

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

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DENR

IN THE NEWS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



DENR cites Masbate mine as model for rehab, community development

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is holding up as an model for the mine site rehabilitation process Filminera Resources Corp., a metals miner threatened with suspension after a government crackdown against sub-standard environmental management practices.

"The company did a good job at rehab. And I love the entrepreneurial spirit where the community is making products... I love the attitude of the company — at the willingness to fix things," said Environment Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez in a mobile message over the weekend. She was referring to Filminera's gold project in Masbate.

Asked if she sees Filminera as a possible role model for the development of the mining industry following her visit to the mine on Friday, Ms. Lopez responded positively, on condition that the


miner resolves certain "community problems."

"There are community issues but it can be addressed. The communication lines between the company and the community need to improve and DENR can help here," she added, noting that the department will help the firm maximize the use of its funds for its social development and management program (SDMP) to the extent that the company can make "a massive impact in the area."

"If they use their SDMP funds well then everyone is happy... Now that's a model. Right now there were rallies there and people are very unhappy. But it can be fixed," Ms. Lopez added. —

Janina C. Lim

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

14 NOV 2016

DATE

5

PAGE

UPPER-HALF

LOWER-HALF

Kemikal mula sa minahan, inireklamo

Hiniling ng mga residente sa bayan ng Aroroy sa Masbate kay Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Gina Lopez na ipasara ang isang kumpanya ng minahan sa kanilang lugar dahil nagpapalabas umano ito ng nakalalasong kemikal na nakapeperhuwiso sa kanila.

Inireklamo ng mga taga-Aroroy ang Filmira Mining Corporation.

Bukod dito, hindi rin umano nagbabayad ang kumpanya sa mine wastes, nag-o-operate nang ang development plan, at

may mga paglabag din umano sa environmental law.

Iginiit naman ni Lopez sa mga residente na magsumite ng pormal na reklamo sa Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) sa Masbate bago sumapit ang Nobyembre 18 upang matalakay ito sa Annual Development Program ng Masbate Gold Project ng kumpanya.

Kasabay nito, nangako ang kalihim na sosolusyunan ang problema ng mga residente.

Rommel P. Tabbad

PEOPLES JOURNAL

14 NOV 2016
DATE

14
PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DENR exec warns of Ormoc-like flash flood in Nueva Ecija towns

CABANATUAN City -- "We may be counting dead bodies."

The warning came from Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Mines and Geo-Sciences Bureau (DENR-MGB) Central Luzon regional chief Engineer Noel B. Lacadin, during the two-day first Geo-Hazards Summit sponsored by the MGB held at the Podium special events center here on Saturday.

Lacadin said an Ormoc City-like scenario of massive flash floods could hit the eastern part of Nueva Ecija due to heavy rains brought by a typhoon.

Like in 1991 deadly deluge in Ormoc City that killed over 5,000 people, Lacadin said residents of eastern Nueva Ecija must be ready and stay alert as strong rains could send debris from the mountains.

Lacadin said Palayan City and Cabanatuan have become susceptible to flash floods because of the Dituhin Creek in Bgy. Calabasa, Gabaldon where debris could cause the water sys-

tems to overflow and create a run-off.

"There will be dead people just like in Ormoc," said Lacadin, citing the November 5, 1991 incident when typhoon Uring brought heavy rainfall, generating flash floods within a three-hour span.

Lacadin explained that rainfall was not absorbed in Ormoc City because it was deforested and poorly cultivated, triggering a large runoff that overwhelmed the Anilao-Malbasag watershed and rushed downstream to the city where they converged.

In just three hours, Ormoc was devastated with thousands of homes damaged or destroyed, at least 4,922 people were killed in the city alone, with 2,300 perishing along the riverbank.

Outside of Ormoc City, 159 people were killed across Leyte and Negros Occidental.

"Just like Ormoc was in 1991, we could have a disaster of similar proportions in Palayan and Cabanatuan," Lacadin said.

In October 2015, Gabaldon also suffered the worst flooding from Typhoon Lando.

Two months later, they were again hit by floods brought by Typhoon Nona with floodwaters carrying mud and rocks.

The frequent flash floods in Gabaldon have been blamed on massive denudation of the forests and mountains in Sierra Madre caused by large-scale illegal logging in the 80s.

In Cabanatuan City, several areas experienced deep flooding after non-stop rains from Nona. Experts said Cabanatuan has become flood-prone because it is along the path of the upstream Pampanga River.

When it rains in the Sierra Madre, these are drained into a network of streams and rivers, flooding not only Gabaldon, Laur and Bongabon but also Cabanatuan.

"We have to act fast now. The urgency is there," Lacadin stressed.

Steve A. Gosulco

THE STANDARD

14 NOV 2016

DATE

UPPER HALF

CI

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Benguet towns aided by Philex mining firm

By Dexter See

TUBA, Benguet—Philex Mining Corp., in keeping with its advocacy to help communities in times of disaster, has donated 100 galvanized iron sheets to three typhoon-hit “Kabayan,” Tublay, and Bokod.

Typhoon “Lawin,” the strongest typhoon in three years to lash northern Philippines, cut a swathe of destruction and damage to agricultural products.

“It is our pleasure to meet the leaders of other municipalities in our host province,” Roy Mangali, assistant resident manager of Philex Mining’s Padcal operations, in Benguet, said.

He was speaking during a simple turn-

over ceremony at the Benguet Congressional District Office in La Trinidad last week.

“Philex adheres to its core values on social and environmental responsibilities not only to its host and neighboring communities but also to others in need,” Mangali said.

The GI sheets shall be divided according to the need of the three towns, which intend to use these to repair the damaged roofs of residential houses and public schools, according to a formal request made by Benguet Rep. Ronald Cosalan to Philex Mining, which has also helped disaster-hit areas in rescue operations nationwide.

“There was no hesitation from Philex

Mining when the congressman requested for help,” Peter Guibac, BCDO chief of staff, said at the event attended also by the mayors of the three towns.

“We hope the next donations will be for the advancement of our municipalities, not due to disasters.”

With sustained winds of 225 kms per hour and gusts of 315 kph, “Lawin” struck the country’s Ilocos Region, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, and the Cordillera Administrative Region on Oct. 19, when it intensified into a super typhoon two days after it entered the Philippine area of responsibility, damaging P657 million worth of infrastructure and agricultural land.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

14 NOV 2016

DATE

B2-3

PAGE

UPPER HALF

✓
LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

COMPANY'S RECORD GOLD OUTPUT

APEX MINING NET INCOME UP 281%

Apex Mining Co., Inc. (APX) consolidated net income for the first nine months of 2016 hit P291 million, up 281 percent from P76 million a year ago.

Parent firm net income amounted to P323 million, or up 141 percent year-on-year.

Consolidated net income for the third quarter hit P158 million, a turnaround from a net loss of P5 million a year ago. Parent company net income in the same quarter rose to P166 million from P26 million a year ago.

Its Maco mine continues to improve on its operating throughput, achieving an average milling rate of more than 1,450 tons of ore per day in the third quarter, short of its goal of 1,500 tons per day but 12 percent higher than the first half

average of 1,295 tons a day.

Gold production established a new record of 41,123 ounces, up 33 percent from 30,995 ounces a year ago. Silver output was 232,201 ounces, 41 percent higher than a year ago. Ore grades were lower, however, at 4.83 grams of gold per ton and 31.53 grams of silver per ton this year, compared to 5.69 grams of gold per ton and 33.96 grams of silver per ton in 2015.

With gold prices averaging a little higher than \$1,300 per ounce in the third quarter, the average nine-month gold price for the Maco production amounted to \$1,275 per ounce, slightly higher than the average gold price of \$1,192 a year ago. Silver prices averaged 10 percent higher this year at \$18

per ounce from the average of \$16 per ounce last year. The stronger prices boosted the company's revenue by 49 percent during the first three quarters to P2.7 billion from P1.8 billion in 2015. The nine-month revenue to date has already surpassed the full year revenue of P2.4 billion in 2015.

Cash operating cost for the three quarters rose to P1.5 billion this year from P1.2 billion in 2015 as a result of the higher milling tonnage, on per ton of ore basis. However, cash operating cost has been lower at \$100 per ton this year from \$118 per ton last year. Cash operating cost per ounce net of silver credits is also lower at \$698 per ounce this year from \$772 per ounce last year.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Duterte's change of heart on climate deal welcomed

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA @jonlmayuga

ENVIRONMENTAL and climate advocates consider President Duterte's change of heart on the international Paris climate agreement a welcome development as they look forward to the country's leadership in voicing the concerns of vulnerable nations on the impact of climate change.

President Duterte last week announced he has decided to sign the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate-change, which he previously said he would "not honor" for fear it would limit the country's industrialization.

"After so much debate, I will sign the climate change agreement," Duterte said in Malacañan Palace.

The Philippines's ratification of the Paris Agreement would bind the country into cutting its greenhouse-gas emission by 70 percent, as stated in its intended nationally determined contribution (INDC) submitted to the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) secretariat in October last year.

The Philippines is a leader of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF), an international partner-

by climate-change impacts, and the last to recover from disaster caused by extreme weather events attributed to climate change.

Boost to vulnerable countries

"THE global community will definitely welcome the ratification of the Paris climate agreement by the Philippines. Now it's time to get down to the business of getting a fair deal and stronger climate action from negotiations in Morocco," said Renato Redentor Constantino, executive director of the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities (ICSC), a policy group in the Philippines promoting low-carbon development initiatives, sustainable energy solutions and fair climate policy in vulnerable countries.

The Philippines's Climate Change Commission (CCC), the agency man-

According to Constantino, developing countries face up to 10-percent loss in annual GDP as warming temperatures drastically reduce productivity of labor by midcentury, citing an International Labor Organization (ILO) report.

Climate action will spur economy-wide job creation as urban

70%

The percentage of greenhouse-gas emission the Philippine will cut based on the 2015 Paris Agreement

P.2

BusinessMirror

DATE

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Duterte's change of heart on climate deal welcomed

services, food supply, roads and highways, sea ports and coastal infrastructure are upgraded to make them more resilient to expected climate-change impacts, he said. Investments in renewable energy and related services in modern energy infrastructure will also increase economic activities along with corresponding job prospects.

Opening doors for renewables

CHUCK BACLAGON of 350.org East Asia said Duterte's decision to agree to ratify the Paris Agreement opened the potential not just for renewables and the bigger energy sector but also for the overall economy.

"With the Philippines being rated as among the most climate-vulnerable countries worldwide, our status as a country that would ratify the agreement advances the voice of those who should be heard the loudest. We are glad that President Duterte has decided we can raise that voice louder in the global climate negotiations, and has taken up the plight of those to whom climate justice is due," he said.

Beyond the Paris Agreement, however, is the test for all governments, including the Philippines, to pursue an energy-policy direction that seeks to keep fossil fuels in the ground, he said.

"This is the best indicator of a country's seriousness in dealing with the climate crisis," he said.

"Fossil-fuel dependence is not synonymous and even detrimental to development," he said.

Toward resilient and sustainable communities

FOR his part, Rodne R. Galicha of the Climate Resilient

be heard. The Philippines will continue to be the conscience of the global community in addressing the climate crisis and to demand climate justice. While we continue to engage, we shall take climate action even outside the negotiating halls toward resilient and sustainable communities," he said.

"We are hopeful that all agencies concerned submit their respective certificates of concurrence as soon as possible with sense of urgency. Joining other countries, we will be able to voice out our demands and positions with full privilege as a party to the Paris Agreement. We are not yet informed of the timeline of ratification but we are optimistic that the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Climate Change Commission and the Senate are closely collaborating with the Office of the President," he said.

He said concrete actions must be undertaken, especially in laying down transition strategies from the country's dependence on dirty coal to available clean energy in the country, such as geothermal, wind solar and hydro.

"We must remember that not ratifying the Paris Agreement is tantamount to swimming in the floodwaters of [Supertyphoon] Ondoy [international code name Ketsana], sleepwalking with Supertyphoon Yolanda [international code name Haiyan] and flying low with [Supertyphoon] Lawin [international code name Haima]," he said.

Country's future, next generation at stake

GERRY ARANCES, convener of Center for Energy, Ecology and Development (CEED) and of the Green Thumb Coalition (GTC), said the Paris Agreement embodies the aspiration of the global climate-justice movement in keeping the temperature rise by end of century to 1.5°C and

stronger El Niño, more hunger, loss, suffering and deaths. This is what is mainly at stake in the whole negotiation process. What more with 2°C?

Arances said being one among the top vulnerable countries of world, the country's future and the next generation's future is at stake.

"That is why the policy and stand of the current government needs to be firm and clear," he said.

Paris Agreement loopholes

BUT let us be clear, as well, that, indeed, as the President has raised, the Paris Agreement has many loopholes. One, while it aspires for a 1.5°C and well-below 2°C global warming by end of the century, the agreement has put the world practically to a more than 3°C through the pledges of all countries as embodied in the agreement. These pledges are major parts of the agreement through the INDC submissions.

"We cannot start to fathom three times or four times what we have already experienced with the changing climate," Arances said.

Under the agreement's implementing rules, the developed countries have gotten away with the nonliability and compensatory clause for loss and damages brought about by climate change. They have moved also the time of the pledge for the \$100-billion climate finance from developed countries from 2020 to 2025 as stated in the agreement.

On the right track

ARANCES said Duterte is on the right track when he lambasted the developed countries with their low ambition on the needed reduction of emissions targets in their INDCs, among many other responsibilities.

"Put together, the developed countries' pledge is far below what should have been their fair share and historical responsibility for

P-3

BusinessMirror

Duterte's change

14 NOV 2016

DATE

A/3

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STR country and of the world, and that higher ambition from all countries, especially the developed countries, is needed.

"After all, the emissions causing global warming right now is due to the excessive burning of fossil fuels, particularly coal and oil, by developed countries to fuel their industrialization. Let us be clear on this, as the President has been ill-advised that coal and fossil fuel are the only energy capable of fueling the country's industrialization and development needs," he said.

Shifting away from coal

HE explained that most of the global community is shifting away from coal and fossil fuel-based energy sources to renewable energy.

In 2015, developing countries, led by China and India, were the biggest investor on renewable energy outstripping even the developed countries in their energy transformation processes.

In terms of investments, renewable energy far out-weighted coal and fossil fuels for global energy needs.

According to government data, the Philippines has one of the vast potential of untapped renewable energy in the country—250 gigawatt (GW). "We are only using 5 GW out of the total 18-GW capacity," he said.

Arances said it is not true that renewable energy cannot fuel the country's needed development growth. Those that have been in darkness for decades, having no access to electricity can best be provided access to power through renewable energy—mainly through solar, wind and microhydro.

He said industrialization could be fueled by renewable energy, citing the experiences of China, California and other countries, which are starting to fuel their development and industrial needs through renewables. "It is first and foremost the coal industry's interest, the big oligarchs' interest that have long gripped our electricity sector and policy," he said.

on Duterte's recent statement to finally ratify the climate agreement.

"We thank all the members of his Cabinet and civil-society groups who have persuaded him to reconsider his previous stand on the climate issue," HCWH Asia Director Ramon San Pascual said in a statement. According to San Pascual, developing countries, like the Philippines, must stop its establishing more coal-fired power plants and shrug off the reality of climate change.

"Our people are the ones most affected and we simply cannot leave it all up to richer countries to cut their carbon emissions," he said.

Investing in renewables will have greater benefits to both the economy and health. Studies have shown that, contrary to what coal companies say, renewable energy is cheaper, more sustainable and socially positive," he said.

"Renewable energy will create more sustainable, quality jobs and provide expanded and cleaner energy access for the poor," he added.

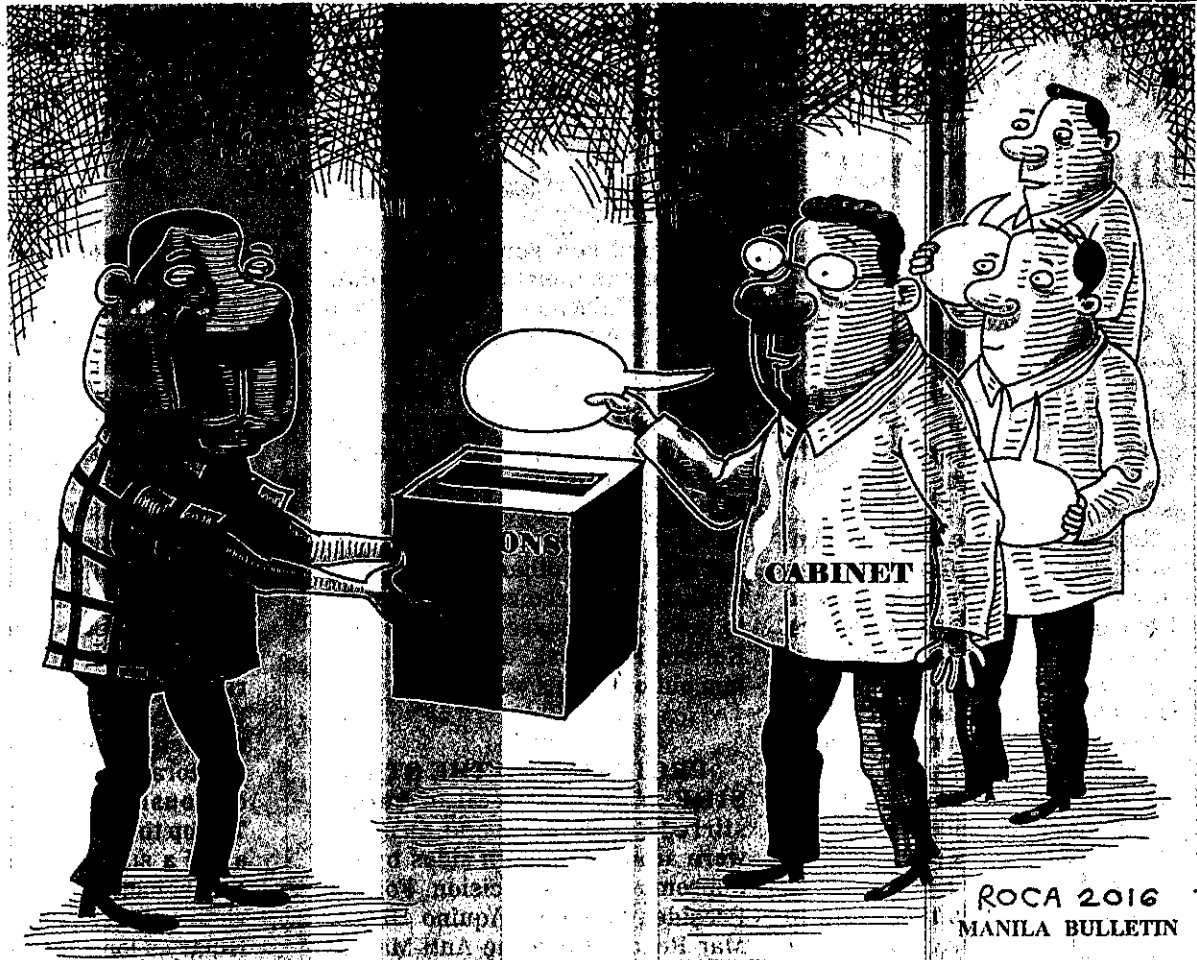
Last week in Taipei, the World Medical Association (WMA) called on health organizations worldwide to divest from fossil fuel-based companies and to invest in companies that uphold environmental principles consistent with United Nations policy.

WMA said the most vulnerable—children, elderly, people with heart or lung disease and the poor—are most at risk from climate change and the least able to adapt to the new conditions.

Fossil-fuel air pollution reduces quality of life for millions of people worldwide, causing a substantial burden of disease and health-care costs. "The President [Duterte] must listen to the voice of the health sector, on both the dangers of climate change and the health benefits of reducing greenhouse-gas emissions. Just as health professionals divested from tobacco companies because it was in opposition to its health mission, it is now calling for

IVES SERVICE

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Welcome consultations with the cabinet

ON two important issues, President Duterte seems to have amended an earlier decision after meeting with his cabinet and they gave their views and their recommendations.

One was the issue of Philippine ratification of the Paris Climate Change Agreement. Early in his term, President Duterte had said he would not sign the Paris agreement as he feared it would set back the country's economic development. Led by Secretary Gina Lopez of the Department of Environment and Natural

his term. But in last Thursday's cabinet meeting, Secretary of Defense Delfin Lorenzana said the cabinet members advised that the annual Balikatan exercises between Philippine and American defense forces be held as scheduled, but no longer the Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) naval exercises and the Amphibious Landing Exercise (Phiblex). The President also yielded to the cabinet on this issue.

President Duterte is a strong-willed leader ready to make decisions on delicate issues. On his own, he has sometimes stepped back and



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PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

14 NOV 2016

DATE

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF



EDITORIAL

KATANGGAP-TANGGAP SA PAGKONSULTA SA GABINETE

PANGULO ni Pangulong Duterte ang nauna niyang desisyon sa dalawang mahahalagang usapin matapos niyang makipagpulong sa kanyang gabinete at pakikangalan ang kani-kanilang opinyon at rekomendasyon.

Ang isa ay ang usapin sa pagratipika ng Pilipinas sa Paris Climate Change Agreement. Sa unang bahagi ng kanyang termino ay sinabi ni Pangulong Duterte na hindi niya lalagdaan ang kasunduan sa Paris sa pangambang mahahalagang ito ang pag-unlad ng ekonomiya ng bansa. Sa pangunguna ni Secretary Gina Lopez ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) pinagdebatehan ng gabinete ang isyu nitong Huwebes at binigyang-diin na ang Pilipinas gaya ng ibang mga bansang dumalo sa kumperensiya sa Paris ay nagsumite lamang ng kani-kanilang Nationally Determined Contribution sa layuning makatulong na maisakatuparan ang adhikain ng kumperensiya, na susuriin naman sa isang follow-up conference limang taon mula ngayon para sa posibilidad na ma-update. Bumoto ang mayorya ng gabinete pabor sa tratado. Halos lubos ang pagkakaisa sa magiging botohan, na isa o dalawa lamang ang tumutol, ayon sa Pangulo. Kaya naman nakumbinse na rin siya at nilagdaan ito.

Ang isa pang malaking usapin ay ang tungkol sa military exercises sa pagitan ng Pilipinas at Amerika. Sa kanyang pagbisita sa China kamakailan, sinabi ng Pangulo na military exercises sa banahon ng kanyang termino. Ngunit

14 NOV 2016

p.1
BusinessMirror

DATE

11

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Rich countries told to shut coal plants by 2030 to save climate



P. 2

BusinessMirror

14 NOV 2016

DATE

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Rich countries told to shut coal plants
by 2030 to save climate

RICH countries must close all their coal-fired power plants by 2030 to have a chance of holding global warming to tolerable levels, a report from an environmental research group said.

China would have to phase out the most polluting fossil fuel by 2040 and the rest of the world by 2050, according to Climate Analytics, a Berlin-based nonprofit that is studying how nations can meet the emissions goals they agreed at UN talks in Paris last year.

The findings illustrate the difficulty in achieving the UN goal of holding global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit). The world already has 8,175 coal plants and is building another 733, providing about 40 percent of all electricity.

Envoy from more than 190 nations are meeting this week and next in Marrakech, Morocco, to discuss how to take forward the ambitions they set out in Paris.

"Both shutting down existing coal and avoiding new coal build is absolutely essential to avoid devastating air pollution and climate impacts," said Jennifer Morgan, executive direc-

8,175

The number of existing coal-fired power plants

Pollution from coal plants could create 2.5 times more carbon-dioxide emissions than allowed by scenarios consistent with 2 degrees of warming, the report said.

If coal plants remain open, the world would have to rely, instead, on geoengineering, which may include pouring nutrients into oceans to save coral habitats or spraying tiny particles into the Earth's atmosphere to reflect sun rays back into space, the report said. Such proposals have been shunned because of their unpredictable consequences on global ecosystems.

The Marrakech meeting has been overshadowed by Donald Trump's

The president-elect has said climate change is a hoax perpetrated by the Chinese and vowed to scrap US participation in the Paris Agreement and stimulate coal and production.

Trump may have difficulty reversing coal's decline as a power-generation fuel, since cheap natural gas has cut its market share.

"Although the US election has created short-term tailwinds for the coal industry, the medium-and long-term outlooks point to continued decline," said Tom Sanzillo, finance director at the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis, an environmental researcher based in Cleveland, Ohio.

Meanwhile, US Secretary of State John Kerry said on Sunday he will continue his efforts to implement the Paris Agreement on global warming until the day President Barack Obama leaves office on January 20.

Speaking in New Zealand following a trip to Antarctica, Kerry said his administration would continue to do everything possible to meet its responsibility to future generations.

Kerry has long championed climate action, but now his legacy is under threat under the Trump administration.

Under the deal, which came into force this month, countries have agreed to limit global warming to 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) above preindustrial levels. Achieving the goal will require a major shift away

P.3

BusinessMirror

14 NOV 2016

DATE

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Rich countries told to shut coal plant
by 2030 to save climate

Kerry said it would be up to the Trump administration to define itself on climate change. He said sometimes there is a divide between what is said on the campaign trail and what is done in governance.

But Kerry appeared to take a swipe at Trump when he listed some of the ways in which global warming could already be seen. He said globally there were more fires, floods and damaging storms, and sea levels were rising.

"The evidence is mounting in ways that people in public life should not dare to avoid accepting as a mandate for action," Kerry said.

He also made a point of crediting a previous Republican president, George H.W. Bush, with first joining the global effort to address climate change in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

"Now the world's scientific community has concluded that climate change is happening beyond any doubt. And the evidence is there for everybody to see," Kerry said.

He said he thinks his administration is on the right track, because the majority of Americans believe climate change is happening and want action.

"So we will wait to see how the next administration addresses this," he said.

Kerry plans to fly this week to a global climate conference in Morocco, where he will give a major speech. Officials there have begun working on a "rulebook" to implement the Paris deal. *Bloomberg News and AP*

14 NOV 2016

DATE

A13

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

UN report: Human footprint 'increasingly visible' in climate

MARRAKECH, Morocco—Hot and wild and with an "increasingly visible human footprint"—that's how the UN weather agency sums up the global climate in the past five years.

In a report released at international climate talks in Morocco, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said 2011 to 2015 was the hottest five-year period on record.

That comes as no surprise as WMO's annual reports have shown record average temperatures in 2014 and 2015. But the agency said the five-year report

provides a better overview of warming trends and extreme events, such as prolonged droughts and recurrent heat waves.

"We just had the hottest five-year period on record, with 2015 claiming the title of hottest individual year. Even that record is likely to be beaten in 2016," WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas said.

The WMO's preliminary climate assessment for 2016 is set to be released next week. While it's complicated to draw links between single weather events and climate change, the report found that many extreme

events during the period were made more likely as a result of man-made climate change. In the case of some extreme high temperatures, the probability increased by a factor of 10 or more, the report said.

"Examples include the record high seasonal and annual temperatures in the United States in 2012 and in Australia in 2013, hot summers in eastern Asia and western Europe in 2013, heat waves in spring and autumn 2014 in Australia, record annual warmth in Europe in 2014, and a heat wave in Argentina in December 2013," WMO said.

The report found no strong climate-change link for extreme rainfall events.

Other highlights:

- Arctic summer sea ice coverage was 28 percent below the 1981-to-2010 average, reaching a record low in 2012. By contrast, the Antarctic sea ice was above average, especially the winter maximum.

- Surface melting of the Greenland ice sheet—a contributor to rising seas—continued at above-average levels, exceeding the 1981-to-2010 average in all five years from 2011 to 2015. Mountain glaciers

also continued their decline.

- Snow cover in the northern hemisphere was "well below average" in all five years, continuing a strong downward trend.

Climate scientists who were not involved with the report said it underscored the need for governments to boost efforts to fight climate change beyond their pledges for last year's landmark Paris Agreement.

"The evidence is overwhelming," said Chris Field, director of the Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment. "The new report from WMO is a clarion call

for embracing and going beyond the goals of the Paris Agreement."

The Paris deal calls for keeping global temperature rises below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) compared with preindustrial times. The average temperature in 2015, partly influenced by a powerful El Niño event, was already halfway there.

"Halting global warming at a manageable level, as the world's nations decided in the Paris Agreement, is now a race against time," Stefan Rahmstorf of the Potsdam Institute in Germany said. *AP*

14 NOV 2016
DATE

✓
UPPER HALF

11
PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

ARMM steps up enforcement of solid waste law

By ALI G. MACARALANG

COTABATO CITY - The Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) is stepping up the enforcement of Republic Act 9003, also known as the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

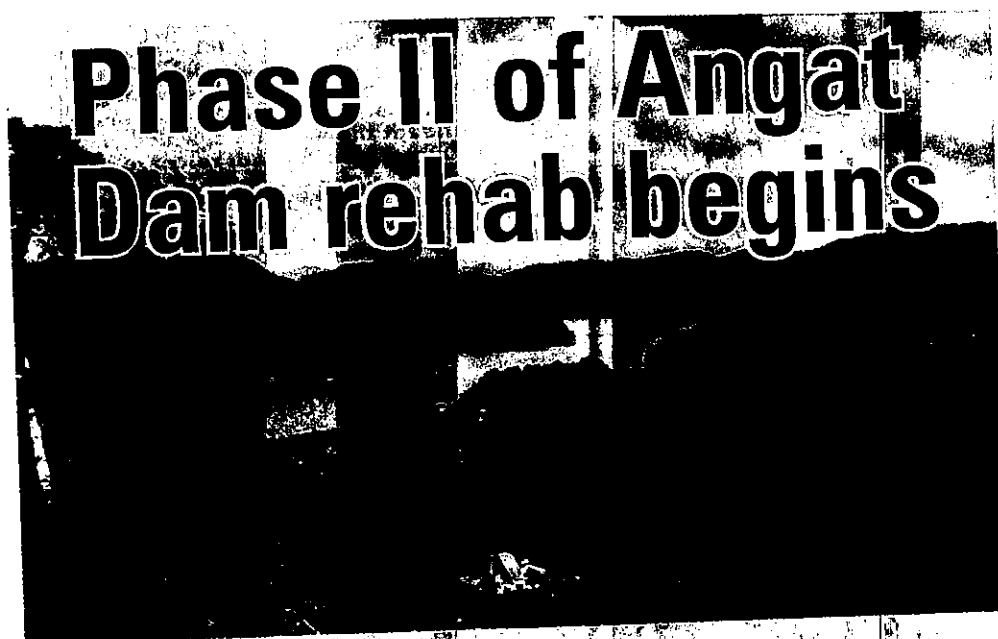
Forester Kahal Kedtag, regional secretary of the ARMM's Department of Environment and Natural Resources, said on Saturday he will enlist various sectors and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG)

in the preliminary enforcement of the solid waste law across the region.

ARMM has operational and administrative jurisdiction over 117 towns in Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi including the cities of Marawi and Lamitan.

Lawyer Kirby Abdullah, regional secretary of the DILG-ARMM, said his department will help carry out the mandate of RA 9003, reminding local executives of their duties to adopt and observe solid waste management programs in their communities.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



DANGEROUS BEAUTY — The 49-year-old Angat Dam undergoes long-awaited rehabilitation to ensure it does not reach the doomsday scenario of a dam break in the event of a very strong earthquake. (Freddie C. Velez)

BY FREDDIE C. VELEZ

NORZAGARAY, Bulacan — The strengthening and rehabilitation of the 49-year-old Angat Dam reportedly sitting near the West Valley fault line has begun.

Engineers of the Angat Hydro Corporation announced during the opening of the Dumagat Livelihood Center at the Angat Rain Forest Ecological Park the completion of Phase I of the project and that Phase II is already in process.

The Dumagat Livelihood Center's opening highlighted the 80th anniversary of the National Power Corporation (Napocor) last Tuesday. Napocor is the government-run corporation that has jurisdiction over the Angat watershed area.

Napocor President and CEO Ma. Gladys Cruz-Sta. Rita, who is a native of Malolos City, said the days of exploitation of the Dumagat, the indigenous tribesmen living along the Sierra Mountain range, are now over and that they are the only ones allowed to fish and gather forest products in the area.

Bot Cuejilo and Rona Tanchico of San Miguel Foundation said they had put up a resettlement area for the Dumagat tribe and were also provided trainings for their livelihood programs.

Meanwhile, AHC Dam Engineer Russel

Angat dam started their operations on October 1967 will extend its lifespan for another 50 years," said Rigor.

The engineers are optimistic that modern engineering approaches could make the old rock-filled structure survive the violent movement of a powerful earthquake.

He said that the pre-construction of works has been completed last July, 2016. This included conduct of survey and soil investigation, repair of access roads, construction of temporary bridge, installation of engineering facilities and actual site verification and detailed engineering design.

For Phase II, Rigor said the Environment Compliance Certificate needed to start Phase II (construction works) was issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environment and Management Bureau on last October 3.

He said the tree-cutting permit was issued last August 23, while the quarrying permit is still under process.

The main works that will be under Phase II will includes flattening of the downstream slopes of the main dam, main dike and secondary dike to improve stability of the said structures; raising of the impervious core of the main dam by about 1.2 meters to prevent over topping of the main dam during seismic events and installation of new dam instruments such as strong motion sensors and

Malaya Business Insight

14 NOV 2016

DATE

UPPER HALF

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

14 NOV 2016

DATE

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

SIERRA MADRE DAMS GROUP SAYS 100,000 PEOPLE IN DANGER

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
@dtmallarijrINQ

LUCENA CITY—The intensity of a quake that shook Quezon province and other areas on Thursday triggered renewed warning that the government's dam projects in Sierra Madre would lead to a disaster that could kill up to 100,000 people.

The Thursday quake, which was also felt in parts of Metro Manila, "serves as a reminder to us all that the threat posed by the dam projects is real," said Zander Bautista, assistant executive director of the Save Sierra Madre Network Alliance (SSMNA), a group opposing the dam projects.

The Philippines sits on the Pacific Ring of Fire where continental plates collide, causing frequent seismic and volcanic activity.

SSMNA is a multisectoral network of indigenous peoples groups, nongovernment organizations, religious and other individuals working for the conservation and protection of the Sierra Madre mountain range.

Death toll

Bautista said he feared that once the dams are in place and another strong quake occurs, thousands of indigenous people and residents in northern Quezon would be killed.

"The government should stop the dam projects and instead find safe alternatives," he said. He urged Congress to



**Lives of people
are more
important than
business**

Pete Montallana
Franciscan priest and head
of Save Sierra Madre Network
Alliance

eral Nakar should take precedence over the projects.

"Lives of people are more important than business," he said.

The priest urged the government to divert the billions of pesos in funds for the dam project to conserve forests and find alternative solutions to Metro Manila's water supply woes.

The Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) has been pushing for the construction of the P18.7-billion New Centennial Water Source (NCWS) dam project in Sierra Madre's Kaliwa River.

The proposed dam might submerge the mountain village of Pagsangahan in General Nakar, flood a watershed area of 9,700 hectares and displace 1,465 families, SSMNA studies showed.

The government is again pushing for the construction of Laiban Dam, a component

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

14 NOV 2016

DATE

A20

PAGE

UPPER HALF

✓
LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

CONSERVATION EFFORTS IN SUBIC

TURTLES BORN IN BEACH RESORT RELEASED TO THEIR HABITAT

SUBIC BAY, FREEPORT—Beach goers on Saturday released 96 olive ridley sea turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) hatchlings into the Subic Bay area, a known nestling haven for marine turtles ("pawikan").

Ameth de la Llana, head of the ecology department of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA), said several adult olive ridley sea turtles laid eggs at the All Hands Beach resort inside this free

port in September.

"This was the first batch of baby sea turtles from the hatchery of All Hands Beach that was released to their natural habitat during the cold season," De la Llana said.

All Hands Beach is among the seven major beach areas here that have been identified as nesting sites for marine turtles.

At least 50 resort guests, including children, gathered at the beach around 9 a.m. to set

the newly hatched turtles free and watch the animals race to the sea for the first time.

"Only 1 percent of these hatchlings will survive after being released to the natural habitat. Let's do our part to protect them by not throwing garbage into the sea," De la Llana told the crowd.

She said an adult sea turtle laid 105 eggs in September but only 96 were hatched on Friday. Aside from the olive ridley sea

turtles, green sea turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) and hawksbill sea turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) have been seen in Zambales waters, according to Marife Castillo, officer of community environment and natural resources office in Olongapo City.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has been recognizing All Hands Beach for its conservation efforts to protect marine animals, including sea

turtles and their habitat, Castillo said.

The SBMA has been carrying out a "Guard My Nest" sea turtle conservation program to make Subic establishments more pawikan-friendly.

The SBMA Ecology Center has also identified the beaches of Waterfront area, Dungaree, Edgewater, Grande Island, Camayan and Minanga as the other nesting areas for sea turtles.

—ALLAN MACATUNO INQ



14 NOV 2016

DATE

UPPER HALF

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Countries around disputed seas to safeguard marine ecosystem

By PIA LEE-BRAGO

Countries around the South China Sea have embarked on a collaborative initiative to safeguard almost two million hectares of the region's most critical marine and coastal

ecosystems for fish production, nutritional security and livelihoods, according to the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP).

The new initiative – called

the "Establishment and Operation of a Regional System of Fisheries Refugia in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand Sea" – aims to

work with communities and governments to integrate habitat and biodiversity conservation considerations into fishery management and practices.

The initiative is financed by the Global Environment Facility and implemented by UNEP.

Isabelle Vanderbeck, UNEP task manager, said the initiative would benefit millions of people at the highest risk globally from the impacts of increasing rates of coastal and marine environmental degradation in an area essential to the economic and political stability of the burgeoning Southeast Asian region.

"Safeguarding habitats critical to the life cycles of

important fisheries resources will not only improve and secure biodiversity but also build resiliency for those who rely on the ocean for their food and livelihood," Vanderbeck said.

"By improving the way fisheries and environment ministries work together and by linking fishing effort with coastal management practices, this initiative will provide multiple benefits for the environment and people," she added.

The South China Sea is the global center of shallow water tropical marine biodiversity. However, the loss of coastal habitats in this marine basin are high and increasing. Each decade, 30 percent of seagrass, 16 percent of mangrove and 16 percent of live coral cover is lost due to unsustainable use by the more than 270 million people who live along its coast.

The Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) is executing the initiative regionally in partnership with the fisheries

ministries of Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

Dr. Kom Silapajarn, secretary general of SEAFDEC, said the initiative complemented SEAFDEC's broader initiatives to improve the management of fishing capacity and energy efficiency in fishing operations, establish vessel licensing and registration systems, promote human-rights based approaches to fisheries management, particularly in fisheries labor markets, and demonstrate sustainability in seafood supply chains.

"Countries are committed to making the most of this opportunity to test, innovate and establish world leading practices for integrating fisheries and environmental management in order to benefit millions of small-scale fisherfolk and vulnerable fishing communities," Silapajarn said.

"Reducing environmental stress through a network of managed coastal and marine

Turn to Page 11



14 NOV 2016

DATE

UPPER HAL

1
PAGE

LOWER HAL

STRATEGIC

Oceanographic instrument found near Panatag

By BEBOT SISON JR.

MASINLOC, Zambales – Fishermen from this town found an oceanographic instrument – a device for measuring sea-water properties – with the mark “National Oceanographic Office, USA,” while fishing near the disputed Scarborough or Panatag Shoal in the West Philippine Sea on Friday.

In a report to the Zambales Police Provincial Office, Chief Inspector Jude Bryan Magundayao of Masinloc town police said three fishermen – Galley Godornes, 30; Reynaldo Mendoza, 30 and Joseph Asuque, 28 – found the yellow-colored device while fishing in the open sea and dragged it to the coastal village of Barangay Inhobol, where they live.

Now in the custody of the provincial police in Camp Conrado Yap in Iba, Zambales, the oceanographic instrument is the second such device found near the disputed Scarborough Shoal in the West Philippine Sea.

The instrument can measure various physical characteristics of the sea and provide data on tides, currents, and water quality characteristics, such as chemical composition and salinity.

Fishermen from Subic town also found what was described initially as a US drone also near Scarborough in February this year, with a different haul described later as a marine instrument weighing about 40 kilos and was marked “Naval Oceanographic Office USA.”

Fishermen spotted the object in the open sea near Scarborough and initially thought it to be just a toy floating on the water.

The marine instrument was turned over to the local police and eventually claimed by the US embassy.

That marine equipment found in Subic and the one recovered on Friday by Masinloc fishermen both bore a telephone number and e-mail address of the US Naval Oceanographic Office.

The marine instrument also bore the name of the manufacturer, Teledyne Webb Research. The company's website, www.webbsearch.com, described the marine instrument as a Slocum Glider, a uniquely mobile network component capable of moving to specific locations and depths and occupying controlled spatial and temporal grids. It is driven in a saw-tooth vertical profile by variable buoyancy and moves both horizontally and vertically.

The website further described it as having long-range and duration capabilities,

INITIATIVES SERVICE

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

14 NOV 2016

DATE

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

CHINA OFFERS PAGE 1/2

China offers aquaculture, but fishers won't bite

MASINLOC, ZAMBALES—

The head of a fisherman's group here likened to a "lollipop" being offered to appease a crying child a Chinese government offer to bring fish-growing technology to local fishermen displaced by a territorial row over Scarborough Shoal.

The offer was made by Liu Sinchong, assistant director of China's department of fisheries, who visited fishermen here and gave assurance that they would not be harassed in Scarborough, an area within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone but which China is claiming to be part of its territory.

The head of a fisherman's group here made the comparison when asked to comment on Sinchong's visit.

Sinchong told fishermen Philippine and Chinese leaders are working together "to bury the hatchet" over Scarborough, a rich fishing ground.

"Our countries had misunderstanding in the past but we have now become like brothers," Liu, speaking through an interpreter, told the fishermen.

DU30 in China

Liu referred to the recent state visit of President Duterte to China, noting that the Philippine leader was "very sincere" when he met with Chinese President Xi Jinping and other officials.

"The situation [between the two countries] will now change. China's government will help Filipino fishermen have a good life," Liu said.

Liu said the Chinese government is offering the fishermen training on aquaculture in China to provide a livelihood source aside from just fishing.

But Leo Cuaresma, chair of the Federated Fishermen Asso-

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

14 NOV 2016

DATE

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

CHMA OFFERS PHOTO 1/2



Fishermen from Zambales have known no other source of livelihood than the rich fishing grounds of Scarborough Shoal, which the Chinese had already taken over. They wouldn't accept any alternative, including an offer by the Chinese government to teach them how to grow fish. —ALLAN MACATUNO

ciation of Masinloc, said the fishermen are hesitant to accept Liu's offer.

"China is treating us like a child, offering us a lollipop," Cuaresma said.

"The Philippines should assert its right over the shoal and China should not set the conditions for us," he added.

Scarborough, also known as Panatag Shoal or Bajo de Masinloc, is some 230 km from the Zambales coastline, and

from the Philippines after a two-month standoff in 2012.

According to Liu, Xi directed him to talk with Filipino fishermen and offer the Chinese government's help for those displaced by the territorial row.

"I'm happy to see you and I know you are surprised by my visit. But I'm here to let you know that our leaders are working together to improve your lives," Liu told the fisher-

sources of livelihood for Filipino fishermen.

"Our President knows that Zambales is a fishing province so we would like to know how our government can help boost your income," he said.

Liu invited fishermen to undergo training on aquaculture in China. "China is the number one aquaculture country in the world and 80 percent of our fish are cultured so we will help you develop aquaculture facili-

ties who are also scheduled to meet Mr. Duterte in Davao City.

Wilfredo Cruz, head of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources in Central Luzon, said Liu's visit sought to outline the extent of the impact of the territorial dispute in the West Philippine Sea.

"We're happy that our fishermen are no longer driven away from the Scarborough Shoal. Mr. Liu is here to assess the situation of our fishermen."



14 NOV 2016

DATE

18

PAGE

UPPER HAL

LOWER HAL

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Senate starts plenary debates on P3-T 2017 budget today

The Senate will start deliberating in plenary today the proposed P3.35-trillion national budget for 2017 that lawmakers said contains provisions on climate change adaption, fighting illegal drugs, promoting peace, and social protection for the poor.

"It's an inclusive budget. So there are social protection provisions for the poor in it for an inclusive growth in the coun-

try," said Sen. Loren Legarda, chair of the Senate committee on finance.

Legarda said pro-poor provisions in the Duterte administration's maiden budget include funding for irrigation so that the National Irrigation Authority (NIA) will no longer collect fees from farmers; scholarships for science, agriculture and fisheries, and mathematics for poor students;

and universal coverage of the Philippine Health Insurance or PhilHealth.

"So any poor Filipino can walk in any state hospital and not worry of any balance billing," she said.

The budget also includes funding for the anti-crime drive of the Department of the Interior and Local Government, and the construction of

rehabilitation centers for drug addicts.

There is also an allocation for livelihood projects for conflict-affected areas.

Legarda said she made sure the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and almost all agencies, including the departments of education (DepEd), agriculture (DA), and public

By PAOLO ROMERO

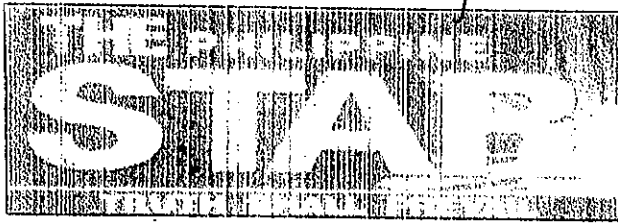
works have provisions on climate resiliency.

Senate Minority Leader Ralph Recto, meanwhile, asked that billions in lump sums in the proposed budget be itemized.

Recto said there is a "bipartisan consensus" to demand the "unbundling" of many lump sum allocations in the interest of transparency, fast implementation and accountability.

He noted that "itemization is the antidote to the underspending" which hounded the previous administration, with one estimate pegging at P1 trillion the amount of appropriations "not spent in time or in full."

"By knowing where funds will go, who will implement it, and details of what will be implemented, the projects will be delivered on time and the people win," Recto said.



14 NOV 2016

DATE

UPPER HALF

41

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Shell supports community-based sustainable tourism in Palawan

A cave within a cave that houses another cave? Yes, such a dazzling attraction called Hundred Caves exists in Brgy. Tagabinet, Puerto Princesa, Palawan. A local discovered it while searching for caves that contained *balinsasayaw*, or edible birds' nests.

With around 100 rooms or chambers, maze-like interconnected passages and interesting rock formations, it is a new community-based sustainable tourism (CBST) site to watch for, and one of the latest that power, energy and gas technology leader Shell supports through the Pilipinas Shell Foundation Inc. (PSFI) and its TANDIKAN (Turismo at Negosyo Dulot ng Ingat Kalikasan) program.

TANDIKAN, launched in 2015, promotes sustainable tourism through community mobilization and creation of alternative income opportunities while protecting Palawan's biodiversity. Furthermore, through training, mentoring and coaching, the program aims to empower communities as well as individuals whose advocacies are on biodiversity protection, conservation, and sustainable development.

Other CBST sites being supported by PSFI are the Palawan Eco-Adventure Trail, Jungle Trail, Maoyon River Cruise and Rafting, Mangrove Paddle Boat Tour, and Isla Felomina Snorkelling and Diving Site.

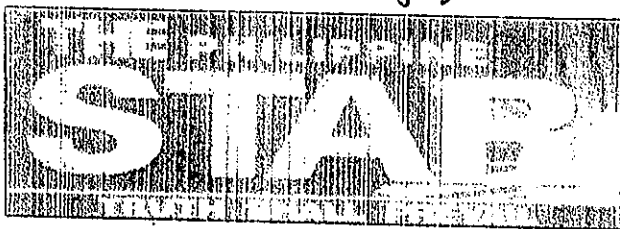


The Hundred Caves community-based sustainable tourism site in Puerto Princesa was soft-launched with a ribbon-cutting ceremony led by (from left) Pilipinas Shell Foundation Inc. program manager Marvi Trudeau, Puerto Princesa City Councilor Matthew Mendoza, Tagabinet Neighborhood Tourism Association vice president Susan Orcajada, and Brgy. Tagabinet Captain Arnold Cayaon.

During the Hundred Cave's soft-launching ceremonies held recently, guests from various travel agencies, youth organizations, and the public sector took part in a fun-filled festival-themed celebration. Present during the event was Puerto Princesa Councilor Matthew Mendoza, who declared that "CBST

The development of Hundred Caves is made possible with the partnership of PSFI and the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD), City Tourism Office, Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park-Project Management Office (PPSNRP PMO), Center for Sustainable and B.

P.2



14 NOV 2016

DATE

UPPER HAL

A2

PAGE

LOWER HAL

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Shell supports community-based sustainable tourism in Palawan

While Shell continues to address today's energy challenge, the company also actively promotes sustainable development through various environmental and livelihood programs implemented in communities all over the country. Beyond producing smarter products to promote clean and efficient transport, Shell is committed to environmental preservation with its numerous programs and activities that safeguard the country's natural resources in partnership with various relevant government and non-government organizations.

With the management of Hundred Caves in the hands of the residents of Brgy. Tagabinet, they are seen to no longer rely solely on fishing and farming as sources of livelihood.

"By developing attractions like Hundred Caves, we can make the tourists stay longer in Puerto Princesa. Visiting the Palawan capital is not just to enjoy the Underground River for local and foreign tourists, we now have Hundred Caves for them to discover and explore," said Arturo Hermoso, chairman of the Tagabinet Neighborhood Tourism Association (TNIA).

The Hundred Caves is expected to open to the public before yearend, after fulfilling the requirements to become a tourist destination.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

14 NOV 2016

DATE
B2-1

PAGE
✓

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

SMC revives flood control project

By Miguel R. Camus
@miguiercamusINQ

A massive Manila Bay flood control and expressway proposal backed by conglomerate San Miguel Corp. has been reactivated, as the Duterte administration opens its doors to unsolicited deals.

The almost P400-billion project, involving a combination of flood control barriers and a Metro Manila to Bataan tollroad, under a 50-year concession period would be pursued by its private sector proponent, Coastal Development Consortium.

"They're still interested," Ariel Angeles, head of the public private partnership office of the Department of Public Works and Highways, said in an interview.

The project, dubbed the Manila Bay Integrated Flood Control, Coastal Defense and Expressway Project, would help combat typhoon waves in the northern part of Manila Bay, improve road access and spur economic

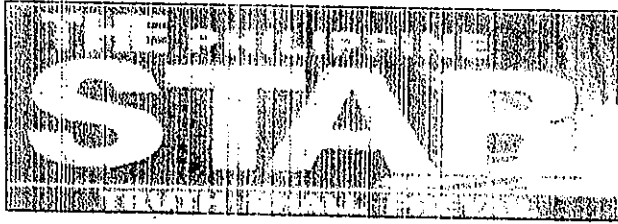
growth north of the capital district, the DPWH said.

It was first proposed by New San Jose Builders Inc. in 2013, before SMC unit San Miguel Holdings entered in 2015. The proponent's name then was changed to Coastal Development Consortium.

However, the proposal made little progress in those years, given the Aquino administration's bias against unsolicited proposals. Recently, Angeles said the proponents had expressed their interest anew and the DPWH was now working under a new schedule.

The new indicative timeline sees the project securing the approval of the National Economic and Development Authority Investment Coordination Committee within the current quarter. This would be followed by the Neda board approval.

Because it is an unsolicited proposal, a competitive challenge will be held. DPWH said this would be launched in the third quarter of 2017 with the actual process to be completed by the fourth quarter. INQ



14 NOV 2016

DATE

4

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Biggest supermoon in 68 years tonight

By HELEN FLORES

Under clear skies, Filipinos can witness tonight the biggest and brightest "supermoon" in 68 years.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said the moon will pass by the earth at a distance of 356,621.611 kilometers, the closest it has passed the earth since 1948, at 7:21 p.m. tonight.

"This year's supermoon is one of the closest and biggest in 68 years and it won't happen again until 2034," PAGASA said.

The moon's average distance from the earth is 384,400 km.

A supermoon or technically a "perigee full moon" is a phenomenon that occurs when a full moon coincides with the moon being the closest it gets

to the earth on its orbit.

The full moon can appear as much as 14 percent larger in the sky and 30 percent brighter to the people's eyes than at minimum size and brightness.

The word "perigee" comes from the Greek words peri, which means "near" and gee, which means "earth."

Astronomy experts said the best way to see a supermoon is in an area with little pollution and with little to no artificial light.

The upcoming supermoon's pull of gravity could also create higher-than-usual tides in some parts of the US.

PAGASA said during the supermoon the gravitational pull makes high tides higher and low tides lower.

Filipino fishermen know this event and so avoid fishing during full moon.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

14 NOV 2016

DATE

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

REVIVING BATAAN NUCLEAR PLANT

MAIN NUKE PROPONENT HAILS 'GOOD NEWS'

DAGUPAN CITY—The main proponent of using the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP) to generate electricity said the decision by Malacañang to give the green light to the plant's activation is "great news."

Former Pangasinan Rep. Mark Cojuangco said a nuclear energy plant consumes less fuel. A jeep full of nuclear fuel, he said, could run the plant for 18 months, compared to a coal-fired plant that would need two and a half tons of coal to run for the same period.

Cojuangco also said nuclear energy is better for the environment since it has zero pollution and zero carbon dioxide emission. "In nuclear [energy], our earth is protected from global warming," he said.

Another advantage is that the cost of power would be cut by half, he said. "Electricity costs would go down and would result in massive economic growth, which would mean more jobs and higher salaries," he said.

"Our economy should have progressed long ago. Trillions of pesos and economic oppor-

tunities were not realized since 1986 [when the BNPP] was mothballed," he said.

On Friday, Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi said President Duterte gave the green light to proceed with the BNPP reactivation, a turnaround from an earlier stand rejecting the use of nuclear energy under his term.

Flip-flop

But Nuclear Free Bataan Movement (NFBM), a group opposing the revival of the BNPP, expressed disappointment at Mr. Duterte's latest flip-flop.

"At first, we were pleased with his earlier decision not to operate the BNPP but with this sudden turnaround, we are frustrated and greatly disappointed," lawyer Dante Ilaya, NFBM cochair, said on Friday.

Ilaya said his group had planned to stage protest actions against the BNPP revival "so we might as well proceed with that."

Msgr. Antonio Dumaul, NFBM cochair, said he was surprised by Cusi's announcement. "We earlier thanked the

President for his decision not to operate BNPP. I'm surprised that this might not be the case now but I have to verify if it's really an official announcement from him," Dumaul said.

Dumaul said all parishes in Bataan have long opposed the BNPP revival.

"We already put up streamers in all of the parishes in Bataan to express our opposition to operating the BNPP," he said.

Cojuangco said international investors had avoided the Philippines as a destination for business and industries because of high power costs and lack of power, he said.

"We can use power as a tool to make our lives easier and better, unlike now when power costs burden us," he added.

But the NFBM said the BNPP is "unsafe and it remains costly."

"These are the very same reasons that pushed particularly the people of Bataan and Central Luzon to oppose its impending operation during Marcos' rule," said the group. —YOLANDA SOTELO AND ALLAN MACATUNG INQ