DENR
IN THE NEWS
DENR fails to come up with list of suspended mining firms

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has failed to come up with a list of suspended mining companies in three months, leaving many stakeholders concerned about the government's commitment to environmental protection.

In the same month, the agency officially took over the cleanup of two large mining projects that had been ordered to shut down by the fishing and mining minister, who believes the companies are not compliant with environmental standards.

In September, instead of closing down mining firms as initially planned, the DENR just issued show-cause orders to 20 companies that were recommended for suspension by the agency's Mining Audit Team.

Mining operators were given seven days to respond to DENR concerns and provide assurance that they have already complied with the standards. The DENR has still not come up with the final audit result, which is not expected to be out until the end of the year.

Industry sources now doubt the agency's capability to ever come up with a final and credible results this year amid all these delays.

Lopez said Business Bulletin last week that DENR is now on the process of finalizing the list of the mining audits. The mining industry has told the DENR to issue an order to close down the mining companies. Lopez said that while going.

"We've been waiting for a list of suspended mining companies from the DENR, but we’re still waiting," Lopez said. "Maybe next week, we can finally announce the list."

Lopez added that the mining industry has been suspending mining operations in the country since May, following the passage of the Mining Act, which requires mining companies to provide evidence of their financial capability to rehabilitate and rehabilitate of areas and companies affected by mining activities.

To recall, as much as 21 out of the country’s 115 mines have been recommended for suspension at the initial result of the government’s nationwide audit on the mining industry.

As of now, the mining industry has reduced its operations in the country to less than one-third of its peak production in the last year. The government has also suspended a number of mining projects to ensure environmental protection.

Under the Mining Act, all mining companies are required to submit a rehabilitation plan and establish a rehabilitation fund to cover the costs of cleaning up mining sites.

DENR is expected to issue a list of suspended mining companies by the end of the year, but stakeholders remain doubtful about the agency's commitment to enforcing environmental regulations.

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Gina Lopez

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The inquirer
Consumer group warns vs hazardous toys

As consumers go on pre-Christmas toy shopping sprees, a non-profit watchdog group for consumer and environmental health urged parents to pick up toys that will not expose young children to hazards lurking in some play things.

In the December 1, launching of its annual “Kid-Safe Toys: for Zero Harm, Zero Waste,” the EcoWaste Coalition, a network of non-government and public interest groups promoting ecological waste solutions, advised parents to insist on the right of their children to safe toys regardless of where the toys are sold and bought.

Regarding where you shop for toys, please be on the lookout for dangerous toys that can injure innocent children. As adults who control the purse strings, we can harness our purchasing power to ensure that our kids are provided with toys that promise good fun, entertainment and education, and are protected against physical and chemical harm. Our children deserve nothing less than non-hazardous toys, said Thony Dizon, Coordinator of the EcoWaste Coalition’s Project Project.

Dangerous toys are those that pose burn, chemical, choking, ingestion, laceration, strangulation and other hazards, including those that can injure the eyes and damage the ears, the EcoWaste Coalition said.

“We appeal to the toy industry, particularly to the toy manufacturers, importers, distributors, and retailers, to respect our children’s right to safe toys and not to put toys in the market that have not undergone and passed the required physical and chemical safety tests and are not adequately labeled,” Dizon added.
Pagwasak sa fish pens, illegal structures suportado

Suportado ni Senior Deputy Minority Rep. at Senior Deputy Minority Rep. Carlito Atienza ang direktiba ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na irsain na ang mga fish pens at illegal structures sa Laguna de Bay. "We all support President Duterte's order for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to immediately dismantle the fish pens in Laguna de Bay. In fact, he gave a deadline. For this reason, this should be done and the lake cleared of fish pens by the second week of December. He is the first president to have responded correctly to this issue and confronted it,"

"The Lake is already seriously deteriorated because of the proliferation of fish pens owned by substantial men and even foreign fishfarmers in Asia. There are also illegal structures in the lake and its environs," said the Environment Secretary.

"The lake is a national water resource and all its problems shall be worked on by the Government of Laguna de Bay. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources should also work on the problem. Fish pens and other illegal structures should be removed," said Atienza. (Oscar Mendez)
San Juan River eyed as QC water source

By Cory Martinez

THE Quezon City council strongly supports the endorsement and re-designation of the San Juan River System as a water quality management area in a bid to restore and protect it from further degradation.

The city council, in a resolution supporting the endorsement, cited the San Juan River and its tributaries as potential sources of sources of potential water supply for local government units and other stakeholders to enhance the water quality of the city.

"The present state of the water quality of the San Juan River and its tributaries requires serious protection and management. Working together to ensure the sustainability of the river system is expected to generate maximum benefits and welfare for the affected communities and stakeholders," Delarmonte said.

Under the Clean Water Act of 2004, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in coordination with the National Water Resources Board is mandated to designate water quality management areas.

As of June 2016, the DENR has already designated 41 water quality management areas.

The Manila Water Company has presented to Mayor Herbert Bautista the Tayabasan River Water Supply Management in Antipolo City, which, if developed, could also serve as an additional water source for Quezon City.
CLIMATE REALITY UNIFIES VOICES FOR CLEANER, DEPENDABLE ENERGY

An international organization has launched the "Let's Talk Cleaner Energy" campaign in the Philippines, challenging Filipinos to consider cleaner alternative energy sources that can power the country.

Climate Reality Project, a global, multi-sectoral alliance advocating grassroots participation in climate change issues, hosted discussions with the media to explore the vulnerabilities faced by coal-dependent countries, like the Philippines.

"If there is one thing that we should talk about, shouldn't it be our future? The Philippines has had opinion leaders start conversations on climate change on the global platform, but we need to unify these voices back home and commit to change our nation's course. I believe that is what we are doing today," said Rodne Galicha, Climate Reality Project Philippines manager.

He noted that elsewhere in the world, the movement for renewable power has been rapidly advancing. India has brought down the cost of solar energy, and successfully made it cheaper than coal-generated power.

Galicha asserts it can be done in the Philippines. "We have hydropower, geothermal energy, solar energy, wind power, and biomass. These are already utilized in different parts of the Philippines, and still have great potential to expand in the coming years."

The Climate Reality Project Philippines manager likewise called on his audience to recognize the impact of shifting away from the conversation on climate change. Galicha explained a three-fold threat to the nation that only grows as it is delayed: the increasing rate of climate risk, the dependence on dwindling coal reserves, and the influence of population acclimated to climate change.

The afternoon's discussions explored topics on failing air quality, resource contamination and their health impacts, disruption and catastrophe from changed climate patterns, and viable alternatives to climate change-inducing coal.

These community and environmental threats were illustrated through a video that featured Filipinos wearing masks that bore the names of the deadliest storms to hit the country in the recent decade. The video parted with the message: "You can do something. Let's talk cleaner energy."

Climate realities and forecasts were also presented with key visuals to encourage the guests to join the conversation about the future of the planet.

At the end of the program, Climate Reality Project Philippines representatives made the symbolic gesture to fight climate change and coal-driven degradation by pushing a "stop the emission" button. The environmental advocates then removed their face masks and called on the audience, "Let's talk cleaner energy."

The "Let's Talk Cleaner Energy" event is one of the many initiatives from the Climate Reality Project Philippines. To know more about their cause and how to shape the future of the planet, follow them at www.facebook.com/climatereality.
Oil exploration sa WPS pinabubuhay

Muling kinikilos ang isang mambabatas na bawat ang Department of Energy (DOE) sa bawat ng mga lupa na kautusan at simulang maliit ng oil at gas exploration sa West Philippine Sea na maatandeen ay sinuspinde noon. "2015 upang bigyan dahan sa kasoong inibain ng Pilipinas sa territorial dispute sa China sa Permanent Court of Arbitration.

Ayon kay Suriaga Rep. Johnny Pimentel, national interest na maatuturing na agad maaarin lumaban din ang mga oil at gas exploration bago na itinuturing na "most promising" lalo na at inaasahahan na mauubos na sa susunod na mga dekada ang natural gas deposits sa Malampaya.

"It's high time to...

Tina Mendoza}
ARMM LGUs pledge P4.2B fund for programs

The framework is a key instrument for the LGUs to properly and equitably allocate development funds to ensure improvements of the welfare of communities,” Abdullah said.

Most of the development funds, he added, were concentrated on alleviating poverty in the region, being the poorest in the country. In the first quarter of 2015, ARMM’s poverty incidence was tracked at 53.4 percent with Lanao del Sur and Sulu posting 70.2 percent and 61.8 percent poverty incidence, respectively.

During the past years, the bulk of the funds in the ARMM annual budget went to infrastructure with roughly P20 billion allocated in 2015.

ARMM Executive Secretary Laisha Alamin said the last three years were focused on infrastructures while the next three years will be devoted primarily to anti-poverty programs.

By 2019, the region’s poverty incidence is expected to be reduced by 30 percent through a convergence of government efforts.

For 2017, a total of P111.209 million, development funds of LGUs across the region were allocated to four major sectors—general services, economic services, social services and environmental concerns.

The bulk of the fund will be used for economic services, or 60.12 percent, equivalent to P67 million. General services was given the least at P7 million, comprising 6.36 percent of the total allocation.

President Rodrigo Duterte who was guest speaker during the summit closing last Thursday, attended by some 500 participants, reiterated his commitment to the development of the Bangsamoro.

JUMAAN M. JANNARAN