

FRONT NEWS

Mining: a dichotomy in narrative, DENR presscon on June 29

by Gina Villanueva, Associate Editor

Newly appointed chief of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Gina Lopez (also the chairperson of the ABS-CBN Lingkod Kapamilya Foundation and the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission) is adamant in that "existing mine sites in the Philippines should cause zero suffering to nearby communities, agricultural lands and bodies of water."

Responding to incoming finance chief Carlos Dominguez II statement to Philippine Star, who maintained "responsible" mining is the keyword, Lopez, an anti-mining advocate, told Philippine Star, even "responsible" mining is not acceptable.

She queried, "How can it be responsible to do open pit mining in the (country that is) most vulnerable to climate change? How can it be responsible to put the lives and future of our farmers and fishermen at stake for the money foreigners and rich people want to make?"

She argued, "If there is responsible mining, why is it that wherever there is mining, there is poverty? The poorest sites in the country are mining areas. What is responsible about the benefit of a few to the detriment of the majority?"

Lopez stressed that mining only benefits a few rich people and puts agriculture and fisheries at risk.

Ernesto Abella, incoming spokesperson for President-elect Rodrigo Duterte, however, explained that the next president is not anti-mining, adding that Duterte will look into a "comprehensive review" of all mining concessions to ensure their operations do not destroy the environment, by planting trees and cleaning up after their chemical mess, otherwise Duterte will "cancel their permit without hesitation. That's the bottom line."

Duterte announced that the mining players "have to do it right because the precious metals belong to the Filipino people."

In 2012 outgoing President Benigno Aquino III issued Executive Order 79 that stopped the issuance of new mining permits until the Philippine Mining Act of 1995 was amended. This was killed in the House of Representatives, according to outgoing DENR

chief Ramon Paje, who co-chairs the interagency Mining Industry Coordinating Council (MICC), adding "But it was Congress' call. We cannot meddle with them."

Paje and Lopez will meet on June 28 for the transition.

Lopez holds a press conference on June 29.

Karla Espinosa, national coordinator of the Philippine Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) attached to the Department of Finance, said her office is willing to work with Lopez.

EITI data showed that the government received P40.7 million from miners.

The controversial appointment of Lopez that caused the market plunge, notwithstanding, Ernesto Pernia, incoming Socioeconomic Planning Secretary, recognizes the possibility of creating a division in the DENR exercising regulations for the environment protection and the direct management of industries that make use of natural resources, including mining.

The department's Mines and Geoscience Bureau (MGB) specifically takes care of the permitting process for the mining industry.

Pernia said this division of responsibilities between MGB and DENR would be more tractable, but has yet to be cleared with the incoming president.

Meanwhile various groups welcomed the appointment of Lopez to the DENR.

The groups include Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (PAMALAKAYA), Mansaka Tribe of Davao, Midsuburan Datu Jimid Pinayao Masagayan of the Lumad Mindanaw People's Federation, Indigenous Peoples (IPs) allied to Katipunan ng Katutubong Mamamayan ng Pilipinas, and Alyansa Tigil Mlna that seeks the halt of operations of Oceana Gold Philippine Inc. (OGPI) in Nueva Vizcaya that led to the destruction of IP land and livelihood. They clamor for the re-creation of the domestic mining industry, the repeal of the Philippine Mining Act of 1995, and the enactment of a pro-people, pro-environment law.

READ MORE: Gina Lopez spooks mining stocks; Environment activist Lopez accepts DENR job

Read more: <http://business.inquirer.net/211271/gina-lopez-spooks-mining-stocks#ixzz4CdwstEzT>

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FRONT NEWS

More guests to arrive in Duterte Inauguration

By: Yashika F. Torib, Manila Bureau Senior Correspondent

From the original 500 guests expected to arrive at president-elect Rodrigo Duterte's inauguration this June 30, an additional 127 more are included in the list to accommodate several government personalities.

According to incoming presidential communications officer Martin Andanar, the guest list has increased to 627 because to include some members from the diplomatic corps, lawmakers, justices, ranking officers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Philippine National Police, cabinet members, and some 150 personal guests of Duterte.

The simple ceremony will be held at the Rizal Hall in Malacañang Palace instead at the Quirino Grandstand. Duterte said he would not want to cause traffic jams along Roxas Boulevard.

Meanwhile, journalists were allotted with a space at the Malacañang grounds near Gate 4, but will not be allowed to enter the ceremonial hall.

Andanar added that Duterte will skip with the customary Vin d' Honneur, or the social celebration held after the ceremony.

Instead, the president-elect will host a diplomat reception following his inauguration ceremony.

"Vin d' Honneur is socials with wine, champagne and things like that. (Since) the president is a simple man, (the diplomatic reception) will just be a chitchat, I suppose, getting to know each other. Don't expect any champagne popping, caviar, cheese or blue cheese. Expect durian," he said in a press briefing.

He furthered that the incoming communication team had a meeting with Elizabeth Hernandez and other Facebook executives for the live streaming of the inaugural rites on June 30.

Duterte to transform after inauguration

Despite his previous pronouncements that he will remain his usual simple self despite the presidency, Duterte himself said recently that there would be a metamorphosis when he assumes as president of the country.

“From caterpillar, just wait, I will be a butterfly by that time,” Duterte told reporters.

A more refined Rody Duterte can be expected by the citizens, but his staunch stance against, drugs, corruption and criminality remains.

This will be reflected in his inaugural speech which will last for only five minutes.

His speech will convey the “message that people must help and let us all move together in this, especially since Duterte is not only the president of the 16.6 million who voted for him in the May 9 elections... but of the entire country,” Melchor Quitain, former city administrator under Duterte, said.

Awkward moments for Duterte’s wife and partner

The most –awaited inauguration ceremonies for president-elect Duterte will be an awkward moment for his wife Elizabeth Zimmerman and partner Cielito Honeylet Avanceña.

This was confirmed by Zimmerman in a press interview during the launching of Duterte’s photo exhibit in Davao.

Zimmerman said that she will request from the Presidential Management Staff (PMS) to provide a separate seat for her, her children and grandchildren at the Rizal Hall during the ceremonies, separate from Avanceña.

She disclosed that she will have to attend the ceremonies because her children, Sara, Paolo and Sebastian, might not go without her.

Zimmerman said she and her family would fly to Manila on June 28 ahead of the inauguration. She will be wearing a pink gown, a symbolic color for cancer. Duterte’s ex-wife is suffering from a stage 3 breast cancer.

FRONT NEWS

Duterte's last act as Mayor

Presumptive Philippines President and outgoing Mayor of Davao City Rodrigo Duterte, signed Tuesday an outlay of P39-billion.

The deal is earmarked for port and coastal development, marking Duterte's support for business that he would bring to Malacanang.

Viewed as one of his last acts as Mayor, Duterte signed the agreement with Mega Harbour Port and Development (MHPD) president Victor Songco, representing the developer.

Approved last year by the city council, the joint reclamation project involves turning a total of 214 hectares along the coastline of the city between the villages of Bucana and Agdao into a world-class, well-planned, environment-friendly and self-contained community.

Benefits from this project will translate into an urban renewal and poverty alleviation for the area residents, including the placement of basic utilities and services, road clearing, zoning to allow a free flow of safety and security vehicles, flood control system, calamity mitigating measures, recreation, commercial and sanitation -- to be developed from a holistic approach.

MHPD said the project would adopt environment-friendly technologies "following the natural footprint of Davao," as it creates employment, and potentially attract tourism and foreign investment.

Duterte's approval is hailed as "hit(ting) the ground running," in improving the economy.

The incoming president said he expects to see tangible results within a year.

Meanwhile, the Sasa port project that was dumped by the city council last year, on several grounds, including the lack of consultation when the Department of Transportation and Communications conceived it, is being eyed anew by councilor Danilo Dayanghirang.

He suggests it would also be best to reopen the study of the Sasa port project in the matter of possibly integrating the controversial P19-billion expansion program project with the Mega Harbour Project.

In a separate development, still in Davao City, Duterte vowed there would be a day of "reckoning" with Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), in Friday's turnover ceremony at the Davao City Police, with the release of Filipina hostage Marites Flor.

During the same event, the incoming president warned the ASG to surrender and release their hostages, or face the consequences. (GV)

READ:Duterte OKs P39-B project in Davao

<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/792194/duterte-oks-p39-b-project-in-davao>

EDITORIAL

The maverick president's war on drugs, criminality and corruption

The current campaign of the Philippine National Police against drug trafficking has doubled up in its previous data to 200 percent for the first six months this year. Same statistics were based on a 12-month statistics, but for the last six months, it has risen to twice its previous 12 months statistics.

Numerous scenarios have been presented from different anti-drug advocates. First, certain quarters are saying that the police are starting to "quiet" their police assets, who are drug pushers themselves. The relationship between the asset and the police at times lead to corruption.

Police assets, when they are arrested by operatives from other PNP jurisdiction, often would let go based on the so called "bata ko yan" (let him go he is my asset/protegee) by his police benefactor.

Even drug lords inside the National Bilibid Prisons (NBP) in Muntinlupa, are known to have the blessings of their police connections, allegedly with the rank of one-general and up.

President-elect has often criticized these police generals as corrupt and has publicly asked them to resign once he has assumed the presidency of the land come July 1, otherwise he will publicly humiliate them should they refuse to resign from their posts.

The sudden resurgence of drug pushers, dealers, and users mostly from urban areas have signified their willingness to change their addiction habit to illegal drugs. Quezon City Mayor Herbert Bautista spoke to about 700 pushers and addicts at Camp Karingal and ensure to provide assistance via rehabilitation, jobs, and other means that the Quezon City government can provide them.

Let us wait for the result of the first 100 days of President Duterte's campaign against illegal drug, graft and corruption, and criminality, By then, we can pass judgment on how things have shaped up, and the next steps to be undertaken by the Duterte administration.

INNERVIEW

The accumulated humiliation of Muslims, a responsibility of journalism (Part 3 of 4)

By Gina Villanueva, Associate Editor

The Biggest Invasion Yet

While most Americans are clueless of this long history of accumulated humiliation of Muslims, Christians and other religious minorities in the region -- and the resulting hatred of the West -- they can't ignore the Iraq invasion, the largest in the West in the region, excluding WWII. Nor is the public unaware of the 2011 intervention in Libya, and the chaos that has resulted. And yet no link is made between these disasters and terror attacks on the West.

The secular strongmen of Iraq, Libya and Syria were targeted because they dared to be independent of Western hegemony -- not because of their awful human rights records. The proof is that Saudi Arabia's and Israel's human records also are appalling, but the U.S. still staunchly stands by these "allies."

During the so-called Arab Spring, when the Bahrainis demanded democracy in that island kingdom, the U.S. mostly looked the other way as they were crushed by a combined force of the nation's monarchy and Saudi troops. Washington also clung to Egyptian strongman Hosni Mubarak until the bitter end.

However, under the pretext of protecting the Libyan population, the U.S. and NATO implemented a bloody "regime change" in Libya leading to anarchy, another failed state and the creation of one more ISIS enclave. For the past 5-odd years, the West and its Gulf Allies have fueled the civil war in Syria, contributing to another humanitarian disaster.(Part 4 of 4 - Conclusion: Veiled Motives)

TOURISM

Sablayan Zipline Adventure Like No Other

By Randy V. Urlanda, Manila Bureau Chief Correspondent

From the seventh level of the 21-meter high yellow zipline steel tower straddling the northern face of a tree-lined 32-meter-high hilltop park in the resort town of Sablayan in the central part of Occidental Mindoro, one can have a picturesque (and dizzying) view of the placid Mindoro Strait with an emerald isle 1.4km across the bay.

Called Pandan Pequeno (Little Pandan), it is the end of phase one of the exhilarating three-minute, fifteen seconds motorized zipline ride from the tower. The double cable zipline, with a total length of 1.7km and three-fourth-inch thick Singapore made stainless cables, is powered by a sophisticated battery-operated pulley system that takes the rider back and forth.

After wearing the required padded helmets commonly worn by rock climbers, the riders were strapped to tight sports harnesses and attached to carabineers, which are used to secure the riders to the motorized trolley, so that the trolley doesn't have a

tendency to sway. After a radioed go signal from the two black-clad zipline staff “catchers” stationed on the island, the two ladies riding in tandem were pushed down to a dizzying ride of their lives.

At the sag part of the lines, four meters above the sea, the riders can see clearly from the shallow waters below colorful coral reefs, multi-colored starfish, and big pawikan (green turtles) swimming gracefully near the deep edge of the island to forage on the lush sea grass. When the riders reach the end of the “down” line at a fast clip, the staff catches them to a halt and re-straped them for the way back.

A typical zipline is made of stainless steel cable mounted on a slope. It is designed to enable the user to be propelled by gravity to travel from the top to the bottom of the inclined cable by attaching to the freely moving pulley. In the Philippines, there are more than 20 ziplines in operation in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, which are situated mostly on forested hillsides and doesn't cross over a body of water to an island.

Most of the ziplines in operation in the country have heights varying from 300 to 450 meters and goes only one way by gravity and their lengths doesn't go beyond Sablayan's 1.4km long double ziplines. Butuan's zipline in Agusan del Norte is 1.3km long and used to be the longest in the Philippines before Sablayan switched on its motorized zipline in September 2015.

The ten-month old Sablayan Zipline Adventure started its operation with a few bookings. To weed out the weak-hearted from the fearless ones, would-be riders had to gingerly climb up the “see-through” stairs to the seventh floor of the steel tower, which is the jump-off point of the “world's longest island-to island zipline,” and the only motorized zipline in Asia that brings back and forth the rider to the lofty launching pad, 53 meters above sea level.

“We were trained by its Filipino designer and builder for four weeks on how to operate and maintain it and what safety measures for our riders to make before we allow them to ride,” says James J. Dapito, the 34-year-old team leader of the nine-man (and a woman) Sablayan Zipline Adventure crew. “Weight limit is 150 kilos so plus-size riders are weighed and their blood pressure are taken and are made to sign a waiver.”

For only php500 one can book his ride between Monday to Sunday, from 8:00am to 11:00am and from 1:00pm to 5:30pm.

The almost four-minute ride is smooth enough to take cell phone videos of the beautiful corals below and the lush, protected mangrove forest on the left along the town's swampy coastline.

"The zipline is so popular now that last April almost half-a-million pesos were generated from more than 400 eager riders," exclaims the affable Sablayan Mayor Eduardo Gadiano, who conceptualized the zipline venture. "It has become a major come-on for visitors to try other interesting pelagic activities like a glass-bottomed boat tour and watch up close and personal our people-friendly pawikan that swims side-by-side with snorkelers.

"Aside from the zipline, the 21-meter tall tower also serves as recreational facilities for wall climbing on its west side, and rappelling on its east side," adds Gadiano. "Since it was featured on local reality TV shows, and featured by local and foreign bloggers in social media, bookings for a ride inundated our Municipal Tourism Office," concludes the chief executive of the Philippines' biggest town with a total land area of 2,188.80 square kilometers, twice the size of Cavite.

So, if you want to have a breezy adrenaline rush twice while zipping above water to an island at 20kph, Sablayan is the place to go.

STRAIGHT TALK

Formation of Duterte Cabinet

By: Ed Libranda

President-elect Duterte has publicly said that the formation of his Cabinet mostly composed of his close friends, classmates from law school from Lyceum to San Beda. Even some of his dorm mates during his college days were given the opportunity to join his Cabinet.

This is no different from the KKK of incumbent President Aquino whose Executive Secretary Ochoa was his lawyer during his days in Congress, both as a Congressman and a Senator.

We all know that the only way a President can exercise his duty and responsibility to the Filipino people is by selecting Cabinet members who can be trusted not to engage in any corrupt practices while in office.

For one, I would know the relationship between incoming Finance Secretary, and former campaign manager Sonny Dominguez started when both were schoolmates at the Ateneo de Davao High School. Sonny was a member of St. John Berchman Society, an organization of altar boys serving daily morning masses at the high school location where they have the rectory, too.

There are other school mates of Digong who are worthy of consideration in joining his Cabinet. For one is the President and Chairman of the Board of Alsons (Alcantara and Sons) Tomas Alcantara who is one year junior of Digong.

Also worthy to mention is the owner of AMA Group of Companies, and who was then active in the Estrada administration. His name is Amable "King" Aguiluz who came from the same school, Ateneo de Davao High School.

Other school mates, like former House Speaker Prospero "Boy" Nograles, and Senior Associate Justice Antonio "Tony" Carpio. But surprisingly, Digong has decided to take his oath of office with another associate justice of the Supreme Court Bienvenido Reyes, a school mate at the college of law in San Beda, and a fraternity brother of Lex Talionis in the same school.

I just wish my school mate Digong the best of luck during his 6-year term of office as President of the Republic. We have our Digong for the next 6 years while President Aquino came up with his own monicker of PNoy.

Mabuhay ang Pilipinas! (Long Live the Philippines!)

NEWS AT A GLANCE

Duterte's wit and humor

Stressing the need to revive the death penalty, elected president Rodrigo Duterte says, "Death penalty is the retribution (not deterrent). It makes you pay for what you did."

The death penalty was abolished in 1987 when Corazon Aquino was president, revived in 1993 under President Fidel Ramos.

Crimes that were punishable by death include murder, rape, kidnapping and drug trafficking.

Former president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo signed a law abolishing capital punishment in 2006.

Duterte reiterated that he would not hesitate to kill those who seek to destroy the youth, identifying them "future of the country."

"Do not destroy my country because I will kill you. Do not destroy my children because I will kill you," he says.

Pummeling his critics of his radical anti-crime drive, he said he'd ignore the Commission on Human Rights chairman Jose Luis Martin Gascon, saying, "I will not follow him."

As for incoming senator Leila de Lima, who vowed to look into the law enforcement operations to be launched by Duterte, "if De Lima does not shut her mouth, I will kill her -- with love. If she agrees, I don't know," he said. (GV)

READ MORE: Rody gov't promises 'conversation' over death penalty

<http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/06/24/1596148/rody-govt-promises-conversation-over-death-penalty>

NEWS AT A GLANCE

No live press coverage for presidential inaugural, FB live streaming

Journalists are nixed for live coverage inside the Rizal ceremonial hall when elected president Rodrigo Roa Duterte takes his oath of office on June 30.

This was disclosed to reporters in Davao City, by Martin Andanar, incoming presidential communications officer.

Press will be allowed to broadcast from the Palace grounds near Gate 4, with Malacanang as their background, he added.

Andanar and his communications team met with Facebook executives led by Elizabeth Hernandez for live streaming the inaugural rites .

Duterte chose an indoor oath-taking as opposed to the traditional Quirino Grandstand in Rizal Park, because he does not wish to create traffic snarls along Roxas Boulevard.

The initially announced 500 geust list is now upped to 627, to accommodate members of the diplomatic corps, lawmakers, justices, ranking officers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), Philippine National Police (PNP), Cabinet members, and some 150 personal guests of the elected president.

His -ex-wife Elizabeth Zimmerman and their children, Davao City Mayor Sara and Vice-Mayor Paolo, as well as Sebastian and their grandchildren will be present.

The flaunted 5-minute inaugural address in English might even be shortened further, depending on what presumptive president Duterte decides to do with it, said Melchor Quitain, who served as city administrator (and speech writer) under Duterte for several years.

The gist of the speech is a call for every Filipino to participate int he new chapter of the country's history.

Duterte will also metamorphose "From caterpillar, just wait, I will be a butterfly that time," he earlier told reporters.

Supreme Court associate justice Bienvenido Reyes will swear-in the 18th president of the Republic of the Philippines. (GV)

READ MORE: TV networks allowed to broadcast Duterte inauguration live

Facebook to stream rites for transfer of power in real time

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NEWS AT A GLANCE

Pope Francis names a Filipino priest as new bishop of Saipan

By Ferdinand G. Patinio

MANILA, June 25 (PNA) -- A Filipino priest has been appointed by Pope Francis as new bishop for the Church in Oceania on Friday.

Fr. Ryan Jimenez will be the second bishop of the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa in Saipan, the largest island of the Northern Mariana Islands.

His episcopal ordination is set for Sunday, Aug. 14, 2016 at the Chalan Kanoa cathedral.

Archbishop Martin Krebs, Apostolic Delegate to the Commonwealth of Northern Marianas Islands and Papal Nuncio to various island countries in the Pacific, will be the primary consecrator at the ordination.

A priest for only around 12 years, Jimenez will succeed Bishop Emeritus Tomas Camacho who served the diocese for 25 years until his retirement in 2010.

He has been serving as the apostolic administrator of the diocese with 15 priests and 21 female religious who are working to serve more than 43,000 Catholics.

Jimenez, 44, was born in Dumaguete City, and raised in Larena, Siquijor.

The bishop-elect finished his Bachelor of Arts degree in Pre-Divinity from the Ateneo de Manila University before going to Saipan in 1997.

As a major seminarian for the Chalan Kanoa diocese, he continued his studies at the St. Patrick Seminary and University in California, USA where he earned his Masters Degree in Theology in 2003. In June of the same year, Jimenez was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa.

For more than a decade as priest, he had served a number of pastoral roles including parish vicar, special secretary to the bishop, rector of the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral, president of the diocesan commission for the cultural heritage of the Church, and diocesan chancellor.

On the other hand, Dumaguete Bishop Julito Cortes said the appointment of Jimenezis a "great news".

"Let us rejoice and pray for Bishop Ryan as he takes on the apostolic responsibility," he said in an article posted on the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) news website. (PNA)

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