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16 March 2016

Wednesday

NEWS HEADLINES

16 MARCH 2016

Pulse: Poe keeps lead as Duterte overtakes Binay

Laundier raps filed vs RCBC exec



WORLD BEX 2016 OPENS TODAY



UNA says AMLC report false, outdated

RCBC pins down manager


Internal report says Deguito got help from coworkers



Young old, aging senators recount memories of joy


The Manila Times

Conspiracy eyed in \$81M launder



MANILA BULLETIN

Senate probes \$81-M money laundering



Tribune

Binay camp warns PDI on rehased AMLC story




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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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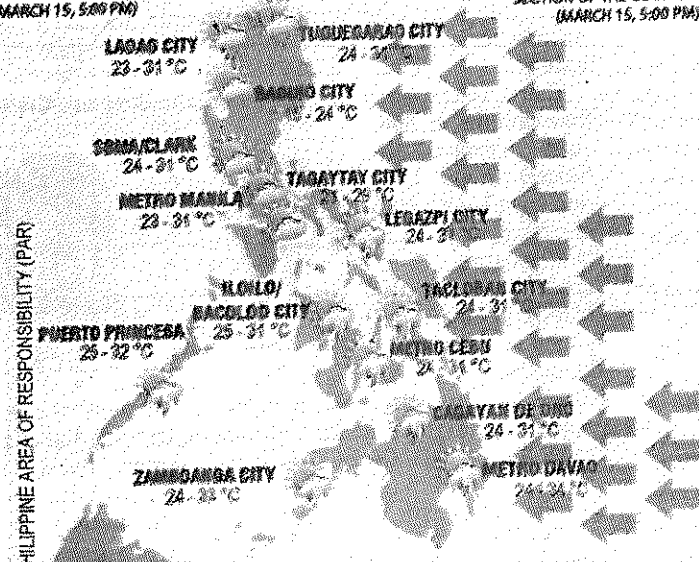



PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TAILORED WEATHER FORECAST | MARCH 15, 2016 | WEDNESDAY

TAIL-END OF A COLD FRONT
AFFECTING EXTREME NORTHERN LUZON
(MARCH 15, 5:00 PM)

EASTERLIES
AFFECTING THE EASTERN
SECTION OF THE COUNTRY
(MARCH 15, 5:00 PM)





PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

SUNRISE	SUNSET
6:03 AM	6:07 PM
MOONRISE	MOONSET
11:13 AM	12:00 AM
FIRST QUARTER	FULL MOON
MAR 15 1:02 AM	MAR 23 8:00 PM
HIGH TIDE	
3:25 PM 0.91 Meter	

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

METRO MANILA		TAGAYTAY		TACLOBAN	
23-32°C	24-32°C	21-30°C	21-30°C	24-32°C	25-32°C
TUGUEGARAO		LEGAZPI		CABAYAN DE ORO	
24-32°C	24-33°C	24-32°C	24-33°C	24-32°C	24-32°C
LAOAG		PUERTO PRINCESA		METRO DAVAO	
23-32°C	24-33°C	25-33°C	25-33°C	25-34°C	25-34°C
BAGUO		ILOILO/BACOLOD		ZAMBOANGA	
15-24°C	15-25°C	25-32°C	25-32°C	24-33°C	25-33°C
SAMA/CLARK		METRO CEBU			
24-32°C	24-32°C	24-32°C	25-32°C		

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AIR 21
SABOT KO, PADALA MO!

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INQUIRER

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They couldn't call themselves 'panday' in front of P-Noy

By Inquirer Northern Luzon

DAGUPAN CITY—They refer to themselves as the original "panday" and have liked being identified with the Filipino "komiks" character popularized by the late movie actor Fernando Poe Jr.

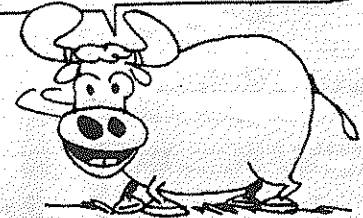
But the word panday was something the blacksmiths of Sitio Pandayan in Calasiao town could not say within

earshot of President Aquino when he distributed grants and equipment to the backyard enterprises of Pangasinan province on Monday.

The testimonial speech prepared by Aliguas Blacksmith Workers Association (Abwa) would have described Poe as their inspiration. The group received P496,920 worth of equipment under the

THEY/ A8

NAKU, OO NGA! SA IBANG ARAW
N'YO NA LANG BIGKASIN 'YON!



From page A1

Department of Trade and Industry's Shared Service Facilities (SSF) projects.

But Abwa was asked not to mention "Panday" or Poe. "[Saying Panday or FPJ in a presidential event] would have promoted the presidential candidacy of the actor's daughter, Sen. Grace Poe," according to an official who was privy to the preparation of the program.

Pandayan community

In the speech, Ruben Magalong, the group's SSF project coordinator, referred only to the community, Pandayan, which got its name from the work of blacksmiths or "pagpapanday."

Many families in the village have converted their backyards into workshops which churn out hundreds of "bolo" of different shapes and sizes each day. They have been engaged in this business for the past 70 years.

Backyard blacksmithing was started in Pandayan before World War II by two brothers, according to Bernardo Roy, who gave an interview in 2011 before he died. Roy said one of the brothers was his grandfather.

Magalong said Calasiao Mayor Mark Roy Macanlalay organized Abwa.

In 2013, the blacksmiths were granted P1.2 million worth of welding machines, metal cut-

off machines, forging hammers and other equipment "that we could not afford because they are expensive," he said.

On Monday, Mr. Aquino turned over P15.6 million worth of SSF grants and equipment to 23 cooperatives in 19 towns in Pangasinan.

P48-M school building

He also inaugurated a P48-million school building shortly before attending a campaign sortie of the Liberal Party in Urdaneta City. He inspected the building's 24 classrooms, which could accommodate more than 1,000 students.

Accompanying him was Cristino Naguiat, chair of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor), who turned over state-run building to officials of the Department of Education.

"This is better than spending P1 billion on coffee," Mr. Aquino said, referring to the controversial Pagcor expenses for coffee during the administration of then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Emmanuel Diaz, head of the Department of Public Works and Highways district office here, said Pagcor had funded 25 school buildings in eastern Pangasinan towns.

"We are now constructing more than 700 classrooms in 20 schools worth about P417 million," Diaz said.

Reports from Yolanda Sotelo, Gabriel Cardinoza and Johanne Margarette Macob, Inquirer Northern Luzon

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INQUIRER

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Young, old, ailing senators recount memories of Jovy

By Christine O. Avendaño

SOME of them may be ailing and gray, but the colleagues of former Senate President Jovito Salonga had no trouble summoning memories about him during a necrological service held at the Senate yesterday.

The Senate on Tuesday paid tribute to Salonga who passed away on March 10 at the age of 95. The first

chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Government served as Senate President from 1987 to 1991.

"The work goes on, the cause endures, the hopes still live and the dream shall never die. Uncle Jovy shall never die," former Sen. Rene Saguisag declared in a quivering voice.

Saguisag, who was on a wheelchair, said it was Salonga who convinced

YOUNG/A8

From page A1

him to get into politics despite his desire to remain a "common lawyer."

They were together in the 8th Congress which voted against the continued stay of US military bases in the country on Sept. 16, 1991, Saguisag added.

Among Salonga's colleagues who attended the necrological rites were former Senators Edgardo Angara, Wigberto Tañada, Leticia Shahani, Saturnina Rasul, Aquilino Pimentel Jr., Teofisto Guingona Jr., Ernesto Maceda Jr., Jose Lina, Vic Ziga, Alfredo Lim and Heherson Alvarez.

Also present was Rodolfo Biazon, a former senator and now Muntinlupa representative.

Meaningful life

Salonga lived a "meaningful and purposeful life" and was a "man of deep faith" who practiced law in the dark days of martial law, Tañada said, adding that Salonga was deposed as Senate President a few months after leading the historic vote against the US bases.

Although he lost the 1992 presidential race to Fidel Ramos, Salonga continued to serve as a "citizen of conscience" when he established groups such as Kilosbayan, Tañada said.

During his term, the Senate was "generally tranquil" like its leader, Angara recalled of Salonga.

He was an "inspirational and very humble leader" under whose leadership the health and education system in the country had been strengthened, Angara added.

Sen. Loren Legarda, who said she never

got a chance to serve under Salonga's leadership, recounted how she became close to him as a journalist and later, as a senator.

'Country before self'

She consulted Salonga when the Senate tackled the PH-US Visiting Forces Agreement. She subsequently voted against the treaty in the Senate. Legarda said, adding that Salonga should also be credited for her advocacy on the environment.

In his eulogy, Senate President Franklin Drilon summed up Salonga's life by quoting a line from the movie on Gen. Antonio Luna. The late official lived the words, "*Bayan muna bago sarili* (country before self)," he added.

"He set the standard for public service by leading a simple life marked by honor, humility and integrity," the Senate President said of Salonga.

Drilon also credited Salonga for recruiting him to the Liberal Party, where he is now its vice chair.

"To belong to the same institution and political party with this giant of a man is indeed a great honor," he added.

Drilon led the senators in presenting to Salonga's heirs Senate Resolution No. 118 "expressing the profound sympathy and sincere condolence(s) of the Senate to a great statesman."

Salonga's son Esteban spoke on behalf of his siblings and their families and profusely thanked the Senate for honoring his father.

"Thank you for giving us an opportunity to hear wonderful stories (about) our father," said the younger Salonga.

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MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Four bomb explosions hit Masbate

By **DANNY J. ESTACIO**

CAMP G. NAKAR, Lucena City — Bombs, believed planted by the New People's Army (NPA), went off in four different areas in Masbate yesterday morning, but fortunately caused no casualties, the military's Southern Luzon Command (SOLCOM) said.

Lt. Gen. Ricardo R. Visaya, SOLCOM chief, said the explosions that happened between 4 a.m. and 7:15 a.m. were identified as improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

Colonel Fernando R. Trinidad, chief of the Philippine Army's 903rd Infantry Brigade, said the first explosion happened at 4 a.m. in Barangay Miaga, Uson, Masbate; followed by 5 a.m. in Barangay Tunga, Esperanza, Masbate; and then next at 7:10 a.m. at Loving Forest Memorial Garden on the National Highway in Barangay Malinta, Masbate City; and the last at 7:15 a.m. on the National Highway in Purok 5, Barangay Tabuc, Mobo, Masbate.

"These explosions are propaganda tactics to sow fear to the people," said Trinidad, who confirmed that no one was hurt as a result of the explosions.

Visaya said these explosions are likely part of the NPA's marking of its anniversary on March 29.

He assured that Army units in the island province are doing their best to ensure the safety of the Masbateños against the NPA's abuses and terror acts.

"The NPA is a diminishing group in Southern Luzon, as such; they resort to terror acts like these IED explosions to project that they are still strong," Visaya said.

At present there are 36 NPAs being hunted by SOLCOM units in Masbate province, reports said.

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2 Army soldiers killed in ambush

ZAMBOANGA CITY

Two Army intelligence operatives were killed in an ambush by suspected Abu Sayyaf bandits in Patikul, Sulu yesterday.

The victims were on their way to Barangay Buhanginan when they were waylaid in Sitio Tibongbong in Barangay Igasan at past 8 a.m., said Brig. Gen. Alan Arrojado, commander of Joint Task Group Sulu.

Arrojado said the identities of the victims have been withheld pending notification of their families.

By ROEL PAREÑO

A certain Morasil Mudjahirin reportedly led the group of Abu Sayyaf bandits.

Arrojado said responding troops from the 10th Infantry Battalion did not capture the militants, who fled toward the jungle.

He said government troops were asked to be on alert to prevent similar attacks.

In Salibo, Maguindanao, Marine soldier Pvt. Ronel Undecimo was killed while

2nd Lt. Shajeed Andik was wounded when suspected members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) attacked a village on Monday night.

Villagers said five BIFF gunmen, four of them identified as a certain Kiram, Alikhan, Samroud and Jamil, were also wounded in the gunfight.

BIFF bandits have been attacking government troops in Datu Salibo, Shariff Saidona, Datu Piang and Datu Saudi towns since January. — With John Unson

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Blasts hit Masbate cell sites; NPA eyed

By Julie M. Aurelio

ELEVEN explosions which targeted mostly cell sites of Globe Telecoms and suspected to have been perpetrated by communist rebels rocked different parts of Masbate on Tuesday morning.

The military, who denounced the blasts as “propaganda tactics” to scare the residents, said two policemen were injured in the incidents.

“These explosions are propaganda tactics to sow fear to the people,” said Col. Fernando Trinidad, 903rd Infantry Brigade Commander.

The New People’s Army is suspected to be behind the explosions in eight different towns in Masbate, which happened on Tuesday morning.

Southern Luzon Command chief Lt. Gen. Ricardo Visaya said the incidents were possibly connected to the NPA’s upcoming anniversary on March 29.

Resorting to terror acts

“The NPA is a diminishing group in Southern Luzon and they resort to terror acts like these explosions to project that they are still strong,” Visaya said, adding that there are only 36 rebels in Masbate.

Two policemen were wounded in one of the blasts in Barangay Burgos, Batuan town. They were identified as SPO1 Amado Albiola and Senior Insp. Aldrin Rosales.

The first four blasts hap-

pened 30 minutes apart beginning at 4:30 a.m. at a Globe Telecoms cell site in Barangay Miaga, Uson town.

The second explosion jolted Barangay Tunga, Esperanza town, around 5 a.m., followed by another blast in Barangay Poblacion, Claveria town, around 5:36 a.m.

At 6 a.m., another explosion rocked another Globe cell site in Barangay Crossing, also in Uson town, followed by an 8:30 a.m. blast at another Globe cell site in Barangay Panisihan in the same town.

Minutes later at 8:50 a.m., an improvised explosive device went off along the provincial road of Barangay Burgos in Batuan town, wounding two policemen, Rosales and Abiola, who were on their way to Barangay Lagundi.

Both policemen were rushed to the Masbate Provincial Hospital for treatment.

Another blast occurred around 10:30 a.m. in Barangay Buenasuerte in Uson town, followed by an explosion 10 minutes later in Barangay Ilaya, Balud town.

The last explosion was around 10:45 a.m. at the boundary of San Jacinto and San Fernando towns.

Trinidad assured that Philippine Army units assigned in Masbate have stepped up its efforts to ensure the safety of residents against communist rebels.

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AFP scuttles NPA's tax collectors

By **MIKE U. CRISMUNDO**

BUTUAN CITY – Elements of the 30th Infantry Battalion (30th IB) encountered suspected collectors of the New People's Army (NPA), armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), last Sunday in Barangay Amontay, in San Francisco town, Surigao del Norte, First Lt. Ryan D. Layug, Civil Military Operation (CMO) officer of the 30th IB yesterday said.

He said the NPAs were believed to be on their way to collect "tax money" and other supplies from rural business folk when they engaged in an almost 15-minute gun battle by the responding peace and development teams of the 30th IB.

He said reports from concerned villagers on alleged forced taxation imposed by the NPAs prompted the operating troops to respond.

"The armed men fired at us while we were approaching the reported designated pick-up location of extorted supplies. We immediately retaliated and the enemy withdrew towards the direction of the barangay," said Second Lt. Wilfredo F. Quilang, one of the platoon commanders of the 30th IB.

After a fierce exchange of gun fire that

lasted 15 minutes, one of the NPA rebels was wounded, and was evacuated by his comrades towards the forested area of Barangay Amontay, Layug added.

No government soldier was wounded in the exchange.

Recovered at the site were an improvised explosive device (IED), a blasting cap, electrical wires, battery pack and backpack with subversive documents and food items.

Last February 27, 2016, 30th IB troopers also encountered NPA collectors in Barangay Anomar, Surigao City, military report also said.

Meanwhile, Lt. Col. Rico O. Amaro, commanding officer of the 30th IB thanked the residents of Barangay Amontay for reporting the alleged extortion activities of the NPAs.

"It is our duty to protect Surigaonons from threats of armed groups, the recent encounter is again a product of a report from concerned citizens that shows many are already complaining about the activities of this group," he said.

"We appeal that the wounded, who may have been hidden by his comrades in the communities nearby, be brought to the nearest hospital and be given medical attention by qualified professionals," Col. Amaro added.

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POLICE FILES

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**Higit 40 pamilya lumikas sa bakbakan
ng militar at NPA sa Surigao**

MAHIGIT 40 pamilya ang lumikas mula sa kanilang mga komunidad sa Sitio Baroboan, Brgy. Caromata, sa bayan ng San Miguel, Surigao del Sur.

Ito'y dahil sa takot na madamay sa mga engkuwentro at pamomomba ng mga sundalo at mga miyembro ng New People's Army (NPA).

Temporaryong nakikisilong sa simbahang Katolika ang mga lumikas na nanawagang itigil na ng mga sundalo at rebeldeng NPA ang kanilang sagupaan malapit sa kanilang mga komunidad. Samantala, inihayag ni Captain Angelo Gomez – Civil Military Officer ng 29th IB, PA, na hindi sila titigil sa paghahabol sa mga rebelde sabay ng pagtitiyak na malayo sa mga residente ang inihulog nilang mga bomba.

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Military: No negotiation policy with ASG stays

ZAMBOANGA CITY – The military will not in any way negotiate with the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) for the release of the bandit group's captives – two Canadians and a Norwegian – in forested areas of Sulu even if they are serious in their threat to behead them hostages if their ransom demand would not be met until April 8.

Brig. Gen. Alan Arrojado, commander of the Joint Task Force Sulu, said Philippine armed forces adhere to the government policy of "no negotiations with the terrorists or any criminal group".

"We're following the policy of

our government and this is no negotiations with the terrorist groups and no payment of ransom," Arrojado said.

The three captives – Canadians John Ridsdel and Robert Hall and Norwegian Kjartan Sekkingstad – bearded and handcuffed appealed to their respective governments for help, saying that if their kidnapper's demands are not met until April 8 they will be killed.

"To the Canadian prime minister and to the Canadian people in the world, please do as needed to meet their demands within one month or they will kill me, they will execute us," Ridsdel, a Canadian mining consultant said.

The video was the third to surface since the trio were kidnapped in Samal Island Resort, Davao del Norte, in September with Filipina Marites Flor.

The kidnappers earlier demanded for a ₱1-billion (\$21,500) for each of the three foreigners.

The Armed Forces' Western Mindanao Command (WestMinCom) has condemned the ASG for the "inhumane treatment" exhibited by the ASG in the latest video.

"We condemn such terroristic and inhumane treatment of the victims," Maj. Felimon Tan Jr., the command's spokesperson said. **(Nonoy E. Lacson)**

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ARMM police lead SAFE 2016 drive

By Alfred Dalizon

THE Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao Police Regional Office headed by Chief Supt. Ronald Estilles on Monday spearheaded a "walk for peace" drive in the region aimed at harnessing the support of all stakeholders, including politicians, in ensuring secure and fair May 9 presidential and national elections in the region.

Estilles, with Comelec regional director Atty. Michael Abbas and Armed Forces Western Mindanao Command chief Lt. Gen. Mayoraldo de la Cruz, met with candidates for different elective posts in the region as well as other participants in the Regional Joint Security Coordinating Center in a conference held at the ARMM police headquarters.

The RJSCC conference is crucial since ARMM has two provinces—Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao—included in the Philippine National Police's watchlist of "election areas of concern."

Lanao del Sur has one city and 13 municipalities



UNITY WALK. Top officials of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao Police Regional Office led by Chief Supt. Ronald Estilles (center) leads a Unity Walk participated in by representatives from the Comelec, Armed Forces, LGU and other stakeholders aimed at harnessing the support of all ARMM residents in the government's effort to ensure secure and fair May 9 presidential and national elections in the region. ARMM has two provinces—Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao—included in the Philippine National Police's watchlist of "election areas of concern." (CONTRIBUTED PHOTO FROM ARMM-PNP)

while Maguindanao has 36 municipalities included in the PNP watchlist.

Acting on orders of PNP chief Director General Ricardo Marquez, Estilles has renewed his call on ARMM residents, specifically candidates, to fully support the government's drive against poll-related violence. He also reiterated the PNP chief's call on all local candidates to follow the example of others, who have signed peace covenants in different parts of Luzon, and

renounced their arms and support growing public outcry against election-related violence.

The top cop particularly exhorted candidates to follow the example set by different politicians, who have turned over their weapons to the authorities, both licensed and those with expired licenses, for safekeeping.

Marquez also ordered police commanders to initiate more peace covenants in their areas to minimize possible poll-related vio-

lence involving supporters of feuding candidates. The PNP chief wants all candidates to denounce poll-related violence and ask their supporters to refrain from initiating trouble and for different stakeholders to dramatize their call for a secure and fair May elections.

Estilles said they have been stepping-up their fo-

cused and sustained police operations to neutralize partisan armed groups and organized criminal gangs and loose weapons in the region, particularly in the municipalities declared priority "election watchlist areas."

As of 2015, the provinces of Pangasinan, Masbate, Negros Oriental, Samar, Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao were tagged by the PNP as areas of concern during the May 9 polls.

"We are initiating more dialogues with our AFP counterparts, the Comelec and other stakeholders including local government units and candidates in the election as part of our program to ensure a SAFE 2016. By meeting with all concerned, we can discuss all election concerns and take note of the suggestions and recommendations from the citizenry," said Estilles even as he assured all ARMM residents of the PNP's readiness to secure the May 9 elections, with the help of the military.

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Pahina. 2

Pabahay sa sundalo, pulis parang 'bahay kalapati'

Mistulang "bahay kalapati" ang mga ipinapatayong pabahay ng gobyerno para sa mga miyembro ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) at Philippine National Police (PNP).

Ganito isinalarawan nina Magdalo partylist Reps. Gary Alejano at Ashley Acedillo, ang mga pabahay ng gobyerno para sa sundalo at pulis.

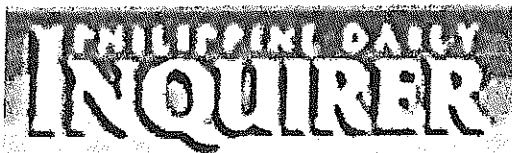
Dahil dito kaya hiniling nina Alejano at Acedillo sa Kamara na imbestigahan ang umano'y substandard na housing units na programa ng National Housing Authority (NHA) para sa AFP at PNP, partikular na ang mga itinayo sa Baras, Rizal at Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon.

Sa ginawang aktwal na inspeksyon, bukod sa walang tubig at kuryente, ang pundasyon at dingding ng mga bahay ay hindi kumpletong sementado.

Bukod ditto substandard din umano ang construction ng septic tank at walang access sa mga social services tulad ng mga ospital at paaralan.

Giit ng mga kongresista, hindi makatao ang kondisyon ng pabahay para sa mga sundalo at pulis na nagsakripisyo at nagbubuwis ng kanilang buhay para sa bayan kaya dapat itong imbestigahan ng Kamara. (Gemma Garcia)

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PMA now more open to hearing cadet gripes

By Vincent Cabreza
Fort Del Pilar, Baguio City

DAYS before he graduated from the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) on March 13, newly commissioned Navy Ensign Kristian Daeve Abiqui said he and his fellow graduates of PMA Gabay Laya Class of 2016 left behind a corps of cadets that was very willing to listen.

Abiqui, the class valedictorian, was referring to a series of grievance mechanisms put up for cadets who questioned punishments imposed by a cadet honor committee.

Although his name was barely mentioned, dismissed cadet Jeff Aldrin Cudia's denunciation of the honor code in 2014 prompted the premier military school to improve how they treat cadets who have issues, Brig. Gen. Rozzano Briguez, PMA commandant of cadets, said.

All cadets undergo trial by a committee composed of their peers to address violations of the honor code and the honor system.

The code and honor system require the cadets to follow traditional and time-honored sets of conduct. "The honor code is a gentleman's agreement," said Abiqui, who chaired the honor committee.

Cadets have sworn against lying and cheating and tolerating those who commit these infractions.

Cudia had challenged an honor committee recommendation to dismiss him, weeks before the graduation of PMA "Siklab Diwa" of 2014, for allegedly lying to justify his two-minute tardiness in class.

His case became public when his sister posted details of the honor committee decision over social media. Soon online commentaries discussed a common impression that Cudia's punishment had not matched the offense.

Things have calmed down since then. Gauging by how many parents and walk-in students have acquired application forms for the PMA entrance examinations at a recruitment booth during PMA graduation week, people have faith in the integrity of cadet training, Staff Sgt. Robert Periodico said.

"I was surprised my booth was very popular. All 500 forms I had prepared for the day were all taken," he said.

More transparent

But because of how the public had reacted, Briguez said the PMA had issued procedures that would make the honor committee "more transparent and open to addressing cadet complaints."

Maj. Gen. Donato San Juan II, PMA superintendent, said the honor system had always been controlled by the cadets.

"We have an honor committee, [composed of members] elected by the cadets. They review all cases of honor violations and they have to vote unanimously [on every verdict]," San Juan said. "Before, during my time [in the academy], the honor system could not be reviewed by the superintendent. We expected the cadets to be honorable enough to decide what was right and what was wrong."

"But because of the changing times and the issues of two years ago... we are now allowing a review of the decisions of the honor committee. There is now [a way to] appeal. Before the decisions were final and could be executed," he said.

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Briguez said grievances could be coursed first through the PMA tactics group, as well as the office of the commandant of cadets. A higher PMA review board had also been formed to assist the superintendent.

Tracking system

The reforms appeared to have helped cadets adjust better to academy life, Briguez said, adding that a tracking system of honor code violations in the last two years had shown a 50-percent drop.

Part of the change involved how members of the honor committee would vote, Abiqui said.

Members of previous honor committees were not required to present a written justification for their votes. "But now ... we explain our votes, so if there are questions ... we could explain our decision," Abiqui said.

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Pahina. 2

PINAS DINAGSA NG US WARSHIP

Nina JOY CANTOS AT ELLEN FERNANDO

Matapos mapagtibay na ng Korte Suprema ang legalidad ng Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) at kaugnay ng nalalapit na pagdaraos ng PH-US Balikatan joint military exercises sa susunod na buwan ay patuloy ang pagdagsang mga barkong pandigma ng Estados Unidos sa Pilipinas.

Sa isang press statement ng US Embassy, dumaong na rin sa Manila Bay kamakalawa ang USS Russel (DDG 59), ang Arleigh Burke-Class guided missile destroyer ng US Navy.

Ayon sa US Embassy ang pagdaong sa Manila Bay ng isa na naman nilang guided missile destroyer ay bahagi ng routine visit nito, maintenance at pamamahinga ng mga crew ng nasabing barkong pandigma.

“The USS Russell is making its way back to its homeport in San Diego, California after a highly successful deployment to the U.S. Fifth Fleet’s Area of Responsibility”, anang US Embassy sa isang press

statement

Samantalang nilalayon din ng pagdaong ng USS Russel sa Pilipinas ay upang mapatatag pa ang alyansa sa pagitan ng US

Navy ng counterpart ng mga ito sa Philippine Navy at maging sa mamamayan ng Pilipinas.

Magugunita na sa loob lamang ng buwang kasalukuyan bukod sa USS Russel ay dalawang

barkong pandigma na kinabibilangan ng USS Blue Ridge at USS An-tietam ang una nang dumaong sa Manila Bay at isang US Submarine o ang USS Charlotte sa Subic Bay, Zambales.

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PUNCHLINE

Be apolitical, PNoy tells AFP; No-el 'remote,' speaker says



By **FRED M. LOBO**

PRESIDENT Aquino calls on the military to remain apolitical and focus on their duty of protecting the people this coming elections.

Keep away from politics. Leave the campaigning to me.

Addressing the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) graduates, the President advises the new military officers to stay out of partisan politics and resist corruption.

My soldiers, to thy vow be true! Don't bow to money and other temptations, huh!

Aquino reminds the soldiers about the country's "dark history" when the military was used to curtail the country's democracy and enforce the whims of the Marcos dictatorship.

PNoy scores anew but expect Bongbong to hit back again.

"Let us remember that the Armed Forces is the only force. If they will join partisan politics, that has a monopoly of power. It will not be fair so it is important to remain neutral,

especially when it comes to politics," Aquino says.

Sustain the country's positive transformation towards progress, stability, and peace, PNoy urges.

"As long as the entire Armed Forces is here, faithfully fulfilling its mandate, as long as you take only one side and that's the people, as long as you don't meddle with politics, we can hope to see the continuity of positive change," Aquino stresses.

Translation: Don't meddle, just stay at the middle, boys!

On the other hand, Speaker Feliciano "Sonny" Belmonte Jr. says that there is a "very remote possibility" that the country could succumb to a constitutional crisis or the no-elections and failure of elections scenario if the Supreme Court (SC) insists on directing the Comelec to enable the voter receipt feature of the automated elections.

Fears and speculations on "boto resibo" are baseless.

But he expresses the hope that SC "will consider" the poll body's appeal to take a second look at its March 8 decision ordering the activa-

tion of the Voter Verification Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) feature of the automated voting machines.

We don't like VVPAT, says LP's campaign manager.

But "very remote," Belmonte says as to the possibility of a constitutional crisis if the Comelec continue opposing SC's unanimous ruling on VVPAT.

"Comelec should do its mandate, though it may mean more money, time, or effort, so as not to postpone the polls," he adds.

Meanwhile, presidential aspirant Senator Grace Poe urges lawyers and IT experts to help "Galing at Puso" avoid a repeat of the alleged massive electoral fraud in the 2004 presidential elections.

No repeat of my fathers fate, FPJ's daughter cries.

Poe recalls that when her father FPJ ran for president in 2004, they lack sufficient legal support and other resources to win the polls that's why "what happened to us then was indeed a tragedy."

No to no-election scenario. No to failure of elections. No to tragedy