

DATE : 05 APR 2019

DAY : Friday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



DENR welcomes court decision convicting wildlife trader

By **ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ**

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has vowed its unwavering protection of the country's wildlife animals, especially those vulner-

able to extinction, following the conviction of a wildlife trader found selling an endangered species of iguana.

DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu welcomed the decision of the Quezon City Metropolitan Trial Court Branch 36

convicting Harriet Shelley Velarde for violating Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act of 2001.

RA 9147 prohibits the killing, injuring, collection, selling and transport of threatened and endangered wildlife species.

Velarde was sentenced to suffer the penalty of imprisonment of one year and one day to two years, and to pay a fine of P200,000.

Cimatu hailed the court ruling as "a victory for the battle against illegal wildlife trade" as he vowed the DENR — through its Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) — will "not waver in its commit-

ment to protect the country's wildlife species, especially the endangered ones."

Court records showed that Velarde was arrested on July 18, 2018 in an entrapment operation carried out by the National Bureau of Investigation-Environmental Crime Division (NBI-EnCD) based on an intelligence report that she was selling a live green iguana in Quezon City.

The NBI-EnCD and Philippine Operations Group on Ivory and Illegal Wildlife or Task Force POGI planned an operation to verify the information using an asset who posed as buyer of the green iguana worth P10,000.

Upon receiving the marked money, the operatives apprehended Velarde in front of a sari-sari store in Brgy. Sangandaan, Project 8, Quezon City.

Task Force POGI is a composite group of enforcers from BMB, NBI-EnCD, and Philippine National Police deputized to go after those who possess and trade illegally acquired flora and fauna.

Velarde lacked the requisite certificate of wildlife registration or any permit from the DENR to justify her possession of the green iguana, which is listed as endangered in the National List of Threatened Animal Species under DENR Administrative Order 2004-15.

Green iguana is also listed as endangered in Appendix II of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

It is a species native to South America and was illegally transported to the Philippines.



Illegal iguana trader gets 2 years in jail

A WILDLIFE trader who was caught last year selling an endangered live green iguana was found guilty by a Quezon City court.

Harriet Shelley Velarde was found by Judge Carlo Villarama of Branch 36 of the QC Metropolitan Trial Court guilty beyond reasonable doubt of violation of Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act 2001.

RA 9147, among others, prohibits the killing, injuring, collection, selling and transport of threatened and endangered wildlife species.

Velarde was sentenced to two years imprison-

ment and was ordered to pay a fine of P200,000.

Velarde was arrested on July 18, 2018 in an entrapment operation by the National Bureau of Investigation-Environmental Crime Division (NBI-EnCD) and the Philippine Operations Group on Ivory and Illegal Wildlife or Task Force POGI based on an intelligence report that she was selling endangered species in Quezon City.

The court dismissed Velarde's denial that she did not own the seized wildlife species as "untenable, unsupported and unbelievable."

Green iguana is listed as endangered in Appendix II of Convention on

International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Green iguana is a specie native to South America and was illegally transported to the country.

Meanwhile, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu hailed the court ruling as "a victory for the battle against illegal wildlife trade" as he vowed the DENR—through its Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB)—will "not waver in its commitment to protect the country's wildlife species, especially the endangered ones."

Cory Martinez



Foreign ship ordered to stop dredging in Batangas river

By **LYKA MANALO**

BATANGAS CITY — The Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) has ordered a Filipino company that owns a foreign dredging ship to stop dredging operations in Lobo, Batangas.

Dondie Sarmiento, officer-in-charge of MGB IV-A Mining Environment and Safety Division said the MV Emerald, which is owned by Seagate Engineering and Building Systems, has no clearance from the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) or the Lobo municipal government to dredge the Lobo River.

Sarmiento said that when the MGB team went to Lobo last Friday, it found that the Emerald had not yet started dredging operations.

Sarmiento said the bureau never issued an ore transport permit or a soil export permit.

DPWH Batangas 2nd District head, Edwin Abrigonda confirmed that the company did not secure a clearance from their office for any dredging activity.

Abrigonda said DPWH will not allow dredging in Lobo because it might

disrupt the construction of a 1.2-kilometer flood control dike there.

He said the dike is 85 percent complete and is expected to be finished by this month.

Maria Paz Luna, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) regional executive director for Calabarzon, said the local Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) issued an Environmental Compliance Certificate in May 2018 allowing the Emerald to dredge the river.

But Luna clarified that Seagate applied for the ECC online and had to submit all other permits within 60 days.

On July 6, 2018, three ECCs were issued to Seagate for desilting, dredging and remediation of the Lobo River Estuary Foreshore, Lobo River Basin Periphery and in Barangays Olo-olo, Poblacion, Tayuman, Mabilog na Bundok, and Nagtaluntong.

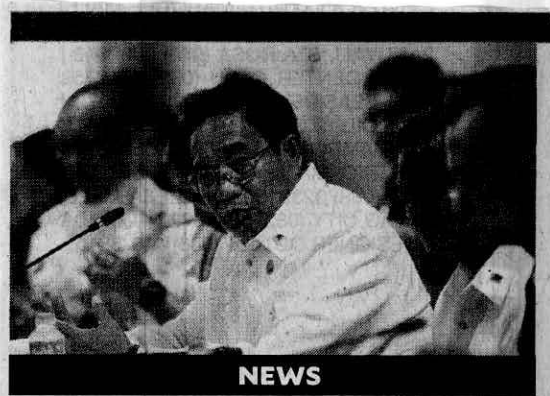
Last week a team from the Maritime Group, Philippine Coast Guard, Batangas Police and Lobo Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office (MENRO) inspected the Emerald.


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NEWS

Esperon has last say on Sino-crewed ship

National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon Jr. on Thursday said he was responsible for the final approval of the dredging operation of a foreign ship brought in by a Filipino company to desilt a river in Batangas after its environmental clearance was suspended. Esperon explained that his approval would depend on whether the company had a contract with a local company or agency.

—STORY BY CHRISTINE O. AVENDAÑO AND MARICAR CINCO **A12**

CONTRACTOR TO APPEAL DENR SUSPENSION OF ECCS

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ESPERON HAS FINAL SAY ON CHINESE-CREWED DREDGING SHIP

By Christine O. Avendaño
and Maricar Cinco
@Team_Inquirer

President Duterte's national security adviser, Hermogenes Esperon Jr., on Thursday said he would be responsible for giving the final approval for the operation of a foreign dredging ship brought into the country by a Filipino company to desilt a river in Batangas province.

Leo Campos, CEO of Seagate Engineering and Buildsystems, said documents on the dredging project had been sent to the National Security Council (NSC), the government agency that gives clearance to any foreign ship that operates in Philippine waters.

The Calabarzon regional office of the Environmental Management Bureau on Wednesday suspended Seagate's three environmental compliance certificates (ECC) issued in May and June last year on orders from Secretary Roy Cimatu of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

No other permits

Officials said the ECCs were suspended because the company had failed to secure permits and clearances from at least 16 other agencies that were required after it received the ECC in October 2018.

Campos earlier expressed confidence they could start

dredging the Lobo River "as soon as we obtain the final permit from the NSC" using the Chinese-manned MV Emerald, a 2,990-ton hopper dredger, which sailed into Lobo town's waters on Thursday last week.

Esperon, who heads the secretariat of the NSC, which is chaired by the President, did not give a categorical answer when the Inquirer asked him whether he would approve Seagate's request for a permit. Instead, he explained the process for getting it.

He said Seagate's application was now with the Maritime Industry Authority, which would consult with other agencies.

'No contract, no NSC permit'

"Then it goes to the National Coast Watch Center," he said. "If [Seagate] has no contract with a local/domestic company or agency, then I can't give any permit."

Esperon last year issued guidelines for securing clearance for foreign-registered vessels after the President directed the Cabinet "to ensure the integrity and security of Philippine borders and to oversee the grant of permits for foreign survey vessels to enter Philippine waters."

A Philippine National Police memorandum to its regional directors on Aug. 20, 2018, explained that the NSC guidelines were intended to take into consideration "the national securi-



Hermogenes Esperon Jr.

ty of the country's maritime domain and the ensuring of compliance with relevant Philippine laws, rules and regulations and international laws and conventions" by foreign vessels.

Export permit denied

The regional Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) in February denied Seagate's request for a permit for mineral ore export, operation and transport because the "source of mineral is not covered by any mining permit."

"We may have overlooked [some requirements] but we are willing to appeal (the suspension by) complying with these," Campos told the Inquirer on Thursday.

Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda on Thursday said Seagate could not dredge the Lobo River until it had the required DENR permits.

"If they have a special arrangement with the NSC, that's their business," he said. "But since the kind of project they [will do] deals with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, then that's our business."

DENR regional director Maria Paz Luna said that even if Seagate secured an NSC permit, the company still needed to comply with the requirements of the other agencies before it begins its operation.

"It's not that (one) supersedes the other because (the

2/2

permits) are different," she told the Inquirer.

Campos earlier said Seagate could not be covered by mining laws since it was involved in dredging "and not mining or quarrying."

"That's a hell of an interpretation," Luna said in response. She said sand was still considered a mineral ore and its transport would require a permit from the MGB.

MGB permit crucial

Campos said his company would appeal the ECC suspension, but Luna said that if Seagate could not obtain an export permit from the MGB and it could not submit other requirements, the suspension would not be lifted.

Asked whether an NSC clearance could supersede the other requirements, she said the MGB permit was "the most important."

"They applied (for an export permit) meaning they know they need it," she said, adding that the company also needed a dredging permit from the DPWH. "Each of those (permits) are different requirements and ECC is hinged on compliance with others."

The Emerald caused alarm among residents of the fishing village of Lagadlarin and Lobo town officials last week when it sailed into its waters unannounced and dropped anchor

just 500 meters from a 30-hectare mangrove reserve, which is part of the Verde Island Passage, a marine sanctuary.

A 2008 memorandum of agreement between Seagate and the Lobo municipal government allowed the company to dredge up to 2 million cubic meters of sand from a 6.5-kilometer stretch of the Lobo River at no cost to the town.

Seagate was to sell the sand for \$2 per metric ton to Synergy Plus Holdings Ltd. for the reclamation and construction of the Hong Kong International Airport Three Runway System.

P300 million to P434 million

Based on worldwide conversion standards followed by the DPWH, 2 million cubic meters of wet packed sand would be equivalent to 4.16 million metric tons, which could be worth \$8.33 million, or P434.4 million, for Seagate. The same volume of dry loose sand would be worth \$5.7 million, or P300.9 million.

Campos told the Inquirer his company would be made to pay a 4-percent excise imposed by the Department of Finance, the local tax set by local ordinances, and P12 per cubic meter of sand or silt to be divided among the local government (which will get 30 percent), the provincial government (30 percent) and the village (40 percent). —WITH REPORTS FROM JHESSET O. ENANO AND INQUIRER RESEARCH INQ



SENATE PROBE SOUGHT ON CHINESE VESSELS' SWARMING IN PHL WATERS

By BUTCH FERNANDEZ
@butchBM

THE Senate was asked to open an inquiry into the recent swarming of Chinese vessels in in Philippine territory.

Sen. Risa Hontiveros filed Resolution 1035 urging the appropriate Senate committee to conduct an investigation in aid of legislation on the presence of Chinese vessels in Philippine territories, including a dredger vessel in Lobo, Batangas. The Hontiveros Resolution adds that "the end in view [is to determine] the necessary course/s of action to protect Philippine interests, sovereignty, and land and marine resources."

As Congress is on recess, formal plenary referral of Resolution 1035 mandating the appropriate committees to open a Senate inquiry—likely to include the foreign affairs and national defense panels—may need to wait until resumption of regular sessions on May 20.

However, Senate Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri, concurrent chairman of the Rules Committee, clarified that the committee chairmen "may conduct hearings during the break if they so wish."

"It is allowed under our rules," Zubiri told the BUSINESSMIRROR.

The Resolution was filed in the wake of reports that a 2,990-ton hopper dredger "suddenly appeared off Barangay Lagadian in the coastal town off Barangay Lagadlarin in the coastal town of Lobo in the province of Batangas, purportedly to conduct dredging operations for a company called Seagate Engineering and Buildsystems."

It added that according to Barangay Captain Mafriel Dimaano, the 99-meter-long, 17-meter-wide Chinese ship docked into Lobo "without prior notice or permission" from local officials and anchored itself close to a 30-hectare mangrove forest.

Moreover, the Resolution noted that "there is reportedly a purchase order made by a company called Synergy Plus Holdings Ltd. to Seagate for the purchase of 2 million cubic meters of Lobo River sand for \$2 per metric ton 'at source'

to be used for the Hong Kong International Airport Three Runway System Project."

It added that Seagate was allegedly able to obtain an Environmental Compliance Certificate from the Calabarzon regional office of the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB), "but it was not able to obtain a mineral ore export permit from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, or a dredging permit from the office of Batangas Gov. Hermilando Mandanas.

Hontiveros's resolution likewise pointed out that Malacañang's Spokesman Salvador Panelo himself had admitted there was "no agreement" between the governments of the Philippines and China allowing the Chinese vessel to conduct dredging operations in Philippine territory.

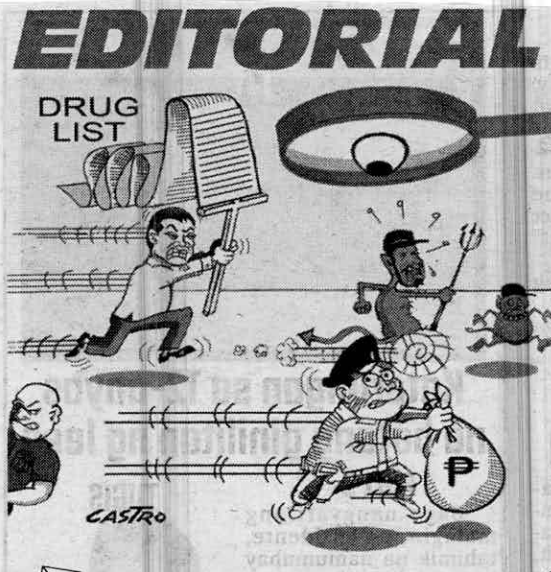
The incident, the resolution noted, comes on the heels of reports that 600 Chinese vessels encircled Pag-Asa Island in the West Philippine Sea since January this year with "the same type of vessels that, according to maritime experts, have been responsible for the destruction of coral reefs and other marine resources."

The resolution recalled that Chinese vessels sighted within the Philippines's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) have also been "found to be involved in acts constitutive of illegal, unreported and unregulated [IUU] fishing," which is considered a criminal activity.

"If China is abetting these acts, it may be considered a state sponsor of criminal activity, as well," the resolution added.

Last, Hontiveros's resolution lamented that the conduct of China's vessels in other waters "does not inspire confidence in its capacity to adhere to international regulations," noting that Chinese trawlers were caught illegally fishing off Africa and Latin America."

It added that "warnings have also been aired that increased competition over dwindling stocks of fish and illicit fishing activity inside maritime boundaries of other nations could cause geopolitical conflicts, and even a war."



Sulat kay Editor

Bakit may Chinese vessel sa Lobo, Batangas?

Dear Editor,

Gusto ko lang po magkomento dito sa Chinese vessel na dumuong sa Lobo, Batangas. Masyado lamang nakababala ang eksenang ito para sa ating lahat na Pilipino. Hindi man tayo taga-doon sa Lobo pero appektado tayo dahil ano ba ang ginagawa ng vessel na ito doon?

Isa pa napapaisip lang din ako kung bakit nabigyan ng clearance o 'yung tinatawag na environmental clearance certificate (ECC) mula sa DENR. Kahit pa sabihin na kinasela na ito, bakit nila pinahintulutan in the first place 'di po ba? Sa aking tingin ay may mga paglabag sa mga pangyayari.

Idagdag pa po dito na walang kaalam-alam ang mga lokal na opisyal sa Lobo, Batangas kung bakit napadpad sa kanilang lugar ang ganitong pandagat na sasakyan ng China.

Kung susuriin natin malaki ang magiging epekto ng gagawin diumanong dredging sa dagat ng Lobo. Hindi po ba napag-isipang mabuti na masisira ang ating karagatan dahil ang Lobo ay bahagi ng Verde Island na isang marine sanctuary at itinuturing ng mga scientist na sentro ng marine shorefish biodiversity.

Hindi po ba ikinunsidera na posibleng masira ng anchor ng barko ang sea grass na breeding ground ng mga isda at sea turtles???

Nakakalungkot lang na parang walang aksyon ang national government sa isyung ito.

Regine Mamagat-Agapay



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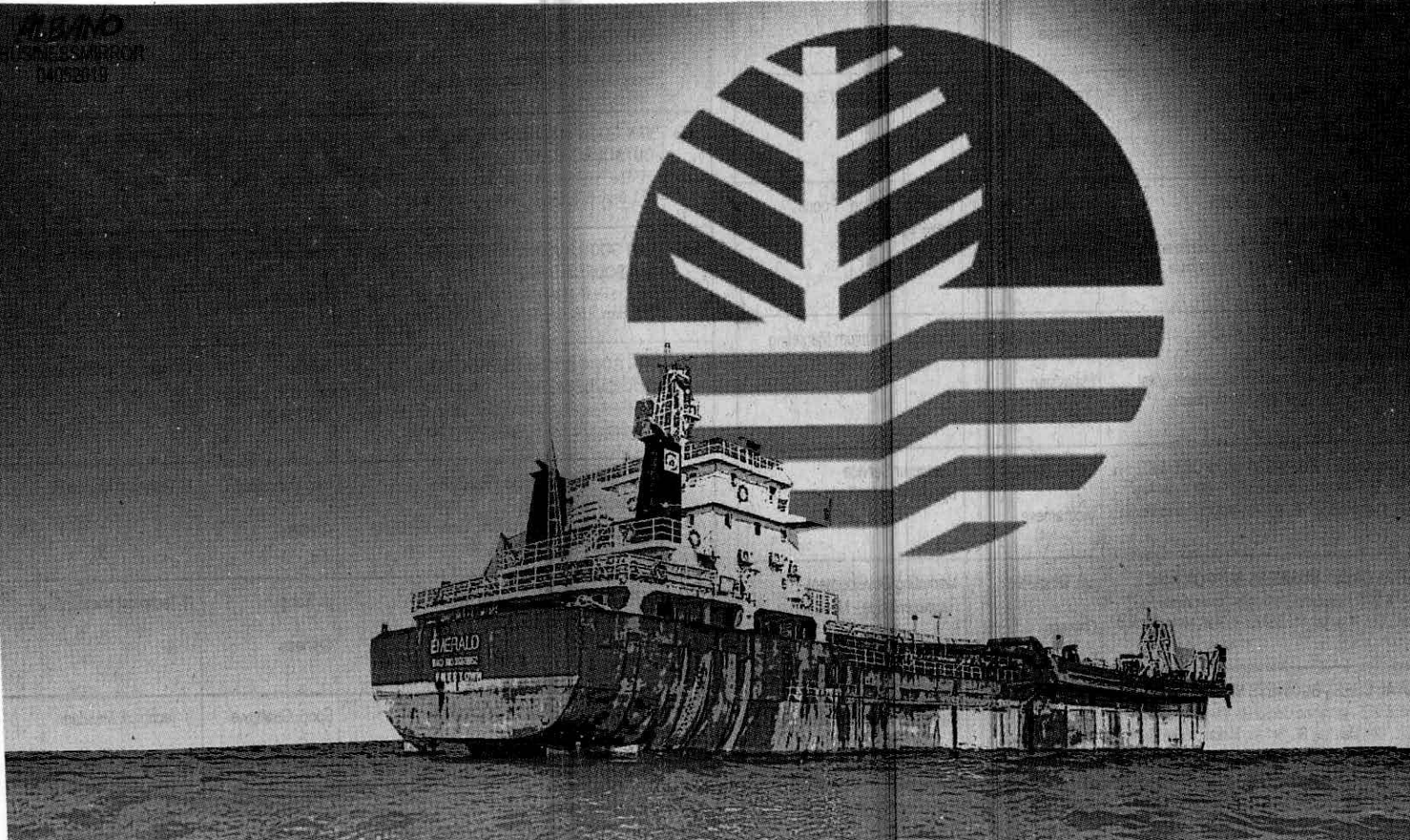
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Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

A broader look at today's business

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DENR: No permit for firm that brought dredging vessel to Lobo



MAS MARAMING "WATER CHAMPION" PINARANGALAN SA WORLD WATER DAY

DAHIL sa patuloy na pagtaguyod at pagpapanatili sa malinis na tubig at maayos na kapaligiran ay umabot sa 21 katao, institusyon at programa ang pinarangalan at tinawag na "water champions" sa ginanap na World Water Day Awards 2019.

Ang awards ay ipinagkaloob sa ginanap na seremonya noong Marso 22 (Biyernes) kasabay ng pagdiriwang ng World Water Day na may tema ngayong taon na "Hawak-Kamay, Tubig Kaagapay".

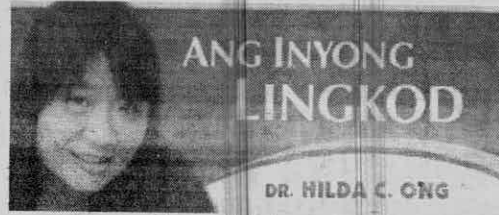
Ayon kay Executive Director Sevillo David, Jr. ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB), mas marami ang nabigyan ng award ngayong taon kumpara noong nakalipas na taon na 18 lamang.

"More and more are becoming our partners for securing our water future. Working hand-in-hand is truly key to addressing challenges in water security," sabi pa nito.

Ginanapang awarding ceremony sa Novotel Hotel Manila sa Araneta Center sa Cubao, Quezon City. Ito ay inorganisa ng NWRB kasama ng water concessionaire na Maynilad.

Naging pangunahing tagapagsalita sa okasyon si Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles kung saan ay tiniyak nito na prayoridad ng Duterte administration ang usapin sa tubig.

Ani pa ni Nograles, gumagawa rin ng paraan ang gobyerno upang maibsan ang nararanasang krisis sa tubig



DR. HILDA C. ONG

na malaki ang nagiging epekto sa kalusugan, food security at economic growth.

Nagmula sa iba't-ibang institusyon ang mga ipinami-gay na award.

Kinilala ng River Basin Control Office ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang Pam-panga River Basin Committee bilang "Bagani ng Katubigan" dahil sa epektibo nitong pamamahala.

Napili naman ng DENR-National Capital Region bilang "Kampeon ng Katubigan" ang Malabon City Environment and Natural Resources Office dahil sa iba't-ibang greening programs nito kabilang na ang pagmementina sa dalawang kilometrong bakawan sa

lungsod.

Ang Environmental Management Bureau ng DENR ay ipinagkaloob sa dalawang indibidwalang Water Leadership Award.

Sila ay sina Franco Rino Apoyon, coordinator ng Youth for Environment in Schools Organization ng Kabasalan National High School sa Zamboanga, Sibugay at Armay Jay Dudas, team leader ng Mimaropa Young Leaders na nakabase sa Mindoro.

Ipinagkaloob naman ng NWRB ang Water-Wise Choice Award sa St. Luke's Medical Center sa Quezon City at Don Pepe Henson Enterprises, Inc. dahil sa pagtupad ng mga ito sa mga regulasyon at tamang paggamit ng tubig.

ANG INYONG LINGKOD



Pawikans hatchlings found inside coal power plant

A TOTAL of 115 sea turtle hatchlings made their way to the sea last March 29, 2019 from the shoreline of a coal-fired power plant, no less.

Since December 2018, three pawikan or sea turtle nests were discovered along the coast of AboitizPower subsidiary Therma South Inc. (TSI).

The first nest was found in December 14 and the second last February 23, 2019.

Since the discovery of the nests, TSI has worked with various groups, including the team from the group's pawikan conservatory in Aboitiz Cleanergy Park in Punta Dumalag, to ensure that the nests inside TSI are well-protected and well-cared for.

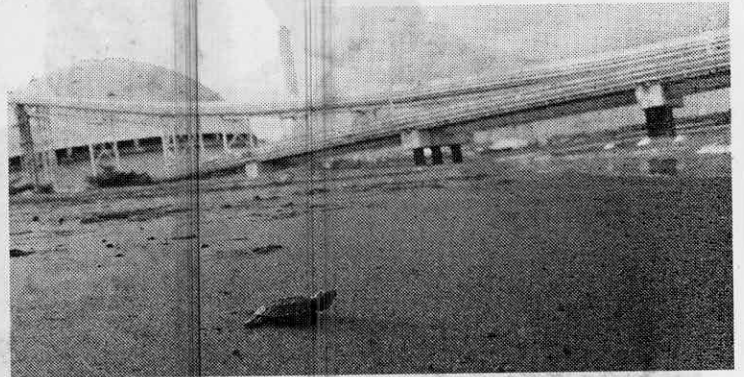
The sea turtle hatchlings released last March 29 emerged from an undiscovered third nest

along the shore of the coal-fired power plant.

TSI named this batch of sea turtle hatchlings "Team Stingray."

"The hatching of the pawikans has been an eye-opening experience. It is a small indicator that our environmental stewardship efforts are bearing fruit. The presence of these endangered creatures inside the plant is proof of sustainable environmental conditions resulting from the steps we have taken to operate our power plants responsibly," said Danel Aboitiz, president and chief operating officer of the AboitizPower-Coal Business Unit.

Since sea turtles come back to the place where they hatch through their magnetic imprinting, there might be other nests in the area. When the released hatchlings grow up, they



One of the 115 pawikan hatchlings on its way back to the sea.

may come back to the area to lay new nests and repeat the cycle.

Because of this, TSI plans to engage the community and experts to ensure that the shorelines remain pristine and conducive for pawikan

nesting in the years to come.

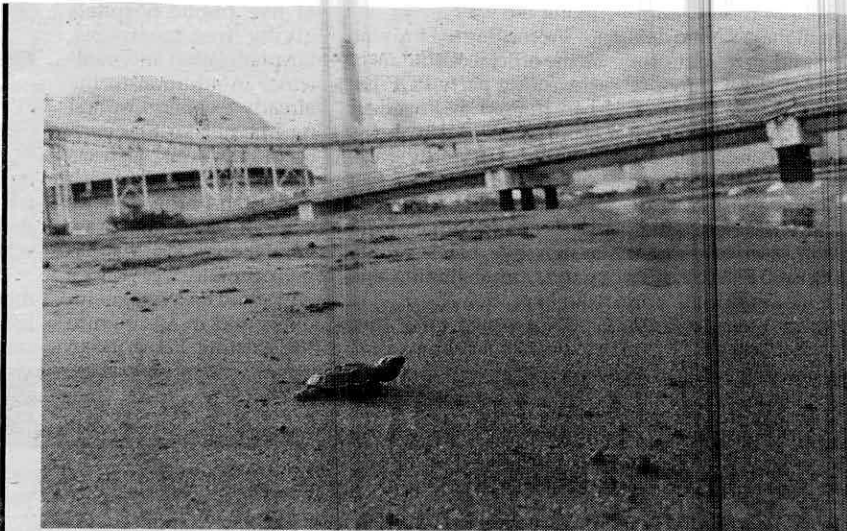
Wholly-owned AboitizPower subsidiary TSI is the owner and operator of the 300-megawatt Davao baseload power plant located in Binugao, Toril, Davao City.



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ONE of the 115 pawikan hatchlings on its way back to the sea.

Pawikans hatch from nests discovered in coal power plant

A TOTAL of 115 sea turtle hatchlings made their way to the sea recently from the shoreline of a coal-fired power plant, no less.

Since December 2018, three pawikan or sea turtle nests were discovered on the coast of Aboitiz Power subsidiary Therma South, Inc. (TSI). Since the discovery of the nests, TSI has worked with various groups, including the team from the group's pawikan conservatory in Aboitiz Cleanergy Park in Punta Dumalag, to ensure that the nests inside TSI are well-protected and well-cared for.

TSI named this batch of sea turtle hatchlings "Team Stingray" after Davao City Mayor Sara

Duterte-Carpio's son, whose birthday is on March 29.

"This occurrence reinforces the diversity of our marine ecosystem in the city. Having a coal-fired power plant playing host to these hatchlings makes this event even more interesting," expressed Mayor Duterte, who would have wanted to join the releasing if not for prior engagements scheduled that afternoon.

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ronmental conditions resulting from the steps we have taken to operate our power plants responsibly," said Danel Aboitiz, President and Chief Operating Officer of the Aboitiz Power-Coal Business Unit.

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Divers needed for Cebu coastal clean-up

By **MINERVA BC NEWMAN**

CEBU CITY — The Junior Chamber International-Cebu Sinulog Inc. (JCI-CSD) needs 100 volunteer divers for this year's Scubasurero Project, a massive coastal cleanup drive on April 21 at the Boyla Diving Resort Terminal in Lapu-Lapu City.

The clean-up project is a worldwide campaign adopted by the JCI-CSI in 2003 to reduce pollution in the oceans and in support of the United Nation's (UN) Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14: Life Below Water.

JCI National Executive Vice President Disston Tan is asking organizations and the community to join the drive on Easter Sunday, April 21.

Tan said the half-day activity kicks off with a registration at 7 a.m.

Tan said he hopes the Scubasurero project catches on among scuba and free divers.

This year the target is to collect plastics and debris on the seabed and shorelines of Lapu Lapu.

"This way, it may help the community in combating the persisting problem of plastics, debris, and waste materials that are present in the commercialized areas in the city," Tan said.

Lapu Lapu Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Coastal Operations Coordinator Andy Berame said that the resort city is prone to man-made pollution, especially along its popular beaches.



#nationataglance

DAVAO: DAVAO CITY

Site ready for Davao City's planned waste-to-energy project

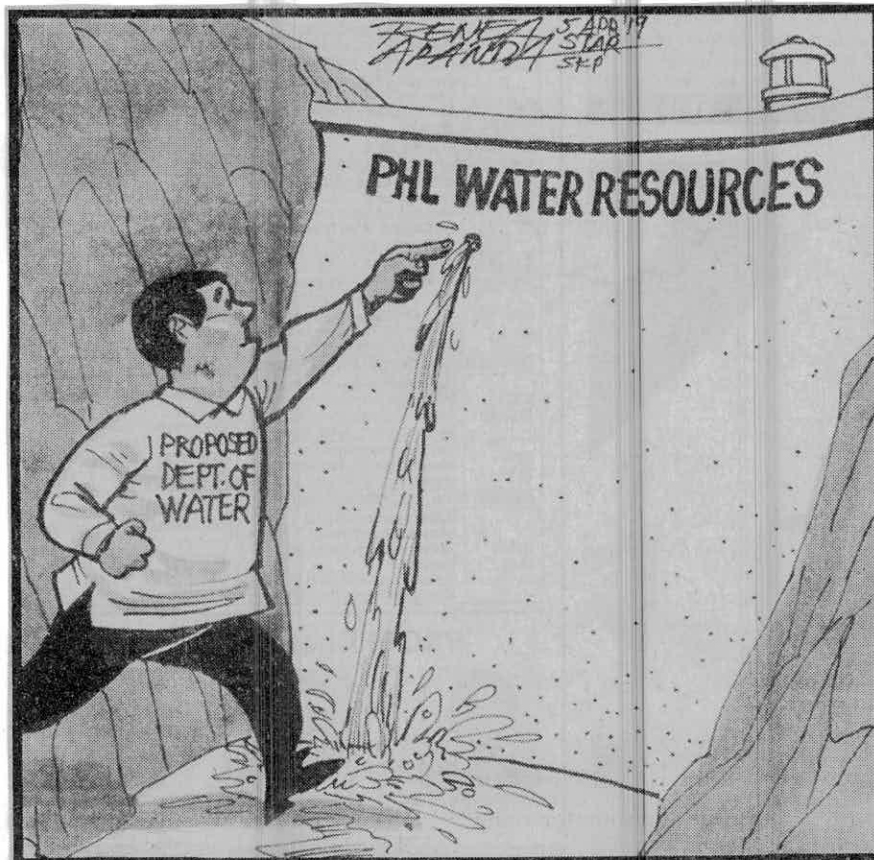
A 10-HECTARE lot at the southwestern part of Davao City has been purchased by the local government for the planned waste-to-energy project, according to Vice Mayor Bernard E. Al-ag. In an interview last week on the sidelines of a business sector meeting, Mr. Al-ag said the property was purchased for P49 million. The city government has already signed a memorandum of agreement with the Department of Finance for the implementation of the project. "It will be funded by the national



DAVAOCITY.GOV.PH

THE EXISTING Davao City landfill.

government through Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) with a grant from the Japanese government," he said. The project will require a capital expenditure of about P2.4 billion. Mr. Al-ag said under the timetable, construction will start later this year and completion is expected within four years. In response to the opposition from environmental groups, Mr. Al-ag said the city government decided to pursue the waste-to-energy facility because it is within the provisions of existing laws. "As long as the project will not violate the Solid Waste Management Act, as long as it is within the bounds of the Clean Air Act, then we do not have a problem," he said. Kitakyushu City in Japan, a sister city of Davao, will provide the technology for the facility's operations. — **Carmelito Q. Francisco**



Department of Water

Water is still being rationed in large portions of Metro Manila, and some communities have yet to see their water service restored. A weak El Niño has led to a drought serious enough to warrant the declaration of a state of calamity in four provinces and 24 towns. The rainy season is still about two months away so there is no immediate relief in sight.

The problem has been blamed on lack of preparedness, for which east sector concessionaire Manila Water has apologized and waived fees for March. But the government is also not blameless; it is, after all, in charge of providing the source of water for treatment and distribution by the concessionaires.

The continuing problems have brought to the forefront proposals for the creation of a department dedicated to water resource management. The Department of Water is envisioned to have jurisdiction over the functions currently assigned to several agencies including the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, the Bureau of Soils and Water Management, National Irrigation Administra-

EDITORIAL

tion, Local Water Utilities Administration, National Water Resources Board and Laguna Lake Development Authority.

The water crisis is the proper time for the government to conduct a performance audit of these agencies. A review can determine if efficiency is suffering from duplication of functions or a lack of coordination.

With global warming, water security is a growing problem worldwide, and it calls for long-term planning and responses. If a new department can trim bureaucratic fat, improve efficiency and do the job better, then the proposal must be pursued.

But if the Department of Water will just add another layer of bureaucracy, with new positions created mainly for political patronage, then the country is better off with the current setup. The efficiency of all the agencies, however, needs a dramatic upgrade if we don't want a repeat of the water crisis.

The United Nations has declared that access to safe water is a universal human right. The agencies in charge of providing this basic need must be up to the task.



EDITORIAL

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Water department

PRESIDENTIAL Spokesman Salvador Panelo had to eat his words again, admitting that "It's just me." A couple of days after Panelo said that a Department of Water Management is not needed anymore because Manila Water and the MWSS had found the solution to the water crisis, here comes President Duterte endorsing the creation by law of a Department of Water Management to put in order all things and concerns about water.

Clearly, Panelo opened his mouth too early, and perhaps forgot that as presidential spokesman, his words are that of the President and so it is perilous to second-guess him.

'The functions of the MWSS, Local Water Utilities Administration, National Water Resources Board and National Irrigation Administration will be consolidated.'

Even before Economic Planning Secretary Ernesto Pernia proposed to the Cabinet the fusing together of all water agencies into one department, Presidential Political Adviser Atty. Francis Tolentino had already been batting for that.

In fact, Tolentino, the former mayor of Tagaytay City and chairman of the Metro Manila Development Authority, already saw the coming water crisis back in December last year. "The public seemed unconcerned until the supply shortage hit," he said.

Tolentino warned of a water crisis both in the short-range and the long-run and even fought the MWSS by opposing in court its approved high water rates for the two concessionaires.

Under the proposal, water would be prioritized as No. 1 basic human need. The functions of the MWSS, Local Water Utilities Administration, National Water Resources Board and National Irrigation Administration will be consolidated. All these agencies will assist government find solutions to the yet impending bigger and more problematic shortage of water.

Included in Tolentino's proposals are the use of water desalination equipment to recycle and reuse water, and further, adopting the policy of water recycling as part of the National Building Code, which should be amended for this purpose.

The former MMDA chairman fears that an even catastrophic drought will hit the country in 2025 but then there is enough time for President Duterte and the next Congress to act on preparatory legislation to avert another major water crisis.



Water and food security



Rev. Fr. Antonio Cecilio T. Pascual

SERVANT LEADER

BROTHERS and sisters, the El Niño phenomenon has brought devastating drought upon us, and many of our people are experiencing the effects of the depletion of water, especially in the metropolis. With the increase in population and continuous rise of temperature brought about by climate change, the water crisis is getting worse.

No sector suffers more than agriculture because it consumes most of the water supply needed for irrigation. According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), in the coming years, the agriculture sector's need for water will rise.

About 80 percent of fresh water

in Asia is used to irrigate farm lands. However, some of our water resources are wasted due to ineffective use and misuse of this precious resource. This is because most of the irrigation facilities in the Philippines are old or inefficient.

Climate change is also making

life more difficult. During seasons of drought, water is scarce, and many plantations are affected. There's the threat that the produce will not be enough, thus, to have sufficient supply of food, we resort to imports. This is another expense. In importing food products, the price is not the only issue. We must try to compete with others in the global market.

Brothers and sisters, we can project the number of people in the future, as well as the need for sufficient food supply. Which is why many of us must prepare the proper facilities to ensure the continuous supply of water.

However, the country's budget is being distributed to the needs of the nation, and our government at this time seemingly does not prioritize irrigation. If the country's irrigation system is improved, farmers will become more productive.

The "Build, Build, Build" project

of the Duterte administration must also give priority to agricultural infrastructure. Farm-to-Market roads are not enough to support our farmers. Irrigations are needed to ensure the delivery of food to the market.

The government must find long-term solutions to the current problems. It has also to prepare citizens to face the challenges of the future. If the government keeps spending the national budget for projects that strangle the people, then the government has failed in its primary mandate: to serve the people. According to *Mater et Magistra*, the government has an obligation to actively take action for the good of the people.

Make it a habit to listen to Radio Veritas 846 Ang Radyo ng Simbahan in the AM band, or through live streaming at www.veritas846.ph, and follow its Twitter and Instagram accounts @veritasph and YouTube at veritas846.ph. For your comments, e-mail veritas846pr@gmail.com.



KRISIS SA TUBIG, DENR NGA BA ANG MAY SALA?

SA dinaranas nating tagtuyot ngayon ay walang ibang masisisi ang sambayanan kundi ang mga opisyal ng iba't ibang ahensiya ng ating gobyerno sa pagpapabayang makalbo ang mga kabundukan, na hindi napagmalasakitan ng DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES (DENR) at sa halip ay ang ahensiyang ito ang nagsilbing DESTROYER OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES.

Mula sa nagdaang mga administrasyon ng ating bansa ay silbing DESTROYER of Environment and Natural Resources itong DENR dahil hindi kinontrol ang mga MINING COMPANIES at mga QUARRYING OPERATIONS sa iba't ibang panig ng ating bansa, na ang mga pangunahing pasaway o walang habas sa pag-sira ng kalikasan ay ang mga minahan at quarrying na pag-aari ng mga maiimpluwensiyang personalidad na ang ilan sa kanila ay naging mga opisyal pa ng gobyerno.

Ang DENR ay hindi naipatupad ang pangil ng batas laban sa paglabag ng mga MINING at QUARRYING operations at yan ay dahil na rin sa kurapsiyon...ika nga, ang mga inspector kuno ay magsasagawa ng pagsisiyasat e hindi naman nagsisiyasat dahil ang mga ito ay reregulahan ng management ng MINING COMPANY ng pagrerelax sa magagandang resort na bubusugin sa pagkain, inumin at mga babaeng pampaligaya...siyempre pa bukod pa riyang ang "take home money".

Kaya naman, ang mga MINING COMPANY e lalong lumakas ang loob sa walang habas na pagpapasabog ng mga dinamita para mauka ang bundok at ang pamumutol ng mga puno...dahil may "protector" na mula sa government agency kapalit ng 'payola' at hindi naikakaila na kasabuwat dito ang mga MAYOR, GOVERNOR at CONGRESSMAN...siyempre pa kasabuwat din dito ang ilan sa mga SENADOR dahil hinayaang mamasaker ang ating mga kabundukan.

Binabatikos ng iba't ibang sektor ang nagawang isla ng CHINA sa gitna ng mga karagatang sakop ng ating bansa e samantalang pinahintulutan ng mga nakaraang administrasyon na ang CHINA ay makakuha ng mga lupa tulad sa kabundukan ng ZAMBALES na ikinakarga at ibinibiyaha sa barko kaya nakagawa ng isla sa karagatan ang CHINA.

Resulta, pati kabuhayan ng mga beach resort operators sa ilang bayan ng ZAMBALES ay naglaho dahil ang tubig karagatan sa kanilang lugar ay kulay tsokolate, na epekto ng kemikal na nickel o mga likidong umaagos mula sa iba't ibang mga minahan at maging ng mga magsasaka at mga fishpond operator ay nawala ang kanilang mga pangkabuhayan dahil sa epekto ng mga minahan.

Sa pagkakalbo at pagkakapatag ng ilang kabundukan ay apektado ngayon ang iba't ibang patubigan, tulad na lamang ng mga dam na pinagkukuhanan bilang tubig-inumin ay namimiligro nang matuyo na dulot ng EL NINO.

Sa kasalukuyan ay nakakakita ako ng progresong aksiyon ngayon ng DENR sa pangunguna ni SECRETARY RUY SIMATU na sinisegundahan ng pagpapakitang 'bangis' ni USEC BENNY ANTIPOEDA sa pagbabantang kakasuhan ang lahat ng mga establisimiyento, gayundin ang mga local government na nagpapabaya sa pagtatapon ng mga basura sa mga katubigan ay tila mahahambing na ngayon sa magandang sinag ng papasikat na araw... dahil napalinis na ang MANILA BAY.

Sa determinasyon at political will ni PRES. RODRIGO DU-TERTE ay muling na-rehab at nagawang maging malinis uli ang BORACAY.

Yun nga lang, kahit maging super linis ang ating katubigan kung mananatiling kalbo ang mga kagubatan ay KRISIS SA TUBIG ang kakaharapin ng ating bansa at tiyak ang kasasadlakan ng sambayanan ay ang pagbagsak ng kabuhayan at ekonomiya ng bansa.

Ngayon pa lamang, ang lahat ng ahensiya ng ating gobyerno ay kinakailangang magtulong-tulong para resolbahin ang kakaharapin ng peligro sa mga darating na panahon... na ang tanging solusyon ay ang malawakang pagtatanim ng puno.

ILUNSA ANG TREE PLANTING SA BUONG BANSA... mandatory mula sa mga edudyante hanggang sa mga government employee para sa pagsasalba sa ating kinabukasan!

Bukod dito, ang lahat ng nagsilbing halimaw sa pagkawasak ng ating mga kabundukan ay kinakailangang mapanagot ang mga ito upang lalong maipadama ng kasalukuyang administrasyon ang sinseridad sa pagbibigay proteksiyon sa ating mga kalikasan.

Kung kayo po ay may mga puna o reklamo lalo na sa mga nababatikos ng ARYA ay maaari kayong mag-email sa irwincorpuz22@gmail.com para sa inyong panig o kaya ay mag-text sa 09997806557.



FUNDING FOR CHICO RIVER PROJECT

SC ASKED TO JUNK CHINA LOAN DEAL BASED ON CHARTER 'VIOLATIONS'

By **Dona Z. Pazzibugan**
@dpazzibuganINQ

Opposition lawmakers on Thursday asked the Supreme Court to strike down as unconstitutional the government's \$62-million loan deal with China to fund the Chico River Irrigation Pump Project.

In a petition, they cited several instances of violations of the Constitution and urged the high court to issue a temporary restraining order (TRO) against enforcing the financial agreement.

Named as respondents were President Duterte, Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea, Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III, Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Ernesto Pernia, Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra and Administrator Ricardo Visaya of the National Irrigation Administration.

Led by Bayan Muna chair

Neri Colmenares, the petitioners said the confidentiality clause in the China loan agreement violated the right to information on foreign loans contracted by the government under Article XII Sections 21 and 22, Art. II Sec. 28, and Art. III Sec. 7 of the Constitution.

The agreement reportedly did not have prior concurrence from the Monetary Board as required under Art. VII Sec. 20 and Art. XII, Sec. 21.

It is conditioned on awarding the project to a Chinese contractor, which violated the country's procurement laws and the Filipino First policy under Art. XII Sec. 10.

It hauls the country to a Chinese arbitration tribunal governed by Chinese laws in violation of Art. II Sec. 7.

The lawmakers also said the loan deal contained an express waiver of sovereign immunity over the state's patrimonial assets in favor of China, in viola-

tion of Art. XII Sec. 7, Art. II Sec. 7 and Art. XII Sec. 2.

Collateral

"Collateralization of patrimonial property for unpaid obligations under a foreign loan contract or as an award in an arbitral proceeding is unconstitutional and illegal," the petition read.

"These assailed provisions open the possibility for China to acquire patrimonial properties in the Philippines which is tantamount to ceding in favor of China certain territories in the Philippines by virtue of our default in our contractual obligations," it added.

"This situation obviously impacts negatively on our national sovereignty, territorial integrity and is inimical to our national interest," it argued.

Oil-rich Recto Bank

The petition came a week after Senior Associate Justice An-

tonio Carpio said that the terms of the Chico River project could allow China to seize oil-rich Recto (Reed) Bank off Palawan province if the Philippines failed to pay the loan.

China has laid claim to Reed Bank, forcing the Philippine government to put on hold the commercial exploration for oil and natural gas in the area.

Aside from Colmenares, a senatorial candidate, the petitioners included Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Zarate, Anakpawis Rep. Ariel Casilao, ACT Teachers Representatives Antonio Tinio and France Castro, Gabriela Representatives Emmi De Jesus and Arlene Brosas, Kabataan Rep. Sarah Jane Elago, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas Chair Danilo Ramos and Kalinga leader Elma Tuzon.

In the petition, they questioned the government's choice of China International Economic and Trade Arbitration

Commission as arbitration tribunal in case of dispute and the choice of Chinese law as the governing law of the agreement.

They said the arbitration provision was "manifestly and grossly disadvantageous to the [Philippine government] and so one-sided in favor of China."

Automatically awarding the contract to a Chinese contractor also violated the constitutional preference given to qualified Filipino contractors, they added.

Ecuador, Sri Lanka precedent

The militant lawmakers warned that the Philippines could go the way of Ecuador and Sri Lanka, which both reportedly fell to China's "debt trap."

Ecuador was forced to cede control of 80 percent of its oil produce after it defaulted on its Coca Codo Hydro Dam, while Sri Lanka surrendered control of its Hambantota port after it failed

to pay its loan to China.

Aside from asking for a TRO, the petitioners asked the Supreme Court to order concerned government agencies to produce all loan agreements with China.

At the Kapihan sa Senado forum on Thursday, Senate Minority Leader Franklin Drilon said the Philippines could ignore oppressive provisions of a foreign-funded loan, but this could lead to worse consequences.

Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. earlier said the administration could ignore a provision in a contract that it would consider to be onerous, even if the deal had been signed.

Drilon said the Philippines could do so but the creditor might take more drastic steps, such as immediately declaring that all its other loans as immediately demandable. —WITH RE-

PORTS FROM LEILA B. SALAVERRIA
AND MELVIN GASCON INQ



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Void Chinese loan for Chico River Project, SC asked

By EDU PUNAY

The Supreme Court (SC) was asked yesterday to strike down the government's \$62-million loan agreement with China for the Chico River irrigation pump project in the Cordillera region.

In a 67-page petition, lawmakers from militant groups under the Makabayan bloc led by senatorial candidate Neri Colmenares asked the high court to nullify the loan agreement for being unconstitutional.

They also sought issuance of a temporary restraining order (TRO) to stop

implementation of the assailed deal where they claimed the Philippines stands to lose natural gas deposits in Recto (Reed) Bank as a collateral in case of loan default.

Taking a cue from arguments publicly raised by Senior Associate Justice Antonio Carpio, petitioners alleged the agreement violates several provisions of the 1987 Constitution as it contains an express waiver of sovereign immunity over the country's patrimonial assets in favor of China.

The petitioners cited provisions of the contract showing the government "has allowed its patrimonial assets to stand as security for unpaid obligations under this Loan Agreement. 'Collateralization' of patrimonial property for unpaid obligations under a foreign loan contract or as an award in an arbitral proceeding is unconstitutional and illegal."

"These assailed provisions open the possibility for China to acquire patrimonial properties in the Philippines which is tantamount to ceding in favor of China certain territories in the Philippines by virtue of our default in our contractual obligations. This situation obviously impacts negatively on our national sovereignty, territorial integrity and is inimical to our national interest," read the petition.

Petitioners said the contract specifically violates Article XII, Section 2 of the Constitution.

They said the assailed provisions of the agreement also violate Article II, Section 7 of the Constitution, which states: "The

State shall pursue an independent foreign policy. In its relations with other states the paramount consideration shall be national sovereignty, territorial integrity, national interest and the right to self-determination."

Colmenares and the petitioners further stressed these constitutional provisions were violated by the "choice of China International Economic and Trade Arbitration Commission (CIETAC) as tribunal and the choice of Chinese law as the governing law of the agreement."

"In this case, Respondents have agreed to submit any form of dispute arising out of or in connection with the Loan Agreement to the China International Economic and Trade Arbitration Commission for arbitration. By doing so, Respondents betrayed the lack of sensitivity to the Constitution and gravely abused their discretion, when they acceded to the arbitration provision in the Loan Agreement which is manifestly and grossly disadvantageous to the GRP and so one-sided in favor of China. Such one-sidedness is plain even to the uninitiated eye," petitioners argued.

Petitioners also assailed the confidentiality clause in the agreement, which they said was "a brazen disregard of the constitutional right of the Filipino people to information on foreign loans obtained or guaranteed by the government and is considered inimical to the national interest" under Article XII, Section 21 of the Constitution. — With Artemio Dumlao



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SC asked to stop Chico River loan deal

BY ASHZEL HACHERO

LAWMAKERS belonging to the leftist Makabayan bloc yesterday asked the Supreme Court to strike down the government's \$62-million loan agreement with China for the Chico River irrigation pump project in the Cordillera region.

In a 67-page petition, the lawmakers said the agreement contains provisions that violate the 1987 Constitution.

Among the alleged unconstitutional provisions are the confidentiality clause, choice of Chinese arbitration tribunal, and the waiver of sovereign immunity over patrimonial assets.

The petitioners said the assailed provisions "open the possibility for China to acquire patrimonial properties in the Philippines."

It will be recalled that Supreme Court Senior Associate Justice Antonio Carpio warned that China could seize gas and oil reserves at the Reed Bank if the country is unable to pay its loan for the Chico River project. He cited a provision in the loan agreement

See SC ASKED ► Page B2

SC ASKED

wherein Manila waived its immunity to patrimonial assets and assets dedicated to commercial use.

Reed Bank is within the country's 200-mile exclusive economic zone, according to a 2016 ruling issued by the Netherlands-based Permanent Court of Arbitration which invalidated China's massive claims in the South China Sea.

China though refused to honor the arbitral ruling. China and the Philippines have competing claims in the South China Sea together with Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Vietnam.

The petitioners are former Bayan Muna representative and now senatorial candidate Neri Colmenares, Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Zarate, Anakpawis Rep. Ariel Casilao, Gabriela Reps. Emmy de Jesus and Arlene Brosas, ACT Teachers Reps. Antonio Tinio and Francisca Castro, and Kabataan Rep. Sarah Jane Elago.

Named respondents were President Duterte, Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea, Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III, National Economic Development Authority head Ernesto Pernia, and Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
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The Manila Times

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Void China loan deal, SC urged

THE Supreme Court (SC) was urged by a group of militant petitioners on Thursday to cancel the Philippine government's \$62-million loan agreement with China for the Chico River Irrigation Pump Project in the Cordillera region.

In a 67-page petition for certiorari and prohibition, the group of party-list legislators from the Makabayan bloc sought to nullify the loan agreement for being unconstitutional.

The group is led by Senate candidate Neri Colmenares.

Named respondents to the case were President Rodrigo Duterte, Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea, Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez 3rd, Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Ernesto Pernia, Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra and National Irrigation Administration Administrator Ricardo Visaya.

The Colmenares group sought the issuance of a temporary restraining order to halt the implementation of the deal, where the Philippines stands to lose natural-gas deposits in the Recto Bank or Reed Bank in the South China Sea (West Philippine Sea) in case of loan default.

Associate Justice Antonio Carpio had said China would ravish the natural gas in the area if the Philippines

➤ **LoanA2**

LOAN FROM A1

SC asked to void

failed to pay the \$62-million loan.

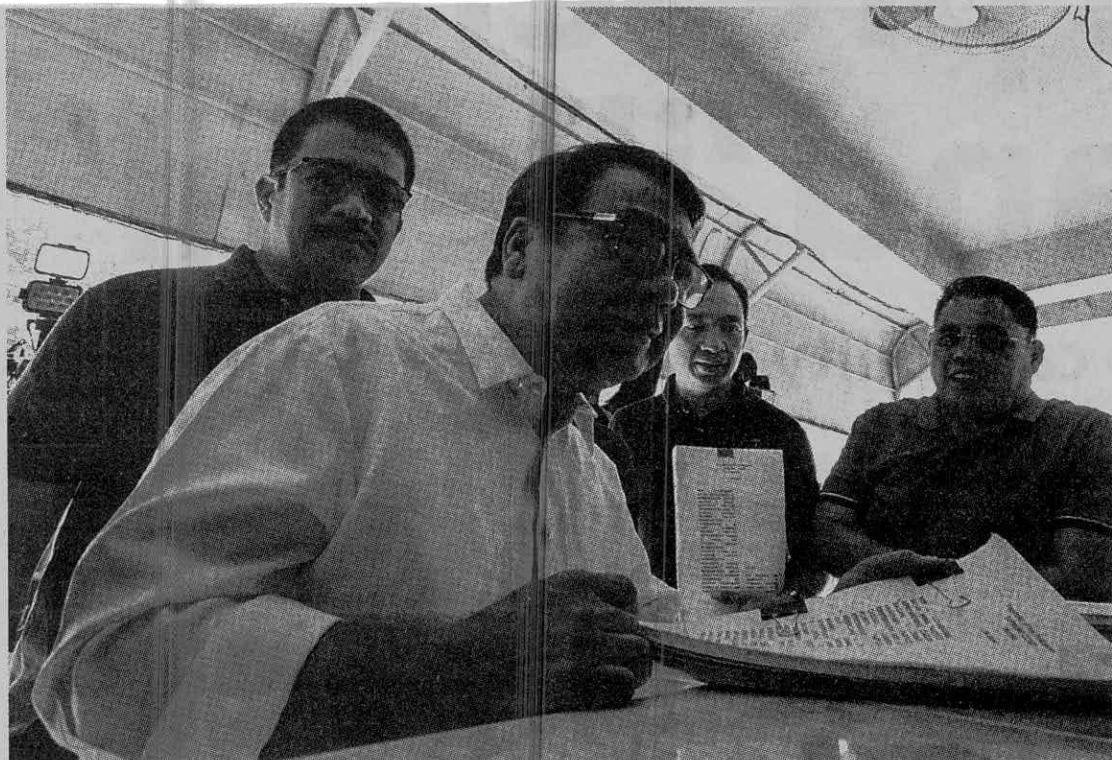
The 20-year deal for the Chico River Pump Irrigation Project was signed by Dominguez and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of China Zhao Jianhua on April 10, 2018.

The petitioners asked the respondents to produce procurement documents in granting civil works to the Chinese contractor and other relevant documents in connection with the case.

They wanted the high tribunal to order all concerned agencies of the government to produce certified true copies, upon request, of all loan agreements executed by and between Manila and Beijing.

Meanwhile, two of Colmenares' fellow candidates for senator opposed Duterte's order to review the loan deal with China and all other government contracts, saying the power to investigate these agreements might be "weaponized."

In a forum at Adamson University in Manila, former solicitor general Florin "Pilo" Hilbay and Magdalo party-list Rep. Gary Alejano likened the review to a "narcologist," saying it might be



STOP CHICO LOAN Senate candidate Neri Colmenares files a petition questioning a loan agreement with China before the Supreme Court in Manila on Thursday. PHOTO BY DJ DIOSINA

used as a means to run after enemies of the government.

The government has entered into what Hilbay said were hundreds of thousands of contracts.

Malacañang also on Thursday assured the public that the President was "serious" in his order to review all existing contracts entered into by the Philippine government with private entities, multilateral agencies or foreign countries.

Palace spokesman Salvador Panelo made the assurance in an interview with radio dzMM after some senators urged the government to exercise caution in implementing the order.

Sen. Franklin Drilon said the government should carefully assess existing and binding contracts as these could not simply be classified as onerous and canceled.

Drilon said the review of the

contracts "must not be used to harass" and should be brought to the Ombudsman if proven to have violated the anti-graft law.

Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian agreed, saying the assessment should not be meant to scrap contracts as it could tarnish the reputation of the country in attracting potential investors.

JOMAR CANLAS, CATHERINE A. MODESTO AND CATHERINE S. VALENTE



JOIN NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC'S EARTH DAY RUN IN THE PHILIPPINES THIS MONTH!

In April the National Geographic further champions its environmental cause with its yearly Earth Day Run. This year's run will be in the theme of "Planet or Plastic?", a multiyear initiative from National Geographic, raising awareness of plastic pollution and reducing the amount of single-use plastic that enters in the world's oceans.

Everyone in the Philippines is welcome to join by visiting www.natgeoearthdayrun.com. The run will take place on April 14 at The Mall of Asia open grounds.

Copresented by Immunomax, this year marks the 10th year of the Earth Day Run in the Philippines and, thus, gaining traction to 15,000 running enthusiasts for the 3K, 5K, 10K and 21K marathon.

"We are proud of how Earth Day Run has played a vital role in bringing awareness to environmental issues in the country...By being more conscious of our actions and the footprint we leave behind, we recommit and strengthen our promise to help and protect our planet," said Charo Espedido, director and head of marketing for FOX Networks Group Philippines.

Each year 9 million tons of plastic waste ends up in the ocean, and Asia is responsible for more plastic waste leakage than the rest of the world combined. Some estimates suggest this plastic could remain in marine environments for 450 years or longer.

The ultimate goal of the Planet or Plastic? campaign is to prevent 1 billion plastic items from reaching the ocean. Doing so will not only benefit thousands to



potentially millions of marine animals that become entangled in, suffocated by or ingest plastic each year, but will also contribute to the overall health of the planet's marine ecosystems and all who rely upon those.

Runners and event-goers at this year's Earth Day activities in the Philippines are encouraged to take pledge of not using plastic and, instead, bring reusable water bottles that will come with every race kit, on the main event.



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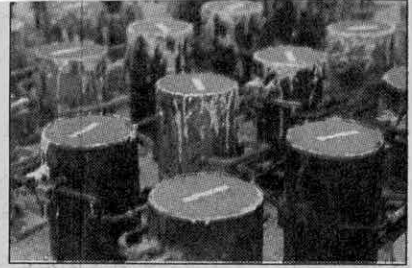
UP students win int'l prize for eco-friendly cement

By JANVIC MATEO

A group of civil engineering students from the University of the Philippines recently won an international competition for de-

veloping an environment-friendly concrete that uses recycled and locally sourced materials.

The Philippine entry, submitted by students Angelica Anne Munar, Turn to Page 8



The eco-concrete developed by UP engineering students won in the event held recently in Canada.

UP From Page 1

Ryan Christopher Ramelo, Paulo Santos and Alexis Declaro, won the first prize of the eco-concrete competition organized by the American Concrete Institute (ACI) in Canada last March 24, the university said in a post on its website on Thursday.

Instead of gravel and cement, the eco-concrete developed by the UP students used recycled materials such as fly ash and waste glass combined with pozzolanic tuff, a common type of porous rock found within and around the university campus in Quezon City.

"Rapid global urbanization boosts the

demand for concrete at an unprecedented rate. This means that the environmental footprint of concrete production can no longer be ignored," the university said in its description of the invention.

"The conventional concrete mix, which consists only of cement, gravel, sand and water, must be revisited to achieve environmental sustainability in the decision-making process," it added.

During the testing of the concrete, an average improvement of 23.9 percent was observed in its environmental performance.

It was measured using five parameters: global warming, carcinogenic impact, ozone depletion, ecotoxicity and fossil fuel depletion.

UP said further testing showed that the eco-concrete's strength and durability is comparable with regular concrete, proving that "an environmentally friendly yet strong and durable concrete can be produced."

The students, who were advised by UP Diliman faculty Justin Jesse Limbo Seranilla and Christian Orozco, took home the \$750 prize after winning the competition.

The delegation to Canada was led by ACI Philippines chapter president Ramon Allado and director Froilan Martillano.

The competition aims to promote the idea of environmental performance in concrete mix design as an important aspect of sustainability, according to ACI.



Thesis film in anti-waste effort

THE thesis film of iACADEMY students, "Halimaw sa Basura" has been chosen by the Canadian Embassy in Philippines as part of its "What A Waste!" initiative to increase awareness and address the looming problem of waste management in the country.

"We are honored to be part of this very big initiative," said Maria Isabella Parca, one of the directors and producers of the film and a BS Animation Graduate (Class of 2018).

Canadian Embassy's "What a Waste!" aims to alleviate waste in Metro Manila where 19 municipalities and 13.7 million residents generate about 3,500 tons of household waste daily.

The symposium on March 25 and 26

encouraged discussion with a view of highlighting a range of technological, social, and circular economy solutions to manage waste.

The initiative will target key decision makers such as city mayors, local government units, and the Department of Energy and meet with Canadian companies, experts, social enterprises and private Philippine companies to discuss and deploy their plans for waste management.

"We really wanted it to be used for something bigger, something that will help push the discussion about waste management and for people to better understand that this issue needs to be addressed," Parca added.

Combating climate change with (from left) Peter Brown, iACADEMY School of Design's Animation Faculty; Her Excellency Patricia Fuller, Canadian Ambassador for Climate Change; Alexandra dela Cruz and Ma. Isabella Parca, iACADEMY BS Animation alumni; Crista McInnis, Counsellor and Senior Trade Commissioner of the Canadian Embassy; and His Excellency John T. Holmes, Ambassador of Canada to the Philippines.





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'Mountain tourism' launched in Camiguin

MAMBAJAO, CAMIGUIN – Camiguin's chains of volcanoes, especially Mt. Hibok-Hibok, will once again be on the radar of adventure seekers as the provincial government, the Department of Tourism-10 (DOT-10) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-10 (DENR-10) launched "Climb Camiguin" as a way of promoting the province as a prime destination for mountain tourism in the country.

"The province recognizes the potential of volcano tourism for driving the socioeconomic growth and development of the local community," said Camiguin Gov. Maria Luisa Romualdo.

Mt. Hibok-Hibok and the adjacent Mt. Timpoong were recently declared by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Center for Biodiversity as an ASEAN heritage park, now officially known as the Mt. Timpoong-Mt. Hibok-Hibok Natural Monument.

The mountain range is home to some of the endemic species of flora and fauna found in this part of Mindanao.

Some of the similar sites in the Philippines include the Apo Natural Park, Mt. Kitanglad Range Natural Park, Mt. Malindang Range Natural Park, Mt. Hamiguitan Range Wildlife Sanctuary, Mts. Iglit-Baco National Park, Mt. Makiling Forest Reserve and Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park.

The number of protected locations in the region – Mt. Kitanglad Range Natural Park, Mt. Malindang Range Natural Park and the Mt. Timpoong-Mt. Hibok-Hibok Natural Monument – has inspired the Department of Tourism-10 to launch mountain tourism



Lush greenery surrounds Mt. Hibok-Hibok in Mambajao, Camiguin.

in Northern Mindanao, said DOT-10 regional director Marie Elaine Unchuan.

She said mountain tourism is the latest addition to the products that DOT-10 has introduced, which also included packages for farm tourism, dive tourism, faith tourism and cultural tourism.

One of the concerns that the tourism department has considered before launching the project was on the crafting of legislation by local governments to protect the mountains in their areas.

"Legislation should be in place, and communities must be involved in this," she said.

Mambajao Mayor Jurdin Jesus Romualdo has appealed to climbers to help spread the word about Camiguin's mountains to their respective families and communities.

"Wherever you go, please

speaking about Camiguin and be our spokespersons to promote Camiguin and help us in our conservation of this beautiful province," the mayor said.

The trail starts at Brgy. Itum in the ASEAN Heritage Park known as "Nightscapes." This is accessible via Mambajao passing the Philvolcs station. Base camp is between Mt. Hibok-Hibok and Mt. Timpoong.

The trail approach is slightly inclined with lots of rattan along the path. Incline increases steadily as the trail progresses to a minor peak at 800 masl above sea level (masl) with a view of the base camp.

The trail transitions from deciduous to mossy forest at 900 masl.

The trail passes by the landslide area where there are sightings of luminous mush-

rooms and sulfur vents. At 1,100 masl one encounters the pandan forest and red ferns. There is a huge vent that can be explored.

Recommended stop is three hours into the climb where there is a panoramic view of the white island and about a quarter of the province. The trail then traverses into the old crater with huge boulders and sulfur vents.

There will be a steep ascent to reach the minor peak of Mt. Hibok-Hibok. You will enter a pygmy forest and have a view of several mountain peaks in the horizon. Nearing the peak will be more pygmy forests with wildflowers and endemic pitcher plants.

Reaching the summit of Mt. Hibok-Hibok will reward you with breathtaking, panoramic views.

– Gerry Lee Gorit



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Accelerating climate change raises alarms

The physical signs and socio-economic impacts of climate change are accelerating as record greenhouse gas concentrations drive global temperatures towards increasingly dangerous levels, according to a new report from the World Meteorological Organization.

The WMO Statement on the State of the Global Climate in 2018, its 25th anniversary edition, highlights record sea level rise, as well as exceptionally high land and ocean temperatures over the past four years. This warming trend has lasted since the start of this century and is expected to continue.

The WMO climate statement includes input from national meteorological and hydrological services, an extensive community of scientific experts, and United Nations agencies.

“Since the statement was first published, climate science has achieved an unprecedented degree of robustness, providing authoritative evidence of global

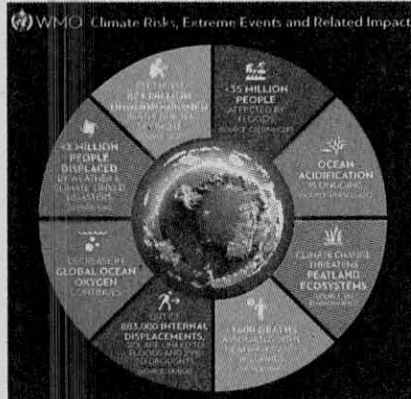


CHART shows climate risks, extreme events and related impact in the world.

UN PHOTO

temperature increase and associated features such as accelerating sea level rise, shrinking sea ice, glacier retreat and extreme events such as heat waves,” said WMO Secretary General Petteri Taalas.

These key climate change indicators are

becoming more pronounced. Carbon dioxide levels, which were at 357.0 parts per million when the statement was first published in 1994, keep rising—to 405.5 parts per million in 2017. For 2018 and 2019, greenhouse gas concentrations are expected to increase further.

The WMO climate statement includes input from national meteorological and hydrological services, an extensive community of scientific experts, and United Nations agencies. It details climate related risks and impacts on human health and welfare, migration and displacement, food security, the environment and ocean and land-based ecosystem. It also catalogues extreme weather around the world.

“Extreme weather has continued in the early 2019, most recently with tropical cyclone ‘Idai,’ which caused devastating floods and tragic loss of life in Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi. It may turn out to be one of the deadliest weather-related disasters to hit the southern hemisphere,” said Taalas.