulong Malinis (TFTM), it declared the same batch of OCTs as spurious.

The undated LRA resolution would have allowed Tang, owner of Manila-based Avenue Electrical Supply Co. (Avesco) who claimed to have bought the land, to get the General Santos Registry of Deeds to register its sale to him.

Holding a title that allegedly covers five parcels of land located next to the General Santos airport, Tang has, in fact, been asking the city's Register of Deeds to register the sale as early as last year. The office, however, wrote him a letter informing him that they could not do so because the mother title of the five parcels "has been found to be spurious" by the LRA's TFTM, and was even the subject of an earlier investigation by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI).

The recently released LRA resolu-

tion attempted to remove this legal impediment, a development that alarmed Senator Aquilino Pimentel III and prompted him to question the agency's sudden turnabout.

In a letter earlier addressed to Eulalio C. Diaz III, LRA administrator, Pimentel, chair of the Senate committee on justice and human rights, warned that the agency's action could be "prejudicial to the LRA's avowed mission to maintain and foster greater public trust and confidence in the Torrens title as a secure, stable and trustworthy record of land ownership and recorded interests."

Pimentel's committee has been conducting a long-running inquiry into the proliferation of fake land titles in the country, particularly in General Santos City. According to him, some 6,000 fake land titles are reportedly in circulation in this city alone.

The 707 hectares in question make up 95% of a 747-hectare government property covered by an Integrated Forest Management Agreement (IFMA) between Aldevinco and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) that was signed in June, 1992.

In fact, Aldevinco was already exercising control over the area as early as 1964 by virtue of a pasture lease agreement that was granted to it by the government.

Thus it came as a complete surprise to Aldevinco when in July, 2003 it was informed by the DENR's Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) in Region XII that an OCT issued in the name of a certain Pedro De Ramos "appeared to embrace" the parcel of land covered by the company's IFMA. This was quickly followed by the discovery of four other titles, all OCTs, issued to Excelsa Lauron, Ralderico Confesor, Julita Confesor and Romeo Confesor. The technical descriptions of each of the five OCTs covered the whole IFMA area of the company.

The LRA head office also found no record of the titles presented by the Confesor group, and, after an investigation conducted by its TFTM, it declared the OCTs as spurious.



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pitatagpuan sa...

Empleyado ng DENR, pamangkin nilikida

TUGUEGARAO CITY

- Pinabulagta ng hindi pa natukoy na mga hired killer ang isang empleyado ng Department of the Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) at 14-anyos nitong pamangkin habang sakay ng kanilang motorsiklo sa highway ng Barangay Ibulo, Baggao, Cagayan kamakalawa.

Kinilala ni Chief Insp. Darwin Urani, hepe ng PNP Baggao ang mga biktima

na sina Joshua Santua na nakatalaga sa Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office ng DENR sa Baggao at pamangkin nitong si Kenneth Portillos.

Lumalabas sa imbestigasyon, dakong alas-8:00 ng umaga nang tambangan ng tatlong suspek ang magtiyuhin at pagbabarilin ng 12 gauge na de-sabog habang binabagtas ang daan patungo sa Brgy. Centro.

Limang basyo ng bala ang natagpuan sa crime scene ng SOCO at ilang dokumento ng New People's Army.

Ayon sa pulisya, hindi nila isinasantabi ang iba pang maaaring motibo sa pamamaslang bagama't maaaring inililigaw lamang ng mga suspects ang mga imbestigador sa pamamagitan ng pagkalat ng mga papelitos ng NPA.

Raymund Catindig

BULGAR

BOSES NG MASA MATA NG BAYAN

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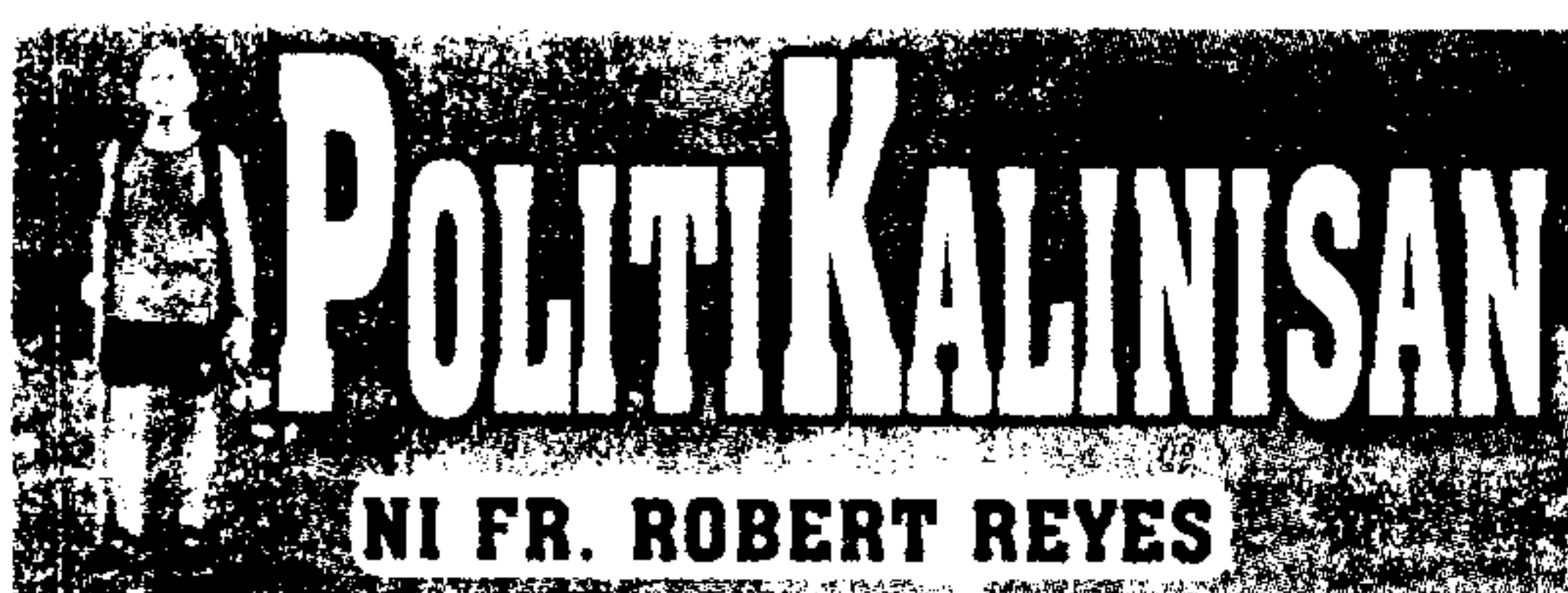
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Tungkulin ni 'Juan' na bantayan at ipagtanggol ang kalikasan kontra mapang-abusong proyekto at pamamahala!

MAIKI. Ilang ang apat na araw sa isang lugar upang makita at maranasan ang kagandahan at kayamanan nito. Apat na araw tayo sa loob ng kumbento ng isang kongregasyon ng mga madreng kontemplatibo upang pamunuan ang liturhiya ng mga Mahal na Araw mula Huwebes Santo, Biyernes Santo, Sabado de Gloria at Linggo ng Muling Pagkabuhay. Mula sa munting kapilya ng mga madre, natatanaw ang magandang Biliran Bay na ayon sa mga tagaroon ay mayaman sa mga isda at sari-saring biyayang-dagat. Dahil sa mga maraming gawain para sa liturhiya ng mga Mahal na Araw, hindi tayo nagkaroon ng panahong lapitan ang dagat at gawing bahagi ito ng pagninilay sa misteryo-paskuwal, ang buhay, paghihirap, kamatayan sa krus at muling pagkabuhay ng Panginoong HesuKristo. Hindi tayo nagkaroon ng pagkakataong pagnilayan ang koneksiyon ng mga problemang pangkapaligiran, pangkalikasan sa paghihirap at kamatayan sa krus ng ating Panginoon. Subalit, alam natin na tuluy-tuloy ang pagpako kay

Inang Kalikasan sa krus ng kasuwapangan at korupsiyon ng marami mula sa mga opisyal sa pamahalaan, mga 'di maka-kalikasan na kalakal, mga grupo at mga indibidwal. Kaya tahimik nating ipinagdasal si Inang Kalikasan habang pinagmamasdan ang luwalhati at ganda ng Biliran Bay.

At nang sumabay tayo sa mga luluwas sa Tacloban noong Linggo ng hapon, halos hindi tayo naidlip sa biyahe nang dalawang oras dahil sa kagandahan ng mga bayan ng Leyte mula Biliran hanggang Tacloban. Muling pinasalamatan natin ang Diyos. Kinabukasan, ilang minuto pa lamang pagkalipas ng ika-8 ng umaga, pinasakay na kami sa eroplanong mag-uuwi sa amin sa Maynila. Inanunsiyo ng stewardess na medyo mapapaaga ang aming lipad. Tuwang-tuwa naman ang karamihan. At siyempre, napakagandang balita na mas maagang alis at pagdating kaysa kabaligtaran nito. At nagpapasalamat din tayo dahil kailangan nating makarating agad ng Maynila para makasabay sa grupong maglalakbay tungo sa Bolinao, Pangasinan.

Bakit merong grupong maglalakbay tungo sa Bolinao, Pangasinan? Noon pang nilabanan natin ang pagpuputol ng mga matatandang puno sa "road widening" sa Manila North Road mula Binalonan hanggang Pozzorubio, nakilala na natin ang ilang mga taga-Bolinao, Pangasinan na nakikiisa sa kilos- protesta laban sa mga LGU, mga ahensiya tulad ng DENR at DPWH, mga kongresista at mga mamamayang sumusuporta rito. Hindi man nagpuputol ng puno sa Bolinao ang mga LGU; ahensiya ng pamahalaan at mga business, merong napipintong pagsulong ng isang proyektong makasisira sa isang napakahalagang bahagi ng Bolinao Bay.

Plano ng isang korporasyon at ng mayor ng Bolinao, Pangasinan na magsimula ng isang "hatchery" sa



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Tungkulin ni Juan

pinakamagandang bahagi ng Bolinao Bay, ang kilalang-kilalang Patar. Ayon sa mga tagaroon, ang tubig sa Patar ang pinakamalinis at pinakamaganda. Dahil dito, napakagandang lagyan ng hatchery na tiyak na malaking-malaki ang kikitain. Ayon kay Mayor Noli Celeste ng Bolinao, nagkaroon na ng sapat na konsultasyon sa mga karaniwang tao tungkol sa planong "hatchery" ng mga isda. Meron na ring Environmental Clearance Certificate o ECC mula DENR. At higit sa lahat ayon sa mayor, malaking-malaki ang pakinabang ng pamahalaang lokal sa naturang proyekto. Ito ay para sa "bangus fingerlings at vanamei shrimps." Magkakapatid ang mga lokal na opisyal na nagtutulak ng naturang proyekto.

Simple lang ang kilos-protestang naganap sa Bolinao, Pangasinan noong nakaraang Martes, ika-29 ng Marso 2016. Inilunsad ang Tipanang Walis at kasabay nito ang PAaNALANGIN. Naglakad ang mga tutol sa proyekto mula harapan ng Simbahang-Katoliko hanggang tanggapan ng mayor ng Bolinao. Awa ng Diyos, naroon ang mayor at tinanggap ang maliit na delegasyon sa kanyang opisina.

Binati ng mga taga-Bolinao si Mayor Arnold "Noli" Celeste. Ipinaliwanag natin ang ibig sabihin ng Tipanang Walis. "Merong dalawang kahulugan ang walis. Una, ito'y panlinis sa anumang du... sa kapaligiran.

Pangalawa, ito'y simbolo ng mabuti at mahusay na pamumuno na tulad ng walis ay bumibigkis sa mga magkakaiba at magkakahiwalay na mamamayan." Kung hindi mabuti at mahusay ang namumuno, hahatiin at paghihiwalayin nito ang mga mamamayan. Subalit, ang walis ay hindi lang para sa pisikal na dumi puwedeng gamitin. Sa puntong ito, dahan-dahang ipinatong natin sa ulo ng mayor ang walis tingting. At ganu'n na lang ang gulat ko nang kunin ng mayor ang walis-tingting at medyo pahampas na ibinagsak sa ating ulo. Kasabay nito sinabi ng mayor, "iniinsulto mo yata ako" Galit at napikon ang Mayor ng Bolinao, hindi tulad ng mayor ng Santiago, Isabela na si Mayor Joseph Tan na pangiting tinanggap ang marahang haplos ng walis sa kanyang ulo.

Nalungkot tayo sa galit at kapikunan ng mayor at sa kanyang pahampas na bagsak ng walis sa ating ulo. Mahal na Mayor Noli Celeste, hindi ko po kayo iniinsulto. Ito ay isang marahang paalala na merong karapatan ang taumbayan na magreklamo at kung kinakailangan walisin din ang mga pinunong kanilang iniluklok sa kapangyarihan. Tungkulin ng mga taga-Bolinao na bantayan at ipagtanggol ang Patar at anumang bahagi ng kalikasan sa Bolinao. Tungkulin din nilang bantayan ang bawat opisyal ng pamahalaan at karapatan nilang magreklamo at kung kinakailangang walisin din ang mga umaabuso at nagkakamali sa mga ito.

PHILIPPINE DAILY
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HEAT SEEKERS
Migratory birds are part of the scenery when tourists visit the coastal town of Bani in Pangasinan province. Bani is one of the idyllic destinations of the province.

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EDITORIAL

Climate change

THE continuing degradation of the environment and its effect on the lives and livelihood of millions of the people provide a major challenge for everybody in various parts of the world.

The situation is alarming and the adverse effects of the worsening of climate change can no longer be ignored or merely passed on as annual incidents, particularly in the Philippines.

Note that typhoons and storms hitting this impoverished but labor-exporting Southeast Asian nation have become more frequent, destructive and stronger. Every year, 20 howlers visit the country.

We, thus, commend the top leadership of the People Management Association of the Philippines-Human Resources Management Foundation, Inc. (PMAP-HRM) for its stellar role in cleaning the environment.

In fact, PMAP members, local government officials and business leaders meet on April 12-13 at the Sofitel Philippines Plaza in Pasay City to discuss climate change and global warming.

The summit on clean air and climate change will be attended by Department of Environment and Natural Resources officials and local government authorities from Cavite, Palawan and Rizal and the cities of Quezon, Pasig and San Fernando (Pampanga).

The two-day summit will discuss the adverse effects of climate change, the staggering economic losses and the emerging technologies which promise to alleviate our situation.

PMAP is tasked to craft ways and means to improve the situation of its members by educating its clients and employees on the best ways to clean the environment.

PMAP-HRM Foundation is making a difference in the way people will live and survive under these unusual times and creating the conditions to enable business and sources of livelihood to flourish.

Indeed, PMAP, in partnership with the government and other sectors of Philippine society, is committed to protect the environment.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Majority involvement to curb climate change

THE STEWARDS of Creation, a group of environmental advocates from various church institutions and denominations, calls on every advocate of productive environment and climate justice to look into the deep-seated roots of global warming and climate change. This is the only way we will be able to come up with strategic and lasting solutions. It is undeniable that the proponents of colonization and globalization, which ushered in the unregulated use of fossil fuels, timber, minerals, cheap labor along with industrialization, are the culprits behind this environmental catastrophe.

The Philippines is among the countries at the receiving end of this brutal phenomenon that has brought about extreme weather conditions, among them supertyphoons and longer droughts. In the 2016 Climate Change Vulnerability Index released by risk analysis company Verisk Maplecroft, the Philippines ranked 13th among the most climate-vulnerable countries. While an improvement from its previous eighth place, the country is still tagged as extremely vulnerable.

Crop losses and lower livestock and poultry production are expected to result from excessive heat and drought; so are the oversaturation of soil and damage to property from increased rainfall. Extreme weather conditions have greatly affected the planting cycle especially in farmlands without

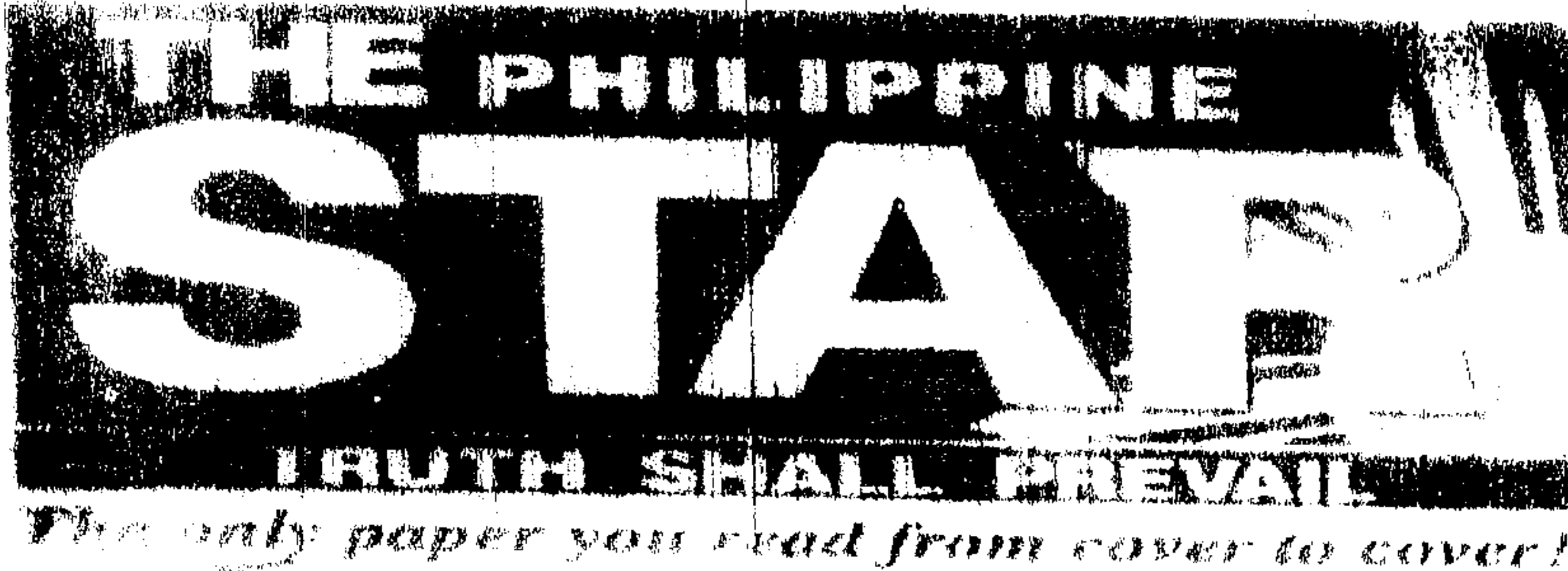
irrigation, which is the norm in many Philippine rural communities. Food security—from food production to food availability, access and control—is in jeopardy even more. With seven out of 10 peasants landless, this global phenomenon has exacerbated the hapless situation of the majority poor Filipinos.

World leaders have failed to address the root causes of climate change. After more than two decades and several climate summits, greenhouse gas emissions continue to increase because of the self-centered practices of the world's richest. Meanwhile, the poorest and most vulnerable people remain at the margins, grappling not only with an inconvenient truth but also with a harsh, life-and-death reality. But it is from their ranks that a wave of change and hope will rise—and bring to the core the dignity of life and integrity of creation.

People, rise up, speak out and take concrete actions! There is a definitive solution to global warming and climate change. It involves not only bringing the people's interests to the negotiating table but also the concomitant action of an informed majority—to effect the urgent, much-needed genuine system change.

—JOSE ARNEL AGUILAR,
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Burning mountains to the ground



a bonfire left behind by trekkers last March 26. Many of my friends share the article with no accompanying comment, perhaps finding no words to describe the destruction. But I have a few — it's murder.

I have climbed Mt. Apo twice and both occasions shared little in common. The first one was in June 2013. While weather forecasts said that the whole of Davao would experience heavy rainfall the entire week, it only poured for a few hours on our first and third days in the mountain. Not a drop of water fell from the sky on our second day, the day we climbed up Mt. Apo's summit.

Climbing out of its mossy forest at 10 a.m. and stepping into its craggy, treeless face of boulders, the veils of smoke which rose from its sulfur beds parted for a second, and one of Apo's peaks peeked through the clouds. The sight was majestic, as if gongs started sounding in our heads. Goaded on by the end in sight, our group of 13 climbers and three elf-like guides (straight from Middle Earth) furiously lunged up the boulders. We formed a crooked line as we signaled to each other which

rocks were loose and which ones gave stable footing. I felt a thunderous beating pound louder and louder in my chest as the peak appeared closer and closer.

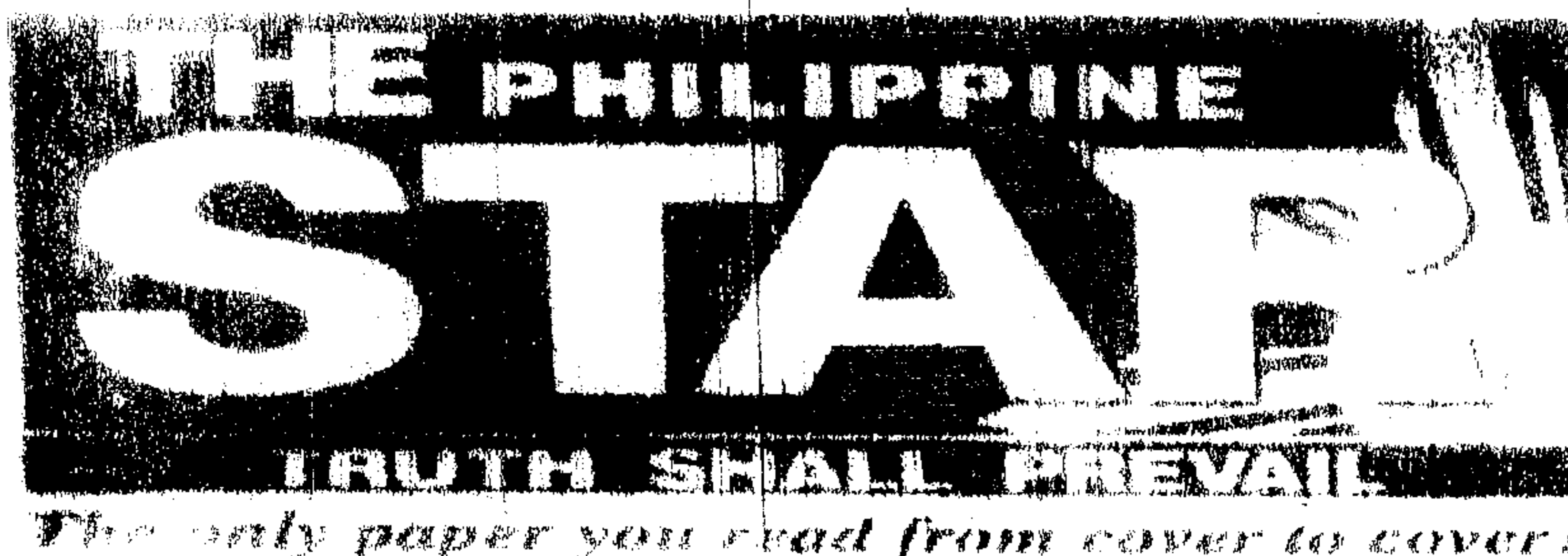
The sour smell of sulfur, which choked us whenever we breathed it in, tasted sweet in our tongues. We fit ourselves through a narrow trail on the climb, up the steep wall to Apo's main crater, balancing to keep the shrubby cliff on our right. And when we reached the summit a few hours before dusk, we finally got a chance to breathe out. Up to today, I have yet to see kinder, more sincere smiles than the ones I saw on my companions' faces at that moment. On top of our country's highest mountain, the sun perched high and clouds blanketing all the land below us, it was foolish to entertain doubts about the existence of God. The weather report was easier to discredit; we came down sunburnt the next day, for we had anticipated a rainy traverse from Digos to Kidapawan.

APO'S UNKIND SIDE

But a more unkind side of the Great Apo showed itself on my second trip

up the mountain last September 2015. While the weather was fair in Davao City, there was nary a ray of sunlight in sight throughout our trek up Apo. Each time we glanced up the heavens, we prayed for the sun to show itself. But to no avail. We were eight visitors with three guides accompanying us. When we reached the boulders, the problem of loose rocks was made tougher by the sudden gusts of wind which carried our feet mid-step. At the campsite, we could hardly pitch our tents. Drenched to my spirits, I felt my knees lock and my arms shake wildly while we attempted to lay down the flooring for our tents in the unrelenting storm. Unceremoniously, I left my more capable teammates to finish assembling our shelter and hid behind a wall which broke the wind.

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Being mountain to the ground.

(P2)

There, our guides who were also trembling handed me coffee — a cup of 3-in-1 — which tasted much better than anything I've had from Starbucks.

We went to sleep, with the wind still punishing our tent. Our hopes of ever seeing a good view at sunrise got crushed, each time the wind rumbled the tarp we had layered over our roofs. We didn't proceed to the summit the following morning even

if it was just a stone's throw away. It rained even harder, the wind was still too strong, and the fog made it impossible to see anything beyond what was right in front of us. We went down through the same route and realized how much tougher it was negotiating the boulders in reverse. Apo cared not if it killed us by tripping on a rock.

SIMILAR STORIES

I can hardly claim my experiences in Apo to be unique. I am sure that many have had similar or even more memorable experiences. Some might even tell stories with tougher, more rewarding circumstances. But what I am sure of is that on both occasions when I did climb Apo, it was I who was conquered and never the other way around. How can anyone really ever conquer a mountain when we're all just passing through? The recent unregulated spate of tour groups offering overpriced and oversized mass climbs up popular outdoor destinations has been a point of debate among mountaineers and enthusiasts alike. With social media colonizing all aspects of life, we have altogether created a digital counterpart of the great outdoors (under the wider genre of digitized



Photo by JERMAINE LOIS CHOA PECK



Mt. Apo has made me realize that nature's grandness is present even without us in the picture.
Photo by JOHN AQUINO

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THE PHILIPPINE STAR

TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

The only paper you read from cover to cover!

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Finally, mountain to the ground



Finally, at the summit of Mt. Apo.

Photo by JAMIR OCAMPO

Mt. Apo has been set on fire. It's murder.

travel) wherein users attempt to recreate the wonder of nature through pocket-sized posts which, even with (or precisely because of) the use of filters and superlatives, admittedly fail to capture the bigness of it all.

At the other end is the progress which this trend brings. To define a sweeping tourism policy is a tedious task since every locality has its own customs, culture, and threshold for travelers. Likewise, it is unfair and unrealistic to say that these lands should remain untouched or that these peoples, indigenous or not, should be kept away from the rest of the world (such is a reverse form of elitism). It is in this intersection that the beauty of environmentalism resides. Taken seriously, environmentalism props the individual out of his/her shell and requires him/her to view the problem with wider social lenses.

Environmentalism asks one to be inclusive, nuanced, and sensitive of the

livelihoods of the persons next to us and the lives of the succeeding generations. That or else accept the bleak view that all humanity must perish in order for Nature to survive. For environmentalism to be constructive, it must veer away from black and white, oversimplified conservationism and look towards sustainability. It is in doing so that we understand that some things outdoors remain the same as in the world online. We still have to educate ourselves more, to study our activities and our surroundings more, and to clean up after everything's done — to leave no trace — so that the journey becomes inward. Perhaps for the sake of striking a balance, we could consider posting photos of the outdoors in moderation, so as to keep the outdoors *outdoors*. That way, we also realize — the way Apo had made me realize — that nature's grandness is present even without us in the picture.

Tweet the author @sarhentosilly.