

17 August 2022, Wednesday



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# **NEWS ALERTS**

# **NEWS CLIPPINGS**

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service  
SUMMARY OF NEWS ALERTS  
17 AUGUST 2022

**TOP STORIES**

- I. **Construction of floating cottages in Cebu town stopped due to sanitation problem** (Phil. Daily Inquirer, A5);

Stoppage order by Cebu Governor Gwen Garcia on the construction activities of fixed and floating cottages – now numbering at least 300 cottages – in a resort facility in Cordova town. The move is in response to water quality test results released by EMB-Region 7, prompting the governor to issue the order “to avoid a marine disaster.”

- II. **New mining fiscal regime pushed** (Mla. Bulletin, B1)

DOF Sec. Benjamin Diokno's announcement of the Marcos Administration agenda for a new mining fiscal regime in accordance with the government's efforts to scale up the mining sector's adherence to transparency and responsible and sustainable mining practices.

- III. **BBM vows to protect cement firms** (Mla. Standard, A7)

Cement manufacturers lauded PBBM's policy direction to ensure the viability of the local manufacturing industry - as shown in its recent move to cut to half the aborted plan to import some 300 metric tons of sugar - with the government's campaign against imported commodities.

Cement Manufacturers Asso. of the Phil. (CEMAP) executive director Cirilo Pestano expressed optimism that said policy thrust “would extend “ to other local industries like those in the cement sector which “is facing equal serious threats from the influx of imports.”

- IV. **Our cement industry needs urgently gov't support** (Column, “About Town,” by Ernesto Hilario, Mla. Standard , A5)

On the urgency to protect the cement industry from the flooding of imported cheap cement in the local market, citing the need to strengthen the local cement industry, given its important role in securing the country's industrial gains .

- V. **Abra quake should jolt nuclear enthusiasts** (Column, “Midweek Comments by Marlen Ronquillo, Mla. Times , A10)

On why the PBBM Administration should junk calls to revive the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP) due to earthquake fault lines namely the Lubao fault, and should instead repurpose BNPP, akin to the proposal of the Bataan provincial government to turn it into an Information and Technology hub instead alongside plans to transition major areas of the province into technology hubs.

- VI. **Fighting urban blight** (Column, "The Corner Oracle," by Andrew Masigan, Phil. Star, 9)

Argues the need to place the management of Metro Manila under a single mega agency akin to the creation of the then-Metro Manila Commission to reverse the metropolis' descent into urban blight, citing that cities in the metropolis "were best managed under the Marcos administration, circa 1960s and 1970s.

- VII. **Grim poverty data show recovery still a long way off** (Editorial, Manila Times, A10)

Cites the apparent shortfall in the government's projection for the country's poverty recovery trends based on figures from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) which do not reflect "the real world," urging government planners to "improve their understanding of the true scope of poverty...."

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PRESERVING CORDOVA'S MARINE RESOURCES

# CONSTRUCTION OF FLOATING COTTAGES IN CEBU TOWN STOPPED

## DUE TO SANITATION PROBLEM

CEBU CITY—Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia has stopped the construction of more floating and fixed cottages in established easement zones in Cordova town on Mactan Island to avoid what she described as a "marine disaster."

Garcia, in an executive order issued on Aug. 9, said the existing cottages, which already reached more than 300 as of this month, have been operating without toilets, with its owners failing to secure the necessary permits or clearances from the local government.

"This is a time that we all collaborate because we are trying to preserve the waters of Cordova

so it can continue to be a tourist destination," said Garcia, in a report by Sugbo News, the web-based news service of the Cebu provincial government.

"The way this is going, in about a matter of time, this will practically be killing the goose that lays the golden egg. This is also a marine disaster waiting to happen. If the fish are affected, the primary means of livelihood in the municipality will be gone," she added.

The prohibition covers foreshore areas, mangrove zones, public beach zones and municipal fishing zones in Cordova.

The governor's order said the cottages were built along the es-

tablished easements in violation of Presidential Decree No. 1067, or the Water Code of the Philippines, and Cebu Provincial Ordinance No. 2021-01, Cebu's Water Code.

### Unsafe for swimming

On Monday, Cordova Mayor Cesar Suan announced that the level of coliform bacteria in the town's waters had increased, citing the findings of the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

"The result of the EMB inspection showed that our seas were no longer safe for swimming," he said.

Based on the water test con-

ducted by the EMB in the past two months, the coliform level in the waters of Cordova reached 1,300 most probable number (MPN) per 100 milliliters.

For bodies of water to be safe for swimming, the coliform levels should only be at 100 MPN per ml.

Swimming in waters with high fecal coliform bacteria levels can lead to various diseases, such as typhoid fever, hepatitis, gastroenteritis and dysentery, health officials said.

Garcia urged key government agencies to help Cordova save its tourism industry.

She said she would issue an executive order calling on the

Philippine Navy, the Philippine National Police, the Maritime Industry Authority and the Philippine Coast Guard to immediately enforce her order, and ensure that there would no longer be additional construction of cottages in the waters of Cordova.

### Relocation

According to Garcia, Suan sought her help on the unregulated floating and fixed cottages that have been sprouting like mushrooms along the town's shores.

To address the matter, the governor brought up the idea of preparing a relocation site for cottage operators, who will be

given cash assistance.

"What is the solution? You know we are going to stop their livelihood. They will no longer be earning. Now for how long? What is in store for them? That is what needs to be answered so that they can be convinced that this is really after all for the greater good and for the future," Garcia said.

She, however, did not say how much would be given to affected cottage owners and when the assistance would be released.

"This is a good beginning. We will address this challenge step by step," Garcia said. —REPORTS

FROM ADOR VINCENT MAYOL AND NESTLE SEMILLA INQ



# Diokno tells Senate New mining fiscal regime pushed

By CHINO S. LEYCO

**T**he Department of Finance (DOF) said the Marcos administration would push for a new mining fiscal regime to increase public tax revenues and promote transparency.

During a Senate hearing on Tuesday, Aug. 16, Finance Secretary Benjamin E. Diokno said that the proposal rationalization of the mining fiscal regime is among the measures being supported by the new administration.

Once enacted into law, Diokno said the new mining fiscal regime "will encourage full public disclosure on extractive industry and increase government share by imposing a single fiscal regime applicable to all mining agreements."

To recall, the rationalization of taxes on mining was included in the Fiscal Consolidation and Re-



SEC. BENJAMIN E. DIOKNO

source Mobilization Plan proposed by former Finance Secretary Carlos G. Dominguez III to the Marcos administration.

Dominguez's fiscal consolidation

package, however, failed to secure the support of President Marcos.

But last Aug. 3, Diokno announced that the DOF, under his leadership, would create an enabling environment for mining activities to flourish in the country.

He explained that the industry is a potential source of sustained economic growth.

"The mining industry holds the greatest potential to be a key driver in our economic recovery and long-term growth, especially now that world metal prices are high," Diokno said.

"The Philippines, after all, is one of the world's most richly endowed countries in terms of mineral resources," he added.

"We recognize that apart from boosting local development, mining is a strong magnet for investments that can propel our economy into a higher growth trajectory," Diokno said.

But Diokno also pointed out that the government expects the mining industry to strictly adhere to responsible and sustainable mining practices.

He said that the mining industry should strike a balance between protecting the environment, uplifting local communities, and supporting the government's socioeconomic agenda.

"This is a non-negotiable condition so we can guarantee the sustainability of the industry and the strong economic growth of its host communities," Diokno said.

Currently, the share of the mining output to gross domestic product (GDP) was a mere 0.06 percent.

Mining used to be a huge contributor to the economy, particularly in the 1980s when the industry accounted for 21 percent of the country's export earnings and over two percent of GDP.



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# BBM vows to protect cement firms

By Othel V. Campos

**C**EMENT manufacturers said they support President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s move against flooding the domestic market with imported commodities that may hurt local manufacturers of like products.

"Like our peers in the sugar sector, we welcome the President's action against the flood of imported products," said Cement Manufacturers Association of the Philippines (CEMAP) executive director Cirilo Pestano.

He cited the uproar caused by the proliferation of imported carrots and other vegetables and the issue of sugar importation.

Pestano said the President had shown wisdom in taking the position that a careful balance must be attained between protecting consumers against rising prices

of basic commodities and ensuring the viability of local industries.

"We hope that the Marcos administration would extend this policy to other local industries that are facing equal serious threats from the influx of imports," he added.

CeMAP had previously sought the assistance of the Tariff Commission (TC) to impose anti-dumping duties against Type 1 and Type 1P cement imports from Vietnam, and to extend the safeguard measures slapped against cement imports in 2019, bound to expire on October 2022.

The group told the Tariff Commission that despite the safeguard measures, the volume of imports increased at dumped prices.

Republic Cement and Building Materials, Inc. said in one of the public hearings that despite constant innovation and operational improvements they made, increasing imports caused sustained injury to the company.

Meanwhile, Holcim Philippines, Inc. noted that the volume of imported cement continues to increase and at lower prices at the retail level notwithstanding increases in the prices of fuel and energy.

The share of imports to domestic production in terms of volume increased steadily from zero in 2013 to 5.3 million metric tons (MT) in 2019, increasing further to 6.88 million MT in 2021.

On the other hand, the percentage in the share of imports to domestic production rose

from zero in 2013 to 26.09 percent in 2019, rising further to 38.42 percent in 2021.

CeMAP's data indicate that as of 2021 around 91 percent of cement imports were from Vietnam.

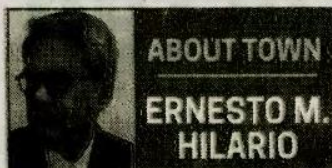
The petitioners also underscored that imports volume grew even if local demand for cement never outpaced domestic supply despite work stoppage caused by the pandemic.

With the Ukraine-Russia war fanning record-high prices of fuel and energy—which account for around 70 percent of the cost of cement cash production cost—the petitioners stressed that the local industry needs effective and more permanent protection from unfair trade practices involving imports to survive and stay competitive.

The Tariff Commission has concluded its hearings on CeMAP's twin petitions and is expected to come out with a ruling soon.



## Our cement industry needs urgent gov't support



ABOUT TOWN

ERNESTO M.  
HILARIO

WE DISCUSSED this issue recently and it bears repeating at this point since the new administration has pledged to accelerate infrastructure projects to sustain the momentum of economic rebound in the next six years.

We refer to the important role played by the cement and steel industries in realizing the government's vision of building more and better roads and bridges, airports and ports, and mass transport facilities such as railways in support of economic development goals.

But there's a real threat that casts a long shadow on the government's ambitious infrastructure development program: the dumping of cement into the country from Vietnam that could lead to serious financial losses or even the shutdown of local cement manufacturers, unless government takes stern measures.

The Cement Manufacturers Association of the Philippines (CEMAP) is understandably concerned over the dumping of cheap cement into the country.

Domestic capacity now stands at approximately 47 million tons. This capacity significantly exceeds domestic demand and assures stability of local cement supply.

But dumped cement from Vietnam threatens the capability of local cement manufacturers to generate thousands of jobs for Filipinos and contribute significantly to over-all economic development.

To address threats to the continued existence of the local cement industry, cement manufacturers have filed for trade remedies, specifically an anti-dumping case against certain Vietnamese manufacturers and traders, and a petition for the extension of safeguard measures.

What they want is for government to promote a level playing field, which ultimately will benefit our country, through job creation, higher tax collection, more local and foreign investments, non-dependence on imports, not to mention the preservation of the country's dollar reserves.

At issue here is this: Should global free trade be allowed to flourish unrestrained by remedies such as anti-dumping measures?

A former top official of the World Bank doesn't think so: "The most appealing option is to get rid of anti-dumping laws and to put nothing in their place. Then all of the evils of such policy—its power politics, its bad economics, and its corrupted law—would be eliminated."

In fact, anti-dumping laws are essential to the continued growth of domestic industries.

It is true that those who fail to learn from history are condemned to repeat it, as we've learned from wise counsel.

In the late 1800s, for instance, Britain accounted for more than the world's manufacturing

output than any other country.

Its domestic industries had the lowest production costs, most advanced manufacturing capabilities, and the dominant position of its shipping and banking industries in world commerce.

But the British government decided against imposing tariffs on dumped imports from other economic powers during that period, led by the United States and Germany.

*“Dumped cement from Vietnam threatens the capability of local cement manufacturers to generate thousands of jobs for Filipinos and contribute significantly to over-all economic development”*

On the contrary, both the U.S. and Germany imposed tariffs on dumped imports to support their domestic industries; this allowed them to foster an environment of higher and continued levels of capital investments to improve production technologies which in the end lowered costs, increased output and efficiencies, and enhanced the overall global competitiveness of their locally manufactured goods in both domestic and foreign markets.

By ignoring the pervasive dumping of goods into its shores, Britain's industrial base, notably in iron, coal, and textile, among others, suffered irreparable damage.

The country was also unable to generate capital to adequately invest in new, upcoming industries such as electrical products, specialty steel, industrial chemicals, and pharmaceuticals.

Thus, it missed out on the so-called "Second Industrial Revolution" that other capitalist countries were able to successfully take part in to propel phenomenal economic growth.

The Philippines should learn lessons from all this and heed the call for protection from dumping sounded by local cement manufacturers.

Our Constitution provides that "the State shall pursue a trade policy that serves the general welfare and utilizes all forms and arrangements of exchange on the basis of equality and reciprocity."

Moreover, it directs the government to "promote the preferential use of Filipino labor, domestic materials and locally produced goods, and adopt measures that help make them competitive."

We don't have to look far to guide us in making the right choices in crafting our economic policies. It's all there in our fundamental law.



## Abra quake should jolt nuclear enthusiasts

THE Philippines probably has more faults than Harry Roque voters in the last elections. (OK, just kidding. People just can't reconcile Mr. Roque's dominating presence in our everyday lives for years with the paucity of his votes.) But the fault factoid is a geological reality that is beyond our collective powers to vanish or wish away. The faults can be found across all regions — Luzon, the Visayas, Mindanao — and the infamous Marikina Fault is an unspoken terror that looms large over the eastern side of Metro Manila. Like the Big One that is dreaded in the US Pacific Northwest, the Seattle area of Big Tech HQs, in particular.

Mild, barely felt, barely noticed earth movements are a part of our daily existence. The major ones come in deathly intervals. We know the sequence. The fissures underneath make a major movement. The earth above shakes, rattles and rolls, with devastating intensity.

People perish, houses and buildings crumble, major infrastructures are inflicted with heavy structural damage, historic sites are reduced to rubble, and entire communities are robbed of their peace and balance. Worse, quake-stricken areas are gripped by overwhelming fear, and post-quake trauma outlives even the physical rebuilding process. One such major earthquake shook Abra province to its core recently, with the accompanying death and destruction and lingering trauma.

Close to 2,500 aftershocks have rocked Abra after the major earthquake, some logged at Intensity 5, and you can understand the lingering sense of panic and unease.

Earthquakes are a tragedy of our geography. Not the will of the Al-



### MIDWEEK COMMENTS

MARLEN V.  
RONQUILLO

mighty nor nature's retribution for man's trespasses against the environment. The Philippines is part of the so-called Ring of Fire that makes this ring of Pacific countries vulnerable to multiple types of natural calamities — earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and deadly tsunamis. And they strike, except for the tsunamis, with little forewarning.

A few years ago, in an Earth Day (April 22) tragedy, people were kidding around and in a jovial mood at the Chuzon Supermarket in Porac, Pampanga. The fault underneath moved, the two-story building collapsed like a deck of cards, and many were trapped and killed in the unmovable rubble. Arnel, a young man who was then helping me in my small piggery, was parking his motorcycle near the main entrance of the collapsed Chuzon before the earth shook. The cries for help of the trapped and the dying bothered his sleep for weeks. What if his wife had not detained him for a few more minutes to add items to their grocery list?

Our unfortunate place at the tropical end of the Ring of Fire (sub-arctic areas near the Andes Range are part of the Ring as is the Antarctic), and the recent Abra quake, hopefully, should be a teachable moment for us. The posse of legislators, business people and the geology-challenged personalities pushing aggressively for the commissioning of the mothballed Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP) should temporarily rein in their irrational

exuberance, pause for a minute or two, then ask this question: Is the BNPP sitting on safe ground?

Or, does the BNPP sit underneath a vast, dangerous fault (many faults dot Central Luzon) that can move like the earth under the Chuzon supermarket? Or, the earth under Abra? Is the BNPP site unfortunately part of the fault-littered geology that is a fact of life in the many countries that stretch along the Pacific Ring of Fire?

Unfortunately, for the information of a faraway congressman named Arnolfo Teves, who heads the congressional posse pushing for nuclear power, yes.

Geologists, in the course of looking at the safety aspect of the BNPP, have discovered a so-called Lubao Fault that starts at Lubao-Hermosa-Dinalupihan. (Lubao, my hometown, marks the western boundary of Pampanga, and Hermosa-Dinalupihan are the easternmost towns in that boundary with Pampanga.)

The fault runs through the Bataan heartland and ends somewhere near Morong town and Mount Natib. This is where the BNPP was built by Westinghouse and this big question is a puzzle. Were there no extensive geological studies done before the construction? Geology and soil and earth formation study was a developed, mature science during the construction of the BNPP in the 1970s. A US president revered by political conservatives, Herbert Hoover, was in the pioneering class of Stanford University in 1891 and trained in geology. And Westinghouse, during that period, was a global, diversified conglomerate. How could it miss doing geological tests?

Mount Natib is a volcano that last erupted centuries ago, but

given the Mount Pinatubo experience — Mount Pinatubo erupted after 600 years and its eruption in 1990 was considered the second-biggest volcanic eruption of the 20th century — you can never be so sure on how long Natib's dormancy will hold. Mount Natib has two giant calderas, and one of its two calderas is bigger than Mount Pinatubo's own.

The existence of the Lubao Fault and Natib's own stability factor are more than enough reasons to mothball the BNPP and repurpose it into something else. The Bataan provincial government, which is transitioning major areas of the province into technology hubs, has proposed turning the BNPP into an IT hub.

The Abra quake and the death and destruction that it left in its wake is just a stark reminder that at any given moment, things can go awry for areas under fault lines. Just imagine a major movement in the Lubao Fault that can fall into the category of a major earthquake. What would happen to the BNPP in that unfortunate event?

Or, this scenario. Mount Natib ending its long dormancy, with its deadly volcanic materials swamping and overwhelming the nearby nuclear plant?

If the BNPP is operational under both scenarios, we know what would take place. Either event can possibly trigger a nuclear apocalypse. And if that takes place, only one thing is certain. Those who will suffer and perish will not be the geologically challenged politicians and energy advocates like Arnolfo Teves Jr. who have been pushing for the commissioning of the BNPP.

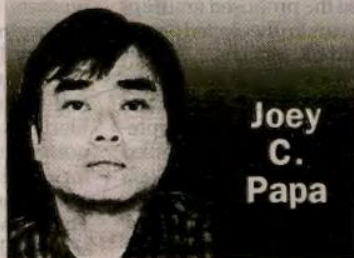
The Abra quake teaches us a lesson — let the sleeping nuclear plant lie.





## Sirang plaka

### BANGON KALIKASAN



Joey  
C.  
Papa

**HINDI** na nabago ang kuwento sa ating bansa tuwing sasapit ang tag-ulan; baha, baha, baha.

Ang dalawang "kapatid" ng tubig-baha bukod sa mga pinutol na mga puno sa bundok ay basura.

Kapag kinalbo ang mga puno sa kagubatan, wala nang mga ugat na hahawak sa tubig-ulan upang hindi ito bumaba sa kapatagan.

Hindi na bago ang kuwentong ito. Maging ang mga pagbasag sa kabundukan upang kunin ang mineral at magagandang uri ng bato ay kapatid din ng tubig-baha.

Itanong n'yo ito kay Mayor Marcy Teodoro ng Marikina dahil sa dinanas nilang malawakang pagbaha sa kanilang lunsod at alam na alam niya kung ano ang dahilan ng pagbaha.

Ngunit isang matagal nang "sugat" 'ika nga na nagnanaknak ng isyu ay ang basura.

Sa maraming report ng media tulad nang nangyaring malaking pagbaha kailan lang sa lunsod ng Maynila, sandamakmak na basura pa rin ang pinakapangunahing dahilan!

Sirang plaka na 'to! Hindi na nalutas-lutas!

Ayaw bang lutasin ang proble-

ma? Bakit?

Sangatutak na makinarya pa ang mga binili ng pamahalaan at pagtatayo ng mga pasilidad tulad ng mga pumping stations ngunit tuloy pa rin ang tubig-baha.

Konting ulan lang, mistulang dagat na ang iba't ibang lunsod sa laki at taas ng tubig-baha!

Itinuturo lagi na ang basura ang dahilan ng baha pero hanggang pagtuturo lang ang ginagawa o nangyayari.

Bumabara ang mga basura sa mga daluyan ng tubig-baha.

Saan nanggagaling ang basura? Natural sa pinanggalingan!

Seryosohan na. Sino ba ang lumilikha ng basura? Sino ba ang nagtatapon ng basura? Sila ang mga tao

mula sa bahay, opisina, palengke, paaralan, sinehan, at marami pang ibang lugar. Ngayong natukoy na, ano ang puwedng gawin?

Ang Ecological Solid Waste management Act o RA 9003 ay nagsasabing dapat pamahalaan ang mga tira-tirang bagay na nagiging basura sa mga kabahayan at komunidad o barangay.

Pagbubukod-bukurin (segregation) ang mga nabubulok at dinabubulok na tira-tirang bagay na nagiging basura, at bubulokin ito (composting) sa mga kabahayan at kung walang ispasyo ay magtatayo ng Ecology Center sa barangay.

Hindi sana mahirap gawin ito ngunit wala itong "makukuhang" pera para sa "korapsyon" kaya ayaw isulong ang maka-kalikasang pamamahala ng mga tira-tirang bagay na makatutulong sa kaligtasan ng Inang kalikasan at ng mundo na sa ngayon ay nasa matinding panganib na ang kalagayan dahil sa lumalalang pag-init ng mundo (global warming) at pabago-bagong klima (climate change).

Iisa lang ang Pilipinas. Iisa lang ang mundo. Pagtulong-tulungan nating ipagtaggol at ibangon ang Inang Kalikasan.



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## THE CORNER ORACLE

ANDREW J. MASIGAN

### Fighting urban blight

The return of the Marcoses to Malacañang was due, not in small part, to the shortcomings of the post EDSA movement. While governments since 1986 have successfully re-established our democracy and *laissez faire* economy, they fell short in many aspects of governance. Among them is the equitable distribution of wealth, the failure to devolve political power and curb political dynasties and to reverse the culture of corruption. Make no mistake, the Marcos administration will be judged by the degree in which it corrects post-EDSA deficiencies.



Although not often discussed, a significant failure of the post EDSA movement is the livability of our cities. Densely populated cities like Metro Manila, Metro Cebu, Cagayan de Oro and Baguio have fallen to urban blight and decay. Like frogs sitting in a pot of slowly boiling water, our people are made to live in squalor, congestion and the indignity of living in grime as if it were normal. Most citizens don't complain since they have bigger problems to deal with – but this does not negate the seriousness of the problem.

Let's talk about Metro Manila. The mordant truth is that the nation's capital has become the ugly neighbor to Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok, all of whom offer better living conditions. Save for a few townships professionally managed by the private sector like BGC and Alabang, the rest of our cities are plagued with degeneration and disorder.

Our cities have ceased to become a reflection of our values, aspirations and achievements as a nation. Rather, they are a morbid metaphor of how our leaders failed to provide a decent quality of life for our people. It mirrors government's incompetence, corruption, lack of vision and penchant for making exceptions to the law, whether for expediency or personal interest.

The world agrees. Backpacker.com named Manila as the worst Asian city to visit. Waze named it the worst city for motorists and the *Asian Correspondent* named it the least sustainable city in Asia.

It was not always like this. From the 50's to the 70's, Manila was known as being the cleanest, most progressive city in Asia. Not only was it the first to adopt vanguard infrastructure like the North and South Expressways and the Metro Manila Transit System, it also offered open spaces, parks and public facilities like the planetarium. Back then, our cities were clean, green, organized and transport-friendly.

Things took a turn for the worse in 1991 with the enactment of the ill-conceived Local Government Code. The law led to the dissolution of the Metro Manila Commission, the superbody that planned, managed and maintained the nation's capital. In its place, powers were devolved to the local governments, all of whom adopted their own laws, ordinances and development plans. This explains the disjointed development of Metro Manila.

The Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) was created but only as a coordinating body. Its role is limited to aligning plans and ordinances among LGUs, not to enforce them. It is in charge of city services like flood control and waste landfills.

The national government has a say only on certain aspects of the Metro's management, like the issuance of bus franchises and operations of railway, among others. Some government agencies carry out their mandates better than others.

The Department of Public Works and Highways of the past administration is an example. For those unaware, the DPWH is mandated to enforce the building code in public spaces. Yet, it issued permits to thousands of billboards and LED signs even if they are in blatant violation of the building code. Just notice how many billboards are within striking distance of high tension wires, how many are closer than 100 meters apart and how many are installed across public thoroughfares. Billboards and LED signs are the primary cause of urban blight. They obstruct the natural view of the landscape, distract motorists from traffic signs or defile the aesthetics of the city.

To appreciate the grotesque outcome of DPWH's permissive negligence, one need not look further than the stretch of EDSA, especially between Makati to Ortigas. We hope that Secretary Manuel Bonoan does a better job in controlling the unrestrained proliferation of billboards.

Our flawed administrative framework for city management makes it conducive (and convenient) for the national government and LGUs to engage in a frenzy of finger pointing when things go awry. No one is accountable. No one takes responsibility.

This is what I hope the Marcos government will correct. The challenge is to tweak the administrative framework of city management without railroading the local government code, which unfortunately is enshrined in law.

To this, I recommend that areas of common interest be put under administrative powers of the MMDA and its equivalents in other metropolitan areas. This includes highways and avenues that traverse cities, historical monuments and national parks. Roles shall reverse whereby the MMDA dictates (not recommends) the policies relating to these common areas while the LGUs play the implementing role.

The scope of an empowered MMDA shall encompass the following: Planning, engineering, infrastructure & maintenance, enforcement of engineering codes, traffic management & mobility, landscape & recreation, environmental protection and licensing. These are the same powers of the former Metro Manila Commission, albeit with a limited scope of responsibility.

Having a centralized agency manage the affairs of large cities is more efficient than having it administered by numerous LGUs. It reduces spending redundancies, reduces manpower, prevents corruption and leads to uniform implementation of rules. Decisions are not made independently at a local level with a local perspective but at a macro level. More significantly, it allows for greater accountability.

Admittedly, our cities were best managed under the Marcos administration, circa 1960's and 1970's. We hope that under the new Marcos administration, the livability of our cities will be restored and urban blight will be reversed.



## Editorial

### Grim poverty data show recovery still a long way off

THE increase in poverty incidence in the Philippines due to the punishing economic effects of the Covid-19 pandemic did not come as a surprise, but the actual data released on Monday by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) was nevertheless disheartening. Based on the preliminary results of the Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES) in 2021, which is conducted every three years, poverty incidence among Filipinos rose to 18.1 percent, up from 16.7 percent in the previous FIES in 2018.

This figure, which translates to about 20 million Filipinos, is grim enough when taken at face value. What is even more alarming, however, is the likelihood that poverty is actually much worse than the official data indicate, and perhaps worse than government planners realize. Unless they improve their understanding of the true scope of poverty, the economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and longer-term anti-poverty efforts will be difficult to achieve.

The PSA defines the poverty threshold as the minimum monthly income needed by a family of five to meet its basic needs; for the 2021 FIES, that figure was set at P12,030 monthly. In addition, the PSA reports another, extreme poverty threshold, which it calls "subsistence incidence," or the minimum income needed just to meet basic food needs; that figure is set at P8,379 per month for a family of five. Like the larger poverty thresh-

*Unless government planners improve their understanding of the true scope of poverty, the economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and longer-term anti-poverty efforts will be difficult to achieve.*

old, the number of Filipinos falling below this more extreme limit also increased from 2018, rising from 5.2 percent to 5.9 percent in 2021, or about 6.5 million Filipinos.

When the "P12,030" figure was reported by various news outlets on Monday, it was instantly met with derision by the public, with most people taking the view that no family of five could actually live on so little income per month. This public reaction has happened before when previous FIES results were announced, and the response has always been a patient explanation that the figure is not intended as a "real world" indicator, but is a statistical benchmark for policy and planning purposes. In other words, anti-poverty and other social programs use the PSA poverty threshold in determining the population to target.

That explanation would be acceptable, except for one glaring fact: P12,030 per month for a family of five works out to P79.05 per person per day, or about \$1.41 at the current peso-dollar exchange rate. However, the universally recognized poverty threshold established by the World Bank stands at \$2.15 per person per day. If we do the math in the reverse direction, that would amount to P120.38 per person per day, or about P18,320 per month for a family of five.

There is obviously a vast difference between the latter figure and the "official" poverty threshold of P12,030 per month, and the implication of this is that there are millions of Filipinos in poverty who are being overlooked by policymakers. The difference between the two figures — the global benchmark is about 50 percent higher than the Philippines' official poverty threshold is reflected in the consistent difference between the official poverty calculations provided by the PSA, and the results of the regular surveys on "self-rated poverty," which stood at 43 percent at the end of 2021 (down slightly from 45 percent a year earlier).

Reducing and ideally eliminating poverty is an aspiration of every administration, but no administration will be successful if it does not fully understand the scope of the problem. It cannot possibly do so given the inadequacy of the data indicators it is given to work with under the current model used by the PSA. At a minimum, the PSA should adopt the global benchmark of \$2.15 per day, and then take it several steps further, in order to compensate for the inadequacies inherent in any macro-scale indicator. There is a big difference, for example, in what constitutes real poverty in an urban or rural population, and there are regional variations within each of those groups. Gathering this data will obviously come at a cost, but a clear picture of poverty incidence will pay dividends in the long run by helping the government develop more efficient and effective measures against it.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
**ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT BUREAU**  
DENR Compound, Valley St. Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City 1118  
Tel. Nos. 8538-4378  
Website: [www.emb.gov.ph](http://www.emb.gov.ph) Email: [records@emb.gov.ph](mailto:records@emb.gov.ph)



## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

On the **ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE REPORT AND MANAGEMENT PLAN (EPRMP)** of the **TOLEDO COPPER MINE PROJECT (MINE TO PORT OPERATIONS)** of **CARMEN COPPER CORPORATION** located in **BRGY. ANDRES SORIANO/LUTOPAN, BIGA, MEDIA ONCE, AND LOAY, TOLEDO CITY, CEBU**.

Notice is hereby given to all parties who wish to give their opinion regarding the implementation of the **TOLEDO COPPER MINE PROJECT (MINE TO PORT OPERATIONS)** to attend the Public Hearing scheduled on:

Date	Time	Participants	Venue
25 August 2022 (Thursday);	10:00 AM (Registration starts at 09:00 AM)	Barangays Don Andres Soriano, Biga, Poog, Bagacay, and Daanglungsod	Brgy. Cantabaco Covered Court, Brgy. Cantabaco, Toledo City, Cebu
26 August 2022 (Friday)	10:00 AM (Registration starts at 09:00 AM)	Barangays Media Once, Loay, Campo 8, Cantabaco, General Climaco	Brgy. Cantabaco Covered Court, Brgy. Cantabaco, Toledo City, Cebu

The Public Hearing is being conducted in connection with the review of the EPRMP of the aforementioned project by the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The following is the project information:

<b>Project Name</b>	Toledo Copper Mine (Mine to Port Operations)
<b>Project Location</b>	Brgy. Andres Soriano/Lutopan, Biga, Media Once, And Loay, Toledo City, Cebu
<b>Project Capacity</b>	Mining: 17,611,145 MT/yr Processing: 8,760,000 MT/yr
<b>Project Type</b>	Resource Extractive Industry and Mineral Processing Project: Metallic Mineral or Ore Processing
<b>Project Rationale</b>	Mining industries positively contribute to a country's economy particularly on aspects of foreign direct investment and national revenues and employment generation. Carmen Copper assists in the development of host and neighboring barangays (villages) where it operates through projects and activities that address issues on human resource development & institutional building; enterprise development; assistance to infrastructure development & support services; access to education & educational support; access to health services, health facilities & health professionals; protection and respect of socio-cultural values; and use of facilities/ services inside the mine camp.
<b>Project components</b>	<b>Major Components:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mining Pits</li> <li>• CARCON Facility</li> <li>• Port Facilities</li> <li>• Waste Rock Dumps</li> <li>• Tailings Disposal Facility</li> </ul> <b>Support Facilities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admin, Social/ Community Facilities</li> <li>• Maintenance and Service Facilities</li> <li>• Reforestation Facilities</li> <li>• Utilities</li> </ul>
<b>Proponent</b>	Carmen Copper Corporation

All interested parties who wish to attend or participate in this Public Hearing should preferably confirm their attendance/participation and may give their opinion(s) in a concise position paper to the **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION (EIAMD)** of this Office through email at [eia@emb.gov.ph](mailto:eia@emb.gov.ph), three (3) days before the Public Hearing schedule. Those who will not be able to register or submit written positions may be given the opportunity to share their issues on the day of the hearing itself.

The project's EPRMP and Executive Summary for the Public are downloadable on our website: (kindly access the Notice of Public Hearing/ Consultation link found in our website) while copies will be available in the following offices:

- **EMB Region VII**  
Greenplains, Mahogany St, Mandaue City, Cebu
- **City Environment & Natural Resources Office- Toledo City**  
Toledo City Sports Center, Sangi, Toledo City

For more details, please contact the EIAMD Division at this Office at telephone number (02) 8539 4378 loc. 116 and look for the project case handlers **Engr. Dexter Tabada** and **Engr. Jason Paolo Esguerra**.



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Republic of the Philippines  
Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
**NATIONAL WATER RESOURCES BOARD**  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor NIA Bldg., EDSA, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines 1100

VITA SPRINGS WATERWORKS, INC.,  
Applicant. Case No. 22-3389

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**NOTICE OF HEARING**

This is an application for the issuance of a Certificate of Public Convenience to operate and sell water through bulk rate within Pico de Loro Beach and Country Club, Barangay Papaya, municipality of Nasugbu, province of Batangas, with the following proposed rates:

**PROPOSED TARIFF**

Bulk	
Pipe Size	Per cu. m.
1"	P 93.90

This application will be initially heard by the Board on 12 September 2022. The hearing will start at 9:00 o' clock in the morning at the NWRB-WUD Conference Room, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, NIA Building, EDSA, Quezon City, at which time applicant shall present its evidence.


At least fifteen (15) days prior to the scheduled hearing, applicant shall publish this notice once in a newspaper of general circulation in the province of Batangas and serve by personal delivery or registered mail a copy of the (i) application and its attachments, and (ii) this notice, to all affected parties appearing on page 2 hereof.

Parties opposed to the granting of the application must file their written opposition supported by documentary evidence on or before the above scheduled date of hearing, furnishing a copy of the same to the applicant.

Failure on the part of any person affected to file its opposition on time and to appear at the hearing will be construed as a waiver of their right to be heard. The Board will proceed to hear and decide the application based on the evidence submitted.

Likewise, failure by the applicant to appear at the hearing shall amount to lack of interest on its part and the instant application shall be dismissed accordingly.

Witness the Honorable Executive Director of the National Water Resources Board this 12<sup>th</sup> day of July 2022.

By Authority of the Board:  
  
  
**Dr. SEVILLO D. DAVID, Jr., CESO III**  
Executive Director

**Affected Parties:**

The Secretary  
Sangguniang Bayan  
Nasugbu, Batangas

The Barangay Chairman  
Barangay Papaya  
Nasugbu, Batangas

The General Manager  
Nasugbu Water District  
J.P. Laurel St., Brgy. 12  
Nasugbu, Batangas 4231



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Republic of the Philippines  
Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
**NATIONAL WATER RESOURCES BOARD**  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor NIA Bldg., EDSA, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines 1100

FILINVEST LAND, INC.,  
Applicant.  
X-----X

Case No. 22-3379

**NOTICE OF HEARING**

This is an application for Certificate of Public Convenience to operate and maintain a waterworks system within Belleview Meadows Subdivision, Barangay Bagtas, municipality of Tanza, province of Cavite, with the following proposed rates:

**PROPOSED TARIFF**

Residential and Institutional						
Pipe Size	0-5 m <sup>3</sup> (min)	6-10 m <sup>3</sup>	11-20 m <sup>3</sup>	21-30 m <sup>3</sup>	31-40 m <sup>3</sup>	Over 40 m <sup>3</sup>
1/2"	P 150.00	31.10	32.40	33.90	36.00	39.00

Commercial and Industrial					
Pipe Size	0-15 m <sup>3</sup> (min.)	16-30 m <sup>3</sup>	31-900 m <sup>3</sup>	901-1000 m <sup>3</sup>	Over 1000 m <sup>3</sup>
1/2"	P 900.00	66.00	72.00	78.00	84.00

This application will be initially heard by the Board on 12 September 2022. The hearing will start at 9:00 o' clock in the morning at the NWRB-WUD Conference Room, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, NIA Building, EDSA, Quezon City, at which time applicant shall present its evidence.

At least fifteen (15) days prior to the scheduled hearing, applicant shall publish this notice once in a newspaper of general circulation in the province of Cavite and serve by personal delivery or registered mail a copy of the (i) application and its attachments, and (ii) this notice, to all affected parties appearing on page 2 hereof.


Parties opposed to the granting of the application must file their written opposition supported by documentary evidence on or before the above scheduled date of hearing, furnishing a copy of the same to the applicant.

Failure on the part of any person affected to file its opposition on time and to appear at the hearing will be construed as a waiver of their rights to be heard. The Board will proceed to hear and decide the application based on the evidence submitted.

Likewise, failure by the applicant to appear at the hearing shall amount to lack of interest on its part and the instant application shall be dismissed accordingly.

Witness the Honorable Executive Director of the National Water Resources Board this 7<sup>th</sup> day of July 2022.

By Authority of the Board:

  
**Dr. SEVILLO D. DAVID, Jr., CESO III**  
 Executive Director