

WHO lauds PH for passing child safety in vehicles law

MANILA -- The World Health Organization (WHO) has lauded the Philippines for passing a law that will require vehicle owners to use child restraint systems when traveling with children.

The WHO said Republic Act 11229 or the Child Safety in Motor Vehicles Act recently signed by President Rodrigo R. Duterte will help prevent injuries that might be sustained by children at road accidents.

"The WHO congratulates the Philippines as President Rodrigo Duterte signed into law the Child Safety in Motor Vehicles Act or Republic Act 11229. The initiative makes Philippines among the few countries in Asia to pass child restraint legislation," the organization said in a statement on Wednesday.

"In the Philippines, more than 600 children die from road crashes each year. The legislation is a significant step towards prioritizing the safety and welfare of infants and children on Philippine roads, and preventing traffic-related deaths and injuries," it added.

The Child Safety in Motor Vehicles Act also restricts children from sitting in the front seats of automobiles.

The use of child restraints in vehicles keeps children secured on their seats as they are not thrown against the car interior or ejected in cases of sudden braking or road collisions, the WHO said.

"Evidence has shown that child restraints reduce the likelihood of a fatal crash by approximately 70 percent among infants and between 54-80 percent among young children," the statement read.

The organization has committed to provide its support to the Philippine government in crafting the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of RA 11229.

The Department of Transportation, in consultation with the Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Health (DOH), Department of the Interior and Local Government, Philippine National Police-Highway Patrol Group, Metro Manila Development Authority, Council

for the Welfare of Children, and other concerned agencies and stakeholders must promulgate the IRR on child restraint systems within six months from the effectivity of the law.

Various government agencies, as well as private agencies and organizations, must conduct a nationwide information campaign on the proper installation, use, and maintenance of the child restraint system. (PNA)

NBI to assist probe of Cebu teen's brutal slay

MANILA -- The Department of Justice (DOJ) on Wednesday ordered the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to assist in resolving the gruesome murder of a 16-year-old girl in Cebu.

"We'll let the local police take the lead. If they have difficulties (solving the case) I'll ask the NBI (National Bureau of Investigation) to come in," Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra told reporters.

The DOJ chief, meanwhile, declined to

comment on calls to reintroduce capital punishment following the incident.

"As SOJ (Secretary of Justice), I will certainly be consulted should a bill reinstating the death penalty be submitted for resolution. Until then I am constrained to reserve my official position on the matter. For now, I can only condemn this hideous crime and promise to utilize all the power within my disposal to ensure that the perpetrators of the crime get

the retribution that they deserve," Guevarra added.

Meanwhile, the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) condemned the act.

"The brutal killing of the teenage girl in Lapu-Lapu is an act of pure evil and we call upon our authorities to catch the monsters responsible. We also call upon witnesses to come out and speak for the early resolution of this dastardly act," the IBP-Cebu chapter said in a statement.

If given the chance, the lawyers' group said it will provide legal service to "aid in the prosecution of the culprits to this vicious crime when caught".

Police investigators said the victim, identified as Christine Lee Silawan, was a resident of Barangay Mac-tan in Lapu-Lapu City and a Grade 9 student at the Maribago National High School.

Silawan, who was a church collector, went missing after attending mass at 6 p.m. on Sunday.

The victim's body was then recovered in a vacant lot in Sitio Mahayahay in Barangay Bangkal, Lapu-Lapu City on Monday. She was found half naked with half of her face skinned. (PNA)

Maritime school dean, 9 others join Navy reserve

MANILA -- The Philippine Navy (PN) has promoted a maritime school dean and a master mariner a rank higher as reserve officers while eight others were commissioned to the naval reserve force in line with efforts to beef up the country's reserve force.

In a statement Tuesday, Capt. Jonathan Zata, Navy spokesperson, said Philippine Merchant Marine Academy Dean of Marine Engineering, Reservist Lt. Charlie M. Pandongan, was promoted to commander while Master Mariner, Reservist Ensign

Modesto Gubaton, was promoted to lieutenant commander.

Joining the two in the donning of ranks and oath-taking ceremonies held at the PN headquarters at Naval Station Jose Andrada, Roxas Blvd., Manila were:

*lawyer Henry Benjamin O. Kanapi III - Investigation Agent IV, National Bureau of Investigation, who was commissioned as commander;

*lawyer Suharto M. Ambolodto -- member, Board of Trustees, International Center for Innovation and Excellence in Governance,

commander;

*Reynaldo M. Rosas -- Presidential Staff Officer VI, Office of the Deputy Executive Secretary for General Administration, Office of the President of the Philippines, commander;

*Nolivienne C. Ermitaño -- Assistant Director, Securities and Exchange Commission, commander;

*Maria Amber V. Hagada -- Senior Environmental Management Specialist, Environmental Management Bureau, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, commander;

*Ray R. Elevazo -- Executive Director III, Cooperative Development Authority, Office of the President of the Philippines, commander;

*Sergio E. Yap II -- Assistant Secretary, Department of Justice, lieutenant commander; and

*Jude Raul N. Manjares -- fraud officer, S&FR Operations, HSBC, lieutenant.

Zata said the event was presided by Navy flag-officer-in-command, Vice Admiral Robert Empedrad, who welcomed and lauded the reservists for their

sense of volunteerism and commitment in serving the nation.

"We need you," Zata said, noting that for the Philippine Navy to become strong and credible, it needs a strong and credible reserve force.

"(These Navy reservists are) our force multipliers. They are the ones who are helping us during HADR (humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations). They are the ones supporting us (in) all our undertaking as a Navy organization," he added. (PNA)

Magnitude 5.6 quake rocks Sarangani

MANILA -- A magnitude 5.6 earthquake jolted Sarangani and several Mindanao areas on Saturday morning, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) reported.

The quake, which struck at about 7:07 a.m. had a depth of 96 km., with the epicenter located at 10 km. northeast of the municipality

of Alabel.

Phivolcs said it is not expecting any damage, but aftershocks are possible.

The tremor was felt at Intensity 5 in Koronadal City, and Malungon in Sarangani, while Intensity 4 was felt in Alabel, Malapatan and Kiamba in Sarangani, as well as in General Santos City and Tupi in

South Cotabato.

Intensity 3 was reported in Davao City, Glan in Sarangani, as well as in Tacurong City in Sultan Kudarat.

Intensity 2 was recorded in Kidapawan City, and in Makilala and Magpet in North Cotabato, while Intensity 1 was recorded in Cagayan de Oro City. (PNA)

Gov't, private groups give aid to areas hit by water shortage

MANILA -- In response to President Duterte's ultimatum to provide ample water supply to affected households, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) on Friday laid out its short and long term measures to address the water shortage with both government and private groups helping concessionaire Manila Water serve its affected

customers.

In a statement, MWSS Administrator Reynaldo V. Velasco said Manila Water has a water supply shortfall of 150 million liters daily (MLD) from its allocation of 1,600 MLD from Angat Dam.

The shortfall is due to the increase in population, demand of consumers, on top of the early onslaught of the dry season.

"Manila Water has already started energiz-

ing and activating these deep wells as the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) through its Executive Director Virgilio David approved they activate 101 deep wells which can supply 101 MLD to its consumers," the statement read.

Another water concessionaire, Maynilad, also agreed to allocate 50 MLD and share water through cross border flow to ease the problem.

"They will also augment the water supply needs of Manila Water including the deployment of water trucks to affected areas that will service or benefit 50,000 households in Quezon City, Parañaque, and Taguig," it added.

Meanwhile, House Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo led the initial opening of the cross-border flow along with Velasco, Maynilad president Ramoncito S. Fernandez, and Manila Water president Ferdinand M. dela Cruz.

The cross border will initially provide ad-