

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

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# DENR

## IN THE NEWS



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# DENR gears up for massive tree planting with onset of 'wet' season

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA  
@jonlmayuga

AS the rainy season sets in next month, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is gearing up for massive tree-planting activities in various parts of the country under the National Greening Program (NGP), the country's top forestry official said.

Ricardo Calderon, director of the DENR's Forest Management Bureau (FMB), said starting in June or July, planting of timber and fuel wood will be carried out simultaneously by the DENR's NGP partners, which include people's organizations and community-based organizations under the Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) program, local government units (LGUs) and the private sector.

All year, forestry officials produce planting materials, but tree-planting activities are implemented during the rainy season to ensure higher survival rate.

This year's target is to cover a total of 252,000 hectares in 5,000 NGP sites by the end of year to achieve the country's overall target under the NGP covering 1.5 million hectares by 2016.

But the official is confident of overshooting the overall greening target by at least 100,000 hectares

to conclude the NGP, considering the current accomplishment under the NGP is around 1.35 hectares as of December 2015.

Next year, by virtue of Executive Order 193, around 5,000 government contracts for planting and maintaining the NGP sites will be signed in the ensuing days. At an average of 50 members per people's organization that will be awarded NGP contracts, the official said around 250,000 green jobs will be created.

"This year we are not planting high-value crops and fruit trees. What we will plant are trees for timber and fuel wood because that is what we need to plant at the moment. Next year we will be going back to planting high-value crops and fruit trees," Calderon, the national coordinator of the NGP, told the BUSINESSMIRROR in an interview on Tuesday.

Calderon added that for every hectare, the target is planting 1,600 trees. The requirement is to produce more than 403 million trees to achieve its 2016 target.

The cost per hectare this year was increased by the DENR to P23,000 compared to the previous year's cost of P18,000.

"We increased the cost per hectare at P8 per tree from P18,000 to P23,000," Calderon said.

The NGP partners awarded the

contracts will have to produce the planting materials, which, he said, could be produced at a price of as low as P3 per tree.

"Our planting materials, more or less, is short by 35 million. Short means the trees we have in our nurseries are not yet 'plantable,' he said.

In the next few months, planting materials in the nurseries will be sufficient to cover the year's target, he said.

Calderon said planting materials need to be old enough to survive upon transfer from nurseries to NGP sites to ensure a high survival rate.

The DENR hopes to surpass its target of an 80-percent survival rate. But Calderon said that, as part of the contract with NGP partners, the DENR requires implementing agencies to replace all the trees that die.

Calderon said the DENR now has five mechanized tree nurseries on top of 27 clonal nurseries. So far, the five regular tree nurseries have produced 12 million planting materials. The DENR, he said, is currently "calibrating" the production capacity of the regular-tree nurseries to produce the target of 1 million trees a day.

Calderon said six more mechanized tree nurseries are ongoing construction to ensure the supply of planting materials for future reforestation efforts.



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### Climate change all-embracing threat to human rights

WE are gathered here today to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of An Inconvenient Truth. A lot has changed since that year, 2006, especially on how we perceive the climate change phenomenon.

I recall that during that time, climate change was still considered an issue that was best left for scientists. It was not easy to make people understand the link between climate change and the economy, agriculture, health, and development. Even those in government did not easily recognize that this is a gut issue.

In 2008, as part of my commitment to the 2008 Manila Call for Action, I filed a resolution recommending the creation of a standing committee on climate change in the Philippine Senate.

There was defiance at first. Some of my colleagues then thought it was not necessary because there was already a committee on environment and natural resources. But I stood my ground because I knew that climate change is not just an environmental issue; it is an all-encompassing threat to our basic human rights.

In December 2008, the Senate Committee on Climate Change was created to ensure the implementation of laws as well as the sustainability of initiatives for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in the Philippines.

In 2009, the Philippine Climate



*Speech of Senator Loren Legarda delivered during the commemoration of the 10th Anniversary An Inconvenient Truth held at the University of San Jose Recoletos, Cebu City on May 24, 2016*

Change Act was passed into law. This measure created the Climate Change Commission, headed by no less than the President of the Philippines, and tasked to mainstream climate change adaptation in policy formulation.

The passage of the Climate Change Act was followed by the enactment of the Philippine National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act. Representing a shift from mere response in times of disasters, the law promotes a comprehensive National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan that strengthens the capacity of the national government and the local government units together with partner stakeholders, to build the disaster resilience of communities.

The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) hailed these two measures as among the world's best laws on disaster re-

silience. The greater challenge, however, was to translate national policies, plans and programs into local action with measurable gains.

Even with these laws, it had to take extreme weather events such as Ondoy and Pepeng, Sendong; Pablo, Yolanda, the habagat-induced rains, and the stronger episodes of El Niño, among many other disasters, for us to realize that climate change is real and our nation is among the most vulnerable to its impacts.

The world will continue to get warmer, which will result in extremely harsh weather events, heavy flooding, declining fish catch, water scarcity, declining agricultural harvests, health issues, extinction of animal and plant species, displacement of people, and even the demise of low-lying areas, among others.

Last April 22, 175 countries, including the Philippines, formally signed the Paris Agreement on Climate Change at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Agreement was the result of the climate negotiations in Paris culminating last December.

Now, we await the affirmation of commitments through the completion of ratification or accession processes of each country.

The Philippines has joined calls for the early entry into force of the Agree-

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### Climate...

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ment by ensuring that at least 55 nations representing 55 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions will ratify the Agreement within the year.

But while nations await the Agreement's entry into force, governments must already start the work to implement their respective Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and to meet the goal of the Paris Agreement.

The main aim of the Paris Agreement is to limit global temperature rise within the century "well below 2 degrees Celsius and to drive efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees

Celsius above pre-industrial levels."

Vulnerable nations, especially the member states of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF), fought for the inclusion of the 1.5 degrees Celsius warming limit in the Paris Agreement. We must not go higher than that because the additional 0.5 degrees Celsius could spell the difference between survival and extinction.

Global warming has already breached the 1°C level with unprecedented warming in the past months. We have already borne countless tragedies and losses from recurring impacts of extreme weather events under a 1°C global warming. How much more with higher temperatures?

The World Bank projects that under a 2°C

scenario, there will be a 20% decline in water availability for many regions and 15–20% decrease in crop yield.

Moreover, with warming of up to 2°C, sea-level rise is projected to be around 70 centimeters. Sea level rise, floods that damage fish farms, and the increased acidification of the oceans by 2050 could reduce farmed fish yield by 90%.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) revealed that a 1.5 to 2.5 degrees Celsius increase in global mean temperatures from pre-industrial levels threatens extinction of 20–30 percent of all species.

The half a degree difference between 1.5 and 2 degrees Celsius matters. The 1.5°C is not a mere aspirational goal. It is the

minimum deliverable. It is non-negotiable. It is a matter of survival.

Even the success of attaining the sustainable development goals (SDGs) is at risk if we do not limit warming to 1.5°C.

We certainly cannot go business as usual.

The world cannot afford further delays, more so the vulnerable people who end up as climate refugees in their own communities, they who suffer again and again from tragedies brought about by a climate crisis not of their own doing. These vulnerable sectors include indigenous peoples, farmers, fisherfolk, persons with disabilities, women, children and the elderly.

For the sake of the vulnerable, we seek climate justice now to restore the dignity of those suffering

and to strengthen the resilience of the poor and recovering.

For the sake of future generations, we seek a commitment to act now and to implement a holistic solution.

There is no reason to hesitate or delay action on a challenge so compelling, on a threat to humanity so clear and present. For every second that ticks away is but a second closer to the next calamity.

The Philippines should achieve its goal of 70% greenhouse gas emissions reduction under its NDCs. The government must commit to this and draw sectoral roadmaps that will lead to this goal, especially in energy, transport, forestry and agriculture.

As a developing nation, it is understandable

that the Philippines needs more power, but it cannot be "we need power at all costs and we will develop at all costs."

They say that coal is cheap. I say, coal is not cheap. Coal affects our health, kills biodiversity and the environment, affects our waters and pollutes the air we breathe.

We are a country rich in renewable energy—the amount of sun and wind is more than enough to power our entire country many times over. We have the Renewable Energy Law and though we may not totally ban coal, we should have a good energy mix where there is a bias for renewables.

We must all work towards building a sustainable and resilient community, one that respects biodiversity and corrects

the misconception that natural resources are infinite. Our extractive and consumptive practices must change. Greed must cease.

We all live in one Earth. Climate change is now in our midst and it imparts to us the lesson that we do not own the planet, but are mere stewards of its resources.

Each of us has opportunities to make a difference for our future. We must lead the way towards meaningful change—change in the way we think, change in the way we live, and change in the way we pursue the development and the future we long for—for our children and grandchildren, for all of humanity, for all species in the world, and for Mother Earth.

Thank you.



[ EDITORIAL ]

# INCONVENIENT TRUTHS

IT HAS been 10 years since the release of “An Inconvenient Truth,” the Academy Award-winning documentary narrated by former US Vice President Al Gore.

The message was unequivocal: the planet was in great danger due to the effects of global warming, in turn fueled by centuries of unfettered emission on greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. The consequences were, even then, apparent.

Between 2006 and today, much has happened to convince the world that something needed to be done to arrest, slow down, if not altogether stop the worsening climate crisis. Extreme and erratic weather patterns have taken place even in areas not previously known to be vulnerable to these.

The Philippines can speak, perhaps most authoritatively, on how it is to be vulnerable to disaster. The past several years have given us episodes of typhoons, flooding and drought that have affected lives and livelihood. Entire communities have been wiped out or have been set back economically by decades. Funds that should have been put into building infrastructure for growth have been instead used to repair structures and restore order in the affected communities’ lives.

In the global stage, the Paris Agreement of 2015 showed that countries of the world finally recognized their common responsibility of scaling down their emission of greenhouse gases so that the warming would not hit runaway levels. Here at home, though, the current shortage of power, the looming energy crisis and the targeted economic growth highlight the dilemma between continuing to use coal-fired power plants and shifting to renewable energy sources like hydro, wind and solar.

In fact, in commemoration of the 10th anniversary of “An Inconvenient Truth,” various groups held a people’s forum in Cebu province where several barangays have been adversely affected by coal-fired power plants near them.

It is said coal is so much cheaper than the renewable alternatives. This may be true, nominally, but there are hidden—and bigger costs—such as the toll on health of citizens and the damage to the environment, compounding the climate problem regardless of whether the Philippines is a historical emitter or not.

We are hoping that President-elect Rodrigo Duterte was just playing to the gallery when he branded the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change “hypocrites.” True, it is impossible to completely turn away from coal-fired power plants now. There have been agreements inked and projects ongoing and halting them could have legal and practical consequences. Moving forward, however, it would be wrong to think that making no changes to the way we generate energy would have no impact on the way we live.

The incoming president will be, by virtue of his office, become the chairman of the Climate Change Commission. Such a role would be meaningless if he is as unenlightened and dismissive of the need to do something about the climate issue in our own sphere—even if this means abandoning the “cheap,” the familiar and the convenient.





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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Isabela watershed program launched

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

A project was recently launched to help farmer-residents in a mountainside community near the city of Ilagan, Isabela combat the effects of El Niño, a group of environmentalists said.

Gregg Yan, communications and media manager of World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), said that in partnership with Sun Life Foundation and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through its "Abuan Integrated Watershed Management Project," five concrete spring box water systems were built to distribute potable water to upland farming communities.

USAID financed the preparation of a water resources inventory, demographic survey, environmental impact review, plus construction supervision and management. Sun Life Foundation, for its part, financed the provision of cement and steel bars, while community residents donated gravel, sand, and their time and labor to build the spring boxes.

"Spring box systems are enclosed water containers built atop fissures, cracks or pores where water naturally seeps out. Over time, the boxes collect water while keeping out debris like rotting twigs and

leaves. Water is then filtered and channeled down to communities for household activities like cooking, bathing, drinking or growing vegetables," Yan explained.

During El Niño and other extreme weather events, spring boxes can help ensure that enough potable water is available for families that need it most.

To augment the spring boxes, Sun Life also planted 15,169 mango, citrus and cacao seedlings. This agroforestry drive has enriched 69.45 hectares of once-barren grassland since 2012.

Agroforestry allows crops and trees to coexist, maximizing benefits. This increases land productivity, improves water recharge and minimizes erosion. Identified beneficiaries are from Sitio Pulang Lupa in Barangay Batong Labang.

"This is a unique approach to reforestation – allowing the balanced intercropping of trees, shrubs and crops to create more productive, profitable and sustainable plots. Since 2009, WWF and its allies have helped 466 Isabela farmers plant 70,786 fruit-bearing trees, which were chosen to provide farmers economic incentives to nurture saplings to maturity," Yan said.

WWF said the move aims to reforest Isabela's Abuan watershed – a once-verdant forest which has since been converted to endless sprawls of corn and rice. Shielding the eastern face of Luzon for 340 kilometers and spanning 359,486 hectares, the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park is both the Philippines' longest mountain range and its largest protected area.

The Abuan Integrated Watershed Management Project pilots the Department of Science and Technology's smarter agriculture program by enhancing the capacity of farmers to adapt to climate change.

By planting trees and protecting the watersheds of Ilagan, WWF, Sun Life and USAID are bolstering the capacity of Isabela's farmers to deal with worsening climate change effects like El Niño.



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# Malaya Business Insight

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### Eco groups support ban on fireworks, 'crackers'

SEVERAL environmental groups led by the EcoWaste Coalition yesterday expressed support to the plan of incoming president Rodrigo Duterte to ban firecrackers and fireworks nationwide.

The groups said they wanted the Davao City's ban on firecrackers and fireworks to be "replicated this year in towns and cities across the country" to "save lives and protect the climate, the environment and the public health from hazardous emissions and wastes."

"It's high time that the Philippines, a climate hotspot, bid goodbye to New Year pollution and mayhem," said Aileen Lucero, coordinator of the EcoWaste.

"If Davao City can enforce the ban on firecrackers and fireworks since 2001, we see no reason why the entire country cannot do the same," she added.

EcoWaste has been partnering with the Department of Health's yearly "Iwas Paputok" campaign.

Joining EcoWaste in backing Duterte's plan are the Bangon Kalikasan Movement, Concerned Citizens Advocating Philippine Environmental Sustainability, Health Futures Foundation, Health Justice, Interface Development Interventions, Kinaiyahan Foundation, Mother Earth Foundation, Philippine Animal Welfare Society and the Philippine Medical Association-Committee on Environmental Health and Ecology.

The EcoWaste said banning pyrotechnics will help in meeting the objectives of the Clean Air Act, Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, Clean Water Act, Climate Change Act, Animal Welfare Act and other environmental and health laws. — *Angela Lopez de Leon*

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## PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

### EcoWaste to Duterte Fulfill promise to ban firecrackers

By JUN ICBAN LEGASPI

A WASTE and pollution watchdog urged presumptive President Rodrigo Duterte to make good on his promise to ban firecrackers and fireworks nationwide.

The EcoWaste Coalition, a civil society partner of the Department of Health in the yearly "Iwas Paputok" campaign, expressed optimism that the Davao City's ban on firecrackers and fireworks would finally get replicated this year in towns and cities across the country.

"We want a comprehensive ban on firecrackers and fireworks to save lives and to protect the climate, the environment and the public health from hazardous emissions and wastes," said Aileen Lucero, coordinator, EcoWaste Coalition.

"It's high time that the Philippines, a climate hotspot, bid goodbye to New Year pollution and mayhem," she said.

Several other groups have joined the EcoWaste Coalition in manifesting support for a national ban on firecrackers and fireworks under the Duterte presidency, including the Bangon Kalikasan Movement, Concerned Citizens Advocating Philippine Environmental Sustainability, Health Futures Foundation, Health Justice, Interface Development Interventions, Kinaiyahan Foundation, Mother Earth Foundation, Philippine Animal Welfare Society and the Philippine Medical Association-Committee on Environmental Health and Ecology.

"Like the Davaoños, we can usher in the New Year in a non-wasteful fashion through non-deafening, non-injurious and non-toxic noisemakers and through the conduct of fun-filled 'kantahan,' 'salu-salo' and more in our homes and neighborhoods," Lucero said.

The massive detonation of both legal and illegal pyrotechnics to herald the New Year goes against the basic state policies of protecting human health and the ecosystems as enshrined in the Constitution, the EcoWaste Coalition pointed out.

On the other hand, banning firecrackers and fireworks will help in meeting the objectives of the Clean Air Act, Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, Clean Water Act, Climate Change Act, Animal Welfare Act and other environmental and health laws.

The EcoWaste Coalition cited eight reasons why the Filipino people should rally behind a national ban on firecrackers and fireworks as announced by Duterte:

1. Firecrackers and fireworks cause serious, if not fatal, injuries to users and non-users alike.
2. Firecrackers and fireworks generate carbon dioxide, a potent greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change.
3. Firecrackers and fireworks produce toxic fumes that exacerbate the air quality and aggravate respiratory and cardiovascular episodes.
4. Firecrackers and fireworks generate tons of toxic-laced non-reusable and non-recyclable discards disposed of in streets, waterways, dumpsites and landfills.
5. Firecrackers and fireworks can lead to fires.
6. Firecrackers and fireworks create thick smog resulting in poor visibility, causing public safety hazards.
7. Firecrackers and fireworks produce ear-splitting noise that is painful for animals, especially to cats and dogs.
8. Firecrackers and fireworks squander hard-earned money for few minutes of "dirty" entertainment that is better spent for food, clothing, books, medicines and other necessities.

"If Davao City can enforce the ban on firecrackers and fireworks since 2001, we see no reason why the entire country cannot do the same," Lucero said.



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**PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS**

### **Fake land titles sa GenSan, muling iimbestigahan ng Senado**

Nagkalat umano ang pekeng titulo sa lupa sa bansa partikular sa General Santos kaya't muling magsasagawa ang Senado ng pagsisiyasat tungkol dito.

Ayon kay Sen. Aquilino 'Koko' Pimentel III, chairman ng Senate committee on justice ang human rights, hindi umano biro ang lantarang land grabbing ng ilang korporasyon at indibidwal sa General Santos City gamit ang mga 'spurious' certificates of title.

Sabi ng senador, umaabot ang mga pekeng land titles ng 6,000 noong una itong inimbestigahan ng Senado noong 2014 at posibleng umabot na ngayon sa 10,000.

Sa report ng Inquirer,

ilan sa mga pekeng titulo ay ang nakapangalan umano sa isang Romeo Confesor na siya namang ginagamit umano ngayon ng negosyanteng si Jimmy Tang.

Kaduda-duda rin umano ang mga titulo kung saan nakalagay ang mga pangalang Excelsa Lauron, Ralderico Confesor and Julita Confesor.

Ang nasabing pinag-aagawang property ay sakop umano ng Integrated Forest Management Agreement (IFMA) na inisyu ng Department of Environment Natural Resources (DENR) noong 1992 sa kumpanyang Alsons Development and Investment Co. (Aldevinco).

**(Dindo Matining)**



# PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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## *Art gets dirty, smelly for cleaner Pasig River*

STRA

By Jhesset O. Enano

IN THIS unique art project, the murky medium is indeed the message.

The "Dirty Watercolor" exhibit features exquisite paintings rendered using pigments collected from polluted waterways in Metro Manila, particularly Pasig River and its tributaries, hoping to raise public awareness about their sorry state.

Taking six months to prepare, the 22-piece show depicts contemporary river scenes in blacks, browns, grays, and sepia tones. Viewers can still catch it until today at Kirov Showroom in Rockwell Center, Makati.

The limited palette of colors was sourced from riverbed soil samples taken from Taguig City, Marikina City, Binondo in Manila, and Cainta in Rizal province, among others. They were treated in the lab and mixed with gum arabic solution before they were used in the paintings.

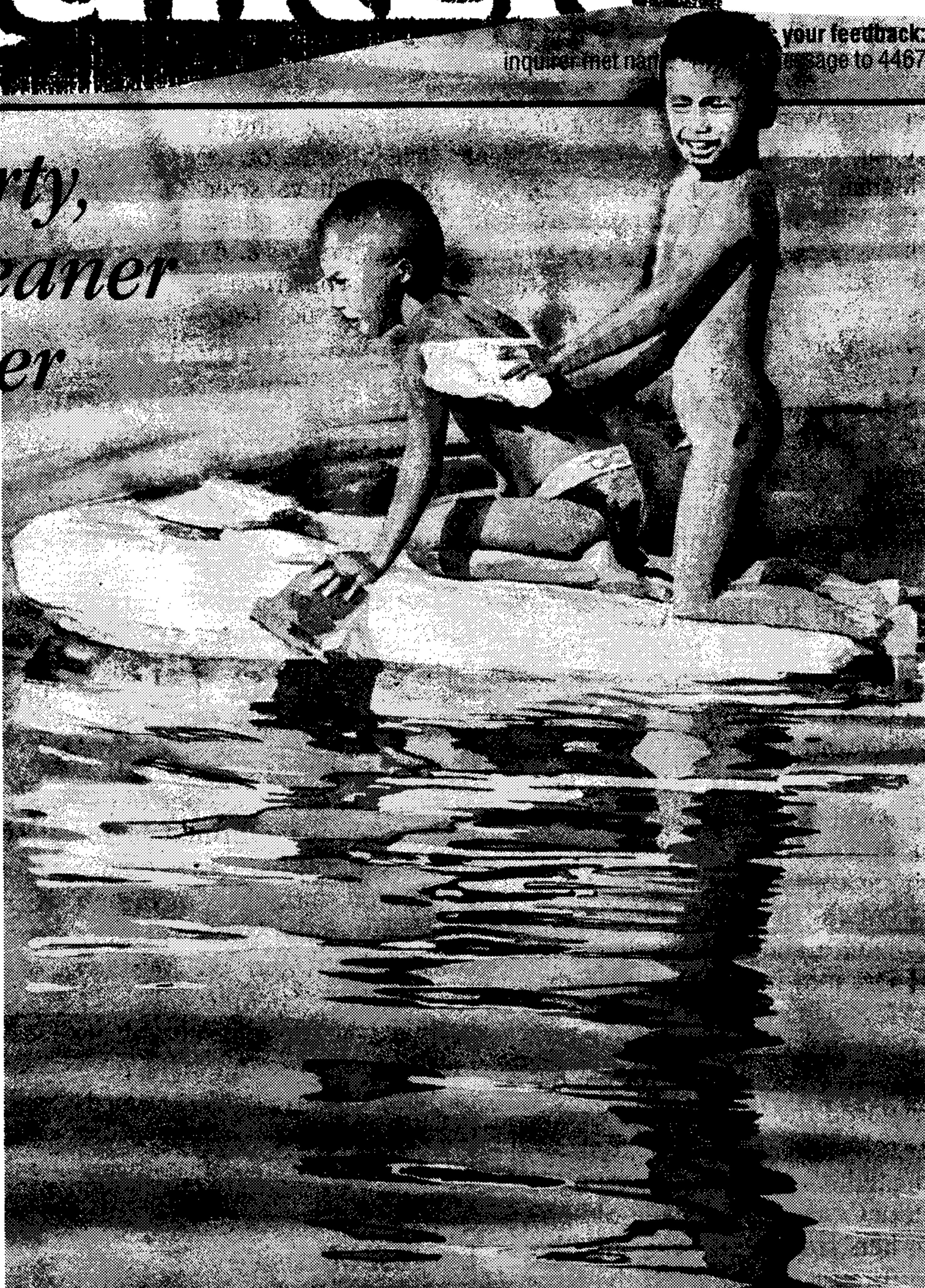
The biggest artwork captures the delight of a child who has just taken a swim in the dirty water but "is unaware that her playground is unsafe," said the artist, JC Vargas, of his work titled "Sabina".

Using the pigments presented a unique challenge for him. "Smelling the paint already tells you a lot about the lives of the people living by the river or *estero*." The stink goes away only when pigments dry off, Vargas noted.

The other participating artists are Toti Cerda, Kean Barrameda, Ferd Failano, Allan Clerigo, Van Isunza, Luigi Almuena, Renee Ysabelle Jose and John Ed De Vera.

"The Pasig River will be there forever, and generations of Filipinos can watch either its destruction or its salvation," art critic and curator Cid Reyes said. "They need to be informed how to save it."

Yeb Sano, executive director of Greenpeace Southeast Asia and former commissioner of the Climate Change Commission, joined the chorus of



**ADVOCACY AFLOAT** "Magkaibigan-I" (Friends) by JC Vargas, one of the 22 works featured in the Dirty Watercolor art exhibit TBWA/SANTIAGO MANGADA PUNO

concern: "There have been a lot of efforts to revive the rivers, but it will take more than just a few people to make this work; it would take all of us. The work of the artists depicts this message in a very clear way. If you combine art and advocacy, it becomes very powerful."

As highlighted in the Philippine International Rivers Summit in 2012, all rivers in Metro Manila are now considered biologically dead. Commanding most attention is Pasig River, a storied waterway that runs through five cities and 51 tributaries.

Niño Caguimbal, a scientist helping in the campaign, took part in the art project by personally gathering the soil samples from the tributaries. The samples were then brought to the laboratory for filtration, decontamination and drying.

"We had to check if we can actually go down near the rivers to get the

samples. We observed first if they were contaminated by human waste or just garbage," Caguimbal said. "The sediments we collected were mixed with trash and fish bones."

In the process, he encountered shantytown dwellers and families living under bridges, whose everyday lives in the midst of a poisoned environment supplied the images for Dirty Watercolor.

An executive order issued in 1999 created the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission, whose main goal is to bring back the water quality to a level suitable for fisheries.

With even artists now lending a hand, it shouldn't be an impossible mission, Caguimbal stressed. "It may not be fully clean or safe, but if we can start small in the different canals, then we can begin the rehabilitation and main cleanup of the Pasig River."



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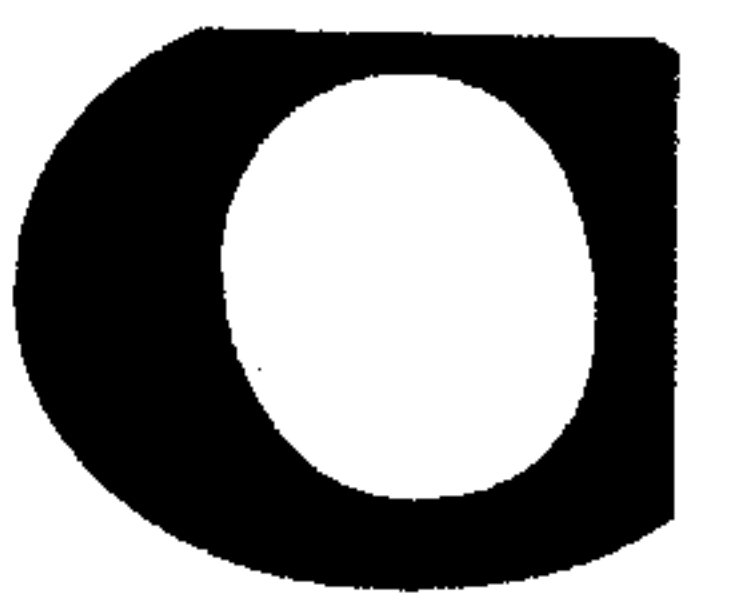
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## Death by ecstasy?

**S**O BAD is the Philippines' drug problem that Filipinos overwhelmingly voted into the presidency a man whose main platform centers on stamping out crime, particularly the trade in illegal drugs, within three to six months after assuming office.

The deaths of five people who attended the open-air Closeup Forever Summer Concert at the Mall of Asia on May 21 suggest the pervasiveness of the drug culture and the easy access to highly regulated substances even in

**EDITORIAL**

very public venues.





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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

"VANISHING" ISLAND . . . .

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By Ma. April Mier  
Malilipot, Albay

**I**N THE WATERS off the coast of Salvacion village in Malilipot town in Albay province hides a little piece of heaven.

As the tide recedes, a glistening sandbar, known in the town as "Vanishing Island," appears under clusters of tents, sheds and floating cottages.

The crystal-clear water surrounding the sandbar teems with starfish and other marine species, attracting tourists to this spot that locals call "Wara-wara" (Bicol term for "disappearing"), since it only appears during low tide.

"It's a mere sandbar but definitely, it will give you an island experience. The provincial tourism office named it Vanishing Island to make it more appealing to the international market, and to leave something in the minds of people," said Maria Ana Bañadera, in charge of tour promotion of the Provincial Tourism Cultural Affairs Office.

Sandy Balimbing, village chief of nearby San Antonio Santicon, said locals believe that storms that hit the province helped form the sandbar, which is about 200 meters from the shore.

"I lived here for 40 years and this was only a plain, ordinary sea. But as typhoons hit the province, huge waves formed the sand into a slope," said Balimbing.

### Discovery

Bañadera said she and some guests discovered the Vanishing Island by accident during a tour in 2013.

While accompanying 12 tourists on their island hopping, Bañadera said the group's boat hit the sandbar. "Instead of staying on our banca, we went down and explored the sandbar for almost four hours," she said.

Since then, the sandbar has been made part of stops in the province's island-hopping tour package.

Despite its accessibility, visiting the sandbar requires timing, as visitors need to wait for the low tide.

Bañadera said the sandbar appears 45 minutes after the scheduled low tide each day, so the leisure opportunity would depend on the cycle.

"If the low tide today is at 10 a.m., the next day, the sandbar would appear at 10:45 a.m., and so on. Some tour guides are not familiar with the tide cycle that is why they find it difficult to compute water levels. We can always use different phone applications to determine [the best time to visit]," she said.

Low tide lasts for almost six hours in a day, allowing visitors time to explore the sandbar, Bañadera said.

### Leisure activities

The hectare-wide sandbar has become popular among budget travelers because of the relatively cheap cost of getting there.

Tourists are also attracted by the reasonably priced accommodation and food. Floating cottages, tents and sheds can be rented for P300 to P400.

Heide Bobiles, 47, sells grilled squid, fish and crabs for P50 to P100 per plate. Other seafood, vegetables and cooked meals are sold at P20 to P30 per serving.

Bobiles started selling food and souvenirs, and offering other services in February, when they noticed that the spot has started luring tourists. Locals have since become part of the development of the place, as they also ensure that the area is kept clean.

Paz Borbe, 58, also saw big opportunity to earn extra from selling fresh and cooked seafood to tourists. Borbe said she earns at least P1,500 from selling seafood and renting out tents.

### Potential

When Bañadera realized the potential of the sandbar to become a key area in Albay tourism, she organized a summit for all tour operators and owners of beach resorts and other tourism-related businesses to introduce the new attraction.

The sudden popularity of the Vanishing Island have given residents in nearby communities extra income. The 12 floating cottages opened for rentals as retail stores, small eateries and pay toilets were established near the Bacacay port in Bacacay town, said Bañadera.



# The Manila Times

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## NGOs slam Japan for investing in coal

**BONN:** Days before Japan will host a G7 summit, NGOs slammed the Asian nation for financing coal-powered energy in developing countries, even as other countries and investors shun the climate-damaging fossil fuel.

Within the G7 bloc, Japan stands out for funnelling more than \$22 billion (20 billion euros) into overseas coal plants since 2007, more than the other six countries combined.

Moreover, the club of rich nation's only Asian member has another \$10 billion worth of coal projects in the pipeline, according to a report by six environmental groups, including the National Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and WWF.

Japan will host a two-day meeting of the G7 -- which also includes the United States, Britain, Canada, France, Germany and Italy -- starting Thursday in the Ise-shima region.

Germany is second on the list in overseas coal financing, having poured some \$9 billion into coal-based power over the same period.

"Financing new coal plants and coal development in the era of dangerous climate change is blatantly reckless," Jake Schmidt, the head of the NRDC's international program said Tuesday on the margins of UN climate talks in Bonn.

Such investments "tie developing countries to the fossil fuels of our past, not the clear energy of our future."

Diplomats from 196 nations have gathered in Bonn five months after hammering through a landmark climate pact that seeks to wean the world economy from fossil fuels, by far the main driver of global warming.

Coal is the biggest climate change culprit, generating more carbon pollution per unit of energy generated than oil or gas.

Some 40 percent of the world's electricity is powered by coal, roughly the same as 40 years ago, according to the International Energy Agency.

China fuelled three decades of double-digit growth mainly with coal, and today accounts for nearly half of world consumption, followed by India.

### Turning away from coal

But both countries have made a massive push to develop renewable and increase energy efficiency, with China's use of coal tapering off in the last two years.

Within the G7, Japan is alone in investing heavily in coal-fired energy on its own soil, with more than 40 new power plants on the drawing board.

The energy-starved country suspended nuclear power generation after an earthquake and tsunami crippled the Fukushima nuclear plant in 2011, contaminating a large area.

"Japan continues to be the only G7 country undertaking a coal rush in spite of the Paris Agreement," said Kimiko Hirata, international director for the Japanese NGO Kiko Network.

This fact is likely to stand out at the G7 meeting, which will address climate change among other issues.

Money mainly from Japan and Germany for building coal plants in the developing world since 2007 has gone to South Africa (\$5 billion), India (\$5 billion), the Philippines and Indonesia (\$3 billion each), Vietnam \$2.5 billion), and a dozen other countries.

The funds have flowed through multilateral banks and export credit agencies, notably the Japan Bank of International Cooperation, and Euler Hermes in Germany.

Other nations have pulled back from investing in coal, with Britain committing to a complete phase-out of coal power by 2025.

In the United States -- where the country's largest coal mine company, Peabody Energy, filed for bankruptcy last month -- officials have announced the retirement of over 230 coal-fired plants, according to a tally by the Sierra Club.

In Canada, the Province of Alberta has vowed to end coal use in power generation by 2030.

Last month Norway's sovereign wealth fund -- at \$864 billion, the world's biggest -- pulled out of 52 coal-related companies to comply with new ethical guidelines. **AFP**



THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS  
SINCE 1900

# MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## Coal dust risk to Great Barrier Reef

SYDNEY – A study released on Tuesday has found that a high concentration of coal dust can quickly kill coral on Australia's Great Barrier Reef.

The research by the Australian Institute of Marine Science discovered coal dust could also slow the growth rate of seagrasses and fish.

"Corals exposed to the highest concentrations of coal dust died within two weeks," author Kathryn Berry said.

"Corals exposed to lower concentrations of coal lasted longer, but most of them also died after four weeks of exposure."

She noted that while some fish and seagrass died from coal dust exposure, it mostly stunted their growth by half compared to clean water.

The study found coal dust entered the marine environment at loading and storage facilities, or when it is blown into the sea during transport.

Researches also noted a shipping disaster as a possible risk to the reef.

"Risks to the Great Barrier Reef posed by large coal spills depend on the probability of an accident and the potential impacts to marine life," author Andrew Negri said.



Australia's Great Barrier Reef (Photo courtesy of Pixabay)

"While the likelihood of a major spill on a coral reef or seagrass meadow is low, we are now beginning to understand the likely consequences."

Researchers hope the results will send a message to coal shipping companies in Australia and across the world. (PNA/Xinhua)





# BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business

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Now the  
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## Lopez-led units to source power requirements from clean energy

**L**OPEZ-LED First Philippine Holdings (FPH) Corp. on Wednesday said its two subsidiaries will spearhead an environmental effort of the group's nonenergy subsidiaries by eventually sourcing all their power needs from the so-called low-carbon suppliers.

The two subsidiaries will be Rockwell Land Corp. and First Philippine Industrial Park. They will draft roadmaps, under which all their power needs will eventually come from low-carbon energy suppliers.

The low-carbon preference will serve as a guide in future power-supply contracts to be signed by the two firms, FPH said.

"The instructions reinforce the earlier declaration of its chairman

and CEO, Federico Lopez, that the FPH will not build, develop, or invest in any coal-fired power plant as part of global efforts to combat climate change," the company said.

It based the decision on scientific advisories that identified the power-generation industry, especially carbon-intensive, coal-fired power plants, as one of the main reasons behind adverse weather patterns associated with climate change, such as floods and droughts, as well as more destructive and more frequent typhoons.

FPH unit First Gen Corp., which uses clean and renewable energy, has an installed capacity of 2,959 megawatts as of the end-2015. These power plants run on what

it claimed as clean, renewable and indigenous fuel sources, such as natural gas, geothermal, hydro, wind and solar.

Lopez's declaration, which he announced during the annual stockholders' meeting of the company earlier this week, means coal-fired power plants will remain outside of First Gen's portfolio

of power facilities and another subsidiary, Energy Development Corp., a company that runs geothermal facilities.

"After Lopez issued his declaration, top officials of FPH and subsidiaries gathered for a meeting, and agreed to ratchet up their campaign versus climate change," the company said.



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Heat wave to affect Filipino pork supply

The heat wave in the country has adverse effects on the supply of pork, a vital aspect of the Filipino diet, animal health experts said.

The Philippines being a tropical country, where relative humidity ranges from 71 to 85 percent and the average year-round temperature is 26.6°C, animal health experts said heat stress conditions pose serious challenges to livestock raisers throughout the year and could have serious consequences on the country's pork and meat supply, security and safety.

They cited a study by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), on climate change in the Philippines, which showed

that the country's climate situation will further deteriorate in the future.

The study noted that there has been an increase in the annual average temperature by 0.65°C. The climate trend was analyzed using available data from 1951 to 2009, with the average for the period 1971–2000 as reference value.

Evaluating the trends of extreme daily temperatures, there is an indication that there will be a significant increase in the number of hot days and decrease in the number of cool nights.

The study also predicted that in the next 30 to 40 years, the entire Philippines will get warmer, with annual average temperatures in all areas expected to rise by 0.9°C to 1.1°C in 2020 and by 1.8°C to 2.2°C in 2050.

Glen Ibañez, head of technical services for Univet Nutrition and Animal Healthcare Co. Inc. (UNAHCO), said the prospect of prolonged high temperatures is a serious cause for concern among swine raisers not only in the Philippines but around the world.

UNAHCO spearheaded the launch of the National Swine Nutrition Month 2016 this May recently with a forum and press briefing at the Serye restaurant in Quezon City led by UNAHCO president and COO Ricardo Alba and Sen. Cynthia Villar, chairperson of the Senate committee on agriculture and food.

"Pigs subjected to high ambient temperature and humidity become heat stressed," Alba said. "In a recent article published in *Animal Production Science*,

experts from Iowa State University and Virginia Tech said heat stress in pigs has far-reaching consequences leading to significant economic losses."

Ibañez, citing the article, said economic losses "will result from poor sow performance, reduced and inconsistent growth, decreased carcass quality, mortality, morbidity, and processing issues caused by less rigid fat (also known as flimsy fat)."

He said pigs suffering from heat stress will also experience reduced intestinal integrity and barrier function, reduced feed intake, increased systemic endotoxemia and inflammation problems, reduced daily gains and reduced lean tissue accretion, lower fertility rates and behavioral changes.

— Rainier Allan Ronda



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## PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS



### MASSIVE CLEANUP AT NIA ROAD

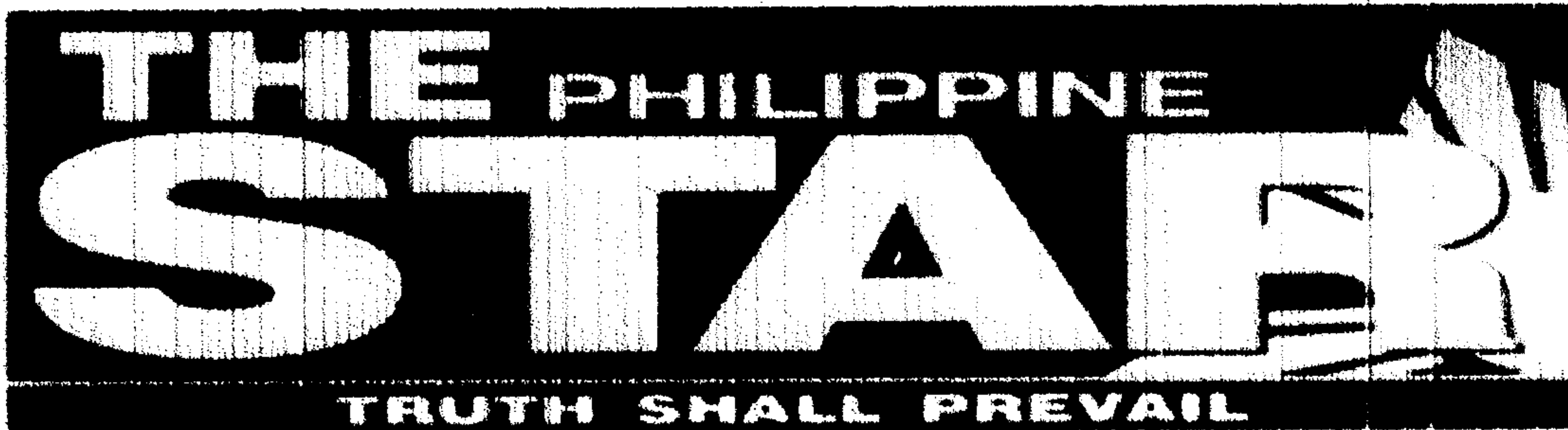
**MORE** than 400 volunteers from the International WeLoveU Foundation and World Mission Society Church of God gathered to clean the stretch of NIA Road, East Avenue, and BIR Road in Quezon City on May 22, 2016 from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m.

The massive cleanup drive was conducted in cooperation with various agencies in Quezon City Hall such as the Environmental Protection and Waste Management Department (EPWMD), Social Services and Development Department (SSDD), Quezon City Police District (QCPD) Station 10, Department of Public Safety and Order (DPOS), and Bgy. Central and Bgy. Pinyahan.

The united cleanup drive was initiated by the WeLoveU Foundation, which proclaimed May 22 as "World Cleanup Day," making the cleanup in Quezon City a part of a worldwide simultaneous cleanup campaign in 2,500 areas in 175 countries.

The International WeLoveU Foundation was founded in South Korea by Chairwoman Zahng Gil-Jah and is known throughout the world as the foundation that shares the love of a mother.





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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# GE crops safe for food, env't, scientific review says

Genetically engineered crops are safe for human consumption and the environment, an independent scientific assessment has concluded.

The US National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine said it has found "no substantiated evidence of a difference in risks to human health between currently commercialized genetically engineered (GE) crops and conventionally bred crops."

No "conclusive cause-and-effect evidence of environmental problems from the GE crops" has been found, it said.

The findings were released mid-May by the academy, one of the highest independent scientific bodies in the United States, in a report, "Genetically Engineered Crops: Past Experience and Future Prospects" written by its Board on Agriculture and Natural Resources, Division on Earth and Life Studies.

GE crops are plants whose genetic composition has been altered using biotechnology. Biotechnology in-

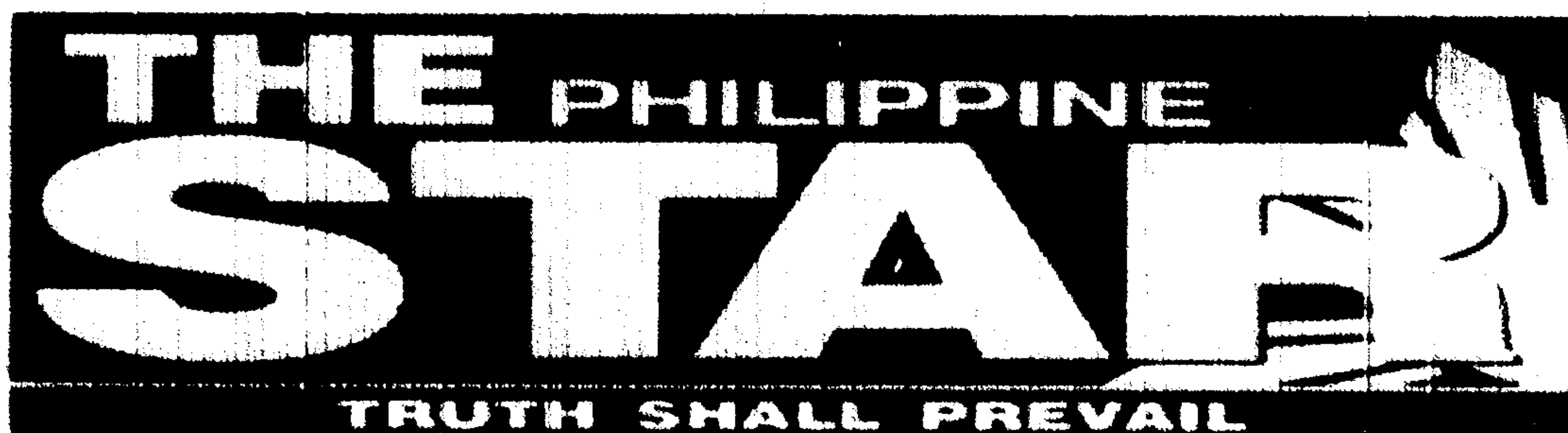
cludes techniques that precisely cut and insert DNA material in a plant to enhance a trait already carried by the plant or to introduce a gene (or genes) that confer a valuable trait from another plant or organism.

Bt corn is the only GE crop commercialized in the Philippines; about 700,000 hectares are planted to the insect-resistant Bt corn, so called because it contains genes from *Bacillus thuringiensis*. Bt is a soil bacterium that gives the corn a built-in insecticide that can kill specific insects that ingest them, in this case the corn borer.

In 2015, some 350,000 poor Filipino farmers planted Bt corn, according to the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA). The Philippines and Vietnam are the only countries that plant Bt corn in Southeast Asia.

"The US Academy of Sciences report confirms what the mainstream





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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

GE crops safe for food env't. scientific  
review says

scientific community has been stating," Paul Teng, ISAAA chairperson, told *SciencePhilippines* in an email. "There has been a clean record on food and feed safety of these crops when used for food, feed and processing."

He said the report affirms what ISAAA had reported in April to commemorate the 20 years of commercialization of biotech crops, "that these crops have been safely planted by farmers and have conferred substantial economic benefits to millions of farmers worldwide and additionally benefited the environment by reduced use of insecticides and reduced need to clear new land for agriculture."

The new report builds on previous academy reports over the last two decades between 1987 and 2010. It is based on more than 900 research and other publications, the opinion of 80 experts at three public meetings

and 15 webinars and more than 700 comments from the public.

GE crops and foods derived from them are tested in three ways: animal testing, compositional analysis and allergenicity testing and prediction. Although the design and analysis of many animal-feeding studies were not optimal, the report observed that many available animal experimental studies taken together "provided reasonable evidence that animals were not harmed by eating foods derived from GE crops."

"Data on the nutrient and chemical composition of a GE plant compared to a similar non-GE variety of the crop sometimes show statistically significant differences in nutrient and chemical composition, but the differences have been considered to fall within the range of naturally occurring variation found in currently available non-GE

crops," the academy said.

It said many people are concerned that GE food consumption may lead to higher incidence of specific health problems including cancer, obesity, gastrointestinal tract illnesses, kidney disease and disorders such as autism spectrum and allergies.

In the absence of long-term, case-controlled studies to examine some hypotheses, the academy examined epidemiological datasets over time from the United States and Canada, where GE food has been consumed since the late 1990s, and similar data sets from the United Kingdom and Western Europe, where GE food is not widely consumed.

"No pattern of differences was found among countries in specific health problems after the introduction of GE foods in the 1990s," it concluded. — **SciencePhilippines**



**PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS**

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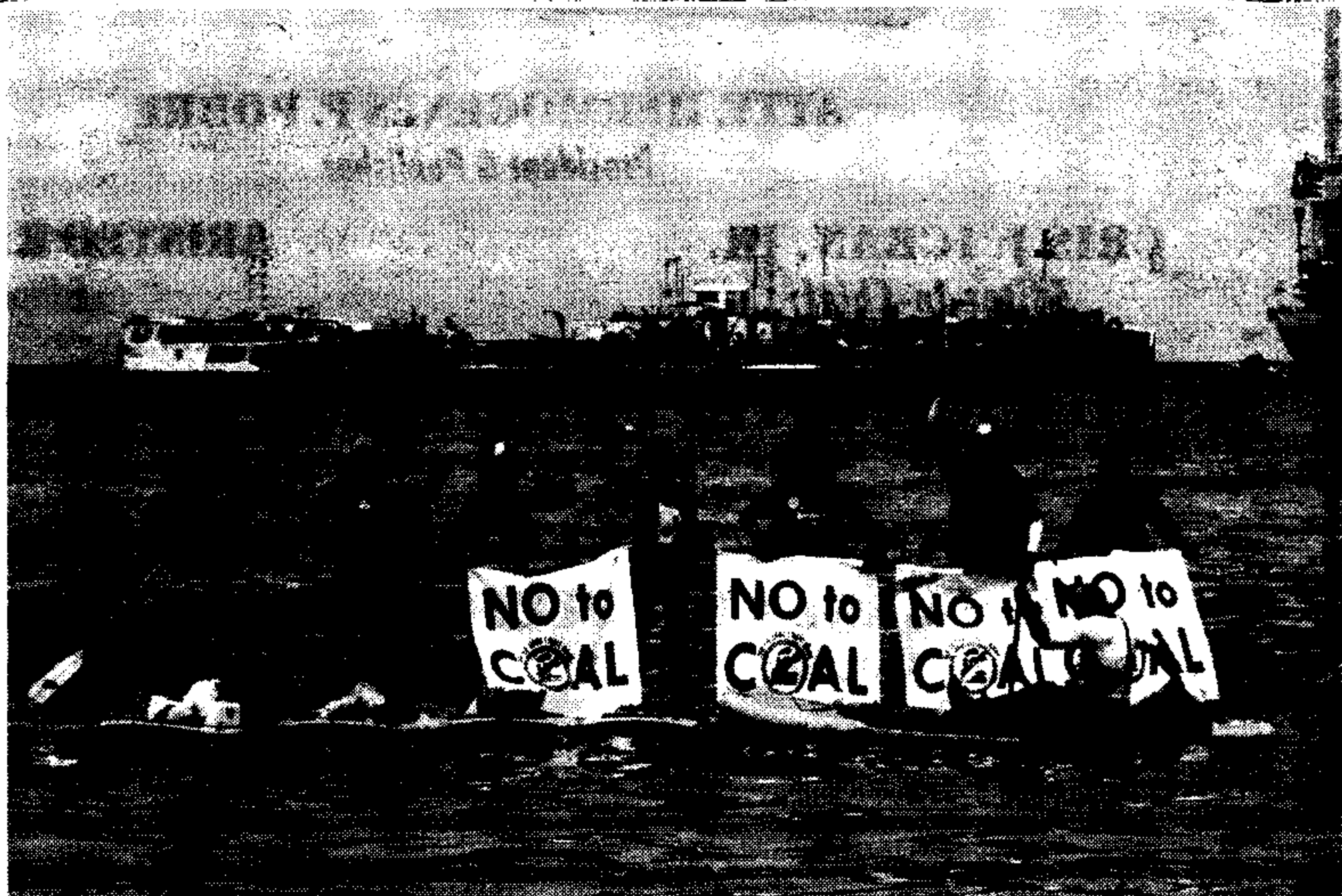
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**AYAW NAMIN** Nakiisa ang mga stand-up paddler ng Cebu sa protesta laban sa planong magtayo ng isang coal-fired plant sa Bgy. Sawang Calero, Cebu City, sa pagsasagwan nila kahapon ng kani-kanilang board mula sa South Road Properties patungo sa Pasil Fish port na malapit sa lugar ng pinaplanong planta.

**JUAN CARLO DE VELA**



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**SASAMA SA BAH** Tone-toneladang basura ang lumulutang sa Estero de Magdalena sa Binondo, Manila habang papasok ang tag-ulan at inaasahan ang mga pagbaha sa Metro Manila. **ALI VICOY**



THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS  
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# MANILA BULLETIN

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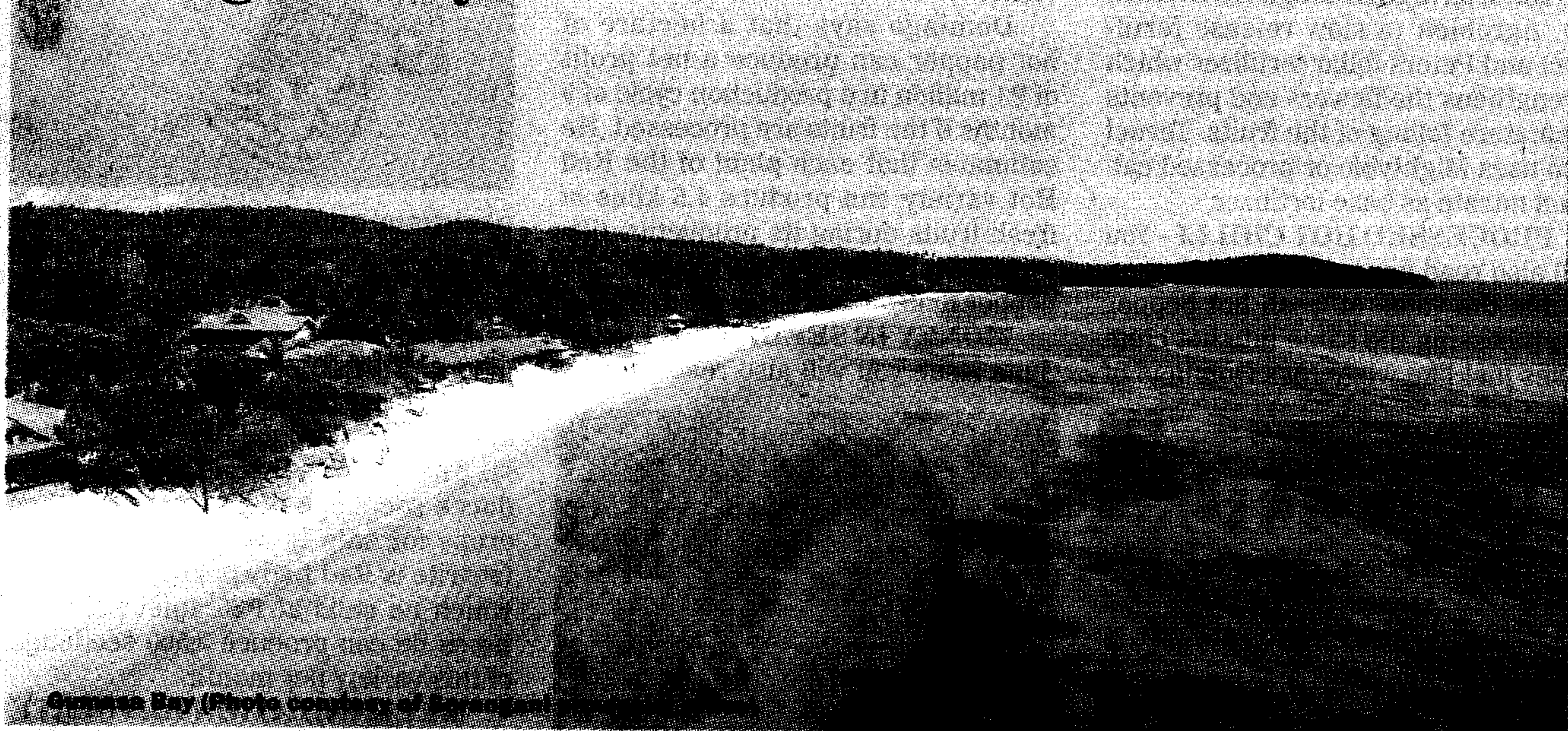
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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### Sarangani Bay sets beach event for Mother Earth



Gumasa Bay (Photo courtesy of Sarangani Provincial Tourism Council)

For the past decade, tens of thousands of sun worshipers and party people from all over the archipelago have been trooping to southern Mindanao for the Sarangani Bay (SarBay) Festival, seen as "biggest" beach party in the country.

This long stretch of white in Gumasa Beach in Glan will sizzle once more on June 3-5, 2016 for the event's 10th installment, but with a unique twist.

Sarangani Provincial Tourism Council president Michelle Lopez-Solon revealed that this year's edition will be more than the usual beach.

Themed #SarBayEvolution, this year's version will celebrate the inno-

vations it has embraced through the years, most notably its advocacy for environmental sustainability.

She said the third day of SarBay will be devoted to coastal clean-up activities, educational programs and environmental projects such as mangrove and tree-planting.

Five non-government organizations are joining the "I Love Clean SarBay" program this year to help maintain the ecological balance of the Bay's coastal ecosystem.

She added that this year's SarBay Fest aims to surpass last year which attracted about 126,000 guests.

This is the first time that it will be held in June to adopt to the new

academic calendar of collegiate students, and serve as summer's last hurrah.

Once a best-kept tourist secret, Gumasa has become one of the country's most sought-after getaway because of its unspoiled talcum-like sand, minus the madding crowd of popular beaches.

A Best Tourism Event Awardee from the Association of Tourism Officers in the Philippines for several years now, SarBay Fest is organized by the Provincial Tourism Council and supported by the Provincial Government, the Department of Tourism Region 12 and the Municipality of Glan.



# The Standard

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE





# PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

FISHERS ABUSED BY MALAYSIA - PAGE 1/2

## Fishers abused by Malaysia Navy narrate ordeal in probe

**By Allan Macatuno**  
*Inquirer Central Luzon*

SUBIC, Zambales—"Last warning!!! Aggressive action will be taken if we meet you again."

This was the handwritten message on a note, which three fishermen showed on Tuesday to a Philippine Navy investigator probing their detention by a Malaysian vessel on May 9.

The note was handed to fishermen Nelson Plamiano, Arlon Sandro and Odelin Baisa by a Malaysian Navy officer when they were released on May 10.

The fishermen said they were still within the territorial waters of the Philippines, about 17 nautical miles from the Rizal (Commodore) Reef, when the Malaysian authorities apprehended them.

The fishermen had asked the Philippine government to file a complaint against at least 20 Malaysian Navy personnel for beating them up while they were under detention on a Malaysian vessel on May 9.

Malaysian maritime policemen claimed the Filipinos illegally entered Malaysia's ter-

ritorial waters, southwest of the Philippines.

"We were handcuffed, slapped, punched and kicked on the chest. We were forced to kneel on the hot floor of the ship's deck," Plamiano recounted to the INQUIRER in an earlier interview.

The fishermen had turned to Subic Mayor Jay Khonghun for medical assistance.

Dr. Leonardo Afable, Subic municipal health officer, said two of the fishermen suffered burns on their knees. A medical certificate issued by Dr. Romel Felarca of the San Marcelino District Hospital said Baisa was still suffering from infected wounds on the knee. Each of his knee bore injuries measuring about three centimeters.

Navy officials said they would coordinate with the Department of Foreign Affairs in preparing an international petition or complaint against the Malaysian Navy.

Khonghun described the fishermen's encounter with the Malaysian authorities as "saddening."

"Our fishermen were mauled and threatened by the Malaysian Navy inside the territory of the Philippines. It's sad that it's not only Chinese who are doing this to us," Khonghun said.



# PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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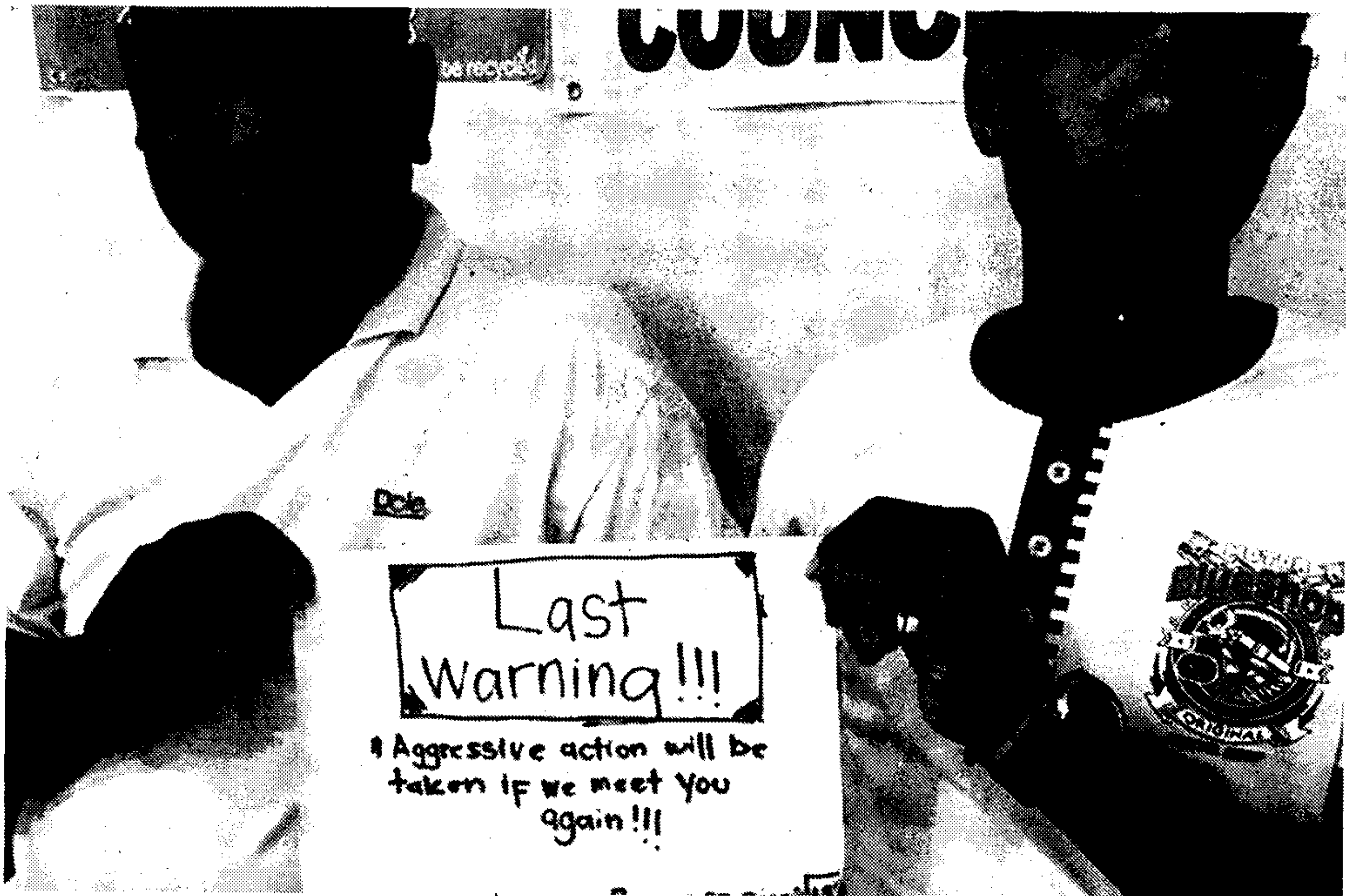
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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

FISHERS ABUSED BY MALAYSIA - - -

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NELSON Plamiano (right) and Odelin Baisa, two of the three fishermen detained and manhandled by Malaysian Navy personnel, show the note that warns them against fishing near the Rizal (Commodore) Reef. The note was given them by a Malaysian navy man. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO