

Army Vision: By 2038, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride



TEAM ARMY

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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
NEWS CLIPPINGS

04 May 2016

Wednesday

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

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BusinessMirror

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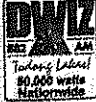
BusinessMirror

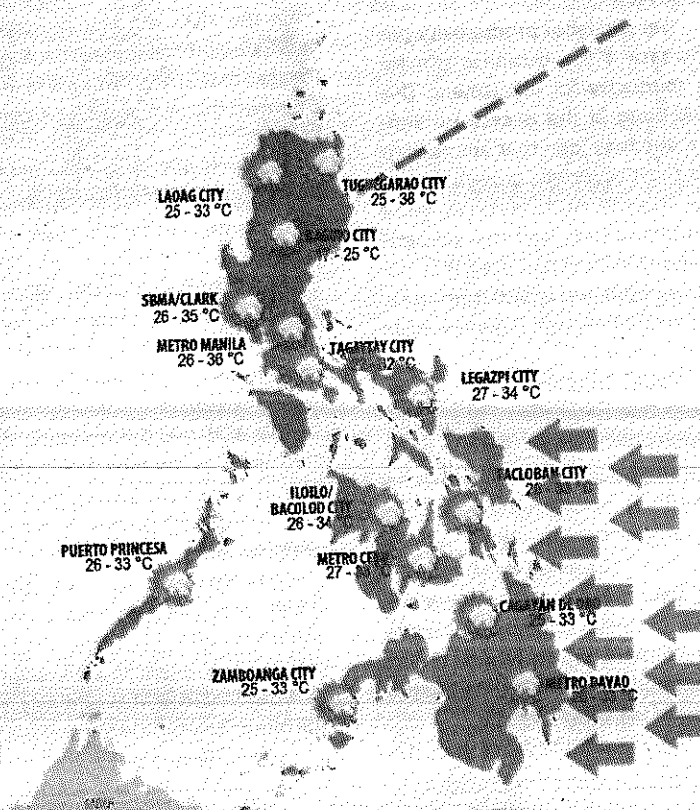
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TODAY'S WEATHER

MAY 04, 2016 | WEDNESDAY

RIDGE OF HIGH PRESSURE AREA AFFECTING LUZON
EASTERLIES AFFECTING EASTERN SECTION OF VISAYAS AND MINDANAO (MAY 3, 5:00 PM)













3-DAY EXTENDED FORECAST

	MAY 5 Thursday	MAY 6 Friday	MAY 7 Saturday
METRO MANILA	25 - 36 °C	25 - 36 °C	25 - 35 °C
TUGUEGARAO	26 - 37 °C	26 - 37 °C	25 - 38 °C
LAOAG	24 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C	25 - 32 °C
BAGUIO	18 - 25 °C	16 - 26 °C	17 - 26 °C
SBMA/CLARK	26 - 35 °C	25 - 36 °C	25 - 35 °C
TAGAYTAY	22 - 33 °C	23 - 33 °C	23 - 32 °C
LEGAZPI	26 - 34 °C	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C
PUERTO PRINCESA	26 - 34 °C	25 - 34 °C	26 - 34 °C
ILOILO/BACOLOD	26 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C	25 - 34 °C

3-DAY EXTENDED FORECAST


	MAY 5 Thursday	MAY 6 Friday	MAY 7 Saturday
METRO CEBU	26 - 34 °C	27 - 34 °C	26 - 34 °C
TACLOBAN	26 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C
CAGAYAN DE ORO	24 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C	24 - 34 °C
METRO DAVAO	26 - 35 °C	26 - 34 °C	25 - 34 °C
ZAMBOANGA	25 - 33 °C	24 - 34 °C	24 - 34 °C

SUNRISE	SUNSET	MOONRISE	MOONSET
			
5:32 AM	6:14 PM	3:15 AM	3:43 PM


LAST QUARTER	NEW MOON	LOW TIDE	HIGH TIDE
			
APR 30 11:29 AM	MAY 7 3:30 AM	MARILA SOUTH SANDS 1:57 AM 0.12 Meter	8:21 PM 0.69 Meter


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People's Television





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New Pulse poll out this week

By JESS DIAZ

A new survey on voters' preference for presidential, vice presidential and senatorial candidates will be out this week.

"It will come out tomorrow or on Thursday, but we will try tomorrow," Pulse Asia

president Ronald Holmes told ABS-CBN News Channel yesterday.

Holmes said the new survey would show if the ratings of presidential frontrunner and Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte have been

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New From Page 1

affected by allegations of ill-gotten wealth, including the P211 million in bank deposits and P2.4 billion in previous bank transactions.

Duterte has denied the accusations.

Holmes said the new opinion poll was taken from April 26 to 29.

He said the accusations of Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV against Duterte came out in media on April 27.

He said he is not sure if Pulse Asia would be able to do another survey before Monday's voting.

"It takes time to process the data," he added.

Analyzing last week's survey results, Holmes said Duterte's numbers in Metro Manila fell by nine percentage points, apparently due to his controversial rape joke.

In the vice presidential race, he said Sen. Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr. kept his lead, although Camarines Sur Rep. Leni Robredo was fast catching up.

He said Marcos led in Metro Manila.

"Preference for him represented protest by residents against the inadequacies of the Aquino administration."

Holmes said Robredo and Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano did well in the Visayas and Mindanao due to "associated voting," since their standard-bearers, former local

government secretary Mar Roxas and Duterte, come from the regions.

"Visayas is Roxas' bailiwick, Mindanao is Duterte's stronghold," he added.

Bongbong keeps lead

Marcos has continued to widen his lead based on a new non-commissioned survey conducted by pollster Pulso ng Pilipino.

The survey, conducted nationwide by the Issues and Advocacy Center from April 23 to 29, showed Marcos obtaining 31 percent, up from 29 percent in an earlier survey conducted from April 11 to 16.

Robredo's ratings remain at 25 percent, followed by Sen. Francis Escudero with 18 percent.

Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano placed fourth with 15 percent followed by senators Gringo Honasan and Antonio Trillanes IV with five and three percent, respectively.

Marcos continued to dominate Metro Manila with 38 percent and the rest of Luzon with 39 percent.

The survey showed that Marcos practically led in the level of preferences in all demographic sectors, with 27 percent from among the "A" and "B" classes, 24 percent from "C" class, 23 percent from the "D" class and 24 percent from those in the "E" class.

IAC director Edgardo Malay said Marcos' ratings manifested the start of his breaking away from the pack.

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Smartmatic ready for May 9

By CHARMIE JOY PAGULONG

The Commission on Elections (Comelec) and Smartmatic International are ready for the May 9 polls, an official of Smartmatic said yesterday.

"It's all systems go for the upcoming elections," Elie Moreno, Smartmatic general manager for the Philip-

pines, said after a mock election held yesterday at The STAR offices in Port Area, Manila.

"We have delivered all the vote counting machines (VCMs) and undergone an international certification review of our system with the Comelec through

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Smartmatic From Page 1

a US provider. We are also done with the hardware acceptance tests, software as well as local source code review," Moreno said. The Comelec has received all the paraphernalia to be used for the coming polls.

Smartmatic said 92,509 VCMs will be used in the elections, with an additional 5,000 machines on standby as backup.

Smartmatic said all the ballots have been printed and the technology to be used has been verified. The Comelec started the final testing and sealing of the VCMs on Monday.

According to Moreno, teachers who will serve as board of election inspectors (BEIs) have been testing the VCMs.

Lawyer Karen Jimeno, head of Smartmatic's voter education committee, said they have delivered the VCMs and other election paraphernalia to the Comelec before the deadline.

"To put it simply, the ball is now in Comelec's court, because they are the ones that will run the elections, it's their people that will be running the counting machines," Jimeno said.

She said Smartmatic's tech-

nical field personnel would be on standby in case anything goes wrong on election day.

Smartmatic will set up a national support center to assist the BEIs who will operate the counting machines. One technician will be assigned in every polling center.

On the issue of power outage during the polls, Jimeno explained that the machines would automatically switch to the use of internal battery, which can last up to 14 hours. The machine is capable of charging the battery itself, she said.

Moreno said the VCM can stand different room temperatures, even the summer heat expected on Monday.

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VCMs hack-free

The Comelec and Smartmatic assured the public that the VCMs are hack-free.

Jimeno explained that the VCMs are not connected to the Internet so hackers would not be able to access them.

"The encryption level of the VCM is 256 bits, which is higher than what most banking programs use for security, so it will take 50 years to hack the encryption of the machines," she explained.

Smartmatic will also use an encrypted SD (Secure Digital) card for the machines with the signatures of the BEIs to prevent tampering of election results, Jimeno said.

Meanwhile, the Parish Pas-

toral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) expressed concern over the last minute preparations of the Comelec with less than a week before the elections.

"We cannot say that anybody is prepared 100 percent for the elections," PPCRV national chairperson Henrietta de Villa said.

If confusion mars the elections, the public might doubt the integrity of the polls, De Villa said.

An advocacy group questioned the Comelec's compliance with the provisions of RA 9369 or the Automated Election Law.

The Coalition of Clean Air Advocates of the Philip-

pires (CCAAP) said the Comelec and Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC) should issue a certification that the automated election system, including its hardware and software components, are operating securely and accurately.

TEC is composed of the Department of Science and Technology, Information and Communications Technology Commission and the Comelec.

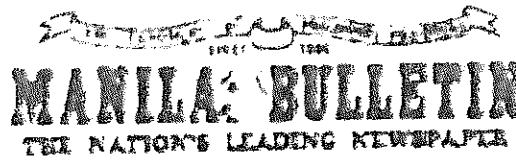
CCAAP president Herminio Buerano Jr. claimed that the Comelec and TEC failed to issue the mandatory certificate required by the automation law 90 days before the elections.

– With Evelyn Macairan,
Rhodina Villanueva

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Top NPA commander in Mindanao, 6 others nabbed in Agusan del Norte

By MIKE U. CRISMUNDO

CAMP RAFAEL C. RODRIGUEZ, Butuan City - A top leader of the New People's Army in Mindanao, who had a ₱4.9-million bounty on his head, was captured Monday by a joint team of Philippine National Police (PNP) and Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) operatives, along the national highway of Mat-i, in Las Nieves town, Agusan del Norte, a high-ranking police official in Caraga region reported.

Ricardo Andan Manili, 62, who is popularly known as Ka Joker, was the commanding officer of the NPA Regional Operational Command or the "Julito Tero Command."

In a press conference late Monday afternoon held at the regional headquarters of Northeastern Mindanao Police Regional Office-13 (PRO-13), Camp Rafael C. Rodriguez here, Regional Director Chief Supt. Rolando B. Felix said Manili had pending criminal cases in local courts, which included two counts of rebellion, two counts of murder, robbery with homicide, two counts of multiple murder and arson.

He is said to be the secretary of the CPP-NPA North Central Mindanao Regional Committee and has a ₱4.9-million reward for his capture, being at the top 4 most wanted person in northeastern Mindanao, Felix claimed.

The suspect was arrested, together with a female and five male companions

onboard a silver Starex van, by combined operatives of 13th Regional Public Safety Battalion and AFP when they conducted a Commission on Elections (Comelec) joint checkpoint in Mat-i area at around 1 p.m. Monday, he said.

The identities of his companions were still not immediately established as tacti-

cal investigation was still ongoing, Felix added.

Seized from Manili and his companions were a .45 caliber pistol, a 9mm pistol with two loaded magazines, two blasting caps, an improvised explosive device (IED), a grenade, a homemade shotgun, medical kits, personal belongings and anti-govern-

ment documents with high intelligence value, the region's police chief said.

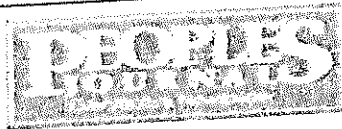
"Our ground personnel apprehended Commander Joker and his companion in the normal course of operation by the joint Comelec-PNP-AFP checkpoint in the area," he emphasized.

Felix noted that the high-ranking NPA commander was on his way to witness the turn over of five prisoner of war (POWs) that were held by the insurgent group in an undisclosed place in Bayugan City, Agusan del Sur.

"Ka Joker and his companions did not resist arrest when accosted by our personnel in the Comelec checkpoint in Mat-i," Felix said.

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NPA leader captured

SECURITY forces on Monday captured a most wanted New People's Army leader in Caraga region for a checkpoint in Las Nieves, Agusan del Norte.

Police Regional Office 13 director Chief Supt. Rolando Felix identified the arrested suspect as Ricardo Manili alias "Kumander Joker," the 4th most wanted person in Caraga region.

Manili was arrested by policemen and soldiers manning a gun ban checkpoint in Las Nieves at 1 p.m. on Monday.

The suspect is the subject of a P4.9 million bounty offered by the government and is the subject of warrants of arrest for multiple murders and two counts of rebellion.

Recovered inside Manili's van were a homemade 12-gauge shotgun, a cal.45 pistol, a 9mm semi-automatic pistol, an improvised explosive device, a grenade and several IED materials, live ammunition, medical kit and suspected rebel documents.

Six persons, who were with Manili, were also taken to a local police headquarters for investigation.

Manili and his fellows were on their way to Bayugan City, Agusan del Sur from Butuan City when they were intercepted by the security troops.

Felix said Manili's capture was a "big blow" to the communist movement in Caraga region, where the suspect was an "institution" in the rebel movement.

Alfred Dalizon

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MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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NPA releases 2 Army soldiers in Agusan del Sur

By MIKE U. CRISMUNDO

SAN LUIS, Agusan del Sur - After 30 days in captivity somewhere in the hinterlands of San Luis town in this

province, the custodial force of the New People's Army (NPA) released at around 3:15 p.m. yesterday two captive Army soldiers.

The released soldiers were Private First Class Glenn Austia and Private First Class Diven Abion Tawide, both of 23rd Infantry Battalion.

The two Army soldiers were turned over by the NPA custodial force of front Committee 88 of the CPP-NPA Northeastern Mindanao Regional Committee to the third party facilitators and local crisis committees of Agusan del Sur and Agusan del Norte, led by San Luis town Mayor Roland Corvera, and Buenavista town Mayor Norbert Paspas of Agusan del Norte.

Presidential candidate Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte also ar-

rived during the turn over ceremony of the former prisoners of war (POWs).

The parents and immediate kin of Austia and Tawide joined the third party facilitators and members of local crisis committees for their release.

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The Manila Times

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Ranking NPA leader nabbed in Caraga

MILITARY and police operatives have arrested a ranking commander of the New People's Army (NPA) in the Caraga Region and six others at a checkpoint in a remote village in Las Nieves town, Agusan del Sur.

Caraga Regional Police spokesman, Supt. Daniel Puesca, said Ricardo Andan Manili, 62, also known in the region as "Joker", carries a P4.9 million reward for his arrest.

Puesca said Manili is the commanding officer of the NPA Regional Operational Command, known as Julito Tero Command. He was intercepted at about 1 p.m. on Monday in Barangay Remedios, Las Nieves town.

Police added that Manili has

pending criminal cases in local courts, which include two counts of rebellion, two counts of murder, robbery with homicide, two counts of multiple murder and arson.

He was arrested together with a female and five male companions on board a silver Starex van at a checkpoint manned by operatives of the 13th Regional Public Safety Battalion and the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Recovered from them were a homemade shotgun, one caliber .45 pistol, one caliber 9 mm pistol, one improvised explosive device, one grenade, two blasting caps, three bolos, three magazines, ammunition, medical kits, subversive documents and personal belongings.

ANTHONY VARGAS

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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★ May 4, 2016

Wednesday

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS FEELS VIEWS



NOT FOR PUBLICATION

STANDING A CLAIM - Betates fishermen and civil society groups hoist the Philippine flag on Mavudis, an island at the east tip of northern Philippines, to warn off foreign poachers near their fishing grounds. A military contingent led by Lt. Gen. Romeo E. Lualaba, head of the Armed Forces Northern Luzon Command, joined in the activity

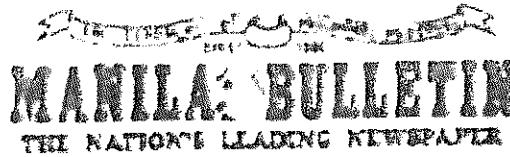
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AFP launches election monitoring center

By ELENA L. ABEN

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) yesterday launched its National Election Monitoring Center (NEMC) in Camp Aguinaldo to consolidate and coordinate information critical for the conduct of Safe and Fair Election (SAFE) 2016.

Capt. Celeste Frank Sayson, deputy chief, AFP public affairs office, said the launching of the NEMC is in line with the military's task as deputized agency of the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to help ensure the conduct of a free, honest, orderly, peaceful, and credible national and local elections on May 9.

The NEMC will utilize the AFP's information-related capabilities to monitor the preparations for and the actual conduct of elections and the canvassing process.

It will also monitor election-related violence especially in identified election watch areas and provide necessary data for decision-making and execution of the Comelec and its deputized agencies.

Sayson further said efforts of the AFP to secure the elections will be coursed through its unified commands and the Joint Task Force-National Capital Region.

Operations related to the security of the election will be done in coordination with the Joint Security Coordination Centers (JSCC) at the regional, provincial, and independent city levels.

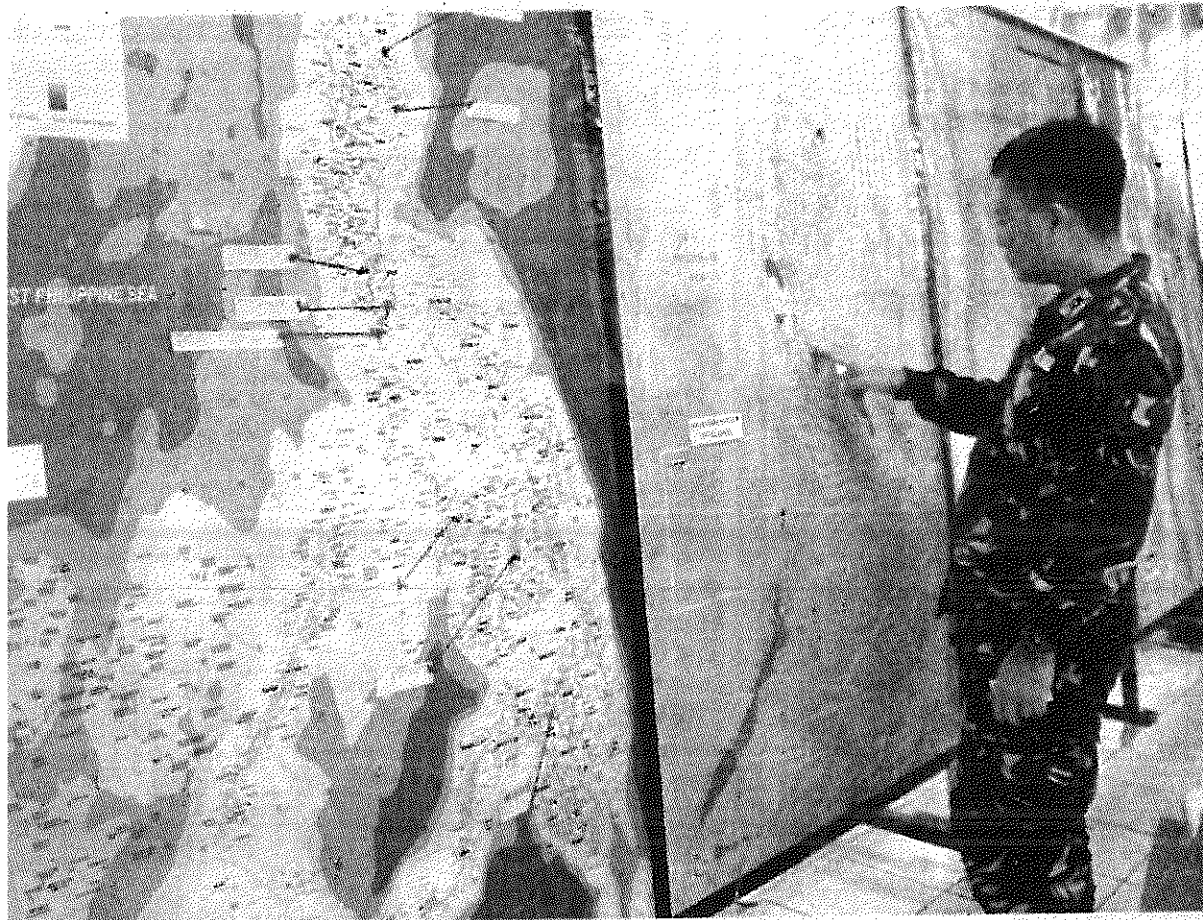
"The AFP NEMC will work in tandem with focused military operations, stakeholders engagement, and intelligence operations to deter all forms of threats to the conduct of the elections," said Sayson.

Earlier, the AFP said it is making available its land, sea and air assets to help the Comelec transport vote counting machines (VCM) and other paraphernalia to be used in the coming May 9 synchronized elections.

04 May 2016

The Manila Times

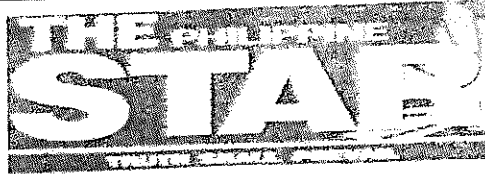
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MILITARY POLL HUB

A military officer points at the chart that marked the areas of election concern during the launch of the National Election Monitoring Center (NEMC) by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). The military election center will consolidate and coordinate information described as critical for the conduct of Safe and Fair Election (SAFE) 2016. PHOTO BY MIKE DE JUAN

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Page: 1

Japan agrees to lease military aircraft to Phi

TOKYO – Japan will lease military aircraft to the Philippines in another sign of deepening security ties between the two former foes to counter Beijing's increasing regional influence.

The agreement was made Monday afternoon during telephone talks between Japan's Defense Minister Gen Nakatani and Philippine counterpart Voltaire Gazmin, the ministry said.

Tensions in the South China Sea – through which one third of the

world's oil passes – have mounted in recent years since China transformed contested reefs into artificial islands capable of supporting military facilities.

Under the accord, Tokyo will lease up to five TC-90 training airplanes and help Manila train pilots and aircraft mechanics, the ministry said. The planes can be used as surveillance aircraft, according to local media.

It will be Japan's first lease of

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Japan

From Page 1

its Self-Defense Forces' aircraft to another country after it recently lifted a self-imposed ban on weapons exports.

"We agreed that it is important for all the countries in the region to strengthen cooperation in order to maintain peace and stability of the South China Sea," Nakatani told reporters.

"We believe that improving the Philippines' capability will lead to stability in the region," he added.

The TC-90 is capable of flying 1,900 kilometers, roughly double the flight range of the Philippine Navy's aircraft, *Kyodo News* said.

The Philippines has been seeking to strengthen ties with Japan as tensions mount over disputed South China Sea waters, almost all of which are claimed by China. The southeast Asian country has a severely under-equipped military.

Aside from the Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia and Taiwan also have overlapping claims to the contested wa-

terway.

Japan has its own dispute with China in the East China Sea over uninhabited islands that it administers but are also claimed by Beijing.

A Japanese warship last month sailed into a Philippine port near disputed South China Sea waters while Tokyo agreed in February to supply Manila with military hardware, which may include anti-submarine reconnaissance aircraft and radar technology.

In a related development, the Philippine Navy announced the arrival of French warship *Guepratte* (F-714) at Pier 15 of the Manila South Harbor today.

Navy spokesman Capt. Lued Lincuna said the visiting French Navy ship is under the command of Commander Claire Potheir, its first female skipper, and would be in the country for several days for a goodwill call.

An F714 is a multi-mission La Fayette-class stealth frigate of the French Marine Nationale (French Navy).

– AFP, Jaime Laude

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INQUIRER

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Japan to lease 5 warplanes to PH

By Julie M. Aurelio

JAPAN will lease five military aircraft to the Philippines in another sign of deepening security ties between the two strategic partners.

The move, which is seen as a counterweight to China's growing military dominance in the Asian region, will start within the year, Department of National Defense (DND) spokesperson Peter Paul Galvez said yesterday.

In a statement, Galvez said that Japanese Defense Minister Gen Nakatani made the commitment in a telephone call to Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin at around 4 p.m. on Monday.

"Nakatani reaffirmed the transfer of the Maritime Self-Defense Force TC-90 aircraft which will be useful for humanitarian assistance, disaster response and maritime security," said Galvez, but declined to reveal the cost of leasing the five trainer planes.

The planes, which will help in the training of pilots and aircraft mechanics, are also being eyed as surveillance aircraft.

This is the first time that Japan will be leasing military aircraft to another country after it lifted a self-imposed ban on weapons exports.

During the phone conversation, the two defense officials reiterated their mutual commitment to continue working together.

Nakatani stressed that the two countries' bilateral relationship was crucial for peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

Galvez said that the two defense chiefs also agreed that bilateral cooperation was indispensable to both countries.

"(They) discussed how to enhance relations by strengthening communications, deepening exchanges and (providing) educational opportunities," said Galvez.

With a report from AFP

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INQUIRER

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MILF hunting down Abus who beheaded Canadian

COTABATO CITY—The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) said it was helping government forces in tracking down the members of the Abu Sayyaf group who beheaded Canadian hostage John Ridsdel in Sulu.

Ridsdel's head was found near a police station in Jolo on April 25 while a body, suspected to be his, was recovered in a remote area in Talipao town two days later.

Sammy Al-Mansour, the MILF military chief, said their men in Sulu had specifically been tasked to determine the exact location of the Abu Sayyaf members behind Ridsdel's death.

Ridsdel, 68, was one of four people seized from a resort on Samal Island on Sept. 21. The others were Robert Hall, also a Canadian; Norwegian Kjartan Sekkingstad; and Filipino Maritess Flor.

"What they did was anti-Islam. We highly condemn it," Al-Mansour said.

He said that based on the latest information, Ridsdel's killers were still in Sulu.

"We are helping in tracking down by gathering information. We just need proper coordination. And if government forces have information too, they can pass it to us and we will forward it to our joint forces on the ground," he said.

This was not the first time the MILF mobilized its forces against the Abu Sayyaf.

Shortly after the May 25, 2013 clash in Sulu that killed seven Marine soldiers, the MILF, which signed a peace deal with the government, also helped government forces locate the bandits, under Radulan Sahiron.

On Feb. 7, 2015, MILF forces actually clashed with Abu Sayyaf bandits they were running after in Basilan. An Abu Sayyaf subleader was killed in the said clash while an MILF mem-

ber was wounded.

Aside from actually engaging in combat operations against the Abu Sayyaf, Al-Mansour said MILF rebels also cleared the path for operating soldiers.

Last April 9, Maj. Filemon Tan Jr., the spokesperson of the Western Mindanao Command, confirmed that MILF forces had stepped aside when government forces entered Barangay Baguindan in Tipo-Tipo to go after Abu Sayyaf bandits.

Brig. Gen. Glenn Macasero of the government's ceasefire committee said prior coordination was made with Hadji Dan Asnawi, commander of the MILF's 114th Base Command, and Hamsa Sapanton, commander of the MILF's Provincial Police Force in Basilan.

"We have implemented this to avoid confrontation between the military and the MILF," Macasero said.

"We have talked to the base commander, then the MILF CCCH (Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities) to establish and relay the general area of operations, and the men of Hamsa Sapanton of the provincial police force were repositioned, they were relocated from Baguindan to Bohe Piyang," Macasero said.

Jeffrey Maitem, Inquirer Mindanao

May 2016

BusinessMirror

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Are PHL airports ready for Brussels-type attack?

By RECTO MERCENE ✉ rectomercene@gmail.com
& RENE ACOSTA ✉ reneracostaBM@gmail.com

Conclusion

NEARLY seven decades ago, the concept of mass surveillance was etched in ink. Today the concept is called closed-circuit television (CCTV).

The CCTV camera network is one of the instruments that Philippine National Police (PNP) Chief Supt.

125,000



The total number of personnel of the Armed Forces of the Philippines fighting terrorist threats, according to Brig. Gen. Restituto

Pablo Francisco F. Balagtas regards highly in defending the three international airports against any terrorist attack and maintaining the security of passengers.

According to Balagtas, commander of the Aviation Security Group (Avsegroup), facilities like the CCTV network and other installations stop any attempt to compromise the

He cited, for one, that terrorists allegedly linked to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) would have difficulty in attacking the country.

"It takes time [for them] to acclimatize. They have to undergo a case buildup first, then surveillance," Balagtas said. "But we have many facility, like CCTV [closed-circuit television], and other installations to stop them, just in case." Still, Balagtas admits, "There are no impenetrable barriers." "But we rely on strict security implementation, as well as the different layers of security we have."

Human acts

ONE of the security layers Balagtas said the Avsegroup has involves humans, not machines: members of the Special Operations Unit (SOU) for anti-hijacking. In case of an armed attack occurring,

we have the SOU, according to Balagtas. "They are crisis-response team, our elite force."

Headed members of the SOU are heavily armed and have snipers among its ranks.

Asked how fast they can respond if some terrorist attack an airport somewhere in Mindanao, Balagtas said they have existing procedures to follow, such as alerting the local police and so on.

The procedures lead up the ladder of command until it reaches the Avsegroup if the crisis could no longer be contained locally.

"To address a serious crisis, a crisis-management committee is convened," Balagtas said. He added the highest levels of the government are alerted all the way up to the president of the Philippines.

The readiness of his mean includes being airlifted by the Philippine Air Force for a speedy rescue in a short notice.

Balagtas said that, since assuming the post of

Avsegroup commander, he also strengthened the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) unit by combining them into one integrated unit, which used to be separate entities.

He personally trained the SWAT team to respond to any situation. "If there's a hijacking and the local police cannot respond accordingly, God forbid, then we take over."

Balagtas added that, during Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in October last year, he was able to come up with interoperability training with other SOUs and the summit was one of the most successful events the country had hosted.

He said the country's security arrangement during the summit was patterned after the US, where other agencies are part of the whole security apparatus. In Hong Kong and Singapore, which used to be British colonies, there is only one agency to address antiterrorism or hijacking, which simplifies coordination, according to Balagtas.

"But even if there are complications that arise in any situation, these are overtaken by good coordination and cooperation among the agencies."

Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla demurs with Balagtas's view saying the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has specialized units trained for specialized duties, "but we are not giving specifics for their own protection."

Padilla explained that members of these special units were trained abroad and were taught techniques and procedures when dealing with terrorist threats. Their training ensued following the kidnapping of the missionary couple, Martin and Gracia Burnham. The couple were kidnapped by the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in 2002 and held for more than a year waiting for ransom. Martin was killed, while Gracia survived during an AFP operation to rescue them.

Last hijacking

ON May 25, 2000, Philippine Airlines Flight 812 left the Davao Airport. While en route to Manila, a man initially identified as Reginald Chua announced he has hijacked the plane. Before landing, Chua reportedly threatened the 278 passengers and 13 crew members with a gun and hand grenade.

He fired his gun into a bulkhead and demanded to be let into the cockpit. When he was refused access, Chua demanded the passengers to place their valuables in a bag before he commanded the pilot to descend so that he could escape using a home-made parachute. But Chua panicked and clung to the rear door. A flight attendant pushed him out of the plane.

The hijacker's body, wearing a ski mask and swimming goggle, was found buried in mud somewhere in Real, Quezon. It was speculated that he survived the fall but was killed by the mud. Chua was correctly identified through his driver's license.

That was the last reported hijacking in the country. How does the Avsegroup assure the Filipino travelers this would not happen again?

"As far as we're concerned, we are prepared for any eventuality but we still need the cooperation of the community," Balagtas said. "At the end of the day, you have our assurance that every aircraft that flies in our skies are safe, through the coordinated efforts of every unit involved."

And when asked how prepared is the Armed Forces to deal with a terrorist attack, Padilla said he would throw back the same question to the reporter: "Have the Filipinos been able to experience the things that happened in the US [Boston marathon bombing], Paris and Belgium?"

ring words

Some may find comfort in the words of Mas and Padilla, spokesman of the AFP, the impact of a terrorist attack remains real because the ASG.

The ASG is considered the "most vicious" among separatist groups in the Philippines. Some of its members have been said to have studied or worked in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and developed ties with jihadeen fighters. The ASG has proclaimed itself as "freedom fighters." However, even Muslim clerics have distanced themselves from this small armed group.

Padilla said the last terrorist attack in the Philippines was the sinking of *SuperFerry 14*, which was bombed allegedly by ASG members on Manila on February 27, 2004. At least 116 people were killed, mostly by drowning. It was considered the country's deadliest and the world's deadliest terrorist attack at sea.

Padilla admits the country is also being subdued to threats. "But we are able to act on them," he said. How the AFP would act would remain classified information, a consensus the *BUSINESSMIRROR* tried to make Padilla agree to an interview.

"The government has monitoring apparatus within the community and they are silently doing their jobs," Padilla said. According to the military spokesman, the Philippines have not experienced the intensity of the terror attacks in the US, France and Belgium "because the country's security apparatus is working day and night to ensure that our community is safe."

Asymmetrical war

PADILLA considers the ASG not as a terrorist group but "a bunch of bandits who are more interested in money by demanding ransom."

"The local terror groups, like the Abu Sayyaf, are motivated by money or material gains," Padilla said. "There is rampant kidnapping at the Southern backdoor but the government has a no-ransom policy."

However, he said families of the kidnap victims usually disobey their order not to pay because they don't like to lose any member of their family.

At the same time, Padilla said these families are usually blackmailed by videos of their relatives being threatened with beheading if they do not cough up the required amount.

He admits, however, that in this age and time, "there is a new kind of terrorism or terrorists that are extremists in nature, with total disregard for the value of life, driven by ideology and, therefore, too evil and ruthless."

Padilla said confronting these new kind of terrorists, gets complicated "because the AFP is now dealing with an asymmetrical form of warfare, where the enemy recognizes no rules, but our men's action are governed by laws."

"Sometimes, the AFP launches an operation against suspected terrorists, but when the enemy feels that they are on the losing end, they splinter into smaller groups, bury their weapons to be retrieved later and mix with civilians."

He said when some soldiers go out in the open, like a marketplace, they recognize what looks like the faces of enemies they encounter in the field. However, he said the enemy is unarmed and looked harmless when mixing with their fellow Mindanoeans, although these are the same persons who could have planted homemade bombs.

"If you don't have proof, like a gun, what would be the basis of your arrest?" Padilla said. "That's why the war on terror is asymmetrical."

Machines or men?

PADILLA estimates it would cost the country "a lot of money" if the government installs CCTV cameras nationwide.

It would be better to ask for the people's cooperation to be watchful, according to him.

"I wish the nation could have 1 million CCTV in the form of human eyes, watching suspicious activities and reporting them to the police, instead of arming ourselves with CCTV cameras to prevent crime," Padilla said. He added that human eyes are fail-safe and do not consume electricity.

"We don't err on intelligence collection, we may not have gadgets and high technology, but we are not far behind," Padilla said. "Many other countries work with us for information about terrorist groups."

The military believes that citizens' participation to look out and report suspicious activities are crucial because the AFP has only 125,000 personnel looking after the welfare of 100 million Filipinos.

He said the PNP has more personnel than the military because its manpower grows as the population increases.

"These capabilities start from employing the military and the police," Padilla said. "But later on, in the context of more proactive way to combat terrorism, [these capabilities entail] the whole-of-government and a whole-of-a-nation approach."

He said this is true in Southern Mindanao, where the borders with neighboring countries are porous and where extremists and radical are able to get in and out without fear of getting arrested.

"We need the cooperation of the whole of the government, particularly those dealing with border matters," Padilla said. "Those that enforce our laws like, customs, immigration, maritime police, Navy and Coast Guard have to be strengthened."

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China warns Asean on backing RP bid

China has used its economic clout to prevent Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) members from backing the Philippines which is a founding member of the now economic bloc, in the arbitration process with a United Nations body at The Hague.

The Philippines has filed the arbitration case defying China's wish for a bilateral negotiations over the disputed areas in South China Sea.

Japan's *Kyodo News Agency* said China has warned the Asean not to issue any statement on the Philippines-initiated

arbitration at The Hague, which *Kyodo* citing Asean diplomatic sources said was a move apparently aimed at preventing Asean from backing any judgment in favor of the Philippines.

China's Vice Foreign Minister Liu Zhemian made the comment at a regular meeting between Chinese and Asean officials in Singapore to discuss the territorial disputes

in the sea, which he co-chaired with Singapore's Foreign Ministry Permanent Secretary Chee Wee Kiong.

Liu claimed during the meeting that it would be a "risky move" for

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China warns Asean on backing RP bid

From page 1

Asean to issue any statement on the case and China would "object" to it, *Kyodo's* source said.

The Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague is expected to make a final decision on the case in the next few months.

Liu reiterated that China's position is not to accept the arbitration, which it regards as a move against China by outside powers – a reference to the United States and Japan. Any relation with outside powers should not be at the cost of Asean-China ties, he said.

Three other Asean members, Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei, are also claimants in the South China Sea dispute.

"The main thing China wants from this senior officials meeting (SOM) is a lack of Asean consensus on an Asean statement on the outcome of the arbitration tribunal in The Hague," explained an Asean diplomat.

At the meeting, Liu also assured Asean that China's construction activities in the Nansha or Spratly Islands in the South China Sea is not for military purposes, but rather for civilian use, including combating piracy and to help ships navigate, the diplomat said on condition of anonymity.

The Chinese delegation also circulated a joint statement at the meeting, which Beijing had drafted in the hope that the foreign ministers of China and Asean can issue it at an upcoming meeting to be held in July in Vientiane, Laos, on the sideline of the annual meeting of Asean foreign ministers and related meetings.

The draft statement emphasizes the importance of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, which Asean and China signed in 2002, followed up in 2011 with the adoption of guidelines to implement the declaration.

At a news conference after that meeting, Liu emphasized the importance of the declaration and the resolution of the dispute by negotiation, as opposed to arbitration.

He defended China's recent four-point consensus with three Asean countries on the South China Sea territorial dispute, which has attracted criticism from some Asean officials as an attempt to split the 10-member regional bloc on the issue.

According to a posting on China's Foreign Ministry website last month, Foreign Minister Wang Yi recently reached the four-point consensus with the governments of Brunei, Cambodia and Laos on how to approach the South China Sea issue. The consensus claims the disputes are not an issue between China and Asean as a whole, and they should only be resolved through dialogue and consultation by parties directly concerned.

As a result of the four-point consensus that China said it has already agreed on with the three Asean countries, "the other Asean countries would not (be able to) take a decisive stand...there will be no consensus for Asean to go forward on South China Sea issues," said the Asean diplomat.

Japan leases aircraft

Japan will lease military aircraft to the Philippines in another sign of deepening security ties between the two former foes to counter Beijing's increasing regional influence.

The agreement was made yesterday afternoon during telephone talks between Japan's Defense Minister Gen Nakatani and his Philippine counterpart Voltaire Gazmin, the ministry said.

Tensions in the South China Sea, through which one third of the world's oil passes, have mounted in recent years since China transformed contested reefs into artificial islands capable of supporting military facilities.

Under the accord, Tokyo will lease up to five TC-90 training airplanes and help Manila train pilots and aircraft mechanics, the ministry said. The planes can be used as surveillance aircraft, according to local media.

It will be Japan's first lease of its Self-Defense Forces' aircraft to another country after it recently lifted a self-imposed ban on weapons exports.

"We agreed that it is important for all the countries in the region to strengthen cooperation in order to maintain peace and stability of the South China Sea," Nakatani told reporters.

"We believe that improving the Philippines' capability will lead to stability in the region," he added.

The TC-90 is capable of flying some 1,900 kilometers, roughly double the flight range of the Philippine navy's aircraft, *Kyodo News* said.

The Philippines has been seeking to strengthen ties with Japan, its former World War II rival, as tensions mount over disputed South China Sea waters, almost all of which are claimed by China. The southeast Asian country has a severely under-equipped military.

Aside from the Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia and Taiwan also have overlapping claims to the contested waterway.

Japan has its own dispute with China in the East China Sea over uninhabited islands that it administers but that are also claimed by Beijing.

A Japanese warship last month sailed into a Philippine port near

disputed South China Sea waters while Tokyo agreed in February to supply Manila with military hardware, which may include anti-submarine reconnaissance aircraft and radar technology.

In a statement, the Department of National Defense (DND) said Gazmin and Nakatani spoke at around 4 p.m. yesterday with the Japanese defense chief expressing appreciation despite the cancellation of his scheduled visit to the Philippines last month.

“Minister Nakatani reaffirmed the transfer of the Maritime Self-Defense Force TC 90 Aircraft which will be useful for HADR (humanitarian assistance and disaster response) and maritime security,” DND public affairs director Arsenio Andolong said in the statement.

Nakatani's visit to Manila was postponed following the strong earthquakes that hit Kyushu in Japan.

During their conversation, Andolong said the defense chiefs agreed that bilateral cooperation “is indispensable and discussed how to enhance relations by strengthening communications, deepening exchanges and educational opportunities.”

“Both parties reiterated their commitment to work together, with Minister Nakatani expressing that the two countries’ bilateral relationship is crucial for peace, stability and prosperity, not only of the two countries, but of the region as well,” Andolong added.

In March, Gazmin said the rental of TC-90 training aircraft from Japan for maritime patrol operations in the country would have to go through processes before the military could avail their services.

“The lease, it would still have to go through discussions. It was a general topic that we would have (TC-90). As to how, the mechanics on how to acquire them, this will be discussed in another forum,” he said.

It was President Aquino who disclosed in March that the country will be leasing five TC-90s from the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Forces for its patrol of its territory, particularly West Philippine Sea.

The TC-90 is based on the commercial, twin-turboprop engine C-90 utility aircraft made by American company Beechcraft. The C-90 is officially known as King Air. Japan's military is using it as a training aircraft with unique locally made avionics.

The TC-90 is similar to F27 Fokker that the Philippine Navy has used in its maritime patrol operations when it comes to speed and range, but it is smaller and lighter, using less powerful engines which translates to lower operating cost.

Mario J. Mallari, AFP

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INQUIRER

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A new Somalia?

THE RELEASE last Sunday of 10 Indonesian seafarers held hostage by the Abu Sayyaf bandit group was good news, but the kind that underlined the bad: Four more Indonesians remain in captivity, at least seven other foreigners have been abducted, and it is likely that the release was facilitated by the payment of ransom.

EDITORIAL

This possibility has been denied officially in two countries.

"The release was conducted without paying a ransom, based on negotiations and cooperation between the TNI [the Indonesian military] and the Philippine military," retired general Kivlan Zein, the Indonesian negotiator, told Indonesian media.

Armed Forces of the Philippines officials also denied that any ransom had been paid to the notorious kidnap group.

The Indonesians were brought to the house of the Sulu governor on Sunday, and returned by private plane to a military base in Jakarta by early Monday.

"Our prayers have been answered," the brother of one of the hostages told Agence France-Presse. "A few days ago when the kidnappers beheaded a hostage we were very worried, but now we heard he is safe we feel so blessed."

But reports persist that money did in fact change hands. In the first place, it is highly unusual for Abu Sayyaf hostages to regain freedom without ransom payments. There have been a few genuine escapes, and unrelenting military pressure has been proven to loosen the group's grip on some of its captives. But by and large, releases are triggered by ransom payments.

Secondly, sources have said that ransom was paid. One source told the INQUIRER that a P50-million ransom was paid to the kidnappers. "They were supposed to be freed between Friday and Saturday somewhere in Luuk town [instead of Sunday]," the source said.

Another source asserted that the shipping company that employed the Indonesians, Patria Maritime Lines, paid the P50 million that the kidnappers were demanding.

Some may argue that paying up is the only effective way to save hostages; military action in the dense terrain of Basilan and Sulu is difficult, and not a guarantee of success. Negotiation is even more complicated, with an unenviable track record.

Sorry experience tells us it isn't only private parties who end up paying ransom; some governments have been known to look the other way or even actively facilitate ransom payments to effect the release of their citizens.

But the grimmer reality is that ransom payments tighten the Abu Sayyaf hold on the areas it controls. Mayor Hussin Amin of Jolo, Sulu, said he did not know if ransom was paid for the 10 Indonesian hostages. But he added words of caution: "If this big release came in exchange for money, those who paid are supporting the Abu Sayyaf."

And: "This money will be used to buy more firearms and will be utilized as mobilization funds by these criminals."

The problem becomes worse when considered in view of the new reputation that part of southern Philippines is gaining: A possible "new Somalia," treacherous waters where unsuspecting travellers and sailors are abducted at gunpoint and held for ransom.

Tomorrow, diplomats and military officials from the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia will meet to discuss the possibility of conducting joint naval patrols in the area. That is an important next step, to prevent possibility from becoming reality.

ONLINE NEWS

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www.dwdd.com.ph

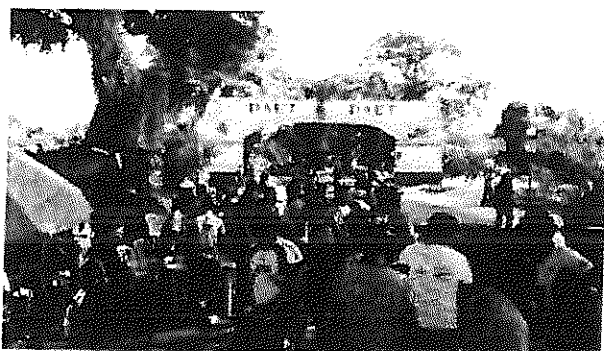
SAFE 2016 II 2,000 bikers pedal for a 'fear-free' elections

Ed. May 3, 2016 6:00am Bikes around 2016 safe2016



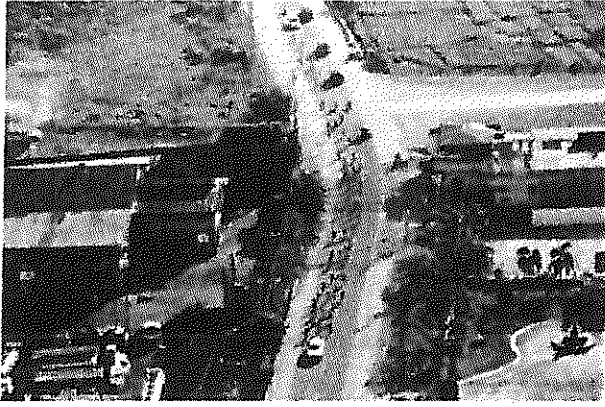
CAMP GUILLERMO NAKAR, Lucena City – Around 2,000 bikers participated in a synchronized pre-election biking activity in selected cities and municipalities in Regions IV-A, IV-B and V at 6 a.m. today, May 3, 2016. The activity was initiated by the AFP Southern Luzon Command and was aimed to send a message of commitment of the men and women in the uniformed services together with COMELEC, partner agencies and other NGOs for a Secure and Fair Elections (SAFE) 2016.

The activity, dubbed as "Bike for SAFE 2016" was participated by SOLCOM and subordinate units, PNP, COMELEC, PPRCV, DepEd, DILG, NGOs, other stakeholders. It was simultaneously conducted in Infanta, Quezon; Binangonan and Tanay of Rizal; Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro; Lucena City and Calauag of Quezon; Labo and Daet of Camarines Norte; Legazpi City, Albay ; Virac, Catanduanes and Sorsogon City, Sorsogon.



In Lucena City, AFP Southern Luzon Command Chief Lieutenant General Ricardo R. Visaya with PNP Acting Quezon Provincial Police Director PSSupt Eugene Paguirigan, COMELEC Quezon Acting Provincial Elections Supervisor Atty Dioscoro Pajutan, COMELEC Lucena City Election Officer Atty Ana Mei Barbacena, Assistant Schools Division Superintendent Celedonio B. Balderas, Jr. and Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting Coordinator Atty Alwin P. Racelis graced the event with messages of hope, unity, peace, fairness for the upcoming May 9 elections.

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



Only those directly involved for the conduct of SAFE and bike enthusiasts participated in the 35 km route which passed from Camp Nakar, Lucena City – Tayabas City – Pagbilao – Perez Park, Lucena City.

The AFP SOLCOM strictly abides to the non-partisan posture of the organization as well as on every member in its ranks. By doing so, we help maintain the sanctity of the ballots, votes and the entire election process.

"We just want to show the people that we are ready for the elections. We just want it to be peaceful," said AFP Southern Luzon Command Chief Lieutenant General Ricardo R. Visaya.

For COMELEC Lucena City Election Officer Atty Ana Mei Barbacena, SOLCOM's Bike for SAFE is one simple gesture of support and commitment that has a great effect on establishing a 'Fear-Free' election atmosphere in the communities. She said that the series of initiatives for SAFE would likely contribute to a high voters' turnout. (SOLCOM-PIO)

www.bomboradyo.com

Palawan humingi ng tulong sa AFP re: delivery ng mga VCM at election paraphernalias

By Analyn Soberano Posted in Latest News Tuesday, 03 May 2016 16:46

Humingi ng tulong ang Palawan sa Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) para i-transport ang mga vote counting machine (VCM) at mga election paraphernalias na gagamitin sa halalan sa Lunes.

Partikular na hiniling ng Palawan ang C-130 cargo plane ng Philippine Air Force (PAF).

Ayon kay Public Affairs Office deputy chief Capt. Frank Sayson na ang request ay ginawa upang magamit sa pagta-transport ng mga election paraphernalia at vote counting machines.

Gayunpaman, sinabi ni Sayson na kailangan pa rin nila ng approval ng Comelec para sa nabanggit na request.

Aniya, papasok lang daw sila sa eksena "under extreme emergency cases" gaya ng kakapusan sa oras.

Sa ngayon nasa kamay pa rin ng pribadong shipment contractor ang nabanggit na responsibilidad at maaari lang aniya silang magkaroon ng partisipasyon sa pagdadala ng VCM at paraphernalia kung may basbas ng Comelec at kung urgent na talaga.

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

www.interaksyon.com

CARAGA'S 4TH MOST WANTED | Top NPA leader captured at PNP-AFP checkpoint

By: Erwin M. Mascariñas, InterAksyon.com

May 3, 2016 1:36 AM



File photo of New People's Army fighters in the Caraga region. (Erwin M. Mascariñas, InterAksyon.com)

InterAksyon.com

The online news portal of TV5

BUTUAN CITY – The fourth most wanted person in the Caraga region, also known as commander Joker of the communist News People's Army (NPA), was captured on Monday by elements of the Philippine National Police and the Army's 23rd Infantry Battalion manning a Comelec checkpoint in the town of Las Nieves in Agusan Del Norte.

"At around 1:00 in the afternoon our composite Comelec PNP and AFP checkpoint along barangay Mat-I in the town of Las Nieves in Agusan del Norte were able to apprehend Ricardo Manili, better known as commander Joker, one of the high ranking commanders of the NPA," said Police Chief Superintendent Rolando Felix, Caraga regional police director. "He is on the number list of our most wanted and has a reward on his head for P4.9 million."

Felix revealed that, "Commander Joker was inside a van without an authorized plate, that inside the van the police team were also able to get a homemade shotgun, a caliber .45 pistol, a 9mm pistol, an improvised explosive device, a grenade, two blasting caps, three bolos, several rounds of ammunitions, medical kit and other documents and personal belongings.

"There were also six individuals inside the van with him who are now under investigation to verify their real names and assess if they are together with commander Joker and members of the NPA," Felix added.

Felix, who assumed his position as the regional police chief this January, considered the capture a big achievement for the region's police force.

"This is an achievement not only for the police but also for our brothers in the army and a huge hit to the leadership of the NPA here in Caraga Region. Commander Joker is known to be an institution within the armed movement. I'm sure his capture will have an impact towards the NPA," said Felix.

A police report from the field suggests that the vehicle was on its way to Bayugan City through the new roads along Esperanza town in Agusan del Sur. The vehicle was believed to have come from barangay Tungao in Butuan City.

Manili has an outstanding warrant for two counts of rebellion, two counts of murder and multiple murders, according to police data.

According to a report of the 4th Infantry Battalion in October 2011, Manili and four other guerrillas were killed in an encounter in Barangay Calabuan in Esperanza. The NPA refuted this report.

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

Manili was last seen on camera handing over the release of Corporal Adriano Bingil of the Army's 26th Infantry Battalion in December 31, 2016 in the town of Las Nieves.

The Caraga region in northeastern Mindanao is composed of the provinces of Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur and Dinagat Islands and the cities of Butuan, Cabadbaran, Surigao, Tandag, Bislig and Bayugan.

www.bomboradyo.com

Pag-release sa 2 sundalo, apektado sa pagkahuli sa NPA leader?

By Bombo ButuanPosted in [Latest News](#) Tuesday, 02 May 2016 14:18

BUTUAN CITY - Nalagay umano sa alanganin ang nakatakda sanang pagpapalaya sa dalawang mga sundalong dinukot ng New People's Army (NPA) matapos mahuli ang releasing officer ng mga rebelde na si Ricardo Manili alyas Ka Joker.

Si Ka Joker ay lider nang tinaguriang Guerilla Front Committee 4-A.

Nagpaabot ng mensahe ang kampo ng mga NPA na si Ka Joker daw ang releasing officer para sa pagpapalaya sana kina Pfc Devin Tawide at Glenn Austria.

Ayon kay C/Supt. Rolando Felix, regional director ng Police Regional Office-13, dadalo sana sa gagawing pag-release sa dalawang bihag si Ka Joker at ang anim na mga kasamahan na naaresto.

Napag-alamang papunta na sana sila sa Bayugan City sa lalawigan ng Agusan del Sur ngunit naharang ng COMELEC checkpoint ang kanilang sinasakyang van sa may Brgy. Mat-i, sa bayan ng Las Nieves, Agusan del Norte.

Nakuha mula sa kanilang posisyon ang mga bala, mga armas, improvised explosive device, at mga subersibong dokumento.

Habang ini-impound naman ang kanilang sinasakyang van.

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Narekober na 19 high-powered IED sa SoCot, gagamitin sana umano ng NPA sa eleksyon

By Bombo KoronadalPosted in [Latest News](#) Tuesday, 02 May 2016 09:27

KORONADAL CITY - Malaki umano ang posibilidad na gagamitin sana ng rebeldeng New Peoples Army (NPA) sa araw ng halalan ang mga narekober na 19 na high-powered improvised explosive device (IED) sa Sitio Tabudtod, Barangay New Dumangas, Tboli, South Cotabato.

Sa panayam ng **Bombo Radyo Koronadal** kay Lt. Mariz Salonga, Civil Military Operations Officer ng 27th IB, Philippine Army, sa 19 na mga bomba, 11 dito ang anti-personnel o para sa mga sundalo na nagsasagawa ng operasyon sa field at 8 naman ang itinuturing na anti-vehicle.

Kaugnay nito, pag-aaralan ng militar ang components ng nasabing mga IED na narekober kahapon kasabay ng pagsilbi ng warrant of arrest sa mga wanted person sa nabaggit na lugar.

Sinabi naman ni Police S/Insp. Jose Marie Simangan, deputy chief of police ng T'boli na sa ngayon ay inihahanda na ang kasong illegal posession of explosives na isasampa sa mga suspek na nasa likod nang pagtatago ng mga bomba.

www.pna.gov.ph

Japanese defense chief reaffirms transfer of TC-90 aircraft to PHL

MANILA, May 3 (PNA) -- Despite the postponement of his visit to the Philippines due to the massive earthquake that flattened Kyushu last April, Japanese Defense Minister Gen Nakatani reaffirmed the lease and transfer of five TC-90 training aircraft to the Philippines.

This was disclosed by Defense public affairs office chief Arsenio Andolong in a statement Tuesday.

"In a telephone call at around 4:00 p.m. on Monday, May 2, 2016, Japan's Defense Minister Gen Nakatani, expressed appreciation to Philippine Defense Secretary Voltaire T. Gazmin for understanding the cancellation of his planned visit to the Philippines in April. The trip was postponed following the strong earthquakes that hit Kyushu," he added.

During the phone call, both defense chiefs agreed that bilateral cooperation is indispensable and discussed how to enhance relations by strengthening communications, deepening exchanges and educational opportunities.

In the same vein, Nakatani reaffirmed the transfer of Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force TC-90 aircraft which will be useful for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and maritime security.

"Further to this, will be the training that will be provided for the end-users," Andolong said.

Delivery of the TC-90s are expected to be completed this year

He added that both leaders are looking forward to meeting each other in a rescheduling of the visit.

Both parties reiterated their commitment to work together, with Nakatani expressing that the two countries' bilateral relationship is crucial for peace, stability and prosperity, not only of the two countries, but of the region as well.

The TC-90, which is part of the Beechcraft King Air aircraft family, was offered by Japan shortly after the Agreement Concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology was finalized last Feb. 29.

The TC-90's patrol range is double of small Philippine aircraft which only has a maximum range of 300 kilometers. (PNA) BNB/PFN/Espie Corral (OJT)