

DATE : 22 AUG 2019

DAY : Thursday

# DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



## Illegal establishments in Siargao demolished

BUTUAN CITY – A task force headed by the Departments of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Interior and Local Government (DILG) have started the demolition of business establishments violating environmental laws on Siargao Island.

DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu and Eduardo Año of the DILG witnessed the demolitions on Tuesday.

"This is... a necessity for the protection of the beach. We cannot afford these structures either private or government to violate the 20-meter easement rule," Cimatu said.

Among those demolished was the Cabuntog function hall owned by the municipal government of General Luna as well as the dining area of a hotel.

The Siargao interagency task force have issued notices of demolition to 391 business establishments.

Felix Alicer, DENR-Caraga director, said many establishments still have no environmental compliance certificates.

Alicer said erring firms should comply within three months upon receipt of notices of demolition to avoid being charged for violation of the Water Code.

The task force reiterated that the government has no plan to close Siargao, a surfing destination, to tourists.

Also on Tuesday, a residual waste containment area was inaugurated in Barangay Malinao, General Luna.

The facility is seen to solve Siargao's waste disposal problem.

– Ben Serrano





STRATEGIC  
COMMUNICATION  
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# Panglao's closure for clean-up looms

By **CALVIN D. CORDOVA**

CEBU CITY – Panglao Island, one of the top tourist destinations in Bohol, could be closed to the public because it has not fully enforced the coastal easement requirement and failed to improve water treatment facilities.

Charlie Fabre, head of the Bohol Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO), said Panglao could be the subject of a massive environmental clean-up, similar to what happened in Boracay Island in Aklan, to prevent further contamination of the island's seas.

Fabre said the quality of seawater in Panglao continues to fluctuate, from below 100 most probable number (MPN) per fecal coliform contamination to 500 MPN or 600 MPN.

The standard MPN was set at 100 MPN.

If the level falls below 100 MPN, it means the waters are safe enough for bathing.

When it comes to coastal easement, only 18 out of the 87 establishments that jut out to the sea have been demolished.

Authorities in Panglao were given until last May to implement measures to improve the situation in the island.

Fabre said the Department of Environment and Natural Resources Central Office will decide what to do now that the deadline had lapsed.

“DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu has always been asking for updates on the status in Panglao island. We have been sending monthly reports to the regional office in Cebu City, which in turn sends our report to the Central Office,” Fabre said.



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### **Ombudsman suspends environment officials**

The Office of the Ombudsman has preventively suspended three environmental officials from Roxas City and Iloilo for a maximum of six months in connection with a land dispute case with religious missionaries. Those suspended include Roxas City community environment and natural resources officer Bernarbe Garnace; Tubungan, Iloilo, municipal environment and natural resources officer Francisco Gallego Jr.; and Miag-ao, Iloilo, community environment and natural resources officer Salvador Manglinong Jr. "There is enough basis to conclude that their continued stay in office may prejudice the just, fair and independent disposition of the present case," the suspension order dated Aug. 15 and signed by Ombudsman Samuel Martires said. The land dispute involved three lots with a total land area of 22,445 square meters in La Paz, Iloilo City, that was leased by the Auxiliary Missionaries of the Assumption Inc. —PATRICIA DENISE M. CHIU





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**ANTIPOLO CITY GOV'T, PANALO SA 4TH ANNUAL ENVIRONMENTAL SUMMIT NG DENR –** Kinilala ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) IV-A ang Pamahalaang Lung-sod ng Antipolo, sa pamumuno ni Mayor Andeng Ynares, sa ginanap na 4th Annual Environmental Summit kama-kailan sa Taal Vista Hotel, Tagaytay City. Sa pangunguna ng City Environment and Waste Management Office (CEWMO), tumanggap ng dalawang Plaque of Recognition para sa Best



Environmental Technology at Best Available Practices ang pamahalaang lokal. Kabilang sa award winning practices ng Antipolo City ang maayos na pagkolekta, pag-imbak, at pagproseso ng mga basura gamit

ang Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs), ang paggamit ng briquetting machine at composting bins sa pagresiklo ng mga basura at information campaign sa tamang waste segregation sa 16 na barangay.



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**WATER PROBLEM**

# ₱18.7-B KALIWA DAM STILL AWAITING ECC

**By Ronnel W. Domingo**  
@RonWDomingoINQ

All requirements for undertaking the ₱18.7-billion Kaliwa Dam—be it legal, financial, environmental or technical—“have been addressed in strict compliance” to Philippine laws, according to the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS).

MWSS said in a statement all submissions that the Commission on Audit (COA) called had been provided, except for the environmental compliance certificate (ECC)—the application for which the Department of Environment and Natural Resources had neither granted nor denied.

The agency was reacting to a COA memorandum dated June 16, which described the Kaliwa Dam project as “a negotiated contract from inception of the bidding process” even if “the procurement of the project is with the semblance of a competitive bidding.”

The memo called for an explanation from MWSS of the criteria for the competitiveness of the three nominated Chinese contractors, among which the winner was China Engineering Corp.

“In response to the (memo), MWSS management has already submitted the detailed explanation for the technical working group to the COA auditor,” the agency said.

“With regard to the observation that the loan remains ineffective due to non-submission of documents required under the loan agreement, it is clarified that [several] documents have been obtained and submitted by MWSS,” it added.

MWSS was referring to the Monetary Board’s approval of the loan between MWSS and Export-Import Bank of China; Department of Finance approval-in-principle and willingness to guarantee; DOE certification that all internal government approval required to execute the loan agreement have already been obtained; Bureau of Treasury certification that complies with Republic Act No. 4860; special authority from the President; signed preferential buyers’ credit loan agreement; and signed letter of guarantee.

RA 7860 authorizes the President to obtain loans for financing of approved economic development projects, among other purposes. INQ





# Gina Lopez, environmental champion

**A** woman ahead of her time, Gina Lopez reminded us that we need to take courageous actions and speak inconvenient truths, if we are to save our natural heritage and, indeed, our planet. While she could have lived a luxurious life or adhered to “feel-good environmentalism,” she took the path of most resistance, boldly campaigning against the destructive practices that are at the root of our environmental crises.

I only encountered Gina Lopez twice: once during the campaign to stop a proposed open-pit mining project in Lobo, Batangas, and again when she and her undersecretary Art Valdez were holding dialogues with civil society groups. “I can sense the love of mountains in you,” she told me in her inimitable yogic fashion. “We need more young people to be passionate about the environment.”

Those encounters were short, but her work and her force of personality loomed larger than life for myself and other environmental advocates for whom she represented hope in a seemingly losing struggle. “If only Ms Gina Lopez would hear about our predicament...,” locals all over the country would tell me, viewing her as a champion against the corrupting influence of mining interests, and of initiatives that are often met with little support.

Some of Lopez’s projects are well-known—the reforestation of La Mesa Ecopark, the rehabilitation of Pasig River—but she also worked quietly in many other places. “We in Sibuyan Island are very grateful for her intervention,” climate change advocate Rodne Galicha tells me, narrating her support for their grassroots anti-mining campaign and eco-tourism initiatives that remain beneficial to their island today.

In doing so, she also served as a role model



## SECOND OPINION

GIDEON LASCO

for environmental advocates all over the country. “She showed me that anyone, from the acutely marginalized to even the extremely privileged, can be an environmentalist, and that we can all take bold steps in our lives,” says Karina Reyes-Antonio, a Filipino-Australian who left her life in Sydney to be part of the Palawan-based Centre for Sustainability PH, a conservation organization she now leads.

“I grew up in a bubble,” Lopez once wrote, acknowledging her Forbes Park childhood, but also recounting how her later experiences as an Ananda Marga yoga missionary in Africa shaped her environmental philosophy, views on social justice and her own way of life. “I lived as the poor lived, so I learned how not to be wasteful.”

This ethos would be reflected in her leadership at the ABS-CBN Foundation, which—unusual for a corporate foundation when she took the helm in the 1990s—she used as a plat-

form to advance her advocacies not just for the environment but also for children, including the impactful Bantay Bata 163 rescue hotline and the unforgettable Sineskwela TV show.

Ever the idealist, Lopez accepted the post of DENR secretary, knowing that she would face stiff opposition were she to hold her ground on her antimining stance. “Tell your brother he killed a mountain,” she defiantly told a lawmaker during her Commission on Appointments hearings. Who today will have the same courage to speak ecological truth to political power? Ultimately, her opponents—they were legion—successfully blocked her confirmation, but not after she had offered a vision against which we will measure her successors.

Some say she could have been more circumspect in her actions, mindful of due process and the realpolitik of a president whose dark side she failed to see or call out. Others point out that she was a “good crusader, but a poor manager.” But while her praxis and intersectionality can be questioned during her 10-month tenure, her principled conviction—which she maintained even as she battled brain cancer—can only serve as a continuing inspiration not just in activism but also in public service.

At a time when environmental activists are themselves an endangered species—the memory of her friend Gerry Ortega comes to mind—surely, we would have wished her to live well beyond her 65 years. But now, more than ever, is the time to recognize the urgency in her unfinished work. Gina Lopez may be gone, but we must continue her legacy by confronting the ecological crises of our time with the same courage and passion.

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# Gina Lopez's lasting legacy

Regina "Gina" Lopez, who recently passed away, was chair of the ABS-CBN Foundation, the network's sociocivic arm.

Under her leadership, Gina launched Bantay Bata 163, the first rescue hotline for children in Asia.

Gina also founded Bantay Kalikasan, a program that advocates for the protection of the environment. For her efforts, she was appointed chair of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission in 2010.

Gina pioneered Educational Television (ETV) in the

Philippines, which put in place video libraries in 10,000 public schools. ETV aired in the span of 15 years, 16 educational TV programs, which include shows on Science ("Sineskwela"), Math ("Math Tinik"), Values ("Hirayamanawari"), History ("Bayani") and English ("Epol/Apple").

She was also the vice chair of the ABS-CBN Bayan Foundation.

In June 2016, Gina was appointed secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in an ad in-

terim basis. But on May 3, 2017, the Commission on Appointments formally rejected her appointment.

Gina hosted an environmental show on ABS-CBN, "G Diaries," which premiered in 2017.

"We will miss Gina's light, as a private person, leader and crusader," said Gina's cousin, ABS-CBN Corp. chair Mark Lopez. "While she left us a void that cannot be filled, we take comfort in knowing that with love, like she had shown us, there remains hope and beauty in the world we live in."



Gina Lopez





By MAE LORRAINE LORENZO

**W**hen it comes to the revival of the Pasig River, former DENR secretary and ABS-CBN Foundation chairperson Gina Lopez, has played a crucial role in its success.

Lopez also served as chairperson of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC), under the Office of the President, from 2009 to 2016. During her stint, she was able to defy what seemed to be the insurmountable challenges facing Manila's most infamous water system.

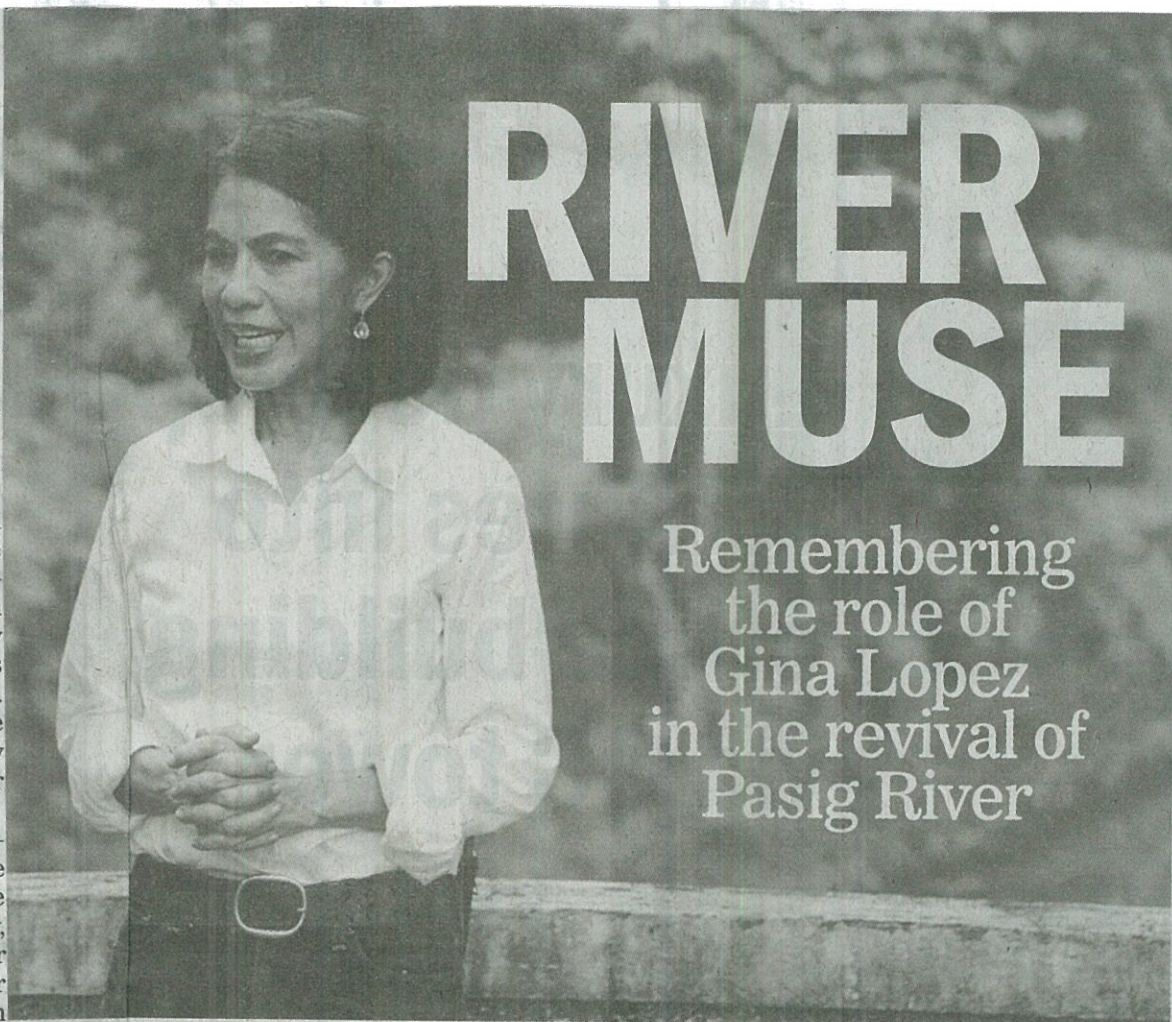
According to the PRRC, Lopez led countless projects for the revival of the Pasig River and its environs. She initiated the expansion of the rehabilitation of the Pasig River into its tributaries by recovering and developing waterways into environmental preservation areas. This included a more comprehensive dredging activity which drastically improved the river system's water quality.

She also introduced several projects, programs, and activities for the maintenance and sustainability of the rehabilitation efforts, most notably, the creation of the River Warriors. Her pioneering works enabled Pasig River to win the inaugural Asia Riverprize in 2018 for the inspiring initiatives to save and protect the historic river.

Lopez was described by the PRRC as "a great leader, an inspiring mentor, a loving friend, and a colleague full of character. She will always be the champion of the Filipino communities and will forever be remembered as the unwavering advocate and muse of the Pasig River."

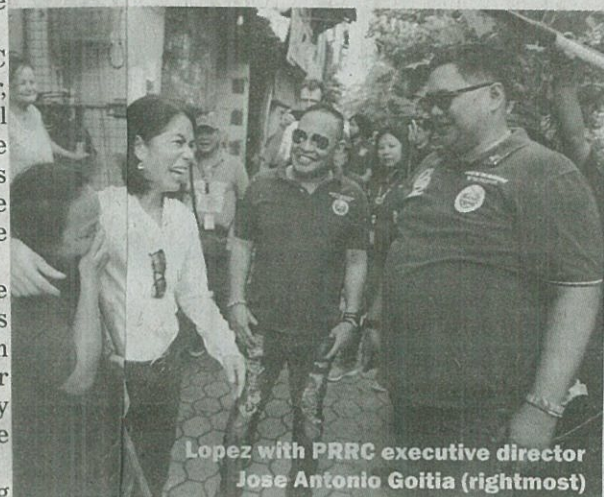
PRRC executive director Jose Antonio Goitia shared that Lopez was first hesitant to join their organization because of the terrible state of the river and that it was members of her family and friends who encouraged her to take on the challenge.

"Our dear friend and fellow Pasig



# RIVER MUSE

Remembering  
the role of  
Gina Lopez  
in the revival of  
Pasig River



Lopez with PRRC executive director Jose Antonio Goitia (rightmost)

'Lopez was described by the PRRC as a great leader, an inspiring mentor, a loving friend, and a colleague full of character. She will always be the champion of the Filipino communities and will forever be remembered as the unwavering advocate and muse of the Pasig River.'





River champion, former First Lady Amelita 'Ming' Ramos also recalls that in the waning years of the Clean and Green Foundation and her Piso Para sa Pasig campaign, she was looking for a successor who will take care of the Pasig River," said Goitia.

"When Ma'am Ming finally met Gina, there was a *'lukso ng dugo'* - an instant connection that told her heart: 'She (Lopez) is the one who will save the Pasig River.'

From then onwards, Lopez was appointed by Presidents Gloria Arroyo and Benigno Aquino III and served as PRRC chairperson for seven years. After that, a courtesy visit to President Rodrigo Duterte in Davao turned out to be a turning point as she was offered right there and then to head the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Goitia underscored the PRRC's commitment to continue improving the Pasig River and help sustain the significant changes brought about by the work of Lopez.

"When Gina assumed office in the PRRC, the rehabilitation efforts expanded to the *estero* level. From then, PRRC grew larger and became a big family. When Estero de Paco was rehabilitated, the River Warriors were born. When we needed to recover the easements for conversion to environmental preservation areas, the River Patrols were born. When we needed to transform the communities, who are very close to her heart and became the subject of her advocacy to uplift their lives, the community organizers were born," said Goitia.

"Many of us owe it to her why we are here now. Many of our achievements are attributable to her leadership, her vision, her profound love for the environment and indomitable spirit which never wavered despite the challenges we face in bringing the Pasig River back to life."





# Goodbye to Sec Gina

By MACRINA TAMAYO ZAFARALLA

For the short time that I was with you in your advocacy for the environment, I observed and learned your style and dedication in doing good for the environment.

We went to a market place where you stood on a chair which you put on top of a fish table, and addressed the people on the need to maintain cleanliness, including waste disposal. We went to the Paco River that was undergoing dredging at the time – revealing what people threw in their river: chairs, broken dishes, old shoes, various kinds of plastic, etc. You delivered public service with dispatch, attacked the problem head-on, solicited external views, and carried out the appropriate action.

You have moved on at 65, but your numerous strategies for the protection and enrichment of our environment and natural resources continue to benefit the Filipino



The future DENR secretary, Gina Lopez, and the author (in red blouse) inspecting one of her environmental projects.

people. May our people, in or out of government, actualize lessons

learned from your legacy. May God bless your soul, Ma'am Gina.





MEDIUM RARE

# Fireflies and Gina L



By **JULLIE YAP DAZA**

**S**HE may not have been the best secretary of the environment, but she will forever be the most memorable on record, and though her reign was brief, it was the most talked about, the most passionate, fearless, fierce, and fun. Thanks to her, men and women of the concrete jungle found a need to exchange commentaries about nature, the environment, ecology, as if they cared and understood, for that was what she had wanted them to do, take care of nature, for nature to take care of you.

The skies turned gray. The stars dimmed, flowers drooped their heads. Trees turned silent, the forest kept still, the birds of the air stopped flying and the little things in the ground sighed.

Gina Lopez was gone.

The Father of Creation and Mother Nature stood by but Gina departed way too soon. At 65 she had many more years ahead of her to do more good, if doing good could be measured in terms of how many people were helped and saved. With her livelihood projects, communities turned creative, earning money by converting plants into wellness

and beauty products. Her Bantay Bata rescued children from a fate they were destined to escape, only because of her intervention. She groomed forgotten spaces into parks, parks into treasures of jade with sparkling silver cascades; revived rivers that had stagnated to death; brought the mountain to the prophet to open his eyes to the destruction that could have been prevented.

It was a mistake not to move mountains to have her nomination confirmed by due process, come what may. It was the state's mistake -- what a shame now to hear Malacañang lament her passing, as if they couldn't have done something to prevent that mistake from occurring in the first (and second) place.

The firefly park in Puerto Princesa, Palawan is a 45-minute celestial journey under the velvety sky as your banca glides noiselessly through a galaxy of twinkling "Christmas tree" lights -- fireflies! -- in the millions. Stars overhead, fireflies all around, plankton glimmering in the water beneath the boat. Who but Gina could have dreamed up such a project?

In my heart, the memory of Gina will glitter and glow like a firefly.





# Think of the worker

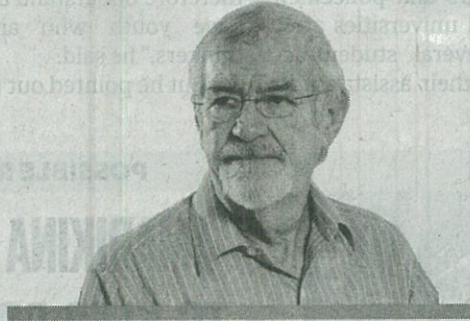
I've lost a friend. The nation has lost a passionate advocate for a better world and a better Philippines in Gina Lopez. We will miss her.

It's time we consider what's best for the worker. And what's best for the worker is a job, any job. Just ask the unemployed. But a responsible government should also want to ensure that it's a well-paying, decent job.

To have a job you must have people who'll create them—investors, businessmen. Turn them off and there's no job. Myopic labor organizations here seem determined to turn off those businessmen and ensure there's no job for the workers they say they are protecting.

The world is global today. Foreign investors can choose where to do business. Local businessmen must provide products and services that are world-competitive and cost-competitive to survive.

Business needs to be flexible, ever more so today as changing technology changes everything. Successful countries have flexible labor laws, failing countries have rigid ones. In Southeast Asia, the Philippines has one of most rigid collection of labor laws, with cumbersome termination policies, while Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand have more flexible hiring and firing policies. The World Economic Forum, through its annual Global Competitiveness Report, ranks countries based on several indicators, including hiring and firing policies. In its 2018 report, Hong Kong ranked as having the most flexible hiring and firing policy in the world (although it's in a precarious political situation now), followed by Singapore (4th), Malaysia (9th), Indonesia (19th) and Thailand (33rd). The Philippines is one of the laggards in the region, ranking 41st. Unsurprisingly, countries that are ranked



## LIKE IT IS

PETER WALLACE

ahead of the Philippines get twice or thrice the amount of foreign investments that we scramble to attract each year.

The two immediate issues are security of tenure and contractualization. I've written about these before, but because of their importance and the current arguments about them triggered by President Duterte's wise decision not to sign the ill-considered anti-"endo" bill, they're at the fore again.

For me, the solution to both is simple, and I'm at a loss as to why I can't get the country's leaders—and the unions—to consider it.

Am I wrong somehow? What I suggest in relation to security of tenure is that security of tenure is not good for anyone except ineffectual workers. It reduces the number of jobs available. It is deterring many, many companies from investing further, or at all. You'll be reluctant to hire when you can't fire—for justifiable reasons, and what reasons wouldn't be? I can't imagine even unscrupulous managers firing whimsically. You then need to find someone else and go through the training process all over again. It's a pain in the neck that anyone would want to avoid.

What should happen is this: If you do a good job, you keep that job; if you do a poor job, you are replaced, after warnings, by someone else. Someone loses a job, someone gains a job. There's no job loss (unions please note: no job loss). That's security of tenure. The new person works hard to keep the job; the terminated one works harder next time so as not to lose his or her job again. Productivity goes up, quality rises and prices dip; volumes increase as well. The Philippines becomes competitive in the world. Investors come in to benefit from the hardworking workforce. More jobs are created.

Security of tenure is protected by the Constitution. So the interim solution, until the Constitution is changed, is to make termination "for cause" simple and speedy. Not long, convoluted and difficult as it is today. The Department of Labor and Employment should institute a simple system that does nothing more than check that the requested termination is not a personal attack on the worker. Nothing more.

All this nonsense about what is contractualization and what isn't can go with one simple change. Just eliminate the six-month probationary period and require payment of contribution to all benefits from Day 1. When the employee leaves—whether after 20 years or one week—these contributions are given pro rata. The responsibility for retirement benefits is transferred to the next employer.

There's no probationary period, the new worker is treated exactly the same as a long-term employee from the beginning. There's no advantage for unscrupulous managers to undertake "5-5-5." What's wrong with that?

Security of tenure and probationary period are antiworker.

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# Ang mga laban ni Gina Lopez

## Ni Leifbilly Begas

**N**OONG nakaraang taon, marami ang nag-abang kung maghahain ng kanyang certificate of candidacy at tatakbo sa pagkasenador si Gina Lopez.

Kasama ang kanyang pangalan sa mga survey noong 2018 kaya maraming nag-akala na totoong tatakbo ito.

Hindi siya tumakbo pero hindi tumigil sa kanyang adbokasiya na tumulong sa mga kapuspalad.

Sa isang panayam kay Lopez, sinabi nito na sinusunod niya ang itinitibok ng kanyang puso—ang gumawa ng pagbabago para sa iba.

“What I do is I follow my heart and right now, my heart wants to do this,” ani Lopez sa isang panayam sa telebisyon.

Sinubukan niya ang meditation nang mag-aral sa Estados Unidos at doon niya naramdaman ang isang bagay na hindi niya naramdaman sa eskuwelahan at simbahan. Nakaramdam siya ng “Divine Love” na nagpabago sa kanyang buhay.

Sa edad na 18 ay iniwan niya ang marangyang buhay at naging isang Ananda Maraga yoga missionary. Matapos mamalagi sa Portugal at India, pumunta siya ng Africa at tumira roon ng 11 taon.

Naghanap siya ng pera upang may maipanggastos sa mga bata na kanyang inaalaagan.

Sa India natuto siya na mamuhay gaya ng isang mahirap at natutunan na huwag maging aksaya. Sa kanyang tinitirahan isang timbang tubig lamang ang mayroon at dapat niyang mapagkasya sa isang araw.

Natutunan niya na mamuhay ng naayon sa prinsipyo at hindi sa panuntunan.

Umuwi siya sa Pilipinas makalipas ang 20 taon dala ang kanyang mga natutunan at itinayo ang ABS-CBN Foundation.

Mula sa pagnanais na makatulong sa iba ay umusbong ang kanyang “gift of love to Filipino children”—ang Bantay Bata 163 na tumutulong sa mga batang nakararanas ng pang-aabuso.

Bilang dagdag na tulong sa mga bata, si Lopez ay nag-produce ng mga educational television shows, nagsasagawa ng feeding program at outreach program sa mga kapuspalad, sumusuporta sa mga maliliit na negosyo, at kinukuha ang Bayanihan spirit ng mga Filipino upang mapaganda ang kalagayan ng iba.

Sinimulan din niya ang Bantay Kalikasan at sinakloloan ang naghihin-galong La Mesa Watershed at binuhay ang La Mesa Eco-Park.

Sinabi ni Lopez na mayroong kaugnayan ang isip ng tao sa kanyang kapaligiran. Mas malinis ang lugar mas may kapayapaan ang isip ng mga nakatira sa lugar.

Noong 2010, pina-munuan ni Lopez ang Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission. At mula sa kanilang ginawang paglilinis ay nagawang buhayin ng Metropolitan Manila Development Authority ang Pasig River ferry service.

Pinangunahan din ni Lopez ang pangangalap ng 10 milyong pirma para sa pagpapatigil ng small at large scale commercial mining sa Palawan. Nagawang malikom ang pirma makalipas ang apat na taon.

Noong 2014, sa edad na 60, naisip ni Lopez na magretiro na mula sa araw-araw na ginagawa sa ABS-CBN Foundation.

Pero makalipas ang

dalawang taon siya ay napili ni Pangulong Duterte upang pamunuan ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

At sa kanyang maikling pamamalagi sa ahensya ay maituturing na tumatak ang kanyang mga ginawa. Nagsagawa ng inspeksyon sa lahat ng minahan at ang mga may paglabag ay agad na ipinasara.

Iginiit ni Lopez na hindi totoo na nakakatulong ang pagmimina sa buhay ng mga tao sa lugar dahil ang yu-mayaman lamang ay ang mga kompanya.

Ang alam niya dapat gawin ang tama na naging hudyat naman sa pagsasama-sama ng kanyang mga kalaban.

Noong Mayo, 2017, ibinasura ng Commission on Appointments ang nominasyon ni Lopez sa kabila ng hayagang pagsuporta sa kanya ni Duterte.

Sa kanyang pag-alis sa kanyang tanggapan ay kinanta pa niya ang isa sa kanyang mga paboritong kanta: “I believe I can fly”.



GINA LOPEZ

Hindi man nagtagal sa puwesto, sinabi ni Lopez na naging oportunidad ito upang mas maisulong ang kanyang adbokasiya.

Sinimulan niya ang I LOVE (Investments in Loving Organizations for Village

Economies) isang organisasyon na nais niyang maging “green models” ng bansa.

At noong Lunes pumanaw sa edad na 65 ang ikalawa sa pitong anak nina Eugenio “Geny” Lopez, Jr. at Conchita La’O.





## EDITORIAL

# Gratitude to Gina

IT is a rather ironic but still a decidedly respectful gesture to the cheerful environmental warrior-princess.

What the recently dearly departed former Environment and Natural Resources secretary Gina Lopez failed to get from the Senate when she was still around, she finally received in an avalanche of praise and gratitude.

To be sure here, Lopez was not the arch-villain of big business she was unfairly portrayed to be by her detractors; she was a righteous tormentor of bad business.

But she was also the cheerleader-in-chief of natural conservation and environmental protection.

Gina made the Green Movement fun and profitable for small, marginalized stakeholders in the campaign to save our forests, oceans, wildlife, and other natural resources.

And her feats in the conservation movement and corporate social responsibility are not lost on discerning lawmakers who heaped plaudits on the fallen fighter for nature and the marginalized in society.

Senate President Pro Tempore Ralph G. Recto said:

Gina was not a debutante infatuated with green causes to which she had a passing fancy. She was a lifelong warrior for Mother Earth.

She walked her talk, be it in defense of helpless children or displaced communities, or in nursing back to life polluted waters or ravaged forests.

Before climate change became a buzzword, she was already warning us about this threat to mankind. The best way to honor her is to heed what she tried to teach us.

While in government, her habit of speaking the inconvenient truth to power was actually a strength, and not a character flaw in a bureaucracy straitjacketed by niceties.

Though her stint was cut short, Gina was a great "secretary of defense of our natural resources".

Senator Nancy Binay has these to say about her:

Secretary Gina Lopez was such a passionate, selfless eco-warrior who has given much to the country.

She has shown us the meaning of hope, and has inspired many of us in a big way.

Her efforts to mainstream the issue of environmental protection in our tourism policies have positively influenced villages and communities.

Her advocacies have now become living showcases of her passion.

Her deep desire to focus on the positive, her peerless efforts to protect our environment and help the underprivileged will surely be missed.

For his part, fellow environmental warrior Sec. Jose Miguel Zubiri said:

Gina Lopez has always been a good friend of every Filipino, rich and poor, and a real warrior for the conservation, protection of the environment. I admire her very much.





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NEWS

## Even critters you hate must be saved

For the first time, invertebrates like cockroaches and spiders have been included on the National List of Threatened Terrestrial Fauna of the Philippines. Of such species, 13 were considered critically endangered, including butterflies Marinduque swallowtail and Leyte swallowtail, while six others were listed as endangered, including the Antipolo blind cave cockroach and Simon's cave cockroach. —STORY BY JHESSET O. ENANO

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CRITTERS NOW COUNTED AMONG VULNERABLE SPECIES

# YOU WANT THEM DEAD, BUT ROACHES, SPIDERS ON PH 'MUST-SAVE' LIST

By **Jhesset O. Enano**  
@JhessetEnanoINQ

While the sight of cockroaches and spiders can leave some fleeing in fear, there is a new reason to rally behind insects and spiders that are not so loved by many.

For the first time, invertebrates, including insects, arachnids and land snails, have been included in the country's updated "Red List," or the National List of Threatened Terrestrial Fauna of the Philippines, expanding the knowledge on critical and vulnerable species in our biodiversity-rich country.

Scientists and conservationists assessed a total of 784 species of cockroaches, beetles, true bugs, wasps, butterflies, moths, dragonflies, damselflies, leaf insects, stick insects, spiders and land snails, accounting for nearly 70 percent of all the species listed.

Led by the Philippine Red List Committee (PRLC), the re-

view is a long-awaited update of the Red List for terrestrial animals, the first of which was published in 2004.

The new list, presented at the 28th Philippine Biodiversity Symposium in Baybay, Leyte province, last week, assessed nearly 2,000 species of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates. It now awaits publication by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

### 1,105 species threatened

From the assessed species, 1,105 or 55 percent were placed under four threatened categories, such as critically endangered, endangered, vulnerable and other threatened species.

PRLC chair Juan Carlos Gonzalez, a professor at the University of the Philippines Los Baños, said the first-time inclusion of invertebrates was made possible by the strong collaboration between scientists and institutions, allowing more

knowledge sharing and research about species otherwise ignored.

Of the 784 invertebrates, 13 were considered critically endangered, while six were listed as endangered. A total of 321 species were placed under vulnerable status.

Among the critically endangered insects were the Marinduque swallowtail (*Meneides luzviae*) and the Leyte swallowtail (*Chilasa osmana*), both butterflies heavily collected for international trade.

Both are endemic species known from extreme limited range and habitat, with unstable populations and are prone to poaching and illegal trade.

### Cave-dwelling roaches

Two cockroaches, the Antipolo blind cave cockroach (*Nocticola caeca*) and Simon's cave cockroach (*Nocticola simoni*) were considered endangered.

Both are strictly cave-

dwelling roaches and are only known from their original collection from caves in Antipolo and San Mateo in Rizal province, way back in the 1890s.

Five other cockroach species were listed as vulnerable, as similar-looking species are either sold off as pets or used in Chinese medicine.

According to a PRLC article in the *Sylvatrop* journal, overharvesting is the most commonly cited threat to invertebrate species.

### Spider wrestling

Stick insects, beetles and wasps are often poached and illegally traded for personal collections. Spider populations are threatened by poaching for pet trade and spider wrestling.

Butterflies, meanwhile, appear heavily in international markets.

Several endemic species also have unstable populations and their habitats are often degraded and heavily polluted, leading

to decline in numbers.

"You remove one member of the food chain, that affects another," Gonzalez said. "That may be just a moth or a caterpillar, but they are food for certain birds. The birds' survival may change by just removing them [from the chain]."

### Habitat, land conversion

Beyond invertebrates, the threats for many terrestrial animals remain, which are mostly due to human activity.

Habitat destruction, hunting and rampant land conversion are just some of the key challenges that policymakers and other stakeholders need to focus on, said Cynthia Layusa, vice president of the Biodiversity Conservation Society of the Philippines and one of the main authors of the journal article.

At least six species have been uplisted in their threatened status, including the Palawan pangolin (*Manis culionensis*) and the Palawan flying

fox (*Acerodon leucotis*), which were moved from vulnerable to endangered status.

The golden-crowned fruit bat (*Acerodon jubatus*), meanwhile, was elevated from endangered to critically endangered, after recent observations showed declining population due to heavy hunting, continuous roost disturbance and reduction of lowland forests where it depends on for food and shelter.

But there is a ray of hope. Gonzalez said that despite having several threatened species, the continuous survival of many critically endangered animals also showcase the resilience of many species.

"I think we are doing something right collectively," he said. "But there should be more awareness programs. And efforts must focus not only on the species but also on people—improving their livelihood and helping them understand the animals." INQ





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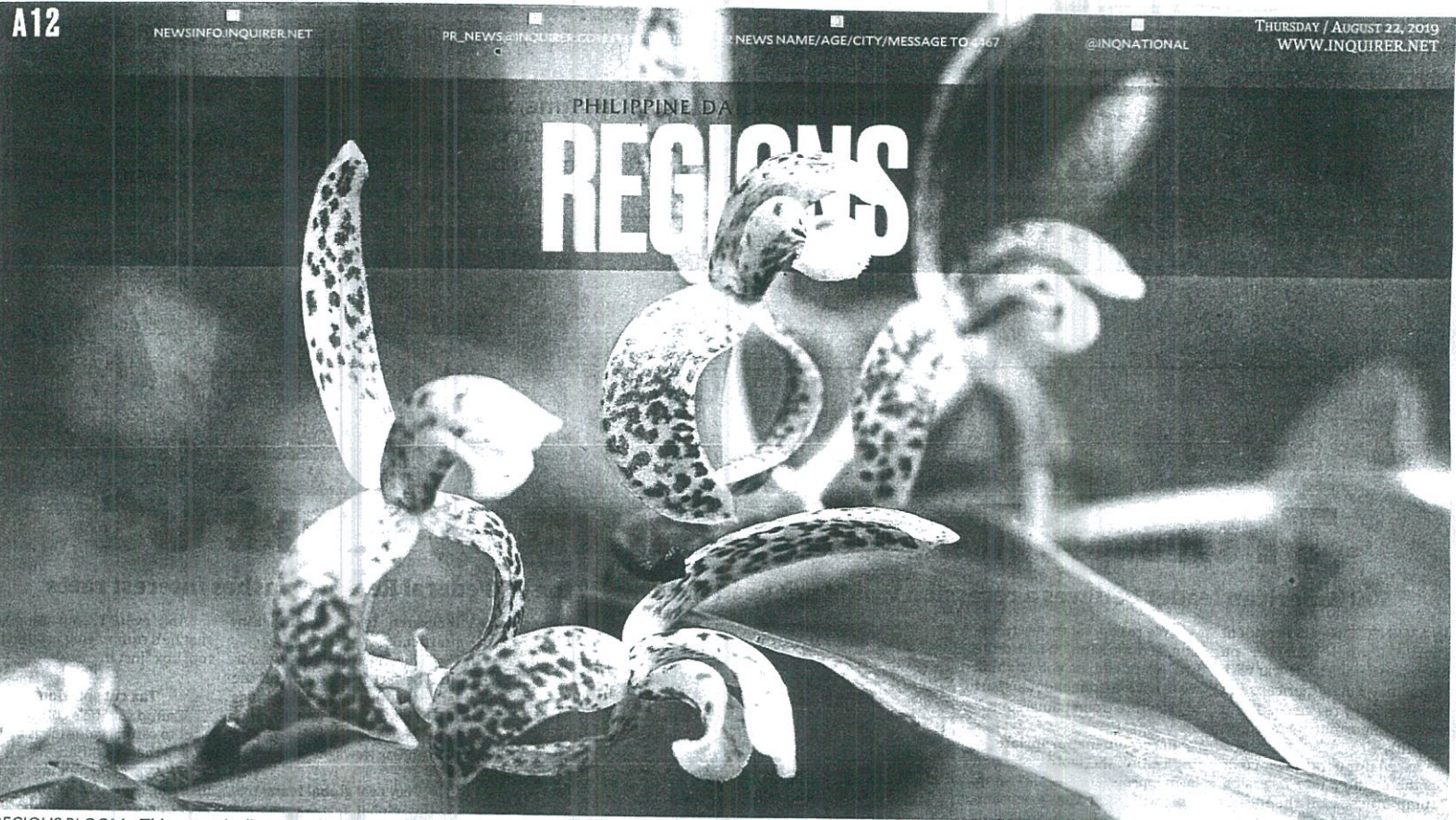
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**PRECIOUS BLOOM** This recently discovered species of orchid, called *Pseuderia samarana* (*P. Samarana*), is found in the forests of Paranas town in Samar province. Classified as "critically endangered" by conservationists, the rare flower is threatened by land conversion, timber poaching and slash-and-burn farming. —ZHEREELEEN MENESES/CONTRIBUTOR





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**RARE AND CRITICALLY ENDANGERED**

# IN SAMAR, THERE'S A NEW ORCHID ON THE BLOCK

By Maricar Cinco  
@maricarcincoINQ

SAN PEDRO CITY—A rare species of orchid has been discovered on Samar Island but scientists are racing against time to protect what is left of this flower in the wild after it has been classified as “critically endangered.”

The *Pseuderia samarana* (*Orchidaceae*) is the first record of orchids belonging to genus *Pseuderia* in the Philippines, according to botanist Zhereeleen Meneses, a professor of environmental biology at the University of the Philippines Los Baños.

*Pseuderia* orchids, she said, are found primarily in New Guinea and on the islands of Moluccas, Micronesia, the Solomon Islands and Fiji.

Meneses, with Australian coauthor James Edward Cootes, published her work on *P. samarana* in the latest issue of science journal *Taiwania*, *International Journal of Biodiversity*, on Aug. 16.

Meneses, 27, said her group discovered the orchid during a field study in 2015 on the hills of Paranas, a second-class municipality in Samar province.

## Smaller flowers

“Amazingly, [the orchids] are found only on top of the hills, [particularly] in forests over limestone formations,” Meneses said in a telephone interview on Wednesday.

She said they had seen just about 20 to 30 “mature individuals” of the orchid each time during several treks back to Paranas.

Meneses, in the journal, said *P. samarana* shared similarities with orchid species *P. frutex* and *P. floribunda*.

During the plant’s early stage, *P. samarana* stays low close to the soil but eventually vines out as it matures. The flowers (1.5 to 1.6 centimeters by

1.1 to 1.4 cm) bloom into yellow with reddish-purple marks.

“Its labellum (main flower) is generally smaller compared with common orchids we see in garden shows,” Meneses said.

*P. samarana*’s clinandrium, the part where the anther is, is not serrated (with jagged edge or sawlike), unlike most orchids in the Philippines.

## Conservation efforts

*P. samarana* is the latest addition to the approximately 1,100 species of known orchids in the Philippines. Globally, there are about 23,000 orchid species.

But Meneses said *P. samarana* fell under the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List category as “critically endangered.” This was based on scientific computations, for instance, the species population against the area it occupies.

Meneses said they tried to grow *P. samarana* seedlings in Los Baños, Laguna, but their attempts were unsuccessful.

“It may have something to do with the [type of] soil [where it grows in Samar],” she said.

Meneses said *P. samarana* might have been existing in the Philippines for a long time, the genus possibly having reached Samar province through earlier movements of tectonic plates.

Since 2015, there have been global scientific efforts to conserve orchid species in Samar, she said.

Local scientists, Meneses said, are working for the inclusion of *P. samarana* in conservation initiatives.

Although Paranas falls within the Samar Island Natural Park, a government protected area, scientists still found threats to the *P. samarana* population, particularly from land conversion, timber poaching and slash-and-burn farming. INQ







# Leyte hosts national biodiversity symposium

Hundreds of conservationists, scientists, independent researchers, government representatives, and students gathered for the 28th annual Philippine Biodiversity Symposium held Aug. 13 to 16 at the Visayas State University in Baybay, Leyte.

With the theme *Conservation Without Borders*, this year's symposium highlighted the interconnection among various conservation efforts such as species protection, the ridge-to-reef approach, and biodiversity management.

"The goal of maintaining the health of our fragile ecosystem depends on our pragmatic approach to conservation," said Rainier Manalo, president of the Biodiversity Conservation Society of the Philippines.

Manalo emphasized the importance of ensuring the sustainability of all conservation actions and the vital role of all stakeholders including the public and business sectors in upholding environmental and socio-cultural development.

During the four-day event, high school and undergraduate research reports, scientific paper presentations, and simultaneous talks and workshops were held.

The symposium encompassed various biodiversity conservation topics including taxonomy, flora and fauna (plant and animal life), threats and issues, and conservation management.

Anson Tagtag, chief of the DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau, Wildlife Management Section and Juan Carlos Gonzales, zoology professor

and director of the UPLB Museum of Natural History, presented the updated *Philippine Red List* for terrestrial fauna, or the list of threatened land-based wildlife species in the country.

During the plenary talk, Tagtag and Gonzales also explained the criteria used for the categories assigned, the basis of the threats, and challenges and issues arising from its implementation across archipelagic Philippines.

Local conservation group Haribon Foundation also gathered conservation experts in a workshop that aims to assess current and identify new priority areas for conservation in the country, also known as Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), using the updated global guidelines by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Unlike the previous versions, the new IUCN criteria for KBA includes the identification of threatened ecosystems, preservation of ecological integrity, and preservation of biological processes. Aside from the overall KBAs, the workshop also aimed to identify sites under the Alliance for Zero Extinctions (AZE) framework, which are said to be the most important site among all KBAs.

On the third day, participants joined an exposure trip to the Leyte Sab-a Peatland, one of the two major peatland sites in the country. It covers four barangays of the municipality of Sta. Fe and Alangalang, Leyte and is considered important in climate regulation and wildlife conservation.

Symposium activities also included an exhibit of groups involved in biodiversity research and conservation.





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**Cradling pristine forests, Mt. Pangasugan's peak is seen at the Visayas State University**

'The goal of maintaining the health of our fragile ecosystem depends on our pragmatic approach to conservation.

It is important to ensure the sustainability of all conservation actions and the vital role of all stakeholders in upholding environmental and socio-cultural development.'



**Exhibit on biodiversity and conservation**





# SBMA takes care of the environment

The Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) is taking care of Mother Earth with various comprehensive environmental programs and measures.

Recently, SBMA employees and community volunteers joined the nationwide observance of Arbor Day at the Subic Bay Freeport Zone. A total of 150 trees and 2,500 bougainvilleas were planted during the annual event. This is in compliance with Proclamation No. 643 which seeks to promote a healthier ecosystem through the rehabilitation and re-greening of the environment by planting trees and ornamental plants across the country.

Leading the activity is SBMA chairperson and administrator Wilma Eisma. She said that the Arbor Day is a commitment of the SBMA because environmental protection is a



**Coastal cleanup is regularly held in Subic Bay**

fundamental advocacy of the government agency, being home to one of few remaining tropical rainforests in the country.

Aside from the Arbor Day, SBMA is also at the forefront of continuing environmental initiatives such as the Dive Heroes Festival-Scubasurero where volunteer scuba divers do underwater

cleanup, the International Coastal Cleanup, and the Recyclables Collection Event (RCE). The latter, which is in line with its "War on Waste" program, is a semi-annual activity which encourages stakeholders to help keep the Freeport clean by collecting recyclable materials and bringing them to accredited waste handlers for upcycling.

## GREEN IS IN!



**GREEN INITIATIVES.** SBMA chairperson and administrator Wilma Eisma (center) leads SBMA officers and employees during the nationwide observance of Arbor Day in Subic Bay Freeport Zone. One of the activities done was a re-greening of sidewalks and open spaces where 2,500 bougainvilleas were planted.





## **BULACAN READIES CREEK, RIVERS TO HOLD UP FLOOD WATER**

**CITY OF MALOLOS:** Bulacan Gov. Daniel Fernando and Malolos City Mayor Gilbert Gatchalian led on Tuesday the Bulacan River System-Clean Up Project held at Apulid Creek in Barangay Longos to ensure the creeks and rivers could hold up flood water. For the initial phase of the project, the Provincial Engineer's Office started dredging the 4.6-kilometer Apulid Creek, which is among the creeks that directly flows to Santo Niño River, one of the major river systems in the province connected to Manila Bay. He also said the fight to protect the environment does not stop in dredging alone but it entails self-discipline with regard to proper waste management.

**FREDERICK SILVERIO**





# Gov't agencies to go paperless

THE Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA) will fast-track the nationwide automation of government services in a move to ease doing business and eliminate corruption.

Jeremiah Belgica, ARTA director-general, said in a statement the agency and the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) will sign on the first week of

September a memorandum of agreement (MOA) that will accelerate efficiency in the government through automation.

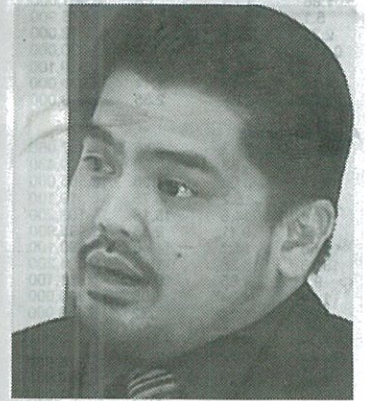
Belgica said automation and digitization of government services would lower the operational costs and would pave the way for a faster transaction.

Belgica added this will eliminate corruption by minimizing interaction between applicants

and government employees and officials.

Under the proposed MOA, DICT information technology (IT) experts would partner with a government agency's IT team to assist in automating and digitizing their services.

He urged heads of government offices and agencies to reach out to DICT for assistance in their automation efforts.



BELGICA





## Nickel miner eyes new site as Tawi-Tawi mine nears depletion

SR Languyan Mining Corp., a top exporter of high-grade nickel ore, is eyeing a new site in the Bicol region, as its Tawi-Tawi mine site nears depletion of ore deposits. *SI/3*

# Nickel miner eyes new site as Tawi-Tawi mine nears depletion

**By Vincent Mariel P. Galang**  
Reporter

SR Languyan Mining Corp., a top exporter of high-grade nickel ore, is eyeing a new site in the Bicol Region, as its Tawi-Tawi mine site nears depletion of ore deposits.

*"Bago mahinto 'yung operations namin nagpa-Plan B na kami. Humanap na kami ng alternative na area para 'yung tao namin, dahan-dahan naming ililipat [Before our operations stop, we already have a Plan B. We already looked for an alternative area so that we can gradually transfer our employees],"* Hamba Bara Loong, port manager of SR Languyan, told *BusinessWorld* in a phone interview earlier this week.

Mr. Loong said the company is currently conducting explo-

ration activities at a site in the Bicol Region. He did not disclose the exact location, but said the site spans 5,000 hectares and has an estimated mine life of 50 years.

As for the Tawi-Tawi site, Mr. Loong said its ore deposits are likely to be depleted by the end of the year.

*"May depletion ang area, so malapit nang mag-deplete... Mga end of this year maybe. Mga 10% na lang (deposits), so most probably end of this year [There is already depletion in the area, it is nearing depletion... Maybe by end of this year. There are only 10% deposits remaining, so most probably end of this year],"* he said.

Reuters earlier reported that the closure of SR Languyan will slash the Philippines' monthly exports of nickel ore to China by 300,000 to 400,000 tons, quoting

estimates by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB). Jaynul Ali Sambaranu, head of the mines and geosciences services of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), said that they will conduct a mine audit on all active mining companies, including SR Languyan, in Tawi-Tawi next week to assess the level of ore deposits. He noted that SR Languyan is exporting a monthly average of 500,000 tons to China, the world's top metals consumer.

Once SR Languyan's operations end, Mr. Sambaranu said BARMM will feel the biggest impact on cash remittances.

*"Unang-una cash remittances ng SR Languyan sa BARMM, syempre 'yung area iiwanan din. Pero ang pinaka malaki talaga sa cash remittances (First, it's*

the cash remittances of SR Languyan to BARMM, and also the area that they will leave. But the biggest impact is really on cash remittances," he said. SR Languyan is one of the top nickel ore producers in the country, and China's second-biggest supplier of nickel ore which are used in stainless steel and battery production.

The company was given a mining permit in 2010 which covers 3,483 hectares of land in Languyan, Tawi-Tawi.

SR Languyan's impending shutdown comes amid a nickel ore shortage and Indonesia's possible ban on nickel ore exports.

Indonesia, the world's top nickel ore supplier, is crafting mineral ore export rules, which might include a ban on exports of unprocessed mineral ores to be implemented from 2022.



# PH to keep relying on coal for energy

BY JORDEENE B. LAGARE

**COAL will stay as the leading source of energy in the Philippines amid the government's continued push for renewable energy (RE), according to a unit of the Fitch Group.**

In its commentary sent to *The Manila Times* on Wednesday, Fitch Solutions Macro Research said it forecasts coal to make up 59.1 percent of the country's energy mix by 2028.

On the other hand, power generation from non-hydro renewables will reach 10.2 percent, the think tank said.

Data from the Department of Energy (DoE) showed that in terms of installed capacity, coal was the country's primary source of energy in 2018 at 8,844 megawatts (MW), a 9.9-percent increase from 8,049 MW in 2017.

RE came in second at 7,227 MW last year, 2.1 percent higher than 7,079MW a year earlier.

Fitch Solutions said coal will

continue to fuel developments in the Philippine energy sector despite President Duterte's recent call to lower the country's reliance on coal.

"While the gradually improving environment for renewables present an upside risk to our renewables forecast, coal will still remain dominant in the Philippines' power sector expansion," the research firm stated.

During his fourth State of the Nation Address last month, Duterte ordered Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi to harness more RE sources. "In this regard, I trust that Secretary Cusi shall fast-track also the development of renewable energy sources, and reduce dependence on the traditional energy

sources such as coal."

Fitch Solutions said the government will continue to lean on coal to stimulate "affordable electricity generation growth" at a pace and scale necessary to bolster continued economic growth.

The government is anticipated "to turn to coal to meet the country's power demand surge, driven primarily by strong macroeconomic and demographic fundamentals, and government goals to achieve a 100-percent electrification rate by 2022," it said.

Coal is still a cheaper and more reliable option as resources from the Malampaya gas field is depleted with limited scope for exploration success in alternative locations in the country, Fitch Solutions said.

Amid declining RE costs, the research company believes the intermittency and low capacity factors of wind and solar power generation means the sector will only supplement baseload resources in scaling up electricity generation.

It also cited setbacks in commissioning the first liquefied natural gas import terminal in the country.

Moreover, Fitch Solutions said several coal-fired power plants were declared as energy projects of national significance this year, including the 2x668-megawatt supercritical clean coal-fired power plant in Mariveles, Bataan and the 2x600-MW ultra supercritical coal-fired power plant in Atimonan, Quezon.

"The government's decision to grant 11 mining and energy companies approval to explore and develop coal blocks in February 2013 further illustrates its ambitions for the growth of the coal power segment, and this government stance has remained largely the case since," it said.

"While growing environmental and social opposition against coal pose an increasing risk to these projects, we still expect a significant amount of coal capacity to be commissioned over the coming decade," it added.





## Eco group wants selling of unsafe toy swords stopped

By Joel E. Zurbano

PROTECT children from unsafe toy swords.

Environmental group Ecowaste Coalition made this appeal to consumers after it discovered the sale in the local market of light up toy swords contaminated with lead, a health-damaging chemical.

Taking its cue from a product recall order in the United Kingdom last Aug. 12 for a China-made light up toy sword due to its lead content, the group bought eight samples of such toys for P40 to P100 each from toy wholesalers and retailers in Divisoria, Manila.

The light-up toy sword recalled in UK contains a silver paint with lead measuring 112 parts per million (ppm). "A child may put the toy in the mouth," the recall order said, noting that "exposure to lead is harmful for human health and cause developmental neurotoxicity."

"We bought some light up toy swords, also known as flashing stick or Star Wars lightsabers, to check if such toys sold locally do not present a lead exposure risk to their young users," said Thony Dizon, Ecowaste chemical safety campaigner.

Using a handheld X-Ray Fluorescence (XRF) analytical device, the group detected lead on two of the eight samples of light up toy swords.

One has 136 ppm of lead and the other has 944 ppm, exceeding the 90 ppm maximum regulatory limit for lead in paint. Also, three of the samples were found to contain high levels of antimony and bromine.

"We also found all the eight samples unlabeled or mislabeled with important information as age grading, cautionary warning and manufacturer's marking missing," said Dizon.



## Water pollution can cut growth – World Bank

**WASHINGTON:** Heavily polluted water is reducing economic growth by up to a third in some countries, a World Bank report said Tuesday (Wednesday), calling for action to address human and environmental harm.

The report relied on what the Bank said was the biggest-ever database assembled on global water quality using monitoring stations, satellite data and machine learning models.

"Clean water is a key factor for economic growth. Deteriorating water quality is stalling economic growth, worsening health conditions, reducing food production, and exacerbating poverty in many countries," said World Bank Group President David Malpass.

The report found that when Biological Oxygen Demand — an index of the degree of organic pollution and a proxy for overall water pollution — crosses a threshold of 8 milligrams per liter, GDP growth in downstream regions drops by 0.83 percentage points, about a third for the mean growth rate of 2.33 percent used in the study.

This is because of impacts on health, agriculture, and ecosystems and a "stark indication that there often trade-offs between benefits of economic production and environmental quality, and that the externalities... can be circular," the report said.

A key contributor to poor water quality is nitrogen, essential for agricultural production but which leaches into rivers and oceans where it creates hypoxia and dead zones, and in the air where it forms nitrous oxide, a greenhouse gas.

The report said that early exposure of children to nitrates affects their growth and brain development, reducing their health and earning potential.

For every additional kilogram of nitrogen fertilizer per hectare, yields may rise up to 5 percent, but childhood stunting increases as much as 19 percent and future adult earnings fall by up to 2 percent compared to those not affected.

And increased salinity as a result of manmade pressures such as irrigation, stormwater runoff, leaching of fertilizer and urban wastewater discharge is pushing down agricultural yields.

The report estimated enough food is lost to saline water each year to feed 170 million people, about the population of Bangladesh.

The authors divided their recommendations into three main areas: information campaigns to raise awareness, prevention efforts to stem some of the worst problems and investments to treat pollution once it has occurred, with more modern technologies like reverse-osmosis offering new pathways.

AFP





## World Bank warns of 'invisible water crisis'

By CAI U. ORDINARIO  
@caiordinario

**T**HE world is facing an invisible water crisis due to poor quality found in polluted areas globally, according to the World Bank.

In the report, titled "Quality Unknown: The Invisible Water Crisis," the Washington-based lender said the combination of bacteria, sewage,

chemicals and plastics in water is a threat to the economic and overall well-being of people.

The report named India, Japan, Lebanon, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Senegal, Turkey and Gaza among those already experiencing unsafe levels of nitrates in drinking water.

"Clean water is a key factor for economic growth. Deteriorating water

quality is stalling economic growth, worsening health conditions, reducing food production, and exacerbating poverty in many countries," said World Bank Group President David Malpass. "Their governments must take urgent actions to help tackle water pollution so that countries can grow faster in equitable and environmentally sustainable ways."

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## Water crisis...

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The World Bank explained in a statement that nitrogen is a key contributor to poor water quality. Usually applied as fertilizer in agriculture, nitrogen eventually enters rivers, lakes and oceans where it transforms into nitrates.

The Bank said if children are exposed to nitrates, it will affect their growth and brain development. This will ultimately affect their health and adult earning potential.

### Stunting risk

THIS could impact child stunting in countries. The World Bank said every additional kilogram of nitrogen fertilizer per hectare could increase childhood stunting by as much as 19 percent and reduce adult earnings by 2 percent, compared to those who were not exposed.

In the Philippines, childhood stunting remains high and accounts for the country's poor ranking in the World Bank's Human Capital Index (HCI)—84th out of 157 countries.

In a briefing in April, World Bank Program Leader for Human Development Gabriel Demombynes said one in three Filipino children below five years old are stunted, a ratio that has been unchanged in 10 years. He said the ratio remained at one in three children in 2015 from 2005.

"Not only are average concentrations high, but in areas with hard rock aquifers, nitrate contamination is found at staggering depths of more than 350 meters, showing that even deep groundwater is not safe from contamination," the report stated.

"Furthermore, the presence of nitrates in groundwater enhances the mobilization of other deadly pollutants such as uranium, compounding the threat of groundwater pollution," it added.

### Danger from E. coli

IN the 2017 Annual Poverty Indicators Survey (Apis) and Water Quality Testing Module, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said 94 percent of the country's 24 million households have improved source of drinking water.

However, only a third have access to E. coli-free water supply. E. coli, PSA said, is a fecal

indicator bacteria and is likely to be present when feces or raw sewage enters the water supply.

PSA said that while most strains of E. coli are harmless, others can make a person sick. Further, some kinds of E. coli can cause diarrhea, while others cause urinary tract infections, respiratory illness and pneumonia, and other illnesses.

"The presence of E. coli in drinking water does not necessarily mean that the person drinking it will become sick, but it indicates that over time the household is at a higher risk for waterborne diseases," PSA said.

Data showed that only one in every three families or 34 percent have their drinking water at the point use free from fecal contamination. In this module, free from fecal contamination refers to drinking water with zero E. coli.

The PSA said households located in urban areas are more likely to have drinking water that is free from contamination of E. coli, compared with those in rural areas.

"The percentage of families with drinking water with no contamination of E. coli is higher in the point source [50 percent] than from

point use [34 percent]. This may indicate that handling and storage may affect the quality of water," the PSA added.

PSA data also showed that around 94 percent of the 24 million Filipino families have improved source of drinking water.

In the urban 97 percent of households have access to improved sources of drinking water while it is a bit lower at 91 percent in rural areas.

Residents in rural areas are more likely to have an unimproved source of drinking water than those in urban areas. Almost four in every five families or 77 percent do not practice any method or treatment in ensuring their drinking water is safe to drink.

On the sufficiency and accessibility of drinking water, majority or 88 percent of the families reported that drinking water is sufficient while 4 percent of families are unable to obtain sufficient water because it is not available from source. Three in every four families or 75 percent obtain their drinking water within the premises or within their yard/plot. Families in urban areas are more likely to have their water sources within their premises compared with families in rural areas.





## Smart mobility

AS the population continues to grow, so does the demand to move people, goods and ideas. Elsewhere in the world, particularly in Asia, Europe and the US, more and more people have been consciously choosing to be mobile without their own vehicles. This is the result of cities and businesses working together to advocate and implement smart mobility programs. In fact, people who live in these cities have been proven to have a higher quality of life in spite of living in a highly urbanized setting. This shift allowed cities to contradict the paradigm that living in cities is more harmful.

To simplify, smart mobility is changing the way we move from one place to another through cleaner, safer and more efficient means. Lukas Neckermann, the author of *Smart Cities, Smart Mobility*, describes it as: "Zero Emissions, Zero Accidents, Zero Ownership." Smart mobility encourages faster, environment-friendly and more affordable transportation options. We all want our modes of transportation to be on-time, easy and systematic. What's remarkable about smart mobility is that aside from ensuring efficiency, it helps develop transportation systems to be flexible, safe, equitable and affordable, and have clean technology. Flexible because it presents travelers with multiple options of transportation with comprehensive area coverage. Smart mobility improves safety, resulting in reduced injuries and fatalities, and is highly affordable and functional for all. The desired ultimate outcome of smart mobility is to improve the quality of life of cities and communities.

The Sustainable Cities Mobility Index 2017 ranked 100 cities in terms of the performance of their mobility systems. These cities were evaluated based on three main criteria: People, Planet and Profit. The criteria for People measured how transport services impact the quality of life of a city's commuters and tourists; criteria for Planet gauged the extent of the system's environmental impacts; and the criteria for Profit evaluated affordability, how much the city is willing to commit for transportation infrastructure, and commuters' average travel time. Hong Kong claimed the top spot in the overall rankings.



**FELINO A. PALAFOX, JR.**

One of Hong Kong's outstanding characteristics is its world-class public transportation system. Even if it is one of the world's most densely populated cities, Hong Kong competently meets the mobility needs of its residents and tourists. In fact, Hong Kong's public transportation system that includes, among others, high-speed rail or mass underground train systems, is famous in the world for being modern and highly organized. Its MTR (Mass Transit Railway) can accommodate 12.6 million passenger journeys each day, but still, it is consistently praised to be one of the world's most efficient, convenient, and comprehensive transport infrastructure. Its citizens and tourists are highly appreciative of how innovative the metro system is, even allowing travelers to access 3G internet services in all tunnels and stations. The main reason why Hong Kong ranks first in the people subcategory is because communities, offices commercial centers, schools and other institutions are well integrated to the rail network, forming progressive transport-oriented developments (TODs). Because of the

close proximity of these to transportation hubs, the United Nations has also cited Hong Kong as one of the most efficient cities in terms of energy consumption in the transport sector.

It is not surprising that Europe dominated the index with seven cities in the top 10. European cities are applauded for being eco-conscious, which has resulted in green infrastructure, technologies, strategies and programs that aim to reduce emissions. Denmark and The Netherlands are known for their cycling culture and vast networks of bicycle lanes that translate to stronger carbon management. Their urban plans have mainly deviated from car-centric designs, and their cities were designed with people's safety and well-being as top priorities. In fact, there are more bicycles than residents in The Netherlands, and most of the cyclists do not wear helmets because the Dutch have invested in street designs and policies that keep cycling safe. Germany, one

of the world's leading car manufacturers, has ironically, neighborhoods that are car-free where people enjoy walking, biking and taking the bus or light rail. Electric vehicles have become mainstream as public and private sectors are choosing to give up gas- and diesel-powered automobiles. Ranked third, Paris was one of the first cities to pass a climate and energy action plan. It includes creating more pedestrian-centric and low-emission zones, strengthening public transportation, and aggressively promoting cycling and electric mobility. European cities are constantly improving their green initiatives to reduce car use and enhance their transportation systems.

Manila placed 62nd in the world ranking and 15th in Asia. Manila's highest rank is for People at the 33rd spot, followed by Profit at the 38th spot, and the lowest is for Planet at the 91st spot. This is not surprising as proven by a 2018 study conducted by the World Health Organization that revealed the Philippines to have the third highest number of deaths because of air pollution. Our cities were patterned after Los Angeles, which was unfortunately designed for the automobile instead of people. Majority of the projects the DPWH and the DOTR have been unveiling are the construction of roads, airports, and subway and rail systems. However, I strongly believe that overhauling our public transportation system to make it efficient, convenient, safe and well-connected should be a top priority. If we improve our public transportation system, we can achieve modal split — the percentage of trips in a city taken through public transport. A high modal split means more people would rather take public transportation or opt for other modes such as walking or biking because of their convenience and availability. I hope our infrastructure plans will not only focus on creating more car-centric roads but rather enhancing their quality by transforming them to more walkable, bikable, safer, greener, and cleaner streets that will be healthier for us and the environment. Less cars equals less carbon emissions, which leads to a healthier environment and communities.





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**MAHIRAP** ma-dengue. Kung hindi ka matatay mismo sa nasabing sakit na dala ng lamok, maaaring matatay ka sa kalisip kung paano mo babayaran ang inutang at ginastos mo para makaligtas ka o iyong anak o asawa kaya kapag sila ang tinamaan.

Heto ang nagaganap sa dengue.

Kapag ipinasok ka sa ospital at mayaman ka, maaaring abutin ang gastos mo sa milyong piso kung grabe ang tama sa iyo at 3 linggo o 1 buwan ka sa ospital.

Grabe ang tama mo kapag ang normal mong dami ng platelet na 150,000-350,000 per microliter ay naging 10,000 na lang o mas maliit pa dahil inubos iyon ng virus ng dengue.

Ang platelet ang gumagawa ng blood clot para mapigil ang pagdurugo mo sa loob ng katawan na lumalabas sa bunganga, ilong at kahit saan.

Kung mahirap naman ang tinamaan, karaniwang P30,000-P40,000 ang gastos sa general hospital.

Lumalaki lang ito kung kasama na ang 5/6 na pangungutang, punerarya, kabaong at libingan.

### TAWA-TAWA, PUGO, KALAPATI

Sa hanay ng mga mamamayan, kung may na-dengue, todo-todo ang paghahanap nila ng pugo at itlog ng pugo para lumakas umano ang dugo ng pasyente.

May nagkakatay rin ng kalapati at gumagamit ng itlog ng kalapati.

May umiinom naman ng sabaw ng pinakulang tawa-tawa at pasikretong dinadala sa mga ospital dahil ayaw ipagamit ng doktor ito.

Ang Department of Science and Technology, okey na sa tawa-tawa bilang drink supplement laban sa dengue.

Yun bang === makatutulong sa pagpapataas ng platelet.

Marami na ang nakasubok sa epekto ng karne ng pugo at itlog nito, karne ng kalapati at itlog nito at tawa-tawa.

Sabi, mas mabilis gumaling ang mga pasyente at mas maaga silang nakaaalis sa mga ospital kaya malaking menos sa gastos sa



## PUGO, DUGO, TAWA-TAWA, KALAPATI VS DENGUE

ospital, punerarya at magpa-5/6.

### DUGO KAILANGAN

Itong bloodletting, mga Bro, ang isang mahalagang sangkap laban sa dengue.

Kapag wala o kulang ang dugo na mapagkukunan para sa mga nade-dengue, patay tayo.

Kaya naman, kabi-kabilaan ang mga bloodletting na sinasalihan ng iba't ibang grupo o organisasyon at iba pa ang panawagan ng mga ospital sa mga kamag-anak ng mga nade-dengue.

Kabilang sa mga sumasalang organisasyon ang mga kasapi ng Lions International at isang organisasyon dito ang Pasay City Host Lions Club na kinabibilangan natin.

Itong Philippine Red Cross ay napakaaktibo rin, maging ang mga kagawad ng media na radio, telebisyon at diaryo.

At sabihin na natin, kabilang sa mga pinakadonor ang galing sa mga pulis at militar.

Silang mga pulis at militar kasi, regular at trainee man, ang may pinakamalalakas ang katawan at pinakamalulusog sa mga donor.

Kaya naman, salamat sa lahat ng mga pulis at militar na boluntaryong magbibigay ng kanilang mga dugo.

Pero hindi rin natin malilimutan maging ang mga opisyal ng barangay at mga tanod na masisipag ding magbibigay ng dugo at maghanap ng donor sa kanilang mga barangay sa mga oras ng bloodletting.

Ito ang tatandaan ng lahat: kung grabe ang tama mo sa dengue, uubos ka ng dalawang bag sa loob ng 24-oras, kaya gaano karaming bag ang uubusin mo kung maconfine ka ng 3 linggo o isang buwan?

### AGOSTO PA LANG 180K NA

Noong 2018, kulang sa 100,000 ang na-dengue.

Ngayong taon, Agosto pa lang, nasa 180,000 na ang na-dengue

Kaya naman, pagdating ng Disyembre 2019, maaari umanong papalo sa 200,000 ang biktima.

Dito natin nakikita ang pangangailangan ng dugo.

Kung may bloodletting, sumali po tayo, magboluntaryo po tayong magbigay.

Kapag nag-aplay tayo, sana hindi tayo mare-reject.

Sa babae, binibilang ang araw kung kailan magkakaroon at natapos ang kanyang regla bago siya payagang mag-donate.

Ang senior citizen, disqualified na, gayundin ang menor-de-edad.

Meron ding problema ang mga may tattoo, puyat, may sipon, lagnat at sexually transmitted disease.

Kung sa palagay natin, eh, okey tayo at hindi disqualified, punta po sa bloodletting.

### APAT NA S

Huwag po nating kalilimutan ang mga simpleng gawin laban sa dengue.

Tinatawag ang mga ito ng Department of Health at Philippine Red Cross na Four S.

Heto ang 4 S: 1) "Search and destroy" sa mga tirahan at itlogan ng lamok; 2) "Self-protection measures" gaya ng pagpapahid ng repellent sa katawan o pagsusuot ng mahahabang damit para walang mapagkagatan ng lamok; "Seek early consultation" kung nakaramdam ng mga palatandaan ng dengue; at "Support fogging/spraying" sa mga hotspot o talagang marami na ang natatamaan.

O sama-sama po tayong lalaban sa dengue at magtulung-tulong tayo lahat sa abot ng ating makakaya.

Anomang reaksyon o reklamo, maaaring iparating sa 0922840-3333 o i-email sa banti-  
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