

Subic Freeport Attracts more Investors from Taiwan

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT — More Taiwan-based companies are now setting their sights on this premier free port, with eight firms expressing interest to invest here after talks with Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) officials in the recent Philippine Investment Forum held in Taipei.

SBMA Chairman and Administrator Wilma T. Eisma, who presented investment and business opportunities in the Subic Bay Freeport during the forum, said two Taiwanese companies had so far committed a total of \$9 million in investments right away.

These are FTI Holdings Group (Milagros International Inc.), which plans to invest \$6 million in Subic and to hire 600 workers within the year, and Grey Matter Industries Group, which had committed to invest \$3 million and hire 200 workers.

FTI Group designs, manufactures and sells luggage, fashion handbags and backpacks, apparel and apparel accessories, outdoor products and pet products and accessories which are sold in the United States.

Eisma said FTI's chief auditor, Paul Lee, already inspected a prospective factory site in Subic's Tipa area on April 30, and will conduct another inspection with other company officials next month to finalize the new business venture.

Meanwhile, Grey Matter Industries Group, which is engaged in the manufacture of PET bottles, plastic films and other plastic products, has already sent the SBMA a letter of intent on April 29, Eisma added.

More than 250 Taiwanese investors attended the April 24-26 Taipei trade roadshow organized by the Philippine Investment Promotion Plan (PIPP) in coordination with the Philippine Trade and Investment Center (PTIC)-Taipei, the commercial affairs section of the Manila Economic and Cultural Office (MECO).

The forum showcased investment and business opportunities for Taiwanese industry players who are repositioning their strategy in light of the recent global trade and economic developments and conflicts between major global markets.

Eisma said that in the Taipei trade roadshow, six other Taiwanese firms expressed interest to locate in the Subic Bay Freeport and the Subic agency is now in touch with them to firm up investment plans here.

Among the prospective investors are Rong Shin Industrial Co., Ltd., which is recognized as the world's leading manufacturer of lawn and garden power tool muffler system; Catcher Technology Co., Ltd., which is a major supplier of Taiwanese computer giant Wistron; Primax Electronic Ltd., which manufactures computer peripherals and accessories for the Taiwan, China and the United States markets; CDStar Co., Ltd., manufacturer of Skechers, Keen, Clarks, Asics, Salomon and Novi shoes; and Ya Horng Electronics Co., Ltd., producer of electrical appliances and audio-visual electronic products for the US, Hong Kong, Japan, Australia, and France.

Another prospective investor is Sagittarius Sporting Good Co., Ltd., (Xiamen Feipeng Industry Co. Ltd.), a manufacturer of sports and protective equipment, which said it intends to produce fishing and sports inflatable boats in Subic.

Eisma said most of the incoming Taiwanese investors will locate at the Tipa area, which is being developed by the SBMA as a major industrial site



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AboitizPower completes purchase in AC Energy's thermal power company



With its first unit coming online later this year, GNPowder Dinginin seeks to help stabilize power supply in the grid.

Aboitiz Power Corporation (AboitizPower) completed its acquisition of a 49% voting stake and a 60% economic stake in AA Thermal, Inc., AC Energy's thermal platform in the Philippines.

This follows the execution of a share purchase agreement for the transaction last year, and the completion of all conditions precedent. The Philippine Competition Commission approved the transaction last February 28, 2019. The transaction is valued at USD572.9 million, after adjustments.

AA Thermal has interests in GNPowder Mariveles Coal Plant Ltd. Co., the owner and operator of an operating 2x316 MW coal plant in Mariveles, Bataan, and in GNPowder Dinginin Ltd. Co., the developer and owner of a 2x668 MW supercritical coal plant project in Dinginin, Bataan, which is currently under construction.

GNPowder Mariveles has been operating since 2013 while GNPowder Dinginin Unit 1 is currently expected to come online later this year.

The completion of the transaction increases AboitizPower's economic interests in GNPowder Mariveles and GNPowder Dinginin to 78.3%, and 70%, respectively.

DENR USec. Antiporda threatens CDO vs open dumpsite in Bataan



OPEN DUMPSITE INSPECTION. Undersecretary Benny Antiporda of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources explains the ill effects of using the open dumpsite in Limay, Bataan on Wednesday (May 8, 2019). The inspection is part of the government's effort to protect and rehabilitate the environment. (Photo by Ernie Esconde)

LIMAY, Bataan -- The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said it will issue a cease-and-desist order against an open dumpsite in a village here after inspection Wednesday.

"Para hindi madagdagan ang basura, bibigyan natin ng cease and desist order upang mapigilan ang pagtatapon dito (In order not to have more wastes, we will issue a cease and desist order to stop the dumping here)," DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said.

"If you will notice sa bandang likod ang Manila Bay at dito punung-puno ng basura (Manila Bay is at the back and here, there are lots of garbage). This is another Smokey Mountain in the making. Ang pinagkaiba lang hindi sinusunog ang basura dito pero pinapabayaang ganiyan (The difference is that the wastes here are not being burned but just left like that)," he said.

Pointing to the garbage heap, Antiporda said: "Mapapansin din natin ang buong kabundukan ay napakaganda pero sinira ng mga basurang ito (We can notice the beautiful mountain but this garbage dump ruins the view)."

"Hindi papayagan ni Secretary Cimat na ganito ang mangyari. Ang creek ginawa nilang kanal. Saan napupunta ang tubig, hindi nila ma-explain. (Secretary Cimat will not allow this to happen. The creek turned into a canal. They cannot explain where the water goes. Sa theory namin, (In our theory), it ends up in the river," the DENR official said.

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Despite rains, Angat Dam water level dips further



CITY OF MALOLOS, Bulacan-- The water elevation in Angat Dam slightly dipped even after the heavy rains in Metro Manila and some parts of Bulacan Wednesday night.

Maricel Cruz of the Bulacan Provincial Public Affairs Office said the water elevation in Angat Dam slightly slid to 174.78 meters on Thursday morning as compared to 175.10 meters on Wednesday morning.

On the other hand, Seville David Jr., executive director of the National Water Resources Board, said in a text message to the Philippine News Agency that compared to previous days, the rate of decline in the dam's water elevation after the heavy rains is a bit lower.

Meanwhile, Bro. Martin Francisco, chairperson of the Sagip Sierra Madre Environmental Society Inc. based in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) forest reserved site in the Sierra Madre Mountain Range, Barangay San Mateo, Norzagaray town, said that rains have been experienced in some parts of the watershed areas of Angat and Ipo Dams since Monday.

Francisco said that heavy rains were monitored in some parts of the watersheds from 4 p.m. until 10 p.m. (PNA)

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He said that based on the inspection, garbage at the Limay Solid Waste Management Processing Facility are products of years of dumping.

"We will conduct immediate investigation. Year 2015 pa lang nagkaroon na ng soft closure and rehabilitation ang lugar na ito. Nagtataka lang po tayo kung bakit nagtuluy-tuloy (there was already a soft closure and rehabilitation in this place in 2015. We are just wondering why it continued)," he said.

Antiporda said they were previously informed that the area was a garbage transfer station but inspection showed that it was an open dumpsite.

He said that wastes are at the foot of the mountains and piled up several stories high.

"Immediately, isu-summon namin ang local government ng Limay para ipaliwanag nila kung bakit nagkaganito (we will summon the local government of Limay to explain why this happened)," he said.

Antiporda said the inspection has no bearing on the elections.

"Wala kaming pakialam sa election. Ang importante sa amin mapangalagaan na tuluy-tuloy ang paglilinis na ginagawa namin sa Manila Bay natin (We do not mind about the election. What is important to us is to continuously do the cleaning of Manila Bay. If there are areas like this na hindi natin pipigilan, hindi magiging successful ang paglilinis natin. Masasayang lang ang malaking halaga na gugugulin (that we do not prevent, the cleaning will not be successful. The big amount of money we are spending will just go to waste)," he said. (PNA)

Bataan May 13 elections Security Preparations

BALANGA CITY, Bataan -- Security preparations are in place to ensure a peaceful and orderly conduct of the mid-term elections in the province on Monday, the Bataan Police Provincial Office said on Saturday.

Col. Villamor Tullao, Bataan police director, said the full force of the provincial command has been dispatched to secure 167 polling centers in 11 towns and one city in the province and to maintain peace before, during, and after voting and canvassing.

Some members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the police's Special Action Force and the Regional Mobile Force Battalion have been tapped as reinforcement.

Tullao said most of the vote counting machines (VCMs) have been tested and sealed and now fully secured.

Gilda Rodrigo, assistant provincial election supervisor, said only 10 VCMs have remained untested and unsealed due to the problem involving the SD (Secure Digital) cards.

She said there are 695 primary or principal VCMs and another 73 contingency VCMs in Bataan to serve 545,507 registered voters in 167 polling centers in 237 barangays.

On the other hand, there are 3,605 established polling precincts and 695 clustered precincts in the province divided into two congressional districts.

"We expect the cards to be delivered any time today (Saturday) and we will proceed immediately with the final testing and sealing. There are no other concern and we see no more hitch for the voting to proceed regularly on Monday," Rodrigo said.

Col. Ricardo Santiago, chief of Police Community Relations, said police are conducting regular checkpoints and inspections in coordination with the Commission on Elections.

He said that so far, there had been no recorded election-related incident in the province. (PNA)

Some 37K illegal campaign posters in Central Luzon taken down



ILLEGAL CAMPAIGN POSTERS REMOVAL. Police and Commission on Elections (Comelec) personnel supervise the removal of illegal campaign posters along Jose Abad Santos Avenue, City of San Fernando, Pampanga during one of the Oplan Baklas operations conducted in Central Luzon. (File photo courtesy of the Police Regional Office 3)

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga -- A total of 37,436 illegal campaign posters were removed from the stretch of major thoroughfares and barangay roads throughout Central Luzon, a police official said on Saturday.

Police Regional Office-3 (Central Luzon) director, Brig. Gen. Joel Napoleon Coronel, said this was the result of the region-wide Oplan Baklas operations by the Commission on Elections (Comelec), the Philippine National Police, and other partner agencies in the region.

"Most campaign materials removed were oversized and posted in prohibited areas, like electric lines and trees," Coronel said, adding that they provided security every "Oplan Baklas" operation.

He said they also secured the delivery of all vote counting machines (VCMs) and other election paraphernalia to the Comelec provincial hubs and polling centers in the region.

"We will continue to be on guard for the election paraphernalia until the conduct of polls on Monday," he said.

Meanwhile, Coronel reminded police personnel of protocols on Election Day.

He said all security forces will keep a distance of beyond 50-meter radius from the polling and canvassing places they are assigned to secure.

No police personnel shall also be allowed to enter or stay inside the polling and canvassing area, except when there is an actual disturbance of the peace and order.

Police personnel are also prohibited from engaging in a conversation with any voter or disturb or prevent or in any manner obstruct the free access of the voters to the polling areas. (PNA)



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Sec. Villar inaugurates 9.6-km Pulilan-Baliuag Diversion Road



ALTERNATE ROAD IN BULACAN. Public Works and Highways Secretary Mark Villar (right) delivers his short message during the inauguration of the 9.6-kilometer Pulilan-Baliuag Diversion Road in Pulilan, Bulacan on Thursday, May 9, 2019. Looking on are Pulilan Mayor Maritz Ochoa-Montejo, Rep. Gavini Pancho and DPWH Regional Director Roseller Tolentino. (Photo by Manny Balbin)

PULILAN, Bulacan -- The new 9.6-kilometer Pulilan-Baliuag Diversion Road is now open to motorists.

Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) Secretary Mark Villar led on Thursday the inauguration of the new road that will decongest the crowded section of Maharlika Highway from Barangay Tibag in Pulilan town to Barangay Tarcen in Baliuag town.

The project with a total cost of PHP509.60 million was implemented by the DPWH Regional Office 3 headed by Director Roseller Tolentino. It was started in 2015 and completed this year under the government's "Build, Build, Build" program.

The alternate four-lane diversion road begins at the Pulilan-Calumpit Road in Barangay Tibag near the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) toll plaza and ends in Daang Maharlika Highway, formerly Doña Remedios Trinidad Highway in Barangay Tarcen, Baliuag town.

Villar said that transportation improvement projects such as this diversion road is seen to boost the local economies of Pulilan and Baliuag as well as the quality of life of the Bulakenyos.

"In this project, an additional feature was implemented such as the inclusion of bike lanes, highlighting the importance of pedestrian infrastructure in roads across the country," he added.

Villar also said that the DPWH will push for the construction of more bypass roads to improve traffic flow and create new development opportunities.

The new diversion road will cut travel time from NLEX to Baliuag town from one hour to 30 minutes. (PNA)

Organic Backyard Farming for Nueva Ecija Villagers



URBAN GARDENING. A variety of vegetables are being raised by residents of a village in Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija, who have finished a 45-day urban gardening training. The project dubbed as "Kabalik sa Kabuhayan" aims to help the villagers earn additional income. (Photo by Marilyn Galang)

CABANATUAN CITY, Nueva Ecija -- Some 87 residents of Barangay Daang Sarile here, mostly beneficiaries of the government's Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), finished a 45-day training on urban gardening on Wednesday.

Alberto Pangilinan, 44, a motorcycle mechanic, said he is optimistic of earning additional income from an erstwhile unutilized backyard, which is now planted with different vegetables such as eggplant, tomato, chili and lettuce.

The training dubbed "Kabalik sa Kabuhayan", which also includes a seminar on production of organic fertilizer and pesticide, was principally sponsored by SM Foundation, the charity arm of the giant mall chain.

"Wala kaming ginamit na kahit anong commercial na abono at pamatay-kulisap (we did not use any kind of commercial fertilizer and insecticide)," Pangilinan said.

The scheme, he believed, will help them earn more. "Malaking tulong sa amin (It is a big help to us)," he said.

Cristina Angeles, assistant vice president of SM Foundation, said the project is in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture, City Social Welfare and Development (CSWD), and village officials.

She added that the program is being implemented in different parts of the country with beneficiaries already numbering 23,000.

"Kami po ay nagpapasalamat sa mga nagtanim ng halaman, sa mga nagtagumpay kami po ay very proud sa inyo kasi patuloy niyo kaming pakakainin (We are thankful to those who planted, for those who have succeeded, we are very proud of you because you continue to feed us)," Angeles said.

She asked for God's continuous guidance for the urban farmers, who held a harvest festival in the village on Tuesday, where they prepared dishes using their organic vegetables. (PNA)

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AROUND CENTRAL LUZON

TESDA, OWWA inks MOA for returning OFWs

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga -- Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) for partnership in skills training, technical education and assessment and certification of returning Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs).

The undertaking, through the Comprehensive OFW Reintegration Program Framework, aims to strengthen TESDA's intervention for returning OFWs.

"Under the agreement, TESDA will provide OWWA with an updated list of programs and schedules of skills training including the Training for Work Scholarship Program, Special Training for Employment Program, Onsite Assessment Program and other initiatives that are viable for returning OFWs and their families," TESDA Director-General Isidro Lapeña said.

He added that they will also designate a focal person who will orient and facilitate training, assessment and certification and job referrals for returning OFWs and their families.

Lapeña said that as part of the MOA, TESDA will also maintain a database of OFWs who have participated in the skills training or have been referred to local job opportunities.

For its part, OWWA shall provide a list of willing and able returning OFWs to TESDA with information on their capacities, expertise and skills, as well as indication of possible trainings needed to enhance such capacities and skills.

The agreement is anchored on the agencies' mandate to serve and promote the interest of OFWs and their families, in recognition of their contribution to the country's economic development. (PIA 3)

CSC reminds state workers to remain apolitical



CSC Regional Supervising Human Resource Specialist Sonny Cuadro reminds state workers to remain apolitical in line with the upcoming May 13 Midterm elections, as he warned them of possible sanctions under CSC Memorandum Circular 30-2009. (Marie Joy L. Simpao/PIA 3)

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga -- Civil Service Commission (CSC) reminds state workers in Central Luzon to remain apolitical in line with the upcoming May 13 Midterm elections.

In his speech during the "No to Vote Buying, No to Vote Selling" motorcade, CSC Regional Supervising Human Resource Specialist Sonny Cuadro warned state workers who will engage in political activities of possible sanctions under CSC Memorandum Circular 30-2009.

"Those who will be caught or found guilty of engaging in partisan political activities will be penalized with one month and one day to six months suspension for the first offense and dismissal from public service for the succeeding offense," Cuadro said.

However, he assured that this will go through due process whether it is caught in the act, until such time the decision is final and executory.

Partisan political activities that state workers should avoid include forming organization, association, club, committee for the purpose of soliciting votes undertaking any campaign for or against candidates; holding political processes, conference or meeting; and making speeches, announcements or commentary or holding interviews against or for any candidate or public office.

Comelec to public: file formal complaint vs vote buying, selling

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga -- Commission on Elections (COMELEC) urged the public to file formal complaints against vote buyers and vote sellers.

Pampanga Provincial Election Supervisor Fernando Cot-om said that among election offenses, vote buying and vote selling are the hardest election offenses to prosecute due to lack of complaints and witnesses.

"Vote buying and vote selling are very big issues that is akin to a cancer in the society. However, despite the fact that we know this problem exists, Comelec and the Department of Justice can only start with the investigation when there is a formal complaint filed before us," Cot-om said.

Based on the data of Comelec Central Office for the past three automated national and local elections, there were only 220 cases filed and most of them were dismissed due to non-appearance of complainants and lack of witnesses.

For his part, Comelec Assistant Regional Director Elmo Duque said vote buying and vote selling are among their greatest challenges.

"The very people that we elect to govern us, to lead us, are the very persons we are going to prosecute. That's the big dilemma we have right now. In addition, the Omnibus Election Code was promulgated in 1985 so it does not totally cover the entire sphere of what we call vote buying and vote selling," Duque said.

"Publishing or distributing any campaign literature or materials designed to support or oppose the election of any candidate, local or national; directly or indirectly soliciting votes, pledges or support for or against a candidate; and being a delegate to any political convention or member of any political committee or directorate for similar political organization are also among the prohibited acts," he said.

He added that making speeches or publication to draw political support in behalf of any particular party or candidate for public office; soliciting or receiving contributions for political purposes directly or indirectly; and becoming publicly identified with the success or failure of any candidate are also included in the memorandum.

Cuadro also reminded government workers to always protect and uphold their credibility and continuously be of public service with or without additional benefits.

"As civil servants, you should always keep in mind that your position is not permanent and that you are dispensable. So it is critical that you always do what is right even if you are alone or even when you are being laughed, because you will not make mistakes in doing what is right," he said. (PIA 3)

With this, Cot-om said that a multi-sectoral network is needed to eradicate or at the least, lessen incidences of vote buying and vote selling.

"We alone in the Comelec cannot solve the problem. We have a short term solution and it is very well within the power of the Comelec to implement or enforce the existing laws against vote buying and vote selling. But we also need to deputize the Philippine National Police and Armed Forces of the Philippines to enforce laws," Cot-om said.

In terms of long term solution, he said it all boils down to education and the need to change the values of the public.

"Another long term factor is the economic development of people. It has been proven in other countries that the more developed their economic conditions become, the less incidence of vote buying they have," Cot-om said.

In closing, he reminded the candidates that the reason why they are running for public office is to be of service to the people so there is no need to buy people's votes.

"For the voters, let us keep in mind that the amount or thing that the candidates give us in exchange of our votes are only temporary. Let us be vigilant of their hidden agenda and remember that the money they use to buy votes are at the expense of government projects if ever they win," Cot-om said. (PIA 3)

BALITA SA WIKANG PINOY

Bulacan Pre-Labor Day Job Fair



May 85 aplikante ang hired-on-the-spot sa idinaos na Pre-Labor Day Job Fair sa Provincial Capitol Gym nitong Abril 30. (Vinson F. Concepcion/PIA 3)

LUNGSOD NG MALOLOS -- May 85 aplikante ang hired-on-the-spot sa idinaos na Bulacan Pre-Labor Day Job Fair sa Provincial Capitol Gym nitong Abril 30.

Ayon kay Provincial Youth, Sports and Public Employment Service Office Head Elizabeth Alonzo, 54 sa mga ito ay kababaihan at 31 naman ay mga kalalakihan.

Umabot sa 56 kumpanya ang nag-alok ng trabaho dito at sa ibayong dagat

kabilang na ang mga construction workers, service crews, call center agents, at medical workers.

Paliwanag ni Alonzo, ang mga hindi pinalad na matanggap ay maaaring suportahan ng Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) para sa pagsasanay sa pagnenegosyo at ng Technical Education Skills and Development Authority (TESDA) para sa skills training. (PIA 3)

Mga Ulap sa ibabaw ng mga dam inasinan para umulan



Nagsabog ng saku-sakong pinong Asin o Iodized Salt sa mga kaulapan sa ibabaw ng mga dam ng La Mesa, Ipo at Angat upang makagawa ng artipisyal na ulan at mapataas ang lebel ng tubig dito. (Shane F. Velasco/PIA 3)

PLARIDEL Bulacan -- Nagsabog ng sako-sakong pinong asin o refined salt sa mga kaulapan sa ibabaw ng mga dam ng La Mesa, Ipo at Angat upang makagawa ng artipisyal na ulan at mapataas ang lebel ng tubig dito.

Gamit ang BN-2 Islander na eroplano, inilipad mula sa Plaridel Airport ang may 25 sako ng pinong asin na pinamahalaan ng Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM) ng Department of Agriculture (DA).

Ayon sa Project Development Officer nitong si Mary Joy David, bawat isang sako ay naglalaman ng 25 kilo ng pinong asin.

Isinagawa ang pag-aasin sa ulap sa panahon na nakakaranas ng tagtuyot ang malaking bahagi ng bansa.

Katunayan, sinabi ni Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System Angat-Umiray Transbasin Operation Division Manager Ted Elipio na nasa 176 metro ang lebel ng tubig ngayon sa Angat Dam na nasa bayan ng Norzagaray.

Malayung malayo sa 214 na spill-ing level tuwing panahon ng tag-ulan at pagdating ng mga bagyo. Bagama't malaki ang ibinaba, mas mababa pa rin aniya ang naitala sa Angat Dam noong unang bahagi ng 2010, na panahon din ng mas matinding tagtuyot, na umabot sa 157 metro.

Kaugnay nito, habang sinisikap na pataasin pa ang lebel ng tubig sa naturang mga dam, pansamantalang puputulin ng National Water Resources Board ang suplay ng patubig sa mga lupang sakahan ng palay sa Bulacan at Pampanga simula Mayo 16.

Sa ngayon, mayroon pang 10 cubic meter per seconds o katumbas ng 864 litro kada araw ang pinapadaloy na patubig sa mga lupang sakahan.

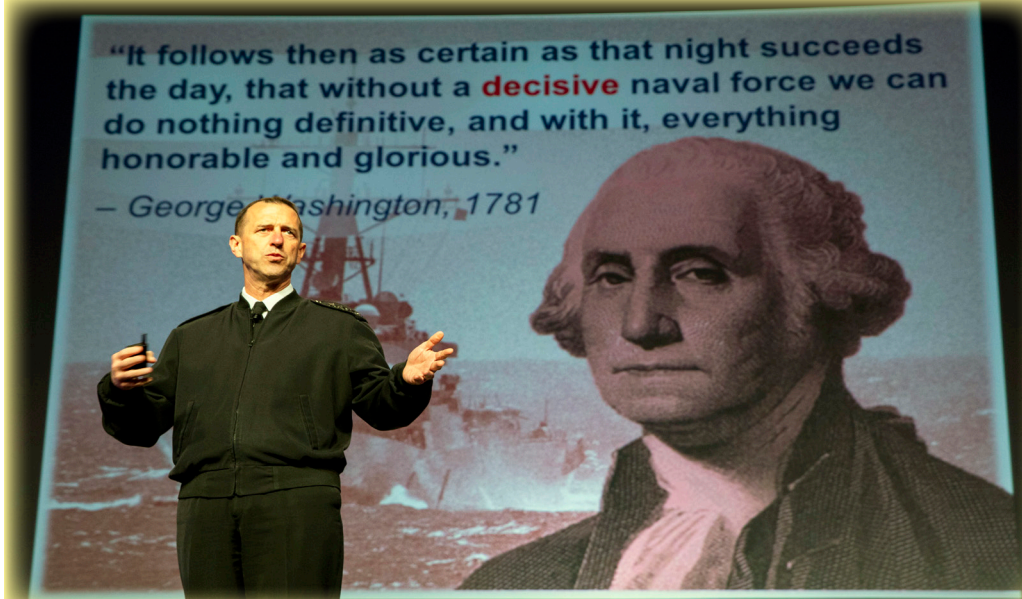
Samantala, tiniyak ni David na patuloy ang isasagawang pag-aasin sa ulap, kung kinakailangan pang lalong madagdagan ang lebel ng tubig sa mga dam.

Nananatiling pinagkukuhanan ng 96 porsiyentong suplay ng tubig ng Metro Manila ang Angat Dam sa Norzagaray. Pinaghahatian ito ng dalawang pribadong konsesyonaryo na Maynilad at Manila Water.

Bukod dito, simula nitong unang bahagi ng 2019, nasimulan nang matikman ng mga Bulakenyo ang tubig mula sa Angat Dam sa pagsisimula ng inisyal na operasyon ng Bulacan Bulk Water Supply Project Stage 1.

Partikular na nakikinabang dito ang lungsod ng San Jose Del Monte at mga bayan ng Santa Maria, Marilao, Meycauyan, Obando at Bocaue. (PIA 3)

IN THE NAVY Sea-Air-Space Exposition 2019 Day One



WASHINGTON (May 6, 2019) Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. John Richardson delivers the keynote address at the Sea-Air-Space Expo. Sea-Air-Space is the largest maritime expo in the United States and brings industry and private-sector companies together with military decision makers. (U.S. Navy Photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Nick Brown)

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Brittney Kinsey, Defense Media Activity Public Affairs

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. (NNS) -- Sea service chiefs and civilian defense leadership discussed myriad opportunities and challenges commanders face while operating on land, sea and air during the first day of the 54th annual Sea-Air-Space Exposition (SAS), May 6, 2019.

Derived from the Chief of Naval Operations' (CNO) Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority 2.0 (Design 2.0), this year's exposition theme is "Sustainability, Agility, Superiority."

CNO Adm. John. M. Richardson, Commandant of the Marine Corps General Robert B. Neller, Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard Adm. Karl Schultz and Administrator of the U.S. Maritime Administration retired Rear Adm. Mark H. Buzby each addressed during the sea service chiefs panel the specific obstacles their services contend with in the current maritime environment.

Richardson explained that rapid changes in technology and maritime security requires a level of trust and confidence in leaders tasked with commanding maritime forces.

"It's very important that our leaders are people of character and integrity so that when we put them in front of our Sailors to lead them, not only do they know their business in warfighting but also that we would be proud for our sons and daughters to follow them," he said. "Whether at sea or near the sea, responding to any man-made or natural crisis, [they] are so much more than a maritime warrior, [they] are also diplomats and are securing our prosperity."

Richardson also stressed the importance of improving the logistical capabilities, stating that services will only maintain an upper hand in the maritime environment by becoming more agile.

"We have got to get capabilities into the hands of our soldiers, Sailors, airmen and Marines -- more and faster," he said. "It's important that as the pace quickens, as new technology enters the fray, as the security environment manifests itself in a really fast-changing world that we don't forget those fundamentals in terms of providing sustainable forces."

During a panel on the Arctic, speakers explained why partnering with

other services is also crucial to maintaining superiority, particularly in places like the Arctic Circle where there hasn't been a large naval presence.

"When it comes to maritime readiness in the Arctic, we cannot and should not go alone," said Rear Adm. John A. Okon, commander, Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command. "Collaboration is key. Resources and access points are limited, so we must work with our maritime partners to be successful."

Richardson echoed Okon's comments during his keynote remarks at the Sea Services Luncheon.

"The Arctic is a very dynamic situation," he said. "There are seaways that are open that were not open before, continental shelves that are being exposed that weren't exposed before, so I think that merits a response from our maritime forces and there's tremendous value in partnering with our fellow services such as the Coast Guard."

Keeping the waters open for Indo-Pacific trade routes, which bolster global economic prosperity, also remains a top priority for the Navy.

"A third of the world's trade flows through the South China Sea, 90% of the world's trade flows by the sea, tens of trillions of U.S. dollars flow through that body of water," said Richardson. "It's extremely important that those lines of communication and sea lanes remain open, and that's why the United States Navy is there and that's why we're going to stay there."

Other scheduled keynote speakers and panelists include Secretary of the Navy Richard V. Spencer, Undersecretary of the Navy Thomas Modly, Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition James "Hondo" Geurts and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Russell Smith.

Founded in 1965 and the largest maritime exposition in the United States, SAS brings together the U.S. defense industrial base, private sector U.S. companies and key military decision makers for an annual event to share the most current policies, programs, information and technology relevant to maritime service. SAS takes place May 6-8 and will include speaker and professional development sessions and dynamic maritime and defense exhibits on the latest technology and military equipment.



NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Robert Neller delivers remarks during the Sea Service Chiefs panel at the Sea-Air-Space (SAS) Exposition, May 6, 2019. The annual exposition, hosted by the Navy League of the United States, brings together key military decision makers, the U.S. defense industrial base, and private-sector U.S. companies for an innovative, educational, and professional maritime based event. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Apprentice Richard Rodgers)



Earthquake-resistant structures in New Clark City



Speaking to reporters, Bases Conversion and Development Authority President Vivencio Dizon assures that the structures in New Clark City can withstand strong seismic waves in the event of an earthquake. (Cherie Joyce V. Flores/PIA 3)

NEW CLARK CITY, Tarlac, May 6 (PIA) -- Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) assured that the structures in New Clark City (NCC) can withstand strong seismic waves in the event of an earthquake.

"In relation to the recent 6.1 magnitude Luzon quake, the buildings and facilities have maintained their structural integrity as there were no cracks and damages reported," BCDA President Vivencio Dizon said.

Dizon emphasized that the earthquake resistance of the National Government Administrative Center (NGAC) structures at NCC is way beyond the intensity 7 seismic tolerance prescribed under the building code.

"We have to build better. So, we built the structures here in a way that they can stand no matter how strong an earthquake is. If the building code required an intensity 7 seismic tolerance then we will build more than that," he

stated.

Aside from the quality materials and construction, Dizon noted that the NCC has a good-quality soil that naturally makes the area resilient and the facilities sturdy.

NGAC is a 40-hectare project that is part of the 9,450 hectare NCC in Capas, Tarlac.

It has sports facilities that will host the 30th South East Asian Games this November namely a 20,000 seater Athletics Stadium, 2,000 seater Aquatics Center, and 525 unit Athletes' Village.

Also for completion under Phase 1A is a seven-storey Government Building which will serve as an integrated operations center for government agencies involved in disaster risk reduction and management, a 525 unit condominium type housing for government employees dubbed as "The Residences", a commercial facility, and a River Park. (PIA 3)

Talentadong Manggagawang Tarlaqueños 2019



Department of Labor and Employment Tarlac Officer-in-Charge Aurita L. Laxamana (right) awards this year's Search for Talentadong Manggagawang Tarlaqueños Grand Winner Christian Ramos (left) with a certificate, plaque and P15,000 cash prize. (Trixie Joy B. Manalili/PIA 3)

TARLAC CITY -- Call center agent Christian Ramos was hailed as Grand Winner in the Search for Talentadong Manggagawang Tarlaqueños 2019.

Ramos, call center agent from Sutherland, bested 14 other contestants winning a certificate, trophy and PhP15,000 cash prize.

"This competition aims to showcase the outstanding talents of Tarlaqueños and to foster camaraderie and unity in the labor and management workforce in the province," Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Tarlac Officer-in-Charge Aurita L. Laxamana

said.

D'Luxe Band placed second receiving a certificate, plaque and P10,000 cash prize while the Crippen Crew ended third with certificate, plaque and P8,000 cash prize.

Special awards were likewise given to Paul Marion Vallentos-Best in Costume Award; D'Luxe Band-DOLE Choice Award; Christian Ramos and D'Luxe Band-My MetroTown Award; and Ruel Dayao-People's Choice Award.

The activity was organized by DOLE in partnership with the provincial government of Tarlac. (PIA 3)