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RENEWABLE ENERGY FORAY

MGEN PITCHES FLOATING SOLAR FACILITY ON LAGUNA DE BAY

By **Ronnel W. Domingo**
@RonW DomingoINQ

Manila Electric Co.'s (Meralco) power generation arm is looking into a possible 110-megawatt floating solar facility on Laguna de Bay as part of its renewable energy thrust.

Meralco PowerGen Corp. (MGen) president and chief executive Rogelio Singson told reporters in an interview the company was "in the process of applying for" such a project.

The Meralco group has earlier announced a plan, through MGen Renewable Energy Inc. (MGreen), to invest in 1,000 MW of renewable energy projects over the next five to seven years.

"This [floating solar project] can be done in about 10 months, [but] the requirement is to have a pilot project first," Singson said. "You have to start at a smaller scale."

He said MGreen was awaiting the go-ahead from the Laguna Lake Development Authority to do the floating solar project.

"Right now, we have a local partner [for this project], but

we hope to be able to eventually grow the portfolio," Singson added.

Earlier this October, Meralco said its board agreed to inject P424 million in funds that would contribute to the P10-billion cost of MGreen's pipeline of solar projects—representing a total of 210 MW in power-generation capacity.

MGreen is intended to be the Meralco group's platform for other renewable energy projects including wind and run-on-river hydro power.

MGen, along with Thai partner Electricity Generating PCL, or EGCO Group, last September started the commercial operations of their 455-MW San Buenaventura power plant in Quezon province.

The San Buenaventura facility, touted as the first in the Philippines to use supercritical technology—which means it is more efficient compared to conventional power plant as it can harness more heat from its fuel in producing electricity—provides round-the-clock supply to the grid, being a baseload power plant. INQ



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MGen eyes floating solar plant in Laguna

By DANESSA RIVERA

The renewable energy unit of power generation arm Meralco Powergen Corp. (MGen) plans to build a floating solar project in Laguna Lake.

MGen president and chief executive officer Rogelio Singson said the company, through subsidiary MGEN Renewable Energy Inc. (MGreen), is working on applying for a pilot floating solar project in Laguna Lake with a local partner.

He said one of the four project proponents made an offer to the company for the floating solar facility which would have a capacity of up to 110 megawatts (MW).

"We have not yet signed any agreement but I believe there are four entities that have been granted the right to develop the pilot project. We're talking to one of them," Singson said.

The proposed floating solar project is awaiting the go signal from the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) to commence construction.

Currently, the LLDA is crafting policy for large-scale floating solar projects over the Laguna Lake.

In the meantime, MGen and its partner are looking to build a small-scale pilot project first which could be completed in 10 months once cleared by the government agency, Singson said.

"The industry is trying to help the LLDA. If they want, we can fund the study, prepare the policy that will not impact on the use of the Laguna Lake. In fact, it will help because the evaporation is lessened because the lake is covered," Singson said.

Singson said a floating solar project is not as expensive as the land-based solar farm.

"You are able to get away from land conversion, and you're only talking to one entity," he said.

The floating solar project is part of MGreen's pipeline of solar project developments to be financed by the P424 million funding from Manila Electric Co. (Meralco).

Meralco is pouring in P424 million in MGen to finance its pipeline of solar project developments, which have a combined capacity of 210 MW and a total estimated project cost of P10.01 billion.

Singson had previously said these projects were in line with the company's commitment to develop large-scale renewable energy projects that will provide reliable, environment-friendly power at competitive prices without the need for subsidy.

Meralco formed MGreen to pursue the development of 1,000 MW of green energy projects in the next five to seven years.



Meralco firm eyes floating solar project in Laguna Lake

By MYRNA M. VELASCO

The power generation arm of Manila Electric Company (Meralco) is targeting to install 110-megawatt floating solar direct current (DC) facility in Laguna Lake.

Rogelio L. Singson, president and CEO of Meralco PowerGen Corporation, indicated that the project shall become part of the portfolio of its subsidiary MGEN Renewable Energy Inc. (MGreen).

He said the company is now in talks with the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) for the planned floating solar venture, which it is hoping to advance to implementation phase soon.

"We are applying for a pilot in Laguna Lake - we're looking at a 110MWDC of floating solar," Singson said.

The MGen chief executive added that they are now in discussion with a prospective partner for the propounded solar facility - but he kept the identity of the company under wraps for now pending any outcome of their negotiations.

He said there had been four entities that were granted permits by the LLDA to undertake pilot projects for floating solar at the bay, "so we're talking to one of them."

Singson similarly qualified

that they did not crunch the investment figures yet, but their assessment exhibits that floating solar will cost less than ground-mounted installations.

"So far, the numbers are not as expensive as the land-based," Singson stressed; emphasizing that if the project will be concretized, its capacity will be wheeled to the grid.

The floating solar is seen next in the investment portfolio of MGen in the RE space - after announcing the 210MW ground-mounted solar ventures that the company will be pursuing in Luzon.

The longer term investment trajectory of the Meralco firm in the renewable energy sector will be for 1,000 to 1,200 megawatts - and that could be a mix of developments in solar, wind, hydro and biomass technologies.

However, Singson opined that these targeted investments must be underpinned with warranted expansion and reinforcement of the transmission system so the capacities of these RE facilities won't be stranded.

Without increasing the capacity-transport of the transmission facilities, he emphasized that investments in RE could be hobbled - similar to the 'congestion dilemma' that the solar farms have been experiencing in Negros.



MGen keen on joining floating solar power project in Laguna

BY LENIE LECTURA

[@lectura](#)

MERALCO PowerGen Corp. (MGen), the power generation subsidiary of Manila Electric Co. (Meralco), wants to take part in the development of a floating solar power project via a partnership with a solar power developer.

"We have not yet signed but I believe there are four entities that have been granted the right to develop the pilot. We're talking to one of them," said MGen President Rogelio Singson.

He said four solar power firms were issued pilot permits by the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA), and MGen is interested to partner with one of the four.

"One operator already made an offer to Meralco. There is already a price offer. There are benchmarks, numbers we're working on. Only four were issued permits," he said.

The scale of the solar power project is 110 megawatts (MW) and the cost is not as expensive as land-based solar panels.

Once the LLDA issues the rules on floating solar projects, Singson said construction will commence and will take only 10 months to finish. "We are waiting for the rules on use and lease for solar projects of lake water," he said. "The requirement is to do a pilot first while they are developing the policy."

MGen, he said, can help LLDA craft the policy to fast-track the development of such projects. "The industry is trying to help LLDA. If they want, we can fund the study, prepare the policy that will not impact on the use of Laguna Lake. In fact, it will help [because] evaporation is lessened [since it is covered]. Unlike now, with high sunlight, [algae grows fast. That's why the fish get swamped]."

Electricity to be produced from the floating solar project will be

thrown into the grid. "It is connected to the Meralco grid because where we're looking at is within the Meralco grid... We can do more if we have enough transmission lines. We're pressing the government to push for some additional transmission lines," commented Singson.

This project will be done through MGen Renewable Energy Inc. (MGreen), which is eyeing to invest in 1,000 MW of renewable-energy projects over the next five to seven years.

"MGen, through MGreen, will continue working on the realization of our project opportunities and will work in partnership with established developers to maximize our growth potential," Singson earlier said.

MGreen is the renewable-energy subsidiary of MGen, which, in turn, is the power generation arm of Meralco. The company was established to serve as the platform for the strategic push to develop renewable-energy projects, primarily solar, wind and run-of-river hydro.

Some RE deals will be signed this year but the commercial operation date of these RE projects, which include solar and microgrid, could happen next year. Also, the RE deals this year are targeted to be completed in time for the release of the Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) guidelines.

RPS mandates distribution utilities to source a minimum portion of energy from renewable sources, thus guaranteeing a market for renewable-energy generators. This minimum will be increased on yearly basis.

"We are working on several renewable-energy prospects and we recognize the significant reduction in the development cost, particularly for large-scale solar and wind over the past years. We intend to be a key player in this expanding sector," Singson said.



MGen eyes floating solar installation in Laguna Lake

By Victor V. Saulon *Sub-Editor*

MERALCO POWERGEN Corp. (MGen) is venturing into a floating solar energy installation in Laguna Lake, which its president said is a cheaper option for its renewables subsidiary than land-based solar farms.

"We are in the process of applying for a pilot [project] in Laguna Lake," Rogelio L. Singson, president and chief executive officer of MGen, told reporters.

"We're looking at 110-megawatt (MW) DC," he added.

He said for now, MGen will be partnering with a local entity. The project will be under MGen unit MGEN Renewable Energy, Inc. (MGreen).

"Right now, local, but we hope to be able to eventually grow the portfolio. This is under already the MGreen subsidiary, purely renewable 'yun," he said.

Mr. Singson said he expects the project to be completed in around 10 months, although the initial requirement of the Laguna Lakes Development Authority (LLDA) is for a proponent to first put up a pilot project while the agency is developing

the policy governing floating solar installations.

"We are just waiting for the green light to do the pilot," he said.

Mr. Singson said he did not know the numbers on the costing of the project although he expects this is not as expensive as a land-based solar farm.

"You are able to get away from land conversion," he said.

"*Hindi pa kami pumipirma* (We haven't signed anything) but I believe there are four entities that have been granted the right to develop the pilot. We're talking to one of them," he said, adding that

only one of the four firms has a French component in the project.

Asked whether the entity MGen was talking to is using French technology for its floating solar, he said: "Yes." He also confirmed the project is the one led by Tetchi C. Capellan, president and chief executive officer of SunAsia Energy, Inc.

"Yes, because they are the ones that have done a big number of floating [projects]," Mr. Singson said.

In an interview last year, Ms. Capellan said she expected an investment of around \$850,000 to \$1 million per MW for the float-

ing solar energy system it plans to install on Laguna Lake with a French partner.

Ms. Capellan had declined to disclose the capacity of the power system that SunAsia plans to install on the lake, saying it might alarm the LLDA. She placed the installation cost for a ground-mounted solar energy system at around \$600,000 per MW.

SunAsia and French company Ciel & Terre (C&T) announced last year their collaboration to introduce the patented Hydrelion technology in the Laguna Lake project. The project is led by SunAsia subsidiary NorteSol.

On Tuesday, MGen formally inaugurated the P56.2-billion San Buenaventura Power Ltd. Co., the country's first supercritical coal-fired power plant, which now provides additional supply to the Luzon grid.

Meralco's controlling stakeholder, Beacon Electric Asset Holdings, Inc., is partly owned by PLDT, Inc.;

Hastings Holdings, Inc., a unit of PLDT Beneficial Trust Fund subsidiary MediaQuest Holdings, Inc., has a majority stake in *BusinessWorld* through the Philippine Star Group, which it controls.



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Meralco unit eyes floating solar plant in Laguna de Bay

By Alena Mae S. Flores

MGEN Renewable Energy Inc., a subsidiary of Meralco PowerGen Corp., plans to put up a 110-megawatt floating solar project in Laguna de Bay, a top executive said Wednesday.

"We are in the process of applying for a pilot [project] in Laguna Lake. We're looking at... a 110-MW DC solar," Meralco PowerGen president Rogelio Singson told reporters.

Singson said the company was in talks with a possible local partner for the project.

"We have not signed anything, but I believe there are four entities that have been granted the right to develop the pilot. We're talking to one of them," Singson said.

Singson said the solar project could be completed within 10 months.

"The requirement of energy is for pilot. We will set up a small one for pilot while they are developing the policy," he said.

Singson said the company was waiting for the go signal from Laguna Lake Development Authority to proceed with the pilot project.

"We are just waiting for the green light to do the pilot," Singson said.

He said floating solar would not be as expensive as land-based solar projects and would not have an impact on the use of the lake.

"LLDA still has to formulate the policy. The industry is trying to help LLDA. If they want, we can fund the study, prepare the policy that will not impact on the use of Laguna Lake. In fact, it will help as evaporation would be lessened because it will have cover," he said.

Singson said the project would likely be connected to the Manila Electric Co.'s distribution line as the company was looking at the Meralco franchise area. Meralco PowerGen is the power arm of power distributor Meralco.

He said aside from the Laguna Lake project, Mgreen was also looking at floating solar projects in Tarlac, Nueva Ecija, Cagayan Valley, Quezon province and Bicol.

"I am focused on Luzon. I need to address the RPS [renewable portfolio standards] requirement of Meralco of about 600 MW," Singson said.

Under the RPS program, Meralco is required to source a certain percentage of its power requirement from renewable energy sources.

Mgreen recently secured an equity funding amounting to P424 million from Meralco that will be invested in various solar projects.



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Floating solar power project eyed in Laguna Lake

MERALCO PowerGen Corp. (MGen) is in talks with the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) for the development of a 110 megawatts (MW) floating solar project.

Rogelio Singson, the company's president and chief executive officer, told reporters on Tuesday subsidiary MGEN Renewable Energy Inc. (MGreen) and a local partner are readying the pilot of the project.

Singson said the project can be constructed in 10 months but the company has to come up with a pilot first while LLDA is developing the policy.

Singson said the project is expected to help solve the algae growth problem in Laguna Lake that has recently caused water supply interruptions in several areas.

He said MGen is talking to one of the four entities granted the right to develop the pilot.

"One operator already made an offer to Meralco with a price offer, benchmarks and numbers we're working on," Singson added.

He said the project will also require additional transmission lines.

He added the proposed float-



Benefit. The project is expected to help solve the algae growth problem in Laguna Lake.

ing solar project will benefit from MGreen's P424 million funding which the company will use to invest in various solar projects

under development with a combined capacity of 210 MW and total combined project cost of P10 billion.



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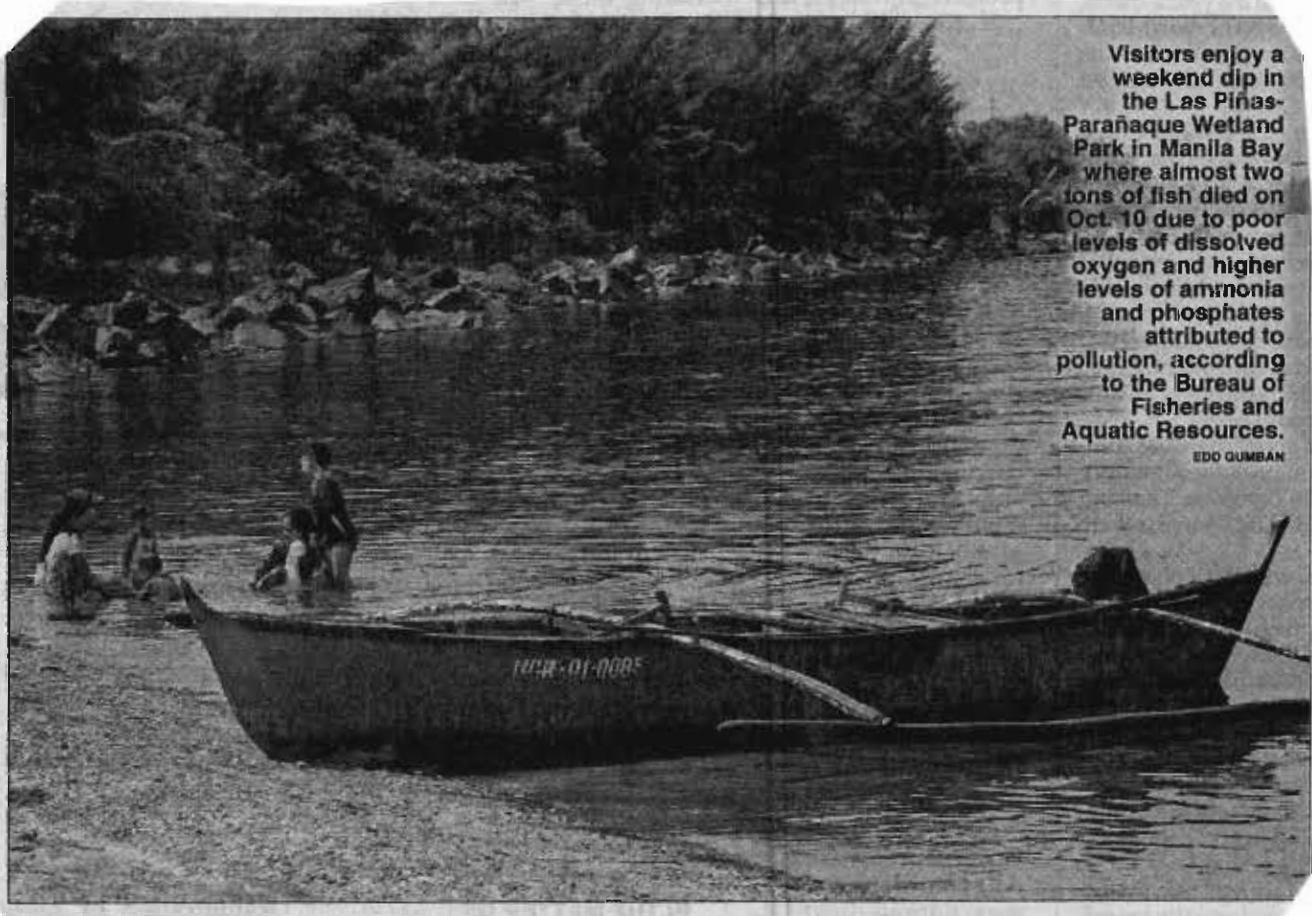
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Visitors enjoy a weekend dip in the Las Piñas-Parañaque Wetland Park in Manila Bay where almost two tons of fish died on Oct. 10 due to poor levels of dissolved oxygen and higher levels of ammonia and phosphates attributed to pollution, according to the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.

EDO GUMBAN



Cause of shellfish death in Manila Bay bared

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) said that low level of salinity of water in some parts of the Manila Bay caused the death of shellfish in some areas in southern Metro Manila last week.

In its statement, the BFAR said: "Based on the initial laboratory report, the level of salinity in the areas [of Bacoor and Sangley Point in Cavite], which ranged from 19-25 parts per thousand (ppt), is lower than the required level for shellfish survival, which is 27-35 ppt."

The bureau also said that "the heavy rainfall in the past few days may have triggered the salinity of the water to drop."

The BFAR maintained that consumption of shellfish from the said fishing ground is still safe, although, the public is advised "to collect only live shellfish and wash them properly before cooking."

Cesar Canoy, Las Piñas City fishery technologist, said that Cavite's low level of salinity of water might also the cause of massive fish and shellfish kill in the waters of Las Piñas and Parañaque since they were connected.

On Friday last week, Oct. 11, several kilos of mussels and oysters turned up dead in some farms of Las Piñas and Parañaque following the death of about 30 tubs of various species of fish, including sapsap, salaysay, bagaong, asuhos, banak, tilapia and salinyase.

According to Saturday's inventory of the two local government units, about 500 kilos of shellfish were wasted in Parañaque while some 150 kilos of dead mussels were recovered in Las Piñas.

Authorities also feared that losses for fisherfolk and vendors could reach ₱2 million. **(Joseph Pedrajas)**



WALANG RED TIDE O SAKIT SA MGA ISDANG MAKUKUHA SA MANILA BAY—BFAR

NILINAW ng Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) na walang red tide o anumang nakamamatay na sakit na maaaring makuha sa mga isdang makukuha sa Manila Bay.

Ito'y kasunod ng fish kill na nang-

yari sa dalampasigan ng Las Piñas at Parañaque.

Giit ng BFAR, namatay ang mga isda roon dahil sa kakulangan ng dissolved oxygen sa dagat. Ibig sabihin, hindi nakahinga ang mga isda.





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Native trees in Ecija; arboretum in Cebu

Geothermal leader Energy Development Corp. (EDC) has partnered with non-government organization Philippine Permaculture Association (PPA) to protect and propagate 21 rare and threatened native tree species in Nueva Ecija.

Under EDC's BINHI program, 152 seedlings from these species were planted in the premises of Cabiokid Foundation Inc., a 13-hectare permaculture development site and integrated farm that serves as PPA's demo farm. Some of the species planted include *yakal-saplungan*, *yakal-malibato*, *malabayabas*, *betis*, *apunan*, *pianga*, *kamagong*, *kamagong ponce*, *ipil*, *tindalo* and *supa*. These species have dwindled in number in the wild and are no longer familiar to the younger generations.

The PPA promotes knowledge on permaculture for sustainable agriculture. Permaculture is the practice of integrating people and

the environment to create diverse, stable and resilient agricultural systems. It comes from the combination of the words "permanent" and "agriculture."

Meanwhile, premium Philippine native tree species such as *narra*, *mangkono* and *molave* will soon be grown and propagated in Cebu City, thanks to the BINHI arboretum that EDC has recently inaugurated in the University of San Carlos (USC) campus in Talamban.

The arboretum was put up in partnership with USC and Knowles Electronics Corp., which have both committed to ensure the sustainability of this initiative in line with their dedication to environmental conservation.

BINHI is EDC's forest restoration and biodiversity preservation program that aims to save endangered premium Philippine timber tree species by planting their seedlings in school grounds, public parks and

other areas that provide a safe haven for the long-term survival of the future mother trees.

As part of the agreement, USC's campus in Talamban will host a permanent designated area for premium and threatened Philippine tree species, supported by planting and promotional activities as well as funding from Knowles.

EDC will provide the seedlings along with technical assistance for the protection and maintenance of the trees, including labelling and scientific monitoring. This is EDC's 11th arboretum since 2008.

As of 2018, BINHI has identified and rescued 96 species of prime and endangered Philippine hardwood. It has raised 175,685 seedlings in central and satellite nurseries, distributed and planted across 3,214 hectares with the help of its 173 partner organizations and 88 farmer's associations.



Cebu halts DPWH tree-cutting

They (DPWH) should ask for our (city's) locational clearance before any project implementation on the planning and design stage

By Rico M. Osmeña

Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia and the Cebu City Council on Tuesday called on the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) to suspend its infrastructure plan on road widening in the province's first district and Natalio Bacalso Avenue in Cebu City that will entail the cutting of 122 trees.

This was as the city council grilled representatives of DPWH-Cebu City Engineering District in its Citizen's Hour during the regular session, pointing out that they were not being consulted on their projects within the city.

"They (DPWH) should ask for our (city's) locational clearance before any project implementation on the planning and design stage," Garcia reiterated.

Almost all of the city councilors present during the session called on the suspension of the road-widening project as they said it needs more study and assessment.

Garcia also met with Mayor Mercedita Apura of Carcar and Mayor Kristine Chiong of Naga, as well as officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and DPWH at the Capitol, wherein Apura and Chiong said that by next week the DENR and DPWH will be presenting an assessment on what trees are to be saved and to be cut off.

In Naga alone, there are 32 old trees

that are to be cut off or earth-balled, while in Carcar, there will be more or less 18.

DPWH-7's Engr. Arian Casquejo explained that the 420-meter stretch of Natalio Bacalso Avenue going to the south within Cebu City will be affected by the road widening and 122 road side trees will be cut-off or earth-balled.

The Daily Tribune tried to get the side of DPWH-7 Regional Director Edgardo Tabacon but has not yet replied as of this writing.

Cebu City's Department of Engineering and Public Works Engineer Kenneth Enriquez also insisted that the DPWH should apply for locational permits before they implement any infrastructure project in the city.



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'Craft laws, policies for climate change protection'

Deputy Speaker Loren Legarda is calling on her colleagues at the House of Representatives to craft pieces of legislation and important policies aimed at helping protect the country's vulnerability to the harsh effects of climate change.

"It is our obligation to lead our nation to a more sustainable and climate-resilient path. We need to ensure that climate action is embedded in the country's long-term development strategies," the former senator said.

In a recent privilege speech, the congresswoman of Antique likewise underscored the need for Congress to "carry out immediate risk-informed and science-based adaptation interventions in the most climate vulnerable communities."

Legarda urged her fellow legislators to strictly implement the country's climate change laws and policies to ensure that climate change adaptation and mitigation is mainstreamed in all policies, plans and programs of the national government.

She put emphasis on the importance of achieving the 1.5°C long-term temperature goal of the Paris Agreement, which is the global warming threshold that will enable vulnerable developing countries like the Philippines not just to survive but also thrive.

Citing the Global Commission on Adaptation's flagship report and its recommendations, entitled "Adapt Now: A Global Call for Leadership on Climate Resilience," Legarda enumerated a number of local adaptation initiatives that her colleagues can pursue.

Among the recommendations she cited were harvesting rainwater for household and community use, which is practiced in Ormoc, Leyte; making rain gardens, food gardens, and edible landscapes for food sufficiency, which is practiced in various cities and municipalities such as Taguig City, Quezon City, UP Los Baños, and Valladolid, Negros Occidental; and constructing roadside ditches to mitigate floods.

She also added harnessing solar and other renewable energy to electrify homes, schools, barangay halls and public places, which is practiced in Guiuan, Samar; and reducing wastes to zero, recycling and reusing, and refusing single-use plastics, as done in Camotes Island, Cebu.

Legarda also said that planting bamboo to protect slopes, prevent landslides, and provide livelihood, which is practiced in Lubao, Pampanga; planting mangroves and sea grasses to protect coastal ecosystems and communities, which is done in Bohol and Sorsogon; promoting climate field schools and resilient livelihoods for farming and rural communities, as practiced in Dumanigas, Iloilo will help local communities adapt to climate change.

- Delon Porcalla



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Coastal LGUs get support on climate adaptation

By JANVIC MATEO

Local government units from various coastal communities across the country have received support from the Climate Change Commission (CCC) on capacity building to prepare for and respond to impacts of climate change.

Development planners from the provinces of Albay, Quezon, Zambales, Northern and Eastern Samar, Camarines Sur, Masbate, Sorsogon and Catanduanes took part in the CCC's Enhanced Local Climate Change Action Plan (E-LCCAP) training recently held in Legazpi City, Albay.

The initiative provided participants with information on aspects of climate science and risk-based action planning at the local level, including climate and disaster risk assessment, ecosystem-based adaptation framework, community-level greenhouse gas inventory and climate change expenditure tagging.

They were also trained to develop and enhance adaptation project proposals for the People's Survival Fund.

"We need to work even smarter, and in unison with each other, to survive and thrive, and to transform our society and economy in this extremely challenging era of climate change," said Climate Secretary Emmanuel de Guzman.

"We shall continue to bring everyone together – key stakeholders in national and local governments, the private business and finance sector, academe and civil society – to ensure a dynamic synergy, as we pursue greener and more resilient pathways toward a sustainable future. In this synergy, everybody's action matters. Now is the time to unite for climate action... unite for climate resilience," he added.

Secretary to the Cabinet Karlo Nograles expressed support for the initiative, noting that the Philippines is at the forefront of the impact of climate change and the challenges facing the country.

"It is therefore our shared responsibility to generate common understanding, to explore possible synergies to draw out climate change responses, and to develop programs and projects that address the dire need of the country to adapt to this life-threatening phenomenon," he said.

The E-LCCAP Training for LGUs is a component of the re-strategized Communities for Resilience program, the CCC's flagship capacity building initiatives for local leaders and planners on mainstreaming climate change in local investment planning and processes.

The climate body said the program is currently geared toward the most climate – vulnerable communities in the country, including coastal villages that may experience impacts of sea level rise and salt water intrusion.



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'HARD-FOUGHT VICTORY FOR RESIDENTS'

GOLD MINING SUSPENDED; GROUP ASKS FOR RETURN OF LAND TO IPS

By Jhesset O. Enano
@JhessetEnanoINQ

An environmental group on Wednesday challenged the administration to return the lands of indigenous peoples (IPs) after OceanaGold Corp. suspended production at its gold and copper mine in Didipio, Nueva Vizcaya.

Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment called the suspension a "hard-fought victory" for the residents.

"We challenge the Duterte administration to follow suit by rejecting OceanaGold's contract renewal with finality and returning the mineralized lands to the indigenous communities who rightfully own the land," the group's national coordinator Leon Dulce said.

Dulce said the lapse of OceanaGold's financial or technical assistance agreement (FTAA) in June meant that the tenement area should have been returned to the govern-

ment, which he said is obliged to return the land to the indigenous Tawali-Ifugao communities.

No choice

OceanaGold cut its full-year output guidance to 460,000 to 480,000 ounces of gold and 10,000 to 11,000 tons of copper, and assumed no further production or sales for the remainder of the year at Didipio.

It had sought renewal of its 25-year operating license for

Didipio last year, but the local government wants the mine shut down due to environmental concerns.

OceanaGold president and CEO Mick Wilkes said the company "had no choice but to temporarily suspend production at Didipio," after the "uncertain" outcome of its appeal for a court injunction last month, and "ongoing" efforts to finalize the renewal of its FTAA. —WITH A REPORT FROM

REUTERS INQ



Mining turns to bamboo for help



Val A. Villanueva

BUSINESSWISE

MINING, the most hated, despised (name all the words in the dictionary that means despicable) industry in the country has waved the SOS flag to bamboo to help it show to the public that it wasn't as bad as its detractors paint it to be.

With its public perception at its lowest, the industry for years has struggled to win the people's heart by immersing itself into the communities where it operates—providing them with livelihood, medical care, education, sanitation services and more important, creating economic activities.

Yet, the stigma of catastrophic accidents of yesteryears would seem hard to erase. The image of swath of destruction caused by excavated mountains, which was once a picture of verdant greens, and the displacement of indigenous townsfolk from their ancestral lands have all given the mining industry a terrible image that anti-mining activists are just too happy to take advantage of.

While the industry has undoubtedly contributed to the country's economic development, mining, particularly the open pit method, is deemed by some experts as a destructive activity. Its disposal of toxic wastes in reservoirs, irrigation

systems and agricultural lands has been damaging to the environment. Thus, efforts have been done to rehabilitate, regenerate, revegetate, and reforest mined-out and mine tailings-covered areas to bring back their productivity.

Today, (October 17), at the Manila FAME, industry stakeholders—Chamber of Mines of the Philippines, the Philippine Nickel Industry Association, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) unwrap what they call the "Bamboo Initiative"—a nationwide campaign targeted to revegetate mined-out areas with fast-growing bamboo trees. The project aims to increase bamboo production and create money-spinning endeavors for mining communities.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said in a press statement the group chose bamboo in rehabilitating degraded lands because it "grows fast, releases 35 percent more oxygen

than trees, and can absorb heavy metals from contaminated soil or water."

Trade Secretary and Philippine Bamboo Industry Development Council Chairman Ramon Lopez added that "the potential for bamboo is limitless, given the variety of its use." Lopez also lauded Cimatu and the mining companies who have started to plant bamboo in their mined-out areas, which will help increase the supply of raw materials for use in creating high-value bamboo products in the future. According to the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, 12 mining companies have already started planting bamboo in 12 provinces across nine regions all over the country.

Marcventures Mining and Development Corp., a wholly owned subsidiary of listed Marcventures Holdings Inc., has in fact made bamboo farming the heart of its mining rehabilitation program. MHI President Isidro Alcantara in previous press interviews said the industry has long been looking for ways to clean up the destructive effects of mining.

He was quoted as saying: "When you undergo rehab, you normally plant trees. They do not really provide any means of livelihood for people living there especially the indigenous people. Once the mine leaves after 10 or 20 years, there will be nothing left and it is only good while it is there... Rehabilitation should have two purposes, one is to restore and enhance the environment, and second is to leave long-term sustainable livelihood."

Bamboo, known as the "greengold



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CONT.

MINING TURNS TO BAMBOO FOR HELP

of life" and "grass of hope," is effective in arresting soil erosion, landslides, and flooding—the usual calamities in any mine site. Aside from releasing up to 35 percent more oxygen than any other trees, and segregating up to 12 metric tons of carbon dioxide per hectare, it is the fastest-growing shelter for the rehabbing despoiled lands.

It can be made into furniture, used in fiber, clothing, pulp and paper production, food ingredients, beauty products, architecture, and construction. Harvest time only takes three years, and the whole process costs much less.

In fact, the country's bamboo-based furniture industry multiplies at an annual rate of 15 percent with export revenues amounting to \$3.2 million per year. Worldwide, bamboo-based handicraft industry swells by an average of 7 percent with export revenues of \$8 billion yearly. According to the Philippine Bamboo Foundation Inc., some bamboo species can withstand 52,000 pounds per square inch before reaching breaking point, almost close to that of steel with 60,000 pounds psi. Currently, only 52,000 hectares in the Philippines have been planted with bamboo, and with mining industry using the grass for rehab, the figures could go much higher.

Can bamboo be an effective PR for the much maligned mining industry? As they say, the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

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



Southeast Asia tackles regional plastic policy

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

PENANG – Hundreds of local government officials from several countries in Southeast Asia including environmental groups gathered in this northwest Malaysian state earlier this week to discuss policies and push for solutions to the problem of plastic pollution in the region.

Jed Alegado, Break Free From Plastic (BFFP) Asia Pacific communications officer, said the “International Zero Waste Cities Conference,” which began Monday at the Light Hotel in Penang, aims for cities already active in zero waste programs to share best practices with other Southeast Asian cities.

“The exchange of information on waste management between cities will result in learning that will be beneficial to each locality or municipality. This is also to encourage more cities to engage in zero waste programs through experiences shared by active municipalities,” Alegado said.

The two-day conference was organized by the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA) Asia Pacific and the Consumers’ Associa-

tion of Penang (CAP) in collaboration with Seberang Perai City Council.

Environmental groups contend that waste should not be addressed through harmful end-of-pipe technologies like “waste-to-energy” incinerators, but through zero waste systems. Zero waste approaches address waste and resources throughout their entire lifecycle – from production to end-of-life – with the goal of waste prevention and resource conservation.

Participants include those from the Philippines led by San Fernando Mayor Erwin Santiago. The city of San Fernando in Pampanga, for example, is implementing a strict plastic bag ban, but challenges remain.

Santiago said their city now has 80 percent recycling rate and continues to work on the remaining 20 percent.

“We are doing our part because

we also want our city to be sustainable. We put up this city environmental office so that the law on waste management can be fully implemented. It was not that easy at first but we accomplished something,” he said.

Santiago stressed, “With strong political will and stakeholder engagement, our city has realized the benefits of zero waste, like reduced waste generation, a cleaner environment and savings for the city. But we’re not stopping here. We also have policies like our plastic bag ban that will further reduce our residual waste. But we need to do more.”

Together with San Fernando city, BFFP noted that Malabon, Navotas, Tacloban, Nueva Vizcaya and Siquijor are also areas exerting efforts in line with the zero waste campaign.

A barangay in Quezon City has also started participating in the zero waste program as well as two barangays in Dumaguete and portions of Batangas province.

The International Zero Waste Cities Conference was first staged in Manila in January 2017. This coin-

cidated with the National Zero Waste Month, which is celebrated every January.

Meanwhile, a group committed to providing solutions to the world’s massive waste problem said there is a need for a global treaty that will address the issue of plastic pollution affecting the environment at alarming levels.

Zero Waste Europe said that together with other concerned groups and individuals, they will push for the passage of this treaty at all costs.

“There are now ongoing discussions around the UN environment with regard to this global treaty to reduce plastic wastes. The talks recognize that plastic is the biggest marine polluter today. It often breaks down into microplastics that not only infiltrate marine life but affect human life as well because of our consumption,” said Jack McQuibban, Cities Program coordinator for Zero Waste Europe.

He expects that a proposal concerning the treaty will soon be forwarded to the upcoming United Nations Environment assembly in February 2021.



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NBI to investigate wastes shipped to PH

The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) is set to investigate allegations that a United States-based organization has been sending wastes to the Philippines in the guise of medical donations.

NBI Deputy Director Vicente de Guzman III has assured that the bureau will immediately act on the complaint filed by Special Envoy to China William Lima.

Lima was at the NBI on Tuesday concerning the complaints

against Mindanao-based businessman David Zarate over the importation of the wastes.

De Guzman said the NBI will also look into the liability of the US-based group World Medical Relief Inc. in the importation of the wastes.

The NBI learned from Lima that brokers connected with Zarate managed to ship for the past 12 years as "donations" unusable and discarded medical equipment and supplies, including dialysis

machines and expired medicines.

Lima revealed that around 100 hospitals received the shipment of 150 containers every year with a declared value of P25 million each.

The last shipment was worth P36 million and contained "cancer medicines."

Lima said the last shipment entered the country without the necessary permits from US regulatory offices. **(Jeffrey Dam-icog)**



NBI to probe entry of US waste into PH

By **HECTOR LAWAS**

THE National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) will investigate a complaint that a United States-based group has been sending medical wastes in the guise of donation of medical equipment to the Philippines.

According to NBI Deputy Director Vicente de Guzman III, the probe was

prompted by a complaint from Special Envoy to China William Lima.

De Guzman said the NBI will look into the possible liability of US-based group World Medical Relief Inc. regarding the entry of wastes.

The NBI learned from Lima that local brokers had managed to bring into the country for the past 12 years shipment marked as "donations" of unusable and discarded medical equipment such as dialy-

sis machines, and expired medicines.

Lima revealed that around 100 hospitals had been receiving shipments of 150 containers every year with a declared value of P25 million each.

The last shipment was worth P36 million and contained "cancer medicines."

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US wastes dumped in PH

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The NBI learned from Lima that local brokers has managed to ship into the country for the past 12 years in the guise of "donations" expired medicines and unusable and discarded medical equipment like dialysis machines.

Lima revealed that around 100 hospitals have been receiving shipments of 150 containers every year with a declared value of P25 million each. **Hector Lawas**



Another water crisis looms

BY JORDEENE B. LAGARE

LOOMS FROM A1

Another water crisis looms

RESIDENTS of Metro Manila and some cities in Cavite province, especially those being serviced by Maynilad Water Services Inc., have been advised to prepare for service interruptions as the water level in Angat Dam continues to dip.

On Wednesday, Maynilad urged its customers to stock up on water as the company may again implement rotational water interruption

► LoomsA2

services in the next few days.

"Madalang ang pag-ulan sa Angat at Ipo Watersheds nitong nakaraang araw, kaya't unti-unting bumababa ang tubig sa Angat at Ipo Dams (Rains had been scarce at Angat and Ipo Dams, their water levels had declined)," Maynilad said in a statement.

"Kaya nais naming bigyang abiso ang mga Maynilad customers na mag-ipon ng tubig dahil posibleng ipatupad muli

ang daily rotational water interruption, sakaling hindi pa rin umulan ng sapat sa mga watersheds at tuluyang maubos ang tubig na ipon sa aming reservoirs (We are advising our customers to stock up on water because it is possible that we will again implement daily rotational water interruption if our supply in reservoirs will dip)," it added.

The West Zone concessionaire said some areas in the cities of

Navotas, Muntinlupa, Manila, Malabon, Makati, Las Piñas, Caloocan, Parañaque, Pasay, Quezon, and Valenzuela may have little to no water supply in the coming days.

Bacoor City, Cavite City, Kawit City, Noveleta City, and Rosario City in Cavite, as well as Bulacan, may also have limited water supply.

"At dahil nananatili sa 40 cubic meters per second (m3/s) lamang — mula sa normal na

48 m3/s — ang kasalukuyang alokasyon ng tubig mula sa Angat Dam, kapos ang raw water supply na pumapasok sa Ipo Dam at sa treatment facilities ng Maynilad (Because the water allocation from Angat Dam remains at 40 m3/s — from the normal allocation of 48 m3/s — the raw water supply entering Ipo Dam and Maynilad's treatment facilities are not enough)," the company added.

On Wednesday morning, water level at Angat Dam was 187.54 m3. The normal operating level is 210 m3.

Water level at Ipo Dam was 100.76 m3. Its normal operating

level is 101 m3. La Mesa Dam, meanwhile, measured 77.87 m3, down from its normal operating level of 80.15 m3.

Weather forecaster Lorie dela Cruz said the water level in these dams could decline further because there are no brewing storms.

Surprise

Maynilad's warning prompted Laban Konsyumer Inc. (LKI) to ask the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) and the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) to investigate these "surprise service interrup-

tions." "The surprise service interruptions should be promptly investigated by the NWRB as well as the MWSS. This service interruption could be putting consumers on the defensive end even when there is no technical basis to do so," LKI President Victorio Mario Dimagiba said in a message to *The Manila Times*.

Early this year, taps in Metro Manila and the provinces of Rizal, Cavite and Bulacan went dry. The water crisis that lasted until August infuriated President Rodrigo Duterte, who gave MWSS officials a tongue-lashing.

WITH FRANCIS EARL A. CUETO



Tubig sa Angat, Ipo bumaba; 'no water' sa MM nakaamba

POSIBLENG magpatupad muli ng daily rotational water service interruption ang Maynilad dahil sa pagbaba ng lebel ng tubig sa Angat at Ipo dams.

Sa advisory na ipinalabas kamakalawa ng gabi, inabisuhan ng Maynilad ang kanilang mga kostumer na mag-ipon ng tubig "sakaling hindi pa rin umulan nang sapat sa watersheds at tuluyang maubos ang ipon na tubig sa aming reservoirs."

At dahil nananatili sa

40 cubic meters per second lamang—mula sa normal na 48 cms—ang kasalukuyang alokasyon ng tubig mula sa Angat Dam, kapos ang raw water supply na pumapasok sa Ipon Dam at sa treatment facilities ng Maynilad.

Samantala, inilabas na ng Maynilad ang listahan ng mga lugar na apektado ng araw-araw na rotational water interruption.

Kabilang sa mga apektadong lugar ng water interruption ang Pasay City,

Muntinlupa, Navotas, Maynila, Malabon City, Makati City, Las Pinas City, Caloocan City, Parañaque City, Quezon City, Valenzuela City, Bacoor City, Cavite City, Kawit City, Noveleta City, Rosario City at Bulacan.

Hindi naman binanggit ng Maynilad kung kailan magiging epektibo ang araw-araw na water cutoff.

"Paumanhin sa abala na dulot nito. Maraming salamat sa inyong pang-unawa," ayon sa Maynilad.

Kahapon ang lebel ng tubig sa Angat dam ay

187.53 metro mula sa 187.92 metro noong Martes ng umaga. Ang tubig naman sa Ipo dam ay 100.76 metro mula sa 100.90 metro.

Bumaba naman ang

tubig ng La Mesa dam sa 77.87 metro mula sa 77.90 metro kung saan kinukuha ng Manila Water ang malaking bulto ng isinusuplay nitong tubig.

—Leifbilly Begas



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Angat Dam water level dips

Angat Dam's water elevation is feared to further decline until the end of the month due to lack of significant precipitation over the watershed area in Norzagaray, Bulacan.

As of 6 a.m. Wednesday, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) monitored the elevation of Angat Dam at 187.53 meters, down from last Tuesday's 187.92 meters.

PAGASA hydrologist Aileen Abelardo said the rate of decline of about 0.30 meters per day is "normal" when there is no precipitation over the water reservoir.

The declining water level at Metro Manila's main water source has been observed in the past few days.

Abelardo said it is possible that Angat Dam's water level may further decline until the end of October should there be no significant rains over the Bulacan watershed.

Angat Dam has only recovered to its 180-meter normal operating level on August 26, 2019. Prior to that, the dam's water elevation has

dipped to its lowest level in nine years at about 158 meters in July 2019.

To ensure that there is enough water for millions of households during the next summer season, Angat Dam's water level has to reach its maximum level of 210 meters by the end of 2019.

Abelardo said Angat Dam's current situation can be compared to the 2010 event when the water reservoir plunged to its lowest level in history at 157.57 meters in July, 2010.

During that time, Abelardo said Angat Dam reached its maximum level of 210 meters only the following year in September, 2011. Its level by the end of 2010 has just reached 203.3 meters.

On October 16, 2010, the water level of Angat Dam was at 180.02 meters.

If we compare these figures, Abelardo said Angat Dam's level now is still way better than its level in 2010. "We can still see Angat Dam's possible recovery by the end of 2019," she added. **(Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz)**



BACK TO WILDERNESS – Kabilang lamang ang sawa na ito sa 20 python na pinakalawan ng Protected Area and Biodiversity Management Bureau ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), sa Aurora Memorial National Park sa Bgy. Villa Aurora, Maria Aurora, Aurora, kahapon.

ARIEL P. AVENDAÑO



NITONG nagdaang mga linggo at buwan, mga paslit na hanggang 5 taong gulang na babae ang nire-rape at pina-patay.

May mga natagpuan sa mga bata na biktima ng mga naka-droga.

Nito namang nagdaang mga araw, may dalawang 14-anyos na namatay sa kalunos-lunos na paraan.

Isa namang 4-anyos ang pinatay ng sarili nitong ina na lulong sa shabu.

14-ANYOS SA CAGAYAN

Itong 14-anyos na estudyante ng Pacac Grande National High School sa bayan ng Amulong, Cagayan at residente ng Brgy. Pacac Pequeño ay natagpuang patay sa kalunos-lunos na kalagayan.

Nakadapa ito sa hangin, nakatali ang kanyang leeg sa isang puno at nakatali rin ang dalawa niyang kamay habang wala siyang sapot sa ibaba at ang mga tuhod at paa ay nakatukod sa lupa.

Ayon sa doktor na sumuri sa biktima, ni-rape ito.

Maaari umanong patay na ito nang ibitin sa mga puno sa paligid dahil walang palatandaan na pinagsasakal ito o maaari rin umanong buhay pa at namatay na lang habang binibigti.

Napag-alamang kinuha ang lubid sa isang nakataling kalabaw sa paligid kaya naman ang may-ari ng kalabaw ay naging suspek sa krimen.

NAKIPANOOD NG TELEBISYON

Sa nakalap na balita ng kanyang mga titser, nakipanood umano ng telebisyon ang biktima sa kanyang kapitbahay nang magdidilim na.

May ilang kalalakihan umanong nakatira sa bahay na iyon.

Teorya ng mga kapitbahay, maaaring sinundan ito sa kanyang pag-uwi, kinaladkad sa masukal na lugar na taniman din ng mais at don isinagawa ang masukal pa sa hayop na krimen.

Ayon naman sa ilang mamamayan, maaaring gawa ang krimen ng mga naka-droga.

MAYOR ELPIDIO RENDON

Ayon sa mga titser at magulang ng biktima, tumutulong na umano si Mayor Elpidio Rendon sa pamilya ng biktima at inatasan nito ang Municipal Social Welfare Ser-



ni BENNY ANTIPORDA

14-ANYOS, BINITAY, NI-RAPE; 14-ANYOS, GINILITAN

vice Office para rito.

Miyembro umano ng 4Ps ang pamilya ng biktima at pumapasok sa iskul ang dalagita bilang kondisyon sa pagpapatuloy ng pagtanggap ng benepisyo mula rito.

Itong si Police Captain Albert Florentino na hepe ng Amulong ay dapat na kumilos din nang husto para makilala at madakip ang mga kalalaking gumawa ng makahayop na krimeng ito.

Ang imbestigador ng kaso na si Master Sergeant Rey Capili ay dapat ding hindi mag-aksaya ng panahon na lutasin ang kaso.

Isang tanong: paano ba hindi paabutin sa Bilibid ang mga suspek sa ganitong klase ng kaso?

14-ANYOS SA CEBU

Ginilitan naman ang 14 anyos din sa Brgy. Guimbawian, Pinamungajan, Cebu.

Natagpuan na lang ang bangkay ni Justine Andayop ng mga kapitbahay niya habang nagtitinda ang kanyang ina sa Carbon Public Market.

Hindi pa malaman ang motibo ng krimen subalit sinasabi ni Police Major Felicisimo Aranas Jr., hepe ng pulisya sa nasabing bayan, na may suspek na sila na kapitbahay ng biktima.

Maaaring isa umanong menor-de-edad ang suspek sa krimen.

Hihintayin natin ang aksyon mo rito, Maj. Aranas.

Gusto natin malaman kung may kaugnayan din sa droga ang krimen lalo na kung iisipin na naglipana ang droga sa lalawigan ng Cebu.

KILLER NA INA

Nakakikilabot din ang ginawa ng isang ina sa bayan ng Rizal, Laguna nang patayin nito ang isang niyang anak at pag-sasaksakin ng 26 beses ang isa pang anak niya.

Posible umanong pinatay ni Ana Lorraine Medalla, 30, residente ng Viriña Subdivision, sa Brgy. Tuy ang 5-taong gulang niyang anak sa pagdagan ng unan sa ilong at mukha nito.

Mabuti at nakaligtas naman sa saksak sa gunting ang panganay niyang si Keisha Kayle Capon-

pon.

Nabatid na magdamag na humitt ng shabu at hindi natulog ang ina at sumunod na rito ang pagpatay at bigong pagpatay sa dalawa niyang anak.

Naganap ang krimen habang nagsusumikap na maghanapbuhay ang padre de pamilya bilang drayber sa Dubai.

SALOT NA DRUGLORD, TULAK

Kung sinoman ang mga druglord at tulak na may gawa ng pagiging adik ni Ana Lorraine na nang ma-high ay itinuring niyang manananggal ang kanyang mga anak kaya inatake niya ang mga ito, dapat lang na hanapin ng mga awtoridad.

Itong dapat na misyon ni Captain. Lindey Tibuc, hepe ng Rizal Municipal Police Station.

Malinaw na may matinding shabu sa inyong nasasakupan, Capt. Tibuc at dapat na may mapakita kang magandang resulta rito.

Sana, hindi mabigo sa inyo, hepe, ang mga mamamayan na umaasang malulutas ninyo ang kasong droga sa kaso ng mag-iina.

Sa parte naman nina Capt. Albert Florentino, ng Amulong Police Station at Major Felicisimo Aranas Jr., ng Pinamungajan Police Station, sana malutas din nila ang nasabing mga kasong kanilang hawak.

Maaaring may kaugnayan sa droga ang mga krimen ninyo, sir Capt. Florentino at Maj. Aranas, ayon sa mga mamamayan ninyo.

Maganda kung makarinig ang Ultimatum ng good news mula sa inyo, sa pinakamaagang panahon.

Alalahanin ninyo, nakasubaybay ang mata tiyak ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte sa mga kasong ito at sana may mabalitaan tayong magandang resulta sa mga imbestigasyon at aksyon ninyo.

Anomang reaksiyon o reklamo, maaaring iparating sa 092284-03333 o i-email sa bantiporda@yahoo.com.