

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DATE : 03 NOV 2016
DAY : Thursday

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IN THE NEWS

The Manila Times

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Benguet Corp takes steps to contain tailings leak

BENGUET Corp., the country's oldest mining firm, said on Wednesday it is already taking steps to resolve and contain the tailings leak at its Antamok mine in Benguet Province even as it assured the public that the tailings from its impoundment area are non-toxic and safe.

The miner blamed unregulated small-scale mining operations for the tailings leak at Antamok.

In a statement, Benguet Corp. said it informed the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on October 27 that an intermittent leak of mine tailings was discovered following regular inspection conducted by the company after heavy rains brought about by Typhoon Lawin (international name: Halma).

"There has been no reported damage to private property or harm to any individuals," Benguet Corp. said, assuring the community that it continues to implement measures to resolve the situation and contain the leak.

According to the miner, the leak occurred in the drain tunnel of the underground Antamok mine, which has not been in operation since 1989.

"The Antamok mine tailings area serves as catchment for mine tailings from small-scale miners in the upstream. There are rampant unregulated small-scale mining activities in the area," the company added.

Since the discovery of the leak, the company said it has mobilized its workforce and equipment to contain the leak and has initiated cleanup operations.

It has also dispatched its workforce, technical teams and equipment to the site in coordination with the Mines and Geosci-

ences Bureau, Environmental Management Bureau and local government unit to undertake preemptive measures, including construction of containment dams downstream of Liang River and cleanup of spilled tailings.

The company has also constructed a counter-drive to plug the Antamok drain tunnel and divert the surface inflow water away from the area.

The Antamok open pit mine has not operated since 1998 while the Antamok underground mine has stopped operations since 1989. Both have been under continuous care and maintenance, the miner said.

Technical studies have been going on for possible tailings reprocessing project and the conversion of the open pit to a water reservoir for bulk water projects, engineered sanitary landfill and waste to energy project.

In a related development, Benguet Corp. told the Philippine Stock Exchange that it has received the mine audit report recommending the stoppage of operations at its Acupan Mine in Itogon, Benguet.

The stoppage order, based on the DENR audit, was due to the operation of a prohibited controlled facility, maintaining and storing of toxic and hazardous materials without accreditation as a Treatment, Storage and Disposal (TSD) facility, and failure to install air pollution control devices and apply for a permit to operate, as well as non-rehabilitation of the Antamok area.

The company is expected to submit its comments and explanations to the DENR in the next seven days.

JAMES KONSTANTIN GALVEZ

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Benguet contains leak in old mine

BENGUET Corp. assured the Environmental Management Bureau, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau and the local community that the minor and intermittent mine tailings leak in Antamok was put under control.

The mine tailings leak was discovered following regular inspection conducted by the company after the heavy rains brought by super typhoon Lawin.

The leak occurred in the drain tunnel of the Antamok underground mine, which has not been operated by the company since 1989.

Benguet Corp. said upon investigation, initial findings showed the mine tail-

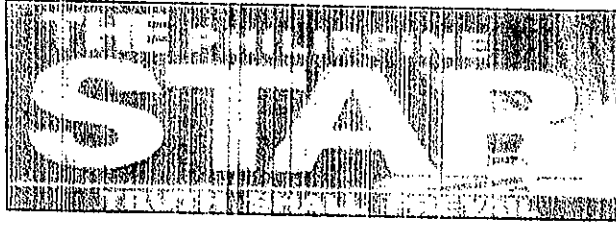
ings came from the Antamok tailings impoundment area, which may have entered the drain tunnel through a breach caused by the intense rains.

"No further leaks have been observed to date. Preliminary estimates showed only a negligible 50,000 metric tons of tailings material leaked into Liang River which is substantially less compared to previous incidents involving other mines," the company said.

Benguet Corp. said there were no reports of damage to property or injury to persons directly attributable to the leak.

"Claims of incidental damage due to siltation, if any, are being verified. Discussions have also been held with the local communities," it said.

The company said that upon discovery of the mine tailings leak, it mobilized its workforce and equipment to prevent any further outflow and initiated containment and clean-up activities in the immediate area to make sure that the residents in the surrounding communities would not be affected.



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No damage from Antamok mine tailings, says Benguet

Benguet Corp. said no damage to property and individuals was reported following the leak of 50,000 metric tons (MT) of tailings materials in its Antamok mine last week.

In a disclosure to the local bourse, Benguet said an intermittent leak of mine tailings was discovered in the Antamok mine in Benguet following the heavy rains brought by Typhoon Lawin that hit the northern part of the country.

"There have been no reports of damage to private property or harm to individuals. We as-

sure the public that the mine tailings are non-toxic and safe," the company said.

Based on initial investigation, the mine tailings came from the Antamok tailings impoundment area and the leak occurred in the drain tunnel of the underground Antamok mine which has not been in operation since 1989.

Alongside the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) and local government unit, Benguet is undertaking pre-emptive

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

measures including construction of containment dams downstream of the Liang River and the clean-up of spilled tailings.

Benguet said laboratory tests conducted showed no toxic substances were present in the water samples, which means that the leaked tailings material was safe and inert.

The company is also pumping out the water from the 440 open pit to minimize hydraulic pressure build-up, constructing a counter drive to plug the Antamok drain tunnel and

diverting the surface inflow water away from the area.

According to Benguet, technical studies have been going for possible tailings reprocessing project and conversion of the open pit to water reservoir for a bulk water project, engineered sanitary landfill and a waste to energy project.

The mine tailings area also serves as catchment for mine tailings from small scale miners in the upstream, following rampant unregulated small scale mining activities in the area.

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Benguet says tailings leak under control

BENGUET Corp. said the minor and intermittent mine tailings leak in Antamok had been put under control.

The company said the mine tailings leak was discovered during a regular inspection conducted after the heavy rains brought by Typhoon Lawin. The leak occurred in the drain tunnel of the Antamok underground mine which has been closed since 1989.

The tailings impoundment area now serves as catchment area for mine tailings from the rampant unregulated small scale mining activities in the upstream area.

Benguet said initial findings showed the mine tailings

came from the Antamok tailings impoundment area which may have entered the drain tunnel through a breach caused by the intense rains.

It said no further leaks have been observed to date.

Benguet added preliminary estimates showed 50,000 metric tons (MT) of tailings material leaked into Liang river but there were no reports of damage to property or injury to persons attributable to the leak. Claims of any incidental damages due to siltation are now being verified through discussions with the local communities.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Benguet Corp.: Tailings leak 'under control'

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

✉ @jonlmayuga

THE "minor and intermittent" mine tailings leak in Antamok is under control.

This was assured by the management of Benguet Corp. (BC) after discovering the leak during the regular inspection conducted by the company after the heavy rains brought by Super typhoon Lawin.

The leak occurred in the drain tunnel of the Antamok underground mine which has not been operated by the company since 1989.

Upon investigation, initial findings showed the mine tailings came from the Antamok tailings impoundment area, which may have entered the drain tunnel through a breach caused by the intense rains.

No further leaks have been observed to date.

Preliminary estimates showed only a negligible 50,000 metric tons (MT) of tailings material leaked into the Liang River, which is substantially less, compared to previous incidents involving other mines, according to a statement issued by Benguet Corp.

The company underscored there were no reports of damage to property or injury to persons directly attributable to the leak.

Claims of incidental damage due to siltation, if any, are now being verified. Benguet Corp. officials have also held dialogues with the local communities in connection with the leak.

In an earlier letter to Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) Cordillera Autonomous Region (CAR)

W. Apil; Benguet Corp. said, upon discovery of the mine tailings leak, it mobilized its work force and equipment to prevent any further outflow and has initiated containment and cleanup activities in the immediate area to make sure the residents in the surrounding communities will not be affected.

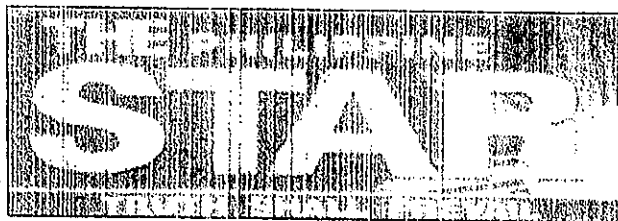
The company, likewise, immediately conducted water sampling along the Liang River. Its said a laboratory test showed no toxic substances are present in the water samples, which means the leaked tailings material is safe and inert.

Samples will be sent to a third party for an independent laboratory analysis, the company added.

The Antamok tailings impoundment area has not been used since 1998 when the Antamok open pit and underground mine temporarily ceased to operate.

The tailings impoundment dam now serves as catchment area for mine tailings from the rampant, unregulated small-scale mining activities in the upstream area, which would otherwise pollute the environs. The company said both the open pit, the underground mines and their facilities are in continuous care and maintenance through the years. There are technical studies going on for the progressive rehabilitation of the areas, such as tailings reprocessing project, conversion of open pit to water reservoir for bulk water project, engineered sanitary landfill with waste-to-energy project and Minahang Bayan.

Benguet Corp. said it is continuously implementing the



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From The Stands

By DOMINI M. TORREVILLAS



YES SERVICE

Responsible mining

Is there such an animal as responsible mining? Yes there is, and there are quite a few responsible miners.

Two executives of Nickel Asia Corp. (NAC) explained to members of Bulong Pulungan at Sofitel that contrary to what has been pounded on the ears of consumers, mining is not harmful, but benefits communities and the nation as well, – if managed responsibly.

NAC has one project in Palawan, in the Rio Tuba area, and three others in Surigao. The two resource persons spoke mainly about the Rio Tuba Nickel Mining operation using a powerpoint presentation that showed a community enriched by the initiatives of the company which was established in the 1960s.

In the Rio Tuba operation, "surface mining is used, so there is no need to blast mountains; quarry stone or use offensive chemicals," explained J.B. Baylon, NAC vice president for communication. The method is simply digging the soil (nickel is found 30 meters down), and pouring the same (nickel and soil) into trucks to be shipped to clients in Japan and Australia.

One can get an idea of how much NAC, the mother company, is earning from its operation through the taxes it pays. In its latest report, Taganito Mining in Surigao paid more than P1.5 billion and Rio Tuba paid P1 billion in Palawan. Dennis Zamora, senior vice president of Rio Tuba, and in charge of investor relations at NAC.

So how is the community benefited?

"There are people who say mining brings poverty. (Our experience) in Rio Tuba is an example of a reverse," said Baylon. More than 40 years ago, there were seven nomad families and 7,000 mosquitoes in Rio Tuba. Now there are 17,000 residents in the barangay alone out of 35-40,000 living in the town of Bataraza. I guess the

kled water during the summer to keep the dust off the air.

The company paid for the road, constructed a hospital, where minor surgical operations are conducted, a housing complex for employees in co-operation with Gawad Kalinga, and a school run by the Dela Salle brothers for employees' children and outsiders; all these services, including electricity and drinking water, are free. It also built a sports complex.

With these privileges, Bataraza is the most advanced municipality outside of Puerto Princesa in Palawan, said Baylon. "And tops in cash balances, income and assets."

The mined-out areas are converted into a forest, with foresters recontouring the open pit, fill it up with top soil, and plant trees that are local species of Palawan. "We spent in 2015 alone, P50 million to rehabilitate almost 300 hectares of mined-area to become a forest," said Baylon.

About siltation, Baylon said the mine sites have ponds to catch siltation if and when it rains so that by the time water gets into the river it will not be a silted river. Mangroves have been planted in the coastal areas, so that by the time the water gets out into the sea the silt has already been captured.

"We take the place of the government by making provisions for the community residents," said Dennis Zamora, son of the NAC founder Ronnie Zamora. "Ours is an example of how mining has transformed the community, in contradiction to those who claim that mining brings poverty."

Even before the present DENR secretary required an audit, NAC had earned the ISO 14001, Dennis added.

Nickel is used to make stainless, rust-free kitchenware, computers, car gadgets, etc.

Asked if the government will earn more if mining companies processed the raw nickel instead of

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WSamar mine successfully replanted



BEFORE Mined out area in Bagacay, Hinabangan, Western Samar (Photo taken prior to ERDB and MGB joint research in 2009) ERDB PHOTO



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BY BEN KRITZ

A 42-HECTARE portion the abandoned, heavily-polluted Bagacay Mine in Western Samar has been declared "successfully replanted," after a six-year project by the Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (ERDB) and the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB).

The joint project of ERDB and MGB called "An Integrated Science-Based approach in the rehabilitation of mined-out and waste dump areas at Bagacay, Hinabangan, Samar" started in 2009 in the mined-out area of Bagacay, a 2,672 hectare former copper and pyrite area.

Bagacay Mine used to be operated by Marinduque Mine Industrial Corporation from 1956 to 1985 and by the Philippine Pyrite Corporation from 1986 to 1992. It ranked first in the general risk ranking among the seven and inactive mines in the Philippines.

In the joint research project by ERDB and the MGB, both attached agencies of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources

(DENR), three experimental blocks of land, all laced with high concentrations of heavy metals and measuring 20 meters by 50 meters each were selected.

"ERDB determined the potential of selected indigenous tree species in greening and absorbing toxic elements in the abandoned mined-out area," ERDB information officer Adriana Santos-Remo explained.

Species used in the area were Mt. Agoho (Gymnostoma rumphianum), vetiver (Vetiveria zizanioides), narra (Pterocarpus indicus), Acacia auriculiformis, and mangium (Acacia mangium).

After the study period, high concentrations of heavy metals were recorded for Mt. Agoho, mangium, A. auri, and narra. This showed

that the four species planted on the metal-filled soil were most efficient in absorbing the metals and in distributing heavy metals from their roots to leaves.

"Today, the aesthetic condition of the waste dump area has improved. A total of forty two hectares of mined out area have been successfully planted already. The project has also provided employment to the surrounding community," according to ERDB Director Dr. Henry A. Adornado.

"All hope is not lost for the environment. The initial results of the phytoremediation study conducted by the DENR-ERDB and MGB revealed that mined-out areas can be rehabilitated through the use of appropriate technology," he added.

ERDB Forester and study project leader Gregorio E. Santos, Jr. said that with the inherent bioremediation (metal and pollutant absorption) capacity of selected tree species along with the fertilization technique, an observable increase in the height of mangium and Agoho del Monte was observed in the former mine.

Biomass (dried leaves and branches) produced by narra was

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noted to provide nutrients to the soil which prompted the growth of grasses and other shrub species.

The research also revealed that organic fertilizer treatment could work well in areas like the Bagacay mine.

The combination of one by three meter forest soil, 1 liter agricultural lime, and 3 liters of organic fertilizer (chicken manure) was found to be the best treatment for the four tree species that were included in the study, according to ERDB forestry staff Niro Villaceran, Joseph Anthony Luna, Jose Milton Montaras, and Zander Doden.

ERDB hopes that this joint research may inspire other mining companies to use similar rehabilitation protocols to bring back the natural state of the mined out areas in the Philippines.

ERDB is also now implementing the use of other ERDB-developed technologies such as carbonized biomass and Hi Q Vam 1 in this endeavor.

The ERDB experts applied Hi Q Vam on the plants while they were growing.

Hi Q Vam, also known as mycorrhiza, is a fungus that has a symbiotic relationship with plants. My-

corrhiza resides in plant roots and causes soil nutrients to retain in the roots, causing survival and growth in plants despite adverse soil condition such as heavy metal content.

Adornado pointed out that Section 47 of PD 705 of the Revised Forestry Code of the Philippines requires mining companies to restore mined areas as near as possible to their former natural state after mining operations end.

Other rehabilitation projects

Other mine rehabilitation projects that have recently been approved by the DENR include those of Surigao nickel miner Marcventures Mining and Development Corporation (MMDC) and Zambales' Benguetcorp Nickel Mines, Inc. (BNMI), which is currently suspended from mining operations due to environmental concerns.

Both mines are rehabilitation 50-hectare plots using a soil amendment technology called Activated Biochar, according to information from the DENR.

Biochar is charcoal produced from plant material, which is incorporated into the soil to

help remove carbon dioxide from the air, and has some metal-absorbing properties.

MMDC and BNMI are working with the Philippine Biochar Association (PBiA) to develop effective biochar material. PbiA said that its partners, Sambali Beach Farm and Microbial Technology Solutions, have developed specific microbes to be added to the biochar "to activate it for optimum performance in assisting and facilitating plant and life-giving microbial growth in heavily degraded surfaces, such as mined-out areas in Zambales and Surigao."

In an earlier statement, Marcventures Vice Chairman Isidro Alcantara said his company's project is not only to comply with requirements of final mine rehabilitation but supports the company's initiatives to provide sustainable, organic, and environmentally enhancing livelihood activities.

"The idea is to apply Biochar and convert mined-out lands into arable lands which can be planted to renewable cash crops which then gives livelihood that is continuing to the communities especially indigenous peoples," Alcantara said.

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Cops stop antioal rally in Pangasinan

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ANTI COAL

Protesters say Sual town doesn't need another polluting power plant near existing one



Residents opposed to the construction of another power plant in Sual town in Pangasinan province regroup in front of the church to dramatize their protest against the project. They had wanted to submit a manifesto to President Duterte during a rally but were stopped by police. —GABRIEL CARDINOZA

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Comes now the hardest part: The collection of trash left behind by the living after visiting their dead at the Manila North Cemetery. —LYN RILLON

The most common type of garbage left by visitors were leftover food, disposable food and beverage containers, cigarette butts and soiled papers likely used as mats, EcoWaste Coalition said.

Bagbag Cemetery, in particular, was identified by the group as the most trashy

trash monitoring this year," Lucero said.

The group has e-mailed photos of the trashed cemetery to the Office of Quezon City Mayor Herbert Bautista with an appeal to officials to enforce a better ecological waste management system next year.

But the group's monitoring

Parañaque City; Hagonoy, St. Anne and Tipas Cemeteries in Taguig City; Carmona Public Cemetery and Santuario de Carmona in Carmona, Cavite; and the Angono Municipal Cemetery in Angono, Rizal.

It also commended local authorities, cemetery administra-

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Tongonan geothermal plant wins DENR nod

By FELIX CODILUANI

The 112.5-megawatt Tongonan geothermal power plant in Leyte is this year's lone recipient of the Philippine Environment Partnership Program (PEPP) Seal of Approval given annually by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The plant is owned by the Energy Development Corp. (EDC).

The PEPP Seal of Approval is given to industries that strive to go beyond compliance and are driven to improve their performance with competitiveness, image and supply chain requirements. Nominees undergo a rigid evaluation process that includes validation of documentary requirements and actual site inspection by the regional offices of the Environmental Management Bureau.

This is the fifth time the DENR has recognized the Tongonan plant for exemplary performance in environmental management and protection. The plant is operated by Green Core Geothermal, Inc., a subsidiary of EDC.

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Funeral parlors warned vs improper disposal of hazardous waste

BAGUIO CITY—The Cordillera office of the Environmental Management Bureau has warned owners of funeral parlors in the city and La Trinidad town to properly dispose of their hazardous health care waste.

This is intended to prevent posing a serious threat to the health of individuals exposed to the contaminated wastes generated by the

environmentally critical establishments, officials said.

In a letter to owners of funeral parlors, EMB-CAR OIC engineer Nestor Donaál said appropriate notices of violation were issued by the agency against the management of several funeral parlors in Baguio and La Trinidad for their alleged gross violation of the guidelines.

Officials said they have discovered some owners of funeral parlors did not follow the prescribed rules and regulations regarding handling and disposal of the hazardous waste.

Donaál informed owners of funeral parlors they could not dispose of blood contaminated gloves and surgical blades alongside domestic waste even if they were reportedly disinfected.

He added this was not a guarantee those exposed to the hazardous health care waste would not contract illnesses that would pose a serious threat to their health.

Under existing guidelines, health care waste generators such as mortuaries, hospitals, and laboratories are required to avail themselves of the services of the Environment department

accredited transporters and treaters for the disposal of their hazardous waste.

He advised funeral parlor and other hazardous waste generators to be transparent on how they were treating cottons contaminated with blood prior to their disposal to prevent garbage collectors from being exposed to extreme health hazards. **Dexter See**

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1,008 tons of garbage left in cemeteries

MANILA
LAVARE

Cemetery-goers have not yet learned the proper waste and segregation procedures as seen from the large volume of garbage collected from various cemeteries during this year's All Saints'/All Souls' long weekend.

Francis Martinez, MMDA Metro Parkway Clearing Group head, said 161 truckloads equivalent to 1,008 tons have been collected during clean-up operations from Oct. 24 to Nov. 1 in 23 cemeteries in the metropolis.

Martinez said they are expecting the figures to increase as the sweepers and clearing groups visit other several more cemeteries.

Last year, the MMDA collected 216 truckloads equivalent to 1,298 tons of garbage from October 26 to Nov. 1.

He attributed the projected increase of garbage to the large number of people who trooped to cemeteries to pay respect to their loved ones during the long weekend.

The most visible discards left by visitors in the cemeteries were leftover foods, disposable plates, plastic cups and bottles, Styrofoam containers, soiled newspapers, candy wrappers, dried flowers.

Meanwhile, the EcoWaste Coalition, a watch group on waste and pollution, lamented the throw-away culture that again typified the annual observance of Undas.

Aileen Lucero, National Coordinator, EcoWaste Coalition said that based on the group's monitoring of 15 private and public cemeteries in Metro Manila and in Cavite and Rizal, rampant littering was observed at the Caloocan Public Cemetery in Caloocan City, Manila North Cemetery in Manila City, Manila South Cemetery in Makati City, Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina City and the Bagbag Cemetery in Quezon City.

Bagbag Cemetery garnered the "Basura pa more" tag from the group for being the most littered among the 15 cemeteries visited by the group.

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GARBAGE PAGE 1/2

168 trucks haul garbage from 23 cemeteries

'Throw-away culture' spoiled All Saints' Day, says group

By Jaymee T. Gamil
@jaymeegamilINQ

Change has yet to happen among cemetery goers as an environmental watch group noted the continuing proliferation of the "throw-away culture" during this year's observance of All Saints' Day.

For this year's "Undas," EcoWaste Coalition monitored 15 private and public cemeteries in Metro Manila, Cavite and Rizal provinces, and found "rampant littering" in the Caloocan Public Cemetery in Caloocan City, Manila North Cemetery in Manila, Manila South Cemetery in Makati City, Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina City and the Bagbag

Cemetery in Quezon City.

"The culture of throwing discards wherever and whenever it is convenient again spoiled our time-honored tradition of remembering our departed relatives," said Aileen Lucero, EcoWaste Coalition national coordinator.

"Many people still litter, rain or shine. The repeated reminders from government, church, political and environmental leaders were no match for these hardened litterbugs," Lucero added.

As of Wednesday, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority said it had collected 168 truckloads of garbage or around 1,008 tons from 23 cemeteries in Metro Manila.

While the volume was more than half of the 302 truckloads collected in 2015 from 26 cemeteries, the figure was still expected to go up since the cleanup operations would continue until Saturday, said Francis Martinez, head of the MMDA Metro Parkway Clearing Group.

He added that they have also yet to get reports from three more cemeteries in the cities of Muntinlupa, Malabon and Las Piñas.

According to Martinez, of the 23 cemeteries, they have cleared Manila North Cemetery had the biggest amount of trash at 35 truckloads. Next was Manila South Cemetery (28 truckloads) and La Loma Public Cemetery (18 truckloads).

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SUAL, PANGASINAN—Residents protesting the construction of another coal-fired power plant here on Wednesday were stopped by the police before they could stage a rally in time for the arrival of President Duterte.

Rosanna Marie Soriano, chair of Save Sual Movement, said policemen seized their placards and streamers as they walked toward the entrance of the Sual wharf here, where Mr. Duterte was to hold the ceremonial send-off of 17 Vietnamese fishermen, who were caught in the waters off Ilocos Sur province on Sept. 8.

Soriano, who was with 30 other protesters, said a policeman first approached and told her that his superior officer, who was on the other side of the road, wanted to talk to her. When she crossed the highway here, Soriano said other policemen seized their streamers and placards.

Not anti-Duterte

"Our streamers and placards were still folded at that time. They also searched the bag of one of my companions," she said. Soriano said she was told by a police officer that they could not stage the rally.

She said the protest action was not directed against

Mr. Duterte.

"This is for the environment. In fact, we want to meet the President and give him our manifesto," said.

The residents are protesting the construction of a 900-megawatt coal-fired power plant in Barangay Baquioen here. The P48 billion

plant is owned by Phinma Energy Corp. (formerly Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Development Corp.).

In a manifesto, the residents

said the 1,600-MW plant—the country's largest coal-fired power plant—owned by Team Energy at Barangay Pangasasan here is enough. The plant

is just a few kilometers from the proposed site of the new plant.

Last month, Soriano's group launched a signature campaign to stop the construction of the new plant. Soriano said residents are fearful of coal's effects on health and the environment.

No consultation

She also said Mayor Roberto Arcinue never consulted them about the new plant. But Arcinue said he conducted six public hearings and that no one objected.

During a program attended by Mr. Duterte, Arcinue acknowledged signing a memorandum of agreement with Phinma, "so that electricity we supply to the Luzon grid will become 2,018 MW" when added to the Team Energy's production.

"To protect and preserve our environment in Sual, I have an agreement with San Miguel Energy Corp. and the Philippine Coconut Authority to plant 1 million trees in Sual," he said.

"I also signed a memorandum of agreement with [the Department of Environment and Natural Resources] this year to plant 150,000 trees and we have planted 100,000 trees already," he said. —GABRIEL CARDINOZA INQ

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QC to manage medical wastes

By Rio Araja

PROPER disposal of medical wastes will soon be managed by the Quezon City government.

This after Mayor Herbert Bautista announced that the city government will soon be collecting waste materials generated by QC-based medical clinics to minimize the risks to public health and the environment.

"What the city government will be doing is to make sure that these waste materials are properly disposed in the most environment-friendly manner," Bautista said.

"This is better instead of just allowing these wastes to be dumped illegally," he added.

However, Bautista reminded clinic owners that the city government will be imposing certain fees for the collection and disposal of medical wastes.

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'UNDAS' AFTERMATH — Garbage litters the Carreta Cemetery in Cebu City on Wednesday morning. Close to a hundred people were apprehended by barangay environmental officers for littering and smoking in cemeteries during All Saints' Day. (Juan Carlo de Vela)



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

IMO agree to curb shipping emissions

By PIA LEE-BRAGO

The 171 member countries of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) including the Philippines recently agreed to address greenhouse gas emissions from international shipping.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has welcomed the steps by the IMO members.

A statement issued by Ban's spokesperson said the steps include efforts to limit sulfur emissions, a mandatory data system for fuel consumption, strengthened implementation

of energy-efficiency regulations, and a road map for developing by 2023 a comprehensive IMO strategy on reduction of emissions from ships.

"Welcoming these important steps, the Secretary-General calls for urgent and ambitious action to limit the green-

house gas emissions from global shipping [which] are projected to rise significantly given the critical role that shipping plays in the global economy," the statement said.

Ban called on IMO members, in partnership with the maritime industry, to promote further progress on the reduction of greenhouse emissions from ships to contribute to the objective of the Paris Agreement on climate change, which enters into force tomorrow.

For its part, the IMO, which

as a specialized UN agency is the global standard-setting authority for the safety, security and environmental performance of international shipping, called the new mandatory requirements an important milestone on the road to controlling international shipping emissions.

The requirements were adopted by the IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) meeting in London for its 70th session last Oct. 24-28.

IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim said the new requirements sent a clear signal that IMO was ready to build on the existing technical and operational measures for ship energy efficiency.

"The data collection system will equip IMO with concrete data to help it make the right decisions, as well as enhancing its credentials as the best placed and competent forum for regulating international shipping," Lim said.

According to IMO, the new

mandatory data collection system is intended to be the first in a three-step approach in which analysis of the data collected would provide the basis for an objective, transparent and inclusive policy debate in the MEPC.

This would allow a decision to be made on whether any further measures are needed to enhance energy efficiency and address greenhouse gas emissions from international shipping. If so, proposed policy options would then be considered.

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PEOPLES Tonight

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Noisy vehicles

DISTURBING and lamentable are reports that many people seem to ignore or underestimate the dangers of noise pollution.

And sad to say, the plague of noise pollution has never had any definite national policy nor regulation for control.

This, despite the fact that this exposure to noise pollution has been associated with changes in blood pressure.

Neophyte Senator Win Gatchalian said noise pollution is also associated with other vascular changes, problems with the digestive system and general fatigue.

That's why the government should now ban motor vehicles without mufflers or defective/modified mufflers, according to Gatchalian.

The concomitant noise emitted by motor vehicles just adds to the ordeal that our suffering citizens have to go through when there's traffic congestion in the metropolis and elsewhere, said the senator.

Gatchalian had earlier filed Senate Bill (SB) No. 1103, which seeks to penalize owners and drivers of motor vehicles that contribute to noise pollution in various parts of the country.

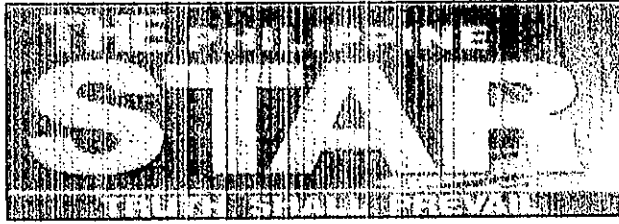
Under the bill, first-time violators face a fine of P5,000 and confiscation of the muffler.

For the second offense, a violator is fined P10,000 and the motor vehicle impounded for one month, while third offense means P15,000 fine and suspension of driver's license for six months.

We agree with Gatchalian that loud muffler noise agitates drivers as it affects hearing, vision, reaction time and judgment, thereby increasing the risk of danger for everyone on the road.

Our lawmakers, like Gatchalian, should be commended for looking into our laws to find ways to address noise pollution.

We salute them.



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Duterte now open to Paris climate deal

He once described the Paris climate deal as "stupid" and "absurd." But President Duterte is having a change of heart.

While he continued to have "misgivings" about the agreement, Duterte said he would approve the deal if his advisers thought it would be good for the country.

"I will follow what my advisers would tell me. If (environment secretary) Gina Lopez would say it's good, and if the legal adviser says that I should sign, then I will sign," the President told reporters during his visit to his parents' tomb in Davao City Tuesday night.

"The only problem is the paper is not yet with me. I cannot approve or disapprove anything that is not on my

table," he added.

Duterte said the Paris agreement has to be studied by his legal team because "there might be some progressive clauses" that can affect the

country.

"I will see if I have leeway and elbow room to move because the treaty now that is being signed or passed around for signing is

binding," he said.

Duterte clarified though that he was expressing his opinion as a lawyer, not as a president, because the paper has not reached him yet.

Climate change has been tied to carbon emissions caused by human activities. The phenomenon has been blamed for natural disasters and drastic weather changes.

In April, more than 150 countries signed the historic Paris climate deal that aims to limit global warming "well below" two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. World leaders have also promised to step up measures that would limit temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels: — Alexis Romero

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HUWEBES 03 NOBYEMBRE 2016 REMATE 9

IBINALITA ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na "compliant" o nakasusunod ang ating bansa sa mga probisyon ng Montreal Protocol na nagtatakda ng pagbabawas at tuluyang hindi paggamit ng ozone depleting substances (ODS).

Ayon kay DENR Undersecretary for Legal Services and Attached Agencies Analiza Rebuta Teh, mula nang lumagda ang Pilipinas at ipa-tupad ang tratado, na-phase out na natin ang mga ODS maliban na lamang sa hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) na ginagamit sa refrigeration, air-conditioning, foam manufacturing, aerosol production at fire extinguisher. Si Undersecretary Teh ay siya ring national coordinator for ODS program.

Sinimulang ipagbawal sa ating bansa ang importasyon ng CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons) nitong 2010 at ang HFCs nitong 2013. Maku-kumpleto ang pagbabawal hanggang sa taong 2040.

Para sa kaalaman ng ating mga kababayan, ang ODS ay hindi ginagawa rito sa ating bansa kung kaya't ang pokus ng regulasyon ay sa importation, processing, sale at disposal ng CFCs at HFCs. Noon pang 1994 ay mayroon na tayong Philippine Ozone Desk (POD) na siyang namamahala sa mga programa ukol sa ODS phase-out, nasa ilalim ito ng Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) na isa ring sangay ng DENR.

Ang Montreal Protocol na

ANG INYONG LINGKOD

DR. HILDA C. ONG

PILIPINAS, NAKASUSUNOD SA 'MONTREAL PROTOCOL' - DENR

nabuo noong taong 1987 ang sinasabing "the most successful and effective environmental treaties ever" na nilagdaan ng ating pamahalaan noong September 14, 1988 at sinang-ayunan ng ating Senado noong March 21, 1991.

Sa loob ng mahigit dalawang dekadang pagpapatupad ng Pilipinas sa nilalaman ng tratadong ito, umabot na sa 93 ODS projects ang naaprubahan sa atin na nagkakahalaga ng US\$38.8 million at katumbas ng 3,300 tons na ODS na-phase out sa bansa.

Dahil sa pagsunod ng maraming bansa, malaki ang naging papel ng Montreal Protocol sa climate change mitigation dahil sa malaking kabawasan ng ODS na ibinubuga sa himpapawirin na tinatayang umabot sa 135 billion tons. Ayon nga sa mga eksperto, "the ozone layer is healing itself and is expected to recover by the middle of the century".

Binabati ng inyong lingkod ang DENR partikular ang POD sa pagsusumikap at pagseseguro na nakasusunod ang bansa sa mga pa-

takaran na sinang-ayunan natin kasama ng international community. Nakatutuwang malaman na malaki ang bahagi natin sa unti-unting paghilom at paggaling ng ating ozone layer.

Sa pamumuno ng kasalukuyang kalihim ng DENR, si Secretary Regina Paz Lopez, ay nakatitiyak tayo na magtutuloy-tuloy ang maganda nating performance sa pagsunod sa Montreal Protocol dahil alam naman natin kung gaano ka-passionate ang kalihim pagdating sa usaping pangkalikasan.

TANGKILIKIN ang programang "HEALTH & Travel @ SERBISYO PUBLIKO, sa DWBL 1242 kHz (8:00-9:00 a.m.) Monday to Friday at DWSS 1494 kHz (9:00-10:00 a.m.), Saturday & Sunday. Mababasa ang kanyang mga article sa Dr. Hilda Ong FB Fan Page.



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

CCC urged to facilitate LGUs' access to climate fund

By JESS DIAZ

Mindoro Occidental Rep. Josephine Sato urged the Climate Change Commission (CCC) Tuesday to make local government units' access to the P2-billion People's Survival Fund easier.

"The CCC and the Department of Finance, which administer the fund, should relax access requirements. Otherwise, what will they do with the money if it is not used?" she said.

Sato said Congress created the huge fund to help LGUs prepare for calamities and other disasters.

The lawmaker said LGUs could apply for funding for climate change mitigation projects but based on CCC data; "only a handful of LGUs have expressed interest in accessing the fund."

"This is because they are required to prepare and submit at least 20 documents. This long list of requirements discourages LGUs from applying for funding for life-saving programs and projects," Sato stressed.

Nevertheless, she encouraged local governments to bring their concerns to the attention of CCC and DOF so they could speedily access the P2-billion fund.

"LGUs are at the forefront of the country's struggle for disaster preparedness and resiliency. They should be provided with all the help they need to boost their capacity to reduce the risk of disasters in their respective localities," Sato said.

The P2-billion PSF is included in the annual budget.

Earlier, Sato urged the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council to speed up the release of funds for victims of recent super Typhoon Lawin, which damaged many communities in Northern Luzon.

She said she received information that the council was "under-spending" foreign and local donations and funds budgeted by Congress for victims of calamities.

Paris Agreement

World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Secretary-General Petteri Taalas again called for the immediate implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change after it was discovered that the average concentration globally of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere surged again.

Taalas said "without tackling carbon dioxide emissions, we cannot tackle climate change and keep temperature increases to below two degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial era," which the Paris Agreement hoped to achieve.

"It is therefore of utmost importance that the Paris Agreement does indeed enter into force well ahead of schedule on (Nov. 4) and that we fast-track its implementation," Taalas said. — With Pia Lee-Brago

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Cavite, Zambales, Bataan joining forces to preserve marine biodiversity

By **ANTHONY GIRON**

TRECE MARTIRES CITY, Cavite - The provinces of Cavite, Zambales and Bataan or CaZamBa are set to unite in a bid to preserve and protect marine biodiversity and improve further the ecosystem and development in Manila Bay.

Engineer Rolino Posas, Provincial Government-Environment and Natural Resources (PG-ENRO) officer, said that meetings are tentatively set this month (November)

among Governor Jesus Crispin Remulla and his counterparts from Bataan and Zambales.

The move was initiated by Remulla and the other governors, Posas said Wednesday afternoon.

"It is about biodiversity, conserving the marine species, stopping illegal fishing, trawling and other concerns in Manila Bay. The (upcoming) forum is set to invite other governors of the provinces with the bay in their turf," said Posas.

Posas said that his office is set to release a report on insights and action plans in the bay area in Cavite and other provinces.

"We hope more provinces join the undertaking. Batangas had signified its intention and so with the neighboring provinces.

Cavite is one of the provinces with a vast coastal area covering the Bacoor District, Cavite City and the municipalities of Kawit, Noveleta, Rosario, Tanza, Naic, Ternate and Maragondon.

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DENR UNVEILS PROJECT FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

A THREE-YEAR project that aims to strengthen the capacity to manage the conservation of areas with indigenous peoples (IPs) by designating them as protected areas has been unveiled by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau will serve as the lead implementing agency of the project called Strengthening National Systems to Improve Governance and Management of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Conserved Areas and Territories (ICCA).

According to DENR Secretary Gina Lopez and BMB Director Theresa Mundita Lim, the project's main goal was to recognize conservation areas managed by indigenous groups as a sustainable addition to the country's protected areas system.

They say: "We acknowledge that because of their affinity with nature, IPs have traditions that in-

trinsically show respect for the environment and preserve it."

Joining the launch, among others, were Ifugao Representative Teodoro Baguilat Jr., donor representative Ola Almgren of the United Nations Development Programme and National Commission on Indigenous Peoples Commissioner Basilio Wandag of the Cordillera Autonomous and Ilocos regions.

The project would be implemented in 10 project sites, namely: Mt. Taungay in Tinglayan, Kalinga; Mt. Polis in Hungduan, Ifugao; Mt. Imugan in Santa Fe, Nueva Vizcaya; Egongot in Maria Aurora, Aurora; Kanawan in Morong, Bataan; Balabac in Palawan; Mt. Kimangkil in Impasugong, Bukidnon; Mt. Apo in Magpet, North Cotabato; Mt. Diwatain Esperanza, Agusan del Sur; and Dinarawan in Jabonga, Agusan del Norte.



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

'GNH just as important as GDP'

By MARVIN SY

Sen. Loren Legarda has called for the adoption of the gross national happiness (GNH) indicator used by Bhutan to measure how happy its citizens are with their lives.

At a lecture on GNH conducted by Bhutan's Dr. Saa-ndu Chetri at the Manila Polo Club last week, Legarda said that improving the quality of life goes beyond economic growth as measured by gross domestic product, which has long been the obsession of governments all over the world.

Legarda said that there are equally important factors that the government should focus on such as good governance, equitable and sustainable socio-economic development, environmental sustainability, cultural preservation and disaster resilience.

"The overall quality of life of Filipinos remains poorly understood due to the absence of measures that will reflect their happiness and well-being. We need to pursue the holistic development of the country amid the threats of climate change and increased disaster risks," said Legarda, the UNISDR Global Champion for Resilience.

Legarda noted that GDP does not reflect the quality of life of the citizens of a country and is focused purely on the growth of the economy.

Based on Bhutan's model for GNH, happiness is measured by the promotion of equitable and sustainable socio-economic development, the preservation and promotion of cultural values, the conservation of the natural environment, and the establishment of good governance.

"The thought behind GNH is simple: incorporate the status of the environment, good governance, equitable and sustainable socio-economic growth and the promotion and preservation of culture when measuring the growth of countries. The quality of life is just as important as the growth rates that we have been working so hard to increase," Legarda said in her speech.

"Is our image of the future an urban jungle where grass cannot grow, where economic growth rate is directly proportional to the number of people who suffocate from industrial fumes? Certainly, this concern is not reflected in our traditional economic yardsticks," she added.

Legarda has filed Senate Resolution Number 15 urging the National Economic and Development Authority to update the country's development indicators to reflect the happiness and well-being of Filipinos, using Bhutan's GNH as its model.

"There is a need for a comprehensive approach to measure the happiness and well-being of Filipinos in order to review the impact of existing policies and introduce corrective measures. The GNH concept used by the Royal Government of Bhutan measures progress by giving equal importance to non-economic aspects of well-being," she said.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



HAZARDOUS WASTE. Trash left by thousands who visited the graves of their departed dead on Monday, like this one at the Sangandaan cemetery in Caloocan City, pose some serious threat to the health of individuals—unless the heaps of garbage are immediately collected and brought to the necessary landfills in the metropolis. Andrew Rabulan