

Navy units in northern Luzon aid 'Ramon' victims

MANILA --- The Philippine Navy (PN)'s Naval Forces Northern Luzon is now conducting humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) missions for families severely affected by Typhoon "Ramon" (Kalmaegi) early this week.

In a statement Wednesday, Lt. Commander Maria Christina Roxas, PN public affairs office chief, said personnel and assets

from NFNL, who are based at Naval Base Camilo Osias in Santa Ana, Cagayan, has already provided "pro-active response" before the arrival of the typhoon.

HADR mitigation plans include distribution of relief goods to 52 affected families at Barangay Kapanikian; and residents of Casmabalangan, Limbus, and Dumasag were advised to eva-

cuate and were brought to different designated evacuation areas like Tangatan gymnasium and Santa Ana gymnasium, she added.

NFNL also immediately dispatched two teams which acted as a support agency to Barangay Casagan.

Other personnel, meanwhile, were deployed at the municipal gymnasium to provide logistics and resources, observe and maintain security in the area, and helped in the delivery of relief goods in the affected areas.

Roxas said NFNL continues to monitor the situation to include nearby provinces such as Isabela, Batanes, and Ilocos region for possible deployment and search and rescue operations.

PRRD vows to sustain DND modernization

MANILA -- President Rodrigo Duterte on Wednesday vowed to sustain the modernization program of the Department of National Defense (DND) as he thanked the country's troops for defending the country against threats.

During the 80th anniversary of the DND at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City, Duterte said his administration would support its modernization programs by working with Congress to enact legislative measures that will enhance the department's capabilities.

"On behalf of a grateful nation, I extend my sincerest thanks to you, the brave men and women of the DND, for successfully carrying out the sacred mandate to defend our country against external and internal threats and ensure peace and security," Duterte said.

The President said the DND has been an important contributor in national development by ensuring public safety and protecting territorial integrity and sovereignty.

He also praised the DND for their "indispensable" participation in humanitarian and disaster response, peace and development, socio-economic growth, and nation-building.

"The Filipino nation will always remember

you in their hearts for pursuing this noble task that puts you at the forefront of combating elements that threaten our freedom and democratic way of life," he added.

Duterte, meanwhile, expressed hope that troops would be inspired to work harder to ensure a "safer and more prosperous society" for future generations.

"Be assured that the entire Filipino nation is behind you as we advance the common good and pursue genuine reforms for our motherland," he added.

Upon the President's arrival, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana briefed him on newly-purchased firearms and ammunition prepositioned at the Tejeros Hall.

The anniversary program also recognized outstanding personnel by conferring the Outstanding Achievement Award to Col. Joel Paloma of the Philippine Army and Lt. Colonel Maria Consuelo Castillo of the Philippine Air Force.

Also present during the event were former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon,

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Solon expects MRT-3 rehab plan completed by 2021

MANILA -- The chairperson of the Senate Committee on Public Services is expecting the Department of Transportation (DOTr) to fulfill its target to complete the rehabilitation of the Metro Rail Transit Line 3 (MRT-3) by July 2021.

Senator Grace Poe got the assurance of its completion during the interpellation of the PHP147-billion proposed 2020 budget of the DOTr on Wednesday.

"Yes, complete rehab, almost like brand new," said Senator Sherwin Gatchalian, sponsor of the DOTr budget.

Poe said the budget



UPHOLDING ITS COMMITMENT TO SERVE THE PUBLIC: To uphold its commitment to serve the public, provincial government's Ugnayan sa Barangay program continuously visited different barangays in the province to brought joy and hope to their constituents. On November 19, 2019, Ugnayan sa Barangay team headed by Governor Jonvic Remulla went to Barangay Mulawin in the Municipality of Tanza and was able to reach out to the people. The governor relayed the good news on the construction of the coastal road connecting Cavite Expressway to Tanza and the provincial government's effort to provide free wifi access in the entire province. Thousands of residents together with their local chief executive, Mayor Yuri Pacumio welcomed and thanked the governor for always extending assistance to the people of Tanza. Seventh District Board Member Lito Langit, Vice Mayor Raymundo Del Rosario and Sangguniang Bayan Members were also present at the event and showed their support to the program. --(PICAD)

Palace sees Filipinos eventually appreciating China

MANILA — Malacañang on Thursday expressed optimism that Filipinos will one day appreciate China, considering President Rodrigo Duterte's push for an independent foreign policy that is advantageous to the Philippines.

Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo issued the statement, as he admitted that it no longer came as a surprise

that public trust in China has fallen to its lowest level, as shown in the latest Social Weather Stations' (SWS) September poll.

"The Palace is not surprised, as it does not feel affronted, with the results of the survey released yesterday, November 20, by the Social Weather Stations which indicate that China remains to be the least trusted country among Filipinos with a net trust rating of -33," Panelo said in a statement.

Duterte has pursued an independent foreign policy, to maintain good relations with all nations, including China.

"It is in our belief, however, that China, like any other country, will be eventually appreciated by the Filipinos by reason of the President's independent foreign policy which has resulted in significant benefits favorable to the Philippines," he added.

Based on the September 27 to 30 survey conducted by the SWS, China's net public trust fell from June 2019's "poor" -24 to "bad" -33, the lowest since the "bad" -35 in June 2018.

SWS noted that net trust in China has been positive in nine out of 51 surveys since it first conducted the poll in August 1994, reaching as high as "moderate" +17 in June 2010.

Panelo said the poll results were "foreseeable and understandable," given the "conflicting" positions of Manila and Beijing concerning the resource-rich South China Sea.

"Despite the territorial dispute not being the sum total of our relationship with China, the Office of the President will neither court nor force any citizen to change his or her sentiments toward our giant neighbor in the North. We will respect their conviction the way we value their allegiance to the Republic and its elements," he said.

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The Philippines and China's diplomatic negotiations are ongoing to resolve their long-standing sea disputes.

Panelo remained hopeful that Filipinos would see China as a "role model," especially in combating corruption.

"Verily, China could even become a role model of the Philippines in reducing, if not totally eradicating, poverty," he said.

The same SWS poll revealed that the United States (US) earned the highest trust score, which remained "excellent" but dropped by one point to +72.

The US was followed by Australia ("good" +37), Japan ("good" +35), Singapore ("moderate" +26), and Vietnam ("neutral" net zero).

The SWS interviewed 1,800 adult Filipinos, using sampling error margins of ±2.3 percentage points for national percentages, ±4 percentage points each for Balance Luzon and Mindanao, and ±6 percentage points each for Metro Manila and the Visayas. (PNA)