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IN THE NEWS

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Mines bureau orders final cancellation of 2 mining deals

THE GOVERNMENT has irrevocably canceled the Mineral Production Sharing Agreements (MPSAs) of two miners over their failure to observe reporting requirements.

A statement issued the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) Web site said the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), in orders dated March 15 and March 11, declaring as "final and executory" the cancellation of the MPSA tenement number 160-2000-V owned by Maria Cruz R. Del Gallego and MPSA 174-2002-VIII of Monark Constructors Corp., respectively.

The Philippine Mining Act of 1995 governs MPSAs, a grant of exclusive rights over a contract area with the government sharing in the gross output.

Edgar C. Madera, head of the audit section under the Mining Tenements Division of the MGB, said the cancellations stemmed from the absence of a response from the two miners after notice was served.

The DENR first issued orders to cancel both MPSAs in July 2015.

According to Mr. Madera, citing the report from MGB regional offices, the two miners

failed to observe the requirements of Executive Order No. 79 and DENR Administrative Order No. 2012-07 by not submitting documents proving their payment of mining fees and taxes, among others. Their failure allows the government to legally assume that they are non-operational.

The initial cancellation was prompted by the two companies' failure to renew their exploration permits for five years or more, according to Mr. Madera.

DENR's Memorandum Order 2010-04 states that "mineral agreements with expired explora-

tion periods of five years or more shall be canceled."

To date, out of the 10 canceled MPSAs these two are the only cases declared final and executory.

In June MPSAs held by Philippine Sunrise Marble, Inc., Panapino Mining, Inc. and GML Corp. were canceled. In the following month, the DENR also revoked the MPSAs of Vulcan Materials Corp. and Ibalong Resources and Development Corp., as well as the MPSA of an individual, Daprosa C. Perez.

Earlier this year, an MPSA held by the individual Concordia R. Llave was also canceled. — **Janina C. Lim**

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Banahaw fire

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna — A grass fire believed caused by "kaingeros" (farmers into stubble burning) hit a portion of the Mt. Banahaw-San Cristobal Protected Landscape (MBSCPL) area in Nagcarlan, this province, the other night. Ms. Sally Pangan, protected area supervisor (PASU) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Region 4, said that based on the information sent to her by a village chief of the town, the fire broke out at 10 p.m. and was put out at 11 p.m. last Wednesday. She said park rangers were still conducting an ocular inspection of the area to determine the damage. (Danny J. Estacio)

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Aboitiz aids 390 firefighters on Mt. Apo

DAVAO-BASED companies of the Aboitiz Group recently heeded the call for assistance in fighting the massive blaze threatening Mt. Apo at present.

In coordination with the Aboitiz Foundation, the corporate social responsibility arm of the Aboitiz Group, four Aboitiz business units—Hedcor Sibulan, Therma South, Davao Light, and APO Agua—donated nearly P350,000 worth of assorted food items and essential firefighting supplies.

A total of 390 firefighters from key organizations benefited from the assistance.

"In good times or bad, the Aboitiz Group has always been committed to sustainability, through the right long-term decisions that help build a truly sustainable enterprise we can entrust to future generations," said Sonny Carpio, Aboitiz Foundation executive vice president and chief operating officer.



Local volunteer firefighters, supported and assisted by Aboitiz companies Hedcor Sibulan, Therma South, Davao Light, and APO Agua, ascend Mt. Apo.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Baguio congressman indicted for tree cutting in forest reserve

By Marlon Ramos

BAGUIO City Rep. Nicasio Aliping Jr. and three others have been indicted in the Sandiganbayan for the illegal cutting of trees inside a forest reserve and watershed in Tuba town,

Benguet province.

"It is clear as daylight that the cutting of trees and other earth-moving activities were done without authority," read a statement issued by the Office of the Ombudsman on Wednesday.

"Aliping's use of the three backhoes/heavy equipment in his earth-moving activity is undisputed," it added.

Citing Presidential Decree No. 705, or the Revised Forestry Code, the Ombudsman said it is unlawful to "cut,

gather, collect, remove timber or other forest products from forest land without any authority."

No permits

Besides Aliping, charged as private respondents were

businessmen William Go, Bernard Capuyan and Romeo Aquino.

"Aliping admitted that no permits had been issued for the earth-moving activities and no documents were presented showing ownership over the

property," the Ombudsman said.

In its investigation, the Environmental Ombudsman said Aliping and his co-accused ordered the uprooting of 293 pine trees in a forest reserve area in Mt. Santo Tomas using heavy equipment.



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Baguio lawmaker faces raps for illegal cutting of trees

The Office of the Ombudsman has ordered the filing of charges against Baguio City Rep. Nicasio Aliping Jr. over the illegal cutting of trees and destruction of a forest in Barangay Sto. Tomas in Tuba, Benguet two years ago.

Aliping and construction

company owners William Go, Bernard Capuyan and Romeo Aquino will be indicted for violation of the Revised Forestry Code, the ombudsman said on Wednesday.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources said heavy

equipment were used during the development of Aliping's property, uprooting over 700 pine trees around it. The DENR placed the damage at P10.3 million.

"Mt. Sto. Tomas was declared a forest reserve... it cannot be converted into private property," the DENR said.

The ombudsman said Aliping admitted during the probe that the DENR did not issue a permit for the cutting of trees and earth-moving activities. Aliping also did not present any document to prove his ownership of the property.

It is illegal for any person to cut, gather, collect and

remove timber from the forest without authority from the DENR, the ombudsman said.

Aliping, who is running for reelection under the Liberal Party, said he would "let the law take its course."

— Michael Punongbayan, Artemio Dumlao

HATAW!

D'YARYO NG BAYAN

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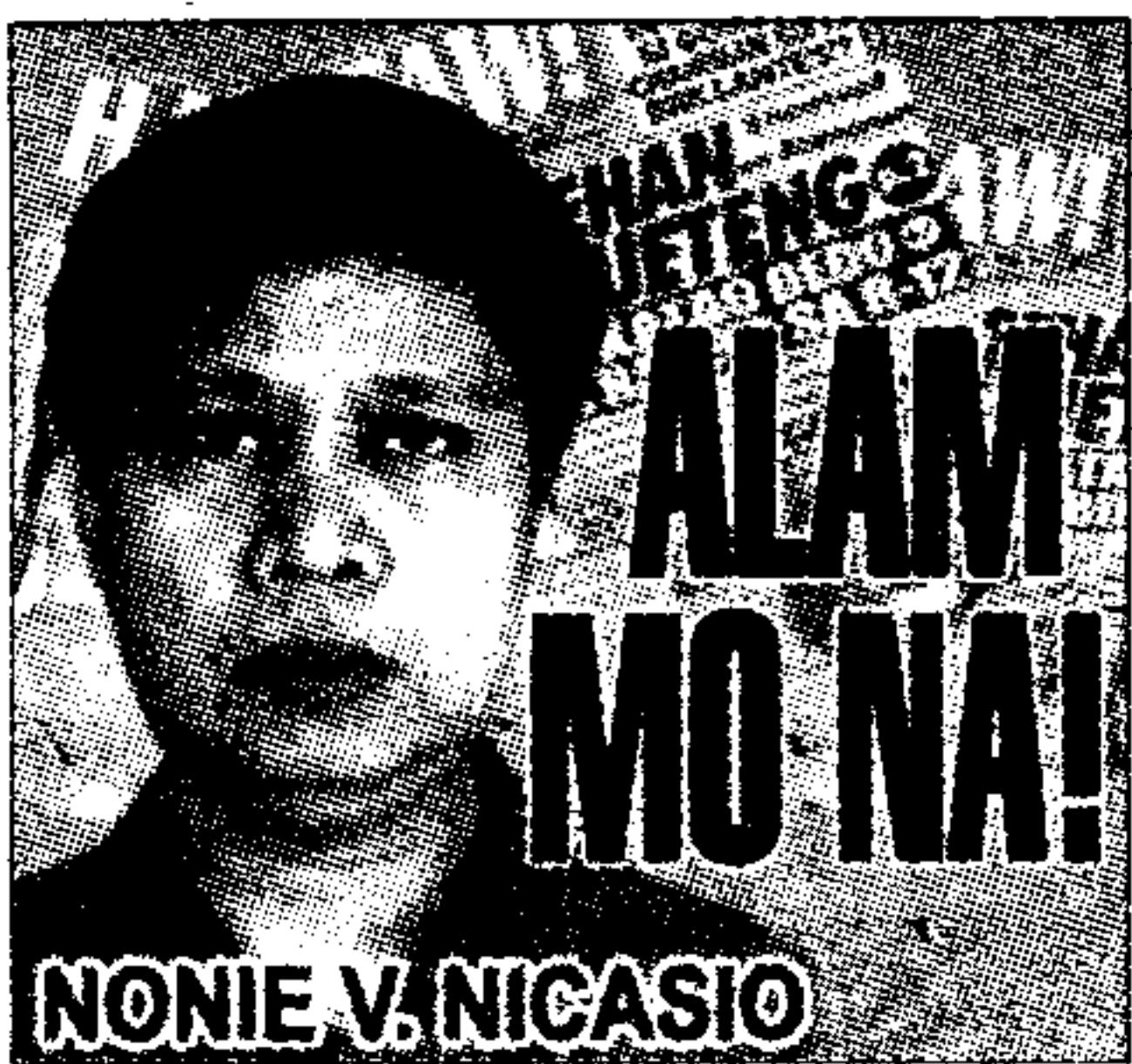
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Earthday Jam sa April 23, pangungunahan ni Lou Bonnevie



NAGING instru-
mento ang Hollywood actor na si Leonardo DiCaprio para simulan ni Lou Bonnevie ang Earthday Jam. Ang yearly event ay nasa 16th year na

ngayon at gaganapin ito sa April 23, 2016 sa SM by the Bay, Mall of Asia.

Ang naturang musical marathon ay bahagi ng pagdiriwang ng international Earth Day. Mag-sisimula ito ng 5 p.m. at lalahukan ng higit 100 musicians at artists sa walong oras na kakaibang musical journey na naglalayong maging aware o mulat ang lahat sa pagbibigay halaga sa kalikasan.

"Nagsimula ito nang napakinggan ko si Leonardo DiCaprio na he was talking and saying something at the National Park in the States. Kaya sabi ko, 'Ano kaya kung totoo ang taong ito?' He was so popular in Titanic and here he is, speaking about taking care of mother earth," wika ni Lou na siyang presidente ng Earthday Jam Foundation.

Ipinahayag din ng singer ang kagalakan na ganito na katagal umabot ang kanilang advocacy para sa pagmamahal sa kalikasan. "Ito ay surprise sa buhay ko and nakakatuwa lang na um-



abot na tayo sa 16 years na hindi man lang natin napapansin ito.

"Nasabihan lang ako ng international website na kami iyong longest running in the world sa ganitong endeavor na free to the public. Kasi karamihan po, even in the States, they don't do it every year at wala na iyong sustaining concert na ginagawang ganyan, na talagang environmental.

"Ginagawa namin ito para mas maraming tao ang maging witness and be part of this momentous event. It's not just the music ngunit ang mensahe na dapat tayong magkaisa at magtulong-

abot na tayo sa 16 years na hindi man lang natin napapansin ito.

"Nasabihan lang ako ng international website na kami iyong longest running in the world sa ganitong endeavor na free to the public. Kasi karamihan po,

tulong upang gamutin ang ating Mother Earth.

"We have invited resource speakers who will discuss the most pressing environmental issues today like climate change mitigation. We have also prepared informative and witty video productions courtesy of the event's creative director Toto Gentica. These videos will be playing all throughout the concert and will include helpful Earth Day tips," saad pa niya.

Ang Earthday Jam ay sa pakikipagtulungan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources at SM By the Bay, Mall of Asia. Sinusuportahan din ito ng Earthday Network Philippines, The National Solid Waste Commission, First Gen Corporation, Honda Cars Philippines, Peace and Equity Foundation, Gerry's Grill, 888 Street Electric Vehicles, Jack Daniels, Dickies, Monster Energy Drink, Kuki's Empanada, at David Salon.

Bukod kay Lou, tampok dito sina Barbie Almalbis, Kitchie Nadal, Sitti, Nina, Noel Cabangon, Abra, Basti Artadi, 6 Cycles Minds, Slapshock, The Chonkeys, Kjwan, Mayonnaise, Gracenote, Brigada, Philia, Flying Ipis, Absolute Play at iba pa. Host dito sina Alvin Anson, Pam Nieva, Phoebe Walker, at Midi G.

Ang overall director ay si Toto Gentica. Para sa karagdagang impormasyon, i-like sa Facebook ang Earthday Jam Foundation o tumawag sa 897-6991.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

e-Vehicle sector eyes P5-B investments in 5 yrs

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE ELECTRIC vehicle industry in the Philippines may expand investments five-fold to about P5 billion in five years.

Electric Vehicle Association of the Philippines (Evap) president Rommel Juan said

in a briefing that it was possible to achieve that investment size in five years since one member, Japanese-led Bemac Electric Transportation Philippines Inc., had already made significant investments.

"We should reach for the stars. If we miss, we're still very high—but I think investments will be similar to Bemac. That's what we want, from the very start of the EV summit, we wanted to bring in foreign investors to the Philippines to help catalyze the industry's (development) and help us with technology," Juan said.

Bemac vice president Yvonne Palomar-Castro said the company had invested about P500 million in its Philippine operations and might infuse another P1 billion into the country to produce electric tricycles (e-trike) to be deployed under the e-vehicle program of the Department of Energy (DOE) and Asian Development Bank (ADB).

E-jeepney rollouts, e-trike deployments, and putting up e-charging stations are among the major components of the e-vehicle

roadmap that Evap is pushing. The industry group has crafted the roadmap and is updating it in view of new developments in the industry. The most significant of which was the awarding of a supply contract for 3,000 units of e-tricycles (e-trikes) under the e-vehicle program of the DOE and ADB.

After two tenders and two rounds of price negotiations in four years, Uzushio Electric Co. of Japan (through subsidiary Bemac) clinched a \$30-million contract to produce, deliver and service the first batch of e-trikes under the ADB-funded "Market Transformation through the Introduction of Energy-Efficient Electric Vehicles Project," which targets local government units (LGUs) nationwide. The total amount of e-trikes to be auctioned off under the DOE-ADB e-trike program is 100,000.

Uzushio intends to complete production of the first 1,200 units by mid-year and another 1,800 units to be produced later. Bemac will deliver the units to designated beneficiaries under the DOE-ADB program.

Juan said he expected other e-vehicle firms to follow Bemac's example. To further develop the e-vehicle market, players have worked with banks and other institutions to open up financing for e-vehicles, Juan said.

"I am proud to announce that Green EV financing packages are available from Development Bank of the Philippines, Landbank, Orix Metro, CARD, Negosyong Pinoy and Proximity Funding, among others... DBP has just granted a green loan to Tojo Motors," Juan said.

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A broader look at today's business

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Groups to presidential wannabes: Bare stand on mining, environmental issues

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

✉ @jonlmayuga

ANTIMINING groups on Thursday urged presidential candidates to take a "progressive stand" on mining, which they blamed for the massive environmental destruction and human-rights abuses allegedly committed against residents in host communities.

According to Alyansa Tigil Mina (ATM), presidential candidates in the May elections should declare their positions on proposed changes in the mining policy, starting with the repeal of Republic Act 7942, or the Philippine Mining Act of 1995, the revocation of Executive Order 270-A on the aggressive promotion of the mining industry, and the declaration of a moratorium on all mining operations, while a new policy is being crafted for implementation.

ATM is a coalition of mining-affected communities, non-governmental organizations, faith-based groups and academic institutions challenging the

promotion of destructive large-scale mining in the Philippines. It claims to have a network of 130 members.

A core member of the Green Thumb Coalition, a national initiative calling for an environmental agenda in the candidates' platforms and future program of government, ATM demands that the candidates respond to the scorecards indicating their positions on certain environmental issues, including mining, biodiversity conservation and climate change.

ATM calls for a "green candidate" to lead the Philippines in the next six years. A "green president", according to ATM, should support the passage of a new mining law, embodied in the Alternative Minerals Management Bill; expand and implement the "No-Go Zones" map of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and Mining Industry Coordinating Council; and address human-rights violations and abuse in mining-affected areas. The green president should also resolve land-use conflicts between mining,

ancestral domains, protected areas, geohazard areas and watersheds; support local autonomy on mining issues; and increase transparency in the mining industry.

"We want a new government that will have human rights and environment on its agenda and that will cater to the peoples' needs versus corporate agenda. We want leaders who will echo our voice, as we demand justice for the ravage and plunder of our lands, the ecological destruction and disasters, the killings and human-rights violations," the group said.

Meanwhile, the group Bantay Kita said national and local candidates are benefiting from mining through campaign contributions, either in cash or in kind.

Cielo Magno, national coordinator of Bantay Kita, said of Palace candidates even use a helicopter and another is holding office for his campaign owned by a mining company.

She said the Commission on Elections should look into the involvement of campaign contributors in these highly

extractive industries, noting that once elected into office, these candidates will be beholden to their supporters.

Bantay Kita sits as a member of the Philippine Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, which promotes financial transparency and tax gains of government, national and local, and their host communities in the mining, coal, oil and gas

industries, said receiving campaign contributions whether in cash or in kind is prohibited by law.

These candidates, she said, should be warned that penalty for violation of the election code pertaining to campaign contribution is perpetual disqualification from the possibility of holding public office.

Mining companies supporting

candidates during election is more pronounced at the local level, Magno said.

Magno said Bantay Kita intends to dig into the campaign contributions received by candidates and file appropriate charges against those who solicit or receive support from corporations.

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Mining bankrolling Duterte's campaign

By Charlie V. Manalo

PDP-Laban standard-bearer Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte has been found lying again on his claim of refusing to accept any funding offers from corporations because he has said too many times that he doesn't want to be beholden to corporations and companies that will then be seeking favors by way of

government contracts should he become the next president.

He has also lied about his not being linked to the Davao Death Squad despite the fact that it is on record that stated that it is true he is the DDS, a vigilante group that is into extra-judicial killings.

Now another lie has been unearthed on Duterte claims.

There have been pictures of the summary killings of at least three youth who were knifed to death in Davao City.

Also, Duterte's claim of Davao City being the safest city in the Philippines has been found to have been a total lie, as blotter records show that the most murders and homicide cases, as well as rape, have been committed in Davao City. **Turn to page 3**

Mining bankrolling Duterte's campaign

From page 1

This time around, the lie of his not accepting any company that wants to fund his campaign has been bared.

The Davao Mayor has been attacking a mining firm for purportedly bankrolling the campaign headquarters of rival Mar Roxas, yet he himself has been getting huge financial support from at least eight companies that have been exploiting Mindanao's natural resources.

This was bared by Liberal Party (LP) spokesman and Caloocan City Rep. Edgar Erice who said Duterte should be candid about his dealings with businessmen Manuel Zamora and Dennis Uy, top officers of several mining firms operating in Mindanao.

Eric noted that Duterte has been boasting that he will not accept receive financial contributions from big business in order to avoid being beholden to them if he wins the presidency.

Duterte has also launched a media offensive against Roxas for allegedly accepting material and financial support from San Roque Metals Inc. which is engaged in nickel mining in parts of Mindanao.

In a series of press statements issued at the start of the campaign period, Duterte zeroed in his attacks at Roxas for using SRMI resources, including a helicopter, for his provincial sorties.

However, information reaching the LP camp showed that Zamora, founder of the Mindanao-based mining firm Nickel Asia Corporation, has been helping Duterte with his media campaign.

Zamora has been into mining in Mindanao since 1969. He founded the Rio Tuba Nickel Mining Corporation and the Taganito Mining Corporation and serves as director of Hinatuan Mining Corporation and Cagadianao Mining Corporation.

Zamora, it was gathered, has tapped a public relations group through Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano, Duterte's running mate, to take care of Duterte's media campaign operations.

In fact, Lito Banayo, a close associate of Zamora, has been tapped to be part of the campaign strategy operations of the Duterte-Cayetano camp.

Duterte's spokesman Peter Law

has admitted that media and public relations operations are indeed under the domain of Cayetano's group. Incidentally, it was also Zamora's aircraft and funding that Cayetano utilized to demolish Vice President Jojo Binay's electoral chances by holding over 21 Senate hearings that lasted over a year, and in aid of election.

Cayetano, along with his cohorts, Senators Pimentel and Antonio Trillanes, were all part of the demolition by perception job against Binay.

Eric said he also received reports that Uy is among the financial backers of Duterte.

Uy is a member of the board of directors of mining firms Apex, Bulbscor and Blucor, all engaged in diamond and silver mining operations in many parts of Mindanao.

Duterte has been quoted in the media as having urged his campaign and finance managers to be discerning about contributors to his campaign for Malacatang and told them not to accept donations from people or groups doing business with the government.

Said the report: "Duterte, who claimed he did not have the financial firepower of his rivals for the presidency, said accepting contributions from such people and companies would compromise his independence in decision-making as President.

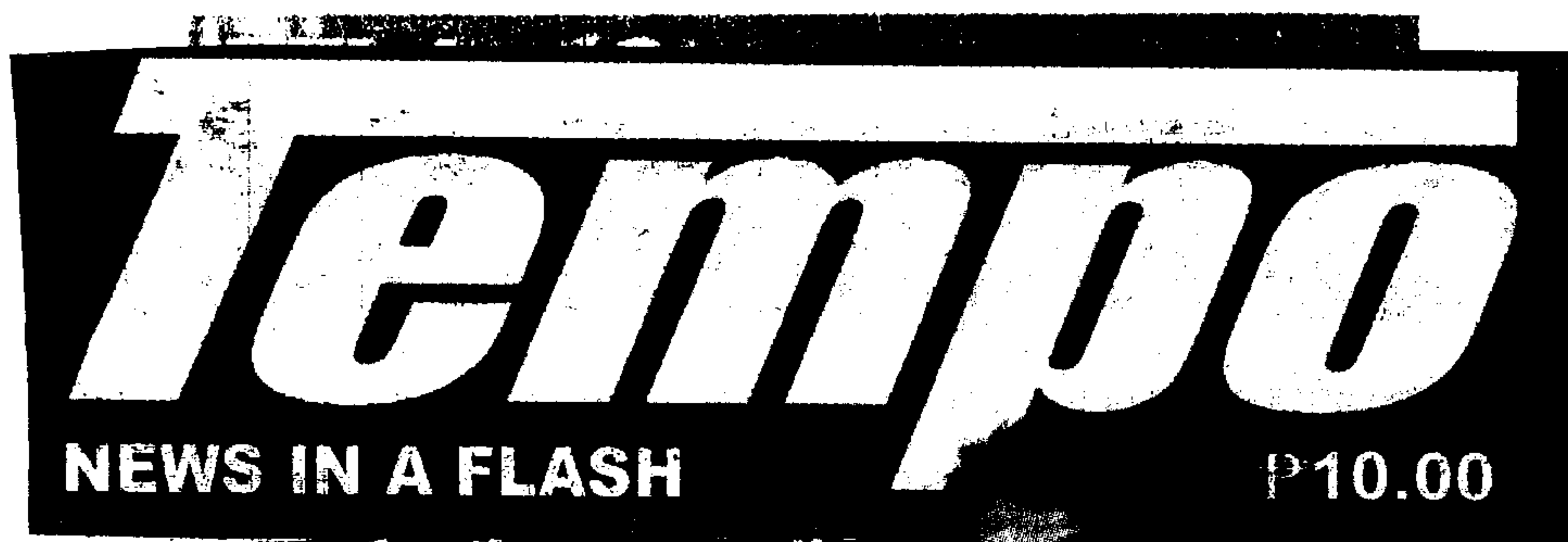
"I will not accept money and contributions from people and groups who have transactions with the government because I will have to pay them back with favors when I become President," Duterte told a gathering of campaign leaders and supporters here.

"He said he was publicizing my campaign for instructing my campaign finance committee members to ensure that campaign contributions come only from people or groups with no vested interests."

He philosophized his stand: "If I compromise myself, I'd not be President. I don't want to have a debt of gratitude. The presidency is not mine to give."

Duterte said he never accepted money from people with vested interests in the 23 years that he had been a politician.

It appears that he does not believe in the time of his campaign.



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Duterte told to bare ties to mining firms

Assailed for allegedly concealing to the public the real score about Davao City's peace and order status, PDP-Laban presidential bet Mayor Rodrigo R. Duterte is facing allegations of misleading Filipinos about his relationship with key officials of at least eight companies that have been exploiting Mindanao's mining resources.

In a text message, Liberal Party stalwart and Caloocan City Rep. Edgar Erice disclosed that Duterte's presidential campaign is being partially bankrolled by Dennis Uy, a top official of several mining firms operating in Mindanao.

Erice said Duterte should also reveal to the public his relationship with nickel mining magnate Manny Zamora, brother of House Minority Leader Ronaldo Zamora.

In many of his public speeches, Duterte invariably declares his abhorrence to mining operations in Mindanao, specifically accusing presidential rival former Interior and Local Government Secretary Manuel A. Roxas II of the Liberal

Party of having benefitted from the SR Metals Inc. which is engaged in nickel mining in huge areas in Mindanao.

The tough talking Davao City mayor has also been boasting of Davao City's peace and order situation under his leadership.

However, the camps of presidential rival Vice President Jejomar Binay and Roxas have exposed such claims to be false.

Erice said Duterte should reveal to the public his relationship with Uy and Zamora. "Yes, dapat sabihin ni Duterte kung mayroon mga mining companies na sumusuporta sa kandidatura niya," said Erice.

"I know that Dennis Uy of Phoenix is bankrolling Duterte's campaign. He is into mining at Diwalwal," added the LP spokesman.

Erice noted that Duterte has been boasting that he will not receive financial contributions from big business in order to avoid being beholden to them if he wins the presidency. **(Ben R. Rosario)**

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Paglilinis ng mga estero sa QC, pinasimulan na

Sinimulan na ng Quezon City government ang paglilinis sa lahat ng waterways laluna ng mga ilog, creeks at malalaking kanal bilang paghahanda sa pagpasok ng tag-ulan sa Hunyo.

Ayon kay Quezon City engineering department chief Engineer Joselito Cabungcal, sinimulan ang de-clogging at desilting operations sa drainage channels sa may Araneta creek sa District I gayundin ang pagsasagawa ng drainage improvement plan sa distrito na sakop ang Mariblo creek, Matalahib creek, Culiati river, San Francisco river, Tanguet creek, Balaba creek, Bayan creek, Katipunan creek, Dario creek, at Pasong Tamo creek.

Sa district II ay naisagawa naman ang drainage improvement plan para sa Tullahan river na tatagos sa North Fairview, Sta. Lucia, Sta. Monica, Gulod, Nagkaisang Nayan at San Bartolome.

Isasagawa naman sa district III ang pag-

lilinis ng estero sa may Barangay East Kamias at Tagumpay habang sa District IV ay sa may Campupot creek na tatagos sa San Juan river, Aurora Boulevard bridge at Lagarian creek.

Sinabi ni Cabungcal na mahigit sa 20 waterways sa QC ang sasakupin ng malawakang clean-up drive upang maibsan ang mga pagbaha laluna kung may malakas na pag-uulan.

Bukod anyan sa clean-up operation, ang engineering department sa pamamagitan ng maintenance division ay magsasagawa ng malawakang drainage de-clogging operation sa kahabaan ng mga major city streets sa lunsod.

Kaugnay nito, nanawagan din si Cabungcal sa mga opisyal ng 142 barangays na magsagawa din ng sariling clean-up drive sa nasasakupang komunidad upang mapangalagaan ang kapakanan ng mga tao sa kani-kanilang lugar laluna tuwing rainy season. (Angie dela Cruz)

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Enforce antilittering law in Alabang CBD

"AYAW NAMIN iuwi ang basura dahil madumi at puro basura na sa amin. Pumupunta kami dito para mag bonding dahil malinis at sariwa ang hangin (We don't want to bring our trash with us because our place is dirty and already full of garbage. We come here to bond because it's clean and the air is fresh)."

This was the answer I got after suggesting to a family that they bring their trash with them in the absence of garbage cans and "No Littering" signs in the area. They were walking away from where they just had a picnic under an Acacia tree and they were leaving behind their trash—fast-food cardboard, plastic, leftover rice and chicken bones, etc.—strewn on the grass and a child's disposable diaper which they had stuffed into a hole of the tree, like it was nobody's business.

With two fast-food establishments across the street, the closed-off sections and streets of the mixed-use residential and commercial development I live in have become a regular "dining place" for families, groups or individuals that prefer to eat out. With its tree-lined streets, mini forest, good bird population, streams, flowering shrubs and natural landscaping, the place is arguably one of the few remaining beautiful green spaces in Muntinlupa. An increasing number of families, runners, senior citizens, bikers, joggers and dog owners come to the place daily, simply because there is no other like it in that section of Metro Manila, which is open and free for the public to use. It has virtually become the Luneta of the South.

Unfortunately, it is also a place where people

feel free to just leave their garbage anywhere they like. Underneath the trees and parking areas are littered with cigarette butts. Empty plastic bottles of water, soft drink and energy drink are strewn all over the grass fields. Fast-food wrappers, paper bags, tin cans, disposable food containers mix with plants or are scattered about the streets.

Sadly, until now there is no indication of any intent to instill discipline among the users of the place so that they can, nay, will help to keep the place and its surroundings clean and protect the natural environment. There are only a few small garbage bins on the main roads, clearly not enough to keep up with the amount of trash generated every few hours. Antilittering laws are not enforced and no solid waste management policies have been laid down either.

Despite the best efforts of the estate's management, security force and street sweepers, it is apparent that by themselves they cannot keep the place clean or raise the public's level of awareness about proper garbage disposal; this they can do only with the cooperation of the fast-food establishments.

Together with the estate's management, they can begin with a strong antilittering campaign aimed at changing the people's behavior and attitude so that they will make a conscious effort to properly dispose of their garbage.

April is Earth Month. A good time to motivate adults and children to be more responsible in the disposal of garbage.

—ROSS HARPER ALONSO,
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CDC reiterates 'no plastic, styro' policy to stakeholders

CLARK authorities have reiterated to employees, locators and residents of the Freeport on the implementation of no plastics and polystyrene here.

Rogelio Magat, manager, Environment Permits Department of Clark Development Corp. (CDC-EPD) said the state-run firm will be implementing guidelines prohibiting, regulating and prescribing certain usage of plastics and Styrofoam (polystyrene) on April 22.

"CDC promotes biodegradable plastics and environment-friendly alternatives to plastics and polystyrene such as corn-based, fiber, pulp, biodegradable polystyrene, reusable food containers, and other similar materials," Magat said.

Based on the circular, a plastic bag commonly known as sando bags maybe used as primary packaging material only for wet goods. Use of plastic bag shall be optimized based in the size and volume of wet goods.

Wet goods that are not pre-contained in plastic wraps, pouches, bag and the like as part of the product's packaging materials such as frozen products shall not be contained further in the plastic.

All concerned stakeholders are enjoined to use eco bags or reusable bags whenever applicable and the general public shall bring appropriate bags or containers when going for a shopping and to the market, the circular stated.

Biodegradable plastics and polystyrene are allowed. Still, a certification from the manufacturer of the said materials and sample product must be submitted to CDC-EPD for approval prior to its use.

Likewise, original packaging of goods delivered to different establishments. Repacking the goods using plastics is prohibited.

Also regulated are plastics and plastics products that form part of a product such as from the semiconductor and electronic facilities.

Styrofoam used as ice chest, insulators and/or for any similar purposes may be allowed. However, Styrofoam after its usage, will be classified as special wastes which requires proper disposal.

CDC highly recommends the use of alternative packing materials such as used papers, old newspapers and banana leaves.

CDC-EPD will monitor the smooth and effective implementation of the circular.

For more information, comments and suggestions; please visit CDC-EPD at 2/F building 2127 CDC Corporate Center, CP Garcia Street or call at (045) 499 1137 to 38.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

'Lead-free paint a must for 2016 Brigada Eskwela'

By MERLINA HERNANDO-MALIPOT

The Department of Education (DepEd) was urged by a pro-environment group to ensure that only lead-free paints are used in sprucing up school buildings nationwide under the annual 'Brigada Eskwela' program.

Through a letter sent to Education Secretary Armin Luistro, the EcoWaste Coalition urged DepEd to issue a Department Order that will make it "obligatory for schools to use only lead-free paints."

EcoWaste Coalition coordinator Aileen Lucero said that the group is counting on Luistro's support "to reduce, if not eliminate, major sources of lead pollution in children's environment such as lead-containing paint and dust."

Lead, she added, "is hazardous to health, it is particularly harmful for a child's developing brain and body."

The group's vigorous drive towards lead-safe schools is in anticipation of the phase-out of lead-containing architectural, decorative and household paints by January 1, 2017 based on

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Administrative Order 2013-24.

Lucero said that while the phase-out will only take effect in January next year, "we find it extremely important that all schools take the deliberate decision now not to use lead-containing paints and ensure a lead-safe school environment for healthy and bright children."

The DENR directive, EcoWaste hoped, "will be released soon" to serve as guidance for the schools and their community of donors and supporters for the Brigada Eskwela.

This year, the Brigada is scheduled from May 30 to June 4.

EcoWaste said it hopes that schools use only lead-free coatings for painting and/or repainting school structures and fixtures (e.g., buildings, classrooms, offices, windows, doors and gates), amenities (e.g., libraries, laboratories, canteens, clinics, covered courts and playgrounds), furniture (e.g., chairs, tables and cabinets) and learning materials (e.g., blackboards and teaching aids, including school supplies and toys).

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LRT operator inks deal on battery, oil disposal

THE LIGHT Rail Manila Corporation (LRMC), operator of LRT-1, recently forged a partnership with ABS-CBN Lingkod Kapamilya Foundation Inc. (LKFI) in an effort to decrease its environmental footprint through the latter's Bantay Baterya and Bantay Langis projects.

In a signing event held at the Eugenio Lopez Jr. Communications Center, top officials of LRMC and ABS-CBN LKFI, and partners formally sealed the agreement which will facilitate the donation of LRMC's used oil and batteries to the foundation. ABS-CBN LKFI, through its partners Motolite and Genetron, will then handle the proper treatment and recycling

of used batteries and oils, the proceeds of which will directly go to ABS-CBN LKFI projects.

"Our mandate is to safely transport commuters and while we are doing that, we'd also like to create the least impact on the environment as possible. We partnered with ABS-CBN LKFI to ensure our used oil and batteries are properly handled and used to help the worthy causes that the foundation supports," said LRMC president and CEO Jesus P. Francisco.

"We are privileged to be involved in protecting the environment and helping the Foundation's causes through this partnership," Francisco added.

Among the projects that will

benefit from the partnership are ABS-CBN's LKFI's Bantay Kalikasan, which tackles environmental protection; Bantay Bata 163, which looks after the welfare of Filipino children; and Sagip Kapamilya, which serves as the foundation's arm for emergency humanitarian aid.

ABS-CBN LKFI managing director Susan Afan said: "This partnership with LRMC will greatly help in fueling the work we do on the ground. It is heartwarming to have companies like LRMC put to fore the cause of protecting the environment by partnering with us in our Bantay Baterya and Bantay Langis projects. We thank LRMC and all our partners for

their trust and support to the foundation."

Bantay Baterya and Bantay Langis are initiatives that aim to address the threat posed by used lead-acid batteries and untreated used oil to humans and the environment. Launched in 2000 and 2007 respectively, Bantay Baterya and Bantay Langis has since struck partnerships with numerous companies to promote the proper handling and treatment of these regulated wastes. To date, Bantay Baterya has collected over 2 million kilograms of lead-acid batteries while Bantay Langis has recovered 50,000 liters of used oil from donor companies.

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A broader look at today's business

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Evap urges govt to draw up 'more definitive' road map for e-vehicle use

BY LENIE LECTURA

🐦 @llectura

THE Electric Vehicle Association of the Philippines (Evap) on Thursday urged the government to formulate the standards for electric vehicles (EVs), including vehicle parts, as well as standards for testing.

"Maybe they could [also] start putting in place testing facilities and manpower-training centers," said Evap President Rommel Juan during the Fifth Philippine Electric Vehicle Summit at the Manila

Electric Co. (Meralco).

The group said it continues to drum up attention for foreign EV players and investors "to give our domestic EV industry a long, hard look."

"We needed to build production capacities and increase our level of technology. This is why we encouraged technical tie-ups and joint ventures with foreign partners. We found that for us to really sell EVs for mass-transport application, we need to offer not just electric vehicles but a complete mass-transport solution package," said Juan, refer-

ring to EV battery-charging and swapping stations.

The group, likewise, reiterated that it is strongly pushing for the approval of the Alternative Fuel Vehicle Incentive bill in both houses of Congress that will grant fiscal and nonfiscal incentives for local EV industry players.

Moreover, the Evap also urged the government to come up with a more definitive EV road map; find cheaper and easier access to financing for capital expenditure, operational expenses and retail sales; to seriously pursue the ap-

plication of newer technologies, including batteries and charging stations, among others.

"Slowly but surely, the pieces of the puzzle are falling into place. And this gives us more reason to be more optimistic about the year and years ahead," Juan said.

"This year it is time to raise the bar and prepare for Asean integration with the theme "Investing in the Electric Vehicle Industry Towards Sustainable and Closer Regional Economic Integration. It is time to up the ante, time to put our money where our mouths are," he added.

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Discovering the wonders of PH on bicycles

FRENCH couple Fabrice and Celine Garlenque, along with their three children, Titouane, Amielle and Fantine, discovered the beauty of the Philippines, its people and culture as they visited some of the fantastic destinations in the country - on bicycles.

Well-traveled, the Garlenques have traveled around Europe, Australia and Asia but they were smitten by the Philippines' natural beauty and unique customs. According to them, their trip to the Philippines was not comparable to anything they have ever experienced before.

Their biking adventure started at Romblon's largest island, Tablas. The Garlenques then biked around the islands of Marinduque and Mindoro and were awed by spectacular mountains, alluring caves and breathtaking beaches.

Riding their own special bikes made it easier for them to enjoy nature up close. It also allowed them to interact with the locals and experience a taste of rural life. "There is a huge diversity of things that can be seen and experienced in the Philippines," noted Celine. "Filipinos are very friendly towards tourists. It is authentic and inherent among the people."

The Garlenques were able to experience many firsts such as riding a "*bangka*" (an outrigger boat) and bathing at a communal water source or '*poso*'. The children also got to climb coconut trees to pick the fruits themselves, a practice common in the country's provinces.

They were also amused by local delicacies such as quail eggs, which are eaten as snacks, and noted how sweet and fresh fruits like bananas, papayas and mangoes, were. Above all, they were delighted to eating rice, the staple food of Filipinos, for breakfast, lunch and dinner paired with assortment of viands.

The last leg of their three-week holiday was a visit to Intramuros in the city of Manila. Instead of using their custom bicycles, they rode around the walled city on bamboo bikes to get a glimpse of the country's history during the Spanish regime still preserved in the midst of the urbanized capital of the country. Their trip to Intramuros included stops at Casa Manila, the plaza of San Agustin Church, Puerta Real, Plaza Roma and Fort Santiago.

"With so many things to see and experience, we will definitely come back. We've only been to three islands and there are more than 7,000 islands to explore. In fact, we have to come back many times!" shared Fabrice. For their next visit, they are looking forward to explore more of Romblon and a visit to Palawan.

The Garlenque family is only one of the millions of tourists who are continuously impressed by the vast natural wonders of the Philippines, and oftentimes, their experience of the Filipinos' unique brand of hospitality makes them want to visit the Philippines again and again.

To find out more of the beauty and splendor of the Philippines, visit www.tpb.gov.ph and www.itsmorefuninthe-philippines.com.

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Drought to linger even after El Niño, water expert warns

By Estrella Torres

AN AUSTRALIAN expert on water management has warned that the the Philippines is at risk of massive water shortage even after the El Niño phenomenon passes because of inadequate policies to govern water use in the face of expanding roads, housing projects, malls and other infrastructure.

Prof. Stuart White, director of Institute for Sustainable Futures of the University of Technology Sydney said the Philippines needs to step up policy measures to mitigate the impact of drought as well as balance water supply and demand to meet infrastructure development.

Manage supply, demand

Cities and provinces will have to live with drought beyond El Niño because of the lack of a water demand management policy, he said at the USAID (United States Agency for International Development) forum on water demand management held at the Marco Polo Hotel in Mandaluyong.

"Increase in water use as a result of development will put extra pressure on water supply in the sewerage system," White explained at the sidelines of the water forum.

Dr. White said Australia's drought was similar to that of the Philippines. He shared that Canberra has adopted a 10-year plan to mitigate water shortage and the impact of drought. So far, it has resulted in 145 billion liters of water being saved every year, he said.

Former environment secretary and now USAID climate resiliency leader Elisea Gozun agreed the Philippines needed to amend the Water Code to manage unregulated ground water extraction.

Encourage conservation

She said the Water Code covers integrated water resource management such as surface, groundwater and rainwater.

Dr. White said the measures should include improvement in the manufacture of appliances; addressing water leakage such as physical leaks at home, offices and commercial establishments.

White also said the government's water providers "need to make it expensive by paying [water] per cubic meter to encourage water conservation."

He said Sao Paulo in Brazil and California in the US are also currently experiencing significant drought leading to water shortages due to the lack of policy planning.

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El Niño and water use

BELIEVE IT or not, there are ways to cope with El Niño, even at the individual, family or household level. Or should I say especially at this level, where water usage is still manageable and measurable.

There is little we can do about the escalating heat, except perhaps if we cocoon ourselves in air-conditioned comfort 24/7. The absence of rain is also a problem beyond our reach, save perhaps for storming the heavens for timely precipitation or performing a rain dance. And even then, there are no guarantees that these will work. And beyond sympathizing with beleaguered farmers and farming families who can do nothing but watch their crops dry up for lack of water, we, too are helpless and can only wait for rain.

But, says Dr. Stuart White, a water demand management expert for USAID's "Be Secure" Project, we can adopt measures at our own levels of comfort that, if wide-reaching enough, can rebound to significant and long-lasting change, including conserving our water resources.

White should know, being Australian and having lived through 10 years of drought that, ironically, were capped by massive floods.

It was while coping with drought conditions even as its population was increasing during this "dry decade" that Australia found policies, measures and technologies to save on water use and mitigate the worst effects of this weather phenomenon.

For instance, it was Australians who invented the "dual flush" toilets, reducing the amount of water needed to get rid of toilet waste. White particularly rues the "wastage" involved in using clean, potable water to flush toilets, advocating instead the use of "double piping," one providing the household with potable water, the other recycling used, albeit treated, water (such as for laundry) for toilet flushing and other uses. In fact, said Bebet Gozun, former environment secretary and climate resilience team leader of the "Be Secure" project, some malls here have already begun to use recycled water in their restrooms.

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David



WATER demand management, say the "Be Secure" proponents, is a "short-term response to El Niño and a long term response to climate impacts on water." It means "getting the most from the water we have," including "any action that reduces the amount of fresh water we use, or that keeps water cleaner in the course of a particular use than it otherwise would be."

In Sydney, says White, water use even during the drought did not increase despite a rise in population numbers. This was due, he said, to a combination of "improved efficiency that resulted in water savings" and new rules on water usage for all new construction, including the installation of the dual flush toilets, the requirement for the construction of rainwater storage facilities like cisterns, and labeling (or rating) of appliances according to their water consumption. (Front-loading washing machines, says White, consume far less water than top-loading ones.)

EL NIÑO here, says Gozun, affects different areas of the country in varying measures of severity.

Joining our media roundtable was the manager of the Zamboanga City Water District, which he said was particularly hard hit by this year's El Niño. Unless mitigation measures are adopted early and massively, he said, the city will soon run out of water.

Public hospitals in the city, he said, are increasingly being filled with children suffering from diarrhea and other water-borne diseases, mainly because of poor sanitation at home and less-than-ideal

measures to ensure the safety of drinking water.

"Be Secure" (it stands for Water Security for Resilient Economic Growth and Stability) materials point out several ironies in the water situation in the country, put into stark highlight because of the existing El Niño.

For instance, research says that on average, a person needs only 54 liters of water a day for drinking, hygiene, sanitation, food preparation and laundry. But the actual water use by Filipinos in 2014 was pegged at 98 liters per person per day. This, despite the reality that the Philippines has one of the lowest rates of freshwater availability per person in Southeast Asia.

HERE are ways to reduce water consumption and wastage at the household level:

Know your usage: Read your water meter, record the amount you use and try to reduce it.

Stop water leaks: Repair leaking faucets, showers and toilets. Put food coloring in your toilet tank and wait for five minutes. If it colors your bowl, your toilet tank has a leak; fix it.

Reuse existing water: Collect rainwater from roof gutters and reuse bath, dishwashing, and laundry water to flush the toilet, wash floors and cars.

Minimize water usage: Your children and housekeepers may be the biggest water users in your home. Ask them to conserve water. Remove leftover food from dishes before washing them in a large plastic container. Wash cars infrequently. When washing, use a dipper (tabo) and a pail of reused water. Water plants in the early morning or late afternoon to minimize evaporation.

The clincher? "Wasted water down the drain is money down the drain." You wouldn't flush cash and coins down your toilet, would you? But that's what we're doing when we don't watch our water usage and proceed as if we have all the clean and potable water at our disposal.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

Drought and disenchantment

WITH the heat index reaching 38 to 41 degrees Celsius this week, it is only now that Filipinos living in Metro Manila are beginning to feel the pinch of the Asia-Pacific-wide drought called El Niño by scientists.

Metro residents are lucky for having a stable supply of electricity to run their air-conditioners and electric fans and make their lives a little bit bearable despite the heat.

The terse warning from PAGASA is to brace for hotter days ahead. This means the temperature will even make a turn for the worse before it becomes better.

Urban residents are now made aware that these temperatures may cause heat cramps and heat exhaustion, and if one is not careful, even heat stroke.

The drought is most severe and carries concomitant difficulties in the south, particularly

EDITORIAL

'Had the government prepared well for this year's El Nino, the suffering of these farmers would not have been exacerbated.'

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Drought and disenchantment

Kidapawan City, where farmers long suffering from lack of rain and failed crops were reduced to begging for rice from government officials.

The farmers' assembly asking for food soon became a three-day street protest, and officials both local and national should have handled the situation better by releasing several bags of rice to the hungry farmers. Instead, what happened was a violent dispersal with policemen using high-pressure water cannons and live bullets and the protesters throwing stones in self-defense, resulting in several deaths and injuries on both sides of the confrontation.

The poor farmers' ordeal did not end there. Some 73 of these farmers were detained and are facing criminal charges resulting from the violence. The Public Attorney's Office (PAO) was perhaps the only government

office helping them, raising some P400,000 from private sources to pay for the bail bond necessary for the farmers' provisional liberty. The PAO will later defend them in court for free.

Had the government prepared well for this year's El Nino, the suffering of these farmers would not have been exacerbated.

The incidents such as Kidapawan contribute much to the disenchantment being felt by many citizens in the administration of Benigno Aquino III.

More than the perceived corruption at the MRT and DOTC and the inefficiency at the NAIA, the drought-induced violence in Kidapawan is one of the best arguments against the sincerity of "Daang Matuwid."

It is why President Aquino's candidate for President, Secretary Mar Roxas, can only make it to third place in the surveys.

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Download El Niño funds, Recto urges

SENATE President Pro-Tempore Ralph Recto on Thursday made an appeal to Malacañang to download at the soonest time the billions of pesos in Calamity Fund and Quick Response Fund to provinces facing the wrath of the El Niño phenomenon, saying pre-emptive measures are needed to avert a national crisis caused by widespread drought.

"The dry spell is real. Now is the time to release the funds approved by Congress to shield the country from the wrath of El Niño. Tomorrow maybe too late," Recto said.

"We do not need to wait for the provinces to declare a state of calamity in their localities before downloading the funds. A national crisis is just around the corner," he added.

"Dry spell plus drought of funds.

That's the formula for more Kidapawans. That should not happen because national government has the money to help local governments and farmers," he said.

The senator again sounded the alarm bells on El Niño after the entire province of Cebu this week (April 11) joined the growing list of provinces that had declared a state of calamity due to dry spell.

Last week (April 7), the neighboring province of Bohol was also placed under a state of calamity.

Recto noted that even the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration had predicted that more than 30 provinces in the country may experience severe drought this April.

According to the weather bureau, more than 30 percent of the country

will experience drought for three consecutive months with below normal rainfall.

Pagasa enumerated the following provinces under threat of severe drought:

- (Luzon): Pangasinan, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, Zambales, Occidental Mindoro, and Palawan;
- (Visayas): Negros Oriental, Bohol, and Siquijor;
- (Mindanao): Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga Sibugay, Bukidnon, Camiguin, Lanao del Norte, Misamis Occidental, Misamis Oriental, Compostela Valley, Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur, South Cotabato, North Cotabato, Sarangani, Sultan Kudarat, Agusan del Sur, Agusan del Norte, Surigao del Norte, Basilan, Maguindanao,

Lanao del Sur, and Tawi-Tawi.

Pagasa has already identified the most vulnerable areas. They should receive the El Niño funds ASAP, Recto said.

For this year, according to Recto, P38.9 billion has been allocated as National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund in the national budget.

However, P18.9 billion of this amount is earmarked for Yolanda reconstruction, "which means only about P19 billion can be disposed for other calamities, like the El Niño."

A lump sum fund, this Calamity Fund covers aid, relief, and rehabilitation services to areas hit by man-made and natural calamities. It also funds pre-disaster projects and operations.

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A broader look at today's business

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Recto to Malacañang: Release El Niño-mitigation funds now

MALACAÑANG should immediately release Congress-approved El Niño funds, as preemptive measures are needed to avert a national crisis caused by widespread drought, Senate President Pro-Tempore Ralph Recto said on Thursday.

Recto said the government must act with a sense of urgency and download billions of pesos in Calamity Fund and Quick Response Fund (QRF) to prevent a repeat of the Kidapawan tragedy.

"The dry spell is real. Now is the time to release the funds approved by Congress to shield the country from the wrath of the El Niño. Tomorrow may be too late," he said in a statement.

"We do not need to wait for the provinces to declare a state of calamity in their localities before downloading the funds. A national crisis is just around the corner," Recto added.

The lawmaker again sounded the alarm bells on El Niño after the entire province of Cebu joined the growing list of provinces that had declared a state of calamity due to the dry spell on April 11.

Last week the neighboring province of Bohol was also placed under a state of calamity.

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Number of provinces that may experience severe drought this month

Recto noted that even the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) had predicted that more than 30 provinces in the country may experience severe drought this April.

According to the weather bureau, more than 30 percent of the country will experience drought for three consecutive months with below-normal rainfall.

Provinces under threat of severe drought include Pangasinan, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, Zambales, Occidental Mindoro, Palawan, Negros Oriental, Bohol, Siquijor, Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga Sibugay and Bukidnon.

Camiguin, Lanao del Norte, Misamis Occidental, Misamis Oriental, Compostela Valley, Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur, South Cotabato, North Cotabato, Saran-

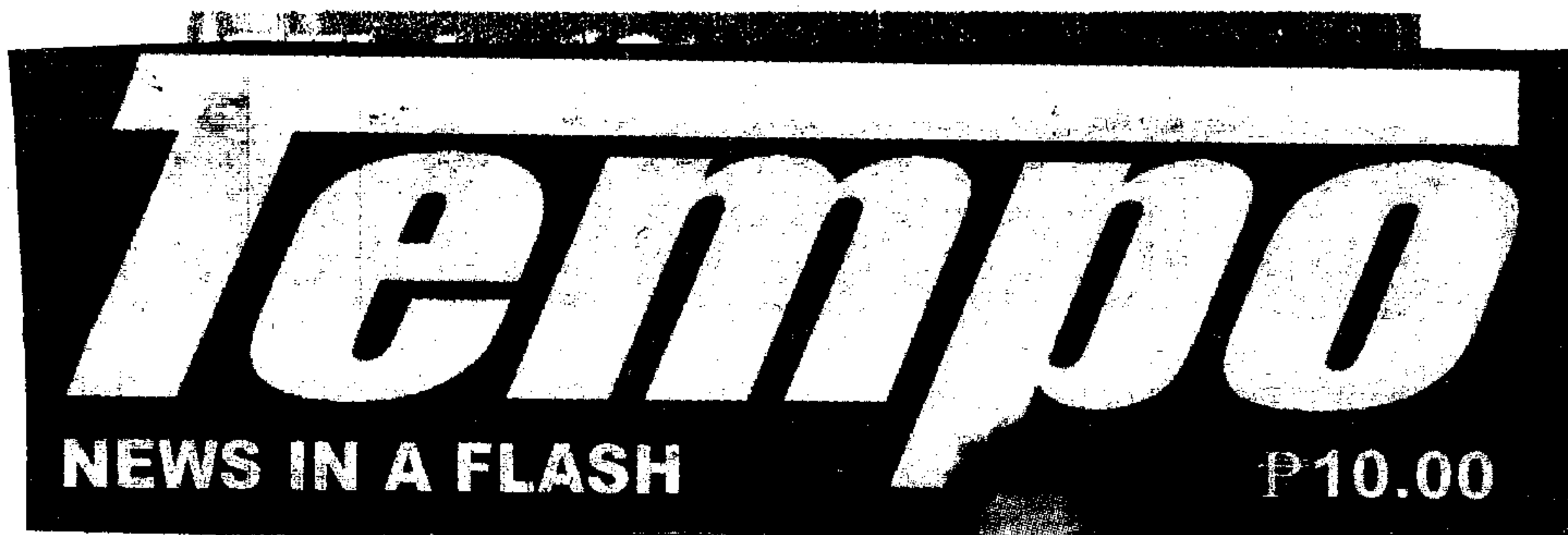
gani, Sultan Kudarat, Agusan del Sur, Agusan del Norte, Surigao del Norte, Basilan, Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur and Tawi-Tawi are also affected.

"Pagasa has already identified the most vulnerable areas. They should receive the El Niño funds ASAP," Recto said.

For this year, he said P38.9 billion has been allocated as National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council Fund in the national budget. However, P18.9 billion of this amount is earmarked for Yolanda reconstruction, "which means only about P19 billion can be disposed for other calamities, like the El Niño."

A lump-sum fund, Recto said this Calamity Fund covers aid, relief and rehabilitation services to areas hit by man-made and natural calamities. It also funds pre-disaster projects and operations.

The Calamity Fund, however, is separate from the P6.7-billion QRF, which has been distributed among 12 agencies, with P1.32 billion given to the Department of Social Welfare and Development, and P500 million each to the Department of Agriculture and the National Irrigation Administration. **Butch Fernandez**



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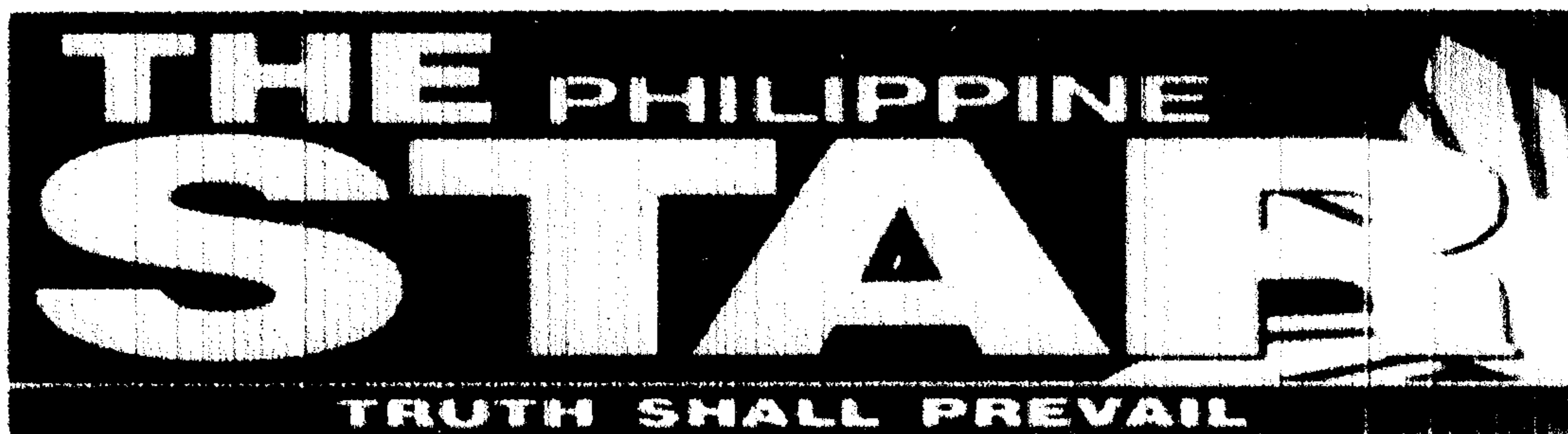
Cebu City tinamaan ng El Niño

CEBU CITY – Patuloy ang pagmo-monitor ng Cebu City government sa umiiral na El Niño phenomenon sa mga kabundukang barangay dito habang naghahanda ang mga disaster officials sa mas matinding epekto nito.

Ayon kay Cebu City Councilor David Tumalak, pinuno ng Cebu City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (CCDRMO), masusing sinusubaybayan ng lungsod ang sitwasyon lalo na sa mga kabundukan kung saan ang mga kabukiran ay sobra nang napinsala dahil sa tindi ng init ng pahanon.

Isinailalim na ng City Council ang buong lungsod sa state of calamity dahil umabot na sa ₱13.4 milyon ang halaga ng napinsalang pananim at alagang hayop.

Kasama sa mga napinsalang barangay ang Adlaon, Agsungot, Babag, Bonbon, Buot, Buhisan, Busay, Budlaan, Binaliw, Cambinocot, Guba, Kalunasan, Lusaran, Mabini, Malubog, Pamutan, Paril, Pulangbato, Pungot, Sibuyan, Sapangdan, Sirao, Sinsin, Sardon I, Sardon II, Tagbato, Taptap. (Mars W. Mosqueda, Jr.)



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Phl accepts limits on greenhouse gases

By PIA LEE-BRAGO and CHRISTINA MENDEZ

The Philippines became the 63rd member-state to submit its instrument of acceptance of the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol to limit greenhouse gas emissions.

A total of 144 member-states are needed for the Doha amendment to enter into force.

Ambassador Lourdes Yparraguirre, Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations, submitted the country's instrument of acceptance of the Doha

Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol to Santiago Villalpando, chief of the UN Treaty Section.

The Doha Amendment sets a second commitment period from 2013 to 2020 for Annex 1 Parties to limit their greenhouse gas emissions to reduce overall emissions to at least 18 percent below 1990 levels.

The Philippines also briefed the States Parties of Amended Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)

on the work done by the Philippine government to limit improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

Brig. Gen. Gerry Amante, commander of the Munitions Control Center of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, said that "the Philippine government has taken steps to address the threat posed by IEDs through a joint inter-agency response, which resides within the whole of government framework."

The framework refers to the establishment of an Inter-Agency Task Force on Counter IEDs and the enactment of the Strategic Trade Management Act of 2015.

The Philippines also informed the States Parties of Protocol V of the Convention on CCW on the progress of the Philippines in dealing with explosive remnants of war.

The Philippines supports the CCW since it contributes to the safety and security of

the country. The country has become safer with the implementation of the CCW, since it makes it harder for non-state actors to get their hands on IEDs, which are used by armed insurgents against police and military personnel.

The CCW and its related protocols aim to ban or restrict weapons that may cause suffering to combatants or to affect civilians indiscriminately, such as explosive remnants of war, incendiary weapons, blinding lasers,

mines, traps and other explosive devices.

Meanwhile, Vice presidential candidate Sen. Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. called on the government to launch a massive information drive on how to cope with the extreme heat the country is currently experiencing. It is said that a heat index between 41 to 54 degrees is already considered dangerous and may cause cramps, exhaustion and even heat stroke. — With Perseus Echeminada

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

Govt to revise PPP process

By CAI U. ORDINARIO [@caiordinario](#)

THE Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Governing Board is thinking of revising the PPP appraisal process to better craft PPP projects.

In a policy circular issued in March 2016 obtained by the BUSINESSMIRROR, the PPP Governing Board is mulling over extending the project evaluation process of the Investment Coordination Committee (ICC) Technical Working Group to 15 working days from the initial 10 days.

In a 2014 memorandum circular issued to then-PPP Center Executive Director Cosette Canilao, former Nation Economist and Development Authority (Neda) Director General Arsenio M. Balisacan said project appraisal for PPPs will no longer go through the ICC Technical Board but through a TWG, which will evaluate PPPs in 10 working days.

"The TWG members shall submit their evaluation report within 15 working days from receipt of the project documents as transmitted by the PPP Secretariat, within which TWG meeting may be called to discuss possible project issues and/or concerns," the circular said.

The PPP Governing Board is seeking stakeholder comments and will discuss the possible changes to the PPP appraisal process in the scheduled ICC meeting this month, the first ICC meeting this year since October last year.

Apart from extending the evaluation process of the ICC TWG, the PPP Governing Board ordered the PPP Center to also submit accomplished ICC Project Evaluation Forms, an endorsement letter by the head of the agency and other similar documents for appraisal by the TWG.

The PPP evaluation process was revised in 2014, in the government's bid to fast-track

PPP projects for rollout. This resulted in the reduction of the evaluation period to 10 days from the regular ICC evaluation of six weeks.

Critics of this measure, however, expressed concern that the reduction of the number of days for evaluation has compromised the quality of PPP projects.

It can be noted that since the 2014 memorandum circular, several PPP projects have suffered delays and underwent rebidding.

These projects include the LRT Line 1 South Extension and, more recently, the Laguna Lakeshore Expressway Dike Project. Both were initially approved by the ICC and the Neda Board in 2014.

Other PPPs that have encountered problems recently are the Davao Sasa Port project and the Cavite-Laguna Expressway, which were also approved in 2014.

In the 2014 memorandum circular, the TWG will consist of the Neda, Department of Finance (DOF), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)-Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) and the PPP Center, as well as other agencies that may be necessary in project evaluation.

The memorandum obtained by the BUSINESSMIRROR stated that the TWG members will conduct separate project appraisals according to their expertise. The Neda will be the one to evaluate a PPP's economic viability; DOF, its financial viability; PPP Center, its "value for money"; and the DENR-EMB, a project's environmental viability.

In so doing, PPP projects will go straight to the ICC Cabinet Committee for approval.

This skirts the provisions in Executive Order 230, Series of 1987, which is the Reorganization Act of the Neda.

The act provides that the technical staff of the Neda are tasked to conduct studies and provide development policy measures and recommendations to the Neda Board.

However, through the memorandum issued in 2014, the Neda technical staff, which comprises the ICC technical board, will no longer provide recommendations when it comes to PPPs. Economists, on the other hand, were quick to point out that proper evaluation of PPPs is crucial in attracting investor interest for projects.

This is not only because it is a government undertaking, but because these projects cost billions and ultimately will affect millions of Filipinos who will use these services.

"I believe that the shorter number of days for evaluation is meant to hasten the bidding process," University of Asia and the Pacific (UA&P) School of Economics Dean Cid Terosa said. "The problem with the bidding process is the inability of bidders to satisfy the stringent and multiple requirements of the Neda."

"The government can streamline these requirements without sacrificing integrity and quality of the bidding requirements," Terosa added.

UA&P economist Victor Abola added that a better approach to PPPs is for the government to seek out design experts worldwide to ensure that the viability of these projects. Abola said, however, these will require time and much preparation, particularly on the part of the government. However, the government needs to strike a balance to ensure that projects are aboveboard and on time for bidders to still be interested on the project. He added that charging investors who want to participate in the bidding process is also another factor why many are not keen on undertaking PPP projects.

"You really have to make sure that your parameters are clear, that it won't be comparing apples and oranges," Abola said.

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The environmental dimension of the South China Sea Dispute

INGS

Writers on the South China Sea (SCS) dispute who refer to the concept of environmental security have reframed the conflict between China and the claimant states as a resource use conflict. They examine how diminishing renewable resources and natural resource degradation are pushing states to unilaterally further their maritime security interests at the expense of another state's security concerns.

Of the existing literature, authors Alan Dupont and Christopher Baker, Zhang Hangzhou, and Katie Lhebling have argued that resource competition in the region is evolving in terms of the visible increase in the number of seismic surveys in the SCS. Resource depletion in China's nearshore waters has also driven the government to support distant water fishing even it entailed fishing in disputed EEZ waters. These have led to multiple often violent fishing incidents between China's fishers and maritime surveillance patrol agents and the fishers and law enforcers of claimant states Vietnam and the Philippines. These encounters have grown with more frequency since 2007, when heightened competition seemed to have transformed China's maritime strategy from active fishing to active law enforcement of maritime claims, including islands and new fishing grounds.

The other side of an environmental security perspective refers to the role of collective action and institutionalism in mitigating open access resource use problems.

Referring to Professor Elinor Ostrom's framework on the commons, South China Sea is viewed as a common pool resource, in which actors, who are in this case, the regional coastal and littoral states, either act unilaterally, increase maritime insecurity, and drive other states to further conflict or they formulate rules and institutions and address open access problems.

It is within this context that Professor Jay Batongbacal, director of the University of the Philippines Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea, and others who wrote the August 2012 White Paper on the West Philippine Sea establish the South China Sea as a global commons or a large marine ecosystem with linkages between regional resource systems in terms of biological and economic production. SCS's deep waters, then are ecologically interconnected to the coastal waters of Malaysia and Indonesia in the southern most edge of the SCS, the Gulf of Thailand, Vietnam and China in the west and the Gulf of Tonkin on the north. The West Philippine Seas in the northern coast of the country and the Sulu-Sulawesi waters in the southern coast constitute an integrated marine area, i.e. they too are ecologically interlinked to the SCS.

As a common pool resource, the SCS is both a source of environmental security and insecurity. Based on the compiled data of the University of British Columbia's Fisheries Centre, the SCS is one of the world's most productive fishing zone in terms of annual marine production, contributing an average of 11% of annual world fisheries exports. SCS waters provide for marine transport, which is the backbone of regional maritime trade. It is a significant source of marine biodiversity.

On the one side, SCS is exposed to rampant overfishing and illegal, unreported, and undocumented (IUU) fishing by actors within the littoral states. Allison Witter et al's studies on the SCS in terms of stock assessment, fish landings, and catch per unit effort of fisheries indicate, that as a whole, SCS's fishing grounds have been overexploited or fished above their maximum sustainability yield (MSY) limits since the 1980s. The most overfished regions are located in the fishing grounds of Thailand, Vietnam, and China in the west side of SCS. Since the '80s, the Lingayen Gulf side of the SCS has been endangered by fishing over and above the MSY and in the 1990s until the 2000, by declining catch per unit effort levels.

Dr. Mary Ann Palma and Professor Martin Tsamenyi of the Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security (ANCORS) demonstrate how unlicensed fishing, fishing with fake papers, and/or with illegal fishing gears (purse seine, trawling, super lights, etc.) and methods (cyanide poisoning, blast fishing) posed a major maritime challenge to the Sulawesi states of the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

Various forms of IUU have been committed at an alarming rate by Philippine, Malaysian, and Indonesian flag carrying vessels as well as by the flag vessels of Thailand, Vietnam, China, and Taiwan. In addition to the yellow fin tuna, sharks, corals reefs, sea turtles, and marine mammals have been targets of the live reef fish and aquarium trade involving China, Hong Kong, Taiwan during the period of the late '90s to the early and mid 2000.

Philippine and Indonesian naval and coast guards apprehensions of hundreds of national and foreign fishing vessels and their confiscations of several hundred more corals from national and foreign fishers reflect the magnitude of maritime security threat where economic losses do not compensate for the amenity value and environmental quality losses in the Sulawesi Sea region.

An environmental standpoint nuances the Philippine state's construction of the SCS dispute beyond the settlement of maritime boundaries. Overfishing and IUU continue to threaten the state's archipelagic security or threats to people's livelihoods, the islands and interconnected islands and waters of the Philippine archipelago. Threats of piracy, illegal drug and people trafficking, maritime terrorism, oil spills and maritime disasters are intermestic and transnational in nature and will therefore require a combined archipelagic and maritime approach.

This is not to underestimate the Philippine's diplomatic work on arbitration against China.

In fact, Dr. Mary Ann Palma has argued that the settlement of maritime boundaries, is a "fundamental element in upholding good order of the sea." Observance of maritime boundaries may lessen the occurrences of fishing incidents to the scale of the Bajo de Masinloc incident in July 2012, the standoff over the Chinese oil rig Hi981 between China and Vietnam off the Parcel Islands in July 2014 and the water cannon incident between China Coast Guard and the Philippine Marines in Ayungin Shoal in March 2014.

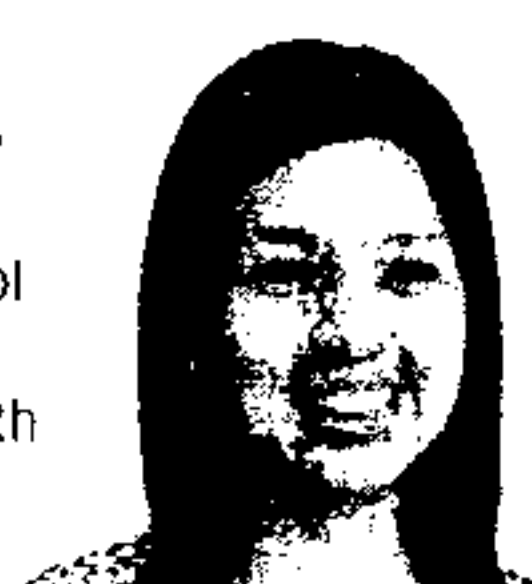
There is an apparently a lot more work to be done in this vicinity, as the Philippine government has yet to formalize its archipelagic sea lanes as part of its obligations to Art 47 of the Law of the Sea Convention (LOSC). It also has yet to address the question of overlapping maritime jurisdictions with Palau, China, and Taiwan as well as settle its differences with the Vietnamese and Malaysian submissions to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) of their extended continental shelves which overlap with the Philippine-occupied Kalayaan Group of Islands.

Given the arguments on environmental security, law and the political settlement of maritime boundaries alone will not reverse the situation in the SCS. To quote from Prof. Jay Batongbacal's Jaime V. Ongpin Memorial Lecture at Ateneo de Manila last October 2012, "(b)oth literature and record of experience of States show that the establishment of maritime boundaries alone do not change the objective conditions and practical problems of marine management."

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Observance of maritime boundaries may lessen the occurrences of fishing incidents to the scale of the Bajo de Masinloc incident in July 2012, the standoff over the Chinese oil rig Hi981 between China and Vietnam off the Parcel Islands in July 2014 and the water cannon incident between China Coast Guard and the Philippine Marines in Ayungin Shoal in March 2014.

ALMA MARIA O. SALVADOR, PhD, assistant professor of political science at the Ateneo de Manila University (ADMU) is currently involved in School of Social Sciences supported research on Philippine naval modernization with Daisy See, Assistant Professor and ADMU Director of Chinese Studies.



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PHILIPPINE STAR MICHAEL VARGAS

PHL wants increased fishing at Benham Rise to cement claim

By Janina C. Lim

THE DEPARTMENT of Agriculture (DA) wants to increase the country's physical control of the Benham Rise by encouraging fishing communities on the east coast to exploit the new resource.

"The actual evidence of ownership is utilization and full control of the Benham Rise," said the director of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquaculture Resources (BFAR) Asis G. Perez in a statement released by the DA.

In 2012, the Philippines won its claim over the Benham Rise under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

DA-BFAR has deployed an exploratory team with the mission

to implement the law of the sea and assert that Benham Rise is within the country's Exclusive Economic Zone.

"The exploratory mission also identified the vast and diverse marine resources in Benham Rise," said Mr. Perez, also DA undersecretary for fisheries.

Since Benham Rise is located several hundred nautical miles east of Luzon, few fishing initiatives have been undertaken. The closest towns are Maconacon and Dinapigue in Isabela, which have small populations.

"BFAR has recently monitored the operation of two to three medium sized fishing vessels in the area while performing the agency's mandate to explore and identify marine and fisheries

resources available in Benham Rise," read the statement.

In addition, BFAR has undertaken oceanographic studies in the vicinity of Benham Rise alongside implementation of the National Payao Program and fisheries assessment.

Under the National Payao Program, BFAR aims to deploy several offshore *payaos*, which are fish-aggregating devices that provide fishermen data on the fishing prospects of specific areas. At present, there are 49 *payaos* deployed off Quezon province.

Government initiatives are ongoing with DA-BFAR exploring the area annually starting 2013, said Mr. Perez, adding that Benham Rise plays a big role in fisher-

ies because the shallowest area, the Benham Bank with depth at some 50 meters, has shown great potential.

According to Mr. Perez, fish caught in Benham Rise are bigger compared to other fishing grounds.

BFAR has identified the presence of various species of tuna in the area.

"Conservation is important as well as utilization. Tuna species are highly migratory species. Conserving the area will not assure that the tuna will stay in Benham Rise all the time. A balance has to be made between utilization and conservation. There has to be utilization of the resource in a proper way," Mr. Perez was quoted as saying.

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Earth could become hotter than the

WASHINGTON — Global warming could make the planet far hotter than currently projected because today's scientific models do not correctly account for the influence of clouds, researchers said last week.

The study in the journal *Science* was led by researchers at Yale University and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

When climate scientists look ahead to how much the planet's surface temperature may warm up in response to a doubling of carbon dioxide — a by-product of fossil fuel burning — they typically predict a rise of between 2.1 and 4.7 degrees Celsius (°C) (3.8 and 8.5 degrees Fahrenheit).

counteract warming in Earth's atmosphere, researchers said.

"We found that the climate sensitivity increased from four degrees Celsius in the default model to five to 5.3 °C in versions that were modified to bring liquid and ice amounts into closer agreement with observations," said lead author Ivy Fan, a researcher at Yale University.

The problem is most models assume there is more ice in clouds than there really is.

Ice clouds would gain more from global warming and absorb more heat from the sun, researchers said.

reflectivity as the atmosphere warms, said co-author Mark Zeller.

"This means we are underestimating the warming that will occur in response to a doubling of carbon dioxide," he said.

Researchers said previous studies that had made warming worse than predicted.

The authors said the study is a first step in understanding the role of clouds in global warming.

The study was funded by the National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy.

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Lower metal prices continue to cause pain for mining firms

By Janina C. Lim

SEVERAL LISTED mining firms on Thursday reported mixed results for 2015, as the industry continued to feel the pain from lower average metal prices.

In a regulatory filing, Lepanto said its net loss attributable to parent equity holder ballooned to P859 million last year, from P718.4 million in 2014.

Lepanto said consolidated revenues fell 18% to P1.22 billion in 2015, as metal revenues went down 19% to P1.15 billion.

"The decline was due to the 14% drop in gold production aggravated by lower metal prices. Average price of gold sold was \$1,145.38/oz. compared with \$1,269.04/oz. last year. Average price of silver sold was \$15.45/oz. versus \$18.97/oz. in 2014. Loss from operations amounted to P777 million compared with last year's loss of P584.2 million," the miner said.

As it adopted selective mining, Lepanto said ore milled declined 259,120 tons in 2015 from the previous year's 419,320 tons. Because of the 44% drop in tons ore mined, operating costs went down to P89.5 million last year.

Lepanto's affiliate Manila Mining Corp. also saw bigger losses in 2015, reaching P79.62 million versus P11.789 million in the previous year, largely due to impairment provisions.

For its part, Dizon Copper-Silver Mines, Inc. reported a smaller net loss of P4.648 million for 2015, 33% lower than the P6.91 million registered in previous year.

The company has no operational revenue to record for the year 2015, while operating expenses fell 15% to P5.11 million.

PROFITS FOR SOME

Meanwhile, Apex Mining Co., Inc. swung to profit in 2015, as its net income attributable to parent reached P168.9 million compared to the net loss of P543.6 million in 2014, before showing a P98 million loss in the consolidation of its subsidiaries' accounts.

Top-line growth jumped 40% to P2.4 billion, on the back of record output of the Maco mine in Compostela Valley. The mine produced 43,048 ounces of gold and 224,479 ounces of silver, which are 49% and 41% higher respectively from 2014 production.

"We are indeed fortunate that even with all of the issues that confronted the Company during the year, it managed to come out with net earnings to break the chain of net losses in previous years," Apex President and Chief Executive Walter W. Brown said in a statement.

At the same time, Geograce Resources Philippines, Inc. said its attributable net income hit P22.3 million in 2015, 15 times higher than the net loss of P304.4 million in the previous year.

In a regulatory filing, the company was able to generate gross revenues at P29.7 million but incurred lower costs and expenses amounting to P7.4 million.

However, Geograce did not have any contracting activities in 2015, saying its revenues came from a management fee of P24.5 million from rendered services from another company.