

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

• **Kamagong seized;
transporter nabbed**

PAGBILAO, Quezon — The Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO), backed up by the police, confiscated illegally cut forest product and arrested its transporter in a hot-pursuit operation in Barangay Bukal, this town, last Thursday. Pagbilao-CENRO Officer Ramil Limpiada reported that Carmelito A. dela Vega, 56, driver and resident of Sta. Teresita Street, Barangay 6, Lucena City tried to transport 20 undocumented fitches of "kamagong" with estimated volume of 876.17 board feet and amounting to ₱131,425.50. Dela Vega's helper jumped off the vehicle during the chase and eluded arrest. (Danny J. Estacio)

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

A VIEW of the abandoned Bagacay copper mine in Samar



Samar copper mine rehab timetable to extend to 2017

THE complete rehabilitation of the long-dormant Bagacay copper mine in Samar has been delayed by another year but current reforestation efforts at the site has shown promise, a regulator said.

Engineer Rodolfo L. Velasco, Jr., chief of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau's (MGB) Mine Safety, Environment and Social Development Division, said that the aim was to reforest the 130-hectare site by this year but natural disasters have led to delays to the schedule.

"The target was not attained since it's still in recovery stage. (Full reforestation) is still our target. But it might extend on the timeline to 2017," said Mr. Velasco in an earlier interview with *BusinessWorld*.

"Access to the site has been difficult since the storm," he added, referring to Typhoon Haiyan, known locally as Yolanda, which hit the central Philippines in November 2013.

The rehabilitation project started in 2008 with a series of feasibility studies, followed by the start of work in 2013.

Remediation efforts for the Bagacay site, one of the priority projects of the Philippine Development Program of the Aquino administration, are being undertaken by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources's research arm the Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (ERDB), as funded by the MGB.

Average annual funds for the Bagacay project are about P10 million but stretching the timetable for the target will not be an issue as the remaining budget carried over from the unused funds over the years is sufficient to cover the one-year extension.

The Bagacay Mine was operated by Marinduque Mine Industrial Corp. from 1956 to 1985.

In 1986, the firm entered into an agreement with Philippine Phosphate Fertilizer Corp. which in turn part-

nered with its subsidiary Philippine Pyrite Corporation (PPC) which operated the mine to produce pyrite concentrate from 1986 until 1992 when rising operational costs and other issues led to its closure.

The Bagacay site was found to have acid drainage problems and contains potentially toxic metals.

During the restoration phase, the regulator spread limestone on the site to mitigate the acid drainage problem, which was polluting a nearby nature reserve.

According to a statement from the ERDB e-mailed to reporters on Friday, some 42 hectares of the inactive copper-pyrite mine has been rehabilitated so far through the use of phytoremediation, in which plants absorb polluting mineral substances in the soil.

The ERDB also determined the potential of selected indigenous tree species in regreening and absorbing toxic elements in the abandoned mined-out area and also revealed that organic fertilizer treatment could work well.

The initial results of the phytoremediation study conducted by the DENR-ERDB and MGB shows that "mined-out areas can be rehabilitated through the use of appropriate technology," said ERDB Director Dr. Henry A. Adornado in the statement.

ERDB expressed hope that the initial results of the project "may inspire other mining companies to use similar rehabilitation protocols to bring back the natural state of the mined out areas in the Philippines."

Section 47 of the Presidential Decree 705 or Revised Forestry Code of the Philippines states that surface-mined areas shall be rehabilitated to "as near its former natural configuration" or as approved by the government prior to its abandonment by the mining company concerned. — Janina C. Lim

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Metal-eating plants can help restore damaged mining sites

BY MANUEL T. CAYON
Mindanao Bureau Chief

DAVAO CITY—Environmentalists are agog with the disclosure about the presence of metal-eating plants endemic in the country, as a scientist revealed they could be harnessed to restore forests and watersheds damaged by mining operations.

The environmentalist organization, Interface Development Interventions (Idis), announced the disclosure, of scientist Dr. Edwino Fernando, that there 20 plant species in the country with known metal-eating characteristics.

The Idis said Fernando and his research team discovered in 2011 the *Rinorea niccolifera*, a nickel-eating shrub, in Zambales. The group said the recently discovered species was among the 20 species of metallophytes.

"These species are called metallophytes. They can tolerate high levels of heavy metals, such as lead. Some of these will even require the presence of heavy metals in the soil in order to survive," Fernando told the recent rainforestation capacity training organized by the Rain Forestation Restoration Initiative (RFRI) network at the Ateneo de Davao University.

Idis said the finding was significant "because the plant was able to accumulate and tolerate metal content at levels 100 times greater than the average ordinary plant growing

in the same environment."

In the Ateneo training, Fernando said "the use of this species can be an alternative strategy to rehabilitate watersheds, which have been damaged by mining."

"Given that there are so many mining companies right now, metallophyte plants can be used to restore forests in mining areas," he said.

IDIS executive director Ann Fuertes said the properties of native metallophyte plants "are very valuable because it can increase the impact of current soil-remediation techniques."

"This is very important, especially in watersheds with large-scale and small-scale mining activities. This will shorten the rehabilitation period, enabling the renewal of the ecosystem more quickly. And because this approach is natural and environment-friendly, it would mean lesser costs for rehabilitation efforts," she said.

"Now that the DENR [Department of Environment and Natural Resources] has been closing critical areas due to the damage caused by mining operations, this can be mainstreamed as a major approach toward renewing our forest resources in the watersheds," Fuertes said.

The RFRI network will convene a conference next year "to discuss the potential of this species for propagation in the government's forest rehabilitation programs."

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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1900
MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Easier LGU access to P2-billion climate change fund sought

By CHARISSA M. LOPEZ

A former governor-turned-lawmaker is appealing to the national government to make the P2-billion People's Survival Fund (PSF) "more accessible" to the local government units (LGUs).

Occidental Mindoro Rep. Josephine "Nene" Ramirez Y. Sato said LGUs should be given access to the survival fund, which is intended to finance programs and projects that would cushion the impact of climate change and save people's lives.

"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," she said.

Republic Act 10174 amended Republic Act 9729 or the Climate Change Act of 2009, establishing the People's Survival Fund to provide long-term finance to enable the government "to effectively address the problem of climate change."

The 2012 law provides an annual

funding of 1-billion to PSF. It was only in 2015 that funding became available.

She said it is about time for the authorities to relax the requirement for LGUs and qualified institutions to gain access to the fund.

Sato, a former governor of Occidental Mindoro, said LGUs are required to submit at least 20 documents before gaining access to the fund, which discourages them to apply for funding life-saving programs and projects.

"Aanhin pa ang damo, kung patay na ang kabayo," she said, noting that the special fund at the National Treasury remains inaccessible to LGUs because of the requirements by the fund managers.

Quoting Climate Change Commission (CCC) Secretary Emmanuel de Guzman, Sato said of the country's 1,715 LGUs, "only a handful expressed interest in accessing the fund."

Sato proposed that a technical working group (TWG) be established by local governments to work with the PSF secretariat and focus on accessing fund for programs and projects that would help reduce the risk of disasters.

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Climate Change Day declared in Leyte town

By NESTOR LABREMA

TANAUAN, Leyte—Survivors of super-typhoon "Yolanda" in this coastal town will commemorate on November 8 the third anniversary of the world's strongest typhoon by focusing on the need to address climate change.

Mayor Pel Tecson Jr. said he has declared November 8 as Climate Change Day in the town.

Tecson said he signed the executive order for Climate Change Day last week.

He underscored the importance of climate change to the community and wants everyone in town to know and learn from its adverse effects.

A climate change forum at the Tanauan Public Plaza presided by Vice Mayor Ronald Flores will be one of the activities during the commemoration.

Tecson said that as a speaker a few months back at a United Nations forum in Berlin, Germany, he shared how the town

recovered from the devastation of the super typhoon.

Also on November 8, close to 900 completed houses donated by the national government and private and non-governmental organizations will be turned over to Yolanda survivors.

Tecson said his constituents are well on the way to recovery, having increased their income from farming through certified seeds and modern machinery.

Tanauan was the first local government unit in Leyte to receive the Emergency Shelter Assistance (ESA) from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) after the typhoon struck.

It also was the first to submit the required list of beneficiaries and the victims that needed the government assistance, paving the way for the early rebuilding of damaged houses, Tecson said.

Close to 1,400 Tanauan residents died during the typhoon Tecson said.

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Paris climate pact enters into force, focus shifts to action

WASHINGTON- The global accord to combat climate change agreed in Paris last year officially entered into force last Friday, putting pressure on nearly 200 countries to start executing plans to slash their greenhouse gas emissions.

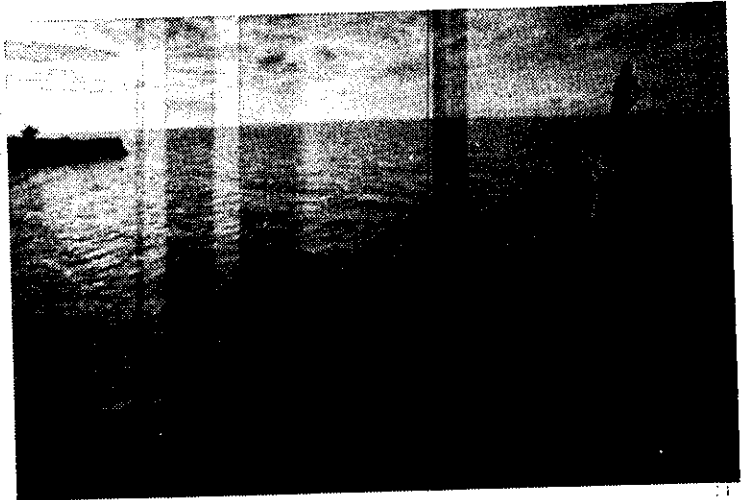
"This is a moment to celebrate," said United Nations climate chief Patricia Espinosa. "It is also a moment to look ahead with sober assessment and renewed will over the task ahead."

The Paris Agreement seeks to wean the world economy off fossil fuels in the second half of the century, limiting the rise in average world temperatures to "well below" 2.0 degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit) above preindustrial times.

It takes effect as greenhouse gas emissions are projected by 2030 to exceed by 12 billion to 14 billion tons what is needed to keep global warming to the internationally agreed target, the United Nations said this week.

Representatives from nearly 200 countries will convene today (Monday) in Marrakesh, Morocco for two weeks to discuss the nuts and bolts of the Paris accord and the policies, technology and finance needed to ensure the Paris goals are achieved.

"The timetable is pressing because globally greenhouse



The Paris Agreement seeks to wean the world economy off fossil fuels in the second half of the century. (Reuters Photo)

gas emissions which drive climate change and its impacts are not yet falling - a fact which the Marrakesh meeting must have at the front of its concerns and collective resolve," said Espinosa.

World Bank President Jim Yong Kim said the milestone also serves as a reminder to rich countries that pledged to help developing countries combat climate change. -Reuters

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Big Oil pledges \$1 billion for gas technologies to fight climate change

LONDON — Some of the world's biggest oil companies, including Saudi Aramco and Royal Dutch Shell, pledged on Friday to invest \$1 billion to develop climate-friendly technologies as a global deal to wean the world off oil came into force.

The Oil and Gas Climate Initiative (OGCI), which also includes Total, BP, Eni, Repsol, Statoil, CNPC, Pemex and Reliance Industries, launched the Climate Investments fund which will invest in technologies to reduce carbon emissions but which will also help an increase gas use.

The companies pledged to use a large share of the \$1 billion for speeding up carbon capture, use and storage (CCUS) in gas-fired power plants and towards reducing leakages of methane, one of the most polluting greenhouse gases.

"If we can reduce and build the technologies to monitor and reduce fugitive methane emissions

that's like an essential licence for us to be able to advocate natural gas," BP Chief Executive Bob Dudley told journalists.

The investment is nevertheless dwarfed by the joint annual spending of the member companies, even as they battle one of the longest downturns in the sector's history. Shell, Total, BP, Statoil, Repsol and Eni are expected to spend nearly \$100 billion in 2016.

The 10 firms, which jointly produce around 20% of the world's oil and gas, have already screened a list of 200 CCUS-related technologies and are now assessing which one or ones to develop to commercial scale.

The group will also invest in improving efficiency in transport and energy-intensive industries.

The announcement coincides with the official coming into force of the 2015 Paris Agreement, intended to wean the world economy off coal, oil and gas in

the second half of this century in order to slash carbon emissions.

The oil and gas sector, which is directly responsible for 5% of man-made greenhouse emissions and the use of its products for another 32%, is under growing pressure from investors and the general public to help fight climate change.

"If the CEOs of the 10 largest corporations meet six times during the year it's not for philanthropy, it's real business," said Patrick Pouyanne, chief executive of Total.

Critics have said oil companies need to do more to reduce emissions and to shield themselves from climate change risks.

"Companies could be worth considerably more, not less, if they aligned their portfolios with 2°C by exercising capital discipline and opting for lower-cost upstream projects that make both financial and climate sense," said Anthony Hobley, chief executive of think tank Carbon Tracker Initiative. — **Reuters**

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ENERGY CARBON TAX PAGE 1/2

Energy stakeholders divided on carbon tax

BY JED MACAPAGAL

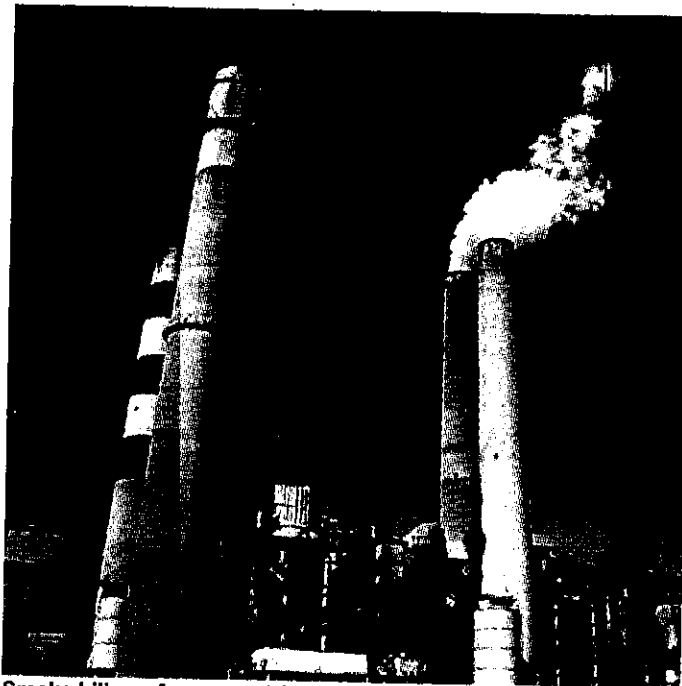
THE global agreement to combat climate change took effect last Friday. (page A-4) The aim of the accord is to convince countries to start implementing plans to cut their greenhouse gas emissions. Levying a carbon tax is one of the means to convince companies to use clean energy.

In the Philippines, energy secretary Alfonso Cusi is against the carbon tax saying this runs counter to government goal of providing cheap energy to the people. The Department of Finance (DOF) is reported to be still undecided whether to impose the tax while energy industry stakeholders are divided on the proposal.

Carbon tax aims to charge producers and consumers for the cost of the carbon they are discharging to prevent pollution and encourage development of renewable energy.

The DOE leads in opposing carbon tax saying it goes against government efforts to lower power rates.

"It is not supportive of the economy's need to develop sufficient baseload plant capacities such as coal and natural gas power plants and reduce electricity rate. It



Smoke billows from a coal-fired plant in Negros Occidental.

is not supportive of the country's program towards industrialization. Also, carbon tax is no guarantee to reducing GHG (greenhouse gas)," Alfonso Cusi, DOE secretary, said in a text message.

Recently, Cusi also said he is not keen on having another round of feed-in-tariff unless the premium can be sourced from other forms aside from the consumers to avoid further increase in power rates.

Antonio Moraza, Aboitiz Power president and chief operating officer, also disapproves of the proposal citing the

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ENERGY CARBON TAX PAGE 2/2

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ENERGY

availability of cleaner coal technology.

"A carbon tax would just increase the cost of electricity in the country. At this point in the economic history reducing our competitiveness is not a good idea. Instead, let's make sure that plants that are put up are of the latest technology," Moraza said in a text message.

Francisco Viray, Phinma Energy president and chief executive officer, said if the government wants to factor in environmental protection, it can either impose carbon tax or mandate an energy mix.

"That is the only way if you want to factor in the environment. To make sure that we can address the environment, whatever model you use will lead to an increase in price... When you need to address the environment, there is really a cost to it. Maybe carbon tax would probably provide some levelling of field depending on its mechanics," Viray said.

Manuel Pangilinan, Manila Electric Co. chairman, on the other hand, supports a carbon tax especially if its proceeds will be used to clean the environment.

"Use it to clean the air, clean the water, clean Pasig river, clean Laguna de bay because, for example, Maynilad draws water from the lake and

we know all sorts of toxic materials (are there.)- The technology we deployed from abroad is getting challenged by sometimes there is a high level of ammonia, sometimes there's a high level of this and that toxic material, so you have a hard time deciding on where to focus," Pangilinan explained.

However, Sherwin Gatchalian, Senate committee on energy chairman, sees carbon tax as a means to encourage industries with high emissions to use cleaner technology.

"(Carbon tax) is a possibility but we have to study the mechanisms on how to do it. It is possible in a sense that we will encourage industries to be more conscious on their carbon emissions as well as employ technologies to reduce carbon emissions," Gatchalian said.

Earlier, DOF said it is wary of the implications of the carbon tax to increase the power cost in the country, but noted the government can raise at least P20 billion in 2019 when it is imposed.

According to a study released by the National Tax Research Center, the government could generate additional revenues of as much as P121.97 billion on average per year if it will impose carbon tax.

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PEOPLES Tonight

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

By RYAN PONCE
PACPACO

CAMARINES Sur Rep. LRay Villafuerte yesterday called on the Duterte administration to seriously consider the implementation of a carbon tax on manmade carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions now that the world's economies have finally reached an agreement on a timeline for the gradual phase-out of greenhouse gas-

es to mitigate the escalating effects of climate change.

Villafuerte said imposing a carbon tax on manmade polluters should be considered by the Duterte administration under its multi-year comprehensive tax program, the first package of which was already endorsed to the Senate and the House of Representatives last month.

Carbon tax on CO2 emissions urged

"A carbon tax would not only help us comply with our international commitments to help curb global warming; we can also use the proceeds from the tax to develop clean energy production processes for our industries and fund other environment-friendly initiatives," Villafuerte said.

Villafuerte issued the statement following a

landmark agreement reached in Rwanda's capital of Kigali on a timetable to phase out hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), a type of hydrocarbon used in refrigerators and air conditioners, that is considered as a major step in curbing global warming.

Under the legally binding agreement, the use and manufacture of HFCs will be made to decline in three

phases: Industrialized economies will begin by 2019; China, Brazil and Africa by 2024; and India, Pakistan and many others by 2028. Villafuerte said he is currently working on a proposed carbon tax bill that he plans to file in the current Congress and weighing the pros and cons on the impact of such a measure on developing economies like the Philippines.

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Eco groups back UNICEF's call for action against air pollution

LOCAL environment-advocate groups have expressed their strong support for the call of the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) to cut air pollution for children's health.

The EcoWaste Coalition and the Partnership for Clean Air (PCA) said that UNICEF's four-point call "to reduce pollution, increase children's access to health care, minimize children's exposure and monitor air pollution" should be strongly supported in order to protect the chil-

dren's health and the public in general.

Last week, the UNICEF released the report "Clear the Air for Children," which "points out that around 300 million children live in areas where the air is toxic - exceeding international limits by at least six times - and that children are uniquely vulnerable to air pollution, breathing faster than adults on average and taking in more air relative to their body weight."

The two groups specifically drew attention to UNICEF's warning that

"open burning of waste is highly hazardous for public health."

"The open burning of waste is a large source of toxic air pollutants such as particulates, carbon monoxide, black carbon, dioxins, furans and mercury. These are highly toxic and/or carcinogenic pollutants," the UNICEF warned.

UNICEF also noted that "women and children often carry out hazardous disposal practices such as the open burning of waste in the absence of regular collection services."

On the other hand,

"better waste management can reduce the amount of waste that is burned within communities," the UNICEF said.

PCA President Rene Pineda said that aside from stopping waste burning in all its forms, action is needed to reduce air pollution from coal power plants and industrial facilities, as well as from vehicles, planes and ships.

Pineda also stressed the need for the environmentally sound management of hazardous waste such as elec-

tronic waste or e-waste, which are often dismantled in uncontrolled conditions or burned to retrieve and recycle valuable materials such as aluminum, copper, iron, tin, etc.

"We call on all Filipinos not to add to the air pollutants in the environment by consuming responsibly, by reducing what we throw away and by not burning waste resources, which could be reused, recycled or composted instead," said Lucero, EcoWaste Coalition national coordinator.

Cory Martinez

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Townsfolk wary of displacement by solar power projects

DAGUPAN CITY—Residents and farmers of San Manuel town are opposing proposed solar power plants in their town, fearing the projects would displace them.

A statement from residents of Barangay Sto. Domingo there said they objected to two solar project applications being processed by the Department of Energy. These are a 60-megawatt plant of the Pilipinas Newton Energy Corp. and a 56-MW plant of the Pilipinas Einstein Energy Corp.

Acknowledging that solar power plants are environment-friendly, the residents said these projects would force farmers, many of them tenants, to leave their fields.

"Solar power is safe but it should not be developed at the expense of farmers," said Erlinda Galistre-Campos, a representative of 59 families tilling 32.5 hectares in Sto. Domingo where one of the proposed plants may rise.

The residents urged President Duterte to approve a moratorium on land-use conversion

being pushed by Agrarian Reform Secretary Rafael Mariano "and to listen to the problems of the farmers, who are oftentimes victims of development programs."

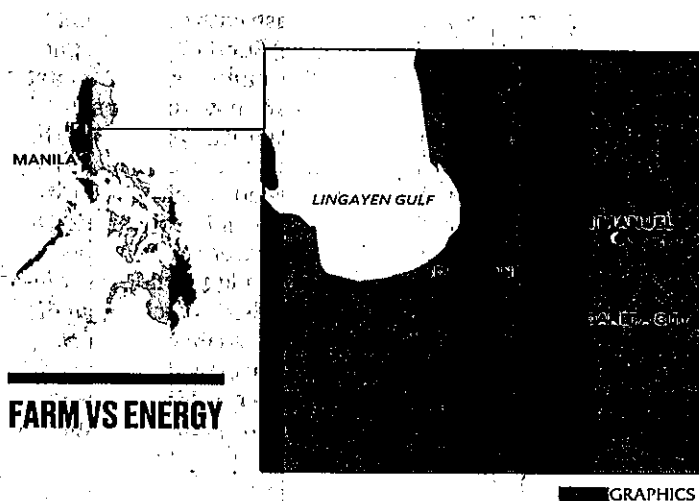
Inocencio Galitre, a farmer, said his family has been earning a living from the lands being considered for the projects. "We harvest thrice because irrigation is good," he said, adding that their displacement would mean "they are killing us slowly."

He said Pilipinas Einstein Energy Corp. had promised

them a relocation site but "nice houses could not replace our livelihood as farmers."

San Manuel, an agricultural town in eastern Pangasinan, hosts the San Roque Multipurpose Dam, which produces as much as 400 MW of electricity.

Galitre said residents and farmers were forced to sell their lands when San Roque Dam was put up. "They were relocated but their lives became miserable. We don't want to end up like them," he said. —YOLANDA SOTELO INQ



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SULTAN KUDARAT FLOODING

3 DAYS OF RAIN DESTROY 23 HOUSES IN 6 VILLAGES

COTABATO CITY—Three days of moderate to heavy rains have flooded at least six villages, displacing 4,000 families and destroying at least 23 houses in the town of Kalamansig in Sultan Kudarat province.

The rains, according to weather specialists, were brought by intertropical convergence zones hovering near Mindanao.

Florante Mulod, resident of Barangay Sta. Maria, said the floods hit the villages of Poral, Obial, Limulan, Sta Maria, Hinalaan and Cadiz.

Also flooded are the villages of Salaman and Poloy-Poloy in Lebak, also in Sultan Kudarat.

Kalamansig Mayor Ronan Garcia said at least 4,255 families have been displaced.

At least 23 houses were de-

stroyed by flash floods, the mayor said.

Mulod said at least 37 Manobo families living on the banks of the Limulan River in Sta. Maria evacuated to the Zone of Peace and Development building at the Sta. Maria village hall.

Disaster officials said power was cut off in the villages after strong winds toppled power lines on Saturday in Barangay Limulan where generators of the Sultan Kudarat Electric Cooperative are located.

Many parts of Mindanao are still suffering from the effects of a prolonged drought brought about by an El Niño episode that weather experts said would be followed by a period of prolonged rains known as La Niña. —EDWIN FERNANDEZ (INQ)

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China announces plan to curb carbon emissions

BEIJING—China has announced a plan to curb greenhouse-gas emissions over the next several years, while capping coal consumption and increasing the use of non-fossil fuels.

Under the plan, by 2020, the level of carbon-dioxide emissions per unit of GDP will be 18 percent lower than in 2015, the State Council said on its website on Friday, the same day that the Paris climate agreement came into effect.

Coal consumption must be capped at about 4.2 billion tons, while non-fossil fuel-energy generation capacity, like hydropower and nuclear power, will be expanded to 15 percent of China's total capacity.

China has taken a leading role in climate-change talks, and its collaboration with the United States has been touted by Washington and Beijing as a bright spot in an otherwise strained relationship.

China will guarantee that emis-

sions peak no later than 2030 under the Paris pact. There are also plans to officially launch a national carbon-trading market next year.

In recent years China has become a world leader in renewable-energy investment and installation of new wind and solar-power capacity, but efforts by the central government to break away from coal consumption have been frustrating at times.

Even after Beijing declared a "war on pollution," hundreds of new coal-power plants were approved for construction in 2015 by local governments keen to buoy their economies.

Central economic planner earlier this year declared a halt on new approvals for coal plants. Energy officials went a step further last month when they declared a construction freeze on scores of partially built plants across more than a dozen provinces, garnering praise from environmental groups, such as Greenpeace. AP

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

'Food forest gardening' pushed

SENATOR Loren Legarda has sought to propagate "food forest gardening" to ensure a sustainable method of food production with minimal cost.

She filed Senate Bill No. 1186 which seeks to promote food forest gardening in the country to address the limited land resources for sustainable food production with minimal farming costs but increased harvests.

Food forest gardening is seeing a "resurgence" in urban areas worldwide, said Legarda. SBN 1186 intends to utilize idle lands and consequently create beautiful living spaces, she added.

"A food forest is a system of gardening using perennial vegetables chosen to complement and support each other, minimizing weeds, pests and maintenance while providing a rich variety of harvest," she said.

Under SBN 1186 food forest gardening may be established in the following places: any parcel or portion of land; public spaces such as urban yards or city and municipal parks; unutilized and idle public land; community or common spaces of land developments; portions of rural

farms; urban housing projects; and actual yards of households.

The bill hopes to introduce low maintenance food production through agro-forestry; to transform farmers from mere mono-crop cultivators to multi-crop agripreneurs; to serve as a model for the youth inspiring them towards sustainable agriculture; and to help farmers build productive farming communities and produce high-quality crops for the country's economy.

SBN 1186 calls for the creation of the Philippine Food Forest Gardening Commission (PFFGC) as an attached agency to the Department of Agriculture (DA). Local government units (LGUs), educational institutions and other stakeholders are mandated to participate in the program.

Likewise, the bill intends to establish the Philippine Center for Food Forest Gardening (PCFFG) to be placed under the proposed PFFGC to provide information, training, education, expertise and best practices to implement the Food Forest Program.

Bernadette E. Tamayo

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Robinsons Land Corporation (RLC) through its Robinsons "RLove" Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Program has conducted a reforestation project in Kaliwa River Watershed, Tanay Rizal in coordination with Rizal Provincial Environment and Natural

RLC joins Kaliwa River Watershed reforestation

Resources Office (PENRO).

The Kaliwa River Watershed (KRW) is part of the Sierra Madre Mountain Range that stretches from northeastern to southeastern Luzon. Specifically, it is situated in the municipalities of Tanay, Rizal and General Nakar in Quezon province.

To set-off RLC's partnership with Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in implementing the National Greening Program (NGP), the government's flagship reforestation

initiative, 80 RLC volunteer employees planted 600 fruit and forest trees covering a hectare of Kaliwa River Watershed. The initiative aims to enhance 5 hectares of forest area, planting a total of 3,000 indigenous seedlings, bringing back the ecological functions of Kaliwa River Watershed and providing livelihood opportunities to the local community.

The RLC's participation in NGP is in collaboration with RLC Rizal PENRO, providing technical support, and the people's organization Samahan ng Maggugulaysa Sto. Nino, Inc. tasked to conduct maintenance and protection of the area.

"Our employees' participation in this tree planting activity is not only the individual's expression and contribution in preserving the environment it is also the fulfillment of RLC's Corporate Social Responsibility", said head of RLove CSR program Michael Torres.

Aside from the company employees' personal involvement in tree planting, Robinsons Land Corporation's Environmental Sustainable Program includes; embarking Renewable Energy Program by installing off-grid solar PV (photo voltaic) panels on 8 malls nationwide, Energy Conservation Program implemented in all RLC projects and Wastewater Recovery Program leading to zero waste water discharge.

