

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

28 MAY 2016

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DAY : Saturday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Illegal-logging syndicates back in business

By JONATHAN MAYUGA [@jonlmayuga](#)

ILLEGAL-LOGGING syndicates are back in business in Southern Mindanao and the Caraga regions, the country's top forestry official said.

"This is now being addressed by the DENR [Department of Environment and Natural Resource] in the regions," Director Ricardo L. Calderon of the DENR's Forest and Management Bureau (FMB) told the BUSINESSMIRROR in an interview.

Calderon said there is also a

resurgence of illegal-logging operations in the Cordillera Autonomous Region, and Infanta and Real towns in the province of Quezon.

The observation was based on reports coming from the regions in April, May and June last year.

"Based on their confiscation of

illegal logs ['hot logs'], there are emerging problems on illegal logging in those areas," Calderon said.

According to Calderon, the DENR-FMB has recommended that concerned agencies sustain their anti-illegal-logging operations in those areas to prevent the illegal activities.

"They have been directed to intensify the anti-illegal-logging campaign in the area. We have instructions sent to concerned DENR field offices," Calderon said.

Hot logs are logs harvested from natural forests, an act prohibited by Executive Order (EO) 23, which imposes a nationwide log ban on natural and residual forests.

Under the policy, only logs that are harvested from established

forest plantations under EO 26, which established the National Greening Program (NGP), or forest plantations run by the private sector with permits are allowed to be processed for various uses.

The DENR confiscates logs even from sawmills that fail to show proper documentation of the logs they process.

The DENR-FMB is seeking a P700-million budget for the implementation of the National Forest Protection Program, which is basically aimed at enforcing the law against destructive activities, such as illegal-logging activities, in the country's natural and residual forests.

Under the Aquino adminis-

tration, Environment Secretary Ramon J.P. Paje said the number of illegal-logging hot spots went down to 23 by the end of 2015, from 197 identified illegal-logging hot spots in 2010.

During the period, illegal logs confiscated were donated to the Department of Education and were used to repair school buildings, manufacture of school chairs and other school furniture.

Based on DENR records, a total of 28.5 million board feet of undocumented wood products have been confiscated from 2010 to September 2015.

Most of the seized logs have been converted into essential school furnishings, like armchairs and desks,

through the P-Noy Bayanihan Project, for use in public elementary and high schools.

Since 2011, more than 146,000 pieces of school furniture have been produced and 369 school buildings have been repaired using seized timber products.

Paje said the enforcement of EO 23 resulted in the filing of 1,370 cases in court and the conviction of close to 200 individuals.

The success of the anti-illegal-logging campaign was partly attributed to the successful implementation of the NGP, in which a total of 1.35 million hectares of open, degraded and denuded forests have been rehabilitated as of December 2015.

Indigents fear effects of road rehabilitation

By Brenda Jocson

ILAGAN CITY, Isabela—Residents living along the more than P2-billion worth Ilagan-Divilacan road rehabilitation project have expressed concern over the impending destruction of indigenous trees serving as sanctuary for the already dwindling Philippine Eagle species.

Pedro Vicente, who belongs to the Agta tribe, said that a major part of the Sierra Madre mountains will be affected with the said 82-kilometer road rehabilitation project and will open up to easy

access among illegal loggers.

"Thousands of indigenous trees and different bird species will be displaced which may result in the extinction of those already threatened if the con-

tractors wouldn't be responsible enough in their rehabilitation activities," Vicente said.

Vicente said the Sierra Madre Mountains is also home to the threatened Philippine Eagle and the Almaciga (*Agathis philippinensis*) tree, one of the Philippines' endangered forest trees.

But the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office in this province has assured that the forest of the Sierra Madre mountains will be preserved and protected even after the start of said road rehabilitation project.

Forester William Savella,

PENRO-Isabela, made the assurance that his office and the provincial government have surveyed the project and that measures are being prepared to minimize cutting of trees along the road for the Ilagan-Divilacan road project.

"The Eagle Sanctuary will not be disturbed," Savella said.

"And as much as possible the affected trees should be uprooted and to be replanted in identified planting areas in the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park," he added.

The road project is expected to traverse the natural park.

The Manila Times

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Green Jobs Act to address eco, employment woes

By HANNAH L. TORREGOZA

With the recent signing into law of the Philippine Green Jobs Act, more Filipinos would find decent employment as caretakers of the environment and the country's natural resources.

Senator Juan Edgardo "Sonny" Angara noted the new law, which President Aquino has earlier signed, grants incentives to companies generating "green jobs" or jobs that contribute substantially to the preservation and restoration of the environment and natural resources, offers a two-way approach in dealing with the country's environment and employment woes.

"I thank our President and our colleagues in both houses of Congress for supporting

the passage of this vital legislation that addresses both employment and environmental issues of the country," Angara said.

"With the passage of this law, we are able to take care of our nature, and at the same time help provide decent jobs to our fellowmen," he added.

Angara is acting chairman of the Senate labor committee and the sponsor of the said measure.

Under Republic Act 10771, green jobs specifically refer to jobs that help "protect ecosystems and biodiversity; reduce energy, materials and water consumption through high-efficiency strategies; de-carbonize the economy; and minimize or altogether avoid generation of all forms of waste and pollution."

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P-Noy: Gov't hitting 'green' targets set in Paris

CABANATUAN CITY—As his term draws to a close, President Aquino said his administration had started to fulfill a promise to use clean energy to meet the country's requirements, after he inaugurated a P710-million solar power plant in Barangay Lourdes here.

Visiting the 10.26-megawatt plant developed by First Cabanatuan Renewable Venture Inc. (FCRVI), Mr. Aquino expressed hope that it would encourage more businessmen to invest in renewable energy sources.

He said the government intended to generate 15,304 MW of renewable energy by 2030, from 5,439 MW developed in 2010.

Criticized for supporting more coal plants than clean energy sources, the President hailed the project for generating electricity without emitting 16,500 of carbon dioxide a year.

He said it summed up the government's resolve to fulfill a commitment to fight climate change without compromising the economy.

"The project is clear evidence that we did not just set out to address the contemporary needs of our boss, the public, but we are also securing their future and the future of the world," Mr. Aquino said, citing results of the 21st Conference of the Parties in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris last year.

The FCRVI plant is the fifth solar power plant to be inaugurated by Mr. Aquino, who said 33 percent of the country's energy requirements now came from renewable sources like solar, geothermal, hydro, wind and biomass.

Because the province had an agriculture economy, Nueva Ecija was one of the areas most vulnerable to extreme weather, he said.

Rep. Rosanna Vergara, also FCRVI president, said there was now a growing industry "that believes in the tenet what is green for the environment is also now green for the economy."

On Thursday, Mr. Aquino unveiled a P3.3-billion water transmission project at Ipo Dam in Norzagaray town in Bulacan province. He said the project would improve the delivery of fresh mountain water to Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

Armand Galang and Carmela Reyes-Estropo, Inquirer Central Luzon

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Solar projects sa Cabanatuan, pinasinayaan ni PNoy

CABANATUAN CITY — Lalong tumatag ang posibilidad ng pagiging "Renewable Energy Capital of the Philippines" ng Nueva Ecija sa idinaos na pagpapasinaya ng 10.26 megawatt Solar Project ng First Cabanatuan Renewable Ventures Inc. (FCRVI) noong Huwebes na pinangunahan ni Pangulong Benigno S. Aquino III.

Ayon kay Congresswoman-elect Rosanna Vergara (3rd dist. NE), presidente ng FCRVI, ang proyekto ay binubuo ng 39,456 solar panels na aagapay sa paghahatid ng renewable energy sa Luzon Grid gayundin ang pagtugon sa lumalalang sitwasyon ng climate change sa bansa.

Nakatayo ang proyekto sa humigit 12 ektaryang solar farm at inaasahang mabawasan ng 16,500 metro tonelada ng carbon dioxide na inilalabas kada taon.

Sa kanyang mensahe, binanggit ni PNoy na dahil sa Climate change ay nagbabago ang weather cycle, humahaba ang panahon ng tag-init kaya't hindi dumadating ang panahon ng tag-ulan sa oras na kinakailangan sa pagsasaka dahilang para maapektuhan ang ani ng mga magsasaka.

Bukod dito ay may mga nakatayo at on-going na mga renewable energy plants sa mga bayan ng Talavera, Rizal, Lupao, Bongabon, sa cities of San Jose at Muñoz at wind power plant sa Pantabangan. (JDG)



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Duterte presses rich countries on carbon emission financing

By ALEXIS ROMERO

DAVAO CITY — Incoming president Rodrigo Duterte expressed his readiness to comply with international agreements on reducing carbon emissions but he maintained that rich nations should also provide funds to enable developing countries' compliance.

Duterte said developed nations have mainly caused pollution during the Industrial Age and they are now asking poor countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

"I don't have problem with that. I will cooperate with whatever it takes to cut emissions, but look at history. They (rich nations) were enjoying the booming (economy) and flooding the air with contaminants. Now that they are rich because of coal and industrialization, we are being asked to cut emissions and limit our activities?" he told a press briefing last Wednesday.

"If you have qualms, pay us or give us time to catch up."

Duterte said the emissions in the country were caused partly by hand-me-down equipment from other countries.

"They filled the atmosphere (with pollution). Now that they have advanced technology, they are constraining (our

activities)," he added.

Frequent natural disasters have been attributed to climate change, which in turn has been blamed on carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions produced by human activities.

Some sectors, however, doubt the link between emissions and climate change and criticized what they called "climate alarmism" that benefits the interests of green technology and renewable energy investors.

The burning of fossil fuels like coal pollutes the atmosphere and warms the planet that triggers the greenhouse effect.

While the Philippines is vulnerable to disasters, coal makes up about 22 percent of the country's power supply while oil accounted 23 percent, hydroelectric and natural gas constitute 18 percent and 14 percent, respectively, while geothermal accounted for 10 percent of the mix. Waste heat accounted for four percent while solar, wind and biomass only comprised two percent.

Last month, more than 150 countries signed the historic Paris climate agreement, which aims to limit global warming well below two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.



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EDITORIAL

Shifting to clean energy

As the nation prepares for a change of leadership, the Climate Change Commission is set to undertake a six-month review of the country's energy policy, reportedly with the aim of reducing coal consumption. The CCC review is in line with the country's commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 70 percent by 2030.

Businessmen have cautioned the government about the measures that might be imposed to achieve the goal, warning about moves that would dampen investments, cut jobs and raise consumer prices. The 70 percent cut was committed by President Aquino at the historic climate conference in Paris last year, during which 150 countries agreed to limit global warming to an annual average of 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

Incoming president Rodrigo Duterte has promised to honor the country's commitments to the international community. At the same time, however, Duterte has also made it clear he would not stop the construction of 25 coal-fired power plants that President Aquino approved in 2015 alone.

Both the President and Duterte have pointed out that developing countries such as the Philippines need assistance from affluent states, many of which are the biggest emit-

ters of greenhouse gases, in reducing carbon emissions. Wealthy nations used cheap coal extensively in industrialization, causing global warming, and now want developing countries to avoid the same route and instead leapfrog to clean but expensive renewable energy.

In a country with limited, unreliable and expensive electricity, coal remains the cheapest source of power. Even with the change of leadership, there is no indication that the government will apply the brakes on the use of coal for power plants. What the government can do is to pursue what proponents say are cleaner technologies for utilizing coal. At the same time, the government must boost support for the development of renewables so the nation can be gradually weaned away from fossil fuels.

Apart from having international commitments to fulfill, the nation must consider the health of people and the environment in areas where coal-fired power plants are built. Fighting global warming has always been complicated. The nation is blessed with renewable energy resources such as geothermal and natural gas reserves. The country may not be able to drastically cut its dependence on fossil fuels in the immediate future, but it's never too early to begin shifting to clean energy.



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DILG to LGUs: Prepare for La Niña

By CECILLE SUERTE FELIPE

As the rainy season starts, Interior and Local Government Secretary Mel Senen Sarmiento has called on local government units (LGUs) to be ready for disasters.

He urged all governors, mayors and department regional directors to take precautionary measures in their areas of responsibility.

"LGUs are encouraged to convene their respective Local Disaster Risk Reduction Management Councils to prepare a La Niña action plan; closely coordinate with PAGASA for timely weather updates and with the DENR-Mines and Geosciences Bureau for adequate information on the threat of flooding and rainfall-induced landslides within the respective LGU," Sarmiento said.

He also advised families to prepare their e-Balde or Emergency Balde, which would be brought during evacuations and should contain essential items like ready-to-eat food, drinking water, medicine, first-aid and hygiene kits, clothes, flashlights and radios.

The DILG chief also directed the LGUs to regularly submit a status report on all La Niña related incidents, including planning, preparations and general assessments.

According to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), the current El Niño is already in its decaying stage and there is a possible rise of La Niña during the second half of 2016.

PAGASA particularly warned the provinces of Isabela, Quezon, Samar, Leyte, Surigao, Agusan and Bicol of the developing La Niña.

Operation Listo

Sarmiento also reminded LGUs to implement the early preparedness action plans listed in the Operation Listo manuals for hydro-meteorological hazards.

The manuals contain the checklists and minimum standards for preparedness before, during and after a disaster.

"As the manuals say, these are done during 'peace time' or when there is no immediate threat of a disaster. This is what Operation Listo reminds everyone: that we must be preemptive instead of reactive," the DILG chief said. — With Mike Frialde

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**Pagmimina,
seryosong
problema ng
Phil - Duterte**

KINIKILALA ni President-elect Rodrigo Duterte na isang seryosong problema ng bansa ang pagmimina.

Ayon kay Duterte, kahit nakakatulong sa ilang mamamayan ang pagmimina, minsan nakakasira naman ito sa kalikasan at gayundin sa kalusugan.

Una nang isinusulong ng alkalde ang responsible mining.

Sinabi na nito na kung masusunod lang ang Australian standard of mining, sasang-ayunan niya ang pagpapatuloy ng pagmimina.

Ngunit kung makakasira naman ito ng kalikasan ay mas mabuting itigil na lamang.

Napag-alaman na ang Australia ay isa sa mga bansa na nagpapatupad ng responsableng pagmimina.

BULGAR

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TAPOS NA RIN DAW ANG HAPPY DAYS NG MGAILLEGAL MINER? — Sabi

ni Duterte na tutol siya sa illegal mining at para raw matigil na rin ang pagsira sa kalikasan ay pansamantalang siya raw muna ang mamumuno sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Ibig sabihin, tapos na ang happy days ng mga illegal miner...boom!

BusinessMirror

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Senate approves bill granting P100K to Filipino centenarians

THE Senate on Monday approved on third and final reading a bill granting P100,000 cash incentives to Filipino centenarians here in the country and abroad.

Voting 14-0, the senators passed Senate Bill 449, or the Centenarians Act of 2013, at the resumption of the third regular session of the soon-to-end 16th Congress.

Sen. Ralph G. Recto, who sponsored the measure, said the bill sought to honor the country's centenarians "through the grant of additional benefits and privileges in the form of a Letter of Felicitation

from the President and a cash gift of P100,000" upon reaching the age of 100.

"Our country's level of development still has much to be desired, and so reaching the milestone age of 100 years is considered a great achievement worthy of respect, emulation and recognition," Recto said.

The bill also seeks to entitle the centenarians to a 75-percent dis-

count and exemption from the value-added tax, if applicable, on the sale of the goods and services enumerated under existing Republic Act 9994 from all establishments, "as long as they are for the exclusive use and enjoyment of the centenarians."

Under the bill, September 25 will be declared as National Respect for Centenarians Day as a fitting recognition for their achievement.

Recto said a plaque of recognition and a cash incentive from the centenarian's city or municipal government shall also be given to him or her.

The recognition and benefits are on top of the benefits and privileges already being enjoyed by the centenarians under RA 9994, as amended by RA 7432, or "An Act

to Maximize the Contribution of Senior Citizens to Nation-Building, Grant Benefits and Special Privileges and for Other Purposes.

In order to recover the cost of the discount, Recto said the establishments will be allowed to claim the discount as tax deduction, based on the cost of the goods sold or services rendered to the centenarians.

"This provision will empower the private sector to become the government's important partner in the delivery of social services and benefits to this disadvantaged sector, currently numbering about 5,000, or only .005 percent of our population," Recto said.

The House of Representatives approved its own version of the bill in June last year. **PNA**

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Red nominees not cadres—NDF

By Karlos Manlupig
Inquirer Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—The nominees submitted by the National Democratic Front (NDF) to presumptive President-elect Rodrigo Duterte's Cabinet are known to be progressives but are not necessarily members of the revolutionary movement, the spokesperson of the NDF's peace panel said Friday.

"The nominees submitted by the NDF are not necessarily members of the revolutionary movement (the NDF, the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army) but individuals who are known to be pro-poor and pro-people in their stand and viewpoint, experts in the field where they were nominated in, and of proven integrity," Fidel Agcaoili told the INQUIRER.

Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Zarate was reportedly nominated as environment secretary; former Anakpawis Rep. Rafael Mariano to the agrarian reform portfolio; University of the Philippines professor and development worker Judy Taguiwalo as social welfare secretary; and Silvestre Bello III as labor secretary. Zarate, however, has reportedly

begged off in favor of former Bayan Muna Rep. Teddy Casiño.

"This clarification is being issued to set the record straight and avoid misunderstanding," Agcaoili said.

The military and anticommunist organizations have relentlessly tagged progressive leaders, activists and caused-oriented groups as legal fronts of the CPP. This labeling had been repeatedly denied by those in the progressive movement.

Duterte has offered four Cabinet positions to the Left, but exiled communist leader Jose Maria "Joma" Sison had declined to take any Cabinet post and instead suggested that individuals from progressive groups fill in the positions.

The NDF has drawn a list of 10 nominees from which

Duterte can pick his prospective Cabinet members.

Duterte, who declined to identify the NDF nominees, said the list was "very impressive."

Agcaoili also corrected impressions that Bello was nominated by the NDF, saying he was personally selected by Duterte.

"Bello was not nominated by the NDF; that he was appointed by President-elect Duterte even before we submitted our list; and that we raised no objections considering that Bebot is a known

patriot and has a track record of holding progressive views and positions," Agcaoili said.

Bello was also named by Duterte as chief negotiator in the future peace talks with the NDF, a position he also held in the past.

Duterte said he was open to offering more positions to top communist leaders if the peace process would make progress.

"If we can talk smoothly, and Joma will come home in July, I am ready to give all leaders positions," Duterte said.

Historic act

Leftist leaders yesterday welcomed Duterte's offer for them to join the Cabinet.

In a post on Facebook, Taguiwalo said she was "honored" to be nominated to the position.

"That an incoming president of the Philippines is extending his hand to the Left and inviting the latter to be part of government is a historic act. I am happy to be part of this event even as a nominee," she said.

Reached online, Taguiwalo, who was on her way back to the Philippines from a trip over-

seas, said he had yet to personally speak to Duterte. She has, however, visited several women's projects in Davao City when she headed the UP Center for Women's Studies.

The Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) also welcomed the nomination of its chairman Rafael Mariano to the Department of Agrarian Reform.

Bayan Muna Rep. Neri Colmenares also lauded Duterte's inclusive stance toward the Left, saying he had never seen an incoming leader reach out to the sector as the Davao mayor had.

"He's the first president to have the guts to seriously embark on a genuine peace process," Colmenares told the INQUIRER when reached by phone. *With a report by Tarra Quismundo*

The Manila Times

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STUDY

Indonesian birds face extinction due to pet trade



JAKARTA, Indonesia (AFP) — Thirteen species of Indonesian birds, including the country's symbolic Javan Hawk-eagle, are at serious risk of extinction mainly due to the pet trade, a wildlife watchdog warned Wednesday.

The vast Indonesian archipelago is home to a dizzying array of birds and keeping them as pets has long been part of the national culture, with birdcages a common sight outside homes and shops

across the country.

However increasing demand for some species as pets has led to dramatic population declines, wildlife trade monitoring network TRAFFIC warned in a new study.

"This is a multi-million-dollar industry, there's a huge criminal element, and many people are profiting illegally from this business," Chris Shepherd, TRAFFIC's director for Southeast Asia and a co-author of the study, told AFP.

Huge demand for songbirds in Indonesia has also put bird species in other countries such as Malaysia and Thailand in danger, Shepherd said.

The Javan Hawk-eagle is Indonesia's national bird and the inspiration for the

Garuda, the mythical winged creature that adorns the country's coat of arms.

Other species at risk of extinction include the Silvery Woodpigeon, Yellow-crested Cockatoo, Scarlet-

breasted Lorikeet, Javan Green Magpie, Black-winged Myna, Bali Myna, Straw-headed Bulbul, Javan White-eye, Rufous-fronted Laughingthrush, Sumatran Laughingthrush, and Java Sparrow.