

Army Vision: By 2028, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride



TEAM ARMY

Serving the people. Securing the land.

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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
NEWS CLIPPINGS

07 April 2016

Thursday

Army Core Purpose: Serving the people, Securing the land.

Army vision: By 2028, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | APRIL 7, 2016 | THURSDAY



PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

RIDGE OF HIGH PRESSURE AREA
EXTENDING OVER NORTHERN LUZON

EASTERLIES
AFFECTING EASTERN SECTION OF
CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN LUZON,
VISAYAS AND MINDANAO
(APRIL 6, 9:00 PM)

SUNRISE	SUNSET
5:48 AM	6:09 PM

MOONRISE	MOONSET
5:29 AM	6:08 PM

NEW MOON	FIRST QUARTER
APR 7 7:24 PM	APR 14 1:23 AM

LOW TIDE	HIGH TIDE
MANILA SOUTH HARBOR 4:06 AM 0.08 Meter	16:33 PM 0.75 Meter

Partly cloudy skies


Partly cloudy; at times cloudy with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms

Cloudy skies with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms

APR 7		APR 8		APR 9		APR 10		APR 11	
METRO MANILA	25 - 35 °C	24 - 35 °C	TAGAYTAY	22 - 32 °C	21 - 31 °C	TACLOBAN	25 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C	
TUQUEGARAO	24 - 36 °C	25 - 36 °C	LEGAZPI	26 - 31 °C	26 - 31 °C	CAQAYAN DE ORO	23 - 32 °C	23 - 31 °C	
LAOAG	23 - 31 °C	23 - 32 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA	25 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C	METRO DAVAO	25 - 35 °C	25 - 34 °C	
BAGUIO	18 - 26 °C	18 - 24 °C	ILOILO/ BACOLOD	25 - 34 °C	26 - 35 °C	ZAMBOANGA	25 - 35 °C	24 - 34 °C	
SBMA/ CLARK	26 - 36 °C	25 - 35 °C	METRO CEBU	26 - 32 °C	26 - 32 °C				

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AIR 21

SAGOT KO, PADALA MO!

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INQUIRER

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Sandigan orders JV arrested

Court sets P30K bail in guns purchase case

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE SANDIGANBAYAN has ordered the arrest of Sen. Joseph Victor "JV" Ejercito for using San Juan's calamity fund to buy firearms for the police in 2008 when he was the mayor of the city.

Ejercito is a son of Manila Mayor Joseph Estrada, a former President of the Philippines, with San Juan Mayor Guia Gomez.

The Sandiganbayan's Fifth Division issued a warrant for Ejercito's arrest after finding probable cause to try the senator on graft charges.

"After perusing the information and carefully assessing the resolution of the Office of the Ombudsman, the evidence in support thereof and the records of the preliminary investigation attached thereto, the court finds that sufficient grounds exist for the finding of probable cause for the purpose of issuing

a warrant of arrest in this case," the court said in a resolution dated April 4.

"I maintain my innocence and deny any wrongdoing in the purchase of high-powered firearms in 2008," Ejercito said in a text message yesterday.

"I know I did nothing wrong, and that this case is undoubtedly politically motivated by oppositionists at the local scene," he said.

"Nevertheless, I will abide by the legal process and will prepare an adequate defense for this case," he said.

"I trust that the court of law will conduct fair proceedings

SANDIGANBAYAN/A4

Sandiganbayan orders JV arrested

From page A1

and exercise wise judgment. In the end, I also hope to restore my honor and dignity as a senator of the Republic, and as a former San Juan City mayor who only thought of the protection and interests of the people of San Juan against lawless elements," he added.

The court also ordered the arrest of Ejercito's coaccused—San Juan City administrator Ranulfo Dacalos, treasurer Rosalinda Marasigan, city attorney Romualdo de los Santos, budget officer Lorenza Ching and city engineer Danilo Mercado.

Dacalos, Marasigan, De los Santos, Ching and Mercado served on the bids and awards committee of the city government that supervised the acquisition of the firearms.

They had been ordered dismissed by the Office of the Ombudsman.

Ejercito and his coaccused can be released temporarily on bail of P30,000 each on one count of graft, according to the warrant signed by Associate Justice Rafael Lagos, acting chair of the Fifth Division, and sent to the police chiefs of San

Juan City and Quezon City.

Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales indicted Ejercito and his coaccused in the Sandiganbayan last month, alleging graft and technical malversation involving the use of P2.1 million from San Juan City's calamity fund to buy submachine guns for the city police in February 2008.

Morales found irregular the use of the city's calamity fund to buy three Daewoo K2 submachine guns and 17 Daewoo K1 submachine guns.

The submachine guns are made by Daewoo Precision Industries of South Korea and chambered for the 5.56mm ammunition.

Conspiracy

According to the information filed by the Ombudsman, Ejercito conspired with other city officials to buy high-powered firearms using the city's calamity fund, calling the purchase an "investment for disaster preparedness."

The San Juan City Council passed a resolution authorizing the purchase of the firearms.

Morales rejected Ejercito's claim that the firearms purchase was an investment in dis-



JV EJERCITO

aster preparedness, citing a circular jointly issued by the Department of Budget and the Department of the Interior and Local Government in 2003 that does not list firearms among things necessary for disaster relief and mitigation.

The Ombudsman also pointed out that San Juan was not under a state of calamity at the time of the purchase of the firearms.

Ombudsman prosecutors said in the information that the purchase of the firearms was done with haste, without "competitive bidding and without any postqualification bolstered by

bid documents bearing dates earlier than the publication of the invitation to bid, showing that unwarranted benefit, advantage and preference were accorded to the supplier."

Technical malversation

Ejercito, whose Senate term runs up to 2019, was also charged with technical malversation over the purchase of the submachine guns.

Also accused of technical malversation were former San Juan Vice Mayor Leonardo Celles and 13 councilors—Andoni Carballo, Vincent Pacheco, Angelino Mendoza, Dante Santiago, Rolando Bernardo, Grace Pardines, Domingo Sese, Francis Peralta, Edgardo Soriano, Jannah Ejercito-Surla, Francisco Zamora (the current vice mayor), Ramon Nakpil and Joseph Christopher Torralba.

The Ombudsman accused them of giving Ejercito authority to use calamity funds to buy the firearms.

The Sandiganbayan Sixth Division, which is handling the case, has yet to issue a resolution. **With reports from Marc Jayson Cayabyab, Inquirer.net; and Inquirer Research**

<http://retiredanalyst.blogspot.com>

Año spearheads Sunrise Ceremony in Taguig

From the Philippine News Agency (Apr 6)

Philippine Army (PA) commander Lt. Gen. Eduardo M. Año spearheaded this year's Sunrise Ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers, Libingan Ng Mga Bayani, Taguig Tuesday.

"Magiging mas makabuluhan din ang ating paggunita kung ating susuklian ang kabayanihan ng ating beterano hindi lamang sa pamamagitan ng mga seremonyang gaya nito, kundi sa pamamagitan ng ating pagsasabuhay ng mga katangiang kanilang taglay upang makamit natin ang magandang kinabukasan—kagitingan, katapatan, at pagmamahal sa bayan," said Año in his speech.

This event traditionally commence the annual observance of the Philippine Veterans Week.

The ceremony provides an opportunity for Filipino veterans to honor their fallen comrades and for the families of these veterans to do the same.

"Hindi natatapos ang tungkulin ng sundalong Pilipino na pangalagaan ang kapayapaan at kalayaan ng ating bansa, at mananatili siyang handing mag-alay ng kaniyang buhay kung kinakailangan. Gayunpaman, patuloy niyang itataguyod ang tradisyon ng kabayanihan na sinimulan ng ating mga beterano. Mananatili siyang tapat sa kaniyang sinumpaang tungkulin, gaya ng kaniyang mga ninuno, upang dalhin ang ating bansa sa magandang kinabukasan," he added.

The conduct of the Philippine Veterans Week and Araw ng Kagitingan is pursuant to Proclamation No. 499 series of 1989 and Executive Order No. 203, series of 1987 that aim to promote, preserve, and memorialize the principles, ideas, and deeds of Filipino veterans and consequently deepen the citizen's love for country and strengthen a collective sense of national pride, especially among the youth.

The week-long observance is an occasion to honor not only the Filipino Veterans who had served or died for the nation but also those who render honorable military service in defending the country in times of war or peace, to gratefully acknowledge their contributions in preserving our sovereignty and defending our national security.

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Military doctors honored for saving soldiers' lives in Maguindanao

CAMP SIONGCO, Maguindanao (PNA) - Two Army doctors from the Armed Forces of the Philippines Medical Center (AFPMC) were awarded with Military Merit Medals by the 6th Infantry Division for helping save lives of soldiers who were wounded in action in Maguindanao.

The award was in recognition of their hard work and efforts in conducting a series of surgical operations to the battle-casualty soldiers admitted at Camp Siongco Station Hospital, according to 6th ID commander Maj. Gen. Ed-

mundo Pangilinan.

Pangilinan personally awarded the medals to Capt. Leo Carlo B. Mayo and Capt. Edmundo DC Bañaga during a simple program simultaneous with the division flag raising ceremonies.

Mayo and Banaga volunteered to be assigned to Mindanao from the AFPMC in Quezon City to help save lives of infantry men wounded in clashes with outlawed Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF).

At least 30 soldiers under the 6th ID operational control were injured with

shrapnel during the month-long offensive against the BIFF fighters who disrupt construction of a flood control project in Datu Salibo, Maguindanao on February 5.

At least five soldiers were separately killed in the skirmishes while the BIFF suffered more than 50 fatalities based on information from the civilians and village officials of Datu Salibo.

Both Army doctors provided augmentation medical personnel to health providers of Camp Siongco Hospital inside the Army's division base.

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6 sawmill workers abducted in Lanao del Sur

ZAMBOANGA CITY (PNA) - Six sawmill workers were abducted Monday by a group of gunmen in Butig, Lanao del Sur, a military official disclosed Tuesday.

Maj. Filemon Tan, Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom) information officer, reported that the incident occurred at around 11 a.m. Monday in Barangay Sandab Madaya, Butig, Lanao del Sur.

Tan said the identities of the victims were not immediately available, and only said that the kidnapped workers were from the village of Sandab Madaya.

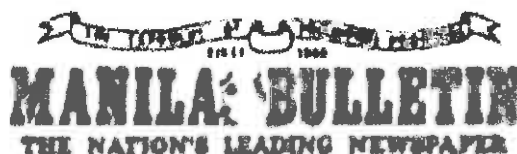
"These individuals (victims) were believed to be workers at the sawmill of the said barangay (Sandab Madaya)," Tan said.

He said the victims were seized by a locally-based terrorist group headed by the so-called Maute brothers, who is reported to have ties with the Jamaah Islamiyah (JI).

"It is clear that this is a criminal act perpetrated by this criminal group (of Maute brothers)," he said.

"We are also working closely with the police in investigating the incident," Tan added.

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Soldier killed in Occidental Mindoro clash

By DANNY J. ESTACIO

CAMP G. NAKAR, Lucena City
– A soldier was killed while another was wounded when troops of the 76th Infantry Battalion encountered an undetermined number of New People's Army (NPA) rebels in Paluan, Occidental Mindoro yesterday.

Col. Gavin D. Edjawan, head of the 203rd Infantry Brigade, said the encounter came on the heels of an operation launched by the brigade against the reported presence of insurgents in Paluan communities at around 7 a.m.

The identities of the victims have been withheld until after their families have been notified.

Reports said that blocking forces have been set up in places where the NPAs may have retreated to. The Philippine National Police (PNP) in the province has also established checkpoints in strategic areas," said Edjawan.

The Southern Luzon Command (SOLCOM) has also utilized its air and naval assets to support the operations.

Naval gunboats are conducting a naval blockade on probable coastal extraction points for the NPAs, while PAF helicopters are conducting close air support for the troops.

Earlier, SOLCOM Chief Lieutenant General Ricardo R. Visaya has ordered the troops to go deep into NPA lairs and neutralize the rebels.

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Army apologizes for fatal shooting of 11-yr old boy in Davao

By ALEXANDER D. LOPEZ

DAVAO CITY - The 10th Infantry (Agila) Division (10th ID) apologized Tuesday for the accidental shooting of an 11-year old boy during a security patrol in Sitio Mitundo, Barangay Baracatan in Toril District here last April 1.

The 10th ID issued the apology as it also ordered soldiers involved in the incident to be restricted to camp.

According to 10th ID chief information officer Captain Rhyan Batchar, one of the conclusions made by the five-man Board of Inquiry (BOI) showed

that the involved troopers failed to exercise due diligence to ascertain their target before firing their firearms.

He added that BOI found that the soldiers' reaction "ran contrary to the provision Internal Peace and Security Plan (IPSP) Bayanihan Rules on Engagement (ROE), particularly on the Use of Force Against the Enemy which states that identification of target must be by visual means."

The probe showed that the victim Daniel Ferrer was with his uncle Danilo Pile foraging through the woods of Sitio Lawaon when they were fired upon by soldiers who were later iden-

tified as coming from the Sixth Scout Ranger Company.

Batchar said the soldiers "saw the two men, (with) one carrying a long firearm."

"This prompted the troopers to fire shots towards them. The man carrying a long firearm was able to jump for cover and run away, leaving behind the firearm," he narrated.

Pile was identified as the one carrying the long firearm while Ferrer was unarmed.

A search of the scene showed that the long firearm that the soldiers perceived to be a rifle was just an airgun.

01 April 2016

Malaya
The National Newspaper

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Soldiers facing probe for boy's death in Davao

BY VICTOR REYES

MEMBERS of the elite Army unit Scout Ranger are facing investigation for the April 1 killing of a 12-year-old boy they mistook for a New People's Army rebel in Davao City.

The soldiers belong to two sections of the 6th Scout Ranger Company, said Capt. Rhyen Batchar, public affairs officer of the Army's 10th Infantry Division based in Davao City.

All the members of the two sections were restricted to a Ranger base in the city although initial probe indicated that only two soldiers opened fire at the boy, Daniel Ferrer, who was then with his uncle who was carrying a firearm, Batchar said.

He declined to say the exact number of soldiers facing the probe. A section is usually composed of 12 to 15 officers and men.

The investigation is being

conducted on the recommendation of a five-man Board of Inquiry which initially looked into the incident.

"All of them have to be investigated to find out what really happened. The purpose is to determine their administrative culpability," said Batchar.

Citing the initial probe conducted by the BOI, Batchar said the incident occurred while the soldiers were conducting operations against a group of NPA rebels in Sitio Mitundo in Barangay Baracatan in Toril District.

The soldiers were on "security halt" when they saw two men, one of them carrying a long firearm, roaming in the area at around 10:30 a.m. on April 1.

The firearm later turned out to be a mere air gun.

"One was able to jump for cover and ran away, leaving behind his firearm," said Batchar, referring to Ferrer's uncle, Danny Pile. The boy

was killed and his body was later turned over to this family.

Batchar said the soldiers violated the Rules of Engagement (ROE) of the Internal Peace and Security Plan Bayanihan, the military's blueprint in winning the peace throughout the country.

"First, the troops failed to exercise due diligence to ascertain their target before firing their firearms contrary to the provision in IPSP Bayanihan ROE on the use of force against the enemy which states that 'identification of target must be by visual means,'" said Batchar.

Batchar said the troops "fired, purely to protect themselves and secure their position from what they perceived at that time as enemy threat."

"They did so without criminal intent," he added.

Batchar said the BOI also recommended the retraining of the involved units.

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POLICE FILES

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Sundalo kulong nang mabaril-patay ang lalaking nagwala sa military camp

ZAMBOANGA CITY - Binaril-patay ng sundalo ang isang lalaki matapos magwaia sa loob ng military camp sa Barangay Muti sa nasabing lungsod.

Kinilala ng Police Regional Office-9 ang napatay na si Hamisul Asanil Marani, 33-anyos at residente ng Barangay Buenavista ng lungsod.

Sa salaysay sa pulisya ni Capt. Ian Kher Oliveros, ang commanding officer ng 21st Infantry Battalion (IB) ng Philippine Army (PA), 6:00 ng umaga nang bigla na lamang pumasok ang nasabing lalaki at humingi ng mainom na tubig sa naka-duty na sundalo na si Cpl. Novil Guzman.

Pinagbigyan naman umano siya ni Guzman at matapos inumin ang tubig ay inutusan na niya itong lumabas ng kampo pero hindi umano sumunod ang lalaki at sa halip ay kumuha ito ng bato at nagwala.

Sinubukan pa raw kontrolin ni Guzman ang lalaki pero patuloy itong nagwawala at tinangka pang agawin ang kanyang baril kaya dito na niya ito binaril.

Boluntaryo namang isinuko ng commanding officer ang naka-baril na sundalo sa himpilan ng pulisya matapos ang insidente at pansamantalang idinetine sa selda.

10

01 April 2016



Pahina. 7

Cafgu patay sa pulis

LEGAZPI CITY, Albay – Napaslang ang isang miyembro ng Cafgu matapos irtong makipagbarilan sa pulis sa labas ng videoke bar sa Barangay District III sa bayan ng San Jacinto, Masbate noong Lunes ng gabi. Kinilala ang napatay na si Manuel Cortes ng San Fernando, Masbate habang sugatan naman si PO1 Johannes Bueno na tinamaan sa kaliwang braso at daplis sa ulo. Nabatid na rumesponde ang mga operatiba ng pulisya kaugnay sa kahina-hinalang ikinikilos ni Cortes kung saan sinita naman ni PO1 Bueno ang suspek dahil sa baril na nakabukol sa baywang nito. Gayunman, nairita ang suspek saka tangkang barilin si PO1 Bueno subalit natabig nito kaya sa kaliwang braso tumama ang bala. Dito na pinutukan ni PO1 Bueno ang sinitang si Cortes na duguang bumulagta. **Jorge Hallare**

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• **SAR training**

CAMP SIONGCO, Maguindanao (PNA) - A humanitarian and emergency response team has been formed in Tawi-Tawi under the supervision of Humanitarian Emergency Action and Response Team of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM-HEART) to respond to disasters and emergency situation in the island province, officials said today. About 70 recruits from the province have been trained by ARMM-HEART and the Army's Sixth Infantry Division on Search and Rescue (SAR) operations, especially on emergency and disaster preparedness, said Lawyer Laisa Alamia, ARMM executive secretary and ARMM-HEART head.

6 April 2016

1946 1986
MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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• **Cotabato drug raid**

COTABATO CITY (PNA) - Six persons were arrested by joint government law enforcers in an intensified anti-illegal drug operation in a remote village here Tuesday, authorities said. The raid was conducted by joint elements of Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (PDEA-ARMM), Army Special Forces and Cotabato City police in a drug den in Purok Dumpsite, Malagapas, Barangay Rosary Heights 10, Cotabato City at 3 p.m. In a statement, PDEA-ARMM identified the suspects as Bimbo Sapi Anton, 41, his wife Judith Santos Anton, 37, both of Barangay Kusiong, Datu Odir, Sinsuat, Maguindanao, Noraisa Ambit Abag, 38; Nida Mamilintaw Usman, 43, both of Barangay Rosary Heights 10, Nor Hamid, Ismael Anas, 33, residents of Poblacion 3, Cotabato city and Datu Nhor ismael, 34 of Datu Piang, Maguindanao.

<http://retiredanalyst.blogspot.com>

PDEA-ARMM, Army operatives arrest Maguindanao big time illegal drug pusher

From the Philippine News Agency (Apr 6)

Joint operatives of Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) and 33rd Infantry Battalion on Tuesday arrested a suspected big time illegal drug pusher in a raid Datu Paglas and Pandag municipalities in Maguindanao, Tuesday, authorities said today.

Lt. Colonel Ricky Bunayog, 33rd IB commander, said his unit has provided augmentation force to PDEA agents in serving warrants of arrest for Bougie Manogkiyang Pangawilan alias "Boogie" and his son Monreagan Pangawilan, both residents of Datu Paglas, Maguindanao.

However, the younger Pangawilan managed to elude arrest during the 6 a.m. raid.

Before the serving of warrants of arrest, armed men figured in a clash over illegal drug issues in Barangay Digal, Buluan, Maguindanao and the adjacent villages of Kabuling in Pandag town and Malala and Alip in Datu Paglas, Maguindanao.

Bunayog said a "rido" (family feud) erupted between armed groups who were also involved in illegal drug activities.

The clashes also led to series of arson cases at La Frutera Incorporated banana plantation in Barangay Digal, damaging about 21 hectares of banana trees.

Bunayog said prior to the raid, Army intelligence agents conducted further information gathering which led to several personalities involved in several crimes.

The suspects were arrested in Sitio Panag, Barangay Malala, Datu Paglas, Maguindanao on Tuesday.

Bunayog said the raiding team seized in the possession of Pangawilan one Carbine rifle, magazines with bullets, three rifle grenades, cal. 22 airgun suspected shabu, paraphernalia.

The confiscated items were brought to the Office of PDEA-ARMM in Cotabato City Crime Laboratory for forensic examination while Pangawilan was brought to the PNP Headquarters of Datu Paglas.

Further police investigation showed that Pangawilan was a suspect in two separate murder cases, including the murder of La Frutera manager in 2009 and the manager's nephew in 2012.

Later Pangawilan was turned over to the custody of PDEA-ARMM to face several violations including the previous criminal cases he committed.

Army vision: By 2028, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride.

<http://retiredanalyst.blogspot.com>

Army trains Tawi-Tawi volunteers on search and rescue operation

From the Philippine News Agency (Apr 6)

A humanitarian and emergency response team has been formed for Tawi-Tawi under the supervision of Humanitarian Emergency Action and Response Team of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM-HEART) to respond to disasters and emergency situation in the island province, officials said today.

About 70 recruits from the province have been trained by ARMM-HEART and the Army's 6th Infantry Division on Search and Rescue (SAR) operations, especially on emergency and disaster preparedness, said Lawyer Laisa Alamia, ARMM executive secretary and ARMM-HEART head.

Alamia said the recruits, composed of ethnic Samah and Tausug volunteers were also trained on peace-building and basic auxiliary police techniques they can use to help maintain law and order during emergency situations.

HEART is an emergency and disaster action group established in 2013 by ARMM Gov. Mujiv Hataman. It has been actively involved in all major disaster response in the provinces of Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, the provinces that composed the ARMM.

According to Ramil Masukat, ARMM's regional disaster action officer, about 27 volunteers from Lanao del Sur, 72 from Maguindanao, 54 from Sulu and 92 from Basilan, were earlier trained on rescue and emergency response by the Army's 6th Infantry Division in Datu Odin Sinsuat town in Maguindanao.

"They will be sent home and be ready for humanitarian response operations with the support of the local government units in their respective municipalities," Masukat said.

Maj. Gen. Edmundo Pangilinan, 6th ID chief, said the 68 recruits from Tawi-Tawi were given extensive training on water search and rescue, basic identification and detection of improvised explosive devices and crowd protection from IED blasts.

He said the recruits from Tawi-Tawi were also provided inputs by experts, led by Col. Bernie Langub, on religious and culture sensitivity.

"We are glad that we now have an ARMM government helping the police and the military decentralize emergency and disaster response capability to the barangays. This is a capacity-building initiative that, at the same time, also empowers the people in the barangays," Pangilinan said.

The HEART had served in the past two years more than a million conflict and calamity-stricken folks in different parts of the autonomous region, which covers Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur, both in mainland Mindanao, and the island provinces of Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.

Alamia said ARMM-HEART recognizes no boundaries in serving the people in crisis situation, including Zamboanga City during the siege by Moro rebels and the Yolanda calamity in the Visayas.

ARMM-HEART can be likened to Davao City's 911 emergency unit.

<http://www.philstar.com>

More volunteers join ARMM emergency contingent

By John Unson (philstar.com) | Updated April 6, 2016 - 1:39pm



The newly-activated Tawi-Tawi rescue and disaster action group of the Humanitarian Emergency Assistance and Response Team. Philstar.com/John Unson

MAGUINDANAO, Philippines - The last 68 recruits for the search and rescue group in Tawi-Tawi of the Humanitarian Emergency Assistance and Response Team (HEART) completed on Monday their training on emergency and disaster preparedness, officials announced Tuesday.

The 68 ethnic Samah and Tausug volunteers were also trained on peace-building and basic auxiliary police techniques they can use to help maintain law and order during emergency situations.

The HEART is an emergency and disaster action group established in 2013 by Gov. Mujiv Hataman of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

The HEART is a well-trained contingent the Hataman administration can rapidly mobilize for rescue and relief missions in conflict and calamity-stricken areas in the autonomous region.

Ramii Masukat, ARMM's regional disaster action officer, said 27 volunteers from Lanao del Sur, 72 from Maguindanao, 54 from Sulu and 92 from Basilan, were earlier trained on rescue and emergency response by the Army's 6th Infantry Division (ID) in Datu Odin Sinsuat town in Maguindanao.

"They are now working in their respective provinces with the support of the local government units in their respective municipalities," Masukat said.

The last 68 HEART recruits completed on Monday an extensive training on water search and rescue, basic detection of improvised explosive devices (IED) and crowd protection from IED explosions.

The commander of 6th ID, Major Gen. Edmundo Pangilinan, said the recruits from Tawi-Tawi were also lectured by experts, led by Col. Bernie Langub, on religious and culture sensitivity.

"We are glad that we now have an ARMM government helping the police and the military decentralize emergency and disaster response capability to the barangays. This is a capacity-building initiative that, at the same time, also empowers the people in the barangays," Panguilinan said.

The HEART had served in the past two years more than a million conflict and calamity-stricken folks in different parts of the autonomous region, which covers Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur, both in mainland Mindanao, and the island provinces of Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.

Army vision: By 2028, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride.

While the HEART is supposed to focus only on areas inside the autonomous region, it crossed regional borders to serve displaced folks in Zamboanga City during the September 2013 siege of several barangays there by renegade followers of Nur Misuari of the Moro National Liberation Front.

The Hataman-led HEART also operated in Eastern Visayas after the super Typhoon Yolanda onslaught, which devastated many towns in the region.

The typhoon, which hit the Philippines on Nov. 8, 2013, caused the deaths of some 7,000 people.

The ARMM government dispersed more than 20 tons of relief supplies to evacuees during the HEART's relief missions in Zamboanga City and in the Visayas.

Army vision: By 2028, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride.

<http://retiredanalyst.blogspot.com>

Trooper killed, another wounded in Oriental Mindoro clash

From the Philippine News Agency (Apr 6)

A soldier was killed while another was wounded when troops of the 76th Infantry Battalion clashed with an undetermined number New People's Army (NPA) bandits in Paluan town, Occidental Mindoro Wednesday morning.

The encounter took place 7:15 a.m., said Southern Luzon Command (SOLCOM) spokesperson Lt. Col. Angelo Guzman.

203rd Infantry Brigade head Col Gavin D. Edjawan said the encounter was the result of an operation launched by the brigade after reports of NPA presence from the the communities that continue to sow fear to the people.

The identities of the victims are withheld for the moment prior to the notification of their families regarding the incident.

"Pursuit operations are ongoing. Blocking operations are being set-up in probable NPA withdrawal areas. The PNP has also established checkpoints in strategic areas," Edjawan said.

SOLCOM has utilized its air and naval assets to support the operations.

Naval gunboats are conducting naval blockade on probable NPA coastal "exfiltration" while Air Force helicopters are now conducting close-air support missions.

<http://dwdd.com.ph>

IN PURSUIT II Gov't troops pursuing NPA remnants in OccMin

Lui



CAMP GUILLERMO NAKAR, Lucena City – A soldier was killed while another was wounded when troops of the 76th Infantry Battalion encountered an undetermined number of NPAs in Paluan, Occidental Mindoro around 7:15 am today, April 6.

203rd Infantry Brigade Commander Colonel Gavin D. Edjawan said the encounter was the result of an operation launched by the brigade after reports of NPA presence from the the communities that continue to sow fear to the people.

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"Pursuit operations are ongoing. Blocking operations are being set-up in probable NPA withdrawal areas. The PNP has also established checkpoints in strategic areas," said Colonel Edjawan.

OLCOM has utilized its air and naval assets to support the operations. Naval gunboats are conducting naval blockade on probable NPA coastal exfiltration while PAF helicopters are conducting close air support to the troops.

Earlier, Southern Luzon Command Chief Lieutenant General Ricardo R. Visaya has ordered the troops to go deep into NPA lairs and neutralize the rebels.

SOLCOM is doing its best to clear Occidental Mindoro of NPA presence and pave way for a peaceful province ready for development.

Army vision: By 2028, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride.

<http://retiredanalyst.blogspot.com>

Barrientos named new head of Joint Task Group Sulu

From the Philippine News Agency (Apr 6)

Major Gen. Gerardo Barrientos was appointed as the new head of Joint Task Group Sulu on Tuesday.

He replaced Brig. Gen. Alan Arrojado, who has assumed full-time command of the 501st Infantry Brigade.

At the same time, Rear Admiral Jorge Amba was appointed head of Joint Task Group Tawi-Tawi.

"As part of this headquarters' effort to streamline our ongoing operations, ensure coverage of all operational areas and synchronize current efforts, we have appointed Major Gen. Gerardo Barrientos as the new Joint Task Group-Jolo Commander and Rear Admiral Jorge Amba as head of Joint Task Group Tawi-Tawi," said WMC spokesperson Major Filemon Tan.

This is to allow brigade commanders in the WMC roster to focus on assigned tasks in light of new security challenges in the area, he added.

Recently, Abu Sayyaf Group bandits and other lawless elements abducted several Indonesian and Malaysian seafarers in Philippine waters bordering these countries.

Barrientos is currently the commander of the 1st Infantry Division, which also covers the whole area of Zambales, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi and has under his command division level resources.

Amba commands all fleet-marine units and all naval assets of the entire Naval Forces Western Mindanao.

"We are optimistic that this change will bring concrete results to our efforts," Tan said.

<http://www.inquirer.net/>

Maguindanao governor Mangudadatu, soldiers survive attack

DAVAO CITY – Maguindanao Governor Esmael Mangudadatu survived an attack in Datu Salibo town on Wednesday morning.

Mangudadatu was onboard one of four airboats when the attack happened near Barangay Tee at 11 a.m. Wednesday.

“There were sniper shots,” Mangudadatu told the Philippine Daily Inquirer by phone.

The governor and 40 others, including top military officials in the the region, were on their way to Barangay Tee to raise the Philippine flag in a school that was earlier occupied by Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) rebels.

Government troops recently recovered the school from rebel occupation.

“We also went there to conduct a medical mission,” Mangudadatu said.

No one was hurt.

Despite the attack, Mangudadatu said they still pushed through with the flag-raising and medical mission.

If they did not do so, Mangudadatu said, “They (rebels) might claim we are afraid of them.” **SFM**

<http://www.inquirer.net/>

Soldier killed, another wounded in Occidental Mindoro clash

LUCENA CITY – An Army soldier was killed while another was wounded in a clash between government troops and communist rebels in Paluan town in Occidental Mindoro on Wednesday, a military official said. Lt. Col. Angelo Guzman, spokesperson of the military’s Southern Luzon Command (Solcom), said a unit from the Army’s 67th Infantry Battalion engaged an undetermined number of New People’s Army rebels in a firefight that started at 7:15 a.m.

Guzman withheld the names of the slain and wounded soldiers, saying they needed to notify their families first.

He said the local police set up checkpoints to block routes that the fleeing rebels would take.

This was the second clash on Mindoro Island since March 15 when an Army soldier and four members of the Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Unit (Cafgu) were killed in a firefight with NPA rebels in Bongabong town in Oriental Mindoro.

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101-year-old WW II veteran honored

The honor might be late in coming, but the exploits and sacrifices of surviving 101-year-old World War II hero Sgt. Jose Quilatan have finally been recognized.

Quilatan, who could barely walk, received a certificate recognizing his contribution to the guerrilla campaign during World War II. The ceremonies were held Tuesday during Philippine Veterans Week at the Philippine Army parade grounds in Fort Bonifacio.

"Quilatan was a member of the trigger unit of the Hunter's Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) Guerrillas, one of the main anti-Japanese guerrilla groups that operated in

Luzon," Army spokesman Col. Benjamin Hao said.

Hao added that Quilatan, who served as a rifleman from 1942 to 1945, saved the lives of hundreds of Filipinos.

Quilatan joined 14 Filipino veterans, both living and dead, whose World War II exploits, bravery and heroism were finally recognized by the government.

Aside from Quilatan, the surviving veteran awardees included Commander Bienvenido Alano, Col. Guillermo Garcia, Sgt. Isaias Lucena, Pfc. Francisco Palamaran, Pvt. Pedro Olate, Pvt. Pedro Mayumay and Pvt. Juanito Pasco.

The posthumous award-

ees were Col. Teofilo Padua, Maj. Lorenzo Padua, Capt. Ambrosio Reyes, 2Lt. Marcela Rosales, Sgt. Luciano Lactao, Sgt. Olimpio Navales and Pvt. Apolonio de Leon.

Troops from the Army, Navy, and Air Force tendered a review for all the veteran awardees. Former executive secretary and secretary of defense Eduardo Ermita was guest of honor and speaker.

The weeklong celebration of the Philippine Veterans Week and the 74th Araw ng Kagitingan will end on April 11 with a sunset ceremony to be held at the Libingan ng mga Bayani.

– Jaime Laude



Handout photo from the Philippine Army's public affairs office shows Sgt. Jose Quilatan receiving a certificate from former executive secretary and defense chief Eduardo Ermita in a ceremony honoring the country's war heroes.

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PAF's newly acquired cargo plane arrives in Cebu

By JAIME LAUDE

One of two C-130 cargo planes that the Philippines acquired from the United States arrived at the Cebu International Airport last night and will be the third Lockheed Martin cargo heavy lift aircraft of the Air Force.

Air Force spokesman Col. Araus Roberto Musico said the aircraft will be based in Mactan Air Base.

He said the cargo plane piloted by Filipinos safely landed in Cebu following a flight from Tucson, Arizona, with stopovers in California, Hawaii, Wake Island and Guam.

Col. Alejandro Baclayon, Lt. Col. Ian Earth Lamzon, Maj. Ian Dexter Dans, Maj. Anthony Amora and Maj. Ramil Daet were part of the team that brought the plane from the US.

In line with its continuing efforts to boost the PAF airlift capabilities, the government acquired two C-130 planes under the US Excess Defense Articles (EDA) for \$61 million.

The second aircraft is still being refurbished in the US and is expected to arrive either in September or October.

The two C-130 planes were originally designed for tanker air operations, but they were reconfigured into logistics and troop-transport aircraft for the Philippines.

Following the test firing of

the US Marines' High Mobility Rocket Systems (HIMARS) at the gunnery range in Crow Valley, Tarlac the other day, the missile battery will be shipped to Antique for the Phl-US Balikatan beach-landing exercises next Monday.

Capt. Celeste Frank Sayson, Balikatan spokesman for the Philippines, said that the HIMARS will be tested during the Joint Rapid Response Force (JRRF) that includes

the movement of troops and equipment.

The joint war games began last Monday and will last until April 15.

The HIMARS platform will also be shipped to Palawan, triggering speculations that one of the modern and most lethal weapons in the US arsenal might be stationed in the island province, which is near the disputed territories in the South China Sea and the West Philippine Sea.

Moreover, Palawan is one of the five areas where the US troops can establish their presence and store their equipment under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) between the Philippines and the US.

The deployment of the HIMARS, used for the first time in 31 years of the Balikatan, forms part of the repositioning of troops and assets of the US in the country under the EDCA.

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Malaya
The National Newspaper

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In AFP, 'sacking' now means 'streamlining'

BY VICTOR REYES

THE Armed Forces is re-organizing its force structure in the provinces of Sulu and Tawi-Tawi amid the spate of kidnapping incidents perpetrated by the Abu Sayyaf, a military spokesman said yesterday.

Maj. Filemon Tan, spokesman of the AFP's Western Mindanao Command, said the streamlining caused the relief of Brig. Generals Alan Arrojado and

Jose Cabanban as commander and deputy commander, respectively, of the Joint Task Group Sulu.

Arrojado and Cabanban will retain their other posts as commanders of the Army's 501st Brigade and 2nd Marine Brigade. The two brigades are under the operational control of the Joint Task Group Sulu.

The new commander of the Joint Task Group Sulu, in concurrent capacity, is Maj. Gen.

Gerry Bariantos, chief of the Army's 1st Infantry Division.

Tan said Navy Capt. Harry John Delgado has been also relieved as commander of the Joint Task Group Tawi-Tawi. Delgado will retain his other position of deputy commander of the Naval Forces Western Mindanao.

The new Joint Task Group Tawi-Tawi commander, also

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IN AFP

in concurrent capacity, is Rear Adm. Jorge Amba, commander of the Naval Forces Western Mindanao.

Tan said Bariantos and Amba were given the additional posts "as part of this headquarters' effort to streamline our ongoing operations, ensure coverage of all operational areas and synchronize current efforts."

"This is to allow our brigade commanders to focus on assigned tasks in light of new security challenges in the area," he added.

He also said the changes are expected to "bring concrete results to our efforts," referring to the continuing operations against the Abu Sayyaf and the rescue of foreign and Filipino hostages the terrorist group is holding.

He said Western Mindanao Command chief Lt. Gen. Mayoralgo dela Cruz decided to re-organized the force structure in the two provinces "for better command and control" in

these areas.

Tan noted that as concurrent commanders of the 1st ID and Naval Forces Western Mindanao, Bariantos and Amba have better flexibility to redeploy forces to Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.

"Our concentration now is Sulu and Tawi-Tawi. We are intensifying our operations in these areas... We want a better command and control," Tan said.

Government forces stepped up operations against the Abu Sayyaf in November last year, following the beheading of a Malaysian captive in Sulu.

Asked if the streamlining will lead to deployment of more forces to Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, Tan said: "That will depend on the two commanders (Bariantos and Amba). If they think there is a need, they have the full authority to shift forces," said Tan.

On whether the move will result in the rescue of Abu Sayyaf hostages, Tan said: "We're sure that the command and control will be strengthened."

The Abu Sayyaf is keeping several foreign and Filipino hostages in Sulu, including a Dutch wildlife photographer abducted in Tawi-Tawi in February 2012.

Two Canadians, a Norwegian and a Filipina seized from Samal island in Davao del Norte last September were reportedly brought by their Abu Sayyaf captors to Sulu. The foreign hostages said they are being held in Sulu by the Abu Sayyaf but the military is still validating this.

The Abu Sayyaf set a deadline of April 8 for the payment of P1-billion ransom for each of the hostages.

Commenting on the deadline, Tan said they are conducting operations with or without the deadline.

Reports also said 10 Indonesian crewmembers of a tugboat intercepted off Tawi-Tawi on March 26 and four Malaysian crewmembers of another tugboat intercepted off Sulu last April 13 are also being held captive in the island-province.

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AFP wants 'concrete results' in efforts vs Abus

By Mario J. Mallari

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) wants "concrete results" in its efforts against the terrorist Abu Sayyaf group in Western Mindanao areas – strengthening its command and control of task groups operating there by reshuffling senior commanders.

Maj. Filemon Tan Jr., spokesman of the AFP-Western Mindanao Command, said that Army 1st Infantry Division commander Maj. Gen. Gerardo Barrientos was named as new commander of Joint Task Group-Jolo and Rear Admiral Jorge Amba, chief of the Naval Forces Western Mindanao, as concurrent commander of JTG-Tawi Tawi.

"We are optimistic that this change will bring concrete results to our efforts," said Tan.

Brig. Gen. Alan Arrojado was relieved as JTG-Sulu commander effective Tuesday.

Tan said that the changes in command and control set up in Wesmincom were meant to "streamline our ongoing operations, ensure coverage of all operational areas and synchronize current efforts."

"This is to allow our brigade commanders to focus on assigned tasks in light of new security challenges in the area," said Tan.

The changes were made immediately after the separate kidnappings of 10 Indonesians and four

Malaysians in less than a week.

It will be recalled that 10 Indonesian crewmembers of tugboat Brahman 12 were intercepted at high seas last March 28. The tugboat was recovered abandoned along the waters of Languyan Island in Tawi-Tawi.

Reports immediately cropped up that the Abu Sayyaf band of Abu Misaya was responsible in the kidnapping of the Indonesians. However, the military did not confirm such information.

Last Saturday, four Malaysians were reportedly abducted from Sabah by armed and brought to Sulu. Again, the military did not confirm this.

The AFP, however, admitted there are ongoing coordination with both Indonesian and Malaysian governments regarding the separate kidnapping incidents.

The twin kidnappings happened while the military is conducting focused combat operations against the Abu Sayyaf band of Radullan Sahiron in Sulu and Isnilon Hapilon in Basilan.

No less than President Aquino ordered the military to intensify operations against the Abu Sayyaf last November following the beheading of Malaysian captive Bernard Then in Jolo.

Meanwhile, as the AFP was realigning its command and control groups, six sawmill operators were snatched by the group of Maute Brothers in Lanao del Sur province.

Tan said that the victims were snatched in Barangay Sandab, Butig town on Tuesday.

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A Military jet with six on board missing in Japan

TOKYO — An air force jet with six persons on board was missing in southwest Japan yesterday, public broadcaster NHK reported. The U-125 aircraft left a base in Kagoshima prefecture on the island of Kyushu in the early afternoon, NHK said, citing the

defense ministry and other sources.

Contact with the plane was lost when it was 11 kilometers north of the base, NHK said, adding helicopters were sent to search for it.

The defense ministry could not immediately confirm the report.

AFP

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Obama: Destroying IS group my 'top priority'

WASHINGTON – US President Barack Obama yesterday said destroying the Islamic State (IS) group remains his "top priority" at a time when the jihadist group continues to lose ground in Iraq and Syria.

"We continue to take on their leadership, their financial networks, their infrastructure," Obama said at a meeting with senior military officials in the White House.

"We are going to squeeze them and we will defeat them."

"As we've seen from Turkey to Belgium, ISIL still has the ability to launch serious terrorist attacks," he added, using another term for the IS group.

Coalition forces must maintain pressure on the insurgents using diplomacy and intelligence as well as military operations, coordinating operations between various branches of government, he said.

"We can no longer tolerate the kinds of positioning that is enabled by them having headquarters in Raqqa and in Mosul," he said of cities in Syria and Iraq.

"Destroying ISIL continues to be my top priority."

Obama spoke next to Defense Secretary Ash Carter, General Joe Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and combatant commanders.

Carter on Tuesday proposed changes to the military that would streamline its various forces of some 1.3 million soldiers and boost their ability to respond quickly by reviewing the current "top heavy" structure set out in the 30-year-old Goldwater-Nichols Act, which critics say is outdated.

The fight against the Islamic State group has shown that the military's various commands and special forces should better coordinate their efforts, he said.

"We intend to be more efficient by integrating functions like logistics, intelligence and plans," he said.

Washington has led an international coalition staging airstrikes against the IS group in Syria and Iraq since September 2014, parallel to operations by the Syrian government and its ally Russia.

The Syrian army and its allies on Monday retook Syria's central town of al-Qaryatayn, one of the IS group's last strongholds in the region. **AFP**

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'Panama Papers' law firm says 'hacked by servers abroad'

PANAMA CITY — One of the founders of the law firm at the center of the explosive "Panama Papers" revelations on off-shore holdings told *AFP* on Tuesday his company was hacked by servers abroad.

Ramon Fonseca said the firm Mossack Fonseca had lodged a criminal complaint with Panamanian prosecutors on Monday over the breach.

He added in all the reporting so far "nobody is talking of the hack, and that is the only crime that has been committed."

In a telephone message responding to *AFP* questions, Fonseca said: "We have lodged a complaint. We have a technical report that we were hacked by servers abroad."

He did not specify from which country the hack was carried out.

Fonseca also rued the fact that reporting on the 11.5 million documents taken from Mossack Fonseca's computer system focused on the high-profile clients who had used the law firm to set up offshore companies to hold their wealth.

"We don't understand. The world is already accepting that privacy is not a human right," he said.

The hack has badly shaken Panama's financial services sector, which relied on discretion to do its business.

With high-profile politicians, sports stars, celebrities and a few criminals revealed to have used Mossack Fonseca to set up offshore entities, scrutiny on the small Central American nation has suddenly ramped up.

But the law firm and the government have stressed that offshore companies are not, in themselves, illegal, and that Mossack Fonseca was not responsible for what its clients used them for.

The government, which has recently seen through reforms to get the country taken off an international list of states seen as money-laundering hubs, is mounting a fierce defense of the financial sector, which contributes seven percent of gross domestic product.

Relatedly, Western leaders pledged to crack down on tax dodges by the rich and powerful amid a mushrooming scandal

provoked by revelations of a web of Panama-based offshore financial dealings.

A day after Iceland's prime minister stepped down after being named in a massive leak of 11.5 million confidential documents — the so-called Panama Papers — international attention turned to tax cheats, with Panama's role in particular focus.

France led global pressure on the Latin American nation, saying it would put Panama back on its own list of tax havens, four years after it had been removed.

Finance Minister Michel Sapin called on the 34-nation Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to do the same.

"Unfortunately Panama has a bit of a tendency to make U-turns, to play the good guy and then the bad guy. This cannot go on," Sapin told parliament Wednesday.

Panama hit back, however, after days of being hammered in the world media.

"In Panama, there is a law that sets out retaliation measures against countries that include Panama in "gray lists," Alvaro

Aleman, the minister for the presidency, warned France in a news conference.

The retaliatory measures can include blocking foreign investment or withholding public tenders.

Panama had earlier lashed out OECD head Angel Gurría, saying his description of the country as the last major tax haven impenetrable to law enforcement was "unfair and discriminatory."

In London, the president of the United Arab Emirates owns London properties worth more than £1.2 billion (\$1.7 billion) through offshore companies revealed in the so-called Panama Papers, *The Guardian* reported.

Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan was among numerous public figures named as owners of billions of pounds of central London real estate following the huge leak of documents from Panamanian law firm Mossack Fonseca.

Owning British property through offshore companies is perfectly legal, but it is controversial because such holdings obscure the identity of the owners, allowing them to avoid scrutiny and tax. **AFP**

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The Manila Times

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AFP FOCUS

Chinese 'parachute kids' flock to US schools

BY JOCELYNE ZABLIT
AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

MURRIETA, United States: Growing up in mainland China, Hailun "Helen" Zhou always knew that she would finish her high school education in America, whatever the cost.

"That's what everybody does," said the 17-year-old from Sichuan province who has spent the last two years studying in California and will be graduating this spring. "My father's friends all sent their kids abroad, so that was the trend."

Zhou is among a growing number of Chinese teens who are flocking to US high schools, looking for a western education and a competitive edge in gaining admission to US universities and then finding a job back home.

But the pursuit of the American dream can quickly turn into a nightmare, experts warn, as many of these so-called "parachute kids" live in the US with

little parental supervision and can end up in trouble -- and even in prison.

"It's a huge industry," said Joaquin Lim, who runs a company that helps place Chinese students in American schools. "The last figure I read put it at 25 billion dollars."

Of nearly one million international students enrolled in public and private institutions in the United States in 2014-2015, about 304,000 -- or 31.2 percent -- were from China, according to the Washington-based Institute of International Education.

Some 30,000 of those students attended secondary schools, compared to fewer than 1,000 a decade ago.

The majority of these "parachute kids" aged between 14 and 19 land in southern California. For the most part, they attend Catholic or Christian schools because of restrictions by the US government on foreign student enrollment at public schools.

In cities such as Murrieta, a rural community about 80 miles (130 kilometers) southeast of Los Angeles, the number of Chinese students has ballooned in recent years, bringing welcome cash to the school district as well as host families who care for the teens.

'It's an investment'

"It costs about 50,000 dollars a year for the parents, who are mostly middle class, to send their kids here but they consider it an investment," Lim said.

"Three years ago, we had about 40 Chinese students enrolled in high schools in Murrieta and today we have more than 300 and the number keeps growing."

The sleepy town of about 105,000 residents, many of them retirees, is a far cry from China's polluted mega-cities, but most of the teens adjust well to American life, said Renate Jefferson, who oversees the exchange program for the public school district.

"What they notice first is the blue sky," she said. "They just walk around in awe at the blue sky. They think it's beautiful."

The students are also baffled by the freedom they enjoy academically and the artistic outlets available to them -- a welcome change from the rigorous, numbers-obsessed learning system in China.

"If there is one word to describe life here, it's the word 'free,'" said Junheng "Carl" Li, 19, who is graduating this year from a Catholic school in Murrieta.

"You have a lot of choices and much more freedom to study what you're interested in."

Shady intermediaries, no supervision

But many of the "parachute kids" whose parents rely on shady intermediaries to help them through the bewildering application process are in for a hard landing in America, ill-equipped to navigate the cultural transition and their

newfound independence.

Last month, three Chinese teens enrolled at a private school in Rowland Heights, a neighborhood east of Los Angeles that has a large Chinese diaspora, were given stiff prison sentences for attacking two other teens.

A judge at the preliminary hearing said the case reminded him, local media reported, of "Lord of the Flies" - the 1954 novel by William Golding about a group of schoolboys stranded on a desert island who turn feral when forced to fend for themselves.

The incident attracted widespread attention in China and prompted soul-searching on the wisdom of sending teenagers to a foreign country with no close parental supervision.

"You don't send your child 6,000 miles before verifying the school and who they are staying with," Lim said. "Too often, these kids are thrown into a completely foreign environment and are not

prepared to fend for themselves."

Police sergeant Steven Perez, who was involved in the Rowland Heights case, said officers are increasingly finding teens out on their own at night or even living in homes bought by their parents with little or no adult guidance.

"You basically have kids who are managing themselves and have no one to answer to," Perez said. "Or you have kids basically renting a room where they are residents and they are not accountable to those people either."

Evan Freed, an attorney who represented one of the Rowland Heights teens who was sentenced to 13 years in prison, said the case should serve as a wake-up call to parents that they could be setting their kids up for disaster rather than a bright future.

"As my client told the court -- she felt lost, she felt sad that her family wasn't here and that she basically took advantage of the freedom that she had," Freed said.

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The Manila Times

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AFP REPORT

Climate change may threaten \$2.5 T in assets

PARIS: Trillions of dollars' worth of financial assets may be under threat from global warming's effects by 2100, climate economists have warned.

If warming reaches 2.5 degrees Celsius (4.5 degrees Fahrenheit) over pre-Industrial Revolution levels by 2100, investments worth some \$2.5 trillion (2.2 trillion euros) may be in danger, a team reported.

This was equal to half the current estimated stock market value of fossil-fuel companies.

But even if the 2C warming agreed by the world's nations in Paris last December is achieved, the value of assets at risk would be \$1.7 trillion, the team wrote in the journal *Nature Climate Change*.

Climate change can destroy assets directly through sea-level rise for example, by depreciating their

value, or by disrupting economic activities lower down the chain through drought or freak storms.

A lot of research has focused on the oil, coal and gas investments that will be lost if the world turns its back on fossil fuels in favour of sustainable energy in line with the 2 C target.

The new study attempts to break new ground with the first-ever estimate of a direct impact of climate change on the value of financial assets themselves.

The projections, using mathematical models, were based on an estimated value of \$143.3 trillion for global non-bank financial assets in 2013, as determined by the Financial Stability Board watchdog, the team said.

At warming of 2.5 C, they wrote, some 1.8 percent of global financial assets could be at risk.

But this could rise to as much as \$24 trillion in worst-case-scenario warming.

Lesser evil

Scientists estimate we are on course for warming of about 4 C or more based on current greenhouse gas emission trends, or about 3 C if nations meet the emissions-curbing pledges they filed to back up the Paris climate agreement.

"When we take into account the financial impacts of efforts to cut emissions, we still find the expected value of financial assets is higher in a world that limits warming to 2 C," said co-author Simon Dietz of the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change.

"This means risk-neutral investors would choose to cut emissions, and risk-averse investors

would be even more keen to do so."

Climate change should be an important issue for all long-term investors, such as pension funds, as well as financial regulators, added Dietz.

Sabine Fuss of the Mercator Research Institute on Global Commons and Climate Change in Berlin, said it was not the final word on the topic, but the study did demonstrate that climate risks to the financial system may be substantial.

"This undermines both the need for full disclosure so that climate risks can be assessed and portfolios adjusted accordingly, and the need for more research to develop comprehensive estimates of the risk of such losses," she wrote in a comment published by the same journal. **AFP**

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ONLINE NEWS

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<http://retiredanalyst.blogspot.com>

Negotiations begin for release of Sayyaf hostages

From the Mindanao Examiner (Apr 6)

Private negotiations have started between suspected Abu Sayyaf rebels and employer of 10 kidnapper Indonesian sailors in southern Philippines.

The rebels demanded \$1 million for the safe release of the hostages, who are all crew members of the tugboat Brahma 12. They were intercepted on March 26 off Tawi-Tawi province in the troubled Muslim autonomous region in Mindanao.

Indonesian media reported that the company that owns the tugboat – Patria Maritime Lines – was willing to pay ransoms in exchange for the hostages, believed being held by Alhabsi Misaya, a rebel commander also tagged as behind the recent kidnappings of 4 Malaysian seamen in Sabah, Malaysia.

Jakarta is said to be monitoring the progress of the negotiations. Indonesian and Philippine authorities were constantly communicating in an effort to free the captives.

The Indonesian daily, Republika, has quoted Chief Security Minister Luhut B. Pandjaitan as saying: "The ship's owner has communicated directly with the hostage takers. But the government is still waiting for further progress in the situation."

"I think it's the company's decision. The government only monitors the situation, because it's the best strategy we can take right now," he added.

An attempt to rescue the hostages had been carried out, according to Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi who met with President Joko Widodo to report on the development of the operations.

"I reported to the President about the attempt to liberate 10 ship crews and results from visits to Manila," Retno was quoted as saying by the Indonesian media. But details of these attempts to free the hostages were not made public. "The safety of the ship crews is the main priority of all currently available options," Retno said.

Indonesia earlier said that it is ready to send police commandos to the Philippines to rescue the hostages. Malaysia has so far maintained silence over the kidnappings of its citizens – Wong Hung Song, 44, Wong Teck Pang, 41, Wong Teck Chi, 39, and Johnny Lau Jung Hien, 21 – all from Sarawak in the oil-rich state of Sabah.

On Tuesday, the Philippine military has sacked 2 army brigadier generals – Alan Arojado and his deputy Jose Cabanban – who headed the anti-terror Joint Task Group Sulu because of their failures to "neutralize" the Abu Sayyaf.

Arojado was replaced by a seasoned combat veteran Major General Gerardo Barrientos, commander of the 1st Infantry Division in Zamboanga del Sur province.

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Sulu Sea area risks becoming a terror haven, expert warns

Indonesia, M'sia, Philippines need a cohesive response to sea terrorists in region, say experts



Security forces patrolling the waters off Semporna, along the Philippine-Malaysian border after four Malaysian sailors were kidnapped there last week. Security experts say a military solution is needed to deal with such threats. Photo: Malay Mail

In the aftermath of the abduction of four Malaysian sailors off the coast of Borneo, security analysts have warned that the authorities must act decisively to secure the waters shared by Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia, or they may become a base for terrorists and criminals.

Professor Rohan Gunaratna, head of the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research at S Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), said the countries in the area have failed to understand and respond to the nature of the threat. "The Eastern Sabah Security Command (ESSCOM) cannot stand alone as the problem is (a) transboundary (one). It must be understood it is one component in a broad security zone," he was quoted as saying by the Malay Mail Online.

"The tri-border area between Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia is overrun with various criminal and terrorist elements," he said, adding that a military solution was needed given the severity of the threat.

Prof Gunaratna said the three governments must develop a strategy to dominate, control and secure the Sulu Sea or face a destabilised border zone.

"The terrorists are engaged in hostage taking with the aim of eventually turning the area into a 'safe zone' to conduct attacks against these countries," he said.

On Friday night, four Malaysians on the tugboat Massive 6 were kidnapped by gunmen in the Pulau Ligitan waters off Semporna. The remainder of the crew on Massive 6, three Myanmar nationals and two Indonesians, were allowed to leave.

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The abductees are reportedly being held captive by the Abu Sayyaf terror group on the southern Philippine island of Jolo, according to The Star Online. The report cited unnamed Filipino sources who claimed the Malaysians and their abductors, led by a veteran cross-border kidnapper known as Apo Mike, arrived in Indanan on Jolo on Sunday night.

The sailors were "unharmful" and under guard in the area where the Abu Sayyaf militants are already holding 10 Indonesians grabbed a week earlier from another tugboat, said the Malaysian newspaper.

Prof Gunaratna stressed the need for a military solution, as dealing with such threats was beyond the means of agencies such as the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency and marine police under ESSCOM.

"Attacks will become increasingly severe unless these groups are dismantled with military force, specifically the Malaysian Navy. There are no other options. Only a strong military response will stabilise the situation," he said. "These groups operating in the tri-border area, part of which is under ESSCOM, are capable of striking anywhere in South-east Asia and represent a serious threat to the region."

Prof Gunaratna said several hundred fighters had been trained for such a purpose and some were known to have links to Islamic State.

"The Malaysian government should lead the way in dismantling these groups as they have more leverage than the Filipino authorities," he said.

Dr Oh Ei Sun, a senior fellow at the RSIS' Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, noted yesterday that the three governments should better coordinate their anti-piracy measures.

"For example, if one country's navy or maritime enforcement is in hot pursuit of the pirates, they should be able to cross the sea boundary into another country, and the latter should also assiduously aid in the pursuit and capture," Dr Oh told TODAY.

Adding that the waters around Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia are not totally safe either, Dr Oh said he advocates joint patrols of the most rampant maritime areas, to demonstrate resolve of the three countries to counter piracies.

National Defence University of Malaysia Assoc Prof Aruna Gopinath said the proximity of several countries in the area made it difficult to carry out enforcement.

"We have no 'hot-pursuit' agreement and so militants or criminals are able to slip between jurisdictions because borders mean nothing to them," she said, adding they were cunning and capable of adapting to threats.

"Bear in mind many of these militants have grown up in this environment. They know the sea and islands intimately as opposed to enforcement officers and navy personnel."