

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

21 DEC 2016

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DAY : Wednesday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

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DENR eyes ecological paradise in UP

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the University of the Philippines have joined hands in creating models of integrated area development at the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Center (NAPWC) and UP Diliman campus in Quezon City.

The 25-hectare NAP-

WC is an area for development which Secretary Gina Lopez plans to transform into an "ecological paradise" and a tourist attraction.

Lopez and UP Chancellor Michael Tan formalized the cause through a memorandum of understanding together with UP Vice Chancellor for Community Affairs Nestor

Castro.

"I feel that the DENR can offer UP an exciting arena where they can parlay their educational know-how, their skills, including community development," Lopez said.

At the same time, Lopez said she is also looking at architecture, community development, engineer-

ing, housing and economics.

The DENR chief expressed optimism the partnership will turn out well and serve as a model for community development that can be replicated in other areas in the country.

"If it's good for DENR and it's good for the university, it's also very good

for the country," she said. She added that an "innovative environmental technology" will be put up in the park to serve as a learning ground for communities and local government units across the country.

Meanwhile, Lopez said the UP Arboretum will also be an extension of the educational experience. Joel dela Torre

BusinessMirror

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DENR reports expansion of PHL forests through greening program

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA
@jorlmayuga

THE country's forest cover expanded by approximately 250,000 hectares with the successful implementation of the National Greening Program (NGP) this year.

In the final year of implementation of NGP, some 367,684,457 seedlings were planted, covering a total of 242,507 hectares. This is 98 percent of the year's target of 247,683 hectares.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the lead implementing agency of the NGP, is still collating data from field offices of the DENR and other NGP partners.

A DENR accomplishment report as of October 2016 also said that a total of 555,794 jobs were generated through the NGP, employing a total of 90,912 individuals.

The NGP aims to plant 1.5 billion trees in 1.5 million hectares of open, degraded and denuded forest. From 2010 to 2015, the DENR has already expanded forest cover by 1.2 million hectares.

The NGP is a climate change mitigation and adaptation strategy, anti-poverty and food security program rolled into one. It also aims to provide support to the country's wood industry by producing raw materials.

The NGP eats up the bulk of the DENR's annual budget since its launching in 2010.

This year the DENR, through the Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau, also produced a total of 2.12 million seedlings from January to October, and 688 tons of mycorrhizal inoculants.

The DENR, through its Forest Management Bureau, is now gearing up for the implementation of the Enhanced-NGP (E-NGP). Under Environment Secretary

Regina Paz L. Lopez's watch, the DENR aims to engage in massive cultivation of bamboo and mangroves in coastal areas.

The E-NGP aims to sustain the country's forest-expansion program to increase its carbon-absorption capacity, in line with its commitment to reduce carbon emission by 70 percent by 2030, as stated under its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution submission to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The NGP accomplishment report submitted by DENR Undersecretary for Policy and Planning Marlo Mendoza to Lopez highlights the agency's performance this year.

During the year, the DENR was able to issue a total of 4,033 agricultural patents and 30,748 residential patents under Republic Act 10023, or the Residential Free Patents.

While the target for land disposition of agricultural patents of 3,322 was surpassed by 21 percent, the accomplishment for residential patent of 55,785 fell short by 45 percent.

The shortage in distributing residential free patents was attributed to the incomplete requirements of the applicants, difficulty of securing requirements such as zoning certification, area limitation, policy of one lot per applicant and slow processing in the Provincial Environment and Natural Resource Offices due to lack of staff that will verify and assist in the transmittal of the patents.

Meanwhile, for Protected Area and Biodiversity Conservation, the DENR approved a total of 817 Protected Area Management Board resolutions. A total of 56 ecotourism facilities were maintained as of October 2016, which represents 44 percent of the annual target.

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'Stop issuing fish pen permits in Laguna de Bay'

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

A fisherfolk group has asked the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to stop issuing permits to fish pen operators in Laguna de Bay.

The Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) said the one-year moratorium is not enough to rehabilitate

the lake.

"The moratorium on the issuance of permits for fish pens should be for good. We do not totally reject fish pens in Laguna de Bay, but it should comply with what the lake can only hold. Fisherfolk organizations and cooperatives should also manage the fish pens," Fernando Hicap, Pa-

malakaya chairman, said.

"Fisherfolk families were deprived of their collective rights to their traditional fishing grounds for decades. Now is the time for them to regain and acknowledge their collective control on the lake permanently," Hicap said.

Contrary to the claim of

big fish pen operators, Pamalakaya said the permanent ban on the issuance of fish pen permits would not result in loss of livelihood for small-scale fishermen.

The moratorium on the issuance of fish pen permits, which is effective next year, is expected to open the lake to

municipal fishermen.

Hicap said the ban would also spare the lake from further degradation caused by chemical-based pellet feeds used to culture fish.

"Aside from thousands of factories along the lake which dump chemical wastes into the water, the use of feed additives and chemicals

to culture fish is one of the main reasons why Laguna de Bay has reached its dying stage," he said.

The lake allows up to only 9,000 hectares for aquaculture.

However, data from the Laguna Lake Development Authority shows big fish pen operators have occupied 22,500 hectares.

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DENR orders closure of dumpsite in Cebu City

BY MARIE W. MOSQUERA

CEBU CITY – The Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) 7 has ordered the Cebu City government to immediately stop the operation of an open dumpsite at the South Road Properties (SRP).

This, after EMB inspectors found that the facility, which is used as temporary dumping site for the city's garbage, has been operating without the required Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC), a violation of Section 37 of Republic Act 9003, or the Philippine Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

"Based on the investigation report prepared by our field personnel, it was found that indeed the City of Cebu was dumping mixed solid wastes at a vacant lot in SRP adjacent to the City's Department of Public Services Compound without an approved ECC," said EMB 7 Director Engr. William Cuñado.

With the violation, the DENR-EMB 7 issued a Cease and Desist Order yesterday, and addressed to Cebu City Mayor Tomas Osmeña.

The city started using the dumpsite last Monday after the Court of Appeals ordered the closure of the Inayawan Sanitary Landfill.

Based on the monitoring report released by the DENR EMB, the SRP temporary dumpsite does not have waste cover, site drainage, odor control, placement of waste, fencing / litter control, signage, and wastewater treatment facility.

Cuñado reminded Osmeña of the provision of Section 4 of Presidential Decree 1586, which states that "No person, partnership or corporation shall undertake or operate any such declared environmentally critical project or area without first securing an ECC issued by the President or his duly authorized representative".

Cordillera maintains forest cover

BAGUIO CITY: The Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Cordillera Administrative Region (DENR-CAR) has urged other stakeholders to continue working for a greener Cordillera while reporting a good performance on environment programs and services.

Regional Director Ralph Pablo said the region maintained its 43 percent forest cover and that through the National Greening Program (2011 to 2016), close to 100,000 hectares of plantation area were added including the 13,525 hectares target for this year.

Through the Watershed and

Water Resources Research Center in partnership with several state universities and colleges, an additional 188 hectares of special project sites were planted with clone seedlings of better varieties of trees, he added.

Pablo said environmental protection through the people's unified effort is also protecting life, especially that of future generations.

For 2017, Pablo said the DENR in partnership with other stakeholders will be implementing the E-NGP or Enhanced National Greening Program.

"Our marching order is not only

to look into greening projects but also look into how it can help in the economic way of life of the upland communities, such as the introduction of agro-forestry wherein fruits and other cash crops can benefit the local folk," he added.

Pablo called on all regional stakeholders to continue commitment and partnership for the protection, preservation and re-greening of Cordillera, especially the region's watersheds and forest reserves that also play important functions for the downstream communities and nearby regions.

GABY B. KEITH

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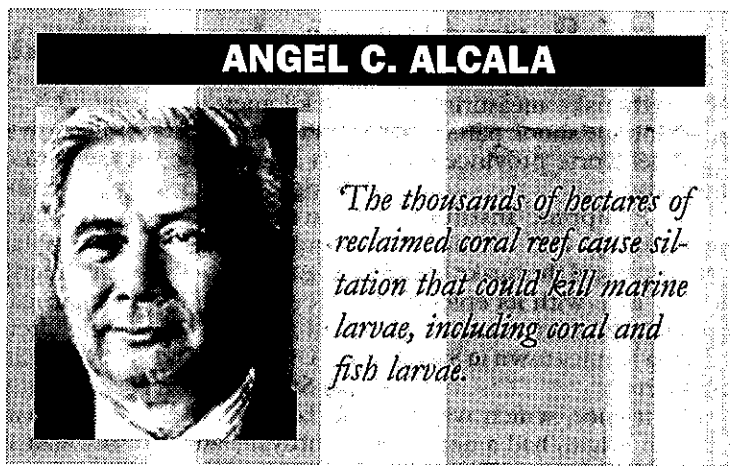
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The environment and marine resources of the West Philippine Sea

THE political and legal issues of the West Philippine Sea are being discussed at length in the media these days. This column takes a different view from the perspective of the environment and the marine resources (especially fisheries) of the South China Sea. Some ideas came from our paper (Alcala and Encomienda, 2015) published in the journal National Security Review and copyrighted by the National Defense College of the Philippines.

Reclamation in the Spratlys according to Professor John McManus "constitute(s) the most rapid rate of permanent loss of coral reef in human history" as well as marine propagules. The thousands of hectares of reclaimed coral reef cause siltation that could kill marine larvae, including coral and fish larvae. A large number of fish larvae are normally transported to the Philippines via ocean currents, benefiting Palawan and western Luzon in terms of sustainable fisheries. Palawan will likely lose its primary role as the center of coral reef fisheries in the Philippines. This is indicated by studies of the



ANGEL C. ALCALA

'The thousands of hectares of reclaimed coral reef cause siltation that could kill marine larvae, including coral and fish larvae.'

Joint Oceanographic and Marine Scientific Research Expedition (JOMSRE) participated in by the Philippines and Vietnam in 1996-2007.

In the past, fish yields of the muro-ami fishing gear in the Spratlys (a gear which is super-efficient in harvesting coral reef fish and a destroyer of coral reefs) is estimated at 12 to 20 metric tons per year, the value of which is 12 to 20 million US dollars per year. This gear has been banned because of its destructive effects on coral reef ecosystems. Added

to this are the fishery yields of the Scarborough Shoal, which has not been quantified.

Aside from fisheries, the Spratlys (West Philippine Sea), used to abound in turtles, giant clams, and other useful invertebrates, but as the result of overexploitation these resources have become rarer. The JOMSRE has documented this fact.

The Spratlys consists of shoals, atolls, low islands and marine waters at various depths to 4,000 meters. The atolls are very important structures, hav-

ing various shapes, each one with a deep lagoon in the center. Atolls store nutrients and fish and biodiversity propagules that are released to the open sea at periodic intervals. These propagules are then carried to various surrounding countries by ocean currents. When they are disturbed by humans, they cease as centers of biodiversity, and all surrounding nations lose their benefits from atolls.

The South China Sea, part of which is the West Philippine Sea, benefits the Philippines tremendously. Our politicians should be aware of this fact and should include the beneficial values of the West Philippine Sea in their assessment of its significance to the country. This is the reason why we are in favour of temporarily suspending territorial claims and establishing the concept of the Peace Park, which is defined by the IUCN as "transboundary protected areas that are formally dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and to the promotion of peace and cooperation."

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TREES ALONG ILOILO MAIN ROAD SPARED FROM DRAINAGE PROJECT

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
@nestorburgosINQ

ILOILO CITY—Decades-old trees along a main street here have again been saved from a road project.

The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) has agreed to redesign a major drainage project so no trees along General Luna Street would be cut, said Councilor R. Leone Gerochi, chair of the city council's committee on public services, environmental protection and ecology.

Parts of the P100-million drainage project would be built under the street, not on the sidewalks where the trees are, Gerochi said. The project aims to address flooding in low-lying City Proper District, especially during heavy rain.

General Luna is a main thoroughfare stretching from the University of the Philippines Visayas campus to Arroyo Fountain in front of Casa Real, the old Iloilo provincial capitol.

Many residents, particularly environmental advocates, have been opposing the cutting of trees along the 4.7-kilometer street for infrastructure pro-

jects. They have stressed that the trees have become city landmarks.

The DPWH had earlier sought an endorsement from the city council for the cutting of the trees, as required by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. But Gerochi and other councilors have expressed opposition to the cutting of the trees.

In 2014, the city council, as well as environmentalists and concerned residents, rejected the proposal of the DPWH to also cut the trees due to a road widening project. The plan involved removing about half a meter from each side of a concrete center strip where the trees are planted to expand the road from four lanes to six.

The road widening was continued but the trees were maintained.

Environmentalists have been pushing for the preservation of trees and mangroves amid the massive infrastructure and other development projects in the city. They have insisted that roads should have space for trees and pedestrians and not only for vehicles as a way of mitigating the worsening effects of climate change. INQ

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Mining firm decries smear campaign

BY JON RAMIREZ

The Claver Mineral Development Corporation (CMDC) has described as "smear campaign" the graft charges filed against it before the Office of the Ombudsman by allegedly illegal mining groups that were ousted last February by a court order from its mining claim in Carrascal, Surigao del Sur.

CMDC President Cesar Detera denied that the company was engaged in illegal nickel ore mining operations, and that it refused to give indigenous peoples their rightful share of revenues from mineral operations in their ancestral lands.

Detera also decried the efforts to hit one of CMDC's owners, Surigao del Sur Representative Prospero Pichay in the smear campaign.

"The truth is, CMDC under new management since October last year is proceeding with its rehabilitation of its mine site in accordance with all mining regulations and pertinent laws, including the Indigenous People's Rights Act of 1997," said Detera.

CMDC officials welcomed the filing of a case with the Ombudsman by a group of indigenous people who claimed that the company engaged in illegal mining operations and abused their rights by withholding their share of mining revenues.

The company officials said those who filed the case included an illegal miner operating within the CMDC mining claim and ordered ousted by the local court earlier this year.

Detera said an investigation would show that there were actually several other indigenous people's groups who were also seeking this share from the operation of CMDC's mining claim.

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Russian nuclear, rail, mining firms to visit PHL

RUSSIAN companies in the nuclear, mining, and rail industries are set to visit the Philippine next year, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said, citing a Russian official.

The visits form part of the Philippines-Russia Joint Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation (JCTEC) meeting in the Philippines scheduled for January.

The intergovernmental body will be co-chaired by Deputy Minister for the Russian Department of Inter-regional and Cross-border Cooperation of the Ministry of Economic Development Alexander Tsybulskiy and Department of Trade and Industry Undersecretary Ceferino S. Rodolfo, and is intended to expand trade cooperation between the two countries.

In a statement released by the DFA on Monday, Mr. Tsybulskiy said that he will be joined on the visit by executives from Rosatom State Atomic Energy Corp., JSC Russian Railways, and MMC Norilsk Nickel.

Rosatom has nuclear construction projects in Finland, Hungary, Iran, India, Vietnam and China.

In its 2015 Key Facts report, the company has operations in 52 countries with annual overseas revenue of \$6.3 billion.

Russian Railways reported 2015 revenue of about \$24.48 billion.

Norilsk Nickel has overseas operations in Finland, the United Kingdom, the United States, China and Switzerland with about \$3.843 billion in revenue for

the first half of 2016. It reported revenue of about \$8.54 billion in 2015.

Philippine Ambassador to Russia Carlos D. Sorreta met with Mr. Tsybulskiy last week to discuss this upcoming meeting.

Sought for comment, Foreign Affairs Spokesperson Charles C. Jose said that the Philippine Embassy in Moscow will send to the DFA a full list of Russian companies set to visit the Philippines.

"Per our Russia Desk, we don't have yet the complete list of companies but we expect to receive it from our Embassy in Moscow," Mr. Jose said in a text message, adding that so far the DFA has confirmed the three companies listed above.

Maxim Anyanin, head of the Visa Section of the Russian Consulate, in a phone interview said that the meeting between Mr. Tsybulskiy and Mr. Rodolfo, which was originally set for this month was postponed to Jan. 20.

In a news conference last month, Russian Ambassador to Manila Igor Khovaev said that some Russian companies have expressed interest in investing in railway, telecommunications, energy and mining in the Philippines.

He also cited the high demand for tropical fruit, particularly bananas, which could be supplied by the Philippines to Russia via the eastern city of Vladivostok. — **Lucia Edna P. de Guzman**

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3 miners buried alive in illegal mine

LEGAZPI CITY, Albay: Three miners were buried alive after a mine tunnel caved in on Monday evening in Labo, Camarines Norte caused by torrential rain brought by tail end of the cold front affecting the Bicol region in the past few days.

Senior Inspector Maria Luia Calubaquib, Philippine National Police-Bicol spokesperson, identified the victims as Florentino Mallanes, 47; Mark Alvin Echano, 22; and Joel Lucena, all residents of Barangay Dalas in Labo town.

A police report said the miners were trying to retrieve mining equipment inside the abandoned

pit when a huge amount of water engulfed the mine, trapping the victims inside.

The illicit mining site is located at Purok 4, Barangay Benit in Labo.

For the past years, many miners have lost lives in the illegal and small-scale mining operations in Camarines Norte and the island province of Masbate.

These illegal and small-scale mining operations have thrived in Camarines Norte since time immemorial and are mostly run by prominent personalities including local politicians.

RHAYDZ B. BARCIA

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

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3 minero nalunod-patay sa loob ng mining pit sa CamNorte

NAGA CITY - Nasawi ang tatlong minero matapos malunod sa mining pit sa Labo, Camarines Norte.

Kinilala ang mga biktima na sina Florentino Mallanes, 47; Joel Cena, 36, at Mark Alvin Echano, 22.

Napag-alaman na sinusubukan sana ng tatlo na iahon mula sa abandonadong mining pit ang equipment na ginagamit sa pagmimina.

Ngunit, habang nasa ilalim ng hukay ang mga ito ay bigla na lamang umpanong bumuhos ang malakas na ulan.

Pinasok ng tubig ang naturang mining pit na naging daan upang malunod ang tatlo na agad binawian ng buhay.

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Balyena patay sa dami ng basurang nakain

Nagpaalala sa publiko tiyan nito.

kahapon ang Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) na huwag magtapon ng mga basura sa karagatan o ilog matapos na matagpuan ang isang patay na balyena sa baybayin ng Samal Island sa Davao del Norte province sa Mindanao.

Nabatid sa BFAR na isang sperm whale ang natagpuan sa coastal barangay ng Miranda at base sa inisyal na pagsusuri ay posibleng nasawi ito dahil sa dami ng basurang nasa

Karamihan sa mga nasa bituka ng balyena ay pawang mga basurang mula sa plastic, gayun din ang mga fishnets at kahoy na maaaring napagkamalan na pagkain, ayon sa BFAR.

Nais umahong pag-aralan pa at mapreserba ang carcass ng balyena sa tulong ng Bone Collector Museum na isang non-government organization sa Davao City.

Natagpuan ang balyena nitong Sabado lamang. (Al Jacinto)

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ENDANGERED. This picture taken on November 8, 2016, shows Andatu, a Sumatran rhino, one of the rarest large mammals on earth, at the Rhino Sanctuary at Way Kambas National Park in eastern Sumatra. There are no more than 100 left on the entire planet and Andatu, a four-year old male, is one of the last remaining hopes for the future of the species. He is part of a special breeding program at the Way Kambas National Park in eastern Sumatra that is trying to save this critically endangered species from disappearing forever. AFP