

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DATE : 18 OCT 2016

DAY : Tuesday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

DENR chief welcomes Bhutan's happiness guru

The man in charge with overseeing happiness in the tiny Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan is in town to spread the word about gross national happiness (GNH), an alternative indicator of a country's economic and social well-being.

Saamdu Chettri, head of Bhutan's GNH Center, arrived last night on invitation of Environment and Natural Resources Sec. Gina Lopez to conduct a series of lectures aimed at inspiring Filipinos to find a balance between materialistic and non-materialistic aspects of life, and other factors that are vital to human happiness.

Lopez said Chettri will be in the country until October 26 to conduct lectures in Luzon (UP Diliman and Ateneo de Manila University), Visayas (University of San Carlos) and Mindanao (Ateneo de Davao University), and in the Philippine Senate.

A strong believer of GNH, Lopez said she envisions the Philippines as a country whose citizens give great value to the environment in the pursuit of economic development.

"We are changing the paradigm of development from the Gross National Product (GDP) to GNH. And, this is the first time that we are really taking a serious look of making happiness a barometer of development," Lopez said.

GNH aims to measure quality of life in more holistic terms than in the standard and monetary-related gross domestic product (GDP), striking a balance between spiritual and material aspect of life.

"Happiness is very subjective, very individual. You do not really measure happiness. For us, GNH is a condition our country will provide for our people. The domains give us a way to measure



Saamdu Chettri, chairman of Bhutan's Committee on Gross National Happiness presents to DENR Secretary Gina Lopez a copy of An Extensive Analysis of GNH Index upon his arrival in Manila for a series of lectures on GNH.

approach.

The target audience for the lectures includes representatives of people's organizations, indigenous peoples, civil society and local government units from 29 priority areas earlier identified by Lopez as models for sustainable development. Also to be invited are members of the academe, Senate and media.

The first lecture will be held on October 18 at the Ateneo de Davao University in Davao City. The succeeding lectures will be held on October 20 at the University of San Carlos in Cebu City, on October 22 at the Ateneo de Manila University, on Oct. 24, at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City.

On October 26, Chettri will conduct lectures in the Senate. He

various sectors and organizations in the priority areas based on the principles of GNH.

She was also expecting to generate commitment and partnership with different stakeholders in pursuing GNH.

As far as the DENR is concerned, Lopez said the agency aims to harmonize and integrate GNH in all its programs and projects.

GNH was coined in 1972 by Bhutan's former King Jigme Singye Wangchuck.

Since then, Bhutan has measured its prosperity through formal principles of GNH instead of relying on GDP.

That was to be measured by its people's sense of being well-governed, their relationship with the environment, satisfaction with

18 OCT 2016

BANNER STORY

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

BusinessMirror

P.1

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Lopez to keep 'protected areas' off-limits to mining

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA @jonlmayuga

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez has placed all permits issued to mining operations in so-called protected areas (PAs) under review, as she vowed to make sure miners will be kept out of biodiversity sites under her watch.

CONTINUED ON A4



LOPEZ: "No more mining in any protected area."

CONTINUED FROM A1

Lopez also ordered the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to conduct an inventory of PAs already threatened by mining activities.

Lopez wants to review the mining permits issued before and after their declaration as PAs covered under the National Integrated Protected Areas (Nipas) Act, underscoring the importance of protecting and conserving the country's rich biodiversity. Lopez made the policy pronouncement as she announced on Friday the cancellation of the environmental compliance certificate (ECC) of Austral-Asia Mining Corp. for its nickel mine in Mati, Davao Oriental. Austral-Asia's nickel mine is situated between two heritage sites—the Pujada Rav and Mount Hamiguitan

to protect the habitats of unique, but threatened, wildlife species against destructive human activities under her watch.

"No more mining in any protected area. We are going to review mining permits. If the permit was issued after the declaration of protected area, they should not have been issued at all. If the permits came prior to the declaration, then we will review it. We will always go for the common good," Lopez said.

Several PAs, considered as key biodiversity areas, are currently threatened by mining activities. Some of these are in Palawan, the country's last ecological frontier, and the hinterlands of Mindanao.

Executive Order 79 declares PAs as mining "no-go zone," but some Mineral Production

for conservation. "The way that the company [Austral-Asia] is doing its operation is putting at risk biodiversity in the area. They don't have a place to put their stock piles," Lopez added.

Austral-Asia is the 11th mining operation slapped with suspension for failing to meet environmental standards. It is the first casualty for failing the criteria that involves biodiversity conservation.

The cancellation of Austral-Asia's ECC was based on the findings and recommendation of the DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB), which conducted a biodiversity assessment in the area.

"I've asked the BMB to conduct a biodiversity assessment in the area and they found out it is rich in biodiversity," Lopez said.

18 OCT 2016

DATE
BANNER STORY
PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

BusinessMirror

P.2

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Lopez to keep 'protected areas' off limits to mining

issued to mining contractors that the government can revoke. "They can be revoked by the government anytime."

Environment Undersecretary for Policy and Planning Marlo D. Mendoza underscored the importance of protecting the country's remaining pygmy forests. He said there are only a handful of pygmy forests in the country, so these should be protected against destructive human activities.

According to the DENR chief, the nickel mine pose a serious threat to the rich biodiversity in the area, which is near the Mount Hamiguitan Range Wildlife Sanctuary (MHRWS), a PA under the Nipas Act one of eight Asean Heritage Parks (AHP) in the Philippines. Known for its rich ecosystem and white-sand beaches, Pujada Bay has been declared as a PA called Pujada Bay Protected Landscape and Seascape by virtue of Proclamation 431 on July 31, 1994, issued by for-

mer President Fidel V. Ramos. It covers 21,200 hectares protecting the bay and its coastal area, including its four islands. There are 25 genera of hard and soft corals in Pujada Bay.

Mount Hamiguitan, meanwhile, has been declared as a PA under the category wildlife sanctuary called MHRWS.

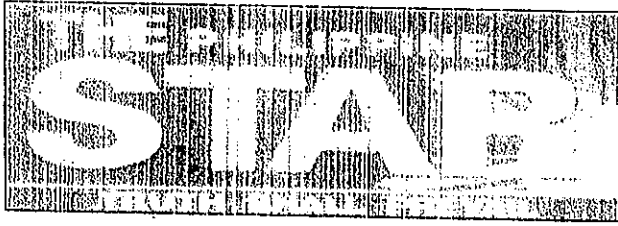
Among the wildlife found in the area are Philippine Eagles and several species of Nepenthes, or pitcher plants, endemic to the mountain. The MHRWS covers approximately 2,000 hectares.

This woodland is also noted for its unique pygmy forest of century-old trees in ultramafic soil, with many endangered, endemic and rare species of flora and fauna. In 2014 the MHRWS was declared as a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization World Heritage Site. In 2015 it was declared an AHP. Director Theresa Mundita S. Lim of the DENR's BMB was elated by Lopez's policy pronouncement.

"We are very delighted with this development. We had a competent team composed of experts on mammals, reptiles, birds, plants and ecology, who conducted the assessment, with primary focus on the impact to the biodiversity, in the area," Lim said.

"It is about time that biological-diversity considerations are taken seriously when planning and implementing development activities, not only in mining, so that the appropriate mitigating measures may be formulated and the potential loss of millions of pesos in investments may be avoided," she added.

According to Lim, the country's unique state of biological richness can be a source of wealth, as well, "providing rare and varied raw materials that can be harnessed for various industries, such as pharmaceuticals, food and cosmetics, and are even renewable, if properly extracted and utilized." *Jonathan L. Mayuga*



18 OCT 2016

DATE

UPPER HAL

B-5

PAGE

LOWER HAL

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Miners hit gov't inaction on new mining contracts

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

Mining firms have assailed the government for the continued implementation of an executive order suspending the approval of new mining projects, saying this is detrimental to the sector.

EO 79 was issued during former president Benigno Aquino's term. The ban on the approval of new mineral agreements will take effect until a legislation rationalizing existing revenue sharing schemes and mechanisms is put in place.

"EO 79 effectively set the mining industry back at least a decade. The country missed so many investment opportunities. But the more serious effect of the postponement of mining projects is the deprivation of opportunities for employment, livelihood and development in far-flung communities, especially in Mindanao said, where they are most needed," Ronald Recidoro said, COMP legal and policy VP.

Stakeholders considered this a dampener as far as investments are concerned, as gross domestic product could have grown up to 10 percent had mining been allowed to flourish. The mining industry contributes a measly 0.7 percent to the

country's gross domestic product.

COMP emphasized that the unstable policy regime of the last administration resulted in staggering loss of opportunity as no new mining agreements were issued and the industry's fiscal and regulatory regime came under very close scrutiny from the executive, legislative and judicial departments.

But the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) is set to review EO 79, its provisions and accomplishments.

"We have a good mining law. EO 79 is something that is not needed, it's just a matter of making sure everything is clear," MGB director Mario Luis Jacinto earlier said.

COMP earlier reported over \$30 billion is expected to be invested in the local mining industry in the next five to 10 years, majority of which are in Mindanao.

"These mining projects are economic catalysts that bring jobs, opportunities and hope to many individuals, especially in Mindanao. The best way to fight the insurgency, crime, and even the drug menace, is to generate jobs in these depressed areas," Recidoro said.

18 OCT 2016

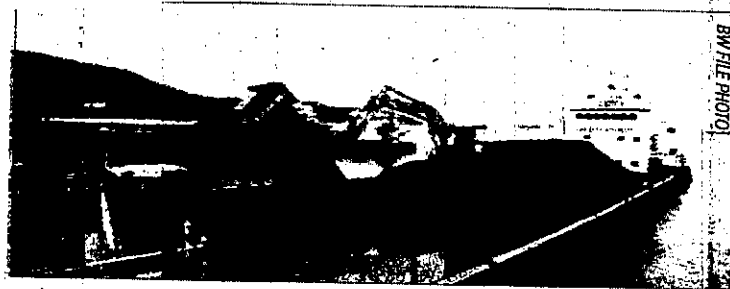
DATE

UPPER HALF

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Miners may sue to overturn Aquino-era freeze on new projects

THE Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (CoMP) is considering legal action against the government should it fail to remove a moratorium on new mining projects.

"We are considering legal action on it... That will be the last resort but it's still on the table. We simply we cannot live with it anymore *eh*. It's killing the industry," said CoMP Vice-President for Legal and Policy Division Ronald V. Recidoro in a phone interview on Monday, referring to Executive Order 79 (EO79) in place since 2012.

Signed by President Benigno S. C. Aquino III, the law freezes applications for new mineral exploration projects until the passage of a new revenue-sharing scheme improves the government take from mining concessions.

Mr. Recidoro said that the EO79 "has not accomplished any of the purposes it set to do" which necessitates its removal.

Environment Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez on Oct. 14 firmly backed the new-applications freeze.

"We really thought the audit will solve her issues," Mr. Recidoro said, referring to Ms. Lopez's order to audit miners' environmental-management practices,

which threaten with suspension those miners found to be noncompliant.

After a two-month audit, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources recommended for suspension 30 metal mines, or three quarters of the industry.

Of the total, 18 are nickel producers that account for 55.5% of the nickel ore output of the Philippines, one of the top nickel suppliers in the world.

"EO79 effectively set the mining industry back at least a decade. The country missed so many investment opportunities," Mr. Recidoro stressed in a separate statement of the CoMP sent to reporters on Monday.

Data from CoMP show that an estimated \$20 billion worth of new mining projects are in the pipeline with the majority slated to rise in Mindanao.

The Tampakan project in South Cotabato, which currently has its environmental compliance certificate under review, has a capital investment of \$5.9 billion while the Silangan project in Surigao del Norte, the Kingking project in Davao del Norte, Asiaticus in Davao Oriental, Philnico in Surigao del Sur, and Balabag in Zamboanga del Sur are all estimated to involve capital investment of \$2 billion each. — Janina C. Lim

11 8 OCT 2016

Malaya Business Insight

www.malaya.com.ph

DATE

A3
PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Miners ask gov't to lift moratorium

THE Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) has asked government to lift the moratorium on new mining projects saying an existing executive order has set back the mining industry by at least a decade, putting to naught \$20 billion worth of projects in the pipeline.

The COMP made this call in the wake of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) admission it intends to continue implementing the said order.

"The Aquino administration has sidelined the mining industry through EO (executive order) 79. The Chamber of Mines has mulled filing cases against this order but for fear of reprisal from the Aquino administration, we chose to suffer in silence. But we can no longer do so," said Ronald Recidoro, COMP vice president for legal and policy.

Recidoro said in a statement the order has adversely impeded the growth of the mining industry.

"EO79 effectively set the mining industry back at least a decade. The country missed so many investment opportunities but the more serious effect of the postponement of mining projects is the deprivation of opportunities for employment, livelihood and development in far-flung communities, especially in Mindanao, where they are most needed," he said.

COMP said an estimated \$20 billion worth of new mining projects are in the pipeline most of which are located in the Mindanao. Among them are the Tampakan project in South Cotabato with a capital investment of \$5.9 billion, the Silangan project in Surigao



Miners said \$20 billion worth of new mining projects had been stalled including the Tampakan project in South Cotabato, the Silangan project in Surigao del Norte, Kingking project in Davao del Norte, Asiaticus in Davao Oriental, Philnico in Surigao del Sur and Balabag in Zamboanga del Sur.

del Norte, Kingking project in Davao del Norte, Asiaticus in Davao Oriental, Philnico in Surigao del Sur and Balabag in Zamboanga del Sur.

Each is estimated to require a capital investment of \$2 billion.

"The Chamber of Mines believes these mining projects are economic catalysts that bring jobs, opportunities and hope to many of our countrymen, especially in Mindanao; hope for better lives. The best way to fight the

insurgency, crime, and even the drug menace, is to generate jobs in these depressed areas," Recidoro added.

He said the development of these projects translates to increased projection and exports of minerals and metals of about \$2 billion export receipts annually and revenue generation of close to \$50 million.

Regina Lopez, DENR secretary, said the moratorium on new mining activities will stay.

18 OCT 2016

DATE

UPPER HALF

4/51
PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Gordon wants to ensure proper taxes paid on Zambales mine haul

SEN. Richard J. Gordon proposed on Monday the expansion of a state laboratory to analyze mine output, particularly in Zambales, in aid of proper tax assessment.

The current laboratory is located in Quezon City and collects a fee for any tests conducted.

Mr. Gordon said local governments should absorb testing fees in relation to mining activities within their provinces.

Mr. Gordon presided as chairman of the Senate Blue Ribbon Committee over the second hearing investigating alleged black sand mining in Zambales.

The committee was assessing whether government officials can be charged over the weak regulation of Zambales mining.

Mr. Gordon expressed concern over the revelation that around 200,000 truck loads were removed from

Zambales, and expressed doubt whether only nickel ore was being excavated.

A report by the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) obtained by *BusinessWorld* shows that 987,795 metric tons of nickel ore in 19 shipments belonging to three mining companies left Zambales ports between Jan. 4 and July 4.

But Mr. Gordon said other metals could have been removed from the mine sites.

"Cadmium is very expensive. It's very rare. But are the right taxes being collected through the PPA, in those shipments?" Mr. Gordon told reporters in a chance interview.

Mr. Peter N. Tiangco of the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority also showed the Senate panel aerial shots of excavations by mining companies, saying the mountains were clearly reduced in size. —

Buena Rilynne C. Bernal

DENR execs face raps over beach property

OLONGAPO CITY, Zambales: The Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) officer in Zambales, the chief of the City Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) and its special investigator are accused by a group of complainants who claimed they were deprived of ownership of a one-hectare beach property here.

Samuel Montecastro accused before the Office of the Ombudsman for Luzon, PENRO officer-in-charge Laudemir Salac, CENRO Marife Castillo and CENRO special investigator Emelita Lambinico of causing the issuance of the Order of Award, Miscellaneous Sales Patent and Original Certificate of Title over The Cliff of a one-hectare beach property allegedly based on falsified statements and fraudulent documents.

Montecastro is a son of one of the 10 owners of the 10,000-square meter beach property located along the National Highway in Barangay Barretto here.

During a media conference, he said his parents, as well as nine other family friends and neighbors who are all based in Manila, bought the property from the Heirs of Baloy Estate Association, (HOBEA) Inc. in 1995 and developed the area into a private beach resort.

In February 1998, they were issued a Transfer Certificate of Title (TCT) and the owners started to develop the area in 2000 where now stand seven structures including four apartments/cottages, clubhouse and swimming pool.

The case was dismissed by the Olongapo City court in March 2007 but the court's decision was reversed by the Court of Appeals in November 2010 and declared all claimants to the Baloy property as co-owners.

In March 2013, owners of the beach property received an offer from Lewis Yakich, owner of the Lewis Grand Hotel in Angeles City and president of Yakich Corporation, to buy the property for P150 million.

Lewis later withdrew the offer, citing funding issue.

In July last year, the title to the beach resort was canceled and the property was declared an unregistered land by the Land Registration Authority.

A Miscellaneous Sales Application by 10 people was approved by PENRO and CENRO and the property was sold immediately to Yakich for P5 million.

Salac could not be contacted for comment while Castillo said she is yet to receive a copy of the case against them filed before the Ombudsman.

PATRICK ROXAS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Aklan's 'other jewel by the sea' imperiled

ARIEL'S Point, the popular eco-adventure destination in Buruanga, Aklan, invariably visited in tandem with Boracay by mostly sea-loving foreign tourists, is also the "favorite" object of ire of the Buruanga leadership headed by former Mayor Quezon Labindao.

He had ordered it closed on March 11, 2015, due to alleged environmental violations and underpayment of taxes, but for various reasons, the closure order supposed to have been implemented on April 9, 2015, did not happen.

Labindao, replaced by his own wife Concepcion Labindao after the May 2016 elections, had shut down Ariel's Point a year earlier in July 2014, but it was promptly reopened only two months later when its closure came under attack from various sectors the world over.

Among those who voiced their opposition to the closure was former Gov. Lito Marque, now a representative of Aklan.

When Ariel's Point reopened on October 27, 2014, its owner Ariel L. Abriam told newsmen that neither he nor his manager

received any closure order from Labindao. He also protested the mayor's statement the resort had violated environmental laws, citing the many awards and commendations it received from admirers from all over the world.

Abriam, an Aklan native who retired from the United States Navy, where he served as a high-ranked naval officer, was the president of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Boracay chapter, and a management partner of the world-famous Bakawan Mangrove Forest, the largest man-made mangrove plantation in Asia.

Labindao's repeated effort to close down the country's best "cliff-diving resort," had received the censure of civic society and the Aklan media. Protests against the closure of Ariel's Point questioned why, instead of taking pride at Buruanga town's "nature's greatest gift," the former mayor had begrudged its operation.

Ariel's Point had filed a case against Labindao, enjoining the court to stop the former mayor in his efforts to close the resort, which it said is "pure harassment."