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NEWS CLIPPINGS

16 September 2018

Sunday

PGS



Honor. Patriotism. Duty

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Ompong leaves trail of destruction

By JAIME LAUDE

Typhoon Ompong tore through Northern Luzon yesterday, its ferocious winds and blinding rain killing at least three people and causing floods, landslides and power outages.

Ompong, the strongest storm to hit the country this year, made landfall at the coastal town of Baggao in Cagayan province at 1:40 a.m. before it exited the Ilocos region before noon and moved out towards the South China Sea with reduced wind speeds of 170 kilometers per hour.

In the aftermath of the storm, officials began to assess the damage and check on casualties.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), for its part, confirmed two of its rescue workers were killed while trying to free

people trapped in a landslide in the Cordillera region.

NDRRMC executive director and Office of Civil Defense (OCD) chief Ricardo Jalad identified the two fatalities as Shaina Mae Laroco, 19, and Grace Ganabe, 45.

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Ompong

From Page 1

both of Youngland, Camp 7, Baguio City.

The two rescuers were among those helping to retrieve Hyacinth Gabino and Narcisa Gabino who went missing after a landslide hit their village in Loakan, Itogon, Benguet.

Police also said the dead body of a 12-year-old girl was fished out of the swelling Marikina River in Pasig City yesterday.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said officials in Cagayan were verifying the drowning of two children.

Authorities were also checking what happened to about 70 men who reportedly returned to their coastal village to check on their homes during dangerous storm surges that saw walls of seawater whipping inland.

Officials are also checking reports that a man was crushed to death when a concrete wall collapsed in Calocan City during the storm.

Officials are also assessing the extent of damage in Cagayan where Ompong initially hit.

At daybreak, Cagayan's capital Tuguegarao City was left with a severely damaged public market, its roof ripped apart and wooden stalls and tarpaulin canopies in disarray.

Outside a popular shopping mall, debris was scattered everywhere and government workers began clearing roads of fallen trees.

Many stores and houses were damaged but most residents remained indoors as occasional gusts sent small pieces of tin sheets and other debris flying dangerously.

Tuguegarao airport terminal was badly damaged, its roof and glass windows shattered by strong wind, which also sent chairs, tables and papers flying about inside, Lorenzana said.

Government damage assessment was underway except in areas still being bat-

tered by wind and rain. Two Air Force C-130 cargo planes and 10 helicopters were on standby in Manila to help transport rescuers and aid supplies.

More than five million people were at risk from the storm, which the Hawaii-based Joint Typhoon Warning Center categorized as a super typhoon with powerful winds and gusts equivalent to a Category 5 Atlantic hurricane.

With a huge raincloud band 900 kilometers wide, combined with southwest monsoon rains, Ompong dumped intense rain that set off landslides and flash floods.

Storm warnings have been raised in almost all the provinces across Luzon, including Metro Manila, restricting sea and air travel.

A few hours after landfall, the eye of the typhoon roared past Ilocos Norte.

Ompong's sustained winds weakened to 170 kph with gusts of up to 260 kph after it sliced across Northern Luzon.

Before it hit land, Ompong packed sustained winds of 205 kph and gusts of up to 255 kph, forecasters said.

Still destructive

Even if the typhoon weakened slightly after slamming ashore, its winds will remain very destructive, according to Rene Paciente, assistant weather services chief of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA).

"Even if Ompong is already out of the (Philippine area of responsibility), the outer spiral of the typhoon may still affect the country," Paciente said.

He said the southwest monsoon enhanced by the typhoon will bring gusty winds with occasional moderate to heavy rains over Western Visayas, Zamboanga Peninsula, ARMM, MIMAROPA

and Bicol Region, while scattered light to moderate to at times heavy rains will prevail over Eastern and Central Visayas.

PAGASA warned stormy weather is expected over the areas still under Signal no. 3, including Cagayan, Babuyan Group of Islands, Batanes, Ilocos provinces, La Union, Mountain Province, Benguet, Ifugao, Kalinga, Apayao and Abra.

Signal No. 2 remained hoisted over Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Pangasinan, Tarlac, Nueva Ecija, Aurora, Zambales, Quirino, Pampanga and Bulacan.

Meanwhile, Signal No. 1 is hoisted over Metro Manila, Bataan, Rizal, Cavite, Batan-

gas, Laguna, Batangas, Lubang Island, Northern Quezon including Polillo Island.

At 5 p.m. yesterday, the eye of Typhoon Ompong was located 160 km west northwest of Laoag City in Ilocos Norte. It was forecast to leave the Philippine area of responsibility last night or early today.

PAGASA said the weather would start to improve today.

Better prepared

Some 105,000 people were staying in temporary shelters after mass evacuation of coastal areas fol-

lowing major storm surge warnings.

Authorities in some areas of northern Luzon turned off power as a precaution, and

said some residents in high-risk areas chose to ride out the storm to protect homes from looters.

Dams across Luzon opened up its floodgates to let off excess water ahead of Ompong's torrential rains.

According to Lorenzana, more than 1,000 houses were impacted in Baguio where the storm first made landfall.

Lorenzana presided over a press conference with NDRRMC officials at Camp Aguinaldo where he revealed thousands of houses in Baggao were completely

flattened by Ompong.

He also said eight villages in the town became isolated with rescue workers and soldiers finding it difficult to establish contact with the residents since electricity is down.

"Aside from the destroyed houses and fallen trees and electric posts along the way, the old Baggao town was also destroyed," Lorenzana said.

"There are a lot of properties that were destroyed, including rice fields and root crops," he added.

At the same press conference, Cagayan Gov. Manuel Mamba said the provincial government has yet to determine the extent of the damage as some areas of the province are still isolated.

Despite the damage and casualties, officials said they were better prepared this time in terms of evacuating and informing high-risk communities.

"I talked to the President last night (Friday). His clear and concise marching order was 'Save lives, save lives,'" said Francis Tolentino, the government's disaster response coordinator and political adviser to President Duterte.

Undersecretary Renato Solidum of the Department of Science and Technology

said people in northern Luzon experienced Super Typhoon Lawin in 2016 and were not caught off guard.

"There has been an aggressive information dissemina-

tion to prepare well," Solidum said.

"Because the people had experienced a super typhoon only recently, they really had imagination about

what happened before and that they really need to be prepared."

In an emergency meeting Thursday, Duterte asked Cabinet officials from the north to help oversee disaster response work.

Duterte designated Tolentino as "conduit" to coordinate government rescue and relief efforts in the regions directly in Ompong's path. - Rhodina Villanueva, Emmanuel Tupas, Raymund Catindig, Robertzon Ramirez, Ding Cervantes, Jack Castaño, Eva Visperas, Cesar Ramirez, Sheila Crisostomo, Rudy Santos, Jun Elias, Ramon Efren Lazaro, Artemio Dum-lao, Marc Jayson Cayabyab, Reuters, AP

'OMPONG' SHUTS POWER, ROADS IN 8 PROVINCES

STORY BY THE INQUIRER STAFF

Government officials are assessing the extent of destruction left by Typhoon 'Ompong' and checking on the conditions of people in the hardest-hit areas of northern Luzon. The howler's winds and rains triggered landslides that blocked roads and toppled major power lines.

By **Rommel Domingo,**
Jaymee T. Gamil
 and **Melvin Gascon**
 @Team_Inquirer

Government disaster-relief officials were assessing damage and checking on the conditions of millions of people in worst-hit provinces on Saturday after Typhoon "Ompong" (international name: Mangkhut) smashed through north and northeastern Luzon leaving a large swathe of destruction and shutting down electricity in at least eight provinces.

At least five people, including two rescuers trying to free people trapped in a landslide in Baguio City, were confirmed to have died and two others were missing in the strongest typhoon to hit the country this year.

The massive storm's blinding rain and ferocious wind gusts of up to 395 kilometers per hour toppled major power lines and caused widespread flooding, most notably in Baguio City and Cagayan province, which Ompong pummeled as it made landfall in Baggao town around 1:40 a.m. on Saturday.

As of 8 p.m. on Saturday, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said Ompong had slightly weakened and was tracked at least 240 km west-northwest of Laoag City, Ilocos Norte, moving across the West Philippine Sea toward Hong Kong.

'Continuing hazards'

After hitting land as a super-typhoon with 220 kilometers per hour sustained winds and slamming across the Sierra Madre and Cordillera mountain ranges, Ompong's winds slowed to 160 kph with gusts of 195 kph.

Though the typhoon was expected to exit the Philippine area of responsibility (PAR) on Sunday morning, Pagasa warned of "continuing hazards."

Weathermen said the western coasts of northern and northeastern Luzon were at risk of storm surges of up to 3 meters that could be stirred by Ompong's outer cloud bands and the enhanced southwest monsoon.

By Saturday night, only 22 areas remained under storm signal, all of which were in northern and central Luzon: Signal No. 3 in Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, and La Union; No. 2 in Batanes, Cagayan, including the Babuyan Group of Islands, Abra, Apayao, Kalinga, Mountain Province, Ifugao, Benguet, Pangasinan, and Zambales; and No. 1 in Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, Tarlac, Pampanga, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Aurora and Bataan.

Storm warnings remained hoisted in 10 provinces as the typhoon, the 15th to hit the country this year, headed for open water.

A government damage assessment was underway, except in northwestern areas of Luzon

that were still being battered by winds and blinding rain as of 8 p.m. on Saturday.

Two Air Force C-130 cargo planes and 10 helicopters were on standby at Villamor Air Base in Pasay City to help transport rescuers and aid supplies.

Ompong's fierce winds put out of commission transmission and distribution lines in the provinces of Cagayan, Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, Abra, Kalinga, Apayao, Mountain Province and Nueva Vizcaya, according to the National Grid Corp. of the Philippines (NGCP).

In a press briefing, NGCP assistant vice president Raul Seludo said 90 percent of Benguet province had no electricity.

Power lines tripped

The typhoon caused the tripping of 12 230-kilovolt transmission lines, 26 69-kv lines and one 23-kv line in all eight provinces, said Seludo, head of the NGCP's systems operation in Luzon.

He said power outages were also experienced in Southern Luzon and the Visayas.

"We cannot say when full restoration will be achieved because we can't send out our people while the weather is still bad," said NGCP vice president Gildo Listano.

In Metro Manila, the Manila Electric Company (Meralco) said Ompong caused service interruptions that affected as many as 423,000 customer connections. As of 5 p.m., the said number of customers had been reduced to 63,000.

Landslides closed off several major road sections in northern Luzon to traffic on Saturday, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) reported.

Huge boulders, loosened soil and thick mud from a collapsed slope at Barangay Ambatec in Bayyo town, Bontoc province, rendered the Mountain Province-Nueva Vizcaya Road impassable to all types of vehicles.

Officials were also monitoring the condition of the Chico Karayan bridge, also in Bontoc, whose foundations were weakened by floodwaters rushing down mountain slopes on both banks of the Chico River.

Collapsed slopes

Collapsed slopes were also reported at the Beto and Supang sections of the Mountain Province-Ilocos Sur Road via Tue.

Several landslides were also reported at the Chakchakan, Gonocon, Malitep and Palingawan sections of the Baguio-Bontoc Road.

In Quirino, the swollen Ngilinan River forced the closure of the NEJ-Villa Sur-San Pedro-Cabua-an-Ysmael-Disimungal Road.

In Ilocos Sur, the Tagudin Cervantes Road was closed to traffic due to land and rock slides, while in Cagayan, the Itawes Overflow Bridge went underwater, rendering the Cagayan Apayao Road section in Sta. Barbara, Piar, impassable to

all types of vehicles.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) said that accumulated rains, compounded by the release of water from several dams, including Chico and San Roque dams in the Cordilleras, could continue to cause floods and trigger more landslides.

In an NDRRMC briefing at Camp Aguinaldo on Saturday, presidential spokesperson Harry Roque said two female "responders" died in landslides in Baguio City. Two other persons perished in the city (See related story on A2), police said.

An 8-month-old infant girl in Pio Duran town, Albay province, died on Thursday night after she fell through a hole in the bamboo floor of a flooded house.

Senior Supt. Benigno Durana, spokesperson for the Philippine National Police, told the briefing that rescuers fished out the body of a still unidentified girl from the Marikina River on Saturday morning.

Two residents in Itogon, Benguet, were reported missing.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and Office of Civil Defense officials said rescuers in Cagayan were verifying the drowning of two children.

The provincial capital of

OMPONG'S FURY Typhoon "Ompong" (international name: Mangkhut) pounds Cagayan province on Saturday as it moves toward the West Philippine Sea. In Arnulung town (above), a man braves heavy rain and powerful wind while crossing a road in Barangay Baculud. In Alcala town, a fallen electric post blocks a section of the Alcala-Baggao Road (right) while Elizabeth Pagallaman (center right) secures her family's belongings in their damaged house in Baggao town. Away from the typhoon's eye, in Rizal province, displaced families in San Mateo town pack an evacuation center in Barangay Banaba.

—PHOTOS BY RICHARD A. REYES AND NIÑO JESUS ORBETA



Tuguegarao reeled from the onslaught of Ompong, which severely damaged the airport and public market, ripped apart roofs of hundreds of houses and uprooted trees, Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade said.

President Duterte designated Tugade as head of his Cabinet's relief and rescue monitoring group for Cagayan.

In all, about 105,000 people were staying in relief centers and other temporary shelters from Ilocos Norte to provinces in Southern Tagalog as of Satur-

day night, according to social welfare and NDRRMC officials.

A report from the regional Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office said a total of 9,025 people from 2,814 families had already sought shelter in relief centers in the provinces of Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon.

In Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan, 457 evacuation centers were activated to accommodate a total of 4,941 evacuees, said police Supt. Imelda Tolentino, the region's police information officer.

Nine members of the Geron family literally hung on for dear life inside their house in Barangay San Jose when Ompong hit land at the coastal town of Baggao before 1:40 a.m.

Five men in the family pulled at ropes tied to the house's trusses for several anxious minutes as the typhoon's winds tugged at the roof.

"They were hanging down from the roof while I and my three children prayed," said Dany Geron, 39.

With a 50-km eyewall, Ompong powered through the Baggao coastline, crossed the Sierra Madre mountain range and slammed into the Cagayan towns of Gattaran and Lasam.

The typhoon flattened huts, toppled trees and electric posts and pried off galvanized iron sheets like pieces of paper in Baggao and the nearby towns of Alcala, Amulung, Gattaran and Lai-lo.

In Barangay Baybayog, Baggao Richard Erpelo and his three children survived after fierce winds and rain blew away the roof and walls of their house.

"We rolled on the highway because of the strong winds. I wrapped my 5-year-old daughter and we rolled together," Erpelo told the inquirer at an evacuation center in the town.

More flights arriving and departing the four terminals of Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) were called off despite Ompong's expected exit from the PAR on Sunday night.

Canceled flights

The total of canceled flights from Friday to Monday climbed to 217—108 domestic and 109 international flights, according to the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA).

Airline companies have advised MIAA that they would cancel a total of 62 more flights on Sunday and Monday.

Cebu Pacific and its budget carrier CebGo called off its remaining flights scheduled on Sunday and Monday.

Cathay Pacific canceled a total of 18 flights, Philippine Airlines 14, AirAsia 5, AirSwift 2 and Air China 1.

The Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines issued a notice to airmen (Notam) calling on commercial airlines flying to and from airports in northern Luzon to secure a waiver from the Office of the Director General.

The Department of Foreign Affairs said it would deploy personnel in the country's international airports to facilitate the provision of P5,000 in financial assistance to overseas Filipino workers whose flights were canceled because of Ompong.

The department has put up a help desk at Clark International Airport in Pampanga and will deploy teams starting on Sunday to terminals 1, 2 and 3 at Naia, Foreign Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano said. —WITH REPORTS FROM JOVIC YEE, LEILA B. SALAVERRIA, JEROME ANING, DEXTER CABALZA, MARICAR CINCO, REY ANTHONY OSTRIA, MADONNA VIOLA, VILLAMOR VISAYA JR., LAILANIE ADRIANO, TONETTE OREJAE, GABRIEL CARDINOZA, YOLANDA SOTELO, ARMAND GALANG, AFP, AP AND REUTERS INQ

TODAY

US ENVOY DENIES CIA HAND IN COUP PLOT

UNITED States Ambassador to the Philippines Sung Kim has denied accusations that the US Central Intelligence is involved in the alleged destabilization plot against President Rodrigo Duterte.

"I can assure you with great confidence and conviction that there is actually no effort in the US government, including the CIA, to come up with some effort to undermine President Duterte's administration," Kim said in a roundtable discussion with journalists.

On the contrary, Kim said the two countries' military cooperation has never been stronger, pointing out the US initiative to work closely with government forces in combating human trafficking, piracy, and terrorism.

"We have a very strong cooperation with all the security agencies and it will continue," the US envoy added.

The President's recent statement hinting at US interference with the country's internal affairs, Kim said, will not affect the military cooperation and bilateral relations between the two countries.

Duterte earlier claimed the CIA wanted him dead.

The Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines have both denied receiving information on the alleged CIA plot against the President.

Lance Baconguis

Ex-military officers warn vs amnesty revocation

By MARVIN SY

Two former military officers warned the administration of the implications of President Duterte's move to revoke the amnesty granted to Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV on the future efforts of the government to attain peace with enemies of the state.

Speaking on The Chiefs' program of Signal TV's *One News* channel, former Armed Forces of the Philippines chief Rodolfo Biazon and former 1Lt. Francisco "Ashley" Acedillo aired their concern over the unilateral revocation of Trillanes' amnesty, which has never been done before.

Biazon, also a former senator, said the grant of amnesty has always been done as a demonstration of the government's sincerity in pursuing peace with its enemies.

"The grant of amnesty is an attempt to bring peace to the

land. The grant of amnesty is a peace consideration," said Biazon.

He recalled how previous administrations have granted amnesty to members of groups such as the Reform the Armed Forces Movement, the Communist Party of the Philippines, Moro National Liberation Front and even the Magdalo Group and that these were done with the concurrence of Congress.

Trillanes led the Magdalo Group of rebel soldiers that mounted a coup against former president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Now by revoking the amnesty granted to Trillanes, Biazon said that the same amnesty given to other personalities such as Metropolitan Manila Development Authority chairman Danny Lim, Sen. Gregorio Honasan and even incumbent AFP chief Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. could also be

revoked in an instant without consulting Congress.

"The grant of amnesty is a shared power between the President and the legislature," said Biazon, who also once served as a member of the House of Representatives.

Acedillo, who was granted amnesty together with Trillanes as part of the Magdalo Group, noted how even the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos issued 12 amnesty proclamations during his term and none of these were withdrawn.

He said that the grant of amnesty has proven to be an effective tool for peace and as such, the unprecedented move of Duterte to revoke Trillanes' amnesty could have dire consequences in the future.

"What is more troubling is it deprives future administrations of this tool for peace. Because the signal now is if you talk to the government about peace and there is an amnesty

offer on the table, I cannot hold on to that because that can be withdrawn at any time and unilaterally, even without consent of Congress," said Acedillo, who was a former party-list representative.

Acedillo said that he and his fellow Magdalo Group members are also wary of the possibility that the amnesty granted to them could also be revoked by the President since they all went through the same process as Trillanes.

He said that there are established procedures to prove the existence of public documents such as those in relation to Trillanes' amnesty that the administration is claiming could not be found.

According to Acedillo, the Department of National Defense and the AFP could be asked by the courts to produce the pertinent documents and that they have no choice but to bring these out.

He cited the National Archives Law that requires the different government agencies to keep their records for 30 years.

Both Acedillo and Biazon said that "infidelity in the handling of documents" is a crime and could lead to charges filed in court.

The two also aired their concerns about the claim of President Duterte about how the CPP, Magdalo and Liberal Party are working together to oust him based on purported recordings provided to him by a foreign government.

Acedillo categorically denied the claim of the President as a member of the Magdalo and said this does not make any sense, considering that there is no way his group would ever cooperate with the CPP.

Biazon said that more than the alleged destabilization plot, the claim of the President

was alarming because it is saying that wiretapping is being done in the country and that this is even being done by foreign governments.

He said the identity of the so-called "friendly country" that gave the recordings must be revealed.

"If they can wiretap the CPP and Magdalo, who else are they tapping? They can tap anybody in this country," Biazon said.

AFP chief Galvez has declared the military's unflinching loyalty to the Constitution and the duly constituted authorities.

Saying the 145,000-strong soldiers are solidly behind the chain of command, Galvez is confident that the men and women of the military will decline firmly any and all attempts to create a wedge in the AFP.

- With Jaime Laude, Gilbert Bayoran

Trillanes: Intelligence men casing my house



BEEN THERE, DONE THAT Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV shares a light moment with Sen. Gregorio Honasan, a known coup leader against the late President Corazon Aquino, at the Senate.—LYN RILLON

By Leila B. Salaverria
 @LeilasINQ

Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV said on Saturday that suspicious-looking men have been casing his house as he continued to hole up at the Senate to avoid arrest after President Duterte revoked his amnesty for two failed mutinies.

Trillanes said his camp listed the license plate numbers of vehicles seen around his house, but these turned out to be unregistered, leading him to conclude that these were from the

government's intelligence units. "We are making the necessary security arrangements," Trillanes, one of the President's most vocal critics, said over radio station dwIZ.

Used to harassment

In the radio interview, the former mutineer and ex-Navy lieutenant said this was not the first time his family was thrust into this kind of situation.

So even if he doesn't want his family to go through this, they were prepared "psychologically

and emotionally," he said.

He also slammed what he said were attempts to draw him out of the Senate through pronouncements from Mr. Duterte and other officials that he would not be arrested without a warrant from the court.

Road arrest

Aside from members of the military informing him that he would still be seized if he went out, it was also shown that the statements were a bluff by the incident on Thursday when his ve-

hicle was followed when it went out of the Senate compound.

This took place after he said earlier the same day that he would leave the Senate after the Department of Justice (DOJ) failed to get an arrest warrant for him from the Makati regional trial court.

He said he surmised that he would have been intercepted and arrested on the road had he gone out and this would render moot his court case contesting Mr. Duterte's move to revoke his amnesty. INQ A9

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THE PHILIPPINE TIMES

A2

Trillanes to sue website over story on his late father

BY DEMPSEY REYES

SEN. Antonio Trillanes 4th has denied a report alleging his late father misused funds while in active service at the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), saying he would file libel charges against the persons behind the writeup.

"I will be filing libel charges against these people. My father retired from the AFP in 1988 and died in 1998," Trillanes told *The Manila Times* in a text message on Friday night.

"He never had any graft case or any other case while he was in the AFP," the former navy officer added.

The writeup on the website "The Daily Sentry" cited a supposed

comment by retired Philippine Navy commodore Vicente Cejoco, and allegedly posted by a certain Ernesto Aquino on Facebook.

It alleged that Trillanes' father, Antonio Sr., became a "dealer-supplier" of various items in the AFP General Headquarters at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City.

The Daily Sentry's report also alleged that the budget for the

telephone directory publication of the AFP and Philippine National Police was "lost in a casino and mahjong bet by Antonio Sr. in just a blink of an eye," after the special allotment release order was encashed.

The report also claimed Cejoco was the younger Trillanes' engineering instructor at the Philippine Military Academy (PMA). Trillanes graduated from the PMA in 1995.

Trillanes Sr. and his wife, Estelita, "always [visited] Baguio and [slept] in his (Trillanes) room," The Daily Sentry claimed.

The senator said he had read the writeup, published on September 13.

He told *The Times* that his

father was a graduate of the PMA Class of 1959 and was in the Philippine Navy during his active duty days.

Military and defense sources told *The Times* they had no knowledge of the supposed wrongdoings of the embattled senator's father.

"I have never heard of such. That story, I think, was just mere propaganda especially with what is happening right now," a defense source said.

Senator Trillanes is facing his biggest personal battle yet, after President Rodrigo Duterte issued a proclamation revoking the 2011 amnesty granted to him by the administration of President Benigno Aquino 3rd. *PT*

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September 10, 2018

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Trillanes charged with sedition

SEN. Antonio Trillanes 4th is facing yet another complaint, this time of sedition.

Labor Undersecretary Jacinto Paras filed a case of inciting to sedition or inciting to coup d'etat against Trillanes, who is still under Senate custody over an amnesty row with the Duterte administration.

In his complaint that he filed before the Pasay City Prosecutor's Office on Friday, Paras cited Trillanes' seditious remarks against President Rodrigo Duterte and the current administration during his recent interviews at the Senate.

"He maligned the President by calling him insane, murderer, stupid, corrupt, incompetent thereby encouraging the soldiers to lose trust and withdraw support to their Commander-in-Chief, who is the President and by

> Sedition A2

SEDITION FROM A1

Trillanes

doing this, Trillanes will be able to lead in the murder of the President and overthrow his government," he said in an interview.

Paras argued that Trillanes' statements against Duterte could not be covered under freedom of expression, citing "The People of the Philippine Islands v. Isaac Perez, G.R. No. L 21049, December 22, 1923, the Supreme Court."

"Criticism, no matter how severe on the Executive, the legislature and the judiciary is within the range of liberty of speech, unless the intention and effect be seditious," the complaint read.

"Trillanes' intemperate use of profane, foul, vile, seditious words or language, and resort to scurrilous libels against the President or the government, his ardent call on the military and the police to disobey the order of the latter, as well as his seditious proposal to the Armed Forces to launch a coup... constitute the crimes of inciting to sedition and proposal to commit coup d'etat," it said.

Under the country's Revised Penal Code, inciting to sedition refers to a crime committed by someone who "incites others to the accomplishment of any of the acts which constitute sedition, by means of speeches, proclamations, writings, emblems, cartoons, banners or other representations tending to the same end."

The charge can also cover those who "utter seditious words or

speeches, write, publish or circulate scurrilous libel against the Republic of the Philippines or any of the duly constituted authorities thereof, or which tend to disturb or obstruct any lawful officer in executing the functions of his office, or which tend to instigate others to cabal and meet together for unlawful purposes, or which suggest or incite people against the lawful authorities or to disturb the peace of the community, the safety and order of the government."

The sedition case is the latest among the opposition senator's legal woes, which include the withdrawal of his amnesty and a libel case.

Duterte's Proclamation 572, dated August 31, 2018, said the amnesty granted to Trillanes was null and void from the beginning.

Paras, a former Jawanaker, previously said the charges stemmed from Trillanes' alleged efforts to prod soldiers to rebel against Duterte and for supposedly calling the President "insane."

Trillanes is facing possible arrest after Duterte voided his amnesty over two failed military uprisings in 2003 and 2007.

He has been holed up in his office at the Senate since Tuesday last week.

The President's son, former Davao City Vice Mayor Paolo Duterte, meanwhile, filed last week a libel case against Trillanes, a year after the senator accused him of corruption.

Trillanes, in 2017, claimed Paolo and brother-in-law Manases Carpio were involved in a scheme to extort money from ride-hailing firms.

CATHERINE S. VALENTE

Trillanes tinuluyan sa 'sedition'

Tuluyan nang sinampahan ng kasong sedition o plotting to coup d' etat sa Pasay City Prosecutors Office sa Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV.

Ibinasa ni Labor Undersecretary Jacinto Ting Paras ang kanyang reklamo sa naging pahayag

ni Trillanes laban kay Pangulong Duterte mula sa interview ng mga rapper noong Setyembre 4, 2018.

Sabi ni Paras, ang mga pahayag ni Trillanes ay malinaw na paglilipag sa Revised Penal Code Art. 142 Inciting to sedition at Art. 136 o ang Proposal to commit Coup d'Etat.

"He maligned the President by calling him insane, murderer, stupid, corrupt, incompetent, thereby encouraging the soldiers to lose trust and withdraw support to their commander in chief, he is the President and by doing this, Trillanes will be able to lead in the murder of the President and overthrow his govern-

ment," ayon kay Paras.

Ibinin ni Paras na ang mga pahayag ni Trillanes laban sa Pangulo ay hindi na sakop ng freedom of expression.

Ibinanggit din sa reklamo na sinasabi umano ng senador na "Malinaw sa lehat na si Mr. Duterte ay isang diktador. Hindi siya tumerespeto sa institusyon kaya ganito layo. Kung yung mga ordinaryong tao pinapatay, yung mga kritiko kukulong, so ganyan ang kalakapan sa Pilipinas ngayon."

Kinondena rin ni Paras ang panawagan ng Senador sa militar at pulisya na huwag sundin ang utos ng Pangulo dahil hindi na

Ethics rap mooted on Trillanes

By Alvin Murcia

The problems of Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV related to his "arrogant behavior" keep piling up as Labor Undersecretary Jacinto Paras said aside from the filing of inciting to sedition charges, he will also likely face

Ethics rap mooted on Trillanes

Criticism, no matter how severe, on the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary is within the range of liberty of speech unless the intention and effect be seditious

From page 1

an ethics complaint before his peers in the Senate.

His co-graduates at the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) who hailed from Mindanao cited among reasons for seeking his removal from the roster of Philippine Military Academy Alumni Association Inc. (PMAAI), Trillanes' "arrogant behavior" towards senior officers and President Rodrigo Duterte.

Trillanes got a temporary reprieve after two Makati Regional Trial Courts deferred the issuance of an alias arrest warrant and hold departure order against him in connection with the voiding of his amnesty through Proclamation 572.

Paras said yesterday his legal team is seriously thinking of filing an ethics complaint before the Senate ethics committee against Trillanes due to his unfounded verbal assaults against Mr. Duterte.

"We're considering that seriously," said Paras on his next option after he filed an inciting to sedition or inciting to a *coup d'etat* case against the chief critic of Mr. Duterte.

While Trillanes is awaiting the Makati Regional Court Branch 148's decision either to issue a warrant and HDQ, he had to contend with

consequences of toxic statements against the President.

Paras filed the other day the case against Trillanes before the Pasay City Prosecutor's office which is the latest in the legal tiffs that the senator is now embroiled in.

Not part of free speech

The charges against the senator were filed for his alleged violation of Revised Penal Code Art. 142, inciting to sedition and Article 136 involving a proposal to commit *coup d'etat*.

He had to contend with consequences of toxic statements against the President.

The complaint alleged that Trillanes issued statements against the President during an interview with reporters on 4 September 2018 that Paras said was clear evidence of inciting to sedition.

"He maligned the President by calling him insane, murderer, stupid, corrupt, incompetent, thereby encouraging the soldiers to lose trust and withdraw support to their commander in chief, who is the President, and, by doing this, Trillanes will be able to lead in the murder of the President and overthrow his government," said Paras after the filing of the complaint.

Paras argued in his complaint the statement of Trillanes against the President could not be covered under the freedom of expression, citing "The People of the Philippine Islands v. Isaac Perez, G.R. L21049, 22 December 1923, the Supreme Court."

Avoid seditious effect

Paras quoted former Associate

Justice Arthur Malcom as saying "criticism, no matter how severe, on the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary is within the range of liberty of speech, unless the intention and effect be seditious."

Malcolm who died in 1961 was an American lawyer who greatly influenced the development of law practice in the Philippines.

At age 35, he was appointed Associate Justice of the Supreme Court where he served for 19 years. His most enduring legacy was his key role in the setting up of the College of Law at the University of the Philippines.

In the complaint, the senator was quoted as saying "it should be clear to everyone that Mr. Duterte is a dictator. He doesn't respect the institution that is why we are this way. If ordinary people are ordered killed, critics are being imprisoned, this is how things in the Philippines these days."

The complaint alleged that Trillanes issued statements against the President that was clear evidence of inciting to sedition.

The senator was also cited for his statement "I didn't expect they'd go through great lengths, even make themselves look stupid, just to get rid of me."

Paras also argued the statements of Trillanes were profane, foul, vile, seditious words or language and resort to scurrilous libels against the President or the government.

The Labor undersecretary said he will wait for the fiscal to conduct a preliminary investigation on the complaints against Trillanes.

Chinese foreign minister's visit postponed due to Ompong

By JANVIC MATEO

The official visit of Chinese Foreign Minister and State Councilor Wang Yi this week has been postponed due to Typhoon Ompong.

In an advisory yesterday, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said Wang's visit, which was scheduled from Sept. 16 to 18, was deferred as Philippine government personnel are busy undertaking rescue, recovery and relief efforts.

"It was mutually agreed by the Philippines and China that the official visit to the Philippines of Chinese State

Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi be rescheduled at a later date," said the DFA.

"At this time, the DFA is focused on coordinating offers of international humanitarian assistance, through the Philippine Humanitarian Assistance Registry, and extending assistance to overseas Filipino workers stranded in ports around the country," it added.

The agency said the two countries would continue to work closely together to ensure the success of all future high-level engagements and the advancement of bilateral cooperation.

Wang was set to arrive today for a three-day official visit to discuss with the Duterte administration the flagship infrastructure program and joint exploration of oil and gas reserves in the South China Sea.

The visit was upon the invitation of Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano.

In earlier separate statements, the DFA and the Chinese Foreign Ministry said Wang's visit was aimed at further strengthening the partnership between the Philippines and China.

"After a successful visit to China by the Philippine eco-

nomic managers last month, this visit will again provide both sides an opportunity to take stock of infrastructure projects under the Philippine government's flagship Build, Build, Build program," the DFA said.

The two sides are also expected to come up with a framework of cooperation that conforms to their respective rules and regulations and international laws.

"The Philippines and China continue to work together in managing differences addressing issues pertaining to the disputed territories in the West Philippine Sea," Cay-

etano said.

"State Councilor Wang's visit is a demonstration that our bilateral ties are becoming solid and steady as never before," he said.

"The Philippines and China are both committed to continue on the path of cooperation, all the while ensuring that the Filipino and the Chinese peoples will reap the dividends of our mutual efforts," added the secretary.

Meanwhile, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Geng Shuang said Wang's visit will consolidate and strengthen friendly cooperation be-

tween the two countries.

"The China-Philippines relationship continues to improve as evidenced by deepening political mutual trust and fruitful outcomes of across-the-board practical cooperation, which has brought tangible benefits to the two peoples," he said.

"In April, (Chinese) President Xi Jinping held his fifth meeting with President Rodrigo Duterte on the sidelines of the Ecao Forum for Asia Annual Conference in China, during which they reached important consensus on further developing bilateral relations," he added. 15

'Ompong' wreaks havoc, closes roads in North Luzon

By ERWIN G. BELED and MARY T. SUPNAD

BALAOAN, La Union — A number of main roads in Region 1 going to Manila and Baguio City were closed due to debris and toppled electric posts following the scourge of typhoon "Ompong" early yesterday, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) reported.

DPWH Information Officer Esperanza Tinaza said the Ilocos Sur-Abra road in Lungong, Narvacan, Ilocos Sur was closed to all types of vehicles due to a fallen acacia tree.

The Ilocos Norte-Apayao road

was closed to traffic, too, due to the eroded concrete pavement and collapsed slope protection in Barangay Maananteng Solsona, Ilocos Norte.

In La Union, only one lane was passable for vehicles going to and from Baguio City because of the temporary stoppage of work in the construction of box culverts in Barangay Imelda, Naguilian, La Union.

The Ilocos Sur 2nd District Engineering Office reported that the Tagudin Cervantes Road in Barangay Zigzag, Cervantes was also closed due to land and rock slides.

Mayor Josefino Miranda said roofs of some houses were blown away and scattered hazardously on the Zigzag Road.

In Tagudin, the stretch of the road became a virtual lumber yard of uprooted trees, said District Engineer Jose G. Ginete Jr.

Meanwhile, only one lane was passable along the Ilocos Norte-Apayao Road due to the eroded shoulder and collapsed slope protection.

In Pangasinan, the Garrita Bridge (detour) in Bani, Pangasinan could only be passable to light vehicles. Heavy vehicles are obliged to take the Mabini-

Bani provincial road or Alaminos-Burgos Agno-Bani national road as an alternate route.

Most areas in Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur and La Union had suffered power outage due to fallen trees and electric posts as Ompong swept across the tip of Northern Luzon with intense rains and destructive winds of over 200 kilometers per hour (kph).

Road signs and warnings have been installed in the area to avoid accidents, while DPWH personnel, military, police and other volunteers conducted clearing operations.

'OMPONG' EXITS; DANGER REMAINS

Vast areas suffering from power outage

By ALEXANDRIA SAN JUAN and MYRNA M. VELASCO

Monster typhoon "Ompong," which swept through Northern Luzon with ferocious winds and torrential rains early Saturday morning, was expected to leave the Philippine area of responsibility (PAR) last night after knocking

out power and communications, setting off landslides, and whipping up the seas in the agriculture region.

Ompong continues to weaken as it veers away from the country.

With the weather easing, officials warned there was lin-



N. Luzon bears Ompong's...

gering danger

"It's still a life and death situation," Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said by phone, citing past drownings in swollen rivers in mountain provinces after storms have passed.

Department of Science and Technology Undersecretary for Risk Reduction and Climate Change Dr. Renato Solidum told the public to stand guard as hazards are still in place while Ompong veers away from the country.

"Ang ating mga panganib dahil sa bagyong Ompong kahit ito ay papalayo na at nakalagpas nang kalupaan ay patuloy pa rin. Nandyan pa rin ang panganib ng habagat na dapat patuloy nating paghandaan (Lingering danger remains although Ompong continues to veer away from the country. There is still the threat of habagat)," he said.

At least three people died and six were reported missing during Ompong's onslaught. Two of the fatalities were responders trying to rescue people trapped in two landslides in Itogon, Benguet, while one drown in a river in Pasig City.

The minimal number of casualties so far may be attributed to preparations ahead of the landfall.

Authorities said they are better prepared than in 2013, when super-typhoon "Yolanda" devastated the Visayas and killed 6,300 people.

Saving lives was paramount and it was too soon to know the extent of Ompong's devastation, said Secretary Francis Tolentino, an adviser to President Duterte and disaster response coordinator.

However, no report of the extent of damage was immediately available as disaster officials are still completing assessment in the agriculture region, where a massive evacuation from high-risk areas was carried out over

two days.

But the ferocity of Ompong, which has a diameter of about 900 km and had maximum gust of 336 kilometers per hour at its peak at 4 a.m. Saturday, is likely to have caused widespread damage to infrastructure and agriculture.

"Almost all of the buildings here have been damaged, the roofs were blown away," Cagayan provincial information officer Rogelio Sendang said. "There has been no electricity supply ... communications were also down. "We've received reports that many trees were uprooted and electric posts toppled and are blocking the roads. This makes the clearing operations really difficult."

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said Ompong made landfall at 1:40 a.m. Saturday in Baggao, Cagayan, before moving west and away from land.

In the 5 p.m. weather update, PAGASA weather specialist Ariel Rojas said the eye of Ompong is now located 160 kilometers west northwest of Laoag City, Ilocos Norte, and now moving west northwest at 25 kilometers per hour.

It continues to weaken and is now packing maximum sustained winds of 160 kph and gustiness of up to 196 kph.

Rojas said Ompong was expected to exit PAR between 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. Saturday while heading toward China where it can possibly make its second landfall.

In a press briefing Saturday morning, PAGASA Assistant Weather Services Chief Renito Paciente said that even if Ompong is already outside PAR, we cannot still immediately feel fairer weather as it will continue to bring rains and winds on the western area of the country.

"It is possible that Ompong may still pour rains over the western part of Luzon while moving westward away from the land. As it moves farther from the country, its effect will continue to weaken," Paciente said.

Paciente advised the public to be alert on possible hazards that Ompong may bring such as flashfloods, and landslides.

Chances of possible storm surges along coastal areas are now slim but PAGASA still advised fisherfolk and those with small seacraft not to venture out over the seaboards of areas with storm warning signals as well on the seaboards of Luzon and of Visayas.

"Good weather can be felt, possibly on Sunday evening or starting Monday morning," Paciente added.

As of 5 p.m. Saturday, signal No. 3 is still up over Cagayan including the Babuyan Group of Islands, Batanes, Ilocos Sur, Ilocos Norte, La Union, Mountain Province, Benguet, Ifugao, Kalinga, Apayao, and Abra wherein winds of greater than 121 to 170 kilometers per hour is expected in at least 18 hours.

Areas under signal No. 2 are Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Pangasinan, Tarlac, Nueva Ecija, Aurora, Zambales, Quirino, Pampanga, and Bulacan.

Meanwhile, signal No. 1 is up over Metro Manila as well as in the provinces of Bataan, Rizal, Cavite, Batangas, Laguna, Lubang Island, Northern Quezon including Polillo Island.

Power outage

The National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP) said some of its transmission lines that were damaged have already been partly restored although the significant chunk will still have to go through repair and power restoration processes.

NGCP Assistant Vice President for System Operations Naul Saludo said the areas that are still suffering from total blackout around mid-day Saturday

include those in Cagayan, Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, Abra, Kalinga, Apayao, Mountain Province, and Nueva Vizcaya.

He added the affected areas with partly restored electricity service were: La Union, 17 percent; Benguet, 16 percent; Isabela, 11 percent; Pangasinan, 15 percent; and Zambales, 90 percent.

Gildo Listano, NGCP VP for Operations and Maintenance, said they cannot give a complete commitment on when power may be fully restored in the typhoon-battered as assessment of damage on transmission facilities continues.

"We want electricity service restoration done as early as possible, but we are still completing our damage assessment. In fact, we have our personnel that had been following the typhoon's track - complete with communications equipment, so we can assess how to go about power restoration," he stressed.

In Pangasinan, 13 towns are affected by the power outage. These are Bolinao, Bugallon, Aguilar, Binmaley, Agno, San Fabian, Lingayen, Mangata-

rem, Alcalá, Sison, Asingan, Binadonan, and Bahingao.

Metro power interruptions

In Metro Manila alone, the Manila Electric Company (Meralco) listed said that as of 6 a.m. Saturday 430,000 electricity consumers suffered power interruptions "due to the effects of typhoon Ompong." That number had been cut down to 62,000 as of 2 p.m. Saturday and full restoration was expected within the day.

Meralco spokesman Joe Zalzarriaga said a large swath of Metro Manila's electricity services were affected with the typhoon's powerful rush.

He said some of the areas affected "are inaccessible due to strong winds and floods," hence, restoration efforts in these domains may take a bit longer.

Zalzarriaga nevertheless assured the public that it will be working round the clock to bring back electricity service, while also ensuring the safety of its dispatched crew in these affected areas. (With reports from Liezle Basa, Reuters, and Aaron B. Recuenco)

Duterte set to visit 'Ompong'-affected sites

BY ARYLL CYRUS B. GEDUCOS

Malacbang said that President Duterte will be sure to visit the areas affected by typhoon "Ompong" as soon as the weather permits him to fly there.

Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque made the statement as Cabinet members held a command conference at the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) office in Quezon City.

During the command conference, Roque said that Duterte is still in Manila monitoring the developments.

"I'm not sure where he is

exactly right now. But he's in Manila. He did not leave and is monitoring," Roque said Saturday morning.

"But knowing him, he will be the first to go to the affected area as soon as the weather allows his chopper to take off," he added.

According to the Palace official, Duterte had no last minute directives regarding the typhoon as of the 9 a.m. command conference. He said that the only directive was to provide information to the public.

"Well, the directive is to conduct this command conference. We were tasked to handle information dissemination," Roque said.

"As you can see many of the department secretaries are here,

coordinating delivery of services," he added. Some Cabinet secretaries present in the command conference are Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and Public Works Secretary Mark Villar.

On Thursday, Duterte presided over a command conference at the NDRRMC office

to ensure the preparation of the government as Ompong enters the Philippines. Duterte also instructed some of his Cabinet members to go to the areas which would be affected by the typhoon.

"The Ilocanos in the Cabinet were tasked to go to their respective home provinces," Roque

said, referring to Labor Secretary Silvestre Belle III and Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade who were tasked to go to Isabela and Cagayan, respectively.

Earlier, Duterte said he instructed the two Cabinet secretaries to go to their provinces as he cannot be everywhere at the same time.

Duterte

From Page 1

This developed as some of Duterte's Cabinet men emerged as Ompong "survivors" after they suffered the brunt of the typhoon.

They were dispatched by the President to Ilocos provinces along Ompong's path to personally supervise government relief efforts.

The roof and windows of the house where political adviser secretary Francis Tolentino stayed was blown off by strong winds even as Transportation secretary Arthur Tugade experienced blackout at the hotel where he stayed in Cagayan.

Roque said Duterte, who often spends weekends in his hometown of Davao City, stayed in Manila for the weekend.

"He's in Manila. He did not leave and is monitoring... Knowing him, he will be the first to go to the affected area as soon as the weather will allow his choppers to take off," said Roque.

Duterte's Ilocos Cabinet men, among them Labor Sec. Silvestre Bello III and Tugade, were tasked to go home to their provinces to monitor government response to Ompong, Roque said.

The President designated Tolentino as his primary to oversee government effort for Ompong.

Roque's office was tasked to monitor information dissemination, while many other Cabinet members attended the interagency briefing on Saturday.

The Presidential Spokesman presided at the 9 a.m. interagency briefing at the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC).

"We confirm as of now, as of this time, wala pa pong reported casual-

ties... Right now it's still ongoing that's why wala pa tayong complete picture. We're getting reports on the ground as the typhoon is still there," said Roque.

Roque said that Cabinet secretaries who were deployed on the ground to personally monitor the impact of Typhoon Ompong, including those from various line agencies, have received instructions from the President.

Quoting a report from Tugade, who is in Tuguegarao, Roque said the typhoon destroyed Tuguegarao Airport.

Tolentino is in Cagayan, while Bello is in Ilocos. Isabela, Roque added.

He said they lost contact with Tolentino due to loss of power, and attempts at trying to reach him through satellite phone were done.

"The presence of the 'alter ego' of the President, I think has been beneficial dahil everyone, as far as the line agencies of the government, are directly reporting to them now," Roque said.

They are going around and ensuring that we are at our best as far as disaster preparedness is concerned," Roque added.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, NDRRMC chairman later clarified Tugade's earlier report, saying that only the Tuguegarao Airport terminal was damaged, but not the runway.

"Kung meron mang mga debris yung runway, it can be cleared immediately pagkawala ng hangin and the airport can be used anytime after that," Lorenzana said.

Quoting Tugade, Roque said there are no problems with the delivery of humanitarian resources to Cagayan amid damage in Tuguegarao Airport terminal.

"There are runways there in Cagayan Valley, one in Kawayan, one in Tuguegarao and one in Lajla," Lorenzana pointed out.

Duterte to visit typhoon-hit areas

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte is eyeing a trip to affected areas even as he monitored yesterday the onslaught of Typhoon Ompong (Mangkhut) in Manila, according to Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque. /Page 7

Lorenzana said NDRRMC personnel have been strategically deployed to respond immediately to stranded residents, particularly in Cagayan Valley, which is prone to flooding.

Secretary Ramon Lopez of Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), in a text message

to Roque, said the DTI has set up command centers "to ensure continuous flow of basic necessities and prime commodities, especially right after the typhoon."

Meanwhile, two C-130 planes are ready to airlift relief goods to Cagayan Valley if the weather permits, while about 10 helicopters are also being prepared for rescue operations in the mountains, said Lorenzana.

Lorenzana said Japan and Australia have already signaled to extend assistance.

Ompong, which made landfall in Cagayan province at 1:40 a.m. on Saturday, has affected 126,751 Filipinos so far.

RODY...
From A1

RODY ON 'STORM WATCH' MODE

By Nat Mariano

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte, who normally spends weekends in his home city of Davao, is in Manila during the weekend monitoring developments in areas affected by Typhoon "Ompong," Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque said Saturday.

"He's in Manila. He did not leave and is monitoring," Roque said in a command conference at the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council office in Quezon City.

"Knowing him, he will be the first to go to the affected areas as soon as the weather will allow his choppers to take off," the Palace official added.

Duterte tasked six of his Cabinet officials to be his "alter egos" in the provinces in Northern Luzon to facilitate government response to Ompong. Roque, meanwhile, was ordered to monitor information dissemination about the typhoon.

According to Roque, the President did not give any last-minute directive about

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the calamity, stressing that Duterte's only mandate was to give information to the public.

According to Roque, the President did not give any last-minute directive about the calamity, stressing that Duterte's only mandate was to give information to the public.

"Well, the directive is to conduct this command conference, we were tasked to handle information dissemination," Roque said. "[That's why] many of the department secretaries are here coordinating delivery of services."

Some Cabinet secretaries who were present during the interagency briefing were Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, who acts as the chairman of NDRRMC, Public Works Secretary Mark Villar, Social Welfare and Development Secretary Virginia Orogo and Communications Secretary Martin Andanar.

On Thursday, the President led a briefing, attended by several government officials, to ensure the prepara-

tion of the government as Ompong was pummeling the country.

Duterte designated presidential political adviser Francis Tolentino as his conduit for preparations and disaster response during the typhoon.

He also ordered Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade, Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III, Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, NDRRMC executive director Ricardo Jalad, and Tolentino to closely monitor the particular provinces in Northern Luzon in the typhoon's path.

"May I ask Atty. [Francis] Tolentino just to be my conduit. I may be around somewhere, I may decide to go out, I really do not know. Just get the information that is available and the things that we wanted to know along the way," said Duterte.

"Be my conduit so that it's only one [person]. Then I can have the whole gamut of information from there. So, he would represent the Office of the President because I'm away, I will be cut off," added the President.

Duterte explained that every department already designated field officers in the areas.

He deemed it proper to pinpoint

the six secretaries to closely monitor the calamity-prone areas.

"It's only proper. What they told me was right. I would need a face there. But I cannot be everywhere and anywhere. So, since they were locals of those provinces, I told them to go there," said Duterte, assuring the public that the government was ready for Ompong.

He explained he had dispatched government officials and already prepositioned food, medicine, and assistance.

Asked whether the country plans to seek aid from foreign countries, Duterte said it's "too early" to ask for help from the international community.

According to Tolentino, there was no report of casualties as of posting time but an increased number of evacuees was reported in affected areas.

Tugade said the Tuguegarao Airport was closed to the public after some facilities were damaged due to the typhoon.

Lorenzana, who joined Roque in the press conference, clarified that although some facilities were damaged, it was still open for humanitarian

services.

"The facilities are damaged but the runway itself is okay. The runway can be used for humanitarian services," Lorenzana said.

Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello, meanwhile, said roads from Metro Manila to Cagayan Valley remained passable and communication signal remained strong.

However, there was reported damage on agricultural products in Cagayan, he said.

He also assured that relief goods and donations were arriving in affected areas.

Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi said although power outages in some affected areas were reported, the government is working to partially restore them.

Trade Secretary Ramon Lopez said his department had set up command centers to ensure the flow of basic commodities, while Social Welfare Acting Secretary Virginia Orogo said 31,631 families in the Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon and Cordillera regions have been affected by the typhoon, and many of them were already in evacuation centers. With PNA

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Ompong leaves trail of death, destruction

BY ROY D.R. NARRA

TYPHOON "Ompong" claimed the lives of five people as it tore through northern Luzon on Saturday, authorities said.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) said two rescuers were killed in Baguio City because of a landslide. Philippine National Police (PNP) spokesman Benigno Durana identified the two fatalities as Shaina Mae Pascua and Grace Canabe, who were rescuing residents when the landslide occurred.

Durana said a girl aged 8 to 12 years

old was found floating on Manilina River under Javier Bridge in Pasig City.

An eight-month-old baby drowned in flooding in Albay province and a security guard was crushed to death after a wall crumbled because of strong rains in Caloocan City.

Four people were injured during the typhoon — Dresden Colidan, Nestor

► Destruction A2

Cabino, Paul John Campos and Janet Juano.

Durana also reported two missing people in Itogon, Benguet: Heacynth Cabi and Narcisa Cabino. A search and rescue operation for the two was ongoing.

"As we go forward, this number will go higher," NDRRMC executive Director Ricardo Jalad said, citing unverified reports of casualties during Typhoon Ompong.

Forty-two landslides were reported in Cordillera Region alone, Jalad noted.

A total of 27,669 families or 105,034 persons sought evacuation.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said Typhoon Ompong was out of the Luzon landmass and had weakened, moving with winds of 160 kilometer per hour (kph) and gustiness of up to 195 kph.

Typhoon warning signals 3 and 4 were lowered. Signal 2 was up in Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Pangasinan, Tarlac, Nueva Ecija, Aurora, Zambales, Quirino, Pampanga and Bulacan.

Metro Manila was under Signal 1, along with Bataan, Rizal, Cavite, Batangas, Laguna, Lubang Island, and northern Quezon including Polillo Island.

The southwest monsoon however is expected to bring rains to the Visayas, Zamboanga Peninsula, Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, Mimaropa and the Bicol Region.

Pagasa reported that four

Ompong leaves trail of death

dams opened their gates on Saturday afternoon.

Ompong was expected to leave the country past 8 p.m. on Saturday, barreling toward densely populated Hong Kong and southern China.

As of 3 p.m. on Saturday, reservoir water levels significantly went up in Ipo Dam, Ambukdao Dam, Binga Dam, and Magat Dam. San Roque Dam was also scheduled to open its gates.

Power out in Cagayan

Roughly four million people were in the path of the destruction the storm slashed through the northern tip of Luzon island.

The extent of the storm's destruction began to emerge, with reports of rain-soaked hillsides collapsing, torrents of out-of-control floodwaters and people being rescued from inundated homes.

At least seven provinces experienced total power outage.

The National Grid Corp. of the Philippines (NGCP) said the provinces of Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, Cagayan, Kalinga, Apayao, Abra, Mountain Province, and Nueva Vizcaya "totally have no power" as the grid operator's 12, 130-kilovolt and 24, 69-kilovolt transmission lines in northern Luzon tripped due to the weather disturbance.

The NGCP said La Union had 17 percent of its power supply; Benguet, 10 percent; Pangasinan, 15 percent; Isabela, 11 percent; and

Zambales, 90 percent.

Cagayan Governor Manuel Mamba pleaded for help from the national government after Typhoon Ompong made landfall in the municipality of Baggao.

Labor Secretary Silvesure Bello 3rd said winds brought by the strongest storm to hit the country this year peeled off the Provincial Capitol's roof and flattened the province's rice and corn fields.

There was no electricity in the area and communication through cellphones is scarce.

"We need a lot of help and we want to get assistance from the national government," Mamba said in a phone interview aired over the ABS-CBN News Channel.

The governor likened Ompong's onslaught to the damage brought by Typhoon Lawin in 2016 when at least "14,000 houses were completely destroyed."

The provincial government has set aside a standby fund but it may not be enough to cover all damage, Mamba said.

Blocked roads

Some roads in Cordillera provinces were also rendered unpassable because of landslides, according to the Fifth Infantry Division.

Capt. Jefferson Somera, spokesman of the Fifth Infantry Division based in Isabela Province, said seven landslide incidents were monitored in the Cordillera Administrative Region.

He said that most of the blocked

roads were in Ifugao and Mountain Province.

Somera said some minor flooding incidents in the region were also reported.

Defense to the rescue

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said two Lockheed C-130 "Hercules" cargo aircraft and 10 helicopters would be deployed for Typhoon Ompong relief and rescue efforts, particularly in Cagayan Valley, once the weather clears.

Lorenzana made the statement during a 9 a.m. press briefing led by Presidential spokesman Harry Roque Jr. in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

The defense chief said the two C-130s could airlift relief goods while the 10 helicopters could reach Cagayan Valley's mountainous area to fulfill rescue missions.

He said these air assets were on standby at Villamor Air Base in Pasay City and could fly any time.

Lorenzana also said troops were available in Cagayan and other affected provinces for rescue missions.

All available military transport assets, he said, could be used by the Department of Social Welfare and Development for the transport of relief goods and other items to communities needing help in the affected provinces.

The Northern Luzon Command head, Lt. Gen. Emmanuel Salamat, was in Tuguegarao, Cagayan managing efforts of the Armed Forces of the Philippines related to "Ompong." **WITH FRANCIS EARL A. CUETO, AFP, PNA AND JOVE MOYA**

'DEATH AND DESTRUCTION'

**'OMPONG' LEAVES 10 DEAD,
MASSIVE DAMAGE TO PH**

By Francisco Tuyay
and Joel Zurbano

UPER Typhoon "Ompong," the 15th and strongest storm to hit the country this year, ferociously whirled away towards the West Philippine Sea before sundown Saturday, leaving in its swathe an undetermined value in destroyed agricultural crops and infrastructure and an initial ten people dead and six others missing.

The typhoon struck the northern tip of Luzon and threatened the lives and homes of nearly four million people of the country's 106 million population. *Turn to A2*

'DEATH...'
From A1

The violent and unforgiving winds, accompanied by torrential rains, triggered massive landslides and knocked down power lines, leaving posthaste communities in its beaten path without power.

"As we go forward, this number will go higher," Ricardo Jalad, head of the national civil defense office, told reporters, referring to the death toll.

The two lifeless bodies of the two responders in Baguio City—identified as Shaina Mae Laroco Pascua, 19, and Grace Ganabe, 45—were pulled from the soil of a hillside that collapsed after the storm's torrential rains, police said.

The third was an unidentified girl in Marikina City in the metropolis.

In Nueva Vizcaya, four members of a family, including a two-year-old toddler and an 8-month old infant, were killed after their house caved in, presidential adviser on political affairs Francis Tolentino said.

Three others were killed in Benguet, Itogon Mayor Victorio Palangdan said in a radio interview.

In related developments:

- Nine airports in the country were ordered closed on Saturday.

The Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines already sent notice to airmen (Notam) that the airports in Basco, Cauayan, Tuguegarao, Lingayen, Laoag, Ibatay, Vigan and Palanan were closed for commercial operations until late afternoon today.

"So far, these are the airports covered by our Notam," said CAAP spokesperson Eric Apolonio in a text message to **Manila Standard**.

In Manila, the Manila International Airport Authority media affairs division said 53 flights were suspended Saturday.

Today, PAL, Cebu Pacific, Cathay Pacific, Air Swift, Air Asia and CebGo also suspended some international and domestic flights. Most of those cancelled were flights to and from Hong Kong.

Tomorrow, Cebu Pacific Air and Cathay Pacific suspended their Manila and Hong Kong flights.

- The Department of Health in Tuguegarao, Cagayan is looking for additional physicians to attend to the 87,000 residents who have fled to evacuation centers.

Dr. Rio Magpantay, Director IV, Re-

gional Office 2 of the DOH said doctors from the regional office would not be enough.

He said he had asked Health Secretary Francisco Duque III for augmentation from the Health Emergency Management Bureau and from the Epidemiologist Bureau.

In Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya, disaster volunteers reported that heavy rains in Nueva Vizcaya had rendered stretches of the Maharlika Highway in Cagayan Valley not passable to traffic since Saturday noon.

Enciong Guballa, a Red Cross volunteer has shown a video footage of road section in Santa Fe where existing flood control dikes failed to contain water from the river to overflow in the road.

As planned by the PDRRMC, Gov. Carlos Padilla sent heavy equipment and personnel to start clearing operations.

In Pampanga, the Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council in Central Luzon distributed a total 79,889 emergency food packages to the residents affected by Ompong in the region Saturday.

Initial reports from disaster council showed a total 19,850 affected families composed of 79,889 persons were served by the Department of Social Service Development and the local government units in the region.

Bobby Manalo, operation officer of the RDRRMC, said the emergency operations center inside the headquarters of Philippines Air Force in Clark was reactivated Saturday.

Manalo said the operation center was equipped with land, sea and air transport system like helicopters and vessels to speed up the relief and rescue and boost the capability of the disaster agencies in helping the victims.

In the southern part of Metro Manila, more than 6,400 people were evacuated, according to Supt. Jenny Tecson, spokesperson of the Southern Police District.

He said the evacuees were brought to 140 evacuation centers set up in the cities of Taguig, Las Pinas, Paranaque, Muntinlupa, Makati, Pasay and in the municipality of Pateros.

In Muntinlupa, the police community precinct 3 conducted police assistance for the distribution of relief goods to the evacuees at Alabang Elementary school. As of this time, there are 495 families and 2,400 individuals in the evacuation center," said Tecson.

The Metro Manila Development Authority also reported that four vehicles

were damaged after a Meralco post was knocked down at the westbound lane of Connecticut near Epifanio de los Santos Avenue.

MMDA spokesperson Assistant Secretary Celine Pinalago said no one was reported injured in the incident.

The UNICEF pledged assistance to the government in any and all capacities the government would require.

UNICEF Representative Lotta Sylwander said "Children are the most vulnerable in any emergency situation. UNICEF stands ready to provide support and assistance to the Philippine Government; and to local government units in the affected areas to respond to this brewing storm.

"We also call on parents and local communities to heed the governments' call to evacuate to safe spaces, to ensure populations, especially children, pregnant mothers, and vulnerable families are safe from possible damage brought about by Ompong."

UNICEF has prepositioned emergency supplies for about 12,500 families to respond to affected people's needs for safe drinking water, sanitation, hygiene, nutrition, education, and child protection. Sylwander said "The agency is also ready to distribute supplies on very short notice and activate partners for more emergency supplies for immediate distribution. Additionally, UNICEF said it has a cross-sectoral contingency already developed for areas on typhoon's track."

As Ompong left the Southeast Asian archipelago and barreled towards densely populated Hong Kong and southern China, search teams in the Philippines began surveying the provinces that suffered a direct hit.

"We believe there has been a lot of damage," said Social Welfare Secretary Virginia Orogo as thousands of evacuees took refuge in emergency shelters.

Ompong was packing sustained winds of 170 kilometers per hour and gusts of up to 260 km per hour as it left the Philippines.

An average of 21 typhoons and storms lash the Philippines each year, killing hundreds of people and leaving millions in near-perpetual poverty.

Thousands of people fled their homes in high-risk areas ahead of the storm's arrival because of major flooding and landslide risks.

Ompong has also left a trail of destruction to agriculture, particularly in the corn capital of Isabela and Nueva Viscaya and the rice granary in Nueva

Ecija, inundating low-lying areas as the whirlwind smashed the rest of Luzon.

Capt. Jefferson Somera, spokesman of the Army's 5th Infantry Division, said Ompong had incurred widespread devastation in Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Viscaya, Apayao, Kalinga and Abra.

He said several roads connecting Ifugao and Mountain Province were not passable. A total 1,882 families from Region 2 had been evacuated to shelters.

CAR Office of Civil Defense director Ruben Carandang said 28 roads were closed due to landslides, rockslides, obstructed to fallen trees and eroding soil.

Japan Meteorological Agency forecaster Hiroshi Ishihara told AFP on Friday, "Among all the typhoons this year, this one (international name Mangkhut; Philippine name Ompong) is the strongest."

"This is a violent typhoon. It has the strongest sustained wind (among the typhoons of this year)."

"They (authorities) said this typhoon is twice as strong as the last typhoon, that's why we are terrified," Myrna Paralang, 53, told AFP after fleeing her home in the northern Philippines.

"We learned our lesson last time. The water reached our roof," she said, referring to when her family rode out a typhoon at home in 2016.

The country's deadliest on record is Super Typhoon Haiyan, which left more than 7,350 people dead or missing across the central Philippines in November 2013.

Poor communities reliant on fishing are some of the most vulnerable to fierce typhoon winds and the storm surges that pound the coast.

"The rains will be strong and the winds are no joke... We may have a storm surge that could reach four storeys high," Michael Conag, a spokesman for local civil defense authorities, told AFP.

As the storm headed for China's southern coast, Cathay Pacific airline said it expects more than 400 flight cancellations over the next three days.

The Hong Kong government said Mangkhut would pose "a severe threat to the region" as many residents in the city and neighboring Macau stocked up on food and supplies.

The president of neighboring Taiwan, Tsai Ing-wen, told citizens to be ready.

"The typhoon is powerful and even it's not expected to make a landfall in Taiwan, we should be well prepared and not... take it lightly," she wrote on Facebook. **With AFP, Abe Almirol,**

Romeo Dizon

'Ompong' devastates Northern Luzon

TUGUEGARAO CITY, Cagayan — Officials were assessing damage and checking on possible casualties as typhoon "Ompong" (international name "Mangkut") yesterday pummeled the northern breadbasket with ferocious winds and rains that set off landslides, damaged the airport here, and ripped off tin roofs.

There are no immediate deaths reported but Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said officials in Cagayan, where the typhoon slammed ashore at 1:40 a.m., were verifying the drownings of two children. Later on, three persons were reported killed while four others were missing in two separate landslides triggered by the howler in Itogon, Benguet.

Authorities were also checking what happened to about 70 men who reportedly returned to their coastal barangay to check on their homes during dangerous storm surges that saw walls of seawater whipped inland.

Ompong's sustained winds weakened to 170 kilometers per hour with gusts of up to 210 kph after it sliced across Luzon's flood-prone rice plains and mountain provinces towards

the South China Sea, aiming at southern China and Hong Kong, where residents braced for the worst.

"It's still a life and death situation," Lorenzana said by telephone, citing past drownings in swollen rivers in mountain provinces.

Storm warnings remained hoisted in 11 northern provinces, including Cagayan, which could still be lashed by devastating winds, forecasters said. Thousands of people on the typhoon's path had been evacuated.

As of 1 p.m., the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration said Ompong was 85 kilometers west of Laoag City, Ilocos Norte, moving west-northwest at 25 kilometers per hour.

PAGASA Assistant Weather Services chief Renato Paciente said Ompong was expected to exit the Philippine Area of Responsibility last night.

This morning, Ompong will be 695 kilometers west-northwest of Laoag City, Ilocos Norte or outside the Philippine Area of Responsibility and 1,410 kms west-northwest of Laoag City

still outside the PAR tomorrow morning.

Tropical cyclone warning signal No. 4 was lowered but tropical cyclone warning signal No. 3 is still in place in Cagayan, including Babuyan Group of Islands, Batanes, Ilocos Sur, Ilocos Norte, La Union, Mountain Province, Benguet, Ifugao, Kalinga, Apayao, and Abra.

Areas under signal No. 2 are Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Pangasinan, Tarlac, Nueva Ecija, Aurora, Zambales, Quirino, Pampanga, and Bulacan and signal No. 1 is in effect in Bataan, Rizal, Metro Manila, Cavite, Batangas, Laguna, Lubang Island, and northern Quezon, including Polillo Island.

At daybreak in Cagayan's capital, Tuguegarao, a severely damaged public market, its roof ripped apart and wooden stalls and tarpaulin canopies in disarray, was seen. Outside a popular shopping mall, debris was scattered everywhere and government workers clearing roads of fallen trees.

Many stores and houses were damaged but most residents remained indoors as occasional gusts sent small pieces of tin sheets and other debris flying

dangerously.

The airport here was badly damaged, its roof and glass windows shattered by strong wind, which also sent chairs, tables, and papers flipping about inside, Lorenzana said.

The typhoon struck at the start of the rice and corn harvesting season in Cagayan, a major agricultural producer, prompting farmers to scramble to save what they could of their crops, Cagayan Gov. Manuel Mamba said.

A government damage assessment was underway except in areas still being battered by wind and rain. Two air force C-130 cargo planes and 10 helicopters were on standby in Manila to help transport rescuers and aid supplies. (Story on Page 11)

More than five million people were at risk from the storm, which the Hawaii-based Joint Typhoon Warning Center downgraded from a super-typhoon but one that's still punching powerful winds and gusts equivalent to a Category 4 Atlantic hurricane.

In Hong Kong, Security Minister John Lee Ka-chiu urged residents to prepare for the worst as Mangkhut barreled towards

the southern Chinese city.

Cathay Pacific said all flights will be canceled between 7:30 a.m. local time today and 4 a.m. tomorrow.

"Because Mangkhut will bring winds and rains of extraordinary speeds, scope, and severity, our preparation and response efforts will be greater than in the past," Lee told a briefing on Friday. "Each department must have a sense of crisis, make a comprehensive assessment and plan, and prepare for the worst."

In nearby Fujian province, 51,000 people were evacuated from fishing boats and around 11,000 vessels returned to port yesterday morning.

Mangkhut, the Thai word for mangosteen fruit, is the 15th storm this year to batter the Philippines, which is hit by about 20 a year and is considered one of the world's most disaster-prone countries. 2

Typhoon "Yolanda" (international name "Haiyan") left more than 7,300 people dead or missing, flattened villages, swept ships inland, and displaced more than five million in the Visayas in 2013. (AP and Alexandria Dennise San Juan)

7 patay kay Ompong!

Pito katao ang naitalagang nasawi sa panahon ng super typhoon Ompong sa Region I, II, Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) at rurog ng Metro Manila, kahapon.

Sa press briefing sa Camp Aguinaldo, malung-

kol na binatila ni National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) Executive Director Ricardo Jalad, na dalawang rescuers ang nagbuwis ng buhay sa Cordillera Region habang nagsasagawa ng search

NI JOY CANTOS

and rescue operations sa mga residente na hiralagud ni Ompong.

Dun sa Cordillera, as of now, meron nang 51 incidents and reported na nangyan dun. 42 dun ay landslides. Confirmed na dalawa ang patay dun, parehong mga responders na tumugon sa paglalarang mga naapektuhan, ani Jalad.

Gayunman, pansamantalang hindi muna tinukoy ni Jalad ang pagkakalantad ng mga biktima dahil kailangan pang impormahan ang kanilang mga pamilya.

Sinabi naman ni PNP Spokesman P/Sr. Supt. Bangso Duriana Jr., lalo ang natatag na patay ng kanilang mga himpilan ng pamilya, na ito ay ang sibil na taong gulang na babae na narokober ang bangkay sa Javier Bridge sa Marikina City kahapon.

Ang dalawa pa ay milyero ng mga pamilya na ang bahay ay natatuburan ng landslide sa magkahalwalay na insidente sa

Ilogon, Benguet habang dalawa pa ang nawalan.

Sa isang radio interview, sinabi naman ni Ilogon Mayor Victorio Palangdan, na lalong bangkay ang narokober sa kanilang bayan.

Una ito, napailat ang pagkasawi sa beha ng isang 8-buwang sanggol na babae sa Pioduen, Albay kamakalawa. Ang Bicol Region ay kabilang sa isinalalim sa signal number 1.

Sa report naman ni Ilocos Norte Gov. Mercedes, isang matandang babae ang nasawi sa kanilang imawigan matapos na atakihin sa puso sa panahon ng bagyo.

Gayunman, nilinaw ni Jalad na may proseso ang pagbibili ng mga nasawi sa bagyo na igmih na kailangan muna ang mga itong isalalam sa post mortem examination at masyuhan ng death certificate ng Department of Health.

Si Ompong ay nanalagsa sa Region I, II, CAR at National Capital Region kung saan pinakagrabeng naapektuhan ang

Cagayan.

Malaking bahag naman ng Northern Luzon ang nawalan ng power supply kabilang ang Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, Nueva Vizcaya, Benguet, MI Province, Abra at Kalinga.

Habang nagtutuhan ang mga puno, poste ng kuryente, nawalan ng tibong ang mga gusali at tahanan habang nagdulot din ito ng malawakang paggasa at landslide.

Ang super typhoon Ompong ay nakasapala na sa halos 5 milyon katao at naas 10,990 pamilya o 64,157 ang kasahulugang kinakanong sa 11 evacuation centers.

Kaughay ito, nagsasagawa na ng clearing operations ang binuong myentiro ng rapid response team ng AFP at PNP sa mga lugar na grabeng sinaktan ng katimdad habang natatanda na rin ang mga relief goods na ipamamahagi.

Si Ompong ay naglandfall sa Baguio, Cagayan dakong ala-1:40 ng madaling araw nalong Sabado.

2 cargo planes, 10 choppers to assist in relief missions

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said yesterday two Lockheed C-130 Hercules cargo aircraft and 10 helicopters will be deployed for typhoon "Ompong" relief and rescue efforts, particularly in Cagayan Valley, once the weather clears.

Lorenzana, during a press briefing presided over by presidential spokesperson Harry Roque at National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council building in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, said the two C-130s can airlift relief goods while the 10 helicopters can reach Cagayan Valley's mountainous areas to fulfill rescue missions.

He said these air assets are on standby at the Villamor Air Base in Pasay City and could fly anytime once the weather improves.

Lorenzana also said troops are available in Cagayan and other affected provinces for rescue missions.

All available military transport assets, he said, can be used by the Department of Social Welfare and Development for the transport of relief goods and other items to communities needing help in the affected provinces.

He added that they are still waiting for damage reports caused by Ompong from the Cagayan Valley, Cordillera Administrative Region, and Ilocos region.

"Base sa sinabi ng PAGASA kanina, malakas pa din ang bagyo dyan kaya yun atin mga members ng NDRRMC ay hindi pa makapag-gala at makapag-assess ng damage. In fact, yun atin mga kasundaluhan ay handang tumulong sa mga nangangailangan ng tulong," Lorenzana said. (PNA)

Relief goods ililipad ng C130

... Inilipad nangoon ni Defense Secretary Dellin Lorenzana na pagpaman naglansang ng matinding proseso sa Tuguegarao City airport sa Cagayan ay agarang maitatagid ang mga relief goods ng

C130 plane ng Philippine Air Force (PAF).

Ayon kay Lorenzana, chairman ng NDRRMC, ang nasa sa Tuguegarao City airport ay ang passengers terminal at hindi naman ang runway kaya maitatagid pa rin ang mga relief goods sa isang madaling panahon.

Sinabi ni Lorenzana na binabantayan lamang na mawala ang sobrang lakas ng hangin para maitatagid na ang mga relief goods.

Bukod dito, mayroon namang iba pang alternatibong airport sa lugar na kinabibilangan ng Cagayan North International Airport, Lallo International Airport na nagsisilbing Cagayan Special Economic Zone at maging ang Cauayan Airport sa

Isabela.

Dalawang C130 Hercules plane ang naka-standby na para maghaid ng tulong medikal at relief goods sa mga lugar na sinagapit ni super typhoon Ompong sa Cagayan sa oras na bumuntal na ang panahon.

Ipinag-utos naman ni AFP-Northern Luzon Command Chief Lt. Gen. Emmanuel Salamat sa mga sundalo ang pagsasagawa ng clearing operations sa mga highways na nababahang ng mga runong kahoy sa mga lugar sa hilagang Luzon na sinalanta ni Ompong.

Patuloy ang humanitarian disaster response operations ng rescue team ng militar at pulisya. (Joy Santos)

CAFGU shot dead in front of church in Masbate

By NINON LUCAS

CAMP OLA, Albay — A militiaman assigned to the Philippine Army based in Masbate City was gunned down in front of a church by two still unidentified assailants Friday morning.

Chief Inspector Malu Calubaquib, spokesperson of Police Regional Office 5 (PRO5), identified the fatality as Joseph R. Lapida, 34, single, a member of the Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) and resident of Barangay Cabitan, Mandaon, Masbate.

Quoting police investigators, Calubaquib said Lapida was waiting to ride a jeepney in front of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish Church in Barangay Malinta, Masbate City when he was killed.

The gunmen approached him and repeatedly shot him repeatedly in the chest and head.

Homicide investigators later collected 20 bullet casings for a .45-caliber gun at the crime scene.

Calubaquib said the personal belongings of the victim were taken by the suspects, although investigators were still gathering more information to determine any deeper motive in the killing other than robbery.

Lapida's body was taken to the Masbate Provincial Hospital for post mortem examination.

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CoA bares housing loans irregularities

LOANS totaling P2.3 billion financed by the National Housing Authority (NHA) for the military, police, and informal settler families living in danger areas were not supported by Individual Loan Agreement (ILA), according to state auditors.

The observation was made in the Commission on Audit's (CoA) Annual Audit Report on the NHA for 2016 and 2017.

"Loans in the total amount of P2.358 billion were not supported by [ILA] contrary to Section 4.6 of PD 1445, Section 7.6 of the TOR for Armed Forces of the Philippines/Philippine National Police (AFP/PNP) Housing Program, Section 5.4 of Memorandum Circulars (MCs) 2518 and 2516-A for Informal Settler Families (ISFs) Living in Danger Areas, and Sections 2.1 and 2.3, Article II of the tripartite MOA [memorandum of agreement]," CoA said.

An ILA serves as the identified beneficiaries' commitment to pay the NHA in return for financing the acquisition of house and lot packages.

The audit agency said as of December 31, 2017, the total recorded loan receivables subsidized by NHA amounted to P4.6 billion for 20 housing projects for the AFP, PNP and Informal Settler Families (ISFs). However, 51 percent of the amount were not supported by ILA.

State auditors recommended that developers be required to strictly comply with the requirement on the submission of ILA.

The audit report said the police and military were given until June 30, 2017 to

submit the revised list of the names of the beneficiaries. However, the list had not yet been finalized by the Housing Board as of February 2018.

The same audit report also showed that the technical and financial capacity of developers to undertake 28 projects costing P10.62 billion was not adequately evaluated.

"Verification of the documents of selected developers who were awarded the contracts for the provision of house and lot packages for various housing projects showed that the developers are not technically and financially capable to undertake the housing projects. These are manifested by the deficiencies in the documents submitted and non-compliance to some requirements by the Developers on the evaluation of the financial capacity as follows," CoA said.

It cited a number of irregularities including non-disclosure of contract cost and client/owner on the list of ongoing projects, awarding projects to certain developers that exceeded their license, and non-evaluation of developers financial capacity.

"Hence, there are no basis for the assessment of the financial capacity of the Developer to undertake individual or multiple housing projects that involve substantial amounts for the same contract period to a single Developer," auditors said.

"The inadequate evaluation of the Developer's capacity to undertake the project were later on manifested in the delayed completion of the housing projects," they added.

MA. REINA LEANNE C. TOLENTINO

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Special Manila Times

9/17

GOLD!

Hidilyn Diaz powers her Olympic silver to an Asiad gold



W EIGHTLIFTER Hidilyn Diaz brought pride and awe to the nation two years ago when she bagged an Olympic silver medal in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Halfway through her determined journey to win the gold at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, she gave her countrymen a preview of how she will do it and how it feels to be No. 1, when she snatched the Philippines' first top medal at the 2018 Asian Games in Indonesia in August.

Golden journey

Besides earning the distinction as the first Filipino weightlifter to win an Asiad gold, the Philippine Air Force (PAF) sergeant also stands to receive a whopping P8 million in cash bonuses from the government and various private sectors for her spectacular feat.

"It's a dream-come-true for me," the petite figure of strength told *The Sunday Times Magazine* a day after winning the gold in an exclusive online interview.

"Eto yung lahat ng resulta na pinagpaguran ko sa training, lahat ng sinakripisyo ko. Masaya ako, lahat ng doubts ko, lahat ng pressure nalampasan ko at naging maganda ang kinalabasan kaya nagpapasalama: ako kay God," she expressed.

("All this is the result of my hard work in training and all my sacrifices. I'm happy I got over my doubts and all the pressure, which is why I'm very thankful to God for this win.")

For the Asiad, the 27-year-old Zamboangueña lifted a leading 207 kilograms in the women's 53-kg event to beat Turkmenistan's Kristina Shermetova (206 kg) and Thailand's Surodchana Khambao (201 kg) at the Jakarta International Expo Hall.

But her journey from winning a silver medal in the Olympics to snagging the Asian Games top prize did not come easy.

After her Olympic stint, Diaz was expected to deliver a bigger win for the Philippines at the 2017 World Championships in Anaheim, California in December, but only managed a bronze. Prior to that in September, she maintained her silver win at the Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.

Short of delivering glory amid well wishes and immense pressure, Diaz took everything in stride all the same, never considering her bronze finish a setback. Instead, she focused her sights on her most compelling motivation, that is, the reality that she is not just competing for herself but more importantly for country.

"*Gaano kahirap? Mahirap. So-brang hirap parang iniisip ko na kung tama ba itong ginagawa ko at parang ayoko na* (It's been a very difficult experience, so much so that sometimes I felt like giving up)," admitted Diaz, who made her athletic debut at the 2008 Beijing Olympics as a wild card entry at 17. She mostly trained at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex on Vito Cruz, Manila despite its outdated sports facilities.

Four years after her Olympic debut, she made it to the 2012 London Olympics too and was flag bearer of the country's lean contingent. Although her first two Olympic stints were hardly impressive, Diaz was never daunt-

ed, pushing herself to the limit through intense discipline.

"Two months before the Asian Games, the pressure was already unbearable. I could hardly sleep, planning how to execute my lifts. It's the pressure that's the most difficult to deal with—it's difficult to have the whole nation's hope on your shoulders. But with God's help, I was able to do it," she finally said of her recent win to *The Sunday Times Magazine*.

Achiever

The fifth of Eduardo and Emelita (nee Francisco) Diaz's six children, the gold medalist learned the basics of weightlifting from

her cousin, Allen Jayfrus Diaz.

At her debut in the Beijing Summer Olympics, Diaz may have just placed second to the last among 12 weightlifters in the women's 58-kg class. However, lifting 85 kilos in the Snatch and 107 kilos in the Clean and Jerk for a total of 192 kilos broke the national record that she herself set at the 2007 Southeast Asian Games in Thailand.

Sports officials praised her performance and considered it promising for her age. Even then, she was seen to become a strong contender in future competitions.

Meanwhile, Diaz was recruited into the PAF in 2013 through the Direct Enlistment Program after her London Olympics stint. She was assigned to the Air Force Special Service Group and given a Specialty Code in Recreation in Weightlifting.

She was promoted to Airwoman Second Class in 2014, then assigned to the PAF Personnel Management Center while training for

the Rio Olympics. She went up the ranks again as Airwoman

Sergeant Diaz flexes her muscles in front of a roaring crowd during the 'Hero's Welcome to the Philippine Air Force Athletes' held at the Villamor Air Base.



First Class following her feat at the 2016 Summer Olympics.

Still very much aware of the value of a college education, Diaz did her best to pursue Bachelor of Science in Computer Science studies at the Universidad de Zamboanga amid all her commitments, but come third year, she had to stop schooling in order to concentrate on her training full-time.

As pride of the nation, she was overjoyed to receive a scholarship from the De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde in Manila where she is now working toward a Business Management degree.

For her success in the international sports scene, not to mention her varied achievements, Diaz was awarded Athlete of the Year of the Philippine Sportswriters Association on February 13, 2017.

Lifting for the future

Literally strong and empowered, the Filipino ace athlete declared she is determined to get another gold at the Southeast Asian Games in 2019 when the country hosts the regional biennial meet. It will be the crowning jewel to her two silver medals from the 2011 and 2013 SEA Games editions.

And as the athlete who ended the country's 20-year Olympic medal drought at the 2016 Rio Olympics, she is looking forward to bag the Philippines' first ever Olympic gold medal in Japan two years from now.

"I have no gold from the SEA Games yet, but of course my main aim is for the gold at the 2020 Olympics. I'm really hoping and praying I get it. It needs careful planning and it's very important to have a good mindset and as much support as I can get. The Olympics is no ordinary games—it's on a very different level," Diaz added.

Buoyed by love

Diaz appeared before President Rodrigo Duterte in Malacañang on Wednesday to receive her P4 million cash-bonus from the government along with other 2016 Asian Games medalists and sports officials, led by Philippine Olympic Committee Chairman Abraham Tolentino and Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) Chairman William Ramirez.

Looking back at the years before this golden win, Diaz mused, "There have been times I've asked myself why am I still here. I mean, can I still do [weightlifting] emotionally and physically? It's the Olympics, of course... I was already there [in Rio]..." and just as her words started fading, she joked, "You know, I can stop weightlifting any time and pursue a normal life. I can just get a job at the Philippine Air Force!"

And then she quickly backtracked, saying, "I chose to stay here because it's my dream and my goal to win in the Asian Games and the 2020 Tokyo Olympics."

Asked what keeps her going, she said it is simply her faith that keeps her dream alive.

Brief history

Continued on G5

of weightlifting in the Olympics



WEIGHTLIFTING was first featured in the first modern Olympic Games in Athens, Greece in 1896.

As a means to measure strength and power, weightlifting was practiced both by ancient Egyptian and Greek societies. It developed as an international sport primarily in the 19th century and is one of the few sports in the first quadriennial meet. Except for the 1900, 1908 and 1912 editions, weightlifting has always been part of the Olympic Games.

Austria, Germany and France were always the most successful nations. However, Soviet Union's weightlifters rose to prominence

in the 1950s and stayed there until the 1990s when China, Turkey, Greece and Iran catapulted to the lead.

Weightlifting has been present at 23 editions of the Olympic Games, and has placed on the podium champions from 32 different National Olympic Committees (NOCs) or countries.

Turkey's and Halil Mutlu have each won three gold medals, like Greece's Pyros Dimas and Kaki Kakhiavilis. Hungary's Imre Foldi and Germany's Ronnie Weller and Ingo Steinhilber hold a special record: they participated in the Olympic Games five times.

Women started to participate only at the 2000 Sydney Olympics, with China

dominating the division since the very beginning. Chen Yanqing holds the record of having two gold medals.

The weightlifting program has evolved greatly over time. Today weightlifters compete in Snatch and Clean and Jerk, and are placed according to their total combined result.

From the 2000 edition, men have competed in eight weight categories and women in seven. This total of 15 events remains unchanged. ARLO CUSTODIO

16

44

ARROYO: PASS DDR BILL INTO LAW

By Maricel V. Cruz

SPEAKER Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has pushed for the creation of a Disaster Management Department in a bid to minimize the country's vulnerability to natural calamities.

Arroyo endorsed the proposed measure authored by Leyte Rep. Yedda Marie Romualdez which is up for second, and third and final reading approval at the House of Representatives.

Arroyo stressed the need for the government to have a Disaster Management secretary who will focus on risk reduction and management concerns.

"We need to have a permanent and full-time Secretary of Disaster. Who's the head of the Council? [Defense] Secretary [Delfin] Lorenzana. Well, he is busy fighting insurgency. He is busy fighting terrorism. So how can he be there full-time?" Arroyo said during the

distribution of relief goods to some 1,000 families in Marilao, Bulacan who were affected by previous typhoons.

"So now, what happened is since the typhoon is going to hit the North, four secretaries are there. If there was a full-time secretary, then you don't need four secretaries to be there," Arroyo added.

She said the creation of a Disaster Management Department will maximize government efforts to respond to natural calamities while at the same time minimize casualties.

"They are doing the best that they can. I am satisfied with what they're

doing within the limitations of a coordinating council, but this really proves we should have a Disaster [Management] Department," the former president said.

The consolidated DDR bill is currently pending for plenary action.

The House committee on government reorganization chaired by Camiguin Rep. Xavier Jesus Romualdo and the House committee on national defense led by Pangasinan Rep. Amado Espino approved the consolidated DDR bill while the House committee on appropriations chaired by Davao City Rep. Karlo Nograles gave the green light for the funding requirement of the measure.

Romualdez's House Bill No. 7968 was a revised version of her original HB 344 that she earlier filed following President Rodrigo Duterte's renewed call during his third State of the Nation Address for Congress to expedite the passage of the proposed law. **PL**

1 soldier killed in Samar encounter with NPA

MARIE TONETTE GRACE MANTICIO

MATUGUINAO, Samar - A soldier was killed in an encounter with suspected New People's Army (NPA) rebels in Barangay Mahayag here last Friday.

Two platoons of the 63rd (Innovator) Battalion composed of two officers and 35 enlisted personnel were conducting clearing operations in the area when they clashed with the suspected communist rebels.

Captain Francisco Agno, Division Public Affairs Officer, disclosed that the

firefight lasted for about 20 minutes.

Killed in action was Sgt. Daniel Silagan, a native of Cathalogan City, Samar.

Other troops were able to maneuver to the nearest high ground, and immediately established contact and sought assistance from fellowtroops stationed in Barangay Maduruto.

"We are still conducting a pursuit operation, so far we have not received any other reports of injured troops and the number of casualties on the enemy side," Agno said. 17

Sundalo utas sa sagupaan

MATUGUINAO, Samar – Patay ang isang sundalo nang makapagpapalig ng tropa nito ang grupo ng mga rebelde sa Barangay Maharik, Matuguinad, Samar, nitong Biyernes.

Kinilala ni Division Public Affairs officer, Capt. Francisco Agno, 24g, kasawi na si Sgt. Daniel Slagan, 14g, Cebulogon, Samar.

Si Slagan ay napatay nang magkaroon ng 20 minuto ng sagupaan sa pagitan ng grupo nitong 63rd Infantry Battalion (8:30) miyembro ng New People's Army (NPA) sa nasabing lugar.

Avon kay Agno, umatras lamang ang mga rebelde nang makaposisyon ang tropa ng pamahalaan ngunit, napatayin sa labanan si Slagan.

"We are still conducting a pursuit operation, so far, we have not received any other reports of injured troops and the number of casualties on the enemy side," sabi pa ni Agno.

Marie Tonette Grace Marticio

Troops treat wounded NPA

DAVAO CITY - Troops rescued a wounded member of the New People's Army (NPA) after an encounter at the vicinity of Barangay Maragatas, Lupon, Davao Oriental on Friday. Eastern Mindanao Command (Eastmincom) spokesperson Lt. Col. Ezra Balagtey identified the wounded NPA member as Jason Languban, of Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur. The rebel was abandoned by his companions following an encounter between rebel forces and troops of the 28th Infantry Battalion. The rescue came after the community reported the presence of a wounded NPA, which prompted the local government unit in the said municipality and members of 28IB to take action and rescue the person, Balagtey said. Languban was brought immediately to Camp Panacan Station Hospital in Davao City for initial medical treatment. He was evacuated to the Southern Philippines Medical Center, Davao City for further medical intervention. The incident also resulted in the death of a soldier killed-in-action and four wounded-in-action, the identities of who have not yet been released. Languban was found in a banana plantation. (Yas D. Ocampo) 18

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SEPTEMBER 1973

The Manila Times

A7

Govt troops rescue wounded NPA rebel

DAVAO CITY: Government troops belonging to 28th Infantry Battalion (28th IB) on Friday rescued a wounded member of the communist New People's Army (NPA), the Eastern Mindanao Command (EMC) reported on Saturday.

Jason Languhan, of Santa Cruz town in Davao del Sur province, was rescued around 9 a.m. on September 14, a day after two armed clashes ensued between the 28th IB and the communist rebels in Sitio Sigang, Barangay Maragtas, Lupon, Davao Oriental.

The wounded rebel was res-

cued in the vicinity of Barangay Maragtas after his companions abandoned him as they fled.

The rebel was lying inside a banana plantation when found by the rescuing troops and community members, the EMC report said.

Languhan was immediately airlifted to Camp Panacan Station Hospital in Davao City for initial treatment.

He was later brought to the Southern Philippines Medical Center, also in Davao City, for further medical intervention, the EMC said.

A7 ALEXANDER D. LOPEZ

Troops rescue injured rebel abandoned by comrades

DAVAO CITY — Troops rescued a wounded member of the New People's Army after an encounter 9 a.m. at the vicinity of Brgy. Maragatas, Lupon, Davao Oriental on Sept. 14.

Eastern Mindanao Command (Eastmincom) spokesperson Lt. Col. Ezra Balagtey identified the wounded NPA member as Jason Languban, from Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur.

The rebel was abandoned by his companions following an encounter between rebel forces and troops of the 28th Infantry Battalion.

The rescue came after the community reported the presence of a wounded NPA, which prompted the Local Government Unit in the

said municipality and members of 28IB to take action and rescue the said person, Balagtey said.

Languban was brought immediately to Camp Perrecan Station Hospital in Davao City for initial medical treatment after being rescued.

After the initial treatment, he was evacuated to Southern Philippines Medical Center, Davao City for further medical intervention.

The incident also resulted to the death of a soldier killed-in-action and four wounded-in-action, the identities of whom have not yet been released.

Languban was found in a banana plantation. (Yas D. Ocampo)

NPA sinagip ng militar

DAVAO CITY, Sa kabila ng magkarabang (Magsabater) na nagpapalawig sa paglipat ng militar ang isang sugatang kumintang ng New People's Army (NPA), na mababangha ng mga kasamahan nito matapos ang isang sagupaan sa Barangay Maragtas, Lupon, Davao Oriental, kamakailan.

Kinumpirma ni Eastern Mindanao Command (Eastmindoc) spokesperson Lt. Col. Eric Belagay na tinawag na nilang manatili sa diyos na kamakailan si Jason Languban, ng Sta. Cruz, Lupon sa Sur.

Aniya, ipinagayon ng mga tauhan ng 26th Infantry Battalion (IB) ng Philippine Army (PA) at ng lokal na pamahalaan ng Lupon na sagipin si Languban, na sugatan nang malikha sa nilang bahalaga sa isang plantasyon ng sagup.

Si Languban ay sinasabing miyembro ng grupo ng mga rebeldeng nanasagup ng militar sa nasabing lokal na lugar.

Yes D. Ocampo

W

2 NPA, sundalo utas sa sagupaan

NORTH COTABATO - Dalawang mga rebeldeng New People's Army (NPA) at isang sundalo ang nasawi matapos na magkaengkwentro ang tropa ng pamahalaan at nasabing grupo sa Sitio 6-gang, Bay Maragatas, Lupon, Davao Oriental, umaga ng Biyernes.

Kinihala lamang ang nasawing NPA rebela at ayas na Dagol na sinasabing lider ng platoon at isang Tante na vice platoon leader.

Hindi muna tinukoy ni Captain Jerry Lamosao, public affairs officer ng 10th Infantry Division ang pangalan ng nasawing sundalo. Aniya, ang apat na mga sugatan ay pawang mga sundalo ni

Una nito, nakatanggap ng report ang tropa ng 26-IB ng Philippine Army na may mga teroristang NPA ang pumasok sa Davao Oriental sanhi upang magsagawa ng focus military operation ang militar hanggang sa makasagupa nila ang mga rebelda.

Narokober mula sa pinangyarihan ng 20 minutong palitan ng putok ang dalawang M-16 assault rifles, isang M203 grenade launcher, isang improvised explosive device (IED), at mga gamit ng NPA. *(Rhaderick Beñez)*

Caftgu nilikida ng NPA

LEGAZPI CITY, Albay - Dupang bumagsak ang isang 34-anyos na miyembro ng Caftgu sa tapang kaisada matapos bantog ng ina nakialang dalawang amado na pinaninawalang kasapi ng rebolusyonaryong New People's Army sa Purok Acacia, Brgy. Mahina, Masbate City, Masbate kamakalawa ng umaga. Napuntahan ng pungto sa mata ulo at dibdib ang biktima no agad nasawi na si Joseph Roy Lapida, ng Brgy. Catagan. Mandarin at miyembro ng Caftgu's Army Detachment sa Brgy. Mangaran, ng lungsod na ito. Sa ulat, dakong alas-10 ng umaga, naagabi ng kaisada si Lapida habang naghihintay ng masasakyang jeep para dumayo sa birthday party ng kanyang kinakasama hang bigang dumating ang dalawang gunmen at pinagbanta ang biktima sa ulo at dibdib. Makaraang bumagsak, nipitan pa ng mga suspek ang biktima at binati ang magkabilang mata saka kinuha ang dala nilong backpack na may lamang mga personal na gamit gaya ng laptop, cellphone at pera. Matapos ang kermen, naglakad lang papatakas ang mga salerni kung saan dumaan sa sementeryo patungo sa direksyon ng Brgy. Sinalongan. Nakuha sa crime scene ang 20 basyo ng bala ng kalibre 45 hari. *(Jorge Hallare)*

Mamasapano raid evacuees to get houses

MAGUINDANAO - The government has started the construction of at least 50 houses for families affected by the fighting in Mamasapano in 2015 that killed 44 members of the police Special Action Force.

The Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao is providing the houses in Barangay Tukanalipao and the town center under its Bangsamoro Regional Inclusive Development for Growth and Empowerment or ARMM-BRIDGE program.

The Department of Public Works and Highways had earlier implemented infrastructure projects worth over P300 million for civilians displaced in the clash.

Around 200 core shelters will also be built in Barangay Pagalamitan in Saguiaran, Lanao del Norte under the ARMM-BRIDGE program for civilians affected by the Marawi siege last year.

- John Unson

Cordillera autonomy among gov't priorities – OPAPP chief

By JOSE RODEL CLAPANO

Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Jesus Dureza has reiterated the Duterte administration's commitment to pursue autonomy for the Cordillera Administrative Region.

"I think the next priority for this government is to install the Autonomous Region for the Cordillera," Dureza said at the celebration of the 32nd anniversary of "Sipal" or the Mount Data Peace Accord on Thursday in Pasay City.

The Mount Data Peace Accord was the first culture-based peace agreement made in the history of the peace process in the Philippines.

It was signed on Sept. 13, 1986 between the Philippine government under then president Corazon Aquino and the Cordillera People's Liberation Army (CPLA) led by the late rebel priest Conrado Balweg.

Last Thursday's celebration, dubbed "Am-Among Di Cordillera. A Convergence for Cordillera Autonomy," was a collaboration among the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), Presidential Legislative Liaison Office (PLLO), Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO), Regional Development Council (RDC-CAR) and Institute for Autonomy and Governance (IAG) in observation of this year's National Peace Consciousness Month.

It featured a theatrical performance portraying the milestones achieved throughout the Cordillera peace process.

Dureza commended the local leaders of the region for working as one to attain autonomy.

"Those who were fragmented before are now united. And I saw convergence of your

political leaders. We should not squander this opportunity," Dureza said.

"It's not just the Bangsamoro that should have an autonomous region. The Constitution provides both for the Bangsamoro and the Cordillera," Dureza added.

For his part, PLLO Secretary Adelino Sitoy guaranteed his office's support for the bills filed in Congress that seek to establish the Autonomous Region of the Cordillera.

"The PLLO will pledge to exert all efforts in lobbying for the inclusion of Cordillera Autonomy Bill in the President's legislative agenda and common legislative agenda," Sitoy said.

Four identical versions of the proposed measure are now pending before the Senate and the House of Representatives.

House Bill 5343, which was authored by Cordilleran legis-

lators, is set to undergo deliberations in the House committee on local government.

Serving as the counterpart of the House legislation, three Senate Bills – 1678, 1923 and 1930 – were filed by Sens. Juan Miguel Zubiri, JV Ejercito and Bam Aquino, respectively.

Baguio City Mayor Mauricio Domogan, chair of the RDC-CAR, urged his constituents as well as other key stakeholders to rally for the passage of these proposed bills.

"Our fight for autonomy will surely enhance our Cordilleran identity, self-governance and self-determination. This is the future of the Cordillera and our children's children," Domogan said.

In his message of support, former president Fidel Ramos, who was present at the 1986 signing of the Mount Data Peace Accord, urged everyone to help the present administra-

tion to attain peace and justice, relating it to the Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations.

"Let us help him (Duterte) finish the transformation of the Philippines," Ramos said.

The gathering was attended by Deputy Presidential Peace Adviser Undersecretary Nabil Tan and other officials from OPAPP as well as representatives from PCOO, PLLO, RDC, National Economic Development Authority (NEDA-CAR), Philippine Information

Agency (PIA-CAR) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

Also present during the activity were provincial governors, vice governors and local chief executives of CAR, Balweg's children, authors and contributors of NEDA-CAR's book titled "A Victory Postponed," surviving witnesses of the 1986 Mount Data Peace Accord and those present during the signing of Executive Order 220, which paved way for the creation of CAR. ☪

Dureza vows to pursue autonomy of Cordillera

By AARON S. RECUEÑO

While all the discussions are currently focused on the autonomous region for the Bangsamoro in Mindanao, Presidential Peace Adviser Jesus Dureza has committed to pursue the autonomy for the Cordillera Region.

"I think the next priority for this government is to install the Autonomous Region for the Cordillera," said Dureza.

The official made the statement during the 32nd anniversary of "Sipat" or the Mount Data Peace Accord which was the first culture-based peace agreement made in the history of the peace process in the Philippines.

It was done on Sept. 13, 1986 between the Philippine government under President Corazon Aquino and the Cordillera People's Liberation Army (CPLA) led by Fr. Conrado Balweg.

In a statement, Dureza commended the local leaders of the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) for working as one to attain autonomy.

Those who were fragmented before are now united. And I saw convergence of your political leaders. We should not squander this opportunity," said Dureza.

"It's not just the Bangsamoro that should have an autonomous region. The Constitution provides both for the Bangsamoro and the Cordillera," he added.

Part of the move for autonomy in the Cordillera, according to Presidential Legislative Liaison Office (PLLO) Secretary Adelino Sitoy, are bills filed in Congress that seek to establish the Autonomous Region of the Cordillera (ARC).

"The PLLO will pledge to exert all efforts in lobbying for the inclusion of Cordillera Autonomy Bill in the President's legislative agenda and common legislative agenda," said Sitoy.

Four identical versions of the proposed measure are now pending before the Senate and the House of Representatives.

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In his message of support, former President Fidel V. Ramos, who was present in the 1986

signing of the Mount Data Peace Accord, urged everyone to help the present administration to attain peace and justice, relating it to the Sustainable Development

Goals set by the United Nations.

"Let us help him (President Rodrigo Duterte) finish the transformation of the Philippines," said Ramos. ☺

7 Abus killed, 17 soldiers wounded in Sulu clash

By ROEL PAREÑO

ZAMBOANGA CITY – Seven Abu Sayyaf bandits were killed and 23 others, 17 of them soldiers, were wounded in intense fighting in Patikul, Sulu on Friday.

Government troopers brought the fatalities to a military hospital for forensic examination and disposition.

Citing the report of Brig. Gen. Rey Divino Pabayo of the Joint Task Force Sulu, Lt. Col. Gerry Besana, Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom) spokesman, said among those critically wounded was Abu Sayyaf sub-leader Hatib Hajan

Sawadjaan.

Besana said Sawadjaan was immediately carried away from the scene by his followers.

The soldiers suffered shrapnel wounds when the bandits fired rifle grenades. They were taken to a military hospital at Camp Teodulfo Bautista in Barangay Bus-bus, Jolo for treatment.

An M16 rifle, ammunition, a bandoleer, a cellular phone and war materiel were among those recovered from the slain bandits.

Besana said around a hundred militants led by Radullan Sahiron, Indang Susukan and Sawadjaan clashed with the soldiers in Barangay Bakong at around 1:30 p.m.

Besana said pursuit as well as search and rescue operations for the remaining hostages are ongoing. A Dutch man, three Indonesians, a Vietnamese and five Filipinos are still being held by the Abu

Sayyaf.

The military said it has yet to confirm reports that the Abu Sayyaf was behind the kidnapping of two Indonesian fishermen in the waters off Sabah on Tuesday.

Lt. Gen. Arnel dela Vega, Westmincom chief, lauded the troops, saying continuous military operations would cripple the Abu Sayyaf.

Dela Vega gave assurance that the wounded soldiers would be provided all the necessary assistance to ensure their speedy and full recovery.

– With Jaime Laud

7 Abu Sayyaf men slain, sub-leader, 17 soldiers wounded in Sulu clash

By MARTIN A. SARDONGONG
and MONOY E. LACSON

Seven suspected members of the terrorist Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) were killed while their sub-leader and 17 soldiers on the part of the government forces were wounded in an armed encounter in Patikul, Sulu on Friday, the military confirmed Saturday.

Troops of the Task Group Panther led by Lt. Col. Samuel Yunque and a group of scout rangers, headed by Captain Michael Asistores, were conducting focused military operations in Barangay Bakong, Patikul, Sulu when they encountered about 100 suspected ASG terrorists, said Lieutenant General Arnel Dela Vega, Armed Forces of the Philippines' Western Mindanao Command (AFP-WESMINCOM) commander.

Dela Vega said the encounter happened around 1:30 p.m. Friday when the armed men suddenly opened fire at the operating troops. The soldiers managed to take cover and fired back.

The group was identified as under ASG senior leader Radulian Sahiron and sub-leaders Hatib Hajan Sawadjaan and Idang Susukan, Dela Vega added.

Brigadier General Divino Rey Pabayo, head of the Joint Task Force (JTF) Sulu, said seven Abus were killed during the firefight and six others were wounded, including ASG sub-leader Sawadjaan.

"(He) was seriously hit in [the] stomach and lower extremities," Pabayo said.

"More casualties on the enemy side are yet to be determined based on the blood stains spotted at the encounter

site," he added.

Meanwhile, the JTF Sulu head said 17 soldiers were "slightly" wounded and they were rushed to Kuta General Teodulfo Bautista Station Hospital in Jolo, Sulu for treatment.

The bodies of the slain suspects were also brought to the hospital for forensic examination and proper disposition, Pabayo disclosed.

Soldiers recovered at the encounter site an M-16 rifle, four 5.56 mm magazines, a bandolier, a cellular phone, assorted ammunition, war supplies and apparatus.

Dela Vega assured that all sorts of assistance will be provided to the wounded soldiers. 18

"Our prayers are with them for their speedy recovery," he said.

He added that more troops were deployed to go after the fleeing bandits.

TODAY

7 ASG KILLED IN SULU ENCOUNTER

SEVEN suspected Abu Sayyaf bandits were killed while six others were wounded in an encounter with government troops on Friday.

At least 17 soldiers were also wounded in the clash in Patikui.

The military said the encounter involved troops from the Task Group Panther and Scout Rangers and at least 100 ASG bandits.

Among the wounded ASG members was sub-leader Hatib Hajan Sawadjaan, who was hit in the stomach.

The military recovered an M-16 rifle, four 5.56 mm magazines, one bandolier, one touch-screen cellular phone, and assorted war materiel and ammunition. All

The Armed Forces likewise dispatched more soldiers in the area to hunt down the ASG members who have escaped.

Abu Sayyaf leader, 6 others killed

BY AL JACINTO

SEVEN Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) terrorists, including a notorious sub-leader, were killed and 17 soldiers and six Islamists were wounded in fierce clashes in Sulu, one of five provinces under the Muslim autonomous region in Mindanao, officials said on Saturday.

Troops of the Task Group Panther were conducting a military operation led by Lt. Col. Samuel Yunque, with a group of Scout

Rangers under Capt. Michael Asistores, when they encountered around 100 fully-armed Abu ASG members under senior leader

Radullan Sahiron and sub-leaders Hatib Hajan Sawadjaan and Idang Susukan in Barangay Bakong, Patikul, Sulu, on Friday.

Lt. Col. Gerry Besana, Western Mindanao Command (WestMinCom) spokesman, said "based on the report of Joint Task Force (JTF)-Sulu headed by Brig. Gen. Divino Rey Pabayo, seven ASG members were killed, based on body count and six others were wounded, including Sawadjaan, who was seriously hit in the stomach and lower extremities."

The WestMinCom spokesman

confirmed that 17 soldiers were also slightly wounded during the encounter from shrapnels while more casualties on the enemy side are yet to be determined based on bloodstains spotted in the clash site.

But there was a report from Sulu that those killed by soldiers were all civilians.

A post on Facebook by Mahmud Arula showed photos of those slain with their families grieving as villagers looked on.

Besana said the fighting stopped after the bandits broke into smaller groups and fled.

He added that the wounded soldiers were brought to the Kuta Heneral Teodulfo Bautista Station Hospital in Jolo, Sulu, for treatment.

"Cadavers of the slain ASG members were also brought to the same hospital for forensic examination and proper disposition," Besana said.

Soldiers recovered an M16 automatic rifle and magazines and ammunition, including a bandolier and a cell phone that the terrorists left behind.

Lt. Gen. Arnel dela Vega, chief of

the Western Mindanao Command, said more soldiers were sent to the area to hunt down the militants.

"I commend the troops of the JTF for this recent accomplishment. All sorts of assistance will be provided to the battle casualties and our prayers are with them for their speedy recovery," he added.

The Abu Sayyaf Group is fighting for the establishment of a caliphate in the troubled, but mineral-rich region of Mindanao in southern Philippines.

**JULMUNIR I. JANNARAL
AND ROY NARRA**

ASG men fall in Sulu encounter

Abu Sayyaf subgroup leader Hatib Hajan Sawadjaan was seriously wounded by government troops in a firefight at Patikul, Sulu, in the afternoon of 14 September.

While conducting focused military operations, troops of the Task Group Panther led by LtCol Samuel Yunque together with a group of scout rangers led by Captain Michael Asistores encountered about 100 fully armed ASG under senior leader Radullan Saliron and sub-leaders Sawadjaan and Idang Susukan in Barangay Bakong.

Based on the report of Joint Task Force Sulu, seven ASG members were killed based on body count and six others wounded, including

Sawadjaan who took a hit in his stomach and lower extremities.

Seventeen soldiers who sustained shrapnel wounds during the encounter were immediately rushed to Kuta General Teodulfo Bautista Station Hospital for proper medical treatment.

Cadavers of the slain ASG members were also brought to said hospital for forensic examination and proper disposition.

Also recovered on the encounter site were one M16 rifle, four 5.56-mm magazines, one bandolier, one touchscreen cellular phone and assorted war materials and ammunitions.

Kathleen Mae Bulquorin

Troops slay 7, injure 6 ASG bandits in Patikul encounter

By ZANDA DELLOS REYES

SEVEN notorious members of Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) were killed while 23 others including 17 soldiers were wounded in an encounter the other day in Patikul, Sulu.

This was confirmed yesterday by Colonel Gerry Bessana, spokesperson of Philippine Army's 6th Infantry Division.

Identities of the slain bandits were not available as of press time but one of the six wounded was identified as ASG subleader Harib Hajan Sawadjan whom was reportedly hit in his stomach and lower extremities.

The wounded soldiers were immediately taken to the nearest hospital.

Reports reaching Camp Aguinaldo showed that the

encounter occurred at around 1:30 pm in Barangay Bakong, Patikul, Sulu.

Accordingly, troops from Task Group Panther led by Lt. Col. Samuel Yapque and a group of Scout Rangers led by Capt. Michael Asisteros were conducting focused military operation in the area when they encountered around 100 fully armed ASG under Senior Leader Radullan Sabiron and sub-leaders Hatib Hajan Sawadjan and

Idang Susukan.

A firefight immediately occurred, lasting for several minutes and resulting to the killing of seven bandits and wounding of six others and 17 soldiers.

Joint Task Force Sulu commander Brigadier General Divino Rey Pabayo said one of the ASG sub-leader was in critical condition.

Recovered from the encounter site were one M16 rifle, four 5.56 mm magazines, one bandolier, one

touchscreen cellular phone, and assorted war material and ammunition.

Western Mindanao command-er Lt. Gen. Ariel Dato Vega commended the troops for their successful operation.

"I commend the troops of the Joint Task Force Sulu for their accomplishment," Dato Vega said.

"All sorts of assistance will be provided in the casualties and our prayers are with them for their speedy recovery," he added.

7 Abu bandits killed, 23 hurt in Patikul clash

By Zaida delos Reyes

SEVEN members of the Abu Sayyaf Group on Friday were killed while 23 others, including 17 soldiers, were wounded in an encounter in Patikul, Sulu.

Philippine Army 6th Infantry Division spokesperson Col. Gerry Basana said the identities of the slain bandits were not yet available.

Among those injured was ASG sub-leader Hatib Hajan Sawadjaan.

The wounded soldiers were immediately taken to the nearest hospital for treatment.

Troopers from the Task Group Panther led by Lt. Col. Samuel Yunque and a group of Scout Rangers led by Capt. Michael Asistores were conducting military operation in Bgy. Bakong in Patikul when they met around 100 fully-armed bandits under ASG senior leader Radullian Sahiron and sub-leaders Hatib Hajan Sawadjaan and Idang Susukan at 1:30 p.m. on Friday.

A firefight broke out lasting for several minutes and resulting in the killing of seven bandits and the wounding of six terrorists and 17 soldiers.

Joint Task Force Sulu commander Brig. Gen. Divino Rev. Pabayo said Sawadjaan, who was hit by bullets, is in serious condition.

Recovered at the encounter site were one M16 rifle, four 5.56 mm magazines, a bandolier, one cellular phone, and assorted war materiel and ammunition.

Western Mindanao Command commander Lt. Gen. Arnel Dela Vega commended the soldiers for the successful operation.

"I commend the troops of the Joint Task Force Sulu for the recent accomplishment," Dela Vega said.

"All sorts of assistance will be provided to the battle casualties and our prayers are with them for their speedy recovery," he added.

7 sa Abu Sayyaf tigok, 23 sugatan sa bakbakan

ZAMBOANGA CITY - Aabot sa pitong umamang miyembro ng Abu Sayyaf Group ang napatay habang 23 iba pa ang nasugatan nang makibakbakan ang mga ito sa militar sa Bakong Patikul, Sulu, nitong Biyernes ng hapon.

Sa pahayag ni Armed Forces of the Philippines-Western Mindanao Command (AFP-WesMinCom) spokesman Army Lt. Col. Gerry Besana,

nasugatan sa insidente ang 17 sandalo bukod pa ang 23 bandido, kabilang ang Abu Sayyaf sub-leader na si Habib Hajan Sawadjan.

Sinabi ni Besana na bago ang saganaan, nagpapatuloy ang mga tsuhan ng Task Group Panther na pinamunuan ni Lt. Col. Samuel Yunque, kasama ang grupo ng Scout Rangers sa masukal na bahagi ng Bgy.

Bakong sa Patikul, nang makasagupa ng mga ito ang aabot sa 100 bandido na nawang tauhan umamang ng ASC senior leader na si Radulian Sahiron.

Matapos ang engkwentro, iniwan ng kaniyang kasamahan ang pitong nasawing bandido.

Ini-report din, aniya, sa kanila ng mga sibilvan na aabot sa 23 bandido ang nasugatan.

Sinabi rin nito na dinale na ng militar sa Kuta General Teodoro Bautista Station Hospital ang mga nasawing 65G.

Avon kay Besana, nasamsam sa lugar ng engkwentro ang iba't ibang armas, kaniad ng M16 rifle, apat na 5.56mm magazine, isang bandolier, isang cell phone, at iba pang kagamitan ng mga bandido.

Nonoy E. Lacson

Bakbakan sa Sulu: 7 Abu dedo, 24 sugatan

Napatay ang pitong miyembro ng teroristang grupong Abu Sayyaf habang 24 ang sugatan kabilang ang 17 mula sa tropa ng militar at isang lider ng mga bandido at anim nitong mga tauhan sa naganap na bakbakan sa Brgy. Bakong, Patikul, Sulu nitong Biyernes ng hapon.

Ita'y kasinod ng isinasagawang search and rescue operator sa nalalabi pang mga hostages kabilang ang ilang dayuhan na hawak ng mga bandidong kidnappers.

Kinilala ni Lt. Col. Gerry Besana, tagapagsalita ng AFP-Eastern Mindanao Command ang nasugatang lider ng Abu Sayyaf na si Habib Hajar Sawadjan, nagtamo ng grabeng tama ng bala sa tiyan at ibabang bahagi ng katawan. Nasa anim din nitong tauhan ang sugatan sa engkwentro.

Patuloy namang inaalam ang pagkakakilanlan ng pitong miyembro ng grupo na napatay sa bakbakan.

Semantalang dinala na sa Kuta Teodoro Baunista Station Hospital para malapatan ng lunas ang 17 nasugatang sundalo na miyembro ng Joint Task Force (JTF) Sulu.

Bandang ala-1:30 ng hapon, nang matasagupa ng tropa ng militar ang nasa 100 mga armadong bandido sa magubat na bahagi ng nasabing lugar.

Tunaga ang palitan ng putok ng ilang minuto hanggang sa magsitakas ang mga bandido na inabandona ang mga napatay nilang kasamahin.

Patuloy namang inatugis ng tropa ng militar ang nalalabi pang grupo ng mga bandido sa lalawigan. -Joy Cantos at Rhoderick Beñez-

Sulu encounter: 7 Sayyaf patay, 24 sugatan

Pitong pinaghihina-iaang miyembro ng mga bandidong Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) ang napasalang habang sugatan ang 24 iba pa kabilang ang sub-commander ng naturang ekstremistang grupo at pitong sundalo sa unsa-urakabong bakbaran sa Brgy. Bakong, Patikul, Sulu nitong Divermes.

Itoy sa gima na rin ng isinasagawang search and rescue operation sa nalalabi pang mga notages ng mga teroristang ASG kabilang ang ilang dayuhan.

Kunilala ni Lt. Col. Gerry Besana, spokesperson

ng AFP-Eastern Mindanao Command, Pauloy na inaalam ang mga pagkaakalianan ng pitong napasalang bandido na inabandona ng kanilang nagsitakas na mga kasamahan.

Nakilala ang sub-commander ng ASG na si Hali Hajan Sawadjaan na nagtamo ng grabang imahe ng bala sa tiyan at ibang bahagi ng katawan. Nasa anum nitong kauban ang sugatan sa enguwentro.

Samentala, dinala na sa Rizal Teodoro Bautista Station Hospital para mapapatan ng tunas ang 17 napasalang sundalo

Nina JOY CANTOS at RHODERICK BENEZ

na miyembro ng Joint Task Force (JTF) Sulu.

Bandang ala-1:30 ng hapon nang makasagupa ng tropa ng Task Group Panther sa pamumuno

ni Lt. Col. Samuel Yungue katiwang ang Scout Rangers ng Phi Army sa pamumuno ni Captain Michael Aistores ang tinatayang nasa 100 armadong

bandido sa magubat na bahagi ng lugar.

Ang mga bandido ay nasa ilalim ng pamumuno nina Abu Sayyaf Commander Radullen

Sahiron at nina Sub-Leaders Sawadjaan at idang Susukan.

Ayon kay Besana, tumaga ang palitan ng pulitok ng ilang minuto hanggang sa magsitakas ang mga bandido na inabandona ang mga napatay nilang kasamahan.

Sinabi ni Besana, din, na sa pagamutan ang bangkay ng napatay

na mga bandido para maisailalim sa forensic examination at kaukulang disposisyon.

Narokober sa anodokter site ang isang M16 rifle, apat na pal 5.56mm magazine, isang bandido-killer, isang touchscreen cellular phone at iba pang mga kagamitang pang-digma kabilang ang mga bala.

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A7

3-day Bangsamoro voter registration a 'success'

COTABATO CITY: The Commission on Elections (Comelec) has declared that the three-day Bangsamoro Special Satellite Registration at Camp Darapanan, the headquarters of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Sultan Kudarat, and here in this city was a major success.

Director James Jimenez, Comelec spokesman, told The Manila Times that speaking specifically of his Cotabato experience, where he personally supervised the special voter's registration, the registrants were very patient and cooperative, which contributed greatly to the orderly conduct of registration. Jimenez said over the last three days, the Cotabato special registration team served 1,821 applicants, including numerous former MILF

combatants who, despite lacking formal identification papers, were allowed to register.

"This, more than anything, speaks of the success of this endeavor," he added.

The Comelec spokesman said there were many more who wish to register, but, considering there were thousands of them, not all were able to register.

He, however, gave the assurance that those who failed to register during the three-day Bangsamoro Satellite Registration can still be accommodated at local Comelec offices where voter registration will continue until September 29, Monday to Saturday inclusive of holidays, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

JULMUNIRI JANNARAL

FROM A DISTANCE

CARMEN N. PEDROSA

Gen. Luna and Goyo in our time; the Filipino musician as hero

A year before the 2016 presidential elections the movie "Heneral Luna" broke box office records in theaters all over the Philippines. It was unprecedented. For the first time we had a movie about Philippine history that drew crowds. I saw the movie myself.



It was an inspiring film on the life of Antonio Luna who was described by the American General James F. Bell himself: "he was the only general the Filipino army had."

But he and his brothers were against violent revolution. Like Rizal, he and his brothers, Juan, and Jose believed it was possible to achieve a gradual reform of the Spanish colonizers. But they were caught in the maelstrom of those troubled times even if they had turned down Bonifacio's approach to join the Katipunan.

Filipinos were inspired by its theme about the intramurals between the rebels on one side against continuing the revolution, and the other. The elite wanted to forge a surrender and cooperation with the American imperialists.

I don't know if it was by chance but it was also the theme that carried Digong to victory. He said repeatedly in his speeches during his campaign that "our enemies were among ourselves and he pointed to the oligarchy as the culprit. In the Philippine-American war, the Filipino oligarchy then did not want to continue the fight because it would imperil their fortunes.

But Antonio Luna was adamant and he fought for the revolution's cause. His intransigence ultimately caused his death when he was assassinated by the oligarchs then who were able to convince Emilio Aguinaldo to their side. It would be suicidal if they continued the war.

As the Spanish/American War came to a close, and the defeated Spanish prepared to withdraw from the Philippines, Filipino revolutionary troops surrounded the capital city of Manila.

The newly arrived officer Antonio Luna urged the other commanders to send troops into the city to ensure a joint occupation when the Americans arrived, but Emilio Aguinaldo refused, believing US naval officers stationed in Manila Bay would hand over power to the Filipinos in due course.

This was a strategic blunder.

We could have been independent without relying on America's word.

There was enough time for Filipinos to implement the Luna plan while the Americans were waiting for reinforcement. Unfortunately the internecine struggle between Luna and Aguinaldo with the elite Filipino oligarchs behind him destroyed the Luna plan by killing him.

It is my opinion that the propitious time came with the emergence of Duterte, a man who was willing to confront our problems of nation-building the most vicious being America's dictum of divide and rule.

Recently on my way to office I saw big signs with the word "Goyo." I did not know that "Goyo" was the nickname of Gregorio del Pilar and like Filipino nicknames it had an ng at the end. It was Goyong. I would like to congratulate its producers. I don't know if its coincidental but once more it comes at a time when Filipino patriotism is being challenged.

Once again we ask the question – was it coincidence or destiny that Luna was killed? Why should Duterte become president at this time to get us out of our history of colonial subservience and the mistakes we made in our wars of independence that brought it upon us.

Would history repeat itself with Digong's presidency being threatened by assassination plots and a "failing" economy? We did not think. "Heneral Luna" would wake up the nation's nationalistic passion. Can it happen again with Goyo?

Its sequel, the second of a trilogy has finally been released. "Goyo: Ang Batang Heneral" is supposedly the most expensive Filipino movie ever made, which means it needs good box office performance to recoup its investments.

After the death of Antonio Luna, the ragtag revolutionary army of Filipinos was divided into troops supportive of his vision, and others on the side of President Emilio Aguinaldo.

Gregorio del Pilar, or Goyo, was with Aguinaldo. Together with his trusted men, Goyo sought to eliminate Aguinaldo's enemies.

The Americans launched a simultaneous attack in several towns in Central Luzon. This forced Aguinaldo, Goyo, and their forces to go further north up to Ilocos Sur where the young general planned and executed a defensive stand on the pass on Mt. Tirad where Goyo was killed.

On the issue of whether we should adopt a revolutionary government we must be reminded that it was declared by the Katipunan during the Philippine Revolution or the War for Independence of the Philippines against the Spanish colonial administration over the islands. The Tejeros Convention of 1897 saw the election of officers for a revolutionary government. The independence of the Philippines from Spain was declared by Katipunan leader, Emilio Aguinaldo, who is recognized as the first President of the country, on June 12, 1898.

Six days later a revolutionary government over the Philippines was officially declared.

The direct mandate of the people power was for the complete reorganization of the government, restoration of democracy, protection of basic rights, rebuilding of confidence in the entire government system, eradication of graft and corruption, restoration of peace and order, maintenance of the supremacy of civilian authority over the military, and the transition to government under a new constitution in the shortest time possible.

Finally, the Duterte administration has done something to keep that noisy Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV looking back at what he has done or should I say that he has undone for this country. Yes, I'm referring to the big news that Pres. Rodrigo Duterte invalided the grant of amnesty to Trillanes for failure to comply with its minimum requirements. Come now, was Trillanes so recidivist that a simple compliance of the minimum requirements for his amnesty he failed to act on, more so that his political patron, P-Noy Aquino was no longer president?

MISCELLANY Well! not all of us can be soldiers. Others would make their contribution to nation building as renowned musicians.

Our very own young Pinoy violin virtuoso, Chino Gutierrez, will stage at the BDO Concert Hall, H. V. de la Costa cor. Makati Avenue, on Saturday, Sept. 22, at 7:30 pm.

Joint exploration

"Oil is power. I don't just mean power as in energy. I mean power as in being a primary factor in the process of asserting and maintaining political dominance and control. Oil is needed to grow food, build infrastructure, advance technology, manufacture goods, and transport them to market. It lubricates the mechanisms of both national and international politics. Those who can consistently get their hands on the most oil, at the best prices... will rule."

This excerpt from an article by oilprice.com, though published almost nine years ago, gains relevance once more as the country's inflation rate hit record levels. Some say it is due to the effects of our tax reform program under TRAIN although there are those who blame soaring crude oil prices.

If only the Philippines had a cheaper source of energy.

The Malampaya natural gas project accounts for half of the Luzon grid's requirements and 30 percent of the entire power needs of the country. Unfortunately, the

gas project in offshore Palawan's life expectancy is only up to 2029 and will start to diminish in 2024.

According to the Department of Energy, as of 2016, of the total installed power capacity, natural gas accounts for 16 percent while renewable energy (geothermal, hydro, biomass, wind and solar) contributed 32.5 percent, coal 34.6 percent, and oil-based, 16.9 percent.

Our vehicles use petroleum products like gasoline and diesel. Households use LPG to cook their food. The manufacturing sector uses diesel engines.

When the price of fuel goes up, everything becomes more expensive.

Imagine what would happen to our economy if the Philippines becomes an oil producer.

According to independent Chinese estimates, the disputed waters in the South China Sea has over 100 billion barrels of oil. But more conservative estimates place the volume at seven billion barrels of oil and about 900 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. The US Geological Survey (USGS) estimated in 1993 discovered and undiscovered oil reserves in the offshore basins of the South China Sea at 28 billion barrels.

A report by Forbes.com said a USGS study in 2010 showed that there is a 95 percent chance that there is at least 750 million barrels of oil in the South China Sea Platform, a median chance of around two billion barrels, and a low probability (five percent) of over five billion barrels.

Unfortunately, these territories are the subject of a dispute between the Philippines and China. But even assuming for the sake of argument that it is undisputably ours, we do not have the financial resources and technical expertise to conduct our own exploration and development activities.

If Malacanang plans push through, though, the Philippines may be able to have China as its partner in exploring these vast untapped resources.

Turn to B10

HIDDEN AGENDA... From B6

About a month ago, Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano said the Philippines had officially relayed to China the creation of a technical working group (TWG) on the possible joint exploration by the two countries in the disputed West Philippine Sea (WPS). President Duterte had approved the creation of the TWG, provided it would only involve a possible commercial agreement with China.

According to Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque Jr., Malacañang expects to come up with a joint exploration deal with China before the visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping later this year. The Chinese leader is expected to visit Manila after taking part in the APEC Summit in Papua New Guinea in November.

Malacañang's plan is likely to get the support of Congress, particularly from House Speaker Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, who as the country's leader signed 14 years ago a Joint Marine Seismic Undertaking (JMSU) with China. Vietnam joined the deal a year later, making it a trilateral pact.

Arroyo signed the agreement for seismic undertaking for certain areas in the South China Sea by and between China National Offshore Oil Corp. and Philippine National Oil Co. in 2004. But Bayan Muna filed a petition before the Supreme Court in 2008, asking it to void the JMSU, which lapsed without being renewed on June 30 that same year. In 2014, Bayan Muna asked the High Court to rule on the petition but the latter has yet to decide on the issue.

In the Senate, several lawmakers appear supportive of this proposed joint exploration arrangement under the Duterte administration provided that it is confined to a commercial venture.

Even Supreme Court Associate Justice Antonio Carpio has been quoted as saying that Chinese companies can be technical and financial contractors of the Philippine government or Filipino companies under Philippine laws, but not Chinese law, just like the set-up in Malampaya where Shell is the technical and financial contractor of the Philippine government under Philippine law.

Former Senate president Juan Ponce Enrile had defended President Duterte's pragmatic non-confrontational approach, saying the government needs to deal with this issue without recklessly exposing the Philippines to possible retaliation.

He said that Malampaya will be gone and our best chance will be Benham Rise, but even that will entail a big amount of investment and we have to have a Navy to guard it.

The West Philippine Sea, believed to be rich in oil and gas deposits, is an opportunity waiting to be tapped and developed. But we can only go as far as sending scientists to the area to conduct study missions because neither the government nor our private sector has the financial capability to shoulder the mammoth costs needed for its exploration and development.

President Duterte's pragmatic approach to this territorial dispute, which is actually constitutionally and legally sound, will immensely benefit the Filipino people.

For comments, e-mail at mareyes@philstarmedia.com

HIDDEN AGENDA



MARY ANN L. REYES

The State remembers and forgets

Acts of remembering and forgetting pertain not only to individuals but, indeed, also to the State, which represents the sovereign will of the people. The State remembers by proclaiming public holidays to commemorate important events in the nation's past, thus inscribing them in the nation's collective memory.

Independence Day, the birthdays and death anniversaries of the nation's greatest heroes, a crucial battle in which the people's valor was on full display, etc. are among such officially remembered events. In addition, monuments are erected to memorialize these, and cities, towns, provinces and main streets are named after heroic figures.

But, there are times when the State also chooses to forget as a matter of policy. The grant of amnesty for certain criminal offenses committed in the past is perhaps the best example of what we may call official forgetting. Amnestied acts are not merely forgiven; they are also, as importantly, erased from the nation's memory. This act of deliberate forgetting allows the State to adapt to new situations in the effort to maintain a climate of normative stability.

In this regard, one can only imagine what the attempt to invalidate an amnesty granted by a previous administration—which is precisely the intent of President Duterte's Proclamation No. 572—does to a nation's legal stability. It creates a dangerous precedent. It opens up every past amnesty to review. It recriminalizes what has been pardoned, and exhumes from the past what the legal system itself has chosen to bury once and for all.

This dangerous maneuver becomes doubly pernicious when it anchors its demand for the correction of an alleged injustice on the search for missing application forms. Instead of facilitating legal procedures, written forms thereby become a curse. When people start looking for them as markers of facts, they forget that such forms can be lost or deliberately removed from the files, and—in the worst of cases—fabricated and inserted into the records.

But, as the theorist Niklas Luhmann notes in his book "Law as a Social System":



PUBLIC LIVES

RANDY DAVID

"Memory is not simply a repertoire of past acts but above all the organization of access to information. This organization—and not what really happened in the past—is what leads to its use in concrete operations, which can only be executed in the present."

Fortunately for Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, whose amnesty Proclamation No. 572 seeks to nullify for being void ab initio (for allegedly failing to file a formal amnesty application and to admit guilt), most of the government officials and personnel who processed and approved his amnesty are, most likely, still alive. This means that their testimonies can be taken, and their written annotations at various stages of the evaluation process can be retrieved and reviewed. It is this organized access to information that matters in the final analysis, not the availability of a certified copy of an application form.

But, if this fixation with written forms is allowed to form the basis for nullifying amnesties, then all past amnesty beneficiaries stand to lose their freedoms simply because, with the passage of time, it would be harder to produce witness accounts that could attest to the regularity of the process they went through. If this is not injustice, I don't know what it is.

The care of official records, papers, documents, etc. is, after all, the responsibility of government. Still, even the best-kept records have limited shelf life unless they are digitized. After a reasonable period, all records are consigned to the archives, of

interest primarily to researchers than to lawyers in search of evidence.

Certainly, amnesty, as a mechanism of official forgetting, is not to be trifled with, or given on a whim. The State, acting in behalf of the people, offers to forgive and forget in exchange for a clear admission of guilt and a plea for clemency. Payment or restoration of what had been stolen or left unpaid is also often demanded.

Part of the reason our transition from the Marcos dictatorship has been marred by recurrent crises is the fact that there has been no clear reckoning of the nation's experience under martial law. Marcos and his cronies fled the country in the wake of the 1986 EDSA uprising. Despite the testimonies of some cronies who voluntarily returned some Marcos properties, the prosecution of the cases against Marcos in our courts became a protracted process that was never satisfactorily concluded. As these cases languished in our judicial system, many original documents were lost (probably stolen), witnesses disappeared, and every passing year only made it harder to secure a conviction. With the consent of Swiss banks, some of the stolen money was recovered, but much more was successfully stashed away in offshore accounts.

Marcos never admitted culpability for the crimes committed by his regime, never apologized to the nation or begged for forgiveness. Soon after his death in Hawaii, his family was allowed to bring back his remains in the name of national reconciliation. A forgetful and forgiving electorate later voted his heirs to public office, as though they were merely being restored to their birthright.

No administration was audacious enough to initiate a formal process in accordance with a vision of justice and national reconciliation. The promise of amnesty would have encouraged the deposed regime's leaders to come forward and confess their crimes. It would have helped heal the nation's wounds and made our politics less divisive.

AW
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Calida's next target: Odel, PDEA's hero dog

In his recent "tête-à-tête" with Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Salvador Panelo, President Duterte mentioned the name of Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV at least 20 times. And that could be a problem. The last time he uttered someone else's name that much, his wife filed for annulment.

Critics described President Duterte's behavior during his talk with Panelo as "childish" and "immature." Mr. Duterte lashed back at them, threatening repeatedly to "tell Mom."

A couple of days back, President Duterte presided over a command conference for Typhoon "Ompong." It was great to see someone on top of something he's really good at: disasters.

It's still several weeks till Halloween but in his TV appearances, we can notice President Duterte is already wearing a mask.

When asked about the status of his health, the President talked about Jose Maria Sison, the Magdalo group, and the alleged conspiracy to oust him. He's not well, obviously.

Here's another pre-Halloween joke for you. Two guys (who do not know each other) wearing identical Bongbong Marcos

COMMENTARY

MARCELO LANDICHO

masks walk into a Halloween costume party. One of the guys says, "Well, this is awkward. We can't be both losers tonight."

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana admitted it was Solicitor General Jose Calida who called him on Aug 16 "to get the amnesty records" of Senator Trillanes. Fifteen days later, President Duterte would claim Trillanes' amnesty records were missing. Remember the saying, "Never judge a book by its cover"? Not all the time.

For helping authorities detect shabu in the magnetic lifters found in a warehouse in Cavite, a 6-year-old dog named Odel was awarded a "Medalya ng Papani" by the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency. The President has earlier dismissed the P6.8-billion shabu shipment as "pure speculation." Calida has started his inquiry into Odel's training records.

According to Gallup's annual Global

Emotions Report, 2017 was the world's most miserable year in more than a decade. People experienced worry, physical pain, sadness, stress and anger. Or, as that's called in the Philippines, the five stages of President Duterte's "war on drugs."

The Department of Justice is offering a reward of P500,000 for information leading to the arrest of alleged big-time drug lord, Peter Lim. Even Peter Lim was like, "Five hundred thousand??? Do you want me arrested or not?"

Here's bad news: Reports say some witnesses against Andal Ampatuan Jr. have recanted their testimonies. Harry Roque, a former counsel of some Maguindanao massacre victims, is upset. He couldn't believe that witnesses would just abandon the side of truth in exchange for something. To which, those witnesses replied, "Look who's talking."

Marcelo Landicho is more popularly known online as the award-winning blogger and political satirist The Professional Heckler. On Twitter: @HecklerForever8; blog Archive: professionalheckler.com

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AMBASSADORS' CORNER

The Manila Chronicle

AS

Jose V. Romero, Ambassador Extraordinary

AMBASSADOR Jose V. Romero is a dedicated contributor to the "Ambassadors' Corner" passed on a few days ago. With his demise, the Philippine Ambassador Foundation incorporated (PAFI) and the Philippine Council on Foreign Relations (PCFR) which he both served as president simultaneously at one time, have lost a leading light.

I was the one who nominated Amb. Romero to be president of PAFI, knowing that he had been an effective Ambassador to Italy. I was the Assistant Secretary for Foreign Affairs at the Department of Foreign Affairs during his stint in Rome, who had as function, among others, overseeing the Philippine Embassy in Rome and the country's other diplomatic and consular establishments in Europe. Italy hosts the biggest Filipino community in Europe, and it was surely notable that Amb. Romero cultivated an excellent PR with the Filipino community under his jurisdiction.

But what was particularly impressive about Amb. Romero was his concern for the welfare of the Filipino overseas workers went beyond those he found in Italy. He minded that conditions would be favorable for all those coming later. For example, he initiated negotiations for a Social Security agreement between the Philippines and Italy. Under the agreement, if the enjoyment by a Filipino worker of a social security benefit in Italy lacked a required number of years, his social security coverage in the Philippines can be counted so that he could qualify for the benefit concerned. Italy had such agreements with other countries, but they were all with developed countries where there were significant numbers of Italian workers. It was the first time that Italy would have one with a country

with a considerable number of workers in Italy. Italy has so far negotiated such an agreement with only one other developing country (Morocco).

Our Ambassador to the Quirinale customarily serves concurrently as the Philippine Permanent Representative to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations specialized agency. This Amb. Romero did, and it fitted him well. He had been an undersecretary of Agriculture and chairman of the Philippine Coconut Authority.

It is perhaps unfortunate that Amb. Romero had only one posting. Amb. Romero was a political ambassador and not a career ambassador. It was commonly the case until recent years that political ambassadors had only one posting. But Amb. Romero had all the qualities of a professional diplomat except that he

His engagement in diplomacy and international relations did not end with his stint in Rome. He went back to the University of Asia and the Pacific to teach international relations and involved himself actively in PAFI and the PCFR, both of which his father helped establish.

One meeting in PAFI when Mr. Duterte was yet to make his bid for the presidency we observed that the country was overly preoccupied with the territorial disputes in the South China Sea, that Philippines-China relations had become one-dimensional. We decided to engage the Chinese Embassy in Manila in a dialogue over reinvigorating the various areas of cooperation possible between the two countries. After all, many other countries have territorial disputes but have a broad range of relations between them. It was helpful that Amb. Romero was also president of the PCFR whose membership consisted not only of diplomats but also businessmen, economists, media men, defense specialists, and others. At the invitation of the Chinese Ambassador, Amb. Romero led a delegation of PAFI and PCFR members on a people-to-people, Track 2 mission to Beijing last year.

Amb. Romero wrote articles for the Ambassadors' Corner covering a vast array of topics in international relations. He also wrote extensively on domestic matters. He dealt with one topic with a relentless, crusading zeal: the return of the coconut levy to its source — the coconut farmers. This remains an unfinished business. I hope God will bless Amb. Romero, a deeply religious person, the rest and peace that his soul deserves and vent his wrath on all the greedy people that have preyed on the poor coconut farmer.



AMBASSADORS' CORNER

JAIME J. YAMBAO

did not take and pass the Foreign Service Officers examination.

He grew up breathing the air of diplomacy. His father was the first Philippine Ambassador to the Court of St. James. From Trinity College Cambridge he got a bachelor's and a master's degree in political economy. He also did postgraduate work in economics at Georgetown University. He obtained a Ph.D. in development management from the University of Asia and the Pacific. Amb. Romero clearly had the academic qualifications even nowadays when successful Foreign Service Officers examinees have at least a master's degree.



Duterte, hindi nagsisisi

MLLA sa Davao City, sinabi ni Pangulong Rodrigo Roa Duterte na hindi siya nagsisisi na maging Pangulo ng Pilipinas. Inihayag ito ni Mano Digong sa gitna ng mga haka-haka na balak siyang patalsikin sa susunod na buwan. Tinukoy niya ang mga grupo na nagpapigano umano na patalsikin siya sa puwesto—ang mga Dilawan (Liberal Party),

pangkat ni Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV (Magdalo) at ang grupo-kilusan ni Jose Ma. Sison.

Maring itinangal ng tatlong grupo ang akusasyon ni PRRD. Ayon kay Vice Pres. Leni Robredo, chairperson ng Liberal Party, walang ganoong balak ang partido. Pinabulaanan din ito ni Trillanes, mahigpit na kritiko ng Pangulo, at sinabing “gunguri” lang ito ng ating Presidente. Nagiging “paranoid” na raw si PDU30.

Sa partig ni Joma, hindi na raw kaalangan ang sabwatan sapagkat mismong ang taunbayan ang magpapatalak sa kanya. Ayon sa dating propesor ng Pangulo, mapalad si PRRD kung mananatili pa siya sa puwesto hanggang 2019. Baka raw ngayong 2018 ay

mawala na siya sa Malacañang. Marahas ang pahayag ni Trillanes laban sa Pangulo. Masyado raw itong “obsessed at insecure” sa kanya. Sa halip daw na ang pagtuunan ay mga problema sa bansa, inflation, bigas, at iba pa, malaking bahagi ng kanyang “tete-a-tete” kay Presidential Chief Legal Counsel Salvador Panelo, ang gumogol sa pagbira sa kanya.

Para naman kay beautiful Leni at ilang senador, sinayang ng ating Pangulo sa televised interview ang pagkakataon upong talakayin ang mga suliranin na lumiligalig ngayon sa Pilos, tulad ng pagtaas ng presyo ng halos lahat ng bilihin. Luma, dapat ay inilatag niya ang ginagawang mga solusyon

ng kanyang gobyerno para mapakalma ang mga sikmura ng mamamayan.

Dinalaw ni ex-Supreme Court Chief Justice Ma. Lourdes Sereno si Sen. Trillanes sa tangnapan nito sa Senado. Ayon sa na-quo warranto na Chief Justice, mapanganib ang paghawit ni PRRD sa amnesty na iginawad sa senador nang hindi kinasusulta ang Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

Tinawag niya ang aksiyong ito ng Pangulo na “divisive and dangerous”. Hindi umano nakatulong ang “tete-a-tete” o one-on-one interview niya kay Panelo sa pagpapababa sa tensiyon o nabigyan ng pagkakataon ang militar na pag-aralan ang Proclamation No. 572,

bago atosang dakpin si Trillanes.

Anyway, habang isinusulat ko ito, sinabi naman ng Pangulo na hihintayin muna ang desisyon ng civilian courts kung magpapalabas ito ng arrest warrant sa kanyang kritiko. Iniatos niya sa AFP at (Philippine National Police) PNP na huwag dakpin si Trillanes hanggang walang warrant of arrest na ibinababa ang Makati Regional Trial Courts. Ewan ko lang kung nagpalabas na ng desisyon ang korte.

Well, well, kung palabiro ang ating Pangulo, palabiro rin ang ilang netizen. May nag-post sa FB ng ganito: “Dinalaw ni Quo Warranto si Ab Initio.” Siguro naman ay alam ninyo kung sino si ab initio. ☺

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ONLINE NEWS

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HADR | NOLCOM mitigates onslaught of TY Ompong

CAMP SERVILLANO AQUINO, Tarlac City (DWDD) – As Typhoon Ompong made its landfall in Baggao, Cagayan, today September 15, 2018, at 1:40 in the early morning. Continuous rainfall and strong gusts of wind are currently being felt in the areas of Northern and Central Luzon.

Northern Luzon Command's (NOLCOM) Disaster Response Task Groups (DRTGs) are simultaneously doing Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response Operations (HADRO) throughout the areas of NOLCOM's area of responsibility.

The Naval Forces Northern Luzon (NFNL) provided manpower assistance by hauling rice from San Juan La Union to San Fernando, La Union last Sept 13, 2018. Meanwhile, the Tactical Operations Wings Northern Luzon (TOWNOL) are already prepositioned in Region 2 to support any sustainment operations on HADR that needs utilization of their aerial conveyance.

Moreover, the 48th Infantry Battalion (48IB) distributed relief goods in Nueva Ecija, 503rd Infantry Brigade (DRTG CAR) and 501st Brigade in Kalinga while the 48th Infantry Battalion is closely monitoring the barangays along the river of Peñaranda, Nueva Ecija.

All Joint Task Force units are directed to collocate all Tactical Operations Centers (TOC) with the different Offices of the Civil Defense (OCD) for faster coordination and response during the typhoon. The Disaster Response team are currently on high alert for any possible rescue operations needed in their areas.

In addition, Civil Relations Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines alerted their partner in Northern and Central Luzon, the Regional Emergency Assistance Communication Team (REACT) Philippines regarding the conduct of NOLCOM's HADRO and their role in the communications aspect in achieving the overall success of each operation.

NOLCOM is currently doing its best efforts in maintaining control and contact with all its Disaster Response Task Units to achieve coordinated action in response to mitigate the onslaught of typhoon Ompong.

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ENCOUNTER | TG Panther engaged 100 ASG in Patikul, Sulu

PATIKUL, Sulu (DWDD) – The Task Group Panther under Lieutenant Colonel Samuel G Yungue with Scout Ranger Class 205-18 under Captain Michael B Asistores while on test mission encountered more or less 100 fully armed members of the Abu Sayyaf Terrorist Group under senior leader Rebullan Sahiron and sub-leaders Hajan Sawadjaan and Idang Susukan in the vicinity of Barangay Bakong, Patikul, Sulu.

According to reports reaching the AFP Western Mindanao Command (WESTMINCOM), the firefight lasted for one hour and thirty minutes (1hr30min). After which, the enemy withdrew towards the northeast direction.

The encounter resulted in 17 Wounded-in-Action (WIA- 16 AFP; 1-PNF (slight/shrapnel wounds all ambulatory) on the government side while the ASG sustained on 7 killed (Body count); the recovery of 1-M16 rifle and assorted war materiel and personal belongings.

Troops employed 60/81mm mortar. Adjacent units were positioned to conduct blocking force against withdrawing enemy.

An MD-520MG helicopter provided air support and air evacuation (1 WFI, 8 HE and 61rds Caliber 50). The wounded soldiers were immediately brought to the Kampehen Teodulfo Bautista Station Hospital for proper medical treatment together with the cadaver of the 7 killed ASG members for forensic and proper disposition.

Relatives of the slain ASG members have not yet claimed their remains as of this writing. AES / MCAG

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SAVED | 281B rescued abandoned wounded NPA

Posted by [Alvin Santiago](#)

NAVAL STATION FELIX APOLINARIO, Panacan, Davao City (DWDD) – A wounded New People's Army (NPA) member who was abandoned by his companions after an encounter was rescued by troops of 28th Infantry "Kamagong" Battalion (IB) at the vicinity of Barangay Maragatas, Lupon, Davao Oriental on September 14, 2018, 09:00 am.

The rescue came after the community reported the presence of a wounded NPA, which prompted the Local Government Unit in the said municipality and members of 281B to take action and rescue the said person.

The wounded NPA identified as Jason Languban, who hails from Sta. Cruz, Davao Del Sur, was brought immediately to Camp Panacan Station Hospital in Davao City for initial medical treatment after being rescued.

After the initial treatment, he was evacuated to Southern Philippines Medical Center, Davao City for further medical intervention.

Accordingly, the NPA was wounded in an encounter between troops of 281B and NPA terrorists in Barangay Maragatas on September 13, 2018, which also resulted to one soldier killed-in-action and four wounded-in-action.

Languban was lying in a banana plantation when he was found by the rescuing troops and members of the community. Video Courtesy: Cpt. Virgel Amor Vallejos / MCAG

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BREAKING | Gov't Troops engage ASG in Patikul, Sulu

CAMP TEODULFO BAUTISTA STATION HOSPITAL, Jolo, Sulu (DWDD) – 17 soldiers were wounded in an encounter with the terrorist group Abu Sayyaf in Patikul, Sulu.

According to initial reports, there are seven (7) terrorist ASG confirmed killed in the engagement. Their cadavers are currently at the morgue of Camp Teodulfo Bautista Station Hospital in Jolo, Sulu.

Meanwhile, the wounded soldiers are recuperating at the same medical facility and all were declared out of danger.

Operations are on-going. MCAAG