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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



DENR moves for creation of enforcement bureau

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

Secretary Roy Cimatu of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is calling for the enactment of a law creating an enforcement bureau within the agency.

"We believe that the creation of an enforcement bureau under the DENR can effectively stop illegal logging, smuggling of wildlife species and other environmental crimes," Cimatu pointed out.

The DENR chief appealed to House members present during the recent budget hearing to help the DENR install this enforcement bureau at the soonest time possible.

This developed after Cimatu condemned the brutal killing of DENR forest ranger Bienvenido Veguilla Jr. by suspected illegal loggers in El Nido, Palawan recently.

"I will never allow another crime

such as the killing of Mr. Veguilla to happen to any of my people. This incident shows how greed and disregard for our laws can have appalling consequences on people and our society," Cimatu added.

Reports reaching the DENR central office in Quezon City showed that Veguilla – together with fellow forest ranger Jenuel Casel, forest extension officer Herson Caliao, and park rangers Marvin Flamiano, Godensio Caber and Norlito Jongay – were conducting forest patrol in the afternoon of Sept. 4 in an area covered by the National Greening Program when they heard the

sound of a chainsaw as they passed through Barangay Pasadena.

Veguilla's group followed the sound until they saw some men slicing a felled tree with a chainsaw. These men suddenly ran away upon seeing the DENR team, leaving behind the chainsaw which Veguilla's group was able to secure.

On their way home and about a hundred meters away from the site, the DENR forest officers were chased by a group of six men armed with a bolo. Veguilla was able to fire his service weapon as he and his companions were running for safety.

However, Veguilla was cornered and hacked to death, while the others were able to seek help from the nearby barangay and police offices.

Veguilla sustained deep, multiple stab wounds on the head, arms and other parts of the body.

One of the suspects identified as Filman Flores was wounded by Veguilla's shots and was brought to hospital.

Flores and another suspect, Gerardo Fulgencio, are now under police custody. A manhunt operation is ongoing for the remaining four suspects.

Earlier, the DENR chief said they have subjected to training forest rangers on the use of shotgun for their protection.

Cimatu said the standard operating procedure is every time patrolling activities are conducted, these forest rangers should be accompanied by personnel from the Philippine National Police or the Army.

He added that their move is limited to that for now as there is no law authorizing them to arm forest rangers.



EDITORIAL

Martyrs for the land

Another environmental defender has been murdered.

Forest ranger Bienvenido Veguilla Jr., 44, was hacked to death in El Nido, Palawan, on Sept. 4 while he was trying to arrest suspected illegal loggers. Veguilla is the country's latest casualty in the violence being committed against those who protect their land and the environment. His killing further worsens the Philippines' reputation as the deadliest country for environmental defenders in 2018, according to international monitor Global Witness. Thirty of them were killed last year alone.

Veguilla and five other rangers of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) were conducting a forest patrol in an area covered by the National Greening Program when they heard the sound of a chainsaw nearby. They followed the sound and discovered men slicing a felled tree. The men ran away, but later, armed with bolos, cornered the DENR team on their way back to the office, leading to Veguilla's death.

This was not the first time an environmental defender has been attacked or murdered in Palawan—the country's so-called last frontier, with 692,288 hectares of forest cover hosting flora and fauna of great diversity. In September 2017, Ruben Arzaga, a member of the El Nido-Taytay Managed Resource Protected Area board, was shot and killed while he was arresting suspected illegal loggers. In August that same year, government forester Lito Eyala was shot and severely injured by a suspected timber poacher while patrolling the mountains in Puerto Princesa City.

These attacks had prompted Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, a former Armed Forces chief of staff, to have DENR personnel trained in handling shotguns. Cimatu reasoned then that he would "never allow" another crime to be committed against any DENR personnel, and asked lawmakers to pass a law establishing an enforcement bureau to boost the implementation of environmental laws. The standard operating procedure to have police or army personnel accompany forest rangers on patrol was not adequate, he said, since uniformed personnel were not available all the time. "*Hindi naman kami pwede mag-hire ng security guard to help us in the patrolling. In the end, sana mayroon na tayong batas na makatulong sa atin,*" Cimatu added.

The DENR chief had been pushing for arming personnel since Arzaga's death in 2017—a move opposed by Kalikasan (People's Network for the Environment), which has warned that armed forest guards can be transformed into paramilitary groups that may end up harassing and repressing local communities.

Global Witness' report on the Philippines having become the most murderous country for environmentalists also made a similar warning in its report, saying that these crimes "are aided by the people and institutions meant to prevent them."

It is not only environmental workers that are getting killed; Global Witness said indigenous people "are disproportionately affected by the scramble for land and natural resources, and the violence that comes with it." It cited the October 2018 massacre in Sagay City, Negros Occidental, of nine sugarcane farmers occupying a plot of disputed land.

The situation has not improved under President Duterte, with 48 deaths—the highest number Global Witness has recorded in an Asian country—in 2017 alone, a year after the former Davao City mayor became president. Also in 2017, Mr. Duterte announced plans to allocate 1.6 million hectares of land to industrial plantations, most of them in Mindanao. "This region," Global Witness noted, referring to Mindanao, "has also become a hot spot for murders of land and environmental defenders, accounting for 67 percent of the total killed in the Philippines in 2017 and a third in 2018."

In an interview with global nonprofit media company Public Radio International, environmental activist Jaybee Garganera said people like him face daunting challenges in the Philippines, where it "is easy for local communities to be tagged as bandits or rebels or communist insurgents." The Duterte administration had accused the massacred Negros farmers, for example, as being backed by the communist armed group New People's Army.

Indeed, as stark and telling as the unabated killings of land and environmental defenders is the lack of meaningful investigations by the government into those behind these crimes. In a time of normalized, everyday bloodbath, the fight has become twofold: protecting not only the environment, but also those who risk their lives defending what's left of it.



'DENR, MICC working to improve mining policies'

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Mining Industry Coordinating Council (MICC) are working to improve several policies affecting the minerals development sector to boost the country's growth and development.

This was disclosed by Environment Undersecretary for Climate Change and Mining Concerns Analiza R. Teh

at the ongoing Mining Philippines 2019: International Conference and Exhibition at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza in Pasay City Wednesday.

Teh, the DENR's undersecretary for climate change and mining concerns, spoke on the government's way forward for the mining industry.

Teh said four priority items that will make the government's mining policies responsive to in-

dustry needs are amendments of DAO 2010-21, or the implementing rules and regulation of Republic Act 7942; a separate initiative to amend sections 189-92, also of the IRR of RA 8942; the guidelines for the Care and Maintenance Program for Mining; and amendment to the implementing rules and regulations of Republic Act 7076 or the People's Small Scale Mining Act.

"Hopefully, with all these pending policies with the cooperation of the mining industry, slowly, we can formulate new policies that will really be responsive to the needs of the mining industry, support their investments and at the same time the environmental safeguards are properly taken care of," she said.

SEE "MICC," A2



MICC...

CONTINUED FROM A8

During the forum, Teh said the government is one with the industry in addressing policy gaps for it to be able to capitalize on opportunities in the global scene, but underscored the need for the government and the industry to work together to improve public perception of mining.

Until such time that the public is convinced of the mining industry's capacity to do mining responsibly, the government will continue to implement strict regulations as a way to ensure environment protection.

Recently, the Indonesian government bared plans to advance a new ban on nickel ore export by 2020. Teh shared the industry's concerns that there is a need to address policy gaps for the industry to capitalize on this development.

She said the Mining Industry Coordinating Council (MICC) is discussing thoroughly these issues in developing an industry road map to boost the country's mineral sector.

COMP, which was affected by a 10-month crackdown on erring mining operations by the late Environment Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez, has been appealing to reverse what

it calls anti-mining policies starting with the controversial closure and suspension orders of more than half of the country's operating mines, the ban on open-pit mining, cancellation of 75 mineral production and sharing agreement for inactive projects within or near "watersheds."

Prior to that, COMP sustained setbacks with the signing of EO 79 which imposes a moratorium on new mining applications pending the legislation of a new fiscal regime for mining.

Amendments to existing policies like the IRR of the Philippine Mining Act will be an opportunity to integrate MICC's views on certain policy needs for the industry's growth and development, she said.

During her talk, she shared the MICC observation on recommending the lifting of the ban on open-pit mining method on select minerals under DAO 2017-10. Teh said open-pit mining method is a globally-accepted method of mining.

Also, she said, not all open-pit mines produce acidic contaminants, and that there are best practices, techniques and technologies that can help avoid or manage the negative impacts of open-pit mining.

The MICC noted, she said, that there are existing policies or laws that designate areas that are closed to mining applications.

Jonathan L. Mayuga



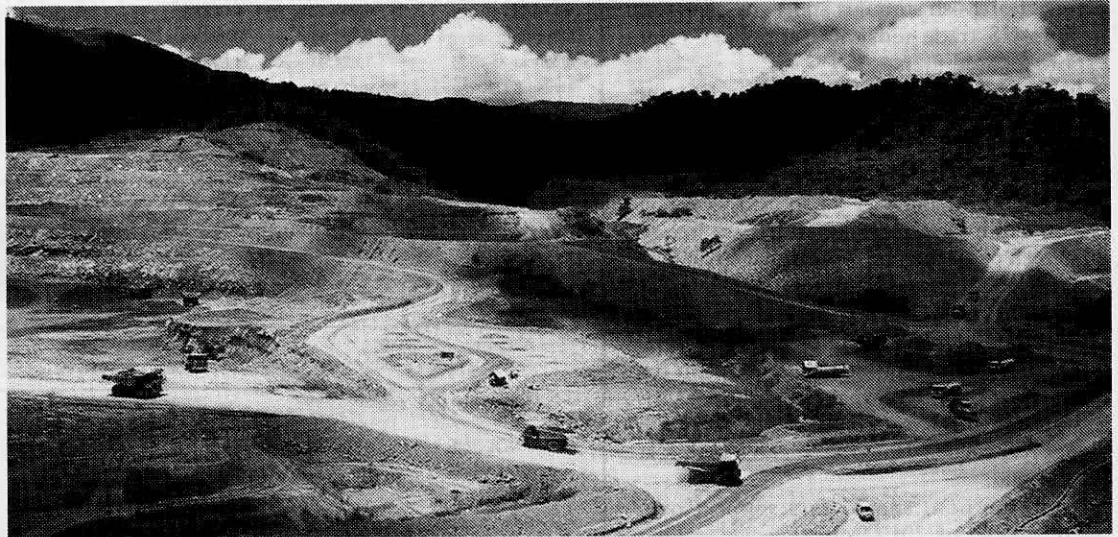
DENR: Changes to make mining policies more responsive

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) assured the mining industry government is working on better policies to boost the growth and development of mining firms.

Analiza Teh, DENR undersecretary for climate change and mining concerns, said the agency identified four priority items that will make the government's mining policies responsive to industry needs during the ongoing Mining Philippines 2019 forum at Pasay City.

The said among the key policies that are being fine-tuned include the amendments to the implementing rules and regulations of the Mining Act instituting a new system of mineral resources exploration, development, utilization and conservation; the guidelines for the care and maintenance program for mining programs; and the amendment to the implementing rules and regulations of the act creating a people's small-scale mining program.

"Hopefully, with all these pending policies with the cooperation of the mining industry, slowly, we can formulate new policies that will really be responsive to the needs of the mining industry, support their investments and at the same time (ensure) the environmental safeguards are properly



Resilient. Mining companies welcome the findings of the audit on their operations, where only three of the 26 failed.

taken care of," Teh said.

She said amendments to the existing policies will be an opportunity to work with various stakeholders to integrate some of the recommendations of the Mining Industry Coordinating Council (MICC) on issues such as the open-pit method ban provided that adequate environmental safeguards are put in place.

Based on the MICC recommendation, not all open-pit mines produce

acidic contaminants and that there are best practices, technique and technologies that can help avoid or manage the negative impacts of the process.

The Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) meanwhile remains positive over the industry's resilience despite uncertainties in the sector.

In the same forum, COMP chairman Gerard Brimo said the completion of the MICC audits on 26 companies that were served closure or suspension orders

as a result of a previous audit was well-received by the industry.

"The MICC audit was thorough and all-encompassing... as it involved not only environmental performance but also legal, technical and social prescriptions by individuals that were experts in those fields. It is good news because out of the 26, only three failed. Some others were asked to do remedial work, but the fact is that the vast majority passed," Brimo said.



12 SEP 2019

DATE

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DENR firm on Minahang Bayan to limit small-scale mining operations

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is willing to streamline the process for the application of "Minahang Bayan" but maintains the need to limit small-scale mining operation within a designated area as mandated by Executive Order (EO) 79 and consistent with Republic Act 7076, or the People's Small-Scale Mining Act.

An amendment to the implementing rules and regulations of the People's Small-Scale Mining Act has been identified as a

priority by the DENR to address policy gaps affecting the minerals development sector.

Issuance of mining permit for small-scale mining is done only after a Minahang Bayan is declared. But the process is seen as very tedious which tend to slow down small-scale mining activities.

Environment Undersecretary for Climate Change and Mining Concerns Analiza R. Teh, who spoke on government's way forward for the mining industry during the ongoing Mining Philippines 2019 Conference and

Exhibition, said there are insinuations that small-scale mining should be allowed outside Minahang Bayan.

"During the recent budget hearing in the House of Representatives, the issue of Minahang Bayan was brought up. Because the process in declaring Minahang Bayan is very tedious," Teh recalled.

In response, Teh said the DENR can streamline the process but to regulate small-scale mining activities, the declaration of Minahang Bayan is a must to

regulate the sector and ensure environmental protection.

"Under EO 79, we stopped the issuance of small-scale mining permit. A requirement is having a declared Minahang Bayan—which requires an approved environmental compliance certificate [ECC]," she said.

Meanwhile, one of the requirements under the People's Small-Scale Mining Act is also the need to secure the so-called Free, Prior and Informed Consent, she said.

To streamline the process,

she said they are thinking of requiring ECC after a mining permit has been issued "which signals the start of actual mining operation."

"There are other processes we are looking at to streamline the process of approving Minahang Bayan application," she said.

Currently, there are only 29 declared Minahang Bayan in the country. There are around 300,000 to 500,000 small-scale miners who depend on small-scale mining as a source of income and livelihood.

Jonathan L. Mayuga



Despite unresolved policy issues, mining still upbeat

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA [@jonlmayuga](#)

DESPITE unresolved policy issues that adversely affect its growth, the minerals development sector remains upbeat about the future and will keep going beyond mere compliance with mining and environmental laws to prove its resilience, the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) asserted on Wednesday.

26

The number of companies served closure or suspension orders as a result of a previous audit. Only three of the 26 failed, and some others were asked to do remedial work

Speaking at the ongoing 2019 Mining Philippine Conference and Exhibition in Pasay City, COMP Chairman Gerard H. Brimo challenged the industry to prove to

all its resilience—by operating responsibly and going beyond mere compliance as it has done so in the past.

He said many policy gaps need

to be addressed by the government, including the moratorium on new mining permits until a new fiscal regime is put in place under Executive Order 79. The ban on the open

pit mining method is another policy issue needing final resolution, he said.

He noted that COMP continues to work with lawmakers to push for a more competitive fiscal regime and the lifting of the open pit ban as recommended by the Mining Industry Coordinating Council (MICC).

Despite the policy stalemates, he said the industry can hold on to some good news.

The completion of the MICC audits on 26 companies that were served closure or suspension orders as a result of a previous audit, he said, is one such positive news for the industry.

SEE "MINING," A2



TITLE:

PAGE 1/

2/2

DATE

Mining...

CONTINUED FROM A8

He said a vast majority passed the MICC audit criteria, which he described as more thorough and encompassing.

"The MICC audit was thorough and all-encompassing...as it involved not only environmental performance but also legal, technical and social prescriptions by individuals that were experts in those fields. It is good news because out of the 26, only three failed. Some others were asked to do remedial work, but the fact is that the vast majority passed," he said.

Brimo said although the reputation of the mining industry suffered tremendously because of the attacks that it has gone through in the recent past, the MICC audit paints a better picture.

However, he "expects to repair the damaged image of the industry to take some time and a concerted effort of the industry is needed to prove that it operates responsibly, by communicating its accomplishments.

"To my mind, that means not just mere compliance, but going beyond," Brimo stressed.

"Going beyond mere compliance is the reason why COMP decided to adopt the Towards Sustainable Mining [TSM] initiative of the Mining Association of Canada," he added. "TSM represents a series of sustainable 'best' practices that we should implement and rate ourselves against. In certain aspects, the program goes beyond regulatory compliance.

"Working with our member-companies, we have now completed the selection of Protocols and are almost finished with the review of Indicators under each of the Protocols," he said.

COMP, he said, also completed the formation of the Community of Interest (COI) Advisory Panel, which is critical in implementing TSM. The Panel is composed of 12 high-level individuals in their respective fields, and three Chamber trustees who will serve in the Panel on an ex-officio basis.

COMP will announce the composition of the Philippine COI Panel shortly.

Call for better policies marks mining summit

A BETTER POLICY ENVIRONMENT is needed to help the mining sector achieve its potentials, experts said in annual industry summit on Wednesday.

"We need to awaken the full potential of the mining industry and it means shifting the government regulatory approach from a restrictive developmental policy regime..." Victor Andres C. Manhit, president of Stratbase Albert del Rosario Institute, said during the second day of the Mining Philippines 2019 International Conference and Exhibition in Pasay City.

"Balanced environmental governance is the key to realizing and unlocking the transformative potential of resource management and sustainable mining activities."

In the same event, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary for Climate Change and Mining Concerns Analiza R. Teh said: "we hope to... formulate new policies that would really be responsive to the needs of the mining industry to support their investments and at the same time ensure that environmental safeguards are properly taken cared of."

Despite the Philippines being known as having significant mineral reserves, miners have been operating in a negative policy environment since the government in 2012 imposed a moratorium on new mining permits until a new law is enacted that gives the government a bigger share in industry revenues.

Such a measure has been refiled in the 18th Congress and is now being discussed at the committee level in both the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Among others, the measure proposes to reduce the royalty on large-scale mining within mineral reserves to three percent of gross output from five percent currently and introduce a 1-5% margin-based royalty on those outside mineral reserves.

At present, only miners operating within mineral reserves are levied a royalty.

This will be imposed on top of other taxes like corporate income tax, excise tax which Republic Act No. 10963 doubled to four percent, the royalty to indigenous communities and local business tax, among others.

This was the same version the House approved on third

Mining, S1/4

THE PHILIPPINES is known as the world's second biggest supplier, next to Indonesia, of nickel, which is used to make stainless steel and is a component of batteries. The Philippines is estimated to currently account for a fifth of global mined nickel supply.



BW FILE PHOTO

Mining,
from S1/1

reading in the 17th Congress; but failed to hurdle the Senate before the June 3 adjournment.

Pocholo C. Domondon, assurance partner of Isla Lipana & Co., said much depends "on predictability as well as consistency with respect to policy, given the fact that this is a capital intensive industry."

Under the proposed new tax regime, small-scale miners will also be levied a royalty equivalent to one-tenth of one percent of gross output, whether the contractor operates within or outside mineral reservations.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) is mandated by RA 7076 to purchase all gold produced by small-scale miners "at prices competitive with those prevailing in the world market regardless of

volume or weight."

"As of now, 10% of GIR (gross international reserves) is gold," BSP Senior Assistant Governor and General Counsel Elmore O. Capule said during the conference.

Despite the currently negative policy environment, latest available data from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau showed that nickel ore production actually grew three percent to 11.306 million dry metric tons (DMT) in the first half of 2019.

Production of gold was up six percent to 11,078 kilograms (kg), while silver was up seven percent to 15,849 kg.

Copper production was also up during the period by 14% to 156,745 DMT. — **Vincent Mariel P. Galang**



Five projects seen boosting growth of Philippine mining sector

FIVE mining projects are expected to boost growth of the country's mining sector.

Environment Undersecretary for Climate Change and Mining Concerns Analiza Teh said the potential of the mining sector to be in the forefront of economic development "has yet to be completely realized."

"Our goal now is how to maximize this potential to boost growth without compromising the protection of the environment and ensuring the sustainability of mining practices," Teh said in her keynote speech Tuesday at the opening of the three-day Mining Conference held at Sofitel Philippine Plaza in Pasay City.

Teh identified five mining proj-

ects that are expected to increase the contribution of the mining sector to the economy. These are the Tampakan Copper-Gold project in South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat and Davao del Sur with a total capital investment of \$8.20 billion; Kingking Copper-Gold mining project in Compostela Valley—\$2.29 billion; Silangan Copper-Gold in Surigao del Norte—\$40.43 billion; the Pujada Nickel project in Davao Oriental—\$540.36 billion; and the Balabag Gold-Silver project in Zamboanga del Sur—\$1.04 billion.

"These mining projects are expected to bring billions of dollars worth of revenues during its operations," she said.

However, Teh underscored the

need for the mining industry to "address the problems on environmental degradation, unsustainable mining practices and human rights violation" to ensure the success of these projects.

"The government and the industry need to work on improving public perception and enhance public confidence in the industry's capacity to implement genuine responsible mining," she noted.

Fitch Solutions Macro Research earlier said Philippine mining, particularly the nickel sector, can get a relief from Indonesia's nickel ore export ban starting January 1, 2020, two years earlier than originally scheduled 2022.

This has created an opportunity for

Philippine nickel miners "to alleviate the impending supply shortfall in Indonesia—the largest nickel producer globally," according to the report by Fitch Solutions Macro Research.

"We believe nickel smelters in China, which currently import the majority of their ore from Indonesia, will likely look to the Philippines as an alternative source of supply, due to its proximity and substantial nickel mining capacity," it added.

Last year, the Philippines was the second-biggest nickel ore supplier to China, next to Indonesia.

In the first half of 2019, however, the Philippines became China's top source of the material used in stainless steel and batteries, and will likely maintain that status next year. *PNA*



The curious case of the mining audit



Val A. Villanueva

BUSINESSWISE

THE long-delayed publication of the mining audit by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), which should provide transparency on which mining firms have been cleared to operate, remains contentious, as the agency's Undersecretary Analiza Rebueta-Teh continues to keep mum when pressed by reporters why the audit remains a secret. Teh heads the agency's Climate Change Service and Mining Concerns

Reporters who buttonholed Teh on Tuesday at the sidelines of the Mining Philippines 2019 International Conference and Exhibition in Sofitel Philippine Plaza, Pasay City, couldn't get her commitment as to when the audit would be made public.

BusinessWise, however, was able to get a copy of the complete audit (a 5-inch thick document) from DENR insiders and published the list of miners that passed the grade in a previous column, "Mining industry in limbo." The succeeding column, "Miners cry injustice," cited that Department of Finance (DOF) Undersecretary Bayani Agabin confirmed the authenticity of the list in a phone interview.

In the list obtained by this paper, 24 mining firms out of the 27 that were ordered shut down in 2017 have been given the green light; the other three failed the audit.

During Tuesday's mining forum, Teh revealed that the "suspension" of mining operations of two companies may soon be lifted, namely: Zambales Diversified Metals Corp. (ZDMC) and Strong Built Mining Development Corp. (SBMDC). She said that the others will still have to be evaluated whether they have complied with the corrective measures.

Note here that Teh was talking about suspension, while the audit concerns the shutting down of mining operations. To recall, then DENR Secretary Ramon Paje ordered the suspension of several mining companies due to environmental concerns. When the late Gina Lopez took over the helm of the DENR, she expanded the list and included those which she claimed to be sitting on watersheds. Lopez shut down—and not merely suspended—the operations of these mining companies, a move that was even harsher. The third-party audit focused on the mining firms that have been shut down, and not just suspended.

Technically, Paje's suspension order should have already been superseded by whatever outcome the audit would lead to. Those mining firms ordered "suspended" during Paje's time which passed the audit should have already been cleared to operate. In echoing this opinion, a source at the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) said that the audit is all encompassing, and the results should have already addressed all pertinent environmental issues.

To those who may not have read my previous column, here's the list of miners and their respective scores. They were assessed based on the criteria and the benchmarks on social, technical, legal and environmental aspects of their operations. Agabin said: "The system was such that three is the highest score; two is minor reforms needed, [and] one is for major reforms. Zero is not acceptable...the passing score is 1.5."

The 24 miners that passed the audit were: Oceana Gold Philippines—2.92; Hinatuan Mining Corp.—2.74; CTP Construction and Mining Corp.—2.46; Emir Minerals Corp.—2.44; Lepanto Consolidated Mining Corp.—2.30; Marcventures Mining and Development Corp.—2.30; AAMPFIL Nat. Res. Exploration 2B—2.28; Adnama Mining Resources Inc.—2.24; Citinickel Mines and Development—2.24; Berong Nickel Corp.—2.20; Strongbuilt Mining Development Corp.—2.16; Wellex Mining Corp. Mine 2—2.16; Carrascal Nickel Corp.—2.14; Eramen Minerals—1.90; Wellex Mining Corp. Mine 1—1.90; Libjo Mining Corp.—1.84; LNL Archipelago Minerals Inc.—1.78; Benguet Corp.—1.74; Krominco Inc.—1.68; Mt. Sinai Mining Exploration and Development—1.68; Zambales Diversified



Metals Corp.—1.68; Benguet Corp. Nickel Mines Inc.—1.64; Oriental Vision Mining Philippine Corp.—1.64, and Sinosteel Philippine, NY, Mining Corp.—1.62.

The three miners that failed the audit were: Oriental Synergy Mining Corp.—1.10; Ore Asia Mining and Dev. Corp.—0.96, and Claver Mineral Development Corp.—0.78.

While their operations remained closed, the government allowed some of these companies to continue exporting their stockpiles, to which the late Gina Lopez grudgingly acceded to. Keeping the excavated minerals at the respective depot is an environmental concern. Now that their stockpiles are running low, the miners cleared by the audit are at a loss as to what happens next.

“It’s been almost two years since we’ve been cleared,” an industry source lamented, “but we remain inactive, all the while paying our creditors, employees and contractors. The hemorrhage is so severe that we don’t know any more what to do to stop the bleeding. The government should at least tell us what our next step is, whether we stay or not. We could not remain in limbo forever.”

Asked by reporters why the DENR has not made the audit public, Teh said that it was the DENR which proposed it “because several companies have requested for a copy of the full report and...pursuant to an executive order on the right to information and state policy on full disclosure, there’s a provision there that, because we have submitted the report to the Office of the President [OP], and it is recommendatory in nature, we cannot disclose the full report.”

Teh was silent when asked why the audit was directly submitted to the OP and not to the affected mining firms, which are demanding full transparency. My industry source asked: “Without the audit results, how do we address the findings or vindicate ourselves of the closure charges of DENR Secretary Gina Lopez [and prove] that [we] were wrongfully and arbitrarily closed? Has government deprived the industry of due process for the second time? Is government afraid to be sued for damages resulting from the audit which will acquit the miners of wrongdoing?”

BusinessWise tried but failed to get Teh’s side as her two listed phone numbers remained unanswered between 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. on Tuesday. I would have wanted to ask her the following questions, and her responses would have helped enlighten the industry about this issue once and for all:

1. Which among the mining firms subjected to the audit have been granted the green light to resume normal operations, including mining, hauling and exporting?

2. Why have some companies which passed the audit been prevented from resuming normal operations?

3. Which companies have been allowed to return to normal operations, and which ones have not been cleared?

4. For those companies that have passed the audit or been granted Stay Orders from the OP, will the DENR-MGB now release the issuance of Ore Transport Permits and Mineral Ore Export Permits, or will these permits continue to be withheld? Why or why not?

It is deplorable how the huge potential of the country’s mining industry remains untapped, and mired in a cobweb of neglect.

For comments and suggestions, e-mail me at mvala.v@gmail.com



REGIONS

Capiz reinstates ban on mining

ILOILO CITY—The provincial board of Capiz has reinstated a province-wide moratorium on mining to heed the clamor of environmental groups. An ordinance approved during the board's Sept. 3 session imposes an indefinite moratorium on large-scale mining activities in 16 towns and the capital, Roxas City. The ban, first imposed in 1999 and extended to 50 years in 2002, was lifted after the 2016 elections. —STORY BY NESTOR P. BURGOS JR. **A12**

Capiz reinstates ban on large-scale mining

Groups laud prov'l execs for standing up for environment, people's interest

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
@nestorburgosINQ

ILOILO CITY—The provincial board of Capiz has listened to the clamor to reinstate a ban on large-scale mining operations in the province.

Provincial Ordinance No. 003, series of 2019, which imposes an indefinite moratorium on large-scale mining activities in the province was approved unanimously by 11 board members present during the board's session on Sept. 3. The ban covers the 16 towns and the capital Roxas City, spanning a total land area of 2,596 square kilometers.

The Capiz Environmental Protection Alliance (Cepa), which led the continuous campaign to reinstate the moratorium, lauded the board for finally listening to the sentiments of the public.

"We welcome the ordinance and laud the provincial board members for standing up for the environment and the people's interest," said Darlene Surriga, Cepa advocacy officer.

"Our experience has shown that large-scale mining operations have not uplifted the lives of farmers and other residents of communities affected by mining. On the contrary, many have suffered from environmental destruction and health hazards," she told the Inquirer.

Landmark legislation

On Aug. 27, 1999, the provincial board passed an ordinance declaring a 15-year



TRIBE'S VOICE Members of indigenous peoples communities in Capiz join a protest action in 2016 to call on the provincial board to reinstate a mining moratorium in the province. —PHOTO COURTESY OF CEPA

moratorium on all large-scale mining activities and the acceptance and processing of all application for mineral agreements in Capiz.

The moratorium was extended to 50 years, to last until

2049, in another provincial ordinance passed on Feb. 15, 2002.

These ordinances were considered landmark pieces of legislation, the first of its kind passed by a local govern-

ment in the country and were hailed by environmental groups and advocates who had campaigned for the moratorium for more than two decades.

But just two days after the national and local elections in May 2016, the ordinances were repealed by the then outgoing provincial board.

The board said that it lifted the moratorium due to the economic and social benefits that Capiz would derive from mining activities.

But the city council of Roxas and municipal councils of at least seven towns issued separate resolutions against the lifting of the moratorium.

Public hearing

Environmental advocates led by Cepa pushed on with their campaign to convince the board to reinstate the moratorium. Their plea was finally heeded on Sept. 3.

"We should listen to the sentiments of the people who are saying no to large-scale mining," board member Mateo Hachuela, author of the ordinance, told the Inquirer.

Hachuela, a first-term board member and chair of the board's committee on environment, said that his committee conducted a public hearing on the ordinance on Aug. 23 and the overwhelming sentiment was to reinstate the ban.

"The people, especially those in communities that are affected by large-scale mining, are against the operations," he said. INQ



12 SEP 2019

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

5 projects seen to boost mining growth

ENVIRONMENT and Natural Resources Undersecretary for Climate Change and Mining Concerns Analiza Teh said the potential of the mining sector to be in the forefront of economic development "has yet to be completely realized".

"Our goal now is how to maximize this potential to boost growth without compromising the protection of the environment and ensuring the sustainability of mining practices," Teh said in her keynote speech at the opening of the three-day Mining Conference held at Sofitel Philippine Plaza in Pasay City.

She identified five mining projects that are expected to increase the contribution of the mining sector to the economy.

These are the Tampakan Copper-Gold project in South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat and Davao del Sur with a total capital investment of \$8.20 billion; Kingking Copper-Gold mining project in Compostela Valley -- \$2.29 billion; Silangan Copper-Gold in Surigao del Norte -- \$40.43 billion; the Pujada Nickel project in Davao Oriental -- P540.36 billion; and the Balabag Gold-Silver project in Zamboanga del Sur -- P1.04 billion.

"These mining projects are expected to bring billions of US dollars worth of revenues during its operations," she said.

However, Teh stressed the need for the mining indus-

try to "address the problems on environmental degradation, unsustainable mining practices, and human rights violation" to ensure the success of these projects.

"The government and the industry need to work on improving public perception and enhance public confidence in the industry's capacity to implement genuine responsible mining," she noted.

Fitch Solutions Macro Research earlier said mining, particularly the nickel sector, can get a relief from Indonesia's nickel ore export ban starting January 1, 2020, two years earlier than originally scheduled 2022.

This has created an opportunity for local nickel miners "to alleviate the impending supply shortfall in Indonesia -- the largest nickel producer globally," according to the report by Fitch Solutions Macro Research.

"We believe nickel smelters in China, which currently import the majority of their ore from Indonesia, will likely look to the Philippines as an alternative source of supply, due to its proximity and substantial nickel mining capacity," it added.

Last year, the Philippines was the second-biggest nickel ore supplier to China, next to Indonesia.

In the first half of 2019, however, the country became China's top source of the material used in stainless steel and batteries, and would likely maintain that status next year.



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

B6
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

12 SEP 2019
DATE

TITLE: _____

PAGE 1/ _____



Children play on the branches of mangrove trees at the Baseco compound in Manila last Sunday. Amid the ongoing Manila Bay rehabilitation, a group of urban poor dwellers in Baseco successfully grew almost 1,000 mangrove seedlings.

EDD GUMBAN



12 SEP 2019

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

EDITORIAL

Manila Bay clean-up

EVEN with thousands of volunteers from the public and private sectors, the government still has a long way to go in the gigantic task of cleaning and rehabilitating historic and sun-kissed Manila Bay.

Since the start of the massive clean-up drive, organized by the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), more than 3,810 tons of garbage and water hyacinth have been removed from the bay.

The Manila Bay rehabilitation program is under the auspices of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), which is headed by Secretary Roy Cimatu, a retired military general.

Supporting the multi-pronged program is MMDA, chaired by retired Gen. Danilo Lim, other state offices and agencies, local government units, private groups, environmentalists and several non-government organizations.

Lim, who used to command the battle-ready Army Scout Rangers, said they expect to collect more garbage during the clean-up drive, which is done every Saturday at the Baywalk and Baseco areas.

Majority of those being collected from the bay are bamboo poles and driftwood which are carried by currents from nearby fish pens, water hyacinths, plastics, household wastes and other sorts of garbage.

Aside from hauling garbage, MMDA workers are focusing on cleaning major waterways, like the Estero San Antonio de Abad, Tripa de Galina, Padre Faura Drainage Main and Remedios Drainage Main.

Without doubt, millions of pesos will have to be spent to rid Manila Bay of garbage, including toxic and hazardous wastes, dumped into esteros, creeks, rivers, drainage canals and other waterways.

We spend millions of pesos of Filipino taxpayers money just to remove the wastes indiscriminately dumped into waterways by commercial and other establishments owned by the rich.

So, why not let the owners of these polluting establishments foot the bill? In fact, in the view of many, these polluters have the moral responsibility to help the government in cleaning Manila Bay.



EDITORIAL

AKSYON AGAD ANG DENR

MABILIS na inaksyunan ng Department Environment and Natural Resources ang sumbong ng mga mamamayan sa Norzagaray at San Jose Del Monte City, Bulacan ukol sa Wacuman sanitary landfill na nag-o-operate nang may mga paglabag sa Republic Act 2002 o Philippine Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

Ayon kay DENR Usec. Benny Antiporda, nagsampa ng reklamo sa DENR laban sa Wacuman ang Alliance for Consumer and Protection of Environment (ACAPE) at si Chairman Gloria Dequito ng Brgy. Paradise III sa SJDM nitong nakaraang Setyembre 6, 2019.

Ayon kay Dequito, ipinatayo ang land fill nang walang konsultasyon sa mga apektadong komunidad habang sinabi ng ACAPE na hindi sumunod ang Acuman sa tamang distansya na nasa 50 hanggang 300 metro mula sa imbakan at daluyan ng mga tubig gaya ng mga ilog na itinatadhana ng batas.

Wala rin umanong permiso mula sa mga nasa-bing pamahalaang lokal para sa operasyon ng Wacuman gaya ng isinasaad din ng batas na pangkalikasan.

Ayon sa mga inspector ng DENR na tumingin sa lugar, nakita nilang may mga paglabag ang Wacuman at agad na nag-isyu ang DENR ng notice of violation.

Kasunod na dapat umano ito ang pagsasampa ng kaso ng mga apektado sa hukuman.

Kung may pulitika man umano na nahahalo sa usapin, hindi dapat madamay ang DENR na gumagampan lang ng tungkulin para tugunan ang mga reklamo ng mga mamamayan.

Napakabilis ang aksyon ng ahensya dahil naga-wa nitong magsagawa ng inspeksyon at pagbibigay ng notice of violation sa loob lamang ng isang linggo.

Patunay ito ng agarang pakikinig ng pamahalaan sa mga hinaing ng bayan.



Pg. 1

Kaliwa Dam uproar; Dubious steel imports

THE controversy over the bidding of the Kaliwa Dam project refuses to ebb.

The Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, hounded by accusations from the Commission on Audit that it committed irregularities

in the bidding and vetting procedures for the New Centennial Water Source-Kaliwa Dam project, is fending off more allegations.

The Senate committees on cultural communities, public works and finance has found out in a recent hearing that the dam project failed to obtain the consent of the indigenous peoples, a requirement under the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997. Senator **Imee Marcos** concurred the IPs opposed (the project) and that no consent was obtained from them.

Civil society and non-government organizations have supported the call of the Agta-Dumagat-Remontado tribes in Quezon and Rizal provinces demanding the cancellation of the Kaliwa Dam project.

Earlier, the COA recommended an "immediate" investigation into findings that three shortlisted contractors for the China-funded Kaliwa Dam might have been qualified to participate in the bidding process "despite shortcuts made as per the pre-qualification requirements of the MWSS."

The project involves the building of a dam at the Kaliwa River (Laiban Dam), and a downstream dam (Kaliwa Dam) in Tanay, Rizal to solve Metro Manila's worsening water supply situation.

COA's investigation came on the heels of President **Rodrigo Duterte's** complaint during his 4th State of the Nation Address, when he expressed frustration over corruption within the government and his promise to use the remaining three years of his term to curb it.

COA said the three Chinese companies that the MWSS' Technical Working Group (TWG) qualified to participate in the bidding did not meet the requirements under three categories: design engineering experience, construction experience and single largest completed contract.

A public hearing held at General Nakar, Quezon, meanwhile, revealed that MWSS representatives reportedly changed the specifications of the project, lowering the planned dam's height from 73 meters to 60 meters, in an attempt to placate sectors opposed to the Kaliwa Dam.

But a change in the dam height will involve a revision in the price of the Chinese contract. A different dam height should also be re-tendered among the previously qualified tenderers, or the newly invited tenderers, following the country's procurement regulations.



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12 SEP 2019
DATE

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

pg 2 KALIWA DAM UPROAR;
DUBIOUS STEEL IMPORTS

Technical smuggling

A separate controversy is plaguing the steel sector.

The Presidential Anti-Corruption Commission is investigating allegations of corruption between several big steel manufacturers and officials of the Bureau of Customs, who may have deprived the government of billions of pesos in tax revenues, including penalties for improper import declarations.

PACC chairman **Dante Jimenez** told a morning radio program his office had brought to the attention of Trade Secretary **Ramon Lopez** reports that large scale "technical smuggling" had been taking place over the past 10 years due to the alleged collusion between BOC officials and large steelmakers.

"Aside from the smuggling allegations, there are also questions regarding the quality of steel, how this affects safety and the lives of people... these are all the subjects of an ongoing investigation by the PACC," says Jimenez.

Jimenez concedes that the case, which involves steelmakers clearing their products at the customs point of entry despite discrepancies in the documents "may be bigger than the cigarettes smuggling and tax evasion issue two years ago."

Senator **Panfilo Lacson** earlier raised the alarm on the billions of pesos the Philippines could be losing annually to tax leakages from imports. Steel contributes a significant portion of Philippine industrial imports.

Citing World Bank data, Lacson said the Philippines may have lost P32.18 billion worth of value added taxes in 2017 alone due to 'under-declaration.'

Industry sources said the PACC obtained documents detailing how the country's largest steelmaker imported two million tons of steel billets last year, and may be responsible for over half a trillion pesos worth of lost revenues for the government due to systematic mis-declaration of import figures.

The PACC suspects that big steel importers, in collusion with BOC officials, have been manipulating the HS codes (the universal code for export and import goods). Specifically, the steelmakers have been describing the imports of cast and prime steel billets used for steel manufacturing as Grade 60 when in fact, the orders under the same code are a mix of Grade 40 (5sp) and Grade 33 (3sp). This allowed them to allegedly misdeclare the imported billets at a lower value.

GAS DEAL OK WITH CHINA IF PH DROPS CLAIM- -DU30

STORY BY JULIE M. AURELIO AND DONA Z. PAZZIBUGAN

But Foreign Secretary Locsin says China has never made setting aside the arbitral award a condition for a joint venture. On the contrary, he says, Beijing and Manila have agreed to disagree on their South China Sea claims.

By Julie M. Aurelio
and Dona Z. Pazzibugan
@Team_Inquirer

President Duterte said on Tuesday that Chinese President Xi Jinping had offered the Philippines a controlling stake in a proposed joint energy venture in the West Philippine Sea if it would set aside an international arbitral ruling award that went against China.

Mr. Duterte said Xi told him during their meeting in Beijing in August that if he ignored the 2016 ruling of the UN-backed Permanent Court of Arbitration, China would agree to be the junior partner in the proposed joint venture to develop gas deposits in Recto Bank, located in the West Philippine Sea, waters within the Philippines' 370-kilometer exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the heavily disputed South China Sea.

60-40 sharing

"Set aside the arbitral ruling," Mr. Duterte told reporters in Malacañang, quoting Xi. "Set aside your claim. Then allow everybody connected with the Chinese companies. They want to explore. If there is something, they said, we will be gracious enough to give you 60 percent, only 40 percent will be theirs. That is the promise of Xi Jinping."



President Duterte and Xi Jinping —MALACAÑANG PHOTO

But Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. refuted Mr. Duterte's statements on Wednesday, saying China did not attach such a condition to the proposed joint exploration deal.

"I read everything he told President Xi. China has never made setting aside the arbitral award a prerequisite to anything," Locsin replied to a reporter's question via Twitter.

"On the contrary, China agrees with the Philippines to disagree on their respective claims," Locsin said.

He said the memorandum of understanding that he signed

with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi "applies only in disputed areas, not in areas everyone, including China, admits belongs to the Philippines."

Locsin cited Justice Menardo Guevarra's legal opinion that the memorandum did not compromise the Philippines' sovereignty in the West Philippine Sea.

Guevarra's legal opinion

"Can't help it if traitors try to put a treasonous spin to it. But it's [OK], one day they'll be assassinated with impunity; indeed to loud acclaim," Locsin said.

After Xi's visit to the Philip-

ppines in November last year, Guevarra vouched for the legal soundness of a joint exploration deal, saying there was no need for the Senate to ratify it because it was not a treaty.

"There are no sovereignty issues whatsoever as the [memorandum of understanding] merely expresses a mutual desire to agree on specific cooperation arrangements within 12 months," Guevarra said in December.

He said the agreement expressly stated that it "shall be without prejudice to the respective legal positions of the two governments and does not give rise to any rights or obligations



12 ... 2019

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

P-2

Gas Deal OK with china if PH drops claim - DU30

under international or domestic law.”

“It’s just [a memorandum of understanding], it’s noncommittal, nonobligatory and non-binding from a legal standpoint. It’s a mere expression of mutual desires,” Guevarra said.

China’s embassy in Manila had no comment on Wednesday on Mr. Duterte’s remarks.

Arbitral ruling

The tribunal in The Hague clarified maritime boundaries and the Philippines’ sovereign entitlements, and in doing so, invalidated China’s claims to nearly the entire South China Sea.

China, which did not take part in the arbitration, does not recognize the ruling.

Mr. Duterte has sought to befriend Xi, hoping to secure billions of dollars of investment, avoiding challenging China over its activities in the South China Sea, including its militarization of seven artificial islands.

Any agreement to forget the arbitral award and team up with China would be a major setback to other claimants, especially Vietnam and Malaysia, which like the Philippines have experienced repeated challenges from China’s coast guard inside their EEZs.

The United States has called that bullying and coercion aimed at denying rivals’ access to their energy assets.

Mr. Duterte did not say if he

had agreed to Xi’s offer, but said part of the arbitral award that referred to the EEZ “we will ignore to come up with an economic activity.”

PH exploration rights

The Hague tribunal said the Philippines had legal rights to exploit gas deposits that China also claims at Recto Bank, located about 140 km off the Philippine coast and internationally known as Reed Bank.

The Philippines’ only accessible gas resources at Malam-paya fields, off Palawan province, are set to run out by 2024.

A joint project with China has been talked about for decades, but has gone nowhere because of their competing claims.

Joint activity could be deemed as legitimizing the other side’s claim, or even relinquishing sovereign rights.

Locsin said in a television interview on Wednesday that a preliminary agreement between China and the Philippines would avoid stating which country was entitled to the gas.

“It’s very clear—no legal position is compromised if we enter into this agreement,” Locsin said, adding that putting aside the arbitration case was immaterial because the Hague court had already made its decision.

“It’s final and binding,” Locsin added. —WITH A REPORT FROM REUTERS INQ



PROTECTED AREA



WATER SOURCE The mineral-rich Mt. Magdiwata in San Francisco, Agusan del Sur, is an important source of water for the town. —CHRIS V. PANGANIBAN

INCLUSION OF AGUSAN WATERSHED IN TRIBE'S DOMAIN OPPOSED

By **Chris V. Panganiban**
@InqNational

SAN FRANCISCO, AGUSAN DEL SUR—Opposition has mounted over the inclusion of the protected Mt. Magdiwata watershed here in the 7,800-hectare ancestral domain being claimed by the Manobo tribe.

The tribe, through Oyay Mansaloay Antod Ogow Bando Ugong (Omaubao) Tribal Clan Organization, has applied for a certificate of ancestral domain title (CADT) over the area which, when granted, empowers it to have primary say over resource use.

Elmer Luzon, general manager of San Francisco Water District, said that they feared the destruction of the 1,658-hectare watershed if its use was left to the discretion of the tribe. He said the tribe's leaders reportedly consented to the entry of mining operations in the area without regard to other users.

Luzon said that the local water district and other groups opposing the move wanted the CADT application of Omaubao deferred until a new ancestral domain was delineated, with the watershed area removed from its scope.

The town council and the lo-

cal Catholic church are also opposing moves giving the tribe sole discretion over Mt. Magdiwata.

Mineral exploration and production plots circled the Mt. Magdiwata watershed area, based on a mining tenements control map of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau in the Caraga region.

Forest reserve

The watershed is the main source of potable water for 18 of 27 villages in this town of about 75,000 people. It was declared a forest reserve on Oct. 25, 1993, through Presidential Proclamation No. 282.

As its source of business, the water district worked in the last three decades to rehabilitate the watershed, which was a logged-over area.

From what used to be only 41 percent forest cover (695 hectares), its greening initiatives brought it to 95-percent coverage today.

But Bardo "Datu Hag-um" Bando, one of Omaubao leaders and a town councilor sitting as indigenous peoples mandatory representative, assured residents that they would not damage Mt. Magdiwata. INQ



Regional network formed to explore bamboo

possibilities

A regional network that will explore the vast potential of bamboo for environmental sustainability and economic resiliency in the midst of climate change will soon be established, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has announced.

The creation of the ASEAN Bamboo Network was the most prominent feature of the resolution adopted by participants in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Bamboo Congress held in Iloilo City recently. Participants included environment

officials, scientists and researchers in Southeast Asia as well as representatives from the World Bamboo Organization, Brazil, Qatar and Peru.

DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu described the resolution as a "decisive output" of the conference as it enabled formal commitment of the signatories toward "a sustainable and climate resilient future for the entire region."

"With this resolution, we are assuring that we will put our utmost endeavors in the continuous research and development in bamboo produc-

tion technologies, as well as stronger linkages within the ASEAN region," Cimatu said.

Bamboo is widely recognized as a "versatile renewable resource" that protects the environment, improves the microclimate, controls soil erosion, protects riverbanks, reduces flash floods, serves as windbreak and sequesters atmospheric carbon efficiently.

It also has good properties comparable to most wood species and offers a variety of uses either in its unmanufactured form or as processed

into engineered products, and as such, reduces the demand burden for wood-based products from the forests thereby arresting deforestation.

The attendees to the regional conference were convinced that engaging in bamboo production and the manufacture of bamboo products provide job opportunities and steady income for farmer groups, local communities, artisans and workers along the value chain.

The bamboo congress is slated to be held every three years.

- Rhodina Villanueva



'SELLING' SUSTAINABILITY

A customized boat tour through mangrove areas heightens eco awareness among tourists

'This beautiful island that has wowed many travelers has even gained international fame after *National Geographic* included it in a list of the best beaches in the world. But beyond the pink sand beach, the island could serve as a model for sustainable tourism.'

Zamboanga Island showcases ideal eco-tourism practice

Text & photos by **KARA SANTOS**

The Great Santa Cruz Island in Zamboanga City is known for having a rare, pink sand beach. The sand gets its unique color from bright red organ-pipe coral (*tubiporamusica*) dissolved by the waves.

This beautiful island that has wowed many travelers has even gained international fame after *National Geographic* included it in a list of the best beaches in the world. But beyond the pink sand beach, the island could serve as a model for sustainable tourism.

We've all seen how overdevelopment can ruin an island. Just look at Boracay. Islands that are remote and pristine soon lose their charm once the tourist crowds come in. While such a trend could have easily destroyed the beauty of Santa Cruz Island, thankfully this island remains well-preserved thanks to local tourism efforts.

Here are some of my observations on best practices.

A tourist limit is imposed

Zamboanga's Sta. Cruz Island has a limit of just 300 tourists per day. Entry to the island is regulated right at the port in the city, so local officials can control the number of visitors. If they get more visitors than expected, tourists are asked to book tours for another day.

While many destinations welcome more tourists because it equates to more income in terms of tourist fees, in the long run, it's not sustainable.

In order to protect the local animal and plant life on small islands, it's really necessary to impose regulations and limit the number of tourists that can visit per day. If the number of visitors are not limited, you put a strain on limited local resources and ruin the overall experience for everybody.

Overnight stays are not allowed

As much as I love camping on the beach, I understand why small islands wouldn't want tourists to camp out overnight.

Many irresponsible tourists make camping an excuse to get wasted, disrupt the local peaceful vibe with their karaoke or loud music and light bonfires on the sand, which can affect the sand quality. They also end up leav-

ing behind loads of trash, from empty mineral water bottles, to shampoo and soap packets, to disposable food packaging, and single-use plastic utensils.

Presently, the Great Santa Cruz Island is a protected area, and overnight stays are not allowed. The island has a few native huts constructed with light, low-impact materials, which are ideal for day trips.

Having tourists stay overnight requires more facilities and permanent structures, including shelter and bathrooms with indoor plumbing, and more food. Often, the construction of resorts and hotels involves bulldozing pristine landscapes and diverting essential resources like water away from the local community.

Because the island is relatively near Zamboanga City by boat, it's more convenient for tourists to stay in the city, with easy access to water and food in hotels and restaurants, and visit on day trips.

Adherence to the 'leave no trace' principle

During the orientation before visiting the island, tourists are immediately oriented about the "do's and don'ts." There's a strict "trash in, trash out" policy. All types of packaging, including biodegradable materials (like banana peels and peanuts shells) need to be brought back to the mainland, to avoid trash buildup on the beach.

Tourists are not allowed to take home sand, corals, and shells from the

beach. It may take a while to change this mindset among tourists that shells and sand are not free souvenirs they anyone can just pick up and take home. Locals should also be discouraged from making and trying to sell souvenir items made of these materials to tourists.

Community partnership

One of the best ways to ensure a destination is sustainable is to engage the local community and offer community-based tourism programs. During the peak summer season and festivals, locals are hired to perform cultural dances for tourists right on the beach.



Pg. 2 | SELLING SUSTAINABILITY

The customized boat tours through mangrove areas and *vinta* rides are also handled by the local fishing community. This way, the local culture of the community is preserved and highlighted.

The local tourism office also partners with the fishing communities to

provide meals for guests, including fresh seafood and local specialties of the Sama Banguigui ethnic community like *oko-oko*, rice cooked inside a whole sea urchin, and *chupakulo* (snails cooked in coconut milk).

The local flavors and cultural experience offers a quality experience compared to just dining on packaged fast food on the island.

Low-impact island activities focused on conservation

Certain water-based activities like riding jet skis or flyboarding sound exciting, but can be damaging to nature by polluting the water, disrupting corals, or marine sanctuaries, and by creating noise pollution.

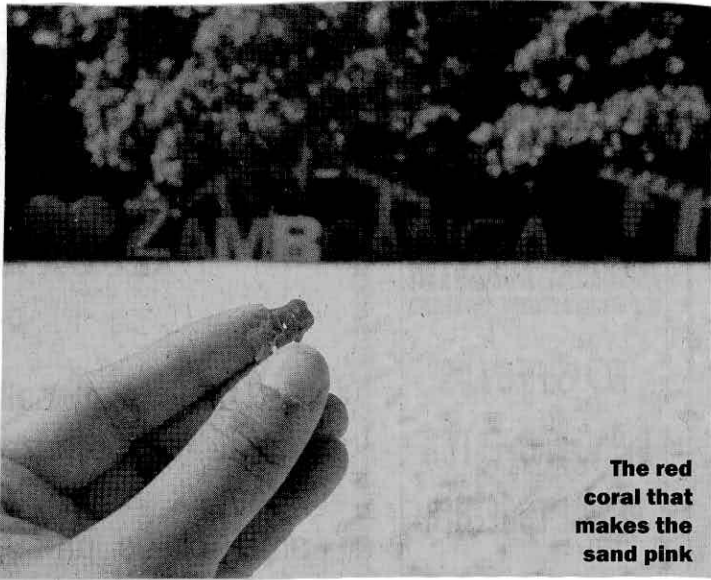
Low-impact activities are more respectful of wildlife, local people and their cultures.

Activities that try to minimize the negative impact on the environment and the places we visit are always more preferable. Visitors can instead swim, snorkel near the shore, or play beach games.

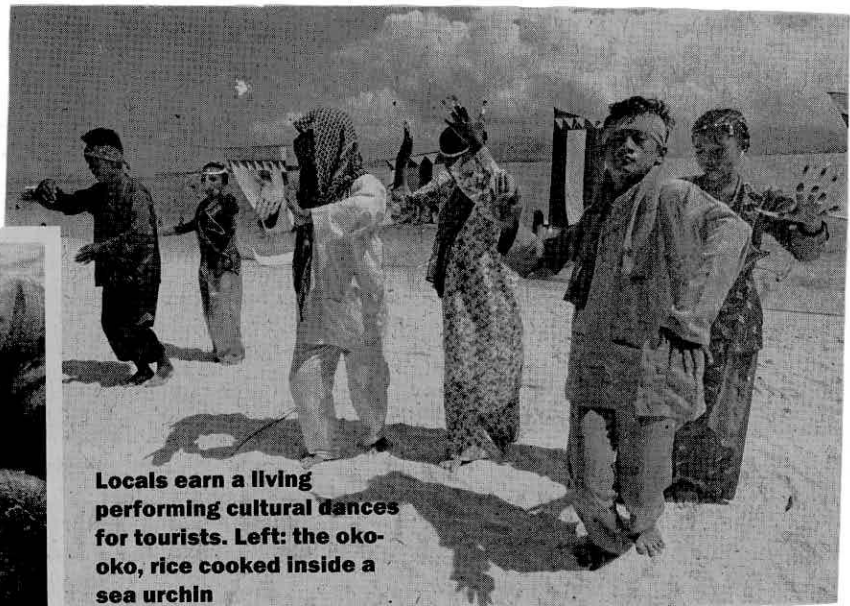
One of the activities offered on Sta. Cruz Island is a peaceful boat tour through the mangrove areas inland. Here, tourists can see firsthand how locals harvest seaweed and see stingless jellyfish up close.

Rides aboard the small native *vinta*, Zamboanga's iconic boats with rainbow-striped sails, also offer a unique cultural experience for guests.

These are just a few of the best practices I've observed while visiting the Great Santa Cruz Island in Zamboanga City. I hope that other islands around the country can also follow suit to keep their environment preserved for future generations to experience and enjoy.



The red coral that makes the sand pink



Locals earn a living performing cultural dances for tourists. Left: the *oko-oko*, rice cooked inside a sea urchin



Town's iconic tree is spared the axe

By **MIKE U. CRISMUNDO**

SAN FRANCISCO, Agusan del Sur – The mayor of this town and officials of the Department of Environment Natural Resources (DENR) on Tuesday gave in to please to the plea of local leaders and non-government organizations to preserve the decaying “Centennial Toog Tree.”

“Yes, my stand is for the safety of the people and we will slowly do what is best,” said Mayor Solomon Ruffila after a dialogue Tuesday with the groups calling for the iconic tree to be spared.

“We have to set aside the plan to immediately cut down the Centennial Toog tree amid suggestions by the DENR For-

est and Wetland Research Development and Extension Center (FWRDEC) of its deteriorating condition,” Ruffila said.

Local government officials wanted the tree felled because its base has weakened to the point that it could collapse.

DENR Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer (CENRO) Jerome I. Albia in Bunawan had been asked by the DENR Caraga Regional Executive Director Felix S. Alicer to coordinate with San Francisco municipal government regarding the findings of the FWRDEC’s “biomechanics and structural analyses” on the Centennial Tree.



ECOnciousness

What about our local forests?

News and social media were abuzz recently with news on the Amazon forest fires. News spread quickly, as fast as the fire itself. Filipino social media users were quick to post hashtags proclaiming grief and concern about the fire on the other side of the planet.

That is commendable – being aware of the immense contribution that the forest in that part of Brazil contributes to humanity.

Now that the fire – and the issue – has subsided, now what? Can we ask this question – “What about Philippine forests?”

Do you know that since the transfer from Spanish to American rule in the 1900’s, the Philippines has lost more than 75 percent of its original forest cover? This is based on data from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Forest Management Bureau.

This has contributed to the increased number of threatened species found only in the Philippines. In a separate study by lead author Dr. JC Gonzalez of the University of the Philippines, Los Baños, there are now 168 threatened endemic species, representing 15 percent of all threatened

species in the country.

Among bird species alone, 50 percent are decreasing in number based from 2012 International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) data retrieved by the Haribon Foundation.

What can you do?

More than ever, it is important to stay informed and to understand that we live on a finite planet that needs to be sustained. Participatory governance is another key: how active are we with our local government or civil society groups?

Non-government organizations

like the Haribon Foundation have been working on environmental conservation for decades.

On the ground, Haribon, Rain Forest Restoration Initiative (RFRI), and the Forests for Life movement have planted more than one million native trees in over 20,000 hectares of forest.

This effort is guided by scientific data and community-based efforts, all of which could not be possible without the 10,000 plus volunteers to date.

Unfortunately, more work has to be done. Not only must we plant more, but we must protect what already exists.

The remaining 24 percent of Philippine forest must be adequately planned. The Sustainable Forest Management Bill is a network-backed solution to forest degradation in the country, and includes provisions for both protected and production forests.

It also includes important provisions for community-involvement and protecting indigenous lands. Both are non-existent in current forestry law.

Act now. Or we are to lose the Philippines’ own Amazon in our lifetime.



Angara files plastic straw bill

By PAOLO ROMERO

To help wean people from the use of plastic straws, Sen. Sonny Angara proposed that establishments charge customers for the use of these straws blamed for polluting waters and killing whales.

Angara has filed Senate Bill 954 or the proposed straw regulation act, which aims to change the habits of consumers, as well as the practices of manufacturers and commercial establishments toward protecting the environment, one small step at a time.

He said such a move would be better than an outright ban on plastic straws.

Establishments, however, have cited the difficulty of thoroughly cleaning metal straws. Concerns over unsanitary metal straws also make people prefer disposable straws.

Under the bill, all commercial establishments that sell beverages, including sari-sari stores and supermarkets would be required to charge a "Plastic Straw Fee" amounting to P2 per straw.

Exempted from this fee are plastic straws or tubes used for medical purposes, those used by senior citizens and persons with disabilities, and individuals who have limited mobility caused by stroke, arthritis and other medical conditions.

"Plastic straws will only be provided upon request by the customers. We should consciously put a stop to the practice of automatically providing straws to customers upon buying their beverages," Angara said.

For pre-packed beverages, the most common of which are juice boxes, the bill states that plastic straws should not be attached to the product and should instead be provided at the point-of-sale for the same P2 per straw fee.

"We also want the manufacturers of these pre-packed beverages to start coming out with new designs for their products so that consumers would be able to drink these without the use of straws," Angara said.

The bill also calls for the establishment of straw disposal and collection facilities in all commercial establishments in order to ensure these would be recycled properly.

Establishments found violating the provisions of the bill would face a fine of up to P10,000 for the first offense, P20,000 for the second offense and P50,000 plus cancellation of their business permits for succeeding offenses.

Proceeds from the straw fee and fines paid would all go to environmental programs focused on the protection and clean-up of Philippine waters, rivers, seas and oceans, including an information and awareness campaign on the effect of plastic drinking straws to aquatic animals and marine ecosystems.

A 2015 report on ocean pollution by the Ocean Conservancy charity and the McKinsey Centre for Business and Environment saw the Philippines ranked number three in the world among sources of discarded plastic the ends up in the ocean.



THE world's population is expected to reach 9.7 billion in 2050, and approximately 70 percent of this will live in cities, according to the United Nations. Along with the fast rising urban population, we are facing other challenges such as climate change, altered landscapes, diminishing natural resources and increasing poverty.

How do we future-proof our communities and cities so they can withstand existing and forthcoming challenges and shifts? To meet these issues, communities and cities must be consciously planned to remain resilient, so they can still thrive in spite of the harsh conditions we will face.

The Urban Land Institute defines resilience as "the ability of cities to continue to function as centers of production, human habitation, and cultural development despite the challenges posed by climate change, population growth, and declining resource supply." A study in 2014 identified the 10 most resilient cities in the world. Toronto was in the No.1 spot, followed by Vancouver, Calgary, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Stockholm, Boston, Zurich, Washington D.C. and Atlanta. These cities have been recognized because of their local governments' commitment to invest in technology, strategies, urban plans and infrastructure



FELINO A. PALAFOX, JR.

geared toward resiliency.

Bioclimatic and resilient architecture and planning

Sea levels are rising, cities have been sinking, typhoons and hurricanes are getting stronger, heat waves are getting more intense, and earthquakes are intensifying. These are the impacts of climate change. But with the help of advanced technology, architects, engineers and other professionals of the built environment are able to design and build structures and communities that can be livable and at the same time are disaster-resilient, sustainable, nature-based, and can reduce environmental impacts and adapt to the local climate. According to the National Institute of Building Sciences, every dollar spent on disaster resiliency saves \$6. Cities around the world have been enhancing their flood management initiatives by increasing their green infrastructure such as rain gardens, permeable pave-

► **PalafoxA7**

less dependence on the power supply.

Smart cities

Our reliance on information and communications technology will increase even further because it will help cities monitor, analyze and coordinate data, so they can prepare for and mitigate natural disasters, efficiently mobilize their public services, and sustainably plan for the future. Sensor systems can be installed in cities' major infrastructure like roads and bridges to monitor its endurance or deterioration. Likewise, bodies of water can be monitored for their water levels, and warnings for risks will be automatically transmitted to disaster management organizations, so they can in turn alert the affected areas. Real-time data enables the city to collect as much information as possible, which will be useful in assessing hazards for their disaster reduction and preparedness strategies. Maximizing technological advancements also results in less time in gathering accurate critical information and faster response and coordination.

ments and stormwater ponds, which can effectively absorb rainwater. On a grander scale, concepts for floating communities have already been envisioned and designed. "The Lilypad," designed by Vincent Callebaut, is a self-sufficient, floating city that shows where people could live if ever rising sea levels and persistent flooding limit our geographical landscape and we become climate refugees. The Lilypad can shelter approximately 50,000 residents, integrates all types of renewable energy, and can provide a biodiverse environment for flora and fauna to thrive.

Japan is known for its resilient architecture and engineering. Technologies such as seismic base isolation, oil dampers and sliding isolation systems help keep the percentage of building collapse very low in Japan. The country is very strict on its mandate that every structure, whether homes or skyscrapers, passes through stringent evaluations for earthquake-proofing. In 2015, a 7.8-magnitude earthquake

hit Nepal, causing approximately 31,000 casualties. In January 2016, we at Palafox were given the privilege to assist in the recovery process by presenting plans for rebuilding school campuses and hospitals for the Tzu Chi Foundation. We were tasked to design buildings that were safe and could last a thousand years, so our first consideration was to make the structures strong enough to withstand a 9.6-magnitude earthquake, which is more than the requirements of the building code. In addition, preserving the Nepalese culture and heritage through the architecture and ensuring inclusivity were also aspects that we incorporated.

The design and construction of buildings also play a significant role in preserving the environment. Through bioclimatic architecture, the site's weather, hydrography, and ecosystem are taken into account, so the structure is designed with respect to its environment. Its key elements are passive systems that comprise passive cooling techniques, passive solar heat protection and natural daylighting systems — promoting energy efficiency and

To ensure food resilience in spite of worsening weather conditions and the decline of our natural resources, researchers and scientists have produced new technology and other agricultural developments to help farmers increase their productivity. Instead of solely relying on rural regions to provide the food supply, cities can be self-sustaining by integrating agricultural farms in the urban setting. The concept of an agropolis — *agros* meaning farm and *polis* meaning city — places the food source in the city or nearby areas. Aside from becoming an additional food source, developing urban food systems provides green spaces that offer relief from pollution, urban heat, and other deteriorating conditions of the urban environment.

Resilience is a vital characteristic cities should have to ensure that they not only exist but continue to prosper in the future. As architects and planners, we have an important role in securing this. Green architecture, and sustainable urban planning and development can help future-proof our cities for generations to come.



The benefits of second-hand buying

YOU know how Barney Stinson always say "New is always better?" Let's challenge that. It can't be stressed enough how underrated second-hand buying really is. It's usually scoffed at by most Filipinos, but buying used items is a lot more rewarding.

Admittedly, we have this stigma on buying used goods. It's time to break that stigma now because you'll be missing out on the benefits. Here are some compelling reasons why you should give second-hand goods a try.

Lower prices, better value

Which is the better deal: a brand new Smart TV worth P50,000 or two equally capable and used flat screen TVs for P20,000 each? Anyway you slice it, getting two for a slightly lower price will always be the better choice. Buying second-hand items allow you to score quality, durable, and even branded items for cheap. It's a life hack that's not being used enough.

A new way of recycling

Recycling doesn't always have to be segregating your waste bins. It requires reusing worn items or converting them into new ones. It also means reselling used items and consequently, buying them completes the cycle. So in a way, you're helping other people recycle while you get to enjoy saving a few bucks. It's a win-win for you and the environment.

Improve your green efforts

Buying second-hand has more eco-friendly benefits than you think. For one, used goods don't require new resources. There's no need to harvest anything; no need to waste energy and fuel for production; no need to generate pollution and release chemical wastes; and there's no need to package anything that will potentially add to the plastic waste we already have.

Denounce cheap labor

It's an open secret that most corpo-



MONEY MAX

RICKY PUBLICO

rations rely on cheap labor from third-world countries to make their products sell for a higher price tag. Don't encourage them by choosing to buy second-hand and repurposing used goods. The best way to influence big businesses to stop this practice is to hit them where it hurts: their sales figures.

Support local businesses

Reserve shopping at the mall for special occasions and go thrift shopping on a regular basis instead. Channel your inner Macklemore and support your local *ukay-ukay* shops or mom-and-pop garage stores nearby. By doing this, you'll end up getting better deals thanks to the *suki* culture. When you're friends with the seller, it's easier to ask for discounts.

Discover hidden gems

One man's trash is another man's treasure. Aside from saving a lot, you'll never know what you'll find on *ukay-ukay* shops and garage sales. It could be some sweet swag from a few years ago, or an ultra-rare video game or comic book, or it could be a limited edition car. The possibilities are endless, and you don't even need to break the bank for it.

Hopefully, these reasons will encourage you to give second-hand goods a try. They are everywhere and you don't even need to search far and wide. You can check out buy-and-sell sites online and have your purchases delivered to you. Do yourself a favor: save money and save the planet—start buying second-hand.

Ricky Publico is a content writer at Moneymax. Save money on car insurance, credit cards, and loans when you compare and apply at www.moneymax.ph. Visit their website to know more.



12 SEP 2019

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

World must adapt to 'inevitable' climate change, report warns

PARIS – Nations rich and poor must invest now to protect against the effects of climate change or pay an even heavier price later, a global commission warned Tuesday.

Spending \$1.8 trillion across five key areas over the next decade would not only help buffer the worst impacts of global warming but could generate more than \$7 trillion in net benefits, the report from the Global Commission on Adaptation argued.

"We are the last generation that can change the course of climate change, and we are the first generation that then has to live with the consequences," former UN chief Ban Ki-moon, who chairs the commission, said at the report's launch in Beijing.

"Delay and pay, or plan and prosper," he said, sharing a catchphrase from the commission, which is co-chaired by Microsoft founder Bill Gates and World Bank CEO Kristalina Georgieva.

Investing now in early warning systems, climate-resistant infrastructure, mangrove protection, better agriculture and improving fresh water resources would pay for itself several times over, the report said.

Mangroves – tropical tidal water forests – protect, for example, against storm surges and act as nurseries for commercial fisheries, but at least a third of them globally have been uprooted for tourism or aquaculture.

"Global actions to slow climate change are promising but insufficient," the report stated. "We must invest in a massive effort to adapt to conditions that are now inevitable."

Without action by 2030, climate change could push more than 100 million people in developing countries below the poverty line, said the report.

At the launch, Chinese environment minister Li Ganjie – whose country is the world's top carbon polluter – called adaptation practices "an inherent requirement of China's sustainable development."

In the 25-year history of UN climate negotiations, adaptation has trailed far down the agenda compared with "mitigation," or the reduction of carbon emissions.

It was long seen as an issue only affecting poor and developing nations.

But recent massive inland flooding and a string of record-breaking hurricanes in the United States, along with ferocious heatwaves in Europe and Japan, have shown that wealth is not an adequate shield.

Dominic Molloy, a co-author of the report from Britain's Department for International Development, said a new focus on adapting should not detract from the need to slash carbon pollution.

"We absolutely need to do both, reduce emissions and adapt," Molloy told AFP. "The purpose of this commission was to raise the visibility of adaptation, not shift away from mitigation." – AFP



A1

GOITIA 'BRUITING ABOUT' HIS SUPPOSED NEXT POST—THE CUSTOMS BUREAU

DU30 SAYS HE FIRED PASIG RIVER AGENCY CHIEF FOR 'ASKING MONEY'

NEWS

Why PRRC chief was fired

President Duterte said he fired the executive director of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) for spreading word about his supposed appointment to the Bureau of Customs and then "asking money" from people dealing with that agency. In a statement, Jose Antonio Goitia did not comment on the corruption allegation but said he still supported the administration's reform and development agenda. —STORY BY JULIE M. AURELIO

A4

By Julie M. Aurelio
@JMAurelioINQ

President Duterte said he fired the executive director of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) for spreading word about his supposed appointment to the Bureau of Customs and then "asking money" from people dealing with that agency.

Mr. Duterte on Tuesday night announced Jose Antonio Goitia's dismissal "for corruption."

Goitia was "bruiting about" that he would be placed in the customs bureau, according to the President.

"And he was already asking

money from those connected with the Customs," Mr. Duterte said. "He's telling people that he will be appointed Customs collector and already was collecting."

Presidential spokesperson Salvador Panelo said the decision to sack the PRRC chief was "pursuant to the President's continuing mandate to eradicate graft and corruption" and was meant to "ensure that public officials and employees conduct themselves in a manner worthy of public trust."

Still a supporter

Goitia did not comment on the corruption allegations in a

statement he issued late on Tuesday after Malacañang announced that he had been fired but thanked the President for entrusting the PRRC post to him.

"I will remain fully supportive of the President's administration reform and development agenda even as I start to embark on my life's new journey," he said.

Mr. Duterte did not say whether the former PRRC chief would be charged.

He said Goitia was just the first PRRC official to be sacked for wrongdoing while the others would be investigated. "My intention is to wipe them all

PHOTO FROM PRRC FACEBOOK PAGE



Jose Antonio Goitia

out, all of them," he said.

The PRRC is the agency tasked with rehabilitating the once biologically dead Pasig River.

The Commission on Audit reported recently that despite the PRRC's using up nearly all of its funds last year, the agency's accomplishments were "notably low," ranging from a dismal 1 percent completion to 27.6 percent.

P107-M budget last year

In June, Goitia denied allegations that the PRRC failed to complete some rehabilitation projects of Metro Manila's waterways even with a P107-million budget for 2018.

He assured the public that the PRRC was strictly monitoring the progress of its rehabilitation project to revive the Pasig River and other waterways.

PRRC spokesperson George de la Rama on Wednesday said Operations Director Anshari Lomodag Jr. took over as interim chief of the agency.

Malacañang did not say when Goitia was fired but a PRRC statement said that as of Monday it had already "abided with the orders of the Office of the President of the Philippines in the changes in leadership of the commission." —WITH A REPORT FROM JHESSET O. ENANO INQ



EDITORIAL

A member of the



The National Association of Philippine Newspapers

Firing announcements

SOMETHING is amiss in President Duterte's announcements involving the sacking of certain officials of the executive department. While the firing of an official, especially under the corruption-ridden Duterte administration, has a huge impact on the individual concerned and perhaps also on the clientele transacting with that official, Malacanang had nothing but general, even generic, explanation for what happened.

Take the case of Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) Executive Director Jose Antonio Goitia. Palace spokesman Salvador Panelo said the sacking of Goitia is part of "the President's continuing mandate to eradicate graft and corruption, and to ensure that public officials and employees conduct themselves in a manner worthy of public trust."

Secretary Panelo made the announcement a week after Duterte ordered the transfer of PRRC chairmanship from the Department of Budget and Management to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

'President Duterte is fond of casually exonerating his favorite officials like Nicanor Faeldon a day or two after serious accusations against them emerged in official investigations, yet little-known officials like Goitia and Philippine Information Agency (PIA) chief Harold Clavite are dismissed without benefit of explanation.'

As part of regular government turnover, the presidential spokesman and chief legal counsel instructed Goitia to give all official documents and properties in his possession to the Office of the Deputy Executive Director for Finance and Administrative Services of the PRRC.

Panelo concluded with another motherhood statement that he hopes will boost the image of this dispensation: "We hope that this shall serve as another example that this Administration does not -- and will never -- tolerate corrupt practices in the bureaucracy and in public service."

After hearing so many words, the people along with mediamen who are the usual audience of Panelo, are left with still unclear facts about what had happened, with many questions still in their mind. One of these questions obviously is this: what infraction of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Law did the executive director of PRRC commit? Was it just a charge or did the Palace conduct a full-scale and intensive investigation and found out that a wrongdoing indeed occurred, with Goitia the most guilty among the perpetrators?

We do not -- and cannot -- question the President's power to reorganize the offices under him, or to fire and hire people. Just that attached to this prerogative is the innate need for transparency and good faith. The public needs to know the reasons for an official's sacking, because other officials are clearly untouchable while still others, found to be incompetent and corrupt on many occasions and in several positions, still manage to get "recycled" or appointed again.

President Duterte is fond of casually exonerating his favorite officials like Nicanor Faeldon a day or two after serious accusations against them emerged in official investigations, yet little-known officials like Goitia and Philippine Information Agency (PIA) chief Harold Clavite are dismissed without benefit of explanation. Clavite's case is worse because while he claimed he did not write a resignation letter, such resignation was accepted by the President. The Executive Secretary just told him so.



3 dead pigs dumped in QC; ASF eyed



DEAD HOGS. Police and Quarantine Division personnel from Quezon City join hands in trying to determine the cause of death of the pigs thrown down at a creek by still unidentified residents from nearby barangays after the Quezon City government ordered backyard hog raisers to stop operation due to suspected African Swine Flu virus.
Manny Palmero

By Rio N. Araja

AGRICULTURE Secretary William Dar on Wednesday raised concern that the pigs affected by the African swine fever from a backyard farm in Bulacan could have been brought to some other areas.

He made the statement even as an official said at least three pigs had been found dumped in a creek in Bagong Si-

langan village, Quezon City.

Supt. Joel Villanueva, Quezon City Police District station 5 commander, said a 51-year-old resident reported the presence of three dead pigs at the creek around 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday

"I suppose these pigs have been dead for about three days. They were already decomposing when found," he told the **Manila Standard.**

In ANC's Early Edition news, Dar said the Department of Agriculture was monitoring the areas where the hogs from Guiguinto could have been taken.

"We are mapping out where these pigs have been redistributed or transported again from Guiguinto, Bulacan," he said.

"That's where we are monitoring, where there would be abnormal deaths of pigs in these areas."

Dar said commercial pig farms had not been spared from the agency's monitoring.

Last Monday, He spearheaded a boodle fight to show that pork was safe for human consumption.

He confirmed that the ASF cases in the country had already been contained by the government.

Laboratory tests from the United Kingdom showed that 14 of the 20 samples taken from the backyard pig farms in Guiguinto and two municipalities in Rizal had tested positive for ASF.

He said pork was safe to eat provided it bore the seal of the National Meat Inspection Commission.



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12 SEP 2019

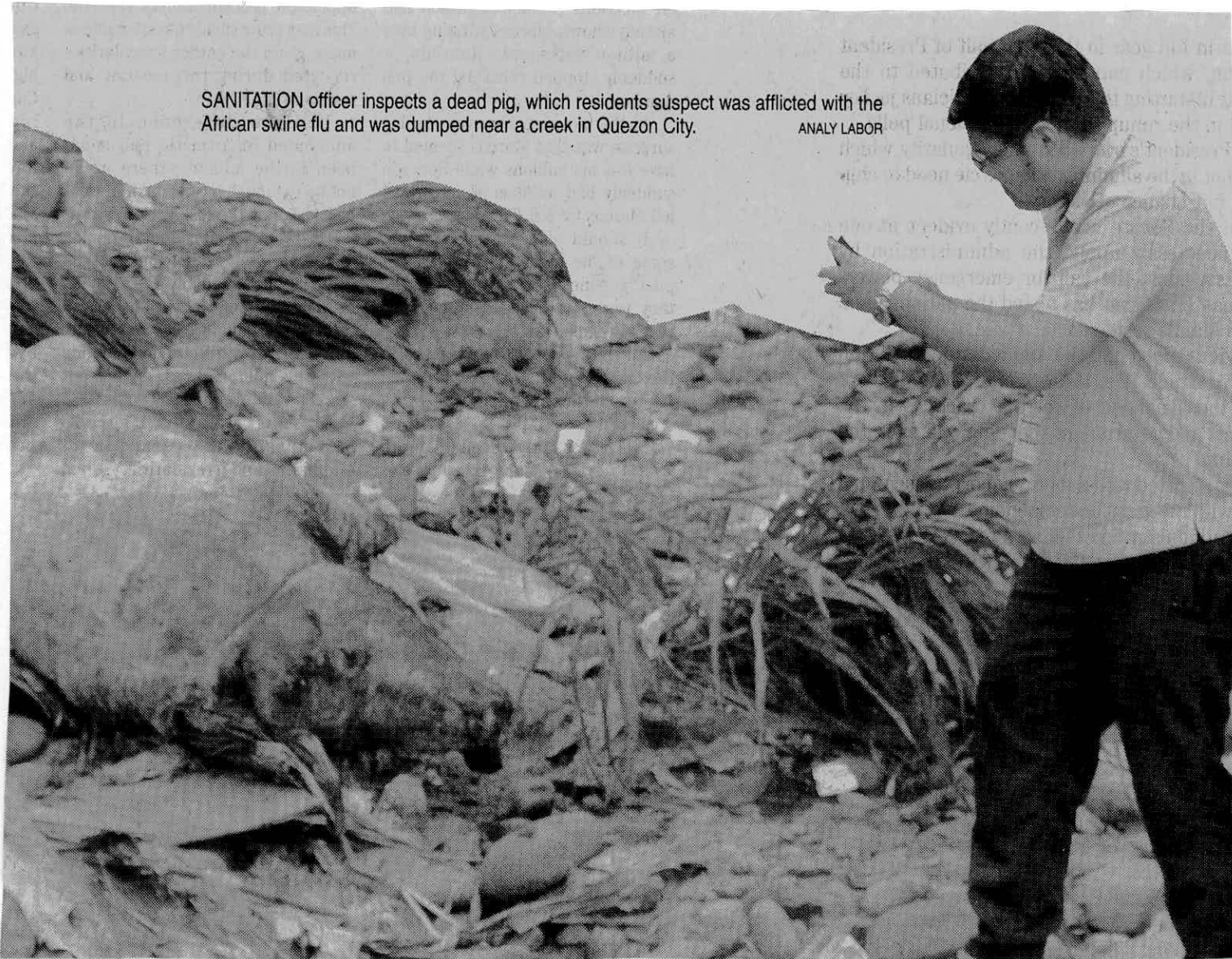
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PAGE 1/ _____

DATE _____

SANITATION officer inspects a dead pig, which residents suspect was afflicted with the African swine flu and was dumped near a creek in Quezon City.

ANALY LABOR





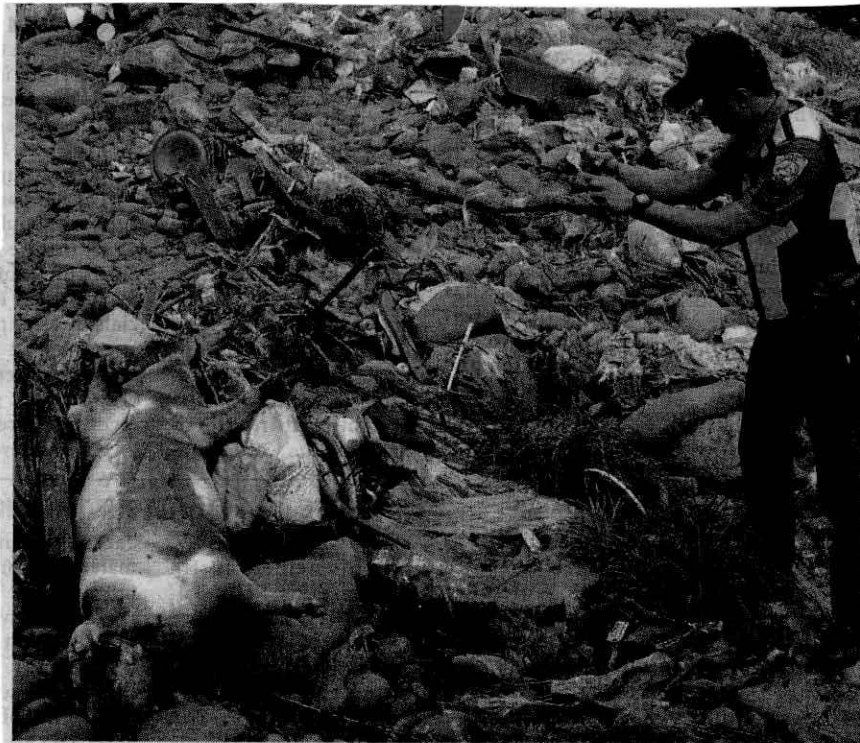
STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

12 SEP 2019

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE



A policeman inspects dead pigs at a creek in Barangay Bagong Silangan in Quezon City on Wednesday, amidst Department of Agriculture confirmation that African Swine Fever is already present in the country. INQUIRER



NAMATAY SA ASF? Iniimbestigahan na ng mga kawani ng Quezon City Health Office, ang patay na baboy na natagpuan sa isang sapa sa Area 5, Barangay Bagong Silangan, Quezon City, kahapon.

MARK BALMORES



MAY pinasara si Manila Mayor Isko Moreno na punerarya dahil sa labis-labis na paniningil nito sa mga namatayan.

Kaugnay nito, alam kaya ni Mayor Isko na malaki ang kita ng ilang opisyal ng Manila Police Department sa mga punerarya na mahal ma-ningil?

At alam din kaya ni Mayor Isko na may butas for sale sa North Cemetery at libo-libong piso ang patong kada butas?

BUTAS FOR SALE

Unahin nating talakayin ang Butas for Sale sa North Cemetery na pinamamahalaan ng Lungsod ng Maynila.

Kung may Good Conduct Time Allowance for sale, hospital pass for sale at fake case for sale sa Bureau of Corrections, talamak din ang Butas for Sale sa nasabing sementeryo na pinaglibingan ni Da King o Fernando Poe Jr.

Ginawa at pinagsusumikapan ng Lungsod ng Maynila na magtayo ng mga pwesto na apordabol sa mga Manilenyo.

Kabilang dito ang mga matataas na gusali para matugunan ang espasyo para sa mga namamatay na Manilenyo.

Pero alam ba ninyo na todo-reklamo ang mga mahihirap dahil sa sobrang taas ng bayarin sa mga butas sa itaas at sa ibaba?

Anak ng tokwa, kada butas pala, may patong na humigit-kumulang sa P20,000.

Magkakasabwat umano ang mga namamahala sa North Cemetery at mga ahente ng mga punerarya sa pagpapataas ng presyo ng mga butas.

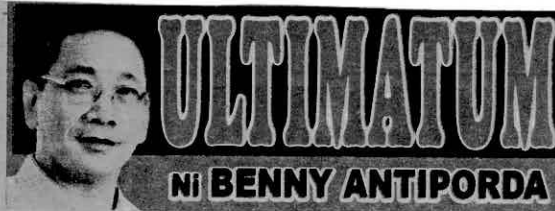
Mayor Isko, sir, pakibantayan ang iskam na ito sa North Cemetery.

Sinisira po ang inyong pagsusumikap na gumanda at gumaan ang buhay ng mga Manilenyo ng mga nagnegosyo ng patay.

P50K SA PULIS

May isinara si Mayor Isko na punerarya na notoryus sa matagal nang panahong paniningil nang napakamahal sa mga namatayan.

Marami na ang sumbong tungkol sa paniningil ng P300,000 pa-taas ng puneraryang ito



BUTAS FOR SALE SA NORTH CEMETERY; P50K SA MPD

sa mga namatayan.

Pero hindi iniintindi ng nakaraang mga administrasyon at ngayon lang napagtuunan ng pansin.

Pero alam kaya ni Mayor Isko na isa sa mga nagpapataas ng singil ng punerarya ay ang singil sa punerarya naman ng mga tiwaling pulis dito?

Aba, tumatangginging umanoong P50,000 ang bigay ng punerarya sa ilang taga-homicide ng Manila Police Department.

Bulong ng ating Uzi, kapalit umano ng mahal na suhol o hingi ng mga tiwaling pulis ang pag-exclusive ng isang punerarya sa mga may kasong mediko-legal.

Hinaharang umano ng mga tiwaling pulis ang ibang punerarya na hindi makapaghatag ng malalaking halaga sa kanila sa medico-legal cases.

Baka pupwedeng pagtuunan din ng pansin ito ni Mayor Isko.

PATAY ISINUSUGAL

Ang mahal na punerarya, mahal na pamemera ng mga pulis at mahal na butas sa sementeryo ang dahilan kung bakit hindi basta mailibing mga Manilenyo ang kanilang mga patay.

Napopospon lagi ang libing dahil hirap ang nakararaming Manilenyo sa pagbabayad ng mahal na butas sa sementeryo, kibil ng mga pulis at mapagsamantalang punerarya.

At alam ba ninyo ang remedyo ng mga namamatayan?

Anak ng tokwa, katakot-takot na pasugal ang ginagawa.

Diyan nagiging aktibo ang mga sakla na may patay at walang patay.

Aktibo rin ang mga tongits, mahjong at iba pang sugal.

Nandiyan din ang panghaharang sa mga jeepney na pumapasada sa lugar ng lamay at may dumadayo pa sa iba.

Inuubos din ng mga namamatayan ang kakarampot na sahod at allowance ng mga opisyal ng barangay.

At malamang, pati ang mga konsehal, kongresman at pulis ay hinihingan din ng mga namatayan.

Dito inaabot ng kung ilang araw o linggo ang lamay.

'Yun iba, hindi na lang kine-claim ang mga bangkay ng kanilang mga kamag-anak at bahala na kung ililibing sila ng mga punerarya.

MALAKING BIYAYA

Sabi ng ating Uzi, mga Bro, kung magagan umano ng paraan ni Mayor Isko ang tatlong problema, magpapiyesta umano ang mga namamatayan.

'Yun bang === gagaan nang husto ang pagdadalamhati ng mga namatayan.

Mababawasan ng sama ng loob at pagkakasakit ng mga namamatayan at maiiwasan din ang pagkakaroon ng depresyon.

Maiiwasan din ang pagkapit sa patalim ng mga biktima ng mga tiwaling punerarya, pulis at namamahala sa sementeryo.

'Yun bang === paggawa ng krimen gaya ng holdap, pagnanakaw at pagsasamantala para sila kumita at may pambayad sa utang na ginamit sa burol at paglilibing.

DIGONG: ISKO MAS MAGALING SA AKIN

Isang malaking hamon, mga Bro, ang nasabing mga problema ukol sa kamatayan.

Ang sabi ni Pangu-long Digong na sumubaybay sa mga lokal na pamahalaan, mas magaling sa kanya si Mayor Isko.

Kung paano nasabi ito ni Pang. Digong, ay isa ring hamon kay Mayor Isko.

O Mayor Francisco 'Isko' Dumagoso, Sir, saludo ang ULTIMATUM sa inyo.

Anomang reaksiyon o reklamo, maaaring iparating sa 0922840-3333 o i-email sa bantiporda@yahoo.com.