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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS **NEWS CLIPPINGS**

17 December 2016

Saturday

NEWS HEADLINES

17 DECEMBER 2016

Rody: Phi won't go hungry sans US aid
SC orders release of Rolito Go
Sacked B1
execs to resign



Phi won't
star China
aid on reefs

Free tuition in state schools next year



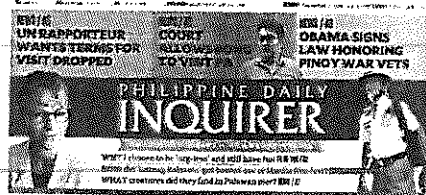
Duterte: I killed 3 people, but EJK just BS



Jollibee's 1st Canada branch warms up Winnipeg

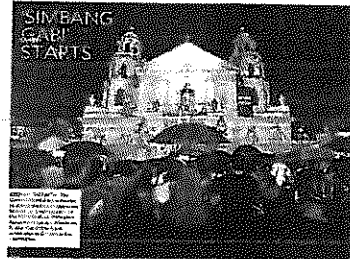
'Gift checks should have no expiry'

LYRR exec in scam quita



RECONSIDER, US ASKED

US asks Duterte to reconsider US aid
US asks Duterte to reconsider US aid



No 3-2 tier for
OK negotiators



Russian having
no views revenge



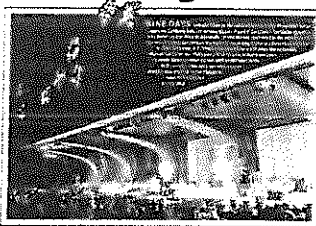
No to forced
organ harvest



The Manila Times

To believe or not to believe President Duterte

Singapore praised for not meddling



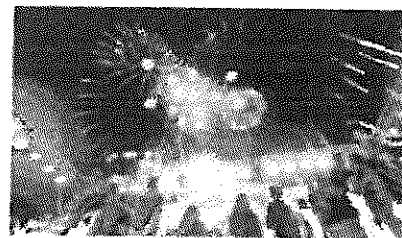
Govt committed to rule of law, poverty reduction - Finance chief

Phil chief wants
expulsion from
UN rapporteur

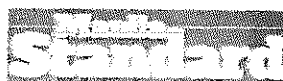
Phil chief wants
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UN rapporteur

Let PLDT for
5 in bribery scandal
on lookout bulletin

GRANDLOTTO 6/55 SATURDAY, 17 DECEMBER 2016 JACKPOT PRIZE
P53,000,000.00



'PH can't stop China'



Philippine Daily Inquirer

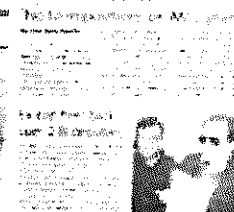
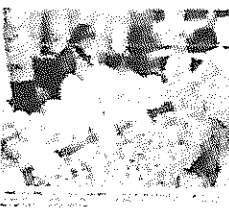


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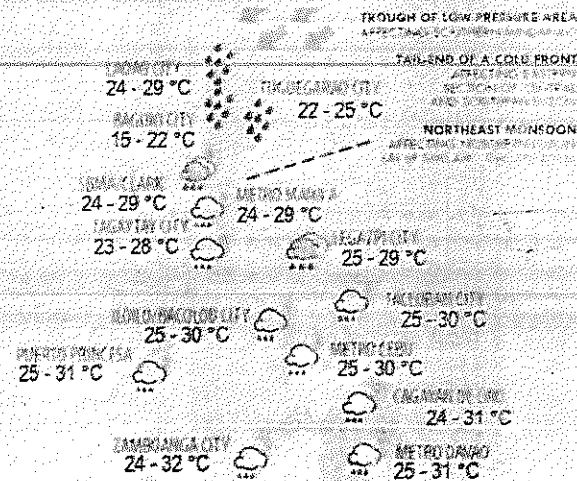
AIR 21
 SUBOT NR. PASALA NGYI

PILIPINAS HD

SUNRISE	SUNSET	MOONRISE	MOONSET
6:14 AM	5:30 PM	8:57 PM	9:03 AM

MOON	QUARTER	LOW TIDE	HIGH TIDE
8:06 AM DEC 14	9:56 AM DEC 21	7:39 AM 0.30 Meter	11:54 PM 1.22 Meter

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST DECEMBER 17, 2016 | SATURDAY



EXTENDED WEATHER FORECAST	DEC 18 SUN	DEC 19 MON	DEC 20 TUE	EXTENDED WEATHER FORECAST	DEC 18 SUN	DEC 19 MON	DEC 20 TUE
METRO MANILA	24 °C 30 °C	25 °C 30 °C	25 °C 29 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA	25 °C 30 °C	26 °C 31 °C	26 °C 31 °C
TUGUEGARAO	22 °C 25 °C	23 °C 26 °C	23 °C 26 °C	ILIGAN/BACOLOD	25 °C 30 °C	26 °C 30 °C	26 °C 31 °C
LAOAG	24 °C 30 °C	25 °C 30 °C	25 °C 30 °C	METRO CEBU	25 °C 30 °C	26 °C 31 °C	26 °C 31 °C
BAGUIO	15 °C 22 °C	16 °C 21 °C	16 °C 22 °C	TACLOBAN	25 °C 30 °C	26 °C 31 °C	26 °C 30 °C
SBMA/CLARK	24 °C 29 °C	25 °C 30 °C	25 °C 30 °C	CAGAYAN DE ORO	23 °C 31 °C	24 °C 30 °C	24 °C 30 °C
TAGAYTAY	23 °C 27 °C	23 °C 27 °C	22 °C 28 °C	METRO DAVAO	25 °C 31 °C	26 °C 30 °C	26 °C 30 °C
LEGAZPI	25 °C 30 °C	26 °C 30 °C	26 °C 30 °C	ZAMBOANGA	25 °C 33 °C	25 °C 33 °C	24 °C 33 °C

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

Cloudy skies with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms

Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rainshowers

Light rain

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Free tuition in state schools next year

By JANVIC MATEO

Students in state universities and colleges (SUCs) do not have to pay tuition starting next year, following the realignment of P8.3 billion in the 2017 budget of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED).

The Senate realigned the P8.3-billion allocation to cover tuition of students in SUCs during the Senate deliberations on the 2017 budget. It reportedly came from the infrastructure budget for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, which was questioned by Sen. Panfilo Lacson and dubbed as a form of pork barrel.

"That's purely for tuition, that's purely to remove tuition from the student expenses," CHED chair Patricia Licuanan said in a television interview yesterday.

"We cannot spend that P8 billion on anything else except to compensate the schools for the fact that they can no longer charge tuition," she added.

Licuanan said the CHED is working with other government agencies for the implementing guidelines on how to utilize the budget, which will be part of the 2017 General Appropriations Act now awaiting the signature of President Duterte.

"Logistically, it will be difficult. How do you share, how do you divide up P8 billion with 113 SUCs (and the University of the Philippines)? What formula do you use?" she asked.

"The implementation will be a bit of a challenge, but that's the intention of the P8 billion," she added.

CHED deputy executive director Napoleon Imperial said the commission would coordinate with the Department

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Free tuition From Page 1

of Budget and Management to address issues regarding fund utilization.

“CHED wants to ensure that the implementation/guidelines are defined prop-

erly to be able to manage the huge amount of funds accordingly,” he added.

Kabataan party-list Rep. Sarah Elago lauded the allocation of the budget and called

it a step in the right direction for SUCs.

“This is a victory for the youth movement which has long fought for the right to education. This is great news

for the nation’s youth and their families, especially the poor and marginalized,” she said.

“I also call on student councils and student governments, as well as the regents and trustees, to conduct student consultation summits

to help shape and monitor the implementation of the tuition-free policy. We must do everything in our power to have it implemented quickly and with a positive effect on students and the SUC community.

“We don’t expect this to

be easy. We are fighting a decades-old problem that infected SUCs with the wrong notion on tuition. Some SUCs may insist on violating the spirit of the Congress decision, but we will patiently and unequivocally fight them,” she added.

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INQUIRER

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Reconsider withholding aid, US urged

FROM A1

By Ben O. de Vera
@bendeveraINQ

Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III on Friday said he hoped the US aid agency Millennium Challenge Corp. (MCC) would reconsider its decision to put on hold funding for a second Philippine anti-poverty program under the administration of incoming US President Donald Trump.

Foreign Secretary Perfecto Yasay also said he hoped the MCC would reconsider the decision, but added that the United States should give the aid without conditions.

The MCC, a US poverty reduction agency, on Thursday said on its website that its board had “deferred a vote on the reselection of the Philippines for compact development, subject to further review of concerns around rule of law and civil liberties.”

The decision came after President Duterte said in a speech to businessmen on Monday night that as mayor of Davao City, he would patrol on a big motorbike hunting for criminals to kill to set an example for police to follow.

‘Deeply troubling’

“Those comments are deeply troubling, and they certainly are at odds with the Philippine government’s stated commitment to due process and rule of law,” White House spokesperson Josh Earnest told reporters.

Earnest reiterated US concern about extrajudicial killings in Mr. Duterte’s brutal war on drugs, which has taken the lives of nearly 6,000 people in just six months.

In Manila, US Embassy press attaché Molly Koscina said on Thursday that the MCC would continue to monitor unfolding events in the Philippines, but like all country partners, it needed to demonstrate “commitment to the rule of law, due process and respect for human rights.”

The MCC’s first five-year \$434-million compact with the Philippines closed in May.

The grant went to the modernization of the Bureau of Internal Revenue, expansion of a Department of Social

Welfare and Development anti-poverty project and rehabilitation of a major road network on Samar Island.

The Philippines had been slated for another aid package, but the almost-nightly killings in Mr. Duterte’s war on drugs and his cursing critics of the human rights violations got in the way of approval.

Committed to rule of law

“We have received the news about the MCC’s decision. We thank them for the grant that the Philippines received under the first compact as we reassure them and the rest of our development partners that the government continues to vigorously implement initiatives that reinforce the Duterte presidency’s commitment to good governance, peace and order and the rule of law,” Dominguez said in a statement on Friday.

Dominguez, head of Mr. Duterte’s economic team, said he found the MCC decision puzzling, pointing out that an MCC scorecard released just last month showed that the Philippines garnered passing scores in 13 of the 20 indicators, including control of corruption, rule of law and civil liberties—an improvement from last year’s performance, with the country clearing 12 indicators.

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Dominguez, however, said he hoped the MCC board would clear the second grant to the Philippines when it meets in March under the Trump administration.

"When President Duterte recalled his recent phone conversation with US President-elect Donald Trump, the American leader wished Mr. Duterte well on his campaign against drugs and said he understood the way that Duterte was handling it," Dominguez said.

Updated information

The Department of Foreign Affairs, responding on Thursday to the MCC's move, said: "The government remains committed to the goals to foster good governance and the rule of law in the country, and will continue to engage the MCC board to ensure that accurate and updated information on government policies and programs are provided to its members."

On Friday, Yasay told re-

porters while in Singapore accompanying Mr. Duterte on a visit to the tiny city-state, that the United States should not decide on the MCC grant on the basis of "alleged violations of human rights."

"If they ... really like to help us on the basis of our needs, they should ... give it to us ... without conditions," Yasay said.

"But unfortunately ... in recent months ... they have raised concerns about ... alleged violations of human rights that they have based simply on unverified reports," he said.

"We would hope that America would try to reconsider this. This has always been our appeal to America. Treat us with mutual respect, and treat us as a sovereign equal," he said.

Yasay said the Duterte administration was trying its best to tackle allegations of human rights violations in the war on drugs.

"But we would like to make sure that if this is merely a ploy, this is merely to bow down to their demands, we will not do it," he said.

"If they don't want to help us, we'll accept that," he said.

Can live with less aid

Mr. Duterte's economic planning secretary, Ernesto Pernia, played down the MCC move, saying the government could live with less aid from the United States.

"It's not going to be anything of significance. And given the amount of investments that many countries are interested in putting in, I would not lose sleep over that," Pernia said on Thursday after news of the MCC move reached the administration.

He said the Duterte administration, which has pledged to raise infrastructure spending to help lift economic growth, could tap other sources of financing in the region, including the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

The Philippines could raise between \$200 million and \$500 million in loans annually from the AIIB to fund infrastructure projects, a senator said last week, after the Senate ratified the country's membership of the China-backed institution. —WITH REPORTS FROM JEANNETTE L. ANDRADA, AP AND REUTERS INQ

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Army builds farm for former rebels

By JUN N. AGUIRRE

The Philippine Army's 12th Infantry Battalion (12 IB) in Banga town, Aklan, has opened a farm for former communist rebels.

Last Wednesday, the unit opened a two-hectare integrated farm in Camp Jizmundo.

Brigadier General Jon Aying, 3rd Infantry Division (3rd ID) commander, said the farm was patterned after the wellness project in Camp Gerona, Negros Occidental, when he was still with the 303rd Infantry Brigade (303rd IB).

It provided livelihood to for-

mer communist rebels as they became farmers. They earned from planting and harvesting vegetables. They also raised ducks, hogs and boars.

Lieutenant Colonel Leomar Jose Doctolero, 12th IB commander, said the integrated farm is one of the battalion's projects for its 44th founding anniversary.

Doctolero added the project is supported by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA), Philippine Fiber Development Authority (PFDA), and the Banga local government.

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Lanao del Sur: 5 sugatan sa bomba

Malubhang nasaktan ang isang sundalo habang nasugatan din ang apat na sibilyan makaraang sumabog ang isang improvised explosive device (IED) sa Barangay Rurogagus, Marawi City, Lanao del Sur, kahapon.

Sinabi ni Lt. Col. Joselito Pastrana, commanding officer ng 65th Infantry Battalion ng Philippine Army, na positibong ang Maute terror group ang nasa likod ng pambobomba sa mga biktima.

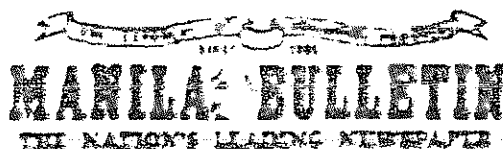
Ayon kay Pastrana, mula sa Iligan City ay papuntang Marawi City ang tropa ng Scout Ranger Battalion nang sumabog ang dalawang IED habang dumaraan ang sasakyan ng mga biktima.

Nagtamo ng sugat sa ulo si Sgt. Adrian Gaon, habang nasugatan din ang mga sibilyang sina Fatima Nawira, guro; Hafi Daluma; Hasbea Daluma; at Adatu Gula.

Ipinag-utos naman ni Marawi City Mayor Majul Gandamra ang masusing imbestigasyon sa pagsabog.

Fer Taboy

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Army troops repulse BIFF attack anew

CAMP SIONGCO, Maguindanao (PNA) — For the second time in three days, the outlawed Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) tried, but failed, to over-run an Army base in Maguindanao, an Army official said.

Col. Robert Sarmiento, commander of the 19th Infantry Battalion, said about 50 heavily armed BIFF bandits harassed the headquarters of 19th IB "Bravo" company in Barangay Bagan, Guindulungan, Maguindanao at around 9 p.m. Wednesday.

This came two days after another band of BIFF men harassed Army and police bases in nearby Datu Salibo, also in Maguindanao.

The attack reportedly came from a faction of the outlawed BIFF under Commander One Eye.

Sarmiento said there was no casualty

on the government side, but he could not say whether the attackers suffered casualties following the sporadic exchange of bullets and mortars.

Sarmiento, meanwhile, appealed to the BIFF to give its brothers Muslims and Christians in Maguindanao the chance to peacefully celebrate Christmas and New Year.

The BIFF is a breakaway faction of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) that broke from mainstream rebel movement due to ideological differences.

Latest military estimates, the group has about 1,000 armed followers operating mainly in the towns of Datu Salibo, Datu Piang, Datu Saudi Ampatuan, Mamasapano, Shariff Aguak, Guindulungan and Talayan, all in Maguindanao's second district.

7 December 2016



Pahina. 6

Balitang VisMin Balitang VisMin

Army camp nilusob ng BIFF

ZAMBOANGA CITY — Inatake ng Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) ang isang kampo ng Philippine Army (PA) sa bayan ng Guindulungan sa lalawigan ng Maguindanao sa Muslim autonomous region sa Mindanao.

Tinatayang nasa limang dosenang mga rebelde ang sumugod sa kampo ng 19th Infantry Battalion sa Barangay Bagan na kung saan ay nauwi sa matinding la-

banan ang atake kamakalawa ng gabi.

Walang inulat na sugatan o nasawi sa magkabilang panig, ngunit ito na ang ikalawang pagkakataon na nilusob ng BIFF ang nasabing kampo sa nakalipas na mga araw. Nabatid na target ng mga rebelde na makubkob ang naturang kampo, ngunit biseo na naman ito.

Sinamantala rin umakom ng BIFF ang away ng dalawang commander ng Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) sa naturang

lugar upang lusubin ang kampo dahil ilang grupo ng sundalo ang ipinadala ng militar upang pigilan ang sagupaan ng magkaway na lider ng MILF na sina Commander Alud at Commander Jack Tuaba.

Tatlong katao na mga tauhan ni Tuaba ang sugatan sa naturang sagupaan ng mga MILF commanders na nag-aaway dahil sa lupain at kontrol sa naturang bayan. Walang pahayag ang liderato ng MILF sa naturang away. (Al Jacinto)

Army aids South Cotabato police in preventing arson attack vs. bus companies

From the Philippine News Agency (Dec 16): **Army aids South Cotabato police in preventing arson attack vs. bus companies**

The Army's 27th Infantry Division has deployed military patrol vehicles along major highways in South Cotabato to thwart arson cases by suspected New Peoples Army (NPA) against bus companies, an Army spokesperson said Friday.

Captain Marvin Gammad, chief of 27th IB civil-military operations (CMO), said the move was in partnership with the Philippine National Police (PNP) following the burning of a Yellow Bus Line (YBL) unit in Barangay Poblacion here on Tuesday night.

Five men who introduced themselves as NPA members torched the bus at around 7:00 p.m., the fourth bus attacked by armed men in Region 12 since Nov. 13. Two YBL buses were earlier torched by armed men in Tupi, South Cotabato and Kiamba, Sarangani on Nov. 13 and Nov. 27, respectively.

Two days later, armed men claiming to be NPAs tried, but failed, to burn a Husky bus in Tantangan, South Cotabato. The bus came from Tacurong City, where the suspects boarded, heading to Koronadal City.

Gammad said that in the Sto Nino arson incident, two suspects boarded the bus in Isulan town in Sultan Kudarat. Upon reaching the Sto Nino bus station, three more men boarded the bus.

After it left the terminal or about five minutes later, two men asked the driver to pull over so they can disembark. As soon as the two jumped off the bus, three others quickly boarded the bus and told the driver to divert the unit towards a dirt road where more armed men with gasoline and lighters met them.

"They have the same modus operandi, they did not harm anyone, driver, conductor or passenger," Senior Supt. Franklin Alvero, South Cotabato police director, said. "They were all after the bus."

Alvero said investigators are looking at extortion and business rivalry as among the possible motives. Capt. Gammad said that to prevent similar incidents, especially during the holidays and rush hours, military vehicles will patrol the bus routes and escort them if necessary.

YBL, one of the four bus firms operating in South Cotabato, has not issued any statement on the incident. Other bus firms plying the South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat and General Santos City routes include Rural Transit, Husky bus company and Mindanao Star bus firm.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/index.php?idn=2&sid=&nid=2&rid=948992>

Army foils BIFF attempt to over-run detachment in Maguindanao

From the Philippine News Agency (Dec 16): Army foils BIFF attempt to over-run detachment in Maguindanao

For the second time in three days, outlawed Moro armed men tried, but failed, to over-run last night an Army base in Maguindanao, an Army official said.

Colonel Robert Sarmiento, commander of the 19th Infantry Battalion, said about 50 heavily armed Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) harassed at 9 p.m. the headquarters of 19th IB "Bravo" company in Barangay Bagan, Guindulungan, Maguindanao, two days after, another band of BIFF harassed Army and police bases in nearby Datu Salibo, also in Maguindanao.

Sarmiento said the soldiers were expecting harassment from the group since it separately attacked the detachments of 2nd Mechanized Battalion and Datu Salibo police station on Wednesday night.

Attackers belonged to a faction of the outlawed BIFF under Commander One Eye.

Sarmiento said no casualty on the government side and he could not say whether the attackers suffered casualties following a sporadic overnight exchange of bullets and mortars.

Sarmiento, meanwhile, appealed to the BIFF to give its brothers Muslims and Christians in Maguindanao the chance to peacefully celebrate Christmas and New Year.

The BIFF is a breakaway faction of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) that broke from mainstream rebel movement due to ideological differences.

Latest military estimates, the group has about 1,000 armed followers operating mainly in the towns of Datu Salibo, Datu Pianq, Datu Saudi Ampatuan, Mamasapano, Shariff Aguak, Guindulungan and Talayan, all in Maguindanao's second district.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/index.php?idn=2&sid=&nid=2&rid=948950>

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BusinessMirror

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Military ready to deal final blow to Mindanao-based terrorists

By RENE ACOSTA

THE military is intensely pursuing the Maute Group, also known as the Dawla Islamiya, in the aftermath of its recent attack and nearly weeklong occupation of Butig in Lanao del Sur, where it even hoisted the black emblem of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which is currently being pummeled by Iraqi and Syrian forces in the Middle East.

The pursuit operation is being carried out simultaneously with the ongoing offensive against the other terrorist Abu Sayyaf Group

(ASG) in the provinces of Sulu and Basilan, which have seen the spike of kidnapping cases during the past several weeks.

The twin operations were being undertaken as the Armed Forces has learned its lesson from the ASG, the original homegrown terrorist group that has evolved into Mindanao's foremost security threat from being a ragtag jihadist group in the 1990s. Such metamorphosis happened right under the government's nose.

While it may be a tall order to defeat the Maute Group in the short term, especially now that it

is already aligned with the ISIS and even backed by the regional terror group Jemaah Islamiyah, it is still possible to break the group since it is still on its infancy.

Grappling with terrorism

NO less than President Duterte has warned about the danger posed by the Maute Group with matching words of urgency for the military to lick it, along with the ASG problem, with his statements that the country would have to grapple with terrorism within the next two to three years.

SEE "MILITARY," A2



NEW Armed Forces chief Lt. Gen. Eduardo M. Año (right) and outgoing chief Gen. Ricardo R. Visaya salute during the change-of-command ceremony at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City on December 7. AP/BULLIT MARQUEZ

Military... CONTINUED FROM A1

The Commander in Chief again conveyed this sense of urgency when he gathered top military officials right after installing former Army Commanding General Lt. Gen. Eduardo Año as chief of staff of the Armed Forces.

"The President reiterated his directive to us...that he wanted terrorism to be addressed properly, particularly the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in Sulu and Basilan and other terrorist groups, like the Maute Group," Año said after the command conference.

Duterte wanted the military to do more in addressing the problem, ordering the officials to ensure that terrorist groups would not have the capabilities to carry out their activities.

Año, whose designation as top military chief was seen as part of the effort in dealing with the existing threat of terrorism, refused to give a time frame in achieving the goal.

(MILF) who were supported by elements of the Army's 37th Infantry Battalion encountered Maute members at the Mount Cararao complex within the triboundary of Buidon and Barira in Maguindanao and Butig in Lanao del Sur.

The Maute fighters led by two of their leaders, Omar and Abdullah Maute, were withdrawing from Butig, which they have occupied earlier, as government troops pursued them.

The municipalities of Buldon and Barira were considered traditional strongholds of the MILF, which has signed a preliminary peace agreement with the previous administration, and which the Duterte administration wanted to make permanent by working on a final agreement.

The involvement of the MILF in the antiterrorism campaign, finally, has been courted by the Duterte administration, believing that as a peace ally, the MILF has to do its share or even perform its task at the other end of the peace table.

The tapping of the MILF's help,

but ensured he would see to it that the directive is achieved.

"We will do our best to make sure that these lawless groups will no longer be a threat to our people in the area," he said.

Compared with his predecessor, retired Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Ricardo R. Visaya, who failed Duterte both in the campaign against the ASG and the Maute Group, Año is highly respected by his peers for his intelligence and operational grit.

It was under Visaya's term that the ASG committed a rash of kidnappings, snatching Indonesian and Malaysian seafarers, while the Maute Group occupied the whole municipality of Butig.

Pushing on with the campaign

JUST a day after Año was given full control of the military, fighters of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front

at least in the case of the Maute, which could translate to the denial of a sanctuary for the Lanao-based terrorist group and would therefore constrict its movement, was a new tack for the administration.

The government was also working for the same arrangement with the Moro National Liberation Front in the case of the ASG in Sulu and Basilan.

Surrender or die

DROPPING his antidrugs slogan, Duterte gave the fleeing Maute Group the only choice of yielding to the government or perish.

The Commander in Chief enumerated the options as he dismissed the group's quid pro quo call of a stop to the military's pursuit operation in exchange for the Maute to stop its attacks.

Duterte said there would be no let up in the campaign against Maute and even with the ASG, an operation that failed previous military commanders, including Visaya, but which will test the mettle of Año once more.

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AFP, PNP on alert vs kidnapping of doctors

ZAMBOANGA CITY

– Police and military operatives have intensified security for doctors and other medical workers in Mindanao to prevent Abu Sayyaf bandits from taking them to treat their wounded comrades.

Maj. Filemon Tan, spokesman for the Western Mindanao Command, confirmed yesterday that Radullan Sahiron was among those wounded in recent encounters with soldiers.

Tan said at least six Abu Sayyaf bandits were hurt in the clashes.

The Sulu police cited previous attempts to kidnap a doctor at his clinic in Jolo. Two of the doctor's Marine escorts were wounded in a shootout with the bandits.

Tan said there would be no letup in the military offensive in Sulu and Basilan during the holiday season.

Around 7,000 soldiers were deployed in Sulu to conduct pursuit operations for the bandits and rescue their remaining captives.

Eighteen foreigners and five Filipinos, including a nine-year-old boy taken from Payao, Zamboanga Sibugay, remain in the hands of the bandits.

– Roel Pareño

7 December 2016



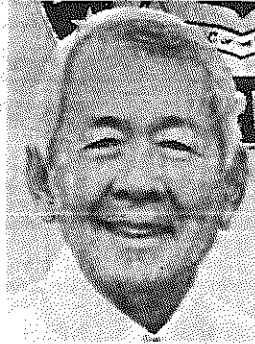
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PH won't question China disputed sea militarization

By **EFREN MONTANO**

THE Philippines will not question China over its reported construction of weapons systems on disputed features in the South China Sea.

"There is nothing that we can do about that now, whether or not it is being done for purposes of further militarizing these facilities that they have put up. We cannot, we cannot stop China at this point in time and saying do not put that up, we will continue to pur-



Secretary Yasay

sue peaceful means at which all of these can be prevented," according to

foreign affairs Secretary Perfecto Yasay in talks with reporters in a briefing in Singapore during President Rodrigo Duterte's state visit.

"For the Philippines, we have our bilateral engagements with China. We wanna make sure that there will be no further actions that will heighten the tensions between the two countries, particularly in the Scarborough Shoal," Yasay said.

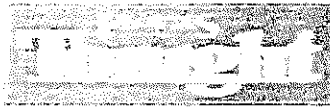
"And our efforts had paid off. As you can see, our fishermen are allowed to... not allowed -- but our fishermen now have free access, insofar as Scarborough Shoal is concerned," he added.

Yasay said the Philippines would continue to engage China "insofar as the other aspects of our relationship is concerned -- trade, investment, people-to-people contact, co-operation, infrastructure development and other such assistance that will have no strings attached."

Yasay said that such bilateral engagements were necessary for confidence building once Philippines and China are ready to find peaceful means to resolve the sea dispute.

"In the meantime, we have placed this at the back burner without compromising our rights as declared by the arbitral tribunal insofar its decision of July 12, 2016 is concerned," Yasay said.

17 December 2016



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Hard-fighting Air Force in cloud nine

BUOYED by its successful showing in the recent MBL Open basketball tournament, Philippine Air Force is looking forward to an even better performance in the coming year.

Led by PAF commanding general Lt. Gen. Edgardo R. Fallo, team manager Col. Elpidio P. Talja and coach Alvin Zuniga, Air Force surpassed expectations and finished a fighting third behind eventual champion FEU-NRMF-Gerry's Grill and runner-up Emilio Aguinaldo College.

The Jet Force finished with a respectable 4-2 win-loss record in the seven-team elimination round before losing to FEU-NRMF, 69-95, in the crossover semis.

The Pasay City-based team was also one of two teams which won over FEU-NRMF.

The Jet Force edged the Tamaraws, 84-82, behind a buzzer-beating three-point shot by ace gunner Rama Krishna

Morales.

Against FEU-NRMF, Air Force made a record 15 three-point shots, seven by Rebollos and six by Morales.

"We're satisfied with the performance of the team. The players did well against their more-experienced opponents during the eliminations," said Zuniga during the team's recent Christmas get-together in Pansol, Laguna.

Zuniga, assistant coaches Jimmy Andaya and Ryan Tongio and the players also presented the third-place trophy to Col. Talja and LTC Nelson Eltis during the get-together party.

Three Air Force players -- Darwin Cordero, Jonjon Rebollos and Morales -- also finished in the Top 10 scoring leaders at the end of the elimination round.

Cordero finished with 14.7 points a game, followed by Rebollos with 14 ppg and Morales



Philippine Air Force, led coaches Alvin Zuniga and Jimmy Andaya and players pose with team manager Col. Elpidio P. Talja (with trophy) during a team celebration in Laguna recently.

with 13.7 ppg.

Also making their presence felt are Raniel Jake Diwa, 21st with 10.2 ppg; and Ranimark Tano, 26th with 9.2 ppg.

The other prominent Air

Force players are Jerry Lumongsod, Mark Ollano, William Casulla, Roger Malig-on, Romeo Almerol, Francis Regalado, Rey-mark Pinto, Elmer Cuasay and Carl Valdevilla.

Air Force's two other losses came against EAC, 70-74, and MBL First Conference champion Macway Travel Club, 94-100.

Ed Andaya

ONLINE NEWS

17 DECEMBER 2016

AFP acquires brand-new refuelling tankers

From the Philippine News Agency (Dec 16): **AFP acquires brand-new refuelling tankers**

In line with efforts to improve its logistical capabilities, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) announced that its acquisition of seven collapsible and 21 towable tankers.

AFP public affairs office chief Col. Edgard Arevalo said these assets will enhance enhance the petroleum oil and lubricant support capabilities.

He added these refueling vehicles were formally commissioned into service by AFP chief-of-staff Lt. Gen. Eduardo M. Año early this week.

Arevalo said these tankers will help in the speedy refuelling of all military vehicles those involved in combat operations.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/index.php?idn=1&sid=&nid=1&rid=948973>

MILF infighting hurts 3 in Maguindanao

From the Philippine News Agency (Dec 16): **MILF infighting hurts 3 in Maguindanao**

Three persons were injured when rival groups belonging to Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) clashed Thursday afternoon over land dispute in Ampatuan, Maguindanao, the military said.

Reports from the 57th Infantry Battalion sent to Colonel Cirilito Sobejana, 601st Infantry Brigade commander, said the fighting erupted between two field commanders of the MILF in Barangay Kakal, Ampatuan town at 4 p.m.

The 57th IB identified the injured MILF fighters as Gringo Sangki, Dading Kadil and Jaime Pasayan, all residents of Barangay Kakal and under the group of MILF Commander Jack Tuaba.

Commander Tuaba's group has been locked in a long standing land dispute with the group of Commander Alud.

The infighting has been settled in the past by MILF leaders with the help of government and MILF ceasefire panels but flared up anew when the group of Commander Tuaba allegedly encroached a community of Commander Alud whose members were harvesting corn crops.

Elements of the 57th Infantry Battalion did not interfere in the infighting because of the existing ceasefire agreement between the largest rebel group and the Philippine military.

Kagi Suadan, village councilman, said both sides traded bullets overnight but no evacuation was reported.

Government soldiers were deployed in village center to secure the civilians and to allow MILF leadership to intervene and settle the land dispute through diplomacy.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/index.php?idn=2&sid=&nid=2&rid=948951>