

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

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DAY : Friday

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IN THE NEWS

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

By Erika Sauler
and Niña Calleja

THE PHILIPPINES will ratify the landmark Paris Agreement, a legally-binding accord to combat climate change, during a signing ceremony in New York on Friday.

Environment Secretary Ramon Paje will represent President Aquino and deliver the Philippine statement at the UN headquarters on April 22, which coincides with the celebration of Earth Day.

Negotiated by 195 nations in France last December, the Paris Agreement calls for keeping the average global temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius while pursuing efforts to limit temperature increase to 1.5 degrees C above preindustrial levels.

PH to ratify Paris climate change pact

2017 deadline

Climate ambassadors have until April 17, 2017 to sign the deal, and the agreement will come into force once signed by at least 55 countries.

The Philippines has pledged to reduce carbon emissions by 70 percent in 2030 through greater use of cleaner and renewable energy, improved mass transport services, more efficient waste management, reforestation and forest protection, and co-firing biomass, Paje said.

Senator Loren Legarda hailed the

formal signing of the historic climate agreement whose main goal is to avoid the catastrophic effects of climate change by limiting temperature increase.

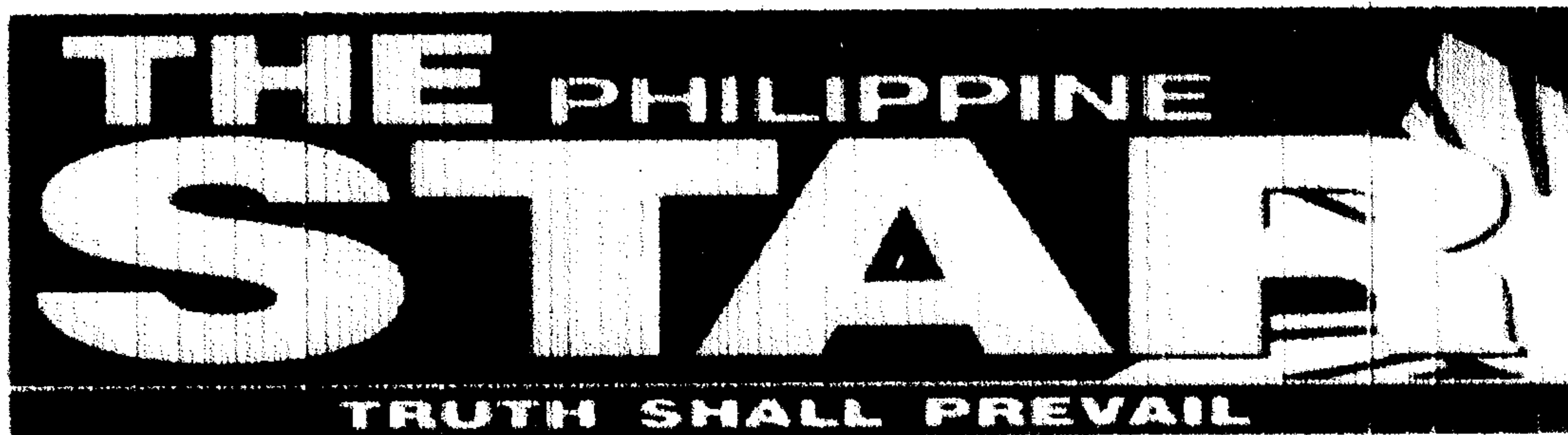
Climate justice

Legarda, the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction Global Champion for Resilience, made this statement when she addressed the Climate Vulnerable Forum in New York late Wednesday.

Legarda called for "climate justice for the victims of ex-

treme weather events," apparently referencing the thousands of drought-hit farmers who protested in Kidapawan City over the lack of government subsidy and support. The four-day protest ended in a violent dispersal on April 1 that claimed the lives of three farmers.

"Is it not ironic and sheer paradoxical that the very people who till the land so that others may have their share of rice on their tables are now begging for food?" Legarda asked.



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Phl signs Paris climate accord at UN

Environment Secretary Ramon Paje signed yesterday the landmark international climate agreement reached in Paris last December and appealed for

other nations to immediately work toward reducing their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

In a ceremony at the United Nations headquarters in New York, Paje said that nations should not wait for the full

implementation of the Paris climate accord in 2020.

The climate agreement was adopted by 196 country-partic-

ipants in the 21st Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris,

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France last Dec. 12.

"Our contribution to the global problem on climate change is admittedly a droplet in the well, but streams, lakes and oceans are all composed of mere droplets. We cannot do this alone," Paje said.

He added that the Philippines signed the deal hoping that all signatories would also begin implementing their respective intended nationally determined contribution (INDC), which is a long-term commitment to curb GHG emissions and the identification of climate mitigation and adaptation actions beyond 2020.

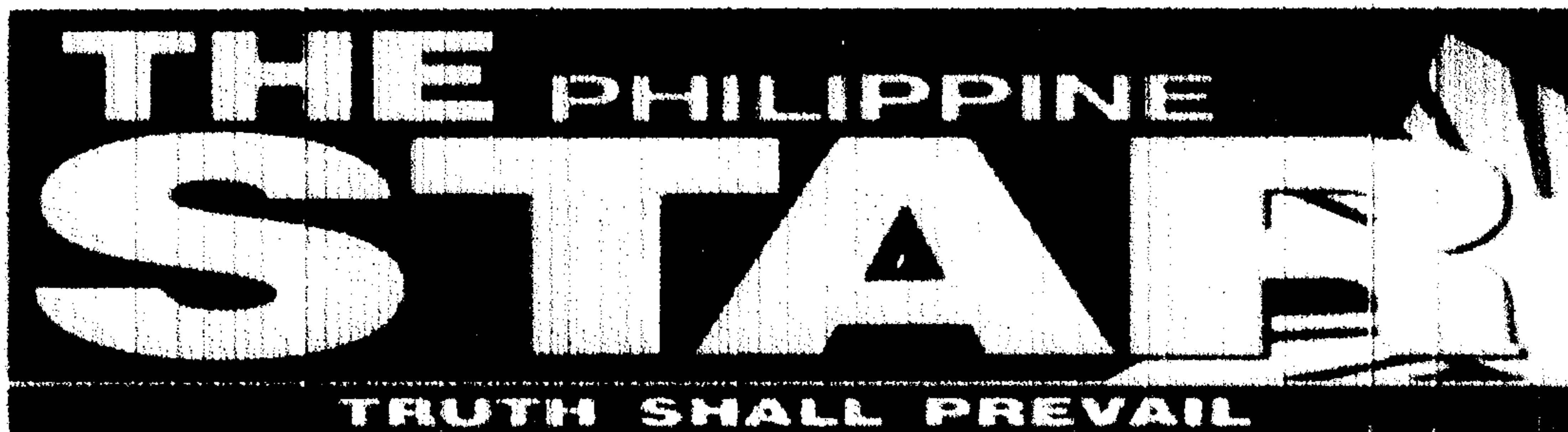
The Philippines committed to reduce by 70 percent its carbon emissions by 2030. The reduction will come from the energy, transport, waste, forestry and industry sectors.

Paje said that while the

country has one of the most ambitious national targets, the full implementation of its contribution to global action "requires grant-based support in the form of adequate, predictable and sustainable financing."

He added that despite financial constraints, the country managed to demonstrate its commitment by starting the implementation of its National Climate Action Plan and the integration of climate change in national and local development plans and budgets.

The country's GHG inventory management and reporting system among national agencies and partner institutions is already being established to create a transparent, accurate, complete and comparable baseline of emissions, he added.



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PWDs, elderly to lead Earth Day celebration

CABANATUAN CITY – Persons with disabilities (PWDs) and senior citizens will lead the celebration of Earth Day at environment and natural resources offices in Central Luzon today.

“Everyone, even those who are physically impaired, as well as senior citizens and youngsters, can play a vital role in saving Mother Earth,”

Tirso Parian Jr., acting regional director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, said yesterday.

Parian said they have lined up a number of activities for the event with the theme “Step up and Deliver, Green Environment Gawing Forever.”

A covenant to save the environment will be signed by

the PWDs, the Office of the Senior Citizens Association and other stakeholders.

Parian said this year’s programs are focused on conserving trees amid the threat of global warming and climate change.

Parian said DENR employees would conduct cleanup of waterways, barangay roads and office premises while

PWDs and senior citizens would take part in soil potting – mixing and potting compost in containers – in preparation for a tree planting activity in June.

Proclamation 1482 signed by former president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in 2008 declares April as “month of planet Earth.”

– Manny Galvez

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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Earth Day recognizes key role of PWDs, seniors, youth sector

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO, Pangasinana — This year's Earth Day celebrations will highlight the vital role of persons with disabilities (PWDs), senior citizens and the youth sector in protecting and conserving the environment.

Tirso Parian, Jr., deputy director for Management Services of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) regional office said hundreds of PWDs, senior citizens, the youth and DENR employees will spearhead and take part in scheduled activities and festivities today, April 22.

"Every member of the society, even those who are physically challenged, the older and younger ones have significant impact to save mother Earth. Because in the end, planet Earth is our one and only home," said Parian.

He said various activities have been lined up, focusing on the international theme, "Trees for the Earth, Let's get planting," while adopting the local

campaign slogan "Step Up and Deliver, #GreenEnvironmentGawingForever".

This year's theme underscores the important role of trees and forests as the number one shield of planet Earth against global warming and climate change, explained Parian.

He said one of the features of this year's celebration is the signing of a covenant to save mother Earth with the PWDs, senior citizens, youth sector and other stakeholders of the DENR.

PWDs and senior citizens will take part in soil potting, one of the many processes involved in nursery operations in preparation for the coming tree planting season from June to September, said Parian.

The first Earth Day was celebrated in April 22, 1970, pioneered by American senator Gaylord Nelson after witnessing the catastrophic oil spill in Sta. Barbara, California in the US. (Franco G. Regala)

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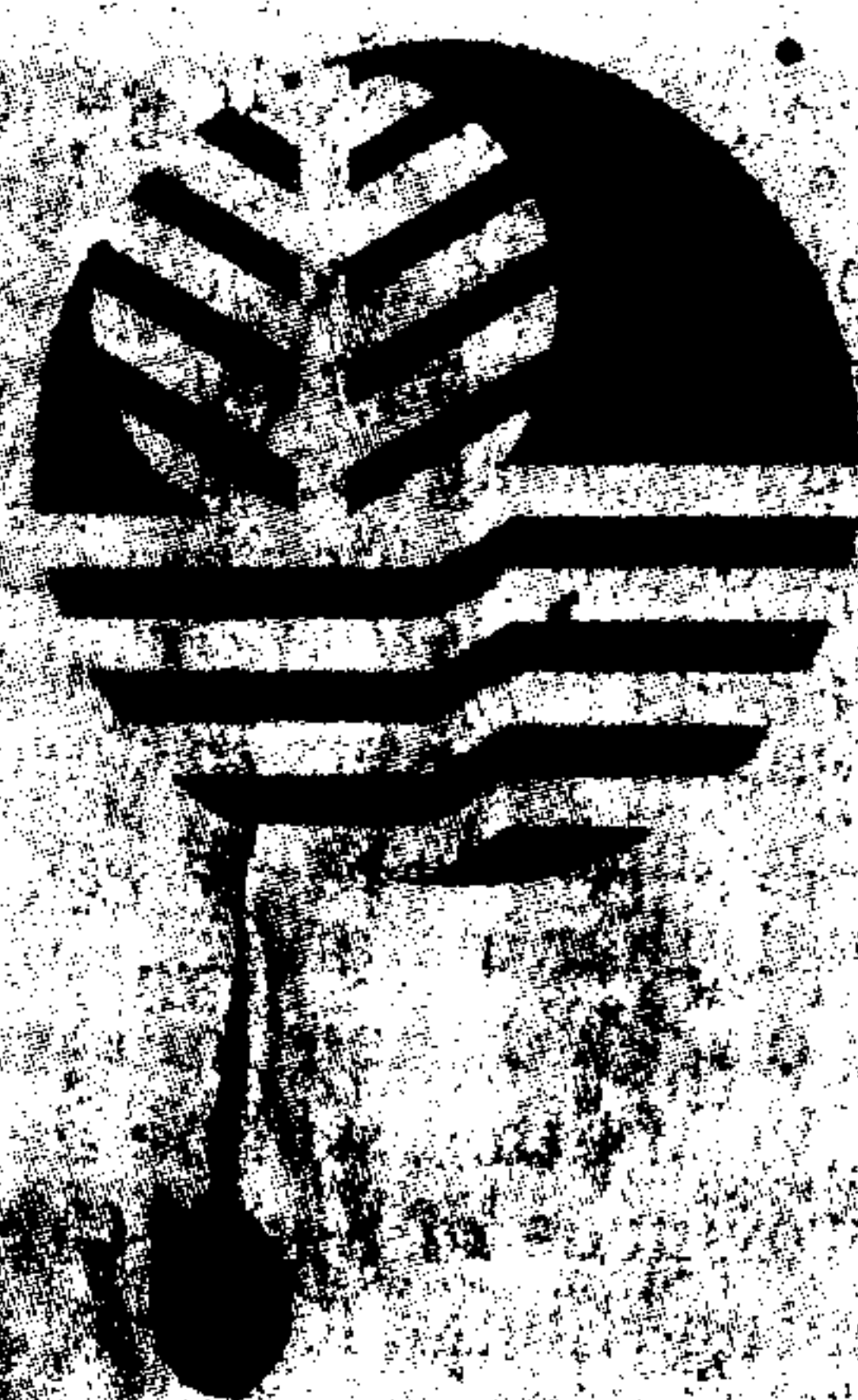
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Department of
Environment and
Natural Resources

join the nation in celebrating

Earth Day

April 22, 2016

Trees for the Earth



Step Up and Deliver, #Green Environment

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20,000 people in Eastern Visayas to mark Earth Day

By **RESTITUTO A. CAYUBIT**

TACLOBAN CITY, Leyte — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources office in Region VIII (DENR-8) is estimating that over 20,000 people from all walks of life in Eastern Visayas will be participating in the Earth Day celebration today, Friday, April 22.

DENR-8 Regional Director Leonardo Sibbaluca told reporters that his office has been drumming up public support for and participation in this event.

Sibbaluca said Earth Day in Eastern Visayas will be highlighted through tree planting and tree seeds potting activities spearheaded by the regional office and field offices of six Provincial En-

vironment and Natural Resources Offices (PENROs) and eleven Community Environment and Natural Resources Offices (CENROs) in the region's six provinces.

He emphasized the need to plant trees for a healthy environment and to combat the effects of climate change. He added that "the trees we plant today will serve as the foundation of a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable planet for all. This Earth Day and beyond, let's share an act of green for Mother Earth. Start planting trees and make a significant impact on the Earth."

Earth Day is an annual event celebrated every April 22 of the year. Today, various events worldwide will be held to demonstrate support for environmental

protection. It was first celebrated in 1970, and today, it is now coordinated globally by the Earth Day Network.

In the Philippines, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo signed Presidential Proclamation 1481 in 2008 declaring April 22 as Philippine Earth Day, in support of the declaration of said date as World Earth Day. The month of April is also declared as the Planet Earth Month per Presidential Proclamation No. 1482 also signed by President Arroyo in 2008.

This year's international theme "Trees for the Earth, Let's get Planting" with the local campaign slogan "Step Up and Deliver, #GreenEnvironment-GawingForever" focuses on the urgent need to plant trees worldwide.

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DENR-Ilocos steps up drive vs illegal logging

By ERWIN G. BELEO

SAN FERNANDO CITY, La Union – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in the Ilocos region is implementing tougher safeguards and measures against individuals involved in activities detrimental to the environment, particularly illegal logging.

The tougher measures were finalized in the memorandum of commitment of DENR- Ilocos region officials led by Regional Director Paquito Moreno, Jr. at the conclusion of the two - day regional management conference in Sarrat, Ilocos Norte recently.

Moreno said that additional checkpoints will be set up to prevent the smuggling and transport of illegally cut logs in Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union and Pangasinan.

Previously, it was reported that several municipalities in the four provinces had been identified as

illegal logging "hotspots," where charcoal and furniture making is the main source of livelihood of residents.

Intelligence reports also revealed that illegally cut logs from the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) and Cagayan Valley gained entry into the region where the contraband are sold for huge profits to furniture shops.

Gwendolyn Bambalan, DENR assistant regional director for technical services, reported that illegal logging activities in those so-called 'hotspot' municipalities were already contained but not totally eradicated.

Bambalan pointed out that to sustain the campaign against illegal logging activities, a closer cooperation among government agencies – DENR, Philippine National Police (PNP) and local government units - and the communities must be established.

On the reported forest fires destroying tree planting areas of the

National Greening Program (NGP) particularly in Western Pangasinan, Moreno warned that DENR extension personnel could be liable for negligence if the incidents were not reported immediately to concerned officials of Community and Environment and Natural Resources Office which has jurisdiction over the area.

He hinted that an investigation is on-going and for the identification and prosecution of those who caused the forest fires.

Meanwhile, Manuel Ydia, chief of the DENR licensing and patents division, said that his office will strictly adhere to rules and regulations before issuing permits for the cutting of trees on private properties and even along public highways.

Ydia said that for every tree cut along public highways due to road expansion project, the contractor is required to plant 100 trees as replacement.

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Forest fire spares protected area in Iloilo

By TARA YAP

ILOILO CITY — A fire that hit a national park in Dingle town, Iloilo province spared a forest protected area in the area.

Jim Sampulna, Regional Director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Western Visayas (DENR-6), said that the 12-hour forest fire at Bulabog National Putian Park did not harm the forestland.

Sampulna said only wild bamboos within a one-hectare site were damaged in the fire which started at around 4:30 p.m. of April 20, 2016 and

was contained at around 5 a.m. of April 21, 2016.

A team consisting of members from the local government of Dingle town, Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP-Iloilo), and DENR-6 worked to stop the fire from spreading.

After the incident, Sampulna reiterated the order to intensify monitoring of forested areas that may be hit by fire, especially sites of the National Greening Program (NGP).

Sampulna emphasized that there must be a quick response mechanism to suppress any other forest fire incident that may occur.

Aside from Iloilo, forest fires have also been recorded in other areas of Panay Island during the past month.

Most notably, an estimated 620 hectares of NGP forestland was damaged by fire in Belison and Culasi towns of Antique province.

Fire also razed almost 20 hectares of forestland in Madalag town, Aklan province while there were also forest fires in Capiz province.

While some were caused by man, the dry spell from the El Niño climate phenomenon is also seen as a contributing factor that has exacerbated forest fires in Panay Island.

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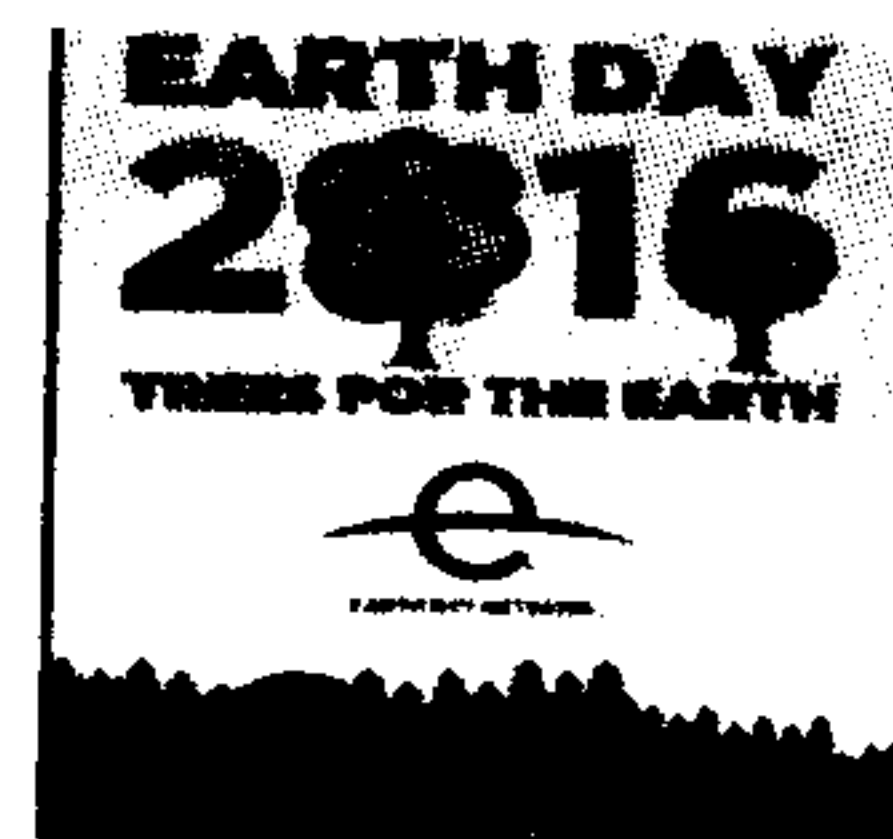
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INFORMATION

Earth Day 2016



THE Earth Day celebration is now on its 46th year. The global observance is led by the Earth Day Network (EDN), "the world's largest recruiter to the environmental movement." EDN works with over 50,000 partners in 196 countries "to build environmental democracy." The network's mission is to broaden and diversify the environmental movement worldwide and mobilize it as the most effective vehicle to build a healthy and sustainable environment. EDN seeks to address the problems resulting from climate change and protect the Earth for future generations.

This year, as Earth Day approaches its 50th anniversary, EDN calls upon individuals, concerned groups, and governments to help achieve one of its most ambitious goals yet, which is planting 7.8 billion trees by the year 2020. Trees will be the first of the five major goals that EDN has set for the five-year countdown to Earth Day's 50th anniversary.

Why trees? Trees help combat climate change by absorbing excess and harmful CO₂ from the atmosphere. In a single year, an acre of mature trees absorbs the same amount of CO₂ produced by driving the average car 26,000 miles. Trees help people

breathe fresh air. They absorb odors and pollutant gases (nitrogen oxides, ammonia, sulfur dioxide, and ozone) and filter particulates out of the air by trapping them on their leaves and barks. Trees help communities achieve long-term economic and environmental sustainability and provide food, energy, and income. Trees protect communities by preventing soil erosion.

EDN also encourages governments and policy makers to divest from fossil fuels, make cities 100% renewable, and ride on the momentum gained from the Paris Climate Summit and built on it.

The first Earth Day, which was held in 1970, gave voice to an emerging consciousness. It helped channel human energy toward environmental issues. Today, Earth Day continues to lead with groundbreaking ideas and by the power of its advocates' example.

In support of the observance of Earth Day 2016, various groups and organizations in the Philippines have lined up numerous activities, including a recyclables fair in Pasig City, an environmental forum in Benguet, tree-planting activities in Pangasinan, a coastal beach clean-up and mangrove-planting in Capiz, a mangrove walk and a

mangrove-planting activity in Leyte, a public awareness and environmental seminar in Misamis Occidental, and an activity dubbed "Love Affair with Nature" in Davao Oriental.

As we mark Earth Day 2016, the Earth Day Network urges us to take matters in our own hands because changing the world starts by changing our own little corner of it.

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BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business

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'Solar Lolas': Lighting up lives



Atty. Patricia A.O. Bunye

WOMEN STEPPING UP

SINCE 1970, April 22 has been celebrated annually as World Earth Day with events all over the globe to demonstrate support for the protection of the environment. Many of the events are symbolic and are focused mainly on raising awareness about environmental issues. A welcome development is the increased attention to the role of women and girls as agents of change, particularly in underdeveloped communities, not just on World Earth Day, but every day.

Recognizing this, Diwata-Women in Resource Development Inc. (Diwata), together with the Philippine Mine Safety and Environment Association (PMSEA) and the Land Rover Club of the Philippines (LRCP) (collectively, the "Project Partners"), with the support of the Embassy of India in the Philippines, embarked on a project called "Tanging Tanglaw: Turning IP Grandmothers into Solar Engineers." It aims to empower indigenous peoples (IP), particularly grandmothers (i.e., mature women who are no longer the primary caregivers of their families) by teaching them how to harness solar power to light up their communities.

The project involves sending illiterate and unskilled women to the Barefoot College in Tilonia, India, to attend a six-month training course on solar engineering, specifically, fabricating, installing, repairing and maintaining solar lighting equipment. The Barefoot College was founded by Sanjit "Bunker" Roy, named one of *TIME Magazine's* most influential people in 2010. The Barefoot College provides training in, among others, solar technology, in the belief that even the uneducated poor have the right to use technologies to improve their life and skills.

Based on the many years of experience of the Barefoot College, wom-

en, rather than men, are specifically chosen because, after receiving their training, the women return to their villages to influence daily life and play a major role in their development rather than migrating to other places as men or younger community members might.

The Project Partners arranged the logistics and assisted the Barefoot College and the government of India to select a group of four Aeta women, namely, Evelyn Clemente, Sharon Flores, Cita Diaz, and Magda Salvador (a.k.a the "Solar Lolas") to undergo a six-month, live-in training at the Barefoot College. Evelyn and Sharon are from Gala, Zambales, while Cita and Magda are from Bamban, Tarlac. They departed for India on September 16, 2014, and returned on March 16, 2015. Their return has generated much interest from the media and the general public.

During their six months of training at the Barefoot College with other women from different countries, the four grandmothers learned solar engineering and other livelihood activities, such as making mosquito nets and sanitary napkins. Learning complex new concepts and interacting with people of different cultures built their self-confidence and fueled their desire to be agents of positive change in their villages. One of the

Based on years of experience of the Barefoot College, women, rather than men, are specifically chosen because, after receiving their training, they return to their villages to influence daily life and play a major role in their development rather than migrating to other places as men or younger community members might do.

highlights of their training was a meeting with United Nations Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, at the UNDP Headquarters in New Delhi.

Upon returning to their respective villages, each pair of solar grandmothers will be responsible for solar-electrifying 100 households. In the case of Bamban, Tarlac, electrification is currently nonexistent and most of the households use kerosene lamps for lighting. On the other hand, electricity is available in Gala, Zambales, but not all the families avail themselves of it. The Solar Lolas will assume the responsibility for installing and maintaining the solar panels and lamps for a minimum of five years.

Once the communities are solar-electrified, qualitative improvements in the communities' standard of living are expected, as the members will be able to use electrical appliances and gadgets, enabling them to become more productive. The children, in particular, will be able to study at night, learn to use computers, and possibly access the internet.

In the year since the Solar Lolas returned from India, the Project Partners have worked hard to raise the amount of P2.6 million for each community of 100 households. As of this writing, the required solar equipment have arrived from India and are awaiting release by the Bureau of Customs. The Solar Lolas are expected to begin installing them in the two pilot communities within the next two to three months.

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BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business

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'Solar Lolos' : Lighting up lives

The response to Tanging Tanglaw has been most gratifying. Support has poured in not just from corporations that are keen on adopting this business model as a corporate social responsibility initiative, but also from individuals who have contributed modest amounts to add to the project fund.

Other like-minded organizations, such as the Filipina CEOS Circle, and even the Bases Conversion and Development Authority and Clark Development Corp., have stepped forward to provide support.

It has been pointed out to that cheaper solar panels are available locally. However, our project does not simply involve providing lights, but also giving our Solar Lolos and their communities the means to improve their lives. I personally witnessed how shy and unsure our Solar Lolos were when they departed for India. Upon meeting them at the airport as they stepped off their flight, I was completely amazed at how their training transformed them into confident, self-assured and articulate role models for their communities.

In communities abroad where the Barefoot College model has been successfully implemented, solar electricity has been provided to schools, hospitals, local administration offices, religious buildings and community centers. Most important, the projects have managed to reduce carbon-dioxide emissions, slow the negative impacts of deforestation and decrease air pollution from burning firewood and kerosene. It is envisioned that the local communities served by our Solar Lolos will derive similar benefits, if it takes one household at a time. More important, the Solar Lolos are now themselves beacons of light who have the power to change others.

Patricia A. O. Bunye is the founding president of Diwata-Women in Resource Development Inc. She is also a senior partner at Cruz Marcelo & Tenebrancia and heads its Mining and Energy practice. E-mail her at po.bunye@cruzmarcelo.com.

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'P-Noy killed land reform program'

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Farmers reach Metro
after 122-km march,
accuse gov't of
neglecting them

LUCENA CITY—Reaching Metro Manila after an eight-day, 122-kilometer march, a group of farmers from Quezon province staged a protest camp in front of the offices of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Quezon City to assail what they said was the Aquino administration's failure to fully implement land reform.

"President Aquino killed the government land reform program," said Janseph Geronimo, spokesperson of the Kilusan para sa Tunay na Repormang Agraryo at Katarungang Panlipunan (Katarungan), on Thursday.

He said farmers nationwide had long been demanding genuine land reform but ignored by Malacañang.

"[Mr. Aquino's] heart really belongs to his fellow hacenderos and not to the poor farmers," Geronimo said.

He also assailed the five presidential candidates for supposedly ignoring problems faced by millions of Filipino farmers.

"They are all busy throwing

mud at each other," he said. "They don't seem to understand that most tillers are now sick and dying due to government negligence and apathy," he said.

On April 12, at least 200 farmers from Quezon started the 122-km walk from Sariaya town to Metro Manila to appeal to the Supreme Court to order the full implementation of the agrarian reform program in the Bondoc Peninsula area and stop the revocation of land titles already given by the government to Sariaya farmers as part of land reform.

The marchers also appealed to the high court to return the multi-billion-peso levy forcibly collected



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Albay, DENR launch sustainable program against climate change

LEGAZPI CITY — Albay, which was declared recently by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) as a world biosphere reserve, recently launched a sustainable ecosystems-management program with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) aimed at mitigating the impacts of climate change in the province.

The Albay-DENR partnership agreement signed last week provides for the establishment of the Sustainable Coral Reef Ecosystem Management Program (SCREMP). The program initially covers the municipalities of Oas, Libon, Pioduran and Ligao City, all in the West Coast of the province, and placed under the supervision of the Albay Provincial Agricultural Services (PAS). It includes a livelihood component, to be managed by legitimate people's organizations, which is deemed critical to sustainability by providing alternative cash flows to slow down, among others, overfishing, Salceda said.

Auder their signed agreement, Albay and DENR each donated P100,000 to each of the four local governments for the livelihood component of the program, to be administered by selected people's organizations which have initially identified hog, goat and poultry raising, marketing of their requirements and produce, and fishing among the feasible livelihood ventures. A 30-foot fiber-glass boat with 16 horse power engine and P40,000 worth of gasoline were also donated to each of the four local governments, for use in surveillance and enforcement.

Albay Gov. Joey Salceda said SCREMP aims to promote sustainable management of coastal and marine resources, including biodiversity, through habitat protection, conservation and rehabilitation, as well as IEC to promote public awareness and social and environmental consciousness on the value of coral reefs, and associated coastal and marine ecosystems on mitigating the impacts of climate change.

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Climate commission seeks review of gov't energy policies

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) is urging energy planners to review policies in the sector – propounding that such must lean on curbing the dominance of coal technology and propagating the installation of renewable energy facilities.

CCC Secretary Emmanuel de Guzman said the country would need to update its energy roadmap so it can now keep pace with transition to cleaner

energy sources from the previously favored domain of fossil fuel-based project developments.

“This allows the Philippines to not only contribute to global efforts to combat climate change but reduce growing economic and financial risks associated with carbon intensive energy sources such as coal,” he stressed.

The Department of Energy (DOE) has already sounded off plans of craft-

ing a fuel mix policy that shall be the country's guiding path into a low carbon energy future.

The agency though is batting for a legislative measure on this sphere – an action plan that it may need to lodge with the upcoming administration.

The Philippine government has submitted its intended nationally determined contribution (INDC) to carbon reduction with the

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United Nations-led climate change diplomacy body. Its target is for up to 70 percent reduction on carbon emissions onward to year 2030.

This will not only involve the power sector – although much of the noise is directed on energy as many of the power plants coming on stream are coal plants – purposively to address the country's dire need for baseload capacity additions.

According to the climate change body, long-term institutional inves-

tors are now “increasing treating carbon as a long-term risk and are divesting from fossil enterprises from their investment portfolio and moving to greener sources of energy.”

De Guzman thus stressed that “we must seize the opportunity now. A decisive transition to clean energy is good for the climate and makes financial and economic sense.” He added “it is now imperative for our country to adjust energy models with the global trend in renewable energy use in mind in order to come up with roadmaps with definitive actions for the power sector.”

Such, he envisioned will then spread to the transport sector as well as other key industries and segments currently labeled as environment offenders. (MMV)



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Mining ban in Romblon, other provinces against law, says GFI

Provinces that recently passed an ordinances banning mining in their localities violated mining laws which is supposed to be harnessed and not muzzled as provided by the Constitution.

Dante Bravo, president of Global Ferronickel Holdings Inc., a listed firm that mines nickel in Surigao del Norte, said more and more provinces and municipalities have violated the law on mining upon passing ordinances disallowing operation of either local or foreign mining firms.

Aside from violating the constitution, the provinces are also committing non-impairment of obligations of contract.

The most recent provinces that committed the violation, according to Bravo, are Romblon, Marinduque and South Cotabato. Aside from mining ban, there is also a snowballing of anti-mining campaigns that started decades back.

"There were municipalities and provinces that passed ordinances banning mining in their area,

which is illegal. There are local leaders who lead in anti-mining campaigns or who put pressure on mining companies to stop operations or to ask for anything under the sun," Bravo told the *Daily Tribune*.

He said the number of areas banning mining is expected to rise as the campaign against it is gaining ground in many provinces. Bravo said the only hope left for mining firms is the intervention of courts that know that the passing of anti-mining ordinance is

prohibited.

Nevertheless, Bravo expressed relief as several courts issued injunction against the ordinance. "Cases of injunction from Romblon and Zamboanga del Norte have already prospered and declared said ordinances illegal," he added.

GFI is one of the two listed mining firms operating in Claver, Surigao del Norte aside from Nickel Asia. It operates in a 4,300-hectare non-arable land in the municipality claimed to be owned by Mamanwa and Manobo tribes.

In order to settle the issue with indigenous people, GFI paid P400 million in royalties. It also has plenty of corporate social responsibility acts that target non-mining barangays in the province.

Its operations is relatively lesser compared to Nickel Asia that has four large operation sites in the province, according to statistics. Other prominent mining firms in the country are Benguet Mining, Rio Tuba, Taganito and Cagdinao based on revenues and net income.

Ed Velasco

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The Manila Times

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Poe's quixotic quest for justice

BY DONG A. DE LOS REYES
COLUMNIST

IN Feb. 2013, Philex Mining Corp. bled P1.034 billion for violation of the Mining Act of 1995. A year later, Philex coughed up an additional P188.6 million to pay for damages wrought on Agno River and Balog Creek from a massive tailings spill – 20 tons of sediments – of the Padcal copper-gold mine in Itogon, Benguet.

Also, Philex had to carry out rehab work and cleanup activities in the mine environs – but untold damage had been done and it may take decades to bring life back to the Agno-Balog waterway that had been a source of drinking water, irrigation for crops,

► **De los Reyes A6**

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

■ DE LOS REYES FROM A1

Poe's quixotic quest for justice

food, and livelihood to several communities along the waterway. Philex lost money; the people lost a way of life that the river, turned "biologically dead," once bequeathed.

There are truckloads of statutes meant to safeguard the environment; but there will always be tragic lapses attended by human error or spawned by sheer stupidity – that can hold the 54-million-strong Filipino electorate in thrall – that can touch off disasters and wreak horrors on the environs. So sad, stupidity cannot be outlawed.

At around 9 p.m. on Aug. 16, 2013, Express Siete, a Davao-bound cargo vessel with 20 tons of diesel and 120 tons of bunker fuel in its hold, was leaving the Port of Cebu when it rammed into an incoming passenger ferry, Aquinas – fatality count, 116 people. The consequent oil spill slathered black the coastline of Cordova town, killed off local marine life, and harrowed dead the source of livelihood for the town's marginal fishermen and their families.

The local government and some fishers went on to file a case, seeking P132 million to pay for the complete rehab of Cordova's marine environment. Fisherfolk are still pressing for P81 million in damages to cover for loss of livelihood caused by the oil spill. Kith and kin of the passengers who perished in the maritime disaster can only grieve, reluctant to pursue a case against the shipowner firms. Litigation of such a sort can drag for eternity – that fritters away time, money, even sanity.

In Metro Manila, a Pasig City-based chemicals manufacturing firm had been found to have dumped high levels of copper, manganese, lead, nickel, and zinc – heavy metals murder-



TWO
CENTS

DONG A. DE
LOS REYES

ous to human health – into an already heavily polluted Pasig River. Nobody has bothered to step forward to sue the firm; it would be a legal tussle between a moth and a behemoth.

But someone is out on a Don Quixote quest for justice for the aggrieved people, for the communities sundered and suffering, and for the environment. Statecraft calls for it.

"There have been many instances of man-made environmental damages like the 1996 Marcopper Mining tragedy in Marinduque that led to the biological death of Boac and Makalupnit rivers, destroyed hectares of farmlands, and displaced families. The 2005 and 2007 massive fish kills in Rapu-Rapu, Albay touched off by cyanide spills from the mining operations of Lafayette Philippines, Inc. also caused untold damage to the community. However, despite these environmental disasters, there is still no policy to ensure adequate compensation for communities affected by man-made disasters," cites lawmaker-turned-aspirant for the presidency Grace Poe.

Poe had been pushing for a mandatory environmental insurance coverage for owners and operators of environmentally critical businesses. Such insurance "will be used to compensate for damages and to rehabilitate any environmental impairment caused by their operation.

"The mandatory environmental insurance coverage is designed to relieve a business firm of the financial burden to spend for environmental loss or damage arising from its project's construction or operation. It

will answer for all claims for the payment of damages to health and property, environmental rehabilitation, remediation, and clean-up costs and expenses," Poe explains.

Business operations hereabouts have yet to take on an emerging paradigm for the new millennium – the triple bottom-line that sees sustainable profits in terms of (1) monetary returns to investors; (2) financial impact on the people and the local economy/community where the business operates; and (3) impact on the environment. Poe's policy uptake is hinged on such a paradigm: profitable, people-friendly, and earth-friendly.

"Although the government recognizes the indispensable role of the private sector, encourages private enterprise, and provides incentives to needed investments, it is also imperative for the government 'to protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthy ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature,' as enshrined in the 1987 Constitution," she points out.

There will always be men and corporations in mad pursuit of profits, but there will be those with a heart that know what corporate social responsibility means and Poe's envisioned policy for environment-friendly business will resonate.

The Poe vision will not exactly win her brownie points from the environmentally retarded or approval from businesses that will have to allocate a portion of their capital expenditures for a mandatory environmental insurance coverage. No matter.

True-brown leaders like Poe need not be popular. But she is a populist.

tagakataga@yahoo.com

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THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS



Mussel divers. Despite the dangers posed by the polluted waters of Manila Bay, divers wearing goggles and improvised swimming fins harvest mussels to be sold in nearby markets.

PHOTO BY RHOY COBILLA

The Manila Times

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Poe eyes cap on coal use

SEN. Grace Poe has vowed to give priority to the development of clean energy sources, saying she will limit the use of coal.

Poe, who cited the development of renewable energy sources in her 20-point priority agenda, said the Philippines should start to focus on tapping cleaner and more sustainable energy sources.

"We will put a cap on coal in our energy mix. Such mix will be determined through consultations, taking into account our commitment to reduce carbon emissions under the Paris Agreement," she added.

**ELECTION
2016**
**17 DAYS
TO GO**

The Department of Energy (DOE) estimates that the Philippines will need 13,167 megawatts of additional power capacity by 2030. Of this, 8,548 MW are expected to be generated by baseload power plants or facilities that produce energy at a constant rate to meet the continuous energy demand.

Coal-fired power plants are the dominant energy-producing technology because it is deemed cheaper and easier to build. There are 23 coal-fired power plants in the Philippines, providing 5,632 megawatts of power or 34.2 percent of dependable power capacity.

The cost of building coal plants, however, does not consider the external costs of coal such as pollution and health impacts, the World Bank said, and if these were taken into account, coal would be among the most expensive forms of power generation.

"[Coal, of course, has environmental impacts. If I become President, my priority would be] clean and alternative sources of energy," Poe told reporters in an interview

in Iligan City in Mindanao on Wednesday night.

She noted that the total committed and indicative coal-fired power plants built between 2012 and 2030 can already deliver 11,992 megawatts, exceeding the country's baseload capacity requirement of 8,400 MW, as indicated in the Philippine Energy Plan.

"Ang importante magkaroon tayo ng mas maraming supply ng kuryente at sana patungo na rin sa renewable energy. 'Yan ang dapat agenda ng bagong Pangulo [What is important is that we will have sufficient power supply and we're on our way to renewable energy. That should be the agenda of the new President]," Poe said.

She added that she also wants to make sure that power becomes more affordable to Filipinos, who are paying one of the highest electricity rates in the world.

"Kung maraming supply, mas mababa ang singil. Kaya sisiguraduhin ko na maraming supply para hindi tayo nagbabayad ng napakataas para sa kuryente [If supply is sufficient, the cost will be lower. So I will make sure that we will have ample supply and we will not pay such high prices for power]," the senator said.

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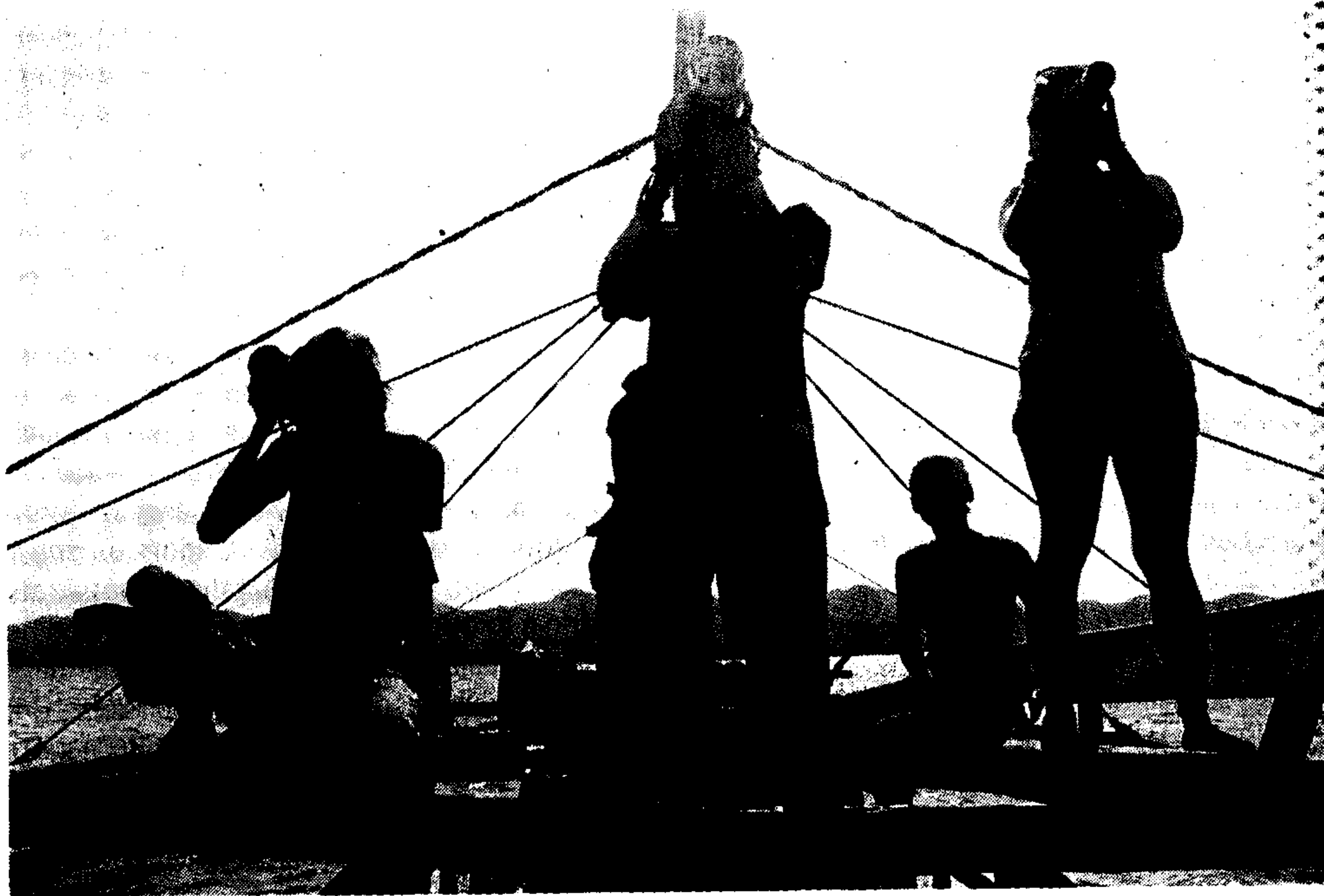
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

HumpBACKS

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Humpbacks lure whale watchers to Babuyan



PHOTOS BY MELATI KAYE/CONTRIBUTOR

and waters often murky—tough for under-water observations.

So rich are the waters of the Luzon Strait that in 2014, the local fishermen's association asked for help in setting up a marine protected area.

Poaching from Taiwanese vessels is the biggest problem, according to the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.

Dynamite fishing by local fishermen and the use of hand-operated beach trawlers are also troubling.

“Based on what I know from other sites, like Hawaii, mothers who have given birth or are just about to give birth prefer calmer areas like a cove or a bay to stay over rough waters,” said Acebes. Local fishermen are now using motorboats, which is worrisome.

“For humpbacks, any disturbance in the environment is significant. They are very sensitive to sound,” she said.

(Editor's Note: Melati Kaye is a science writer based in Southeast Asia.)

WHALE WATCHERS

Balyenas founder Jo Marie Acebes (right) and other volunteers photograph a humpback whale as its tail breaks the waters west of Camiguin de Babuyan in northern Luzon.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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HUM PBACIS . . .

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whales, and getting close enough to get a clear picture of their tails.

Photos are then matched against multiple albums of whale tail photos to determine if the whale in question has visited the Babuyan waters before or been photographed by researchers in other breeding or feeding grounds.

Acebes and scientists in Japan have found one instance where a whale commuted from the Babuyans to the coast of Japan and back in the space of a month. They also have matched another individual to Alaskan waters.

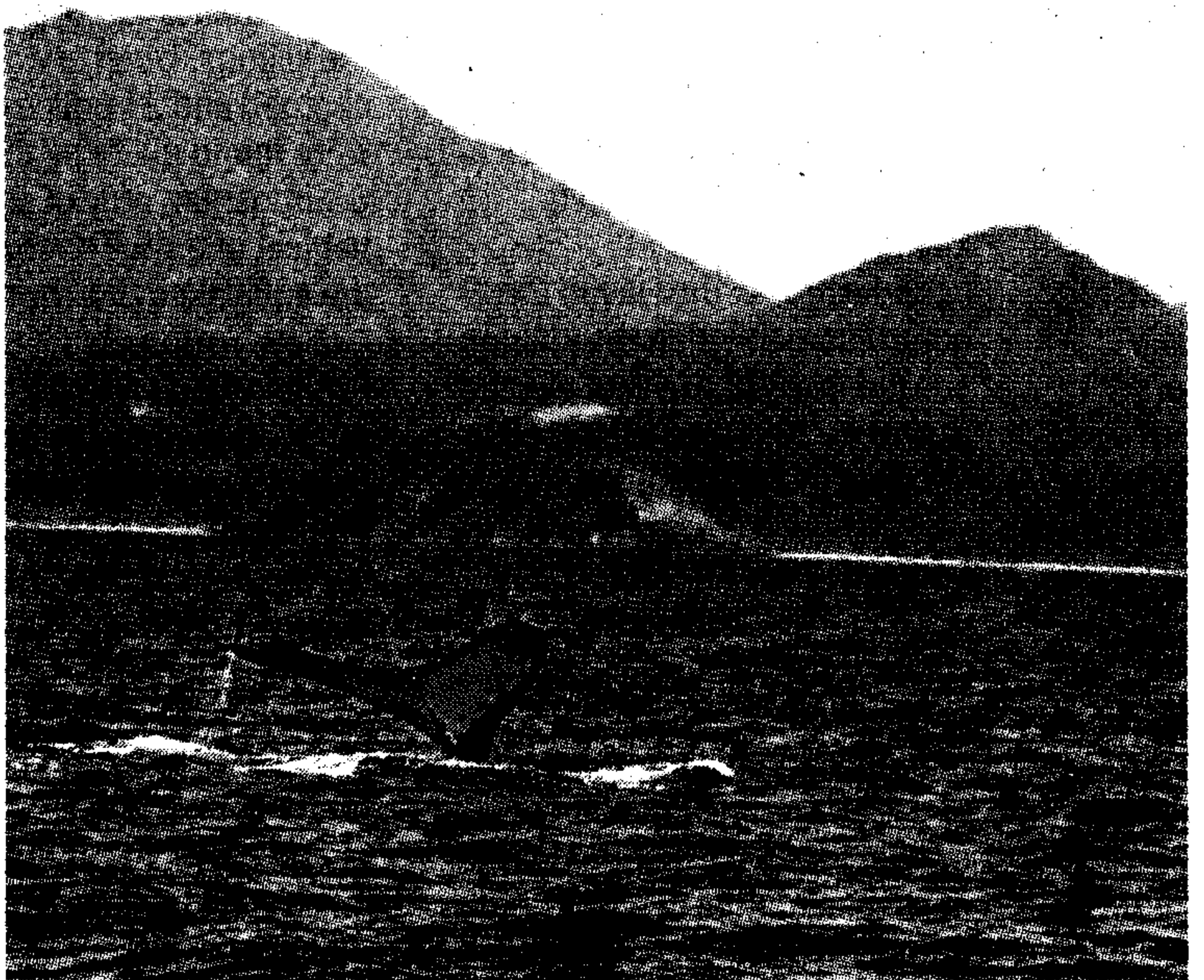
Doc Jom, as islanders call her, records whale songs using underwater microphones.

"We have found that songs here are similar to the songs recorded in Hawaii and Japan, which means that the whales are mixing and learning from one another," she said.

Genetic data

Acebes is also gathering genetic data with a crossbow to collect biopsies (flesh plugs). "It's difficult, you need to be 50 meters from the whale," she said.

Acebes laments there is so much more research to be done on one of the world's least studied humpback whale populations. In part, Balyena's is stymied with a meager P460,000 budget ("in a good year"). Also, the currents near the Babuyans are swift



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HUMPBCKS

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Humpbacks lure whale watchers to Babuyan

By Melati Kaye
Contributor

A DISTANT splash breaks the flat gold sheen of the ocean off the Babuyan island group.

"One o'clock, three kilometers," Jo Marie Acebes yells. The captain of her outrigger changes course.

The chase is on for a photo shoot of humpback whales of the North Pacific in their southernmost breeding ground. Annually, these creatures—each the length of a basketball court and weighing 22,000 to 36,000 kilograms—migrate from the

HUMPBCKS/A19

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Arctic to these balmy Babuyan waters to mate and breed.

This also makes the remote islands stage to one of the world's least understood underwater symphonies. Humpback whales purr, moan and squeak in repeated sequences better known as "whalesong."

The behemoths reserve these recitals for their breeding grounds—off Hawaii and Okinawa and the waters between the Philippines and Taiwan.

Only males sing. At first, it was assumed that the songs were for attracting females. This theory was disputed when it was noticed that males only "sing" to other males.

Acebes, director of the research nonprofit Balyena, has studied the seasonal whale migration since 1999, when a local resort owner alerted the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), where she was employed, to the event.

She has since regularly visited the area to catch the peak of the mating season (March through May). After receiving a doctoral degree from Murdoch University in Australia in 2007, Acebes moved from WWF to Balyena.

The Philippine seas are home to half the known whale species and to date, most of that diversity has been documented around the Visayas. Dolphins of South Negros and whale sharks off Cebu province are the most famous instances.

Unique creatures

But there are a number of unique creatures whose behavior have not been studied extensively by scientists.

For example, the Tañon Strait between Cebu and Negros islands has a large population of dwarf sperm whales who squirt ink when pursued. In the Babuyan waters, false killer whales, pilot and melonhead whales are frequently sighted near humpback pods.

So far, Acebes has identified 240 unique individual humpback whales in the Babuyan area. Eleven have been matched to whales spotted off Okinawa; another 28 have been spotted wintering off Russia's eastern Siberian peninsula of Kamchatka.

Though the distances between these habitats are vast, the process of divining the populations' links is relatively simple.

Each individual humpback whale's tail and dorsal fin is unique like a human's fingerprints. Acebes and her team of five volunteers spend eight hours a day spotting

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

El Niño-affected families urge govt to step up drought response



FACING THE CHALLENGE Environment advocates gather to assess national and local governments' readiness to address the devastating effect of El Niño during an Oxfam International workshop held at University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City (Metro Manila). PHOTO BY RUY L. MARTINEZ

DROUGHT-STRICKEN farmers and fisherfolk from the Visayas and Mindanao raised their concerns to officials from the national government agencies during the El Niño Response forum on Thursday, urging for immediate action to address the needs of El Niño-affected families.

Marceda Sibya, 36-year-old mother of two who is also a farmer from Pigcawayan, North Cotabato told the attendees they have been struggling to feed their families as drought left them with nothing to toil.

Sibya and her family were among the many who are hardest hit by the weather phenomenon. Latest figures from the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) indicate that nearly 200,000 farmers from across the country are affected by drought, as damage to crops – mostly rice, corn and high value crops – reached P6.5 billion.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), on the other hand, has placed the number of

those affected at 457,497 or almost half a million families.

The farmer and fishermen leaders from Mindanao and the Visayas attended the international workshop at the University of the Philippines (UP) in Diliman, Quezon City.

Jermaine Bayas, Disaster Risk Reduction and Response Coordinator of Oxfam said their assessments in selected municipalities in North Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat and Maguindanao showed that farmers and their families are experiencing hunger, without enough food stocks, nor enough cash to buy food.

"People will be needing immediate food and emergency livelihood assistance, as we anticipate this situation to last for the next 3-8 months. It will take some time for them to recover lost incomes and livelihoods," Bayas said.

World Food Program (WFP) assessments in Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao validate observations that food insecurity has turned from bad

to worse, as more than a third of total households eat fewer than three meals a day. almost 50 percent of families are now adapting emergency coping strategies, as they begin to sell farm animals and other assets.

The region is also home to a large number of households suffering from mild, moderate and severe chronic food insecurity. Extensive damage to rice and corn production in Region XII is feared to further aggravate this situation.

Bayas added that the situation is even more volatile in conflict-affected areas in Mindanao like Maguindanao.

"The tragedy of the situation that confronts us today with El Niño is that we have had enough evidence ahead of time to make plans. In fact, we do have plans, and we do have funds for these, and yet we have failed some of our communities, who have yet to see these plans implemented," said Erwin Alampay, director of University of the Philippines Center for Local and Regional Governance (UP-CLRG).

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

El Niño is a lesson in food self-sufficiency – agri chief

BY JAMES KONSTANTIN GALVEZ
REPORTER

THE El Niño episode clearly shows the need for government to continue pursuing self-sufficiency, not only in paddy rice production but also in other food staples, said Agriculture Secretary Proceso Alcala.

"We should really take a close look at our importation program. When rice exporting countries are also hit by El Niño and prices shoot up, are we just going to surrender our production and put the fate of our nation to just importing rice?" Alcala told reporters on the sideline of the Agri-Pinoy Rice Achievers Award in Pasay City on Thursday.

Rice is thinly traded and global trade of the commodity is highly concentrated, he said.

Only 7 percent of the global production is sold outside national borders, with the top five exporters accounting for 80 percent of total exports.

This makes importing countries vulnerable to export bans or restrictions, Alcala noted.

"At present, when prices . . . are still low, importation is ideal. What if prices shoot up over \$1,000 per metric ton? What will happen to us?" he said, citing a possible repeat of the 2008 food crisis.

Alcala was reacting to reports that the drought has impacted negatively on agriculture output in several countries.

sions by governments of the biggest market players. Such governments consider rice a vital commodity.

Rice traders and exporters are now closely monitoring Manila's importation policy as it prepares for the lean months.

NFA Administrator Renan Dalisay said the Food Security Committee has yet to decide on a rice importation scheme for the buffer stock requirements as the inventory at state-owned warehouses remained high.

"We are considering all options. It is still harvest season, so the arrival of the imported rice should still fall during the lean months," Dalisay said in a text message to The Manila Times.

The lean months are July, August, and September.

Alcala is urging the NFA to buy more locally produced palay on the heels of reports that farmgate prices remain below profitable levels.

"I will write a letter to the NFA administrator to prioritize local procurement. Farmers should not be the last recourse," the DA chief said, "If they need to rent, they should rent. Lack of warehousing

The ongoing drought has caused a fall in rice supply and stockpiles in many parts of the world, particularly in the three largest rice exporters—India, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Thailand is not increase rice exports while Vietnam expects a slight drop in paddy rice production this year.

The Philippines, on the other hand, is expected to fail anew in achieving self-sufficiency due to drought as palay production falls below the full-year target.

The official emphasized global market realizes make rice self-sufficiency a desirable goal. He said rice trading is the subject of political deci-

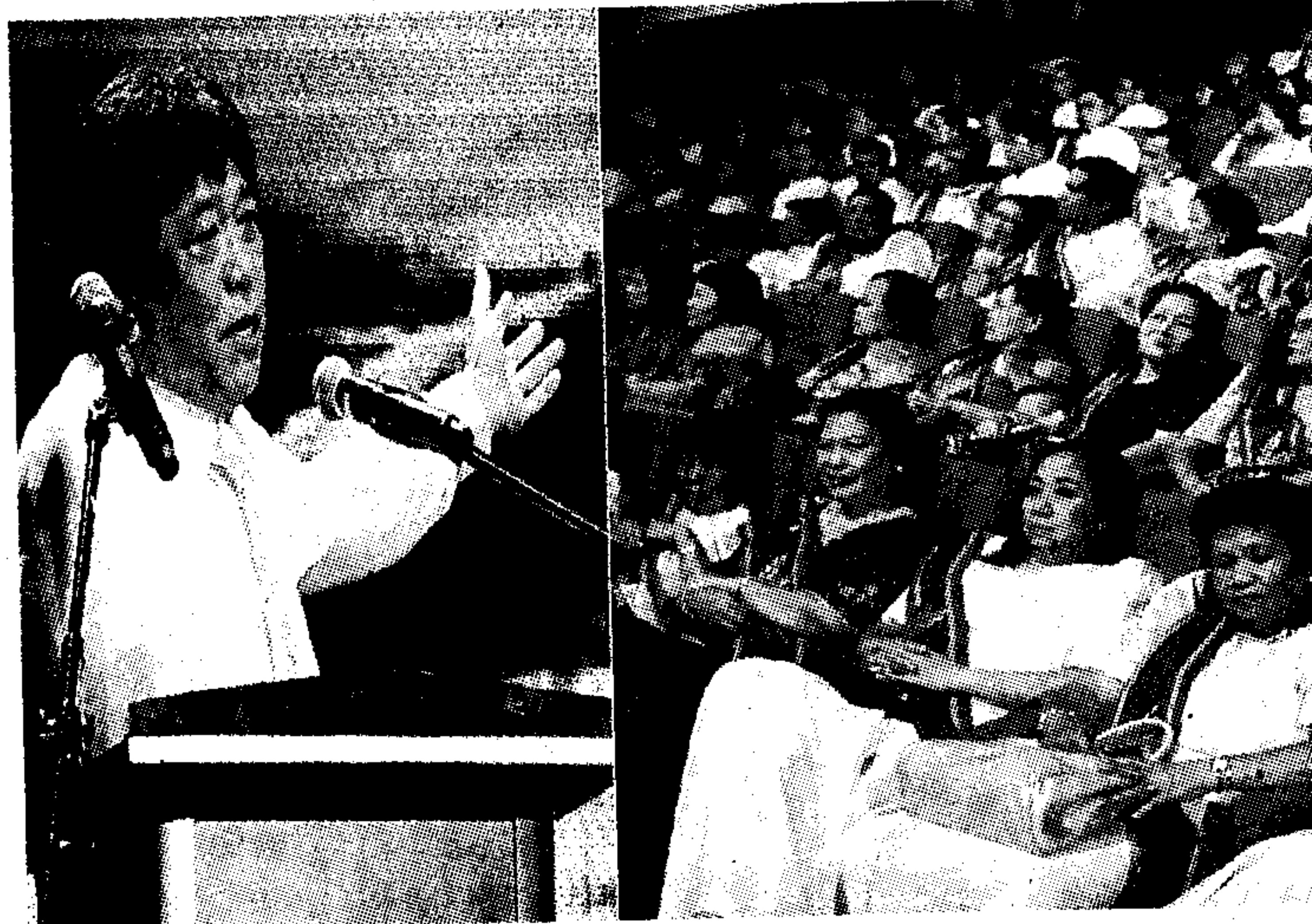
should not be a reason not to buy from farmers."

Despite the El Niño, government expects palay production not to fall significantly last year as damage caused by the drought seemed negligible.

"At the start of the El Nino, we have projected damage of around 950,000 MT of palay. But as of April 14 this year, we have sustained only about 233,000 MT, which means that our mitigation programs were effective," Alcala claimed.

Palay production is forecast to reach 18.15 million MT for 2016.

Alcala said the department is aiming for 19 million MT.



■ Agriculture Secretary Proceso Alcala (left) gestures to emphasize a point in his speech during the 2015 Agri-Pinoy Rice Achievers Awards ceremony at the Newport Performing Arts Theater in Resorts World Manila, Pasay City on Wednesday. PNA PHOTO

BusinessWorld

INCREASE YOUR BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

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El Niño less damaging to rice than expected

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) has maintained its *palay* production estimate for 2016 at just under a million metric tons (MT) over 2015 levels, saying it is confident that damage from the strongest El Niño to ever hit the country will be less than initially expected.

"We're still targeting 19 million MT," Department of Agriculture Chief Proceso J. Alcala told reporters on the sidelines of the Agri-Pinoy awards on Tuesday. In 2015, *palay* production was 18.15-million MT, down 4.31% from a year earlier.

According to Mr. Alcala, the initial proposed budget for 2016 was drafted with a view towards *palay* output of about 20-million MT, but not all proposals were approved on review.

On DA's expectation of a possible contraction in the first quarter, Mr. Alcala said: "What's possible is that if *palay* dips big time, it will be only one third of projected damage loss."

The DA said the forecast, prepared at the tail end of 2015, anticipated *palay* losses from the

El Niño at 957,000 MT. "But as of April 14, reports say that lost *palay* production is just at 233,000 MT," said Mr. Alcala.

When asked if *palay* output can recover in the second quarter from the projected dip in the first three months of the year, Mr. Alcala said: "The second quarter marks the beginning of the summer cropping. If it does not dip so much, that would be good enough for us."

Mr. Alcala also assured that the Philippines prepared for the dry spell by importing

500,000 MT of rice before the first quarter, when official weather forecasters said the dry spell would intensify.

In September, the inter-agency Food Security Committee allowed the National Food Authority to proceed with procurement of 500,000 MT by the first quarter of 2016 via state-to-state deals as means to top up buffer stocks in anticipation of a severe El Niño.

According to the weather agency PAGASA's El Niño advisory last month, "climate models

suggest gradual weakening of El Niño in the March-April-May 2016 season" but still advised agencies to take precautionary action and intervention measures to mitigate the adverse impact of El Niño.

When asked if the country is ready for a disaster on the magnitude of the 2007-2008 rice crisis considering the impact of the El Niño that has hit several countries including Vietnam and Thailand, the world's biggest rice exporters, Mr. Alcala said the country, a top importer of rice should depend

too heavily on satisfying domestic demand via trade.

During the 2007-2008 rice crisis, global prices shoot up by 300% to \$1000 per MT in the span of four months.

Mr. Alcala said the targets set in the 2017 Agriculture budget will revisit the 20-million metric ton level initially contemplated in 2016.

"Currently we're in the process for budget preparation for 2017... we're double-checking how to increase production [aims] to more than 19 million MT," the secretary said. — **Janina C. Lim**

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LALO pang iinit ang panahon pero maghanda sa matinding tag-ulan.

Ito ang pahayag ng Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

Malamang na tama ang PAGASA.

Kaya naman, dapat nang tanungin, lalo ang pamahalaan, kung handa na ito sa matinding tag-ulan.

Paano naman ang paghahanda ng mga mamamayan?

TULOY ANG INIT

Sinasabi ng PAGASA na lalo pang makararanas ng sobrang mainit na panahon ang bansa sa mga darating na araw at maaaring lalawig pa ang El Niño.

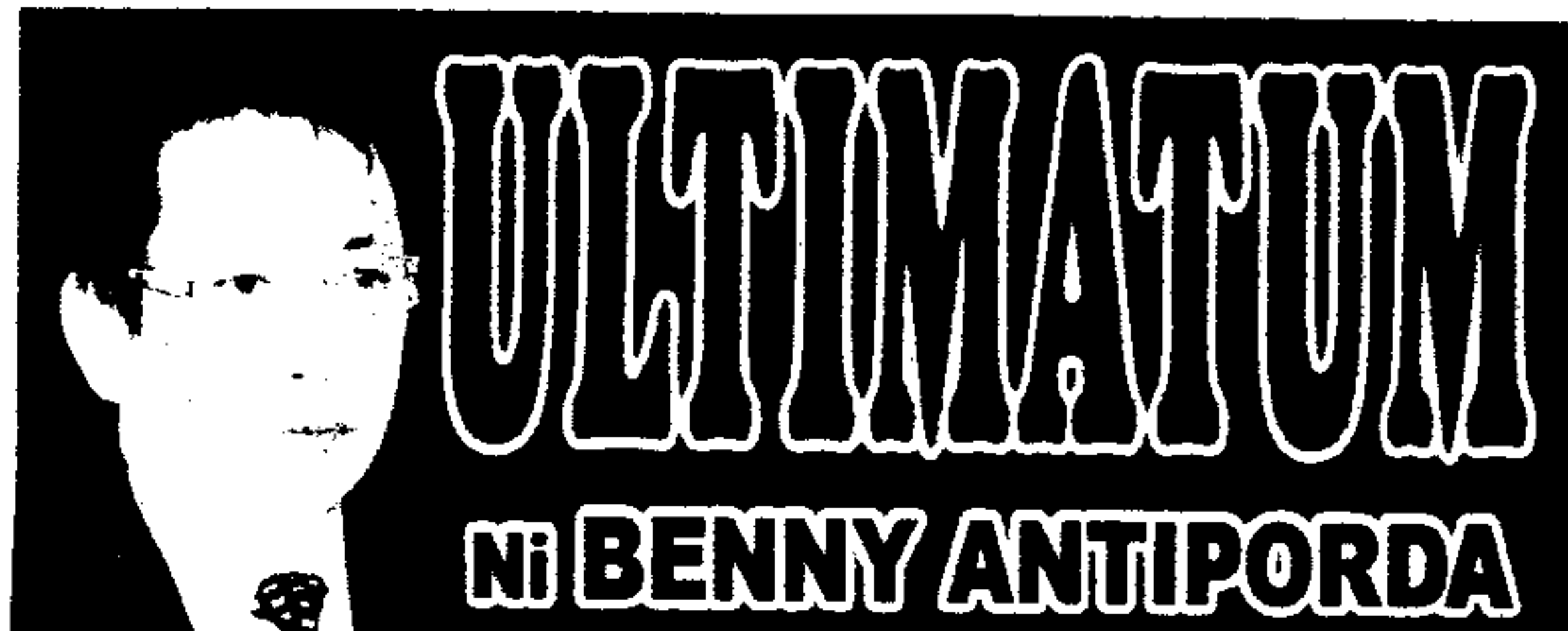
Ito'y sa kabila ng pagkakaroon ng ilang ulap na lilipad-lipad kahit saan ngayon.

Kung ganun, dapat ipagpatuloy ang pag-iingat dahil nakamamatay ang heat stroke at iba pang sakit na dala ng sobrang mainit na panahon.

PAANO SILA?

Pero para sa atin, mga Bro, ang ibig sabihin ng pagpapatuloy ng sobrang init ay ang pagpapatuloy ng gutom at hirap ng milyong magsasaka, mangingisda at naghahayupan.

Sira ang mga pananim at walang makapagtatanim sa hanay ng mga magsasaka habang nagkakaroon ng pagkakasakit at peste ang mga alagang hayop dahil sa kawalan o labis na kakulangan ng malinom na tubig at sariwang damo o halamang naakain.



EL NIÑO NGAYON, LA NIÑA NAMAN BUKAS

matitinding ulan at grabeng landslide at baha.

Ito ang sinasabi ng PAGASA na mararanasan ng mahal kong Pinas sa pagsapit ng La Niña na maaaring tumama sa bansa mula Oktubre hanggang Disyembre.

Maaaring maulit umano ang bagyong Sendong na tumama sa Mindanao noong Disyembre 15-16, 2011.

Sa bagyong ito, may 1,292 na patay, 1,049 na missing at 2,002 na sugatan.

May 40,000 tahanan na nasira at 11,463 ang ganap na nawasak.

Bilyon-bilyong piso naman ang halaga ng mga ari-ariang nasira at nasira rin, siyempre, ang buhay ng milyong kataong sinagasaan ng bagyo.

Ang Sendong ay nagangap makaraang sagasaan ang Pinas ng El Niño sa taon ding iyon at sinasabing pinakamalakas at pinakamapanira sa ilang dekada.

Tanging si Yolanda lamang ang nakalalampas ng bangis nito.

Ganyan katindi umano ang La Niña na darating.

Nasaan ang ating mga paghahanda, mga Bro?

ayuda na bigas, walang maibigay ang mga lokal na pamahalaan, maging ang nasyonal na pamahalaan.

Hayun at bala pa nga ang ipinalamon sa mga magsasakang nagrotesta. Paano ang pagdating naman ng La Niña?

GOBYERNO PABAYA

Nagdaan ang mga bagyong Sendong at Yolanda, hanggang ngayon, wala pang masasabing satisfactory o nakasisiyang gawa ng pamahalaan.

Higit na mas maraming biktima ng mga bagyong ito ang hanggang ngayong nganga sa pag-aantay ng ayuda.

Ang nakasusuka, mga Bro, dahil sa halalan, ngayon lang nagkukumahog ang mga lider ng bansa na umayuda sa mga biktima.

Gawa rito, gawa roon ng mga bahay at buhos dito, buhos doon ng mga pondo.

Pero para kanino ba talaga ang mga ito?

Para sa mga kandidato at ginagawang pambili ng boto ang mga ayuda.

Dumarating din ang ulat sa atin na maraming palaisdaan ang nagkakaroon ng fishkill na umeepekto rin sa mga mamumuhunan, biyahero at tindero ng isda at suplay ng isda sa palengke.

Nasaan ang ayuda ng pamahalaan sa mga ito?

Siyempre pa, may ayuda mula sa mga pribadong indibiduwal o kompanya pero mababaw ang balon ng mga ito.

Nasa pamahalaan ang buwis ng mamamayan na dapat asahan nang higit para sa mga biktima.

Nasaan ito na kailangan kung tutuusin para sa buong taon o kung El Niño ang pag-uusapan, para sana sa nakalipas na anim na buwan?

ANG LA NIÑA

Malalakas na bagyo,

CALAMITY FUND

Ang sabi, dahil sa El Niño, nagkakaubusan na ang mga calamity fund ng mga lokal na pamahalaan at maging ang pambansang pamahalaan.

Gaano ba katotoo ito?

Naging masisipag kasi ang mga pamahalaang ito sa pagdedeklara ng mga state of calamity.

Sabi naman ng iba, eleksyon kasi, at ang mga calamity fund, bagama't kailangang-kailangan ng mga mamamayang nagugutom at naghihirap, ay mas para sa vote buying pa kaysa sa talagang pantulong sa mga biktima ng masamang panahon.

Sa North Cotabato nga lang, biglang nagturuan ang mga lokal na opisyal kung nasaan ang mga calamity fund matapos maganap ang Kidapawan massacre.

Hindi alam ng mga tao kung saan nagamit ang mga calamity fund dahil nang manghingi sila ng

X-FILES

SAGAD SA SHOWBIZ • BULGAR SA BALITA

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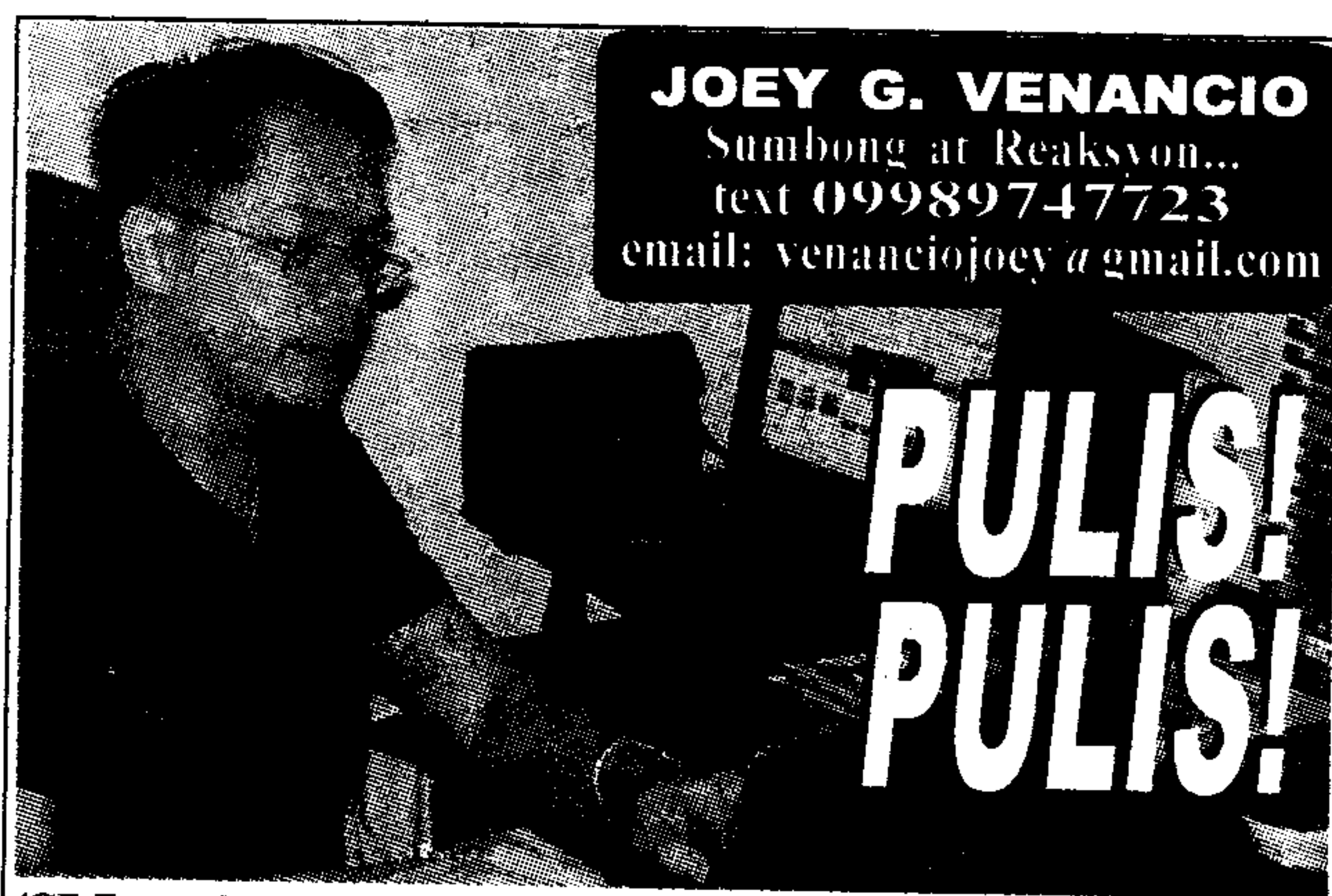
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JOEY G. VENANCIO

Sumbong at Reaksyon...

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email: venanciojoey@gmail.com

**PULIS!
PULIS!**

DAMING NAGHIHIRAP SA EL NIÑO

GRABE na ang epekto ng El Niño ngayon sa mga lalawigan. Andami nang naghihirap na magsasaka. Nangamatay kasi ang kanilang mga pananim na source ng kanilang pagkain sa araw-araw. Hirap na hirap narin sila sa tubiginumin. Natuyo na raw ang kanilang pinagkukunan ng malinis na tubig. Hindi na nila malaman kung saan sila huhukay para makakuha ng inumin o gamit panluto. At yan ang dapat sulosyunan ng gobyerno.

Ayon sa Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), namamahagi na sila ngayon ng bigas at nagsusuplay ng tubig sa mga lugar na apektado ng El Niño. Mabuti naman kung ganun. Dahil sa panahong ito kailangang kailangan ng ating mga kababayan ang tulong ng ating gobyerno.

At may babala naman ang Department of Science and Technology (DoST). Pagkatapos raw nitong El Niño ay papasok naman ang El Nina o grabeng pag-uulan na tiyak magreresulta ng malalim na pagbaha at landslides. Expected ito simula sa pagpasok ng Hunyo. Kaya paghandaan narin natin ang bagay na ito. God bless sa ating lahat...

BusinessWorld

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Irrigation held back by inefficiencies, deteriorating environment — PIDS

UNDERDEVELOPMENT, mismanagement and environmental degradation have kept the irrigation sector from delivering expected results, according to a paper produced by a government think tank.

In a discussion paper, Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) researchers headed by De La Salle University Professor Arlene B. Inocencio identified key institutional and technical constraints to improving performance of both national and communal irrigation systems.

The think tank released the study titled: "Technical and Institutional Evaluation of Selected National and Communal Irrigation Systems and Characterization of Irrigation Sector Governance Structure" for public discussion this month.

The study evaluated 66 communal irrigation systems and 22 national irrigation systems in 16 provinces in Luzon. It forms part of PIDS' research project to evaluate the effectiveness and

impacts of key government programs and projects.

In their evaluation, the researchers found the expansion of national irrigation systems' service areas slowed in the last decade and have been concentrated in four regions only.

"Cropping intensity only slightly increased over the years. In fact, wet season irrigation intensity appears to have largely slowed down," the discussion paper read.

The study also noted that collection efficiency only "noticeably improved" in two regions in Luzon and turned out worst in the Western Visayas Region.

"The Mindanao regions appear to have been performing better in terms of this indicator, consistent with the corresponding improvement in cropping intensity," the researchers noted.

Also, the study pointed out issues such as inadequate water during the dry season, flooding during the wet season, high incidences of canal problems and siltation/solid waste problems.

"Irrigation canal problems were ranked first in the list of problems, and followed by institutional problems and then by calamities/pest infestation causing production problems," it read.

Meanwhile, the service area of communal irrigation systems has also grown albeit "relatively very slow."

"However, the trends in actual irrigated areas during the wet and dry seasons irrigation intensities never reached the 80% mark and even declined by about 20% in 2012," according to the study.

The researchers further cited as "serious concern" the decline in amortization collection efficiency in communal irrigation systems.

"With the rise in equity schemes, the amortization collection decreased and became a less significant source of income. Despite this trend, amortization collection efficiency drastically declined, making this a serious concern." — Keith Richard D. Mariano

BW FILE PHOTO



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THE PHILIPPINE STAR

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The only paper you read from cover to cover!

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



A makeshift house made of bamboo sits on the banks of Laguna de Bay in Taguig City yesterday, with Makati's financial district in the background. On the eve of Earth Day, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is urging the public to plant bamboo – a vigorous plant that produces extensive root systems, making it difficult to kill off – and counter the effects of climate change.

EPA

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

PARIS CLIMATE AGREEMENT ON TRACK FOR EARLY START

UNITED NATIONS—About 160 countries are expected to sign the Paris Agreement on climate change on Friday in a symbolic triumph for a landmark deal that once seemed unlikely but now appears on track to enter into force years ahead of schedule.

UN officials say the signing ceremony on Friday will set a record for international diplomacy: Never before have so many countries inked an agreement on the first day of the signing period.

That could help pave the way for the pact to become effective long before the original 2020 deadline—possibly this year—though countries must first formally approve it through their domestic procedures.

"We are within striking distance of having the agreement start years earlier than anyone anticipated," Brian Deese, an adviser to President Barack Obama, said in a speech last week at Reed College in Portland, Oregon.

The US and China, which together account for nearly 40 percent of global emissions, have said they intend to formally join the agreement this year. It will enter into force once 55 countries representing at least 55 percent of global emissions have done so.

"There's incredible momentum," former New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark, who heads the UN Development Program, told The Associated Press. "We're moving as quickly as possible to action."

She said her agency is working with more than 140 countries on climate change-related issues, and that financing to make the Paris Agreement a reality is "critical, and let's hope everyone lives up to commitments made."

The agreement, the world's response to hotter temperatures, rising seas and other impacts of climate change, was hammered out in December outside Paris. The pact was a major breakthrough in UN climate negotiations, which for years were bogged down with disputes

between rich and poor countries over who should do what to fight global warming.

The mood was so pessimistic after a failed 2009 climate summit in Copenhagen, Denmark, that UN climate chief Christiana Figueres said she thought a global deal wouldn't happen in her lifetime. Now she expects the Paris Agreement to take effect by 2018.

Under the agreement, countries set their own targets for reducing emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. The targets are not legally binding but countries must update them every five years.

That's because scientific analyses show the initial set of targets that countries pledged before Paris don't match the long-term goal of the agreement to keep global warming below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit), compared with pre-industrial times. Global average temperatures have already climbed by almost 1°C. Last year

was the hottest on record.

"Even if the Paris pledges are implemented in full, they are not enough to get us even close to a 2-degree pathway," said John Sterman, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. "I don't think people understand how urgent it is."

The latest analysis by Sterman and colleagues at the Climate Interactive research group shows the Paris pledges put the world on track for 3.5°C of warming. A separate analysis by Climate Action Tracker, a European group, projected warming of 2.7°C.

Either way, scientists say the consequences could be catastrophic in some places, wiping out crops, flooding coastal areas and melting glaciers and Arctic sea ice.

Small island nations and other vulnerable countries managed in Paris to get others to agree to an aspirational goal of keeping the temperature rise below 1.5°C, which many analysts say won't be possible without removing vast amounts of

greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.

"In Paris they reached what was possible diplomatically and maybe went a little bit beyond it," Sterman said. "I think we should celebrate it. But the physics of the climate are relentless."

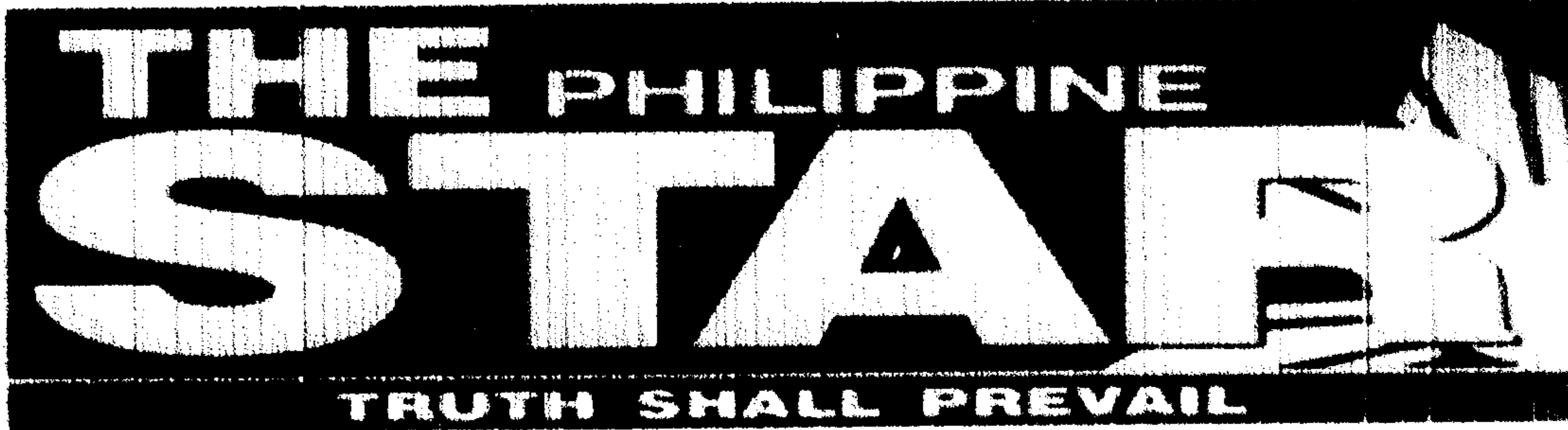
There is some good news. Global energy emissions, the biggest source of man-made greenhouse gases, were flat last year even though the global economy grew, according to the International Energy Agency. Some say that shows countries are finally driving their economies forward without burning massive amounts of oil, coal and gas.

Still, those fossil fuels are used much more widely than renewable sources like wind and solar power.

After signing the agreement, countries need to formally ratify it. Procedures for doing that vary among countries. The UN says about 10 countries, most of them small island developing states, will deposit their instruments of ratification on Friday and that the world body will have a better idea by the end of the day which other countries intend to ratify the agreement this year.

The Obama administration says the deal is consistent with existing US law and doesn't require the approval of the Republican-controlled Senate, where it would likely face stiff resistance. The administration is expected to treat the deal as an executive agreement, which needs only the president's approval.

Analysts say that if the Paris Agreement enters into force before Obama leaves office in January, it would be more complicated for his successor to withdraw from the deal, because it would take four years to do so under the rules of the agreement. Also, there would be "a strong negative reaction globally that any administration would have to take into account," said David Waskow of the World Resources Institute in Washington. AP



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

EDITORIAL

Earthquake drill

Schools and disaster mitigation authorities held simultaneous drills yesterday in preparation for an earthquake. The drills were conducted in the wake of the powerful quake that has left hundreds dead and over a thousand still missing in Ecuador.

Deadly earthquakes have also struck in the past weeks in Japan and Indonesia, raising fears that the Philippines, which lies along the Pacific Ring of Fire, is also ripe for a powerful temblor.

Government volcanologists have long warned that the country should prepare for the so-called Big One, which is expected along an earthquake fault that runs through Metro Manila from Marikina to parts of Laguna and Cavite. A map of the fault line is available, with volcanologists warning that the Big One can unleash horrendous death and destruction not only on surrounding areas but also on communities many kilometers away.

Earthquake drills prepare school children, teachers, office

workers and rescue teams for what must be done in a regular quake. Studies have shown, however, that even Metro Manila is ill prepared for a quake on the scale that hit Japan in 2011. The magnitude 9 quake triggered an apocalyptic tsunami in Japan and a meltdown in a nuclear reactor, wiping away entire communities.

Even without a tsunami, studies have warned that Metro Manila and areas around the earthquake fault are not equipped to handle the collapse of many buildings and infrastructure, fires, and disruptions of basic services such as water, electricity and telecommunications in case the Big One strikes.

No country can fully cope with a disaster of the magnitude that hit Japan in 2011, but mitigation measures can reduce the scale of devastation. Sufficient warnings have been given; the government cannot wait for a change of administration to improve preparedness for a powerful earthquake.

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