

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



ARMY

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oacpa.army2012@gmail.com

OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS NEWS CLIPPINGS

08 March 2016

Tuesday

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

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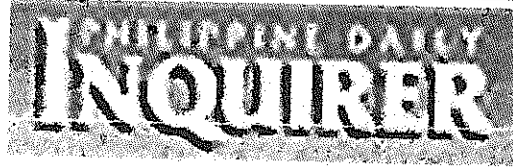
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TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | MARCH 8, 2016 | THURSDAY

EASTWINDS
AFFECTING THE EASTERN SECTION OF THE COUNTRY
(MARCH 7, 5:00 PM)

PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

SUNRISE	SUNSET
6:08 AM	6:05 PM
MOONRISE	MOONSET
5:13 AM	5:21 PM
LOW TIDE	HIGH TIDE
4:41 AM	9:42 PM
0.14 Meter	0.97 Meter

Partly cloudy to a thier cloudy with occasional rain and/or squalls.

METRO MANILA		TACAYTAY		TACLOBAN	
24-35 °C	25-35 °C	23-31 °C	22-32 °C	25-31 °C	24-31 °C
ILOCOS		LEGAZPI		CAGAYAN DE ORO	
23-33 °C	22-31 °C	25-32 °C	24-31 °C	24-32 °C	24-33 °C
LAGAO		PUERTO PRINCESA		METRO DAVAO	
23-31 °C	23-32 °C	25-33 °C	24-31 °C	25-34 °C	25-34 °C
BAGUIO		ILOILO/BACOLOD		ZAMBOANGA	
24-34 °C	25-34 °C	25-33 °C	25-34 °C	25-34 °C	25-34 °C
DANAGAU		METRO CEBU			
24-34 °C	24-34 °C	25-32 °C	24-33 °C		

Watch PANAHON TV everyday at 6:00 AM on PTV (Channel 4).

SAGOT KO, PAGALA NGOI

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Ybanag, Bolinao girl top 2016 PMA class

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City – As the world celebrates International Women's Day today, the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) is honoring a female graduate who has emerged among the

top 10 in her class this year.

Graduating salutatorian is Christine Mae Naungayan Calima, 21, from Bolinao, Pangasinan. Seven other female cadets

By ARTEMIO Dumlao

are graduating from the nation's premier military school.

At graduation ceremonies this Sunday, she will receive the Vice Presidential Saber, PAF Saber, Tactics Group Award, Australian Defense Best Overall Performance (Air Force) and other awards.

Kristian Daeve Gelacio Abiqui, an Ybanag from Minanga Sur, San

Pablo, Isabela, topped this year's PMA graduating class of 2016. He bested 62 of his "mistahs" in PMA 2016 class "Gabay-Laya" (Gintong Anak ng Bayan, Alay ay Buhay para sa Kalayaan). Abiqui was a "turn-back," a term referring to a cadet who had to repeat a semester to com-

plete academic as well as military proficiency courses. The 23-year-old said he had to take a medical leave for a semester in 2014.

Only 63 members of the Gabay-Laya class of 2016 are graduating on Sunday, the smallest number of graduates since 1970.

House to celebrate women's day

Meanwhile, the House of Representatives will join the country's leading women organizations in celebrating International Women's Day today.

Bulacan Rep. Linabelle Ruth Villarica, chairperson of the House committee on women and gender equality, said this

year's theme "Kapakanan ni Juana, Isama sa Agenda!" is focused on women's concerns in leadership platforms and in the government's development agenda.

"Nevertheless, it is encouraging to note that the continuous creation of avenue for women and their advocates aids in closing gender gap in leadership positions," Villarica said.

Villarica said the committee has lined up activities, in partnership with Gabriela Women's Party, National Council on Disability Affairs and other concerned government agencies as well as non-government organizations and civil society groups.

Liberal Party vice presidential candidate Camarines Sur Rep. Leni Robredo said

yesterday women empowerment starts with giving them jobs and livelihood.

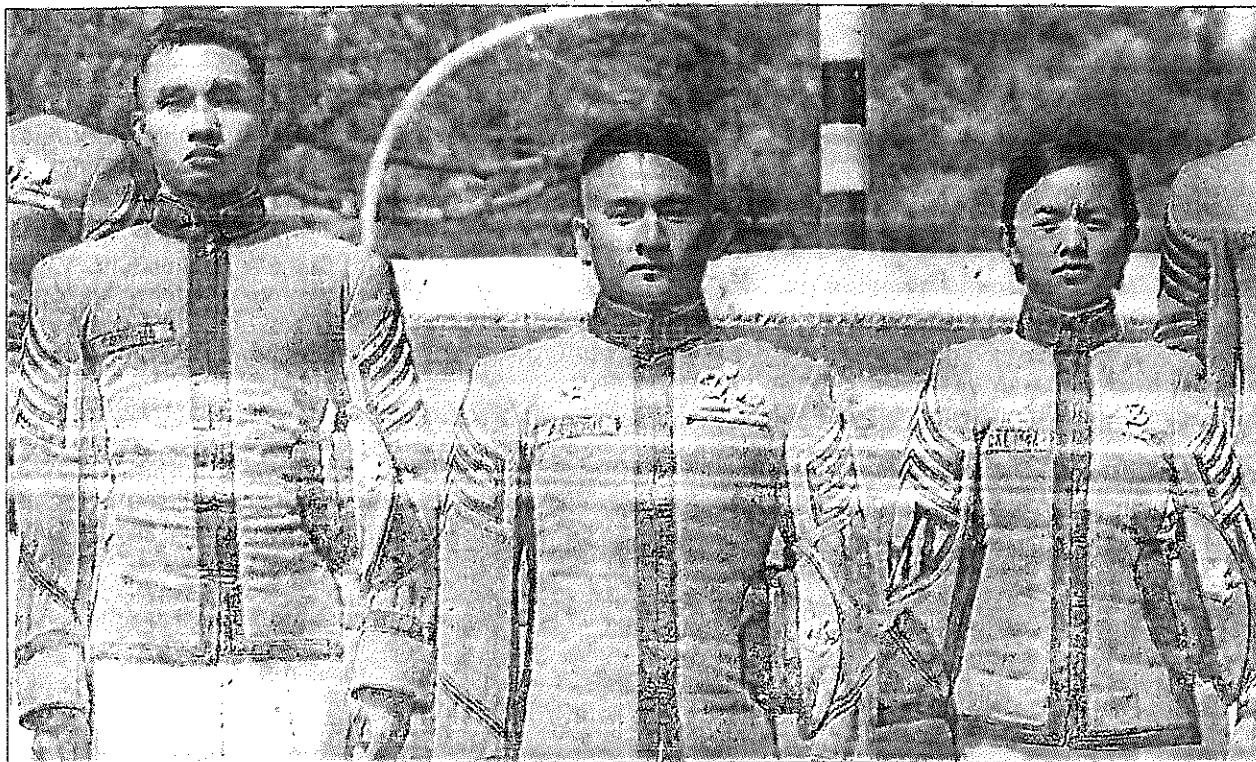
"Violence and abuse against women continue only when they can't stand on their own and remain dependent on their partners," Robredo told reporters in Makati City where she attended a rally on women empowerment.

– With Paolo Romero, Raymond Catindig

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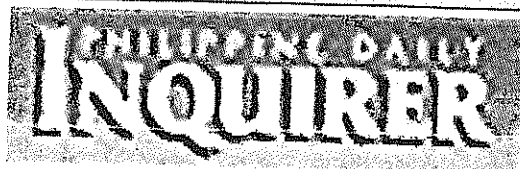
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The top three cadets of the Philippine Military Academy's Gabay Laya Class of 2016 stand in formation yesterday as they practice for their graduation. Kristlan Daeve Ablul (center) will receive the Presidential Saber from President Aquino while second placer Christine Mae Calima is the only woman who made it to the top 10 of the batch. At left is Arby Jurist Cabrera, who is in third place.

ANDY ZAPATA JR.

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63-member Gabay Laya smallest PMA class to graduate in 40 years

By Inquirer Northern Luzon

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City—Cadet First Class Christine Mae Calima said her mother never wanted her to join the Philippine Military Academy (PMA), but she defied her and ended up the lone female in this year's top 10 graduates of the premier military school.

Calima, who hails from Bolinao, Pangasinan province, ranked second among 63

graduating cadets of PMA "Gabay Laya" Class of 2016, the last class to be commissioned as junior officers by President Aquino on March 13.

Gabay Laya is also the smallest PMA class to graduate in 40 years. It includes seven female cadets and a top achiever, who was named Joseph Stalin after the Soviet Union leader, whom his father admired.

The top 10 cadets were presented on

Monday, the eve of the commemoration of International Women's Day.

Cadet First Class Kristian Daeve Abiqui, an Ybanag of San Pablo, Isabela province, topped the class. He was turned back from a previous class due to an ailment but was designated class president.

Ranking third was Cadet First Class Arby Jurist Cabrera of Cauayan, Isabela. He was followed by Cadets First Class Joseph Stalin Pagsao (fourth) of Maddela, Quirino province; Jayson Jess Tumitit (fifth) of Baguio City; Mark Joseph Daria (sixth) of Bangar, La Union province; Ace Clarianes (seventh) of Libmanan, Camarines Sur province; Prince Aday (eighth) of Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur province; George Bernard Garcia (ninth) of Labrador, Pangasinan; and Gerald Gasacao (10th) of the City of Meycauayan, Bulacan province.

Gabay Laya stands for "Gintong Anak ng Bayan, Alay sa Buhay Para sa Kalayaan (Golden children of the nation, who offer their lives for freedom)."

Abiqui said he had not taken part in naming the class, but the members "wanted to stick to that name [to express their desire] to protect our democracy."

13 turnbacks

Maj. Gen. Donato San Juan II, PMA superintendent, said only 123 members joined the class in 2012, but 50 completed the course. The surviving members were joined by 13 "turnbacks," a PMA term for cadets belonging to previous classes.

Abiqui was a turnback of PMA "Sinag Lahi" Class of 2015 because he had to recover from an ailment common to athletes.

San Juan said the PMA was allowed to take in as many as 350 cadets each year. He has recommended an increase of this number for April 1 when new cadets are accepted.

Like the first seven women cadets to join the academy in 1997, Gabay Laya's female cadets dropped from the original 21 to seven.

But the class would have lost another cadet had Calima heeded her mother, Mariela, principal of Bolinao School of Fisheries (BSF).

Mariela said she tried to dissuade her daughter from joining the PMA. "She is our eldest [of three children], so we were quite worried about her joining the PMA. But she wanted to be [a cadet] so we supported her," she said.

Father's wish

As a girl, Calima loved wearing military uniforms and had told her father, Edward, that she wanted to fulfill his dream of becoming a police officer. Edward, now a BSF teacher, is a former plebe of the Philippine National Police Academy (PNPA).

"We are very happy, of course," Mariela said of Calima, who was BSF high school valedictorian in 2010.

Calima took up accountancy at Saint Louis University in Baguio, where she was a consistent honor student. She was in her second year in college when she took the PMA entrance examination.

"We saw that she was determined to graduate from PMA, and now she had proven it," Mariela said.

In Isabela, Abiqui's father, Efren, was equally proud. A laboratory technician of the Department of Public Works and Highways' Cagayan office in Tuguegarao City, Efren said the family gave Abiqui all their support during his stay at the academy.

"We have been both tense and overjoyed [upon learning about his success]. Imagine, he topped the class as valedictorian," Efren told the INQUIRER.

Engineering student

Abiqui, who turned 23 on March 4, was a third year civil engineering student at the University of the Philippines when he passed the PMA test.

"I joined the activities of the LFS (League of Filipino Students) in my first year. I was very idealistic then. I joined the PMA because I found it a stable institution where I could make changes," he said.

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Mr. Aquino, the guest of honor in the PMA graduation ceremony on March 13, will award the Presidential Saber to Abiqui.

Abiqui will also receive the Philippine Navy Saber, Australian Defense Best Overall Performance Award, and Gen. Antonio Luna Award. He will receive plaques for being the best student in humanities, mathematics, natural sciences and Navy professional courses.

Stalin's namesake

An orphan, Fagsao lost his father, a member of the now defunct Philippine Constabulary, to a lingering disease when he was in Grade 3. His mother, Delia, brought him up but she died in 2011.

"The day she died was also the day the results of the PMA entrance examination were released," Fagsao said. "I wanted to take up computer engineering but my mother said it was her dream that I join the PMA."

Before he took the PMA test, Fagsao failed the entrance examination of the PNPA.

"I asked my father why I was named after a Soviet Union communist leader, and he replied that Stalin was a good leader," Fagsao said.

In Pangasinan, Garcia's mother, Melvina, said all her sons were now in the military.

Garcia's oldest brother, John Melvin, also graduated from the PMA in 2012 and is now a Philippine Air Force officer. Another brother, Jerson, serves as an Army officer after graduating from the PMA in 2013.

"He followed in the footsteps of his older siblings," said Melvina, an overseas Filipino worker for 11 years. She returned from abroad in 2008. *Reports from Vincent Cabreza, Gabriel Cardinoza, Frank Cimatú and Villamor Visaya Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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March 2016

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Isabela cadet tops PMA Gabay-Laya Class of 2016

By ZALDY COMANDA

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City – A cadet who had to go on leave from the academy on his second year due to health reasons topped

►2

the Philippine Military Academy's (PMA) Gabay-Laya (Gintong Anak ng Bayan, Alay ay Buhay Para sa Kalayaan) Class of 2016.

An Ibanag from the province of Isabela, Cadet First Class Kristian Daeve Gelacio Abiqui, 24, of San Pablo, Isabela leads the graduating class on March 13 composed of 63 cadets.

President Aquino, Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, is expected to address the occasion.

Abique will receive the Presidential Saber Award, the Philippine Navy Saber, the Academic Group award, the Australian Defense Best Overall Performance Award, the Humanities Plaque, the Mathematics Plaque, the Natural Science Plaque, Navy Professional Course Plaque, and the General Antonio Luna Award.

Kristian Abiqui is the son of an employee of the Department of Public Works and Highways. His mother is a housewife and he has a sister.

PMA Superintendent Major Gen. Donato San Juan II said the graduating class is composed of 57 males and seven females from the original 123 members who reported on April

1, 2012.

From the number, 24 are turn-back cadets belonging to earlier batches – 13 originally from batch 2014 and nine from batch 2015, including Abiqui.

San Juan said the 64-member batch is the lowest in membership. Eight of the top ten graduates are from Luzon and three from Region 2, Cagayan Valley.

Abiqui will join a group of 17 members of the class who will join the Navy. There are 13 going to the Air Force and 33 to the Philippine Army.

Abiqui had to leave the academy when he was in the second year due to lung illness brought about by the training. He was hospitalized for a number of months, then sent home for the remaining months of the school year. He returned to the PMA the following year.

"I am happy that my new mistakes (classmates) accepted me even if I was a turn-back. We are all Number 1 here. I am certain that PMA is the only stable institution which has credibility and I am willing to perform my task for our country," he said.

Coming second is the only female in the top ten – Cadet First Class Christine Naungayan Calima, 21, of Bolinao, Pangasinan. She will receive the Vice Presidential Saber and 12 other major awards. She will join the Philippine Air Force. Third on the list is Cadet Arby Jurist Cabrera, of Cauayan City, Isabela;

No. 4 is Cadet Joseph Stalin Gasao, of Madella, Quirino; No. 5 is Cadet Jayson Jess Tunitit of Baguio City; No. 6 is Cadet Mark Joseph Daria of Bangar, La Union; No. 7 is Ace Clarianes of Libmanan Camarines Sur; No. 8 is Cadet Prine Aday of Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur; No. 9 is Cadet George Garcia of Labrador Pangasinan; and No. 10 is Gerals Gasacao of Meycauayan City, Bulacan.

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Malaya
The Most H Newspaper

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Isabela native tops PMA Class 2016

BY VICTOR REYES

A CADET from Isabela province, Kristian Daeve Abiqui, is graduating at the top of the Philippine Military Academy Class "Gabay Laya" which is composed of only 63 cadets, the lowest number of graduates in about 40 years.

Second to Abiqui is Christine Mae Calima of Pangasinan, the only female in the Top 10. There are six other females in the class.

The cadets will graduate from the academy on Sunday in ceremonies to be led by President Aquino at the PMA grounds in Baguio City.

PMA spokesman Lt. Col. Rey Balido said the number of graduates this year is the lowest since 1970 "because of the normal rate of attrition." The class was initially composed of 121 members.

AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said the low number of graduates this year is "based on the low number of recruits four years back as well as the attrition rate that affected the class."

He explained "attrition rate" means the number of cadets "who are either turned back to the next class or who are

dismissed or separated from the corps."

"Usually the attrition is more than 50 percent of an original number of recruits for a particular class and in this case that held true and even went beyond," he said.

He also said this year's class has "a higher attrition rate" and a low number of recruits.

Padilla said the PMA is addressing the situation.

"They are trying to address this with a more aggressive marketing effort to recruit more to the corps so that we can have more cadets joining each class and eventually have a higher number of graduates," he said.

Class 2016 is not the smallest batch. In the 1960s, there were batches with only around 20 graduates.

Last year's class had 171 graduates.

Of this year's graduates, 33 will join the Army, 13 the Air Force, 17 the Navy while the remaining six will be training in the United States.

Aside from Abiqui and Calima, the others in the Top 10 (from third to 10th place) are Arby Jurist Cabrera, 21, of

See ISABELA > Page B6

Cauayan City in Isabela; Joseph Stalin Fagsao, 22, of Maddela, Qurino; Jayson Jess Tumitit, 23, of Baguio City; Mark Joseph Daria, 23, of Baguio City; Ace Clarianes, 21, of Libmanan, Camarines Sur; Prince Aday, 23, of Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur; George Bernard Garcia, 21, of Labrador, Pangasinan; and Gerald Gasacao, 22, of Meycauayan City in Bulacan.

Fagsao, Clarianes, and Garcia will join the Army while Anayao, Daria, and Aday are set

to join the Navy. Gasacao will join the Air Force.

Abiqui will receive the Presidential Saber, he being the top graduate of the class. He will also receive the Philippine Navy Saber because he is joining the Navy.

The 23-year-old Abiqui, who is from San Pablo in Isabela, is the son of Efren, a government employee, and Norma, a housewife. Abiqui reached third year in college as a civil engineering student before he entered the academy.

Calima, of Bolinao in Pangasinan, will get the Vice Presidential saber. The 21-year-old is joining the Philippine Air Force.

Calima is a daughter of government employees. She attended second year in college, as an accounting student, before joining the PMA.

Cabrera reached third year in college, as a civil engineering student, before entering the PMA. He will receive the Secretary of National Defense Saber. His parents are also government employees.

Like Calima, Cabrera will join the Air Force. – With Ma. Elena Gonzales

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Anak ng gov't employee, nanguna sa PMA Class 2016

Ni Rizaldy Comanda

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City - Isang Ibanag mula sa Isabela ang nanguna sa "Gabay Laya" (Gintong Anak ng Bayan, Alay ay Buhay Para sa Kalayaan) Class 2016 ng Philippine Military Academy (PMA).

Pangungunahan ni Cadet First Class Kristian Daeve Gelacio Abiqui, 24, ng San Pablo, Isabela, ang pagtatapos ng 63 kadete ng akademya sa Linggo, Marso 13, na inaasahang dadaluhan ni Commander in Chief President Benigno S. Aquino III.

Tatanggap si Abiqui ng Presidential Saber Award, Philippine Navy Saber Award, Academic Group Award, Australian Defense Best Overall Performance Award, Humanities Plaque, Mathematics Plaque, Natural Science Plaque, Navy Professional Course Plaque, at General Antonio Luna Award.

Kabilang si Abiqui sa 17 kadete na aanib sa Philippine Navy (PN), 13 sa Philippine Air Force (PAF), at 33 sa Philippine Army (PA).

Bunso sa dalawang magkapatid na babaeng panganay, si Abiqui ay anak ng isang kawani ng Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) at maybahay naman ang kanyang ina.

Nabatid na si Abiqui ay dating miyembro ng PMA Class 2015, ngunit sa ikalawang taon niya ay nagkaroon siya ng problema sa baba dahil sa training at ilang buwang na-confine sa ospital, kaya tuluyan na siyang natigil sa pag-aaral at hindi nakasama sa mga nagtapos sa akademya noong nakaraang taon.

"Isang malaking hamon sa akin ang makapasok at makapagtapos sa PMA, dahil bata pa lang ako ay pangarap ko

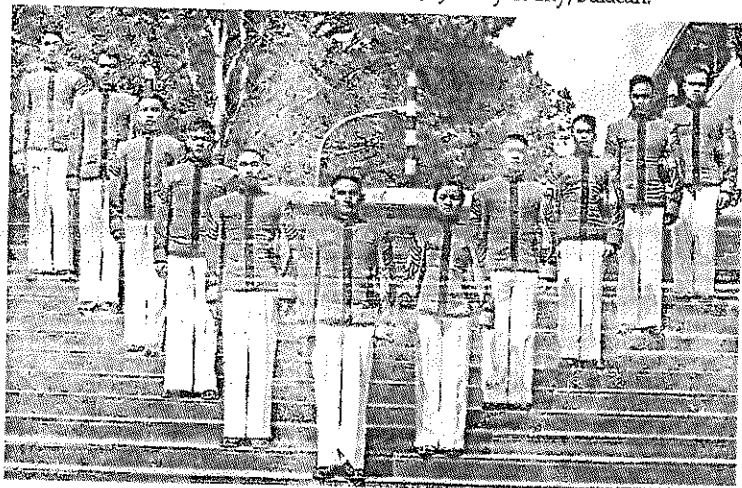
na rito. Dahil 16 taon pa lang ako noong magtapos ng high school, nag-aral muna ako sa UPLB (University of the Philippines-Los Baños) at pinalad na makapasa sa examination, at 'eto, hindi ko akalain na mangunguna ako sa aming class," ani Abiqui.

"Lahat kami ay number one, at malaki ang paniwala ko na ang PMA ang tanging institusyon na matatag at may kredibilidad, kaya handa kong gampanan at gawin ang mga natutunan ko para sa bayan," dagdag pa ni Abiqui.

Pumangalawa naman kay Abiqui ang nag-iisang babaeng kadete na si First Class

Christine Mae Naungayan Calima, 21, ng Bolinao, Pangasinan, na aanib sa PAF, at tatanggap ng Vice Presidential Saber Award at 12 pang major award.

Ang top 10 ng PMA Class of 2016 ay kinumpleto nina Arby Jurist Cabrera, ng Cauayan City, Isabela; Joseph Stalin Fagsao, ng Madella, Quirino; Jayson Jess Tumitit, ng Baguio City; Mark Joseph Daria, ng Bangar, La Union; Ace Clarianes, ng Libmanan, Camarines Sur; Prince Aday, ng Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur; George Garcia, ng Labrador, Pangasinan; at Gerald Gasacao, ng Meycauayan City, Bulacan.

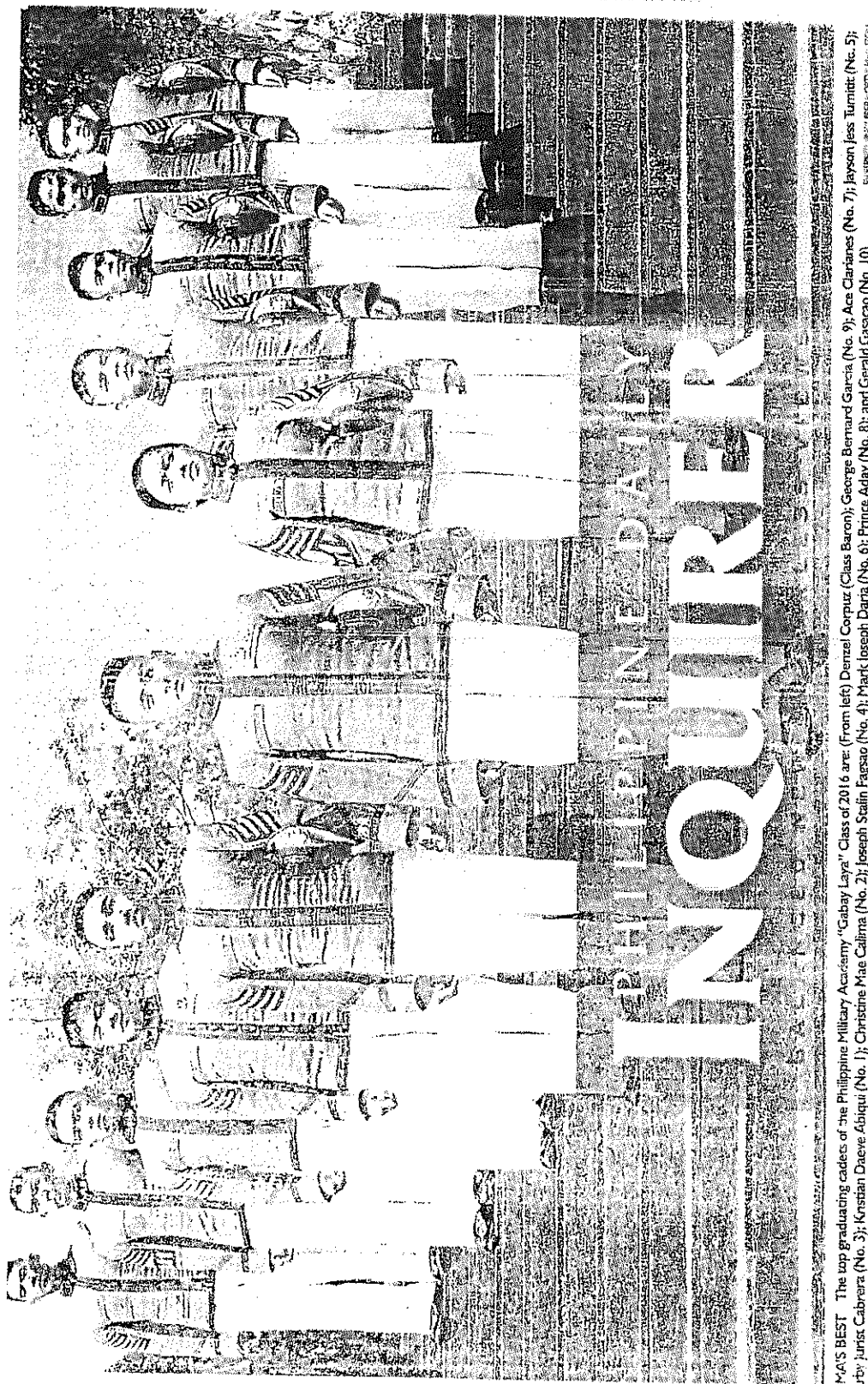


PINAKAMAHUHUSAY Ang top ten ng Philippine Military Academy ngayong taon mula sa 63-miyembrong "Gabay Laya" (Gintong Anak ng Bayan, Alay ay Buhay para sa Kalayaan) Class of 2016 na magtatapos sa Linggo, Marso 13, sa Fort del Pilar sa Baguio City. Pinangungunahan ni Cadet First Class Kristian Daeve Abiqui ang 10 pinakamahuhusay sa PMA ngayong taon, kasunod sina Christine Mae Calima, Arby Cabrera, Joseph Stalin Fagsao, Jayson Jess Tumitit, Mark Joseph Daria, Ace Clarianes, Prince Aday, George Bernard Garcia, at Gerald Gasacao. **RIZALDY COMANDA**

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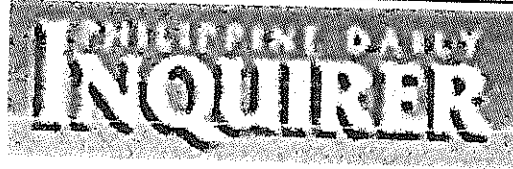
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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MAY'S BEST The top graduating cadets of the Philippine Military Academy "Gabay Laya" Class of 2016 are: (From left) Denzel Corpuz (Class Baron); George Bernard Garcia (No. 9); Ace Claranes (No. 7); Jayson Jess Turnitt (No. 5); Jrey Juris Cabrera (No. 3); Kristian Daew Abiqui (No. 1); Christine Mae Calima (No. 2); Joseph Stalin Fagsao (No. 4); Mark Joseph Doria (No. 6); Prince Aday (No. 8); and Gerald Gascao (No. 10).

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20 soldiers in Lanao clashes get medals

TWENTY soldiers who recently clashed with local militants allied with the Islamic State (IS) group were honored with medals and citations yesterday for their gallantry and bravery in Butig, Lanao del Sur.

The Armed Forces chief of staff, Gen. Hernando Iriberry, flew to Marawi City with the Philippine Army chief, Lt. Gen. Eduardo Año, to personally award the medals and citations to the 20 soldiers of the 103rd Infantry Brigade of the 1st Infantry Division.

Iriberry, whose military service ends on April 22 when he reaches the mandatory retirement age of 56, led a one-minute prayer for the three soldiers who were killed in

the Butig clashes with the so-called Maute group, which reportedly suffered 24 fatalities and lost two of its camps.

The Jemaah Islamiyah-affiliated group, which has pledged allegiance to the IS group that is sowing terror in Iraq and Syria, is reportedly led by the brothers Omar and Abdullah Maute. The weeklong fighting started on Feb. 20 when the Maute group harassed an Army detachment in Butig.

During the ceremony that was also attended by the Western Mindanao Command chief, Lt. Gen. Mayoralgo dela Cruz, Iriberry awarded the Gold Cross to Capt.

Baltazar Marcos, 1Lt Ariel Bulagao, 2Lt Jesus Reyes Jr., Sgt. Rogelio Abuan, and Cpl. Efren Manicad.

The AFP chief of staff awarded the Silver Cross to 1Lt. Sydney Garcia, TSgt. Leopoldo Albana Jr., SSgt. Mario Salinas, SSgt. Ronald Vino, and Cpl. Diamael Macapan-ton. Pfc. Benoch Larona was awarded the Bronze Cross.

Citations were handed to Capt. Ricardo Nolasco, TSgt. Augusto Grande, SSgt. Renante Catalan, SSgt. Rolly Perez, SSgt. Fernando Villavicencio, Sgt. Franky Lazaga, Sgt. Lew Mark Mendiola, Cpl. Antonio Balmores Jr., and Cpl. Rogelio Martin Jr.

Julie M. Aurelio

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5 soldiers honored for gallantry

For acts of gallantry during the recently-concluded operations against a "local terrorist organization" (LTO) in Lanao Del Sur, five members of the Army's 103rd Infantry Brigade were conferred the Gold Cross Medal, the country's third highest military decoration.

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief of Staff Gen. Hernando DCA Iriberry bestowed the award to Capt. Baltazar L. Marcos, 1Lt. Ariel O. Bulagao, 2Lt. Jesus A. Poyes, Sgt. Rogelio F. Abuan and Cpl. Efren B. Manicad.

The awarding ceremony was held at the 103rd Brigade headquarters in Marawi City, with Army chief Lt. Gen. Eduardo Año and Western Mindanao Command (Wesmincom) chief Lt. Gen. Mayoralgo Dela Cruz

joining the AFP chief.

All five participated in the military offensive against the LTO led by the brothers, Omar and Abdullah Maute in February.

This stemmed from the group's botched attack against a detachment of the 51st Infantry Battalion in Butig town, Lanao Del Sur last Feb. 20.

The Maute group is believed to be allied to elements of the Jemaah Islamiyah.

The almost three-week government assault, backed by air, artillery and armored vehicles resulted in the killing of at least 42 extremists, 24 of which were confirmed by intelligence reports.

Six Army troopers were also killed in the ensuing encounters. (Elena L. Aben)

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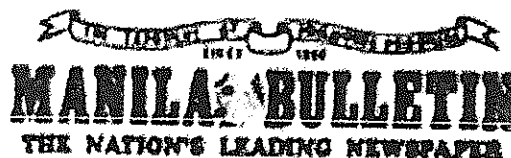
Kandidatong magbabayad sa NPA kakasuhan – military

GENERAL SANTOS CITY – Nanawagan ang militar sa mga local candidates na huwag magbigay ng permit-to-campaign fees sa New People's Army (NPA). Ayon kay Col. Ronald Villanueva, 1002nd Infantry Brigade commander, sasampahan nila ng criminal case ang mga kandidatong mapapatunayan na nagbayad ng permit-to-campaign fees sa mga komunistang rebelde. Sinabi niya na nakatanggap ang military ng impormasyon na nagpadala na ng mga sulat ang NPA local guerilla command sa mga kandidato na humihingi ng bayad para payagan silang mangapanya sa mga lugar na kontrolado ng rebeldeng grupo. Ayon pa kay Villanueva, mahigpit nilang sinusubaybayan ang mga local candidates nang magsimula ang campaign period noong March 26. "We will not hesitate to file criminal actions against local candidates who will be found giving money to NPA rebels," Villanueva said. Pinayuhan niya ang mga kandidatong ipaalam kaagad sa awtoridad kung sakaling makatanggap sila ng sulat mula sa NPA na humihingi ng permit-to-campaign fees. **(Joseph Jubelag)**

2 suspek sa ComVal bombing huli

DAVAO CITY – Naaresto ng miyembro ng 46th Infantry Battalion ang dalawang New People's Army (NPA) rebels na umano'y sangkot sa pagpapasabog ng improvised explosive device (IED) na ikinasugat ng limang sundalo sa Barangay Golden Valley, Mabini, Compostela Valley noong nakaraang Sabado. Kinilala ni 10th ID chief information officer Captain Rhyen Batchar, ang dalawang nadakip na sina Ronie Consolacion Mimi, 23, at Sonny Mimi, 22, magpinsan na naninirahan sa Sitio Palali, Barangay Golden Valley. Nakumpiska sa dalawa ang tatlong IED, isang 300-meter wire, dalawang switch devices, at isang Motoposh motorcycle. Ayon kay Batchar, ang dalawang suspek ay nahuli ng 46th IB troopers sa aktong nagtatanim ng bomba sa Purok 13, Barangay Golden Valley, noong Sabado, ilang minuto matapos ang unang pagpapasabog na ikinasugat ng limang sundalo. **(Alexander D. Lopez)**

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AFP tells candidates not to pay NPA permits to campaign

By JOSEPH JUBELAG

GENERAL SANTOS CITY – Don't give in to demands of extortion from the New People's Army (NPA), or else, you would face the consequences under existing laws.

This was the admonition given by the military yesterday as it warned local candidates that paying the NPA for permits to campaign could get them into trouble with the law.

Col. Ronald Villanueva, 1002nd Infantry Brigade commander, said the military was ready to file criminal charges against local candidates who will pay for such permits from the insurgent group.

He said the military had received information that the NPA local guerrilla command had already sent letters to several local candidates asking for money in exchange for permits to campaign in NPA-controlled areas.

Giving in to the demands from the NPA for them to pay fees for permits to

campaign could mean disqualification from the elections.

"We will not hesitate to file criminal actions against local candidates who will be found giving money to NPA rebels," Villanueva said.

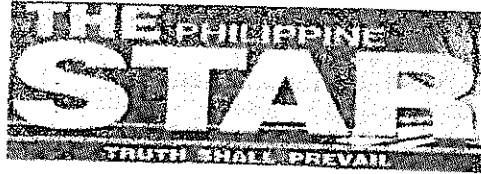
Instead, local candidates should immediately report to authorities if they receive any letter from NPA, asking them to pay permits before they could campaign in certain areas.

He said the military was even willing to provide security to all candidates, who wish to launch their campaign in areas which are considered strongholds of NPA, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

According to the military asking money from politicians in exchange for permits to campaign in areas they control were just one of the ways the rebel group raises funds.

It said the permit to campaign fees asked by NPA rebels could run into the millions of pesos.

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30 ex-NPA rebels receive livelihood assistance

BUTUAN CITY – Thirty former New People's Army (NPA) rebels each received P65,000 in livelihood assistance on Friday.

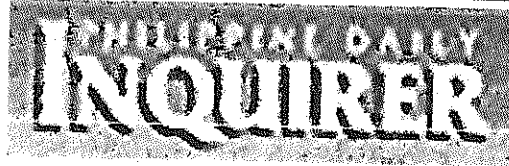
Capt. Jasper Gacayan, spokesman for the 401st Infantry Brigade (IB), said the assistance is under the Comprehensive Local Integration Program of the Departments of the Interior and Local Government and Social Welfare and Development.

"We are appealing to our NPA brothers and sisters to come down and avail themselves of the livelihood program and live peacefully," Col. Alexander Macario, 401st IB commander, said.

DILG Secretary Mel Senen Sarmiento and Agusan del Sur Gov. Adolph Edward Plaza as well as military and barangay officials attended the awarding ceremony held at the provincial capitol.

– Ben Serrano

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Dredging project resumes after Moro rebel attacks

COTABATO CITY—Army bomb experts have cleared the construction site for a dredging facility under a flood-control project in Datu Salibo town in Maguindanao province, prompting the resumption of work activities there over the weekend.

The project was earlier halted due to harassment by Moro rebels belonging to the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF).

Lt. Col. Warlito Limet, commander of the 2nd Mechanized Infantry Battalion, said the search for booby traps still continued in other areas, but the dredging site in the villages of Butalo and Tee in Datu Salibo had been cleared of bombs that might have left by the rebels.

On Friday, a backhoe and dump trucks entered Butalo.

Datu Salibo Mayor Norodin Salasal said the P58-million dredging project being implemented by the national government was to start in December but was delayed by road right-of-way (ROW) claims by residents.

"I have talked to all the lot owners where the project was to be built and the government have paid them," Salasal told reporters.

After the ROW claims were settled, the project commenced on Feb. 5, but the BIFF burned two backhoes, triggering a fire-fight between them and government forces.

"We torched the equipment because the contractor did not

coordinate with us, and because the road right-of-way claim was not settled," Abu Misri Mama, BIFF spokesperson, told the INQUIRER by phone.

Mayor Salasal denied Mama's claim. "All claims have been settled," he said.

Limet said the project would benefit the people once it is completed. "We cannot understand why the BIFF is opposed to it," he told reporters.

On Feb. 5, the military, with the backing of two MG-520 attack helicopters, launched offensives to drive away about 100 heavily armed BIFF men.

The monthlong offensives claimed the lives of four soldiers and wounded about 30

others. Four civilians, including the municipal treasurer of Datu Salibo, were killed when the BIFF set off a roadside bomb.

Military officials could not say how many BIFF members were killed or wounded. Civilians in Datu Salibo claimed about 40 BIFF fighters were killed and 20 others wounded.

"We cannot confirm that, we have no body count, but for sure they have casualties," Capt. Joann Petinglay, Army regional Army spokesperson, told the INQUIRER.

On Thursday, the decomposing body of a man, believed to be a BIFF fighter based on his fatigue uniform with a BIFF logo, was found in the village of Tee. *Edwin O. Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao*

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'PNP, AFP still most corrupt govt agencies'

By Florante S. Solmerin

FOLLOWING local government units, the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines are still the most corrupt government agencies, the Ombudsman said in a report released Monday.

"For five straight years, officials from local government units [LGU] and members of the Philippine National Police [PNP] topped the chart as the agencies with the most number of cases filed with the Office of the Ombudsman," Morales said.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines is at third place followed by the Department of Education (fourth); Department

of Environment and Natural Resources (fifth); State Universities and Colleges (sixth); Department of Agriculture (seventh); Department of Finance (eighth); and Department of Agrarian Reform (ninth).

"Based on the report submitted by the Finance and Management Information Office, cases against LGU officials rose by 31 percent, an increase from 2,053 cases in

2014 to 2,697 in 2015, while cases against members of the PNP increased from 1,258 in 2014 to 1,265 in 2015," Morales said.

Surprisingly, Ombudsman Conchita Morales there has been a "downward trend" of corruption cases at the Bureau of Customs, now at 10th place.

"In contrast, the Bureau of Customs, at 10th place, registered a downward trend with 177 cases in 2011 to 81 cases in 2012, 76 cases in 2013, 84 cases in 2014 and 70 cases in 2015," she said, noting the cases filed included both criminal and administrative complaints.

Morales released the report a month after Transparency International noted in its annual Cor-

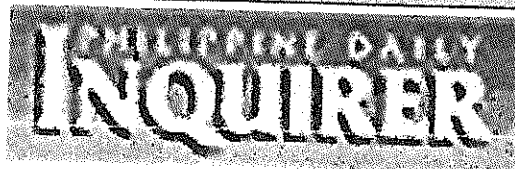
ruption Perceptions Index that the Philippines slipped 10 notches in ranking of corruption perception in 168 countries.

In the 2015 CPI released late January, the Philippines got a score of 35 out of 100, 10 notches lower than its ranking last year. Philippines scored 34 in 2012, 36 in 2013, and 38 in 2014.

The scores in the CPI, which could be from a scale of 0 (perceived to be highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean), are based on "expert opinions of public sector corruption."

Transparency International also observed that two-thirds of the 168 countries have scores below 50, adding that no country in the world is completely corruption-free.

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New fighter jets to fly at PAF chief's sendoff

By Julie M. Aurelio

THE COMMANDER of the Philippine Air Force will finally get a proper sendoff when he retires from the military service tomorrow.

Outgoing commanding general Lt. Gen. Jeffrey Delgado will review the troops as the PAF's brand new supersonic jets—two FA-50 lead-in fighters recently acquired from South Korea—will zoom by at his retirement ceremony at Fernando Air Base in Lipa City.

PAF spokesperson Col. Enrico Canaya said it was tradition for the commander to review the troops and assets for the last time.

"It's also an opportunity for our pilots to gain proficiency in formation flying, which they train for," Canaya said.

It was under Delgado's term that the PAF acquired the supersonic fighter jets, an array of medium-lift aircraft and attack helicopters, this after the Air Force had lost most of its air power over the past decades.

Two of the jets arrived in November as the first part of a

12-aircraft order from Korea Aerospace Industries worth P18.9 billion.

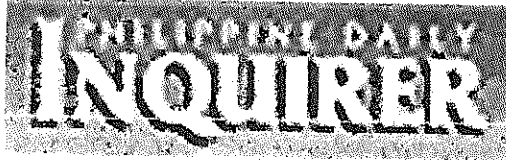
Delgado will be turning over the Air Force to a still unnamed successor to be named by President Aquino most likely from a list that includes Lt. Gen. Edgar Gallorina, deputy chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines; Maj. Gen. Salvador Melchor Mison, commander of the Air Education and Training Command; 1st Air Division commander Maj. Gen. Raul del Rosario and PAF chief of air staff Maj. Gen. Galileo Kintanar.

The President is expected to preside over the ceremony at Fernando Air Base.

Delgado's 56th birthday, the age of mandatory retirement age from the military and police service, isn't until March 20 but he is leaving earlier on March 9 due to the election ban on appointments.

Delgado belongs to Philippine Military Academy "Sandigan" Class of 1982 and spent most of his military career in the Air Force, receiving various medals for outstanding service, including the Presidential Legion of Honor.

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MILF warns IS terror group setting up base in Mindanao

KUALA LUMPUR—The head of the biggest Moro rebel group in southern Philippines on Monday warned that the Islamic State (IS) terrorist group was trying to establish a stronghold in Mindanao following the failure of the Philippine Congress to pass the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) as part of a peace agreement.

Murad Fashim, chair of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, said the militant IS group

had attempted over the past year to recruit supporters in Mindanao, but he added the MILF had worked to convince them that the peace pact it had signed with the government in 2014 was the best solution.

Even so, Murad said the delay in the en-

MILF/A6

**20 soldiers in Lanao
clashes get medals / A6**

From page A1

actment of the proposed BBL, which sought to establish a more powerful and better-funded autonomous region for minority Muslims, had led to frustrations that could be exploited by the IS and other extremist rebel groups.

Malaysia is a facilitator in the peace talks between the Philippine government and the MILF, and Murad spoke while passing through Kuala Lumpur.

"There have been some efforts of penetration [by IS] but they have not succeeded in establishing a stronghold in Mindanao," Murad said during a news conference.

"But now after the nonpassage of the [proposed BBL], we are quite concerned that they (IS militants) can capitalize on this because the [frustration] of the people in the area is now very strong," he added.

Gunmen pledging allegiance to

the IS group, which controls vast swathes of territory in Iraq and Syria, recently instigated a series of deadly battles with the Army in Lanao del Sur, leaving three soldiers and 24 others dead.

Malacañang and the military, however, insisted there were no operational links between the IS and Moro terrorist groups in Mindanao.

The 11,000-strong MILF dropped its secessionist bid and settled for broader autonomy for minority Muslims in Mindanao in a Malaysian-brokered peace pact it signed with the administration of President Aquino in 2014.

The conflict has left 150,000 people dead and stunted development in Mindanao, home to some of the country's poorest regions.

Under the peace deal, a draft BBL was submitted to Congress to create the autonomous region to be called Bangsamoro. The bill's early passage was stalled by anger over the killing

last year of 44 Special Action Force commandos in fighting that involved some fighters from the Moro group.

Lawmakers ended the last regular session of their term last month without passing the bill.

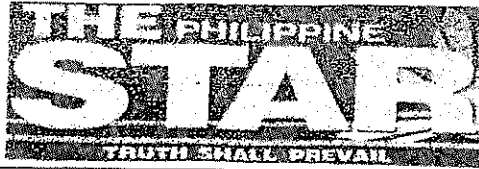
Murad said the MILF could not give up its armed struggle yet but would not revert to violence as long as the peace process had a chance to move forward.

"We cannot completely abandon armed struggle, but we always believe we have to give supremacy, primacy to the peace process because we believe the solution to the problem is still political," he said.

"As long as the peace process has a chance to move forward, then we don't want to revert to violence again," he added.

Murad said he was hopeful that the new President who would be elected in May this year would support and continue the Aquino administration's peace efforts. **AP and AFP**

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IS seeking stronghold in Mindanao – MILF

The Islamic State (IS) is trying to establish a stronghold in violence-racked Mindanao, the head of the country's biggest Muslim rebel organization warned yesterday.

Moro Islamic Liberation Front chairman Murad Ebrahim said the IS seeks to capitalize on the growing frustration of some MILF members over the breakdown of efforts to end a

decades-long Muslim separatist rebellion in the South.

The peace process has been frozen since Congress failed last month to pass a bill that would have granted autonomy to the Muslim region.

"We are quite concerned that they (IS) can capitalize on this, because the sentiment of the people in the area is now very strong... the frustrations after the

non-passage of the law," Murad told reporters in Kuala Lumpur.

Gunmen pledging allegiance to the jihadists controlling vast swathes of Iraq and Syria have instigated a series of deadly battles with the army in the volatile Mindanao.

Murad said the MILF was seeking a dialogue with IS-allied militants to dissuade them from further attacks.

Violence has plagued Mindanao for decades during a Muslim separatist insurgency that has claimed at least 120,000 lives.

The MILF signed a peace accord with President Aquino's government in 2014 to end its struggle for independence, which began in the 1970s.

Aquino's six-year term ends in June and the MILF has pledged to honor a ceasefire

while it awaits elections in May.

"We cannot completely abandon armed struggle, but we always believe we have to give supremacy, primacy to the peace process because we believe the solution to the problem is still political," Murad said.

"As long as the peace process has a chance to move forward then we don't want to revert to violence again."

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is enjoining the MILF leadership to continue contributing their share to preserve peace in Mindanao.

AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla made the declaration in response to Murad's claim that the IS is establishing links with the MILF.

– AFP, Jaime Laude, Jose Rodel Clapano, Janvic Mateo

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DEFINING THE NEWS

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MILF: ISIS PUTTING UP PH STRONGHOLD

KUALA LUMPUR—*The Islamic State is trying to establish a stronghold in Mindanao, the head of the nation's biggest Muslim rebel organization warned Monday.*

Moro Islamic Liberation Front chairman Murad Ebrahim said the extremist IS seeks to capitalize on growing frustration over the

breakdown of efforts to end a decades-long Muslim separatist rebellion in the southern Mindanao region.

the people in the area is now very strong. The frustrations after the non-passage of the law—they can capitalize on that," Murad told reporters in Kuala Lumpur.

Gunmen pledging allegiance to the jihadists controlling vast swathes of Iraq and Syria have instigated a series of deadly battles

The peace process has been frozen since Congress failed last month to pass the Bangsamoro Basic Law that would have granted greater autonomy to the region.

"Now, after the non-passage of the [bill], we are quite concerned that they [the IS] can capitalize on this, because the sentiment of with the Army in Mindanao since Congress failed to pass BBL.

Murad said the MILF was seeking dialogue with IS-allied militants to dissuade them for further attacks.

But the military questioned Murad's assessment, saying the

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MILF was merely using the IS—also referred to as Daesh—to gain attention.

"We believe that the names of big groups like the Daesh are only being brought into the conversation because of their desire to get further attention from many of the players out there in the field," said Brig. Gen. Festiano Padilla, spokesman of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Padilla dismissed reports about the presence of Islamic terrorists.

"There is no direct verifiable and credible presence of any international groups within the area," he said.

Padilla said the military did not put much stock in Murad's statement, but took seriously the ability of local terrorist groups to recruit young members.

Vice presidential candidate Senator Gregorio Honasan II on Monday urged the intelligence service of the AFP to verify and validate the presence of the Daesh in Mindanao.

Violence has plagued Mindanao for decades during a Muslim separatist insurgency that has claimed 120,000 lives.

The MILF signed a peace accord with the government in 2014 to end its struggle for independence, which began in the 1970s.

Despite the non-passage of the BBL, the MILF has pledged to honor a ceasefire while it awaits elections at mid-year.

"We cannot completely abandon armed struggle, but we always believe we have to give supremacy, primacy to the peace process because we believe the solution to the problem is still political," Murad said.

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Military disputes MILF's warning on IS recruitment

**BY VICTOR REYES
AND JOCELYN MONTEMAYOR**

THE military yesterday disputed a pronouncement of Moro Islamic Liberation Front chairman Murad Ebrahim that the Islamic State is trying to establish a foothold in Mindanao, capitalizing on the people's frustration

over the failure of Congress to pass the Bangsamoro Basic Law.

"We are not putting much weight on those pronouncements... We believe, up to now, that there is no direct, verifiable and credible presence of any international group within the area," said Armed Forces spokesman Brig. Gen.

Restituto Padilla.

Peace adviser Teresita Deles acknowledged Murad's warning that the IS is using the non-passage of the BBL to recruit frustrated Moros, and said there is a lot of disappointment over the non-passage of the BBL but

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MILITARY

that government forces are working closely with the MILF to prevent, if not curb, extremism in parts of Mindanao.

"We agree that the frustrations of the people on the ground can lead to recruitment for radical, extremist thought and action. Our security sector is working on this and our ceasefire mechanisms are working closely and robustly with them to maintain peace and order on the ground, including curbing the spread of extremism," she said.

Mural, in a press conference in Malaysia, also said the MILF is trying to talk to IS-allied militants to dissuade them from conducting further attacks in Mindanao.

There have been reports in the past that the IS, also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), was recruiting forces in Mindanao after groups, including the Abu Sayyaf, pledged allegiance to it.

Padilla said some quarters in Mindanao are using the name of IS and other big terrorist groups just to get attention.

He acknowledged there is frustration over the non-passage of the BBL, which would have established a new political entity in the South, but said everybody should understand the "dynamics" involved.

"In the end, we expect that there will be a mechanism toward a long-lasting peace," he said.

The passage of the BBL is part of the peace agreement signed by government with the MILF in 2014. Authorities

are optimistic the BBL will be passed in the next administration. The BBL was endorsed by President Aquino to Congress for approval but lack of time, lack of quorum, and a number of potentially unconstitutional provisions delayed and eventually led to its non-passage.

Padilla also urged the public to ignore information about the supposed success of the Maute terrorist group in Butig town, Lanao del Norte. The group, which has links with the Jemaah Islamiah, has been subject of a military offensive since February 20.

He noted reports about the death of many soldiers in the operations against the Maute group, and that the group had shot down an Air Force helicopter, among others, over the past two weeks.

On Sunday, the SITE Intelligence Group quoted the IS-linked Amaq News Agency as saying that IS fighters have captured 20 Army soldiers "in the city of Lanao."

Padilla said: "That's a hoax; pure lies. Those sources support extremists and terrorism. You should pass the word around and question its credibility as a source of news. Those who follow and believe it may unknowingly be supporting extremists, terrorist propaganda."

AWARDS

Armed Forces chief Gen. Hernando Iriberry conferred the Gold Cross Medal, the third highest military decoration for combat, on five soldiers for their role in the operations

against the Maute group.

The awardees, led by Capt. Baltazar Marcos, a company commander under the Army's 51st Infantry Battalion, were cited during Iriberry's visit at the headquarters of the 103rd Brigade in Marawi City.

The four other awardees are 1Lt. Ariel Bulagao, 2Lt. Jesus Reyes, Sgt. Rogelio Abuan, and Cpl. Efrén Manicad.

Col. Noel Detoyato, chief of the AFP's public affairs office, said the five were given the medals "for acts of gallantry during the combat operations against the Maute group."

Fifteen other officers and men got lower-grade medals. Five were given the Silver Cross Medal, five the Bronze Cross Medal, and another five the Military Merit Medal.

Last February 20, about 40 members of the Maute group attacked a military detachment in Butig, leading to intense fighting that saw the deployment of bomber planes, attack helicopters, and armored personnel carriers.

On Tuesday last week, military and local government officials held a flag-raising ceremony at a captured camp of the Maute group, signaling a military victory. The military said 24 members of the Maute group died in the fighting.

Detoyato said there are no longer "combat operations" against the group but said there are ongoing "IED (improvised explosive device) clearing and perimeter scouring."

He added: "There's no more enemy resistance as of today."

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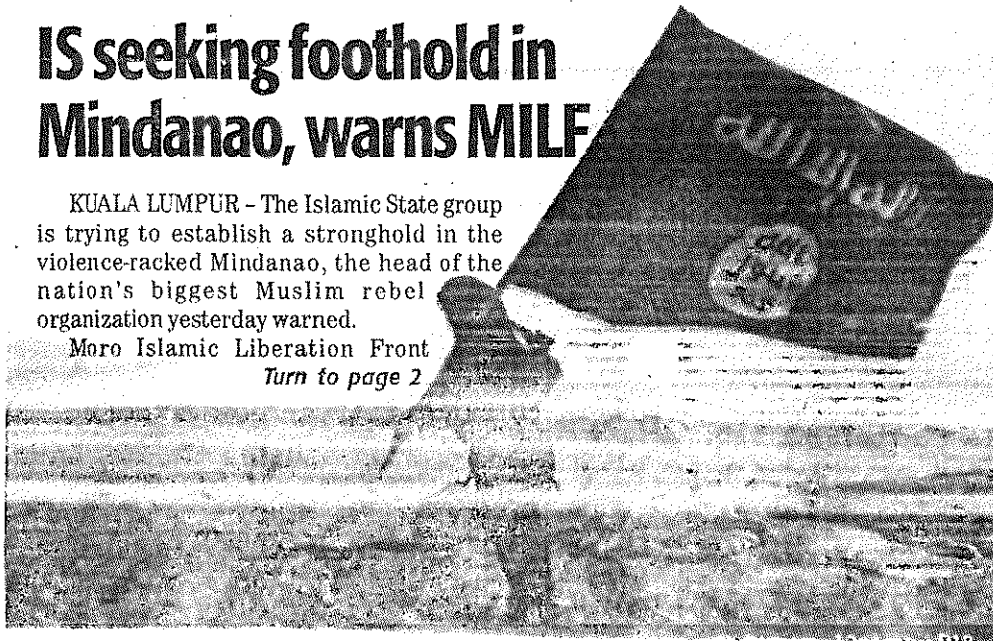


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IS seeking foothold in Mindanao, warns MILF

KUALA LUMPUR – The Islamic State group is trying to establish a stronghold in the violence-racked Mindanao, the head of the nation's biggest Muslim rebel organization yesterday warned.

Moro Islamic Liberation Front
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(MILF) chairman Murad Ebrahim said the extremist IS seeks to capitalize on growing frustration over the breakdown of efforts to end a decades-long Muslim separatist rebellion in the war-torn region.

The peace process has been frozen since Congress failed last month to pass the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL), agreed between the government and the MILF, that would have granted autonomy to the region.

"Now, after the non-passage of the (bill), we are quite concerned that they (the IS) can capitalize on this, because the sentiment of the people in the area is now very strong. The frustrations after the

non-passage of the law – they can capitalize on that," Murad told reporters in Kuala Lumpur.

Gunmen pledging allegiance to the jihadists controlling vast swathes of Iraq and Syria have instigated a series of deadly battles with the Army in the Mindanao since Congress blocked the peace push.

Murad said the MILF was seeking dialog with IS-allied militants to dissuade them for further attacks.

Violence has plagued the southern Philippines for decades during a Muslim separatist insurgency that has claimed 120,000 lives.

The MILF signed a peace accord with the Aquino administration in 2014 to end its

struggle for independence, which began in the 1970s.

Aquino's six-year term ends in June and the MILF has pledged to honor a ceasefire while it awaits elections at mid-year.

"We cannot completely abandon armed struggle, but we always believe we have to give supremacy, primacy to the peace process because we believe the solution to the problem is still political," Murad said.

"As long as the peace process has a chance to move forward then we don't want to revert to violence again."

United Nationalist Alliance (UNA) vice presidential candidate Sen. Gregorio Honasan II, meanwhile, reiterated the importance of an extensive

verification and validation of the reported presence of IS extremists in the southern region.

He said the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp) should exert all efforts to confirm if the reports are true.

"If the reports are true it should be validated. The Intelligence Service of the AFP should exert all efforts to confirm if it is classified. As we know, terrorism represented by ISIS and even any other groups identified in this activity is an idea which can only be countered by much better ideas," Honasan stressed.

Earlier this year, a video from Mindanao circulated in the jihadi forum Shumukh al-Islam,

showing Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon marching with extremist leader Abu Sharifa, leader of Ansar al-Khalifa. Both leaders have allegedly pledged allegiance to IS leader Abu bakr al-Baghdadi.

Honasan said the national government, especially the Armed Forces, should not dilly-dally in taking the necessary actions to ensure and protect the safety of its people.

"We as a nation should never be reluctant in doing proper actions," he added.

Honasan, a former soldier, also stressed the need to prioritize the approval of proposed amendments to the Human Security Act and National Defense and Security laws. **AFP**

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Lawmakers call for urgent probe on lumad evacuation center blaze

By **CHARISSA M. LUCI**

Women lawmakers are appealing to the House of Representatives leadership to immediately direct a probe on the fire that gutted the lumad evacuation center in the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) Haran Compound in Davao City last Feb. 24.

Gabriela party-list Reps. Luz Ilagan and Emmi de Jesus asked Speaker Feliciano Belmonte Jr. to effect the urgent investigation of the apparent intentional burning down of the dormitories housing some 700 lumads fleeing the militarization of their ancestral domain.

"Instead of investigating the widely suspected culprits behind the crime, which the lumads point as the Alamara militia that the military is supporting, the regional heads of the armed forces are even

hitting back on the lumad and human rights defenders, sowing intrigues that the victims and advocates inflicted this barbaric crime upon themselves to gain sympathy," Ilagan, a native of Davao city, said.

Ilagan and De Jesus filed House Resolution 2672 to call on the House Committee on Human Rights to immediately conduct an investigation into the burning down of four makeshift houses and two dormitories in UCCP Haran compound that left five lumad evacuees injured, including children.

Ilagan lamented that the youngest victim of the blaze was a two year-old child.

De Jesus said the afflicted lumads should be invited to the hearing, especially Manobo Datu Dul-om Tumagsa, an evacuee from Davao del Norte who heard members of the 60th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army and paramilitary

group Alamara planned to set the evacuation center on fire.

Bai Ali Indayla, Gabriela Women Partylist third nominee and spokesperson for Mindanao, said Datu Dul-om Tumagsa heard the plan to set the Haran compound on fire as he was one of those forcibly taken by the Philippine Army and Alamara to Davao City to join series of rallies in front of the Haran compound.

"UCCP Secretary-General Bishop Reuel Marigsa surmised that the burning of the UCCP dormitories was deliberate since plastic bottles containing gasoline were found around the compound," she noted.

Some 700 lumad evacuees sought refuge in the UCCP-Haran compound in March 2015 after series of attacks and intensified militarization infested their communities in Davao Del Norte, Bukidnon and Surigao del Sur.

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Lumad raise plaint to UN

By John Paolo
Bencito and
Maricel V. Cruz

ASSISTED by human rights activists, Mindanao tribal folk filed a formal complaint before the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Internally Displaced Persons over the burning of a refugee camp for displaced indigenous people, or *lumad*, in a church compound in Davao City.

Michelle Campos, daughter of slain *lumad* leader Dionel Campos, submitted the complaint to UN Special Rapporteur Dr. Cheloka Beyani assisted by rights group Karapatan secretary-general Cristina Palabay and its coordinator Dr. Naty Castro.

Palabay said the continuing harassment of *lumad* evacuees seeking refuge at the UCCP Haran Compound, and the insistence of state actors to force them back to their communities, show a lack of understanding of their plight and a lack of concern for their safety and welfare.

In July 2015, Dr. Beyani was in the Philippines for an official visit to investigate the human rights situation of people displaced by Typhoon "Yolanda", communities affected by mining activities and those who were forcibly evacuated from their communities because of military operations.

In his exit statement, Beyani expressed alarm at the incident and said tribal leaders "reported that their communities were consistently being manipulated and divided and that they had been harassed and received threats when they expressed their opposition."

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UN suit filed vs military for burning Lumad dorms

By Mario J. Mallari

A militant group yesterday filed formal complaint against the military before the United Nations for the burning of dormitories of Lumad evacuees inside the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) compound in Davao City recently.

Karapatan filed the complaint letter to Dr. Chaloka Beyani, UN special rapporteur on the Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, at the side of the 31st UN Human Rights Council Session in Geneva, Switzerland.

The complaint stemmed from the Feb. 24 fire that hit the dormitories of indigenous people inside UCCP Haran compound.

Five were reportedly hurt during the incident, blamed to the military by the militant group Pasaka.

The military, however, vehemently denied any involvement in the incident.

Karapatan Secretary General Cristina Palabay, who is in Geneva attending the session, claimed there is continuing harassment of Lumad evacuees seeking refuge at the UCCP compound in Haran.

Palabay said there are more than 700 members of the tribal groups based in Talaingod and Kapalong in Davao del Norte who are currently staying inside UCCP Haran compound.

"The Lumads fled their communities when soldiers and military-backed Alamara militia forces occupied their communities and forcibly recruited them into the paramilitary group," Palabay said.

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No Marcelino tell-all on drug raid

Marine Lt. Col. Ferdinand Marcelino failed yesterday to divulge the real reason behind his presence at the shabu storage facility in Manila where 64 kilos of shabu with a street value of P256 million were seized in a raid last January.

Marcelino was supposed to give a tell-all testimony about "sensitive information" on the drug raid during a hearing at the Department of Justice (DOJ) yesterday.

He wanted acting DOJ Secretary Emmanuel Caparas, Prosecutor General Claro Arellano, National Bureau of Investigation Director Virgilio Mendez and Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines

chief Arnold Quiapo to be present during the hearing. But the officials did not attend the proceedings.

Marcelino refused to proceed with his testimony and requested that he be subjected to a lie-detector test.

Senior Deputy Prosecutor Theodore Villanueva rejected Marcelino's appeal.

The prosecutor ordered Marcelino to submit his rejoinder to the charges of conspiracy in the manufacture and possession of illegal drugs under Republic Act 9165 tomorrow.

Marcelino and his Chinese companion, Yan Yi Shuo, were nabbed in a drug raid in Sta. Cruz, Manila in January. — Edu Punay

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Search For Truth

By ERNESTO M. MACEDA

Unjust dismissal

The Ombudsman ordered the dismissal of Mayor Rex Gatchalian and other Valenzuela officials, for issuing a business permit to Kentex Manufacturing Corporation, in relation to the slipper factory fire that killed at least 74 people in May 2015.

The order is objectionable and puts all municipal mayors in a problematic situation as they issue thousands of mayor's permit.

The dismissal order is politically suspect, since Mayor Gatchalian is the spokesperson of presidential candidate Grace Poe.

However, Gatchalian is still fighting the Ombudsman's dismissal order against him and six other officials. He said there is no scene that he will step down or be brought out from his office as he did not violate any law in issuing provisional business permits for the factories.

The Court of Appeals (CA) issued a temporary restraining order (TRO) against the Ombudsman's order of dismissal.

To date, the victims had claimed P130,000 each from the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).

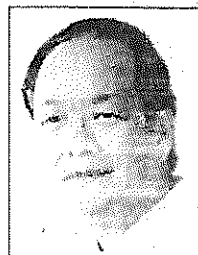
Political update

Independent tandem Grace Poe and Francis Escudero visited Aguinid Falls in Samboan, Cebu. Poe urged fellow presidentiables to visit tourist sites and appreciate their potential, for tourism growth.

Seeing himself as a "batang palengke," United Nationalist Alliance (UNA) presidential candidate Vice-President Jejomar Binay visited several wet markets, including Mega Q Mart and Kamuning Market, and Barangay Damayang Lagi and Manresa in Quezon City. Over the weekend, he visited Pampanga towns.

Binay noted the increasing prices of prime commodities and the proliferation of poverty in the country. He also expressed alarm over the rising crime incidence in the country. If elected, Binay said he will appoint his running mate Cringo Honasan as the crime czar to curb criminality.

In an interview last Sunday, former Candaba Mayor Jerry Pelayo bared all local candidates – all incumbent and former mayors of the 21 municipalities and lone city – in Pampanga have decided to disregard their party affiliations and throw their support to Vice-President Binay whom they see as the champion of local government units (LGUs).



OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS – Email add: oacpa.army2012@gmail.com – Tel no. (02) 845-9555 Local: 5285, 5295

Administration standard-bearer Mar Roxas campaigned in Cavite last weekend. He said he has faith and confidence in the people on how they will weigh the qualifications of candidates. They know who are fresh and who's stale. They know who is capable and who is not.

Roxas' vice presidential bet Leni Robredo campaigned separately in Albay.

Partido Demokratiko Pilipino-Lakas ng Bayan (PDP-Laban) presidential bet Rodrigo Duterte was in Albay too. He announced plans to appoint Albay Gov. Joey Salceda as National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) secretary-general. He also visited Butuan City.

People's Reform Party (PRP) standard-bearer Miriam Defensor-Santiago cancelled her speaking engagement at the Eastern Visayas State University in Tacloban.

Valencia's statement

Former Oriental Mindoro Rep. Rodolfo Valencia issued the following statement on the accusation of the Ombudsman on his alleged misuse of his Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) funds.

1. "My signatures were forged. I sent affidavits and evidences to Justice Sec. Leila de Lima and requested a meeting several times, but she didn't even reply."

2. "I do not know Napoles much more so Ben I Iur, the whistleblower."

3. "There is no final Commission on Audit (COA) report yet, so what's the evidence? Only a baseless and unfounded statement from a whistleblower who is unknown to me."

Lack of government jobs

One of the failures of the Aquino administration is the non-creation of jobs in government.

The Philippine National Police (PNP) needs 50,000 more policemen. The Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) lacks 30,000 firemen.

The Department of Health (DOH) should hire 30,000 more nurses to assign one, for every barangay. There's a need to hire 1,000 doctors and dentists.

There is a need to hire 60,000 teachers to help reduce class sizes to one teacher, for every 35 students.

The Aquino administration is not filling up vacant positions to generate more savings. This is a bad policy.

The next president should immediately hire 500,000 government employees to help alleviate the unemployment problem.

Crime update

Police Chief Inspector Ger A. Igtanloc of Maragusan, Compostela Valley was shot dead in an ambush.

Brgy. Chairman Jacinto Cassanova Gardiola of Mataas na Kahoy was shot dead in Batangas.

Another National Grid Corporation (NGCP) tower was bombed in Aleosan, North Cotabato by unidentified armed men. The said steel power tower was also bombed on January 14, but the explosion failed to topple down the power pylon.

Mark Lambino, a security guard, was killed while having a drinking session with his friends in Tondo, Manila.

After breaking up, 16-year-old Analyn Pastrano was shot dead by her ex-boyfriend, alias Jay-are, in Cagayan de Oro.

Two brothers were shot dead in Batangas.

Five soldiers of 10th Infantry Division were hurt, in separate clashes between the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the New People's Army (NPA) in Compostela Valley Province, after the latter exploded an improvised bomb.

Two soldiers of the 28th Infantry Battalion were wounded after an encounter against the members of the NPA in Lupon, Davao Oriental.

Tidbits

Ex-Makati Vice-Mayor Ernesto Mercado was seen by ex-Mayor Jerry Pelayo playing at the Widus Casino at Clark free-trade zone. A source said Mercado lost P300,000.

The Sandiganbayan ordered Tuguegarao Mayor Jefferson Soriano to be suspended for 90 days.

MNLF chair Nur Misuari endorsed Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, for president.

Condolence to Governor Chavit Singson and his seven children on the death of his wife, Evelyn Verzosa-Singson.

★

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ONLINE NEWS

08 MARCH 2016

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KICK-OFF | Army's 119th Anniversary Activities

By: Lui

FORT BONIFACIO, Taguig City – The Philippine Army started its major activities lined-up in celebration of the 119th founding anniversary with its enduring theme, "Serving the people. Securing the land." A static capability display and information caravan of the Army's CMO Group started early today at the Bonifacio High Street, Bonifacio Global City which will showcase to the public the Army capabilities such as the war fighting equipment, humanitarian assistance and disaster response (HADR) capabilities and recruitment program. The spectators are free to take photo souvenirs and get the feel of handling displayed Army equipment. The information caravan will culminate with a live concert featuring the Philippine Army band in the evening tomorrow, Sunday.

The Philippine Army will extend its anniversary celebration nationwide by conducting the Army Day Field Celebration in three major island of the country, the Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao which will be facilitated by the Office of the Army Chief Public Affairs with the support of its major units and various stakeholders.

The field day celebration activities includes the following; presentation of the Army transformation 119 years since its establishment through photo exhibits and static displays, recruitment of officers and enlisted personnel for 2016, and showcasing the government peace programs in collaboration with the LGUs and other stakeholders.

The field day celebration in Luzon started today at SM City Lucena under the supervision of the Army's 2nd Infantry Division (2ID). It will end on Sunday, March 6.

Army field day in Visayas will be held at Robinsons Mall in Tacloban City on March 11 and 12. Celebration in Mindanao will be held at Gaisano Mall in Tagum City on March 12 and 13.

Col. Benjamin L. Hao, the Army Chief Public Affairs says, "The Army Field Day Celebration in three major islands of the country aims to expand the celebration of the 119th founding anniversary down to its troops on the ground."

"Our troops on the ground and the general public must be informed on what the Philippine Army has achieved on its 119 years of existence. They must know how far the Philippine Army is, in its transformation efforts," said Hao.

Other activities lined-up in celebration of the 119th founding anniversary of the Philippine Army includes the following: Philippine Army Marksmanship Assessment and Evaluation to be held at the Army's Training and Doctrine Command in Camp O'Donnell, Capas, Tarlac on March 7 to 14; Public Affairs Officers (PAO) Forum to be held at Army Headquarters here; free surgical mission to adult and children with cleft lip/palate at Army General Hospital on March 9 to 11; Regional Annual Administrative Tactical Inspection (RAATI) to ROTC units to be held here on March 13; Army Museum Open House on March 13 to 22; Fun Run and Media Fellowship Night on March 15; Tejeros Convention Ceremony at Tejeros, Cavite on March 16; Fellowship Dinner with Former Commanding General of the Philippine Army on March 17; wreath laying ceremony at Libingan ng mga Bayani on March 18; bloodletting activity at Army Grandstand on March 19; and the anniversary program on March 22 to be held here.

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

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

The Philippine Army was established on March 22, 1897 at the Tejeros, San Francisco de Malabon, Cavite. Gen Artemio Ricarte was named Captain General of the Ejercito en la Republica delos Islas Filipinas or the Revolutionary Philippine Army.

www.inquirer.net

Retiring 'Superman' writes PMA cadets extolling peace

The millennial cadets of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) on Saturday received a letter from outgoing Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff Gen. Hernando Iriberry on how peace building has enriched the military.

In lieu of a speech, Iriberry read the letter to the cadets and then handed it to the corps' senior cadet during a testimonial parade given in honor of the chief of staff on Saturday, 48 days before his mandatory retirement on April 22 when he turns 56.

Letter writing is "the secret weapon" of cadets, who reread notes from girlfriends and parents because these are "lifelines and carriers of hope" to combat a stressful PMA life, said Iriberry, who earned the monicker "Superman" as he rose through the ranks.

A member of PMA "Matikas" Class of 1983, Iriberry said that writing a letter may seem odd to a generation of cadets that is more at home with texting their thoughts and discussing their passions on social media.

Completing career cycle

Iriberry told the cadets that writing the letter was his way of completing the cycle of his career as a soldier. He said military life helped him "fully appreciate the dividends of peace and of building consensus."

He said the military of the 21st century is composed of "men and women in uniform [who] are not only warriors, but [are] also builders, peace makers, teachers, advocates and partners for progress [because]... we interact, we build relationships and we strengthen alliances."

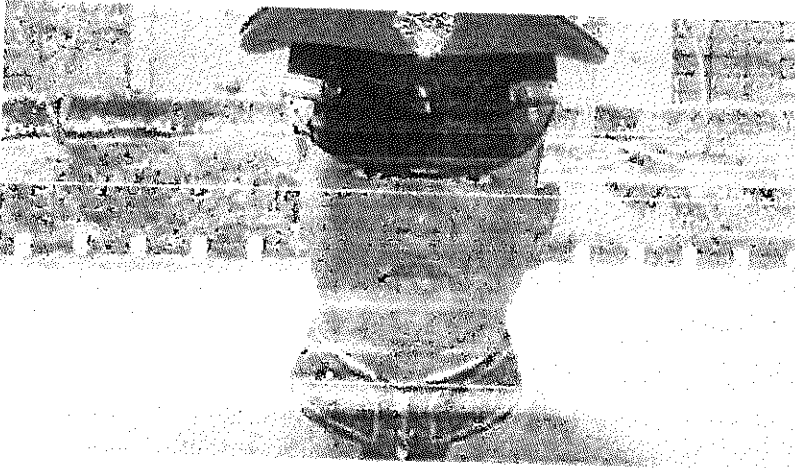
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www.rappler.com

'Joseph Stalin' among top PH military school grads

From Rappler (Mar 7): 'Joseph Stalin' among top PH military school grads

He lost his parents before he became a Philippine Military Academy cadet. Joseph Stalin Abara Fagsao now says, 'I survived because of the dreams of my parents. I hope I made them proud.'



'COOLEST GUY.' This was what Joseph Stalin Fagsao promised to become when he first tweeted 6 years ago. He graduates with the 4th highest honors from the Philippine Military Academy on March 13, 2016. Rappler photo.

Six years ago, a 16-year-old boy joined Twitter.

"I'm the coolest person you'll ever know," he said in his description.

What can be cooler than to carry the name "Joseph Stalin"? However, Joseph Stalin Abara Fagsao wanted to just be called Xeph.

He stopped tweeting in 2012, around the time he was set to attend the Philippine Military Academy (PMA), Asia's oldest military school.

On Sunday, March 13, Cadet 1st Class Fagsao will graduate as the 4th in his class. Being the top cadet to join the Army, he will be attending the United States Military Academy or West Point.

"I asked my father why I was named after a communist leader, and he said he was his idol," Fagsao said.

Ironically, his father, who is from Bontoc, Mountain Province, was a member of the Philippine Constabulary. He died of a lingering disease when Joseph was in Grade III.

"I wanted to join the military and my dreams were shattered when my father died," Fagsao said.

He is the only son, although he has 3 half siblings from each parent. He was born in Maddela, Quirino, but he grew up in Fort Bonifacio in Taguig City.

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When he was 18, he took the PMA examinations. On the day Fagsao learned that he passed the exams, his mother Delia, who was into the furniture business, died of a lingering disease.

"I wanted to take up computer engineering, but my mother said it was her dream that I joined the PMA," Fagsao recalled.

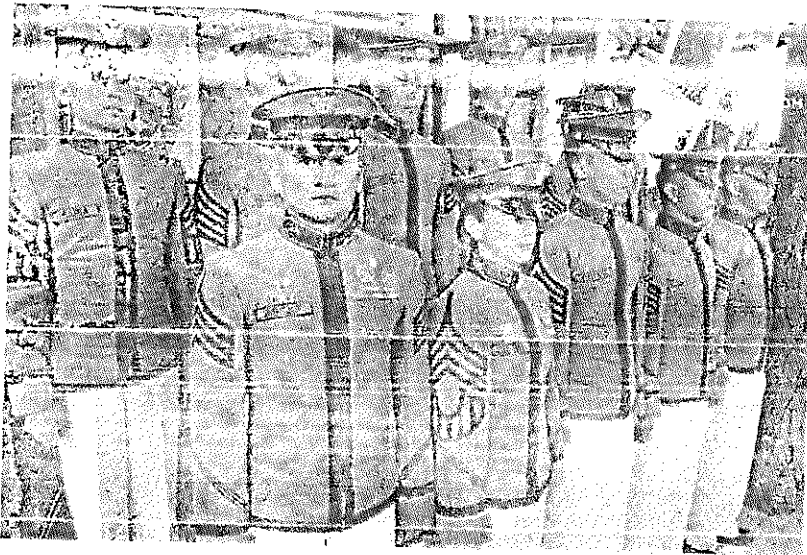
He said that life in the academy was hard. "I survived because of the dreams of my parents. I hope I made them proud."

www.rappler.com

PMA graduates smallest batch in almost 5 decades

From Rappler (Mar 7): **PMA graduates smallest batch in almost 5 decades**

If President Aquino approves the Philippine Military Academy resolution, the school will take in 400 exam passers in April to supplement this year's small number of graduates



PMA GABAY LAYA CLASS 2016. Among the top graduates of Asia's oldest military school are Cdt 1CL Kristian Daeve Glacio Abiqui of San Pablo, Isabela (leftmost, 1st row), and 2 females: Cdt 1CL Christine Mae Naungayan Calima from Bolinao, Pangasinan, and 3rd Cdt 1CL Arby Jurist Azman Cabrera. Photo by Mau Victa/Rappler

The Philippine Military Academy (PMA) will graduate on Sunday, March 13, the smallest batch of graduates since 1970.

The PMA Gabay Laya (Gintong Anak ng Bayan, Alay sa Buhay Para sa Kalayaan) Class of 2016 has only 63 members, with 13 of them turnbacks – the PMA term for those belonging to previous classes.

The class valedictorian, Cadet 1st Class (Cdt 1CL) Kristian Daeve Gelacio Abiqui, is a turnback for medical reasons.

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Cdt 1CL Christine Mae Calima, the class salutatorian, is the only female in the Top 10.

The 7 females of Gabay Laya are the fewest since the Magnificent Seven of 1997, the first female graduates of the oldest military academy in Asia.

PMA Superintendent Major General Donato San Juan said that only 123 members attended the Hell Week of 2012 and only 50 finished, with 13 turnbacks joining them.

San Juan said that he will be recommending the additional 50 exam passers in the incoming class to supplement the small number this year. The PMA is allowed to get 350 passers every year. If President Benigno Aquino III approves the PMA resolution, the school will take in 400 in April.

Abiqui, who just celebrated his birthday last March 4, is an Ybanag from San Pablo, Isabela. He was already on this 3rd year in his civil engineering course at the University of the Philippines in Los Baños when he passed the PMA exam.

"I joined the activities of LFS (League of Filipino Students) in my first year. I was very idealistic then. I joined the PMA because I find it a stable institution where I can instill change," he said.

Abiqui will receive from President Aquino the Presidential Saber for being valedictorian. He will also receive the Philippine Navy Saber for being the first in Navy, the Australian Defence Best Overall Performance, and the General Antonio Award. He will also get the plaques for humanities, mathematics, natural sciences, and Navy professional courses.

Despite the attrition rate of 56%, this class has 6 high school valedictorians, 2 salutatorians, and 10 honorable mentions like Abiqui.

Calima was a valedictorian and was already in second year in accountancy at the Saint Louis University in Baguio when she joined the military academy.

She said that there were 21 females who entered the academy and 14 were turned back. She said that the female PMA graduates always reminded her and her peers to fight harassment and discrimination in the academy.

Calima will receive the Vice President Saber, Philippine Air Force Saber, General Aquinaldo Award, Australian Defence Award, Tactics Group Award, and plaques for management, social sciences, tactical officers, department of leadership, and Air Force professional courses.

The 3rd top graduate is Cdt 1CL Arby Jurist Cabrera of Cauayan City in Isabela. He will receive the Secretary of National Defense Corps Award.

Fourth is Cadet 1CL Joseph Stalin Fagsao of Madella, Quirino, who will receive the Philippine Army Saber for finishing first among the Army recruits.

Fagsao, Abiqui, and Calima will be studying in the United States as part of the Jusmag, while 3 others will be studying in the military academies of Australia, Korea, and Japan.

The rest of the Top 10 are:

- 5. Cdt 1CL Jayson Jess Tumitit of Baguio
- 6. Mark Joseph Daria of Bangar, La Union

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- 7. Ace Clarianes of Libmanan, Camarines Sur
- 8. Prince Regodon Aday of Sta Cruz, Davao del Sur
- 9. George Bernard Garcia of Labrador, Pangasinan
- 10. Gerald Gasacao of Meycauayan, Bulacan

When they were cadets, they received more than P27,000 as monthly allowance. Among the Top 10, only 3 have family incomes higher than what they got in PMA, with 3 of them saying that their monthly family income was only P5,000.

www.mindanaotimes.net

Lucky break

From the Mindanao Times (Mar 7): **Lucky break**

5 soldiers survive landmine explosion; 2 NPA rebels nabbed

FIVE soldiers were wounded from a landmine blast in Barangay Golden Valley in Mabini, Compostela Valley at 12:45 a.m. on Saturday.

Cap. Rhyon B. Batchar, 10th Infantry Division public affairs officer, declined to name the five soldiers prior to informing their families of their condition.

According to Batchar, the peace and development team of the 46th Infantry Battalion, was conducting a security patrol at sitios Logdeck and Cadinuyan in Barangay Golden Valley when they were hit by the improvised explosives device.

The army is pointing the blame at the NPA's Guerilla Front 2 of the Southern Mindanao Regional Committee.

Four of the soldiers were brought to Davao Regional Hospital while the other one was evacuated to Camp Panacan hospital for further treatment.

Maj. Gen. Rafael Valencia, commander of 10th Infantry Division, said that the NPA's wanton laying of landmines is a clear disregard of the safety of the people who are also passing on the same road.

"Our soldiers are there to ensure that government projects will be fully implemented but the disgruntled NPAs show their anti-people and anti-development character," he added.

Meanwhile, two members of New People's Army were arrested by troops from the 46th Infantry Battalion as they reportedly tried to lay down landmines in Barangay Golden Valley in Mabini, Compostela Valley province at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday.

The suspects were identified as Ronie Consolacion Mimi, 23, and his cousin Sonny Mimi, 22, both residents of Sitio Palali of the same barangay.

Batchar said the troops were conducting a pursuit operation when they chanced upon the two men.

Recovered from their possession were three unexploded IEDs, a 300-meter wire, two switch devices and a motorcycle.

Maj. Gen. Rafael Valencia, commander of 10th Infantry Division, lauded the troops of 46th IB for their accomplishment.

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

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

"We will not let those who continue to use the path of violence to pursue their objectives," Valencia said." The long arms of the law will continuously bring them to face justice for their evil deeds."

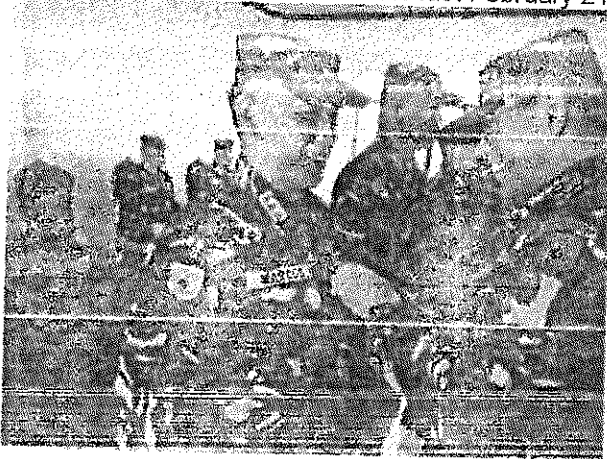
The arrested rebels were brought to Mabini Police Station for filing of appropriate charges for violation of RA 9561 or "Illegal Possession of Explosives."

www.dwdd.com.ph

BRAVERY & HEROISM II Awards to Soldiers Involved in Campaign vs Local Terror Group

Alvin Santiago March 7, 2016 0 Comment Breaking Headlines

CAMP GEN EMILIO AGUINALDO, Quezon City (DWDD) – The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) decorated five (5) military personnel for bravery and heroism shown against "local terrorist organization" (LTO) in Lanao Del Sur led by Omar and Abdullah Maute last February 21.



AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hernando DCA Iriberri personally decorated Capt. Baltazar L. Marcos, 1Lt Ariel O. Bulageo, 2Lt. Jesus A. Reyes, Sgt. Rogelio F. Abuan and Cpl. Efren D. Manicad, all members of the 103rd Infantry Brigade, under the 1st Infantry Division, with the Gold Cross Medal, the nation's third highest award for combat. The offensive launched against the Maute terror group stemmed from the group's botched attack against a detachment of the 51st Infantry Battalion in Butig town, Lanao Del Sur on February 20 that lasted almost three-week, with the military using air firepower, artillery and armored vehicles, killing an estimated 42 terrorists.

The Maute group is believed to be sympathizers of the Jemaah Munafique, a regional terror group.

Silver Cross Medals were also given to 1Lt. Sydney P. Garcia, Tsg. Leopoldo D. Albana, Ssg Mario L. Salinas, Ssg Ronald E. Vino, and Cpl. Diamael T. Macapanton.

While Bronze Cross Medals were handed out to Capt. Ricardo B. Nolasco, Tsg Augusto I. Grande, Ssg Renante C. Catalan, Ssg. Rolly P. Perez and Pfc. Benoch D. Larona.

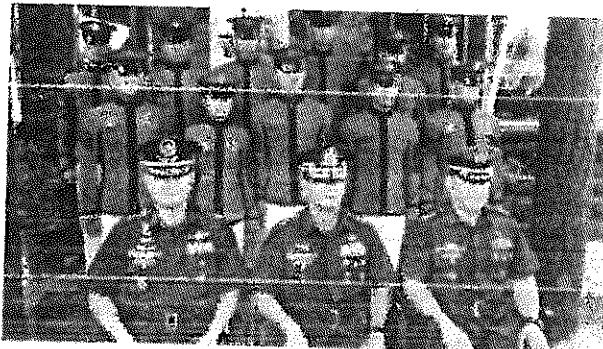
Military Merit Medals were also given to Ssg Ferdinand G. Villavicencio, Sgt. Franky L. Lazaga, Sgt. Lew Mark A. Mendiola, Cpl. Antonio N. Balmores and Cpl. Rogelio D. Martin. AES / PAO AFP / MCAG

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FUTURE LEADERS II Gabay Laya Class of 2016

Alvin Santiago



FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City (DWDD) – The Philippine Military Academy (PMA) through PMA Superintendent Major General Donato San Juan has announced the names of the Top 10 Cadets of "Gabay Laya" Class of 2016. The Top 10 are:

- Cadet First Class Kristian Daeve Gelacio Abiqui (Minanga Sur, San Pablo, Isabela);
- Cadet First Class Christine Mae Naungayan Calima (Bolinao, Pangasinan),
- Cadet First Class Arby Jurist Azman Cabrera (Tagaran, Cauayan City, Isabela),
- Cadet First Class Joseph Stalin Abara Fagsao (Poblacion Sur, Maddela, Quirino),
- Cadet First Class Jayson Jess Ananayo Tumitit (Pacdal, Baguio City),
- Cadet First Class Mark Joseph Cabanit Daria (Banger, La Union),
- Cadet First Class Ace Uy Clarianes (Libmanan, Camarines Sur),
- Cadet First Class Prince Regodon Aday (Santa Cruz, Davao del Sur),
- Cadet First Class George Bernard De Guzman Garcia (Labrador, Pangasinan), and
- Cadet First Class Gerald Gasacao (Bulacan).

President and Armed Forces of the Philippines Commander-in-Chief Benigno Aquino III will be the Guest of Honor in the graduation ceremony which will be held on March 13, 2016 at the Borromeo field, Fort Del Pilar, Baguio City AES / PMA / MCAG

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NO MORE EMPTY PROMISES | NPA Surrendered to 58IB

By: Lui

CAMPOSITO D BAHIAN, MALAYBALAY CITY – Another member of New People's Army (NPA) voluntarily surrendered to the operating elements of Charlie Company, 58th Infantry Battalion stationed at Brgy Umagos, Lagonglong, Misamis Oriental, afternoon of March 04, 2016.

Rodie Jhon Carlo Cañeos Y Balangiao aka Maxx, 20 years old, a member of Squad 2, Samahang Platoon Pangpropaganda 2 (SPP2) "Pelot", Guerilla Front Committee (GFC) 4B bring along with him an AK47 Rifle with Serial Number: 10312 with two magazines and sixty rounds of ammunitions.

Cañeos was immediately brought to 58th Infantry (Dimalulupig) Battalion Headquarters at Sito Migbanday, Brgy Poblacion, Claveria, Misamis Oriental for further debriefing. He (Cañeos) claimed that hardship in the mountains, empty promises with growing concern for the safety and welfare of his family has finally made him decide to abandon the armed struggle.

"We are expecting more NPA members to surrender due to increasing frustration and ongoing conflict in their organization. Concerted efforts of our stakeholders facilitated the surrender of Rodie Jhon Carlo Cañeos", said Colonel Jesse Alvarez, Commander of the 403rd Infantry (Peacemaker) Brigade.

www.inquirer.net

Dredging project resumes in Maguindanao town after Army drives out BIFF rebels

COTABATO CITY – Construction work on a flood-control project in Datu Salibo town in Maguindanao, which was halted due to harassment by Moro rebels, has resumed over the weekend.

Lt. Col. Warlito Limet, commander of the 2nd Mechanized Infantry Battalion, said the construction site has been cleared of improvised bombs left by elements of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) in the villages of Butalo and Tee in Datu Salibo town.

He said clearing of booby traps still continued in other areas, but the dredging site has been cleared so workers have resumed work there.

On Friday, dredging equipment like backhoe and dump trucks entered the village of Butalo.

Limet said the project would benefit the residents upon its completion. "We cannot understand why the BIFF is opposed to it," he told reporters.

On Feb. 5, the military, with the backing of two MG-520 attack helicopters, launched offensives to drive away about 100 heavily armed BIFF men.

The month-long offensives claimed the lives of four soldiers and wounded about 30 others. Four civilians, including the town treasurer of Datu Salibo, were killed when the BIFF set off a roadside bomb.

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Military officials could not say how many BIFF members were killed or wounded during the hostilities. Civilians in Datu Salibo claimed about 40 BIFF fighters were killed and 20 others wounded.

"But we cannot confirm that, we have no body count, but for sure they have casualties," Capt. Joann Petinglay, regional Army spokesperson, told the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

On Thursday, a decomposing body of a man, believed to be BIFF fighter based on his fatigue uniform with BIFF logo, was found in the village of Tee.

Datu Salibo Mayor Norodin Salasal said the P58-million dredging project being implemented by the national government was to start in December but was delayed by road right of way (ROW) claims of residents.

"I have talked to all the lot owners where the project was to be built and the government have paid them," Salasal told reporters.

After the ROW claims issue were settled, the project commenced on February 5, but the BIFF torched two backhoes, triggering a firefight between them and government forces.

"We torched the equipment because the contractor did not coordinate with us, and because the road right of way claim was not settled," Abu Misri Mama, BIFF spokesperson, told the INQUIRER by phone.

But Mayor Salasal denied Mama's claim. "All claims have been settled," he said.

Members of Philippine Marines and Army Special Forces have been deployed in Maguindanao marshland as perimeter defense of the dredging project.

Limet said some of the displaced families have returned to their communities after the Army cleared the area of improvised bombs and the Philippine flag was hoisted there. Others may return later as de-mining operation is still ongoing, according to Limet. SFM

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