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**MANILA**—Amagnitude 5.5 quake jolted Quezon province on Friday afternoon, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) reported.

The quake of tectonic origin struck 40 km. north-east of the municipality of Burdeos at 4:28 p.m. It had

a depth of 10 km.

Intensity 4 was felt in Quezon City, Jose Panganiban and Camarines Norte, while Intensity III was recorded in Guinayangan, Quezon.

Phivolcs said aftershocks and damages are possible from the earthquake. (PNA)

## SC fines judges in 2014 Sharia bar mess

**MANILA** – The Supreme Court (SC) has imposed fines on two Shari’a Circuit Court judges for their acts which cast doubts on the 2014 Sharia Bar Examinations.

In a statement Friday, the high court said it had issued a 13-page resolution promulgated on July 24, through the SC’s Third Division which found Judge Kaudri L. Jainul, appointed Chairperson of the Board of Examiners, and Judge Saman-odden L. Ampaso the designated translator of the 2014 Sharia Bar, guilty of conduct unbecoming of a judge and ordered them to each pay a fine of PHP10,000.

Jainul of the Sharia Circuit Court, Isabela City, Basilan and Ampaso of the Sharia Circuit Court, Tamparan, Lanao del Sur were also sanctioned “with a stern warning that a repetition of the same or similar acts shall be dealt with more severely”.

The SC concurred with the findings of the Office Court Administrator (OCA) that there is no concrete proof that there was a leakage of questions during the 2014 Shari’a Bar examinations.

It held that the evidence at hand readily points to the appearance of impropriety caused by Ampaso’s designation as the translator of the examination questions.

“Although no harm was actually inflicted on the Shari’a Bar examinations by such designation, it is the impression of impropriety that it created that casts a rather bleak picture of

undue preference on the image of the Judiciary. [N]o matter how miniscule such appearance of impropriety is, the Court is duty-bound to forever maintain an untarnished image as the last bastion of democratic society where pure justice is expected and dispensed,” the SC ruled.

The SC said the OCA was justified in not giving credence and weight to Jainul’s contention that he had no knowledge that Ampaso had relatives who would be taking the exams.

Ampaso’s three children took the same Sharia Bar Examinations where he was appointed as translator.

“The fact remains that Judge Ampaso had full access to the questions when he translated the questions from English to Arabic two days before the first week of the examination,” the High Court said.

It also noted that Ampaso was billeted at a hotel located only a few kilometers away from where his children stayed.

Citing Canon 4 of the New Code of Judicial Conduct for the Philippine Judiciary which requires judges to exemplify propriety at all times, the Court held that Judges Jainul and Ampaso failed to exercise caution and prudence in their actions as expected of them as judges not only in the performance of their judicial duties but in their professional and private activities as well.

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## No LGUs 'fully compliant' with road clearing ops yet: DILG

**MANILA** -- There is no local government unit (LGU) yet which has been declared as fully compliant with the campaign to clear roads of obstructions and illegal structures, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) said Friday.

“We have not made any determination on which LGUs are fully compliant because the assessment of all LGUs will come after the 60-day deadline which will be on September 29, 2019,” DILG spokesperson and Undersecretary Jonathan Malaya said in a statement.

Malaya made the clarification in response to the Makati City government's claim that it has joined the cities of Marikina, Malabon, Navotas, Pasay, San Juan, Valenzuela and municipality of Pateros, which earlier reports said are 100-percent compliant with the campaign to clear roads of obstructions, ahead of the 60-day deadline imposed by the DILG.

Citing the department's Memorandum Circular No. 121-2019, Malaya said full compliance with the order is not based on road clearing operations alone.

"For an LGU to be declared as fully compliant, they should also enact or revisit ordinances related to road clearing and banning of illegal construction; prepare an inventory of roads within their jurisdiction; develop and implement displacement strategies, and cause the rehabilitation of recovered public roads," the DILG official said.

Malaya also said compliance reports on the matter submitted by LGUs to the DILG regional offices and its Bureau of Local Government Supervision (BLGS) are still subject to validation.

“Secretary (Eduardo) Año has, in fact, ordered the creation of validation teams to check on the compliance of the accomplishments of LGUs in the implementation of the MC on road clearing. These teams shall be composed of the DILG, Philippine National Police (PNP), Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, and civil society,” Malaya stressed.

“Similar to what he did in Metro Manila, Secretary Año has also assigned DILG Undersecretaries and Assistant Secretaries to the regions to closely work and coordinate with the DILG regional directors and LGUs, monitor actions taken, and emphasize that the road clearing is national in scope,” he added.

The DILG official, however, said the agency is pleased with the smooth implementation of road clearing operations nationwide.

“As Secretary Año has said, the real test of the performance of the Local Chief Executives lies in their consistency of maintaining the cleared roads beyond the September 29 deadline with the support of the police and the barangays,” Malaya said. (PNA)

“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and He will flee from you.” – James 4:7