

We bank on Filipino ingenuity and perseverance that have no bounds.
 We're about sharing hopes and ambitions, and nurturing them to life.
 We revere partnerships and the spirit of cooperation as keys to success.
 We believe in the Filipinos' aspiration of triumph. We believe in YOU.
 Whatever your dream, whatever your goal, **we're here to HELP YOU GROW.**



Your partner in progress.
54 years and **growing.**



LANDBANK

landbankofficial LBP_Official www.landbank.com

Registered by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
 Financial Consumer Protection Department
 (+632) 709-7007 / consumeraffairs@bnp.gov.ph
 ASC REF NO: L004P100417LW

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT MAGAZINE

LEAGUE

APRIL-MAY 2018

VOL. 1 NO. 4 PHP 195.00

PAKIL, LAGUNA
 TAKES A
 QUANTUM LEAP

BAGUIO CITY
 BLOOMS ANEW

BRGY. MARCELO GREEN
 CHAMPIONS
 EDUCATION

BORACAY
 CLEAN UP OR
 SHUT DOWN?

INSIDE:
 SENATOR CYNTHIA VILLAR
 TOURISM SECRETARY WANDA TEO
 PEZA DG CHARITO PLAZA
 MISS EARTH 2017 KAREN IBASCO



Mindanao's Next Big Thing

Governor Bambi Emano
 on transforming Misamis Oriental
 into a top tourism spot





26 YEARS OF LINKING NATION, EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

One of the keys towards sustained public patronage of public service is a credible image based on honest, effective and efficient service. This however, should be complemented with support not only from the government but also from different sectors of society who view postal communications as a major tool towards ensuring national unity and development, linking the life of the Filipino with his Countryman and the rest of the world.

This is the view of the Philippine Postmaster General Joel L. Otarra, appointed to head country's public postal services by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte.

In its 26 years as a Government Owned and Controlled Corporation (GOCC), the Philippine Postal Corporation (PHLPost) is now strengthening its partnership with government and private institutions not only to deliver mail services, parcels and various goods but also to serve as the catalyst towards alleviating the economic conditions of the people in the countryside.

BRINGING CASH ASSISTANCE TO FAR FLUNG AREAS

Government and private humanitarian agencies recognize the role of the postal service to distribute cash grants and payout services using its facilities in far flung areas especially during calamities and disasters.

Recently, PHLPost was tapped to deliver financial services and conditional cash transfer for the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) to families hit by Typhoon Ferdie (Meranti) in far-flung town of Itbayat, province of Batanes.

"With the vast network and familiarity of our postal workers, PHLPost can be an effective partner of public and private stakeholders to provide financial services and well being of low-income households", Postmaster General Joel L. Otarra said.

Aside from PNRC, financial inclusion stakeholders such as the International Red Cross, United Nations (UN)-World Food Program, the DSWD -Door-to-Door Delivery of Social Pension for the Indigent Senior Citizens Program, Save the Children, Inc. in the southern part of the Philippines and the international non-profit organization Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (OXFAM) has partnered with PHLPost to deliver cash assistance.



FASTER AND EASIER GOVERNMENT TRANSACTION VIA POST OFFICE

While PHLPost continues to maintain its traditional mail delivery services to serve communities who are not yet linked electronically, it has gone beyond tradition to stay relevant, competitive and still serving the postal needs of every Filipino.

PHLPost is set to redefine service delivery by bringing it closer to the public and widening its business territory.

PHLPost has started to implement government partnerships on agencies that offer vital services on application processes and in obtaining clearances for employment, gun licensing, travel abroad and many others.

Recently, the Philippine Postal Corporation (PHLPost) and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) has forged a Memorandum of Agreement pertaining to the establishment of NBI Satellite Office at Manila Central Post Office Building to serve as NBI Clearance processing site.

The NBI-PHLPost project is the first step towards de-clogging the long lines, obtained clearances and government documents faster for the convenience of the public.

People in far-flung areas of the country receiving cash grants and payout services from PHLPost employees who were tapped to serve as relay for international humanitarian groups.



"Philippine Postal Corporation (PHLPost) is now strengthening its partnership with government and private institutions not only to deliver mail services, parcels and various goods but also to serve as the catalyst towards alleviating the economic conditions of the people in the countryside."

— PMG Joel L. Otarra

PHLPOST OFFERS COMMUNITY LIVELIHOOD PROGRAM

To provide viable and alternative source of income, PHLPost has engaged in the operation of the Postal Station in partnership with the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG). This noble and sustainable program caters to areas in dire need of postal and financial services and facilities for community development among Local Government Units (LGU's).

Postal station is a facility established and operated by a private individual, entity or local government unit to perform postal business and sale of any related products and services specifically authorized in its accreditation issued by PHLPost.

LGUs may start their income generating venture by simply applying for a postal station in respective areas. Hence, private individuals may start their business for as low as Php 25,000 start-up capital, with the right location and a stable market. Included in the start-up package are marketing equipment, initial stocks, and training of employees.

There will be a 20% rebate on total sales of postage stamps and other merchandise supplied by PHLPost.

PHLPost will not only proliferate in every corner of the country but will also be able to help many individuals establish a stable business to stimulate economic growth.



LGU-assisted Post Office Counter. A Postal Extension Office was established inside the City Hall with the support of the Local Government Unit (LGU) in the City of Candon, Province of Ilocos Sur.

It's more fun~lastic
in SUBIC



Forest trails
and mountain hikes



Indigenous culture



Jungle survival
training and more

IT'S MORE FUN IN THE
PHILIPPINES
www.tourism.gov.ph

SUBIC
bay
PHILIPPINES



The cruise
destination
of a
lifetime

SUBIC
BAY
FREEPORT
PHILIPPINES



Nature-based theme parks



Only at Subic Bay!



Tourism Department

2F Subic Bay Exhibition
and Convention Center
Efficiency St., Subic Bay
Gateway Park
Subic Bay Freeport Zone
2222 Philippines
Tel. no.: +6347.252.4123
+6347.252.4154
+6347.252.4049
+6347.252.4129
Manila direct line: +632.584.4362
Fax.: +6347.252.4194

marketing.tourism@sbma.com

www.mysubicbay.com.ph

Photo Credits: © Norwegian Cruise Line



REGULARS

10 ROUNDUP

Moving Forward

12 BARANGAY FORUM

Around the Town

14 FESTIVALS

The Best of the Philippines

18 FAST FACTS

The Most Beautiful Manmade Attractions

88 ANTI-RED TAPE ACT REPORT CARD

Passing with Flying Colors

90 SOLUTIONS & INNOVATION

Surbana Jurong

92 SOLUTIONS & INNOVATION

Hungarian Water Technology

94 SPOTLIGHT:

Vjandep Pastel

FEATURES

22 THOUGHT LEADERS

Taiwan Exchange

26 TALKING POINTS:

PEZA DIRECTOR GENERAL CHARITO PLAZA

In the Zone

30 10 QUESTIONS:

SEN. CYNTHIA VILLAR

Sustainable Communities

34 TOURISM SEC. WANDA TEO

Saving the Islands



MIDORI
HOTEL-CASINO



Midori Clark Hotel and Casino is ideal for guests traveling for family holiday, romance, business, visiting loved ones or pure leisure. Surrounded with sprawling golf courses, shopping complex, casinos and sports facilities in a well-secured community. Located along Kalayaan Road, C.M. Recto Avenue, Clark Freeport, Philippines

www.midorihotel.com | reservations@midorihotel.com | +63 45 308 8888



@midoriclarkhotel



@midorihotelcasino



@midoriclark

38 MISS EARTH KAREN IBASCO
The Green Agenda

42 LAGUNA LAKE ECOLOGY CENTER
The New Economic Zone

GOVERNANCE IN REVIEW

46 MISAMIS ORIENTAL
Mindanao's Next Big Thing

60 BAGUIO
Rising from the Ruins

66 PAKIL, LAGUNA
Embracing Change

72 JOLO, SULU
Changing Perceptions

78 BATAAN
Travel Back in Time

82 ABC PRESIDENT CHRIS AGUILAR
Leading the Way



Publisher Generoso M. Dungo / **Editor In Chief** Lakambini Bautista / **Art Director** Agnes S. Escasa / **Managing Editor** Kristel Dacumos-Lagorza / **Associate Editor** John Lee Candelaria / **Copy Editor** Ma. Lourdes E. Rosal / **Editorial Assistants** Gemma Dungo, Shimico Dianne Nakamura / **Marketing Associates** Juan Miguel Paolo Tungpalan, Daniel Marco Nicanor / **Contributing Writers** Anna Chato, Joyce Reyes-Aguila, Maielle Montayre, Cynthia U. Santiago, Maridol Bismark, Herman Joseph Kraft / **Photographers** Daniel Soriano, Mike Cortez, Bon Aserios, Ed L. Santiago, Mel Cortez, Jar Concengco / **Illustrator** Amiel Rufo

LEAGUE MAGAZINE is published bi-monthly by The League Publishing Company, Inc. All rights reserved. Copyright 2017 by The League Publishing Company, Inc. No part of the magazine may be reproduced in any manner without the permission of the publisher. Opinions and views expressed in this publication are the writers' and not necessarily endorsed by editors and management of LEAGUE. Address all correspondence to: LEAGUE Magazine, The League Publishing Company, Inc., Unit 9B One Burgundy Plaza, 307 Katipunan Avenue, Loyola Heights, Quezon City, Philippines 1108; Tel Nos. (02) 936-3979; (02) 285-6367/ email: editorial@leaguemag.com.ph / www.leaguemag.com.ph



COVER PHOTO BY BON ASERIOS
OF "ONE HAPPY STORY"



THE
Carmen
DOWNTOWN NAGA'S BOUTIQUE HOTEL

COMFORT, CONVENIENCE, CLASS

The Carmen Hotel – Downtown Naga's Boutique Hotel – opened its doors in September 2016, and it has changed the Naga City landscape for good.

The Carmen boasts modern and contemporary architecture that features extensive exterior cladding designed to embody the ebb and flow of the Naga River. The structure, properly set back from the street, dominates the landscape with its towering presence. Its tall and wide lobby draws the eyes with its clean and modern lines, accentuated by the abundance of natural light, thanks to its floor-to-ceiling glass walls.

The Carmen is located on Peñafrancia Avenue, in the less busy part of Downtown Naga. Its location in the center of Naga's commercial and cultural district gives guests a fair number of advantages. It is close to shops and dining destinations, particularly Naga People's Mall where native goods are sold. It is also but a short walk away to notable tourist spots such as the Naga Metropolitan Cathedral, Plaza Quince Martires, and the Bell Tower of the San Francisco Church, among others.

And if guests want to experience the busy nightlife of Magsaysay Avenue or visit the big malls, a short jeepney or tricycle ride is all it takes to do so.

Naga is easily accessible thanks to the variety of public transportation options, available right from The Carmen.

Two of the town's major events during the Peñafrancia festivities, the *Translacion* and the *Fluvial* Procession, are best experienced right from The Carmen. Naga City has a lot to offer its guests, but The Carmen – equipped with international-standard amenities – makes sure guests will enjoy staying in as much as they do going out.

The guest rooms have a unique and pleasant scent, and they echo the hotel lobby's minimalist but functional aesthetics. They look and feel new. The beds are relaxing with fluffy and soft lines, and the air-conditioning effectively cools you from the tropical heat. Each room is also outfitted with all the modern conveniences guests can expect from a hotel of this caliber.

The Carmen is also the only hotel in Downtown Naga with a swimming pool, which has a kiddie and an adult section, and plenty of lounge seats on the poolside, perfect for families. Guests are also sure to enjoy the buffet at Baba Social Dining, the hotel's flagship restaurant. At dusk, go up to the top floor and just kick back and relax at the Sky Lounge as the cityscape turns a gorgeous hue thanks to the setting sun.

The Carmen Hotel is operated by enable Hospitality Inc. Hotel Trunk line: +63 54 4725888 / +63 917 570 2791 +63 919 648 9143 cc@thecarmenhotel.com.ph / www.thecarmenhotel.com.ph

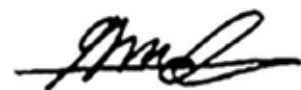


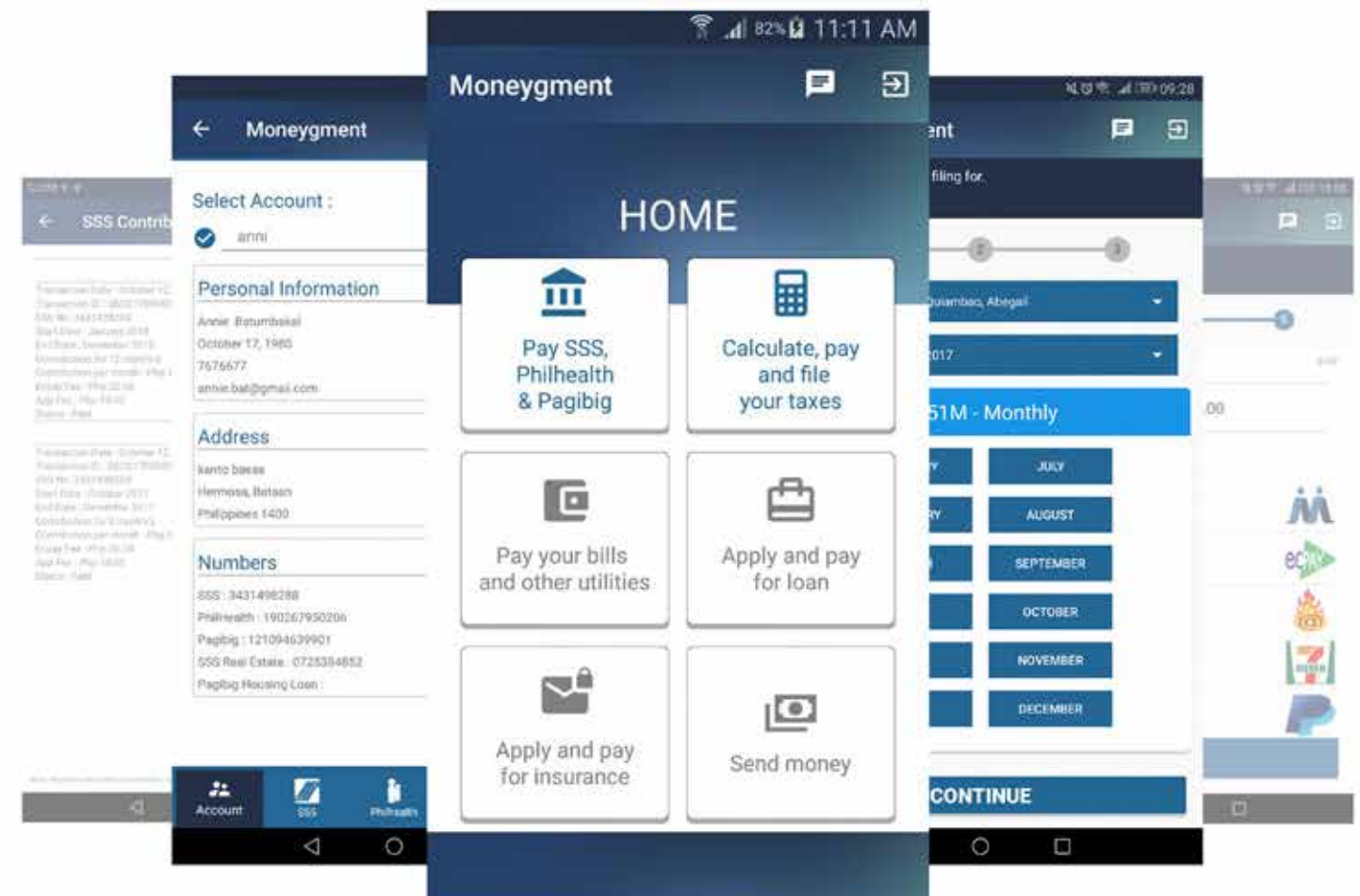
Welcome to the summer issue of *League* magazine! To kick off the season, we feature a mix of the country's up-and-coming vacation destinations and summer capitals—from Baguio to Misamis Oriental, and everything between.

As we celebrate the Philippine's most beautiful sites, we also shine the light on the importance of preserving our natural resources. In this issue, we tackle the concern of Boracay and its environmental degradation, which serves as a pressing case of how tourism—when not tempered with smart urban planning and laws and regulations—greatly affects the health of a place and the livelihood of a community. *League* underlines the responsibility of every citizen to become responsible tourists and travelers.

In addition, *League* sits down with leaders and experts who share their insights and advice on how the local government and the greater public can better protect tourism sites and uphold the campaign on environmental protection.

Rest assured, *League*, as your source of credible information, will be here to cover stories and present solutions which we think can help further the cause and open up the dialogue for greater progress.


Generoso M. Dungo



Moneygment offers payments solutions for self-employed individuals, household employers, OFWs, and the unbanked. Through the app, users can pay their SSS, PhilHealth, and Pag-IBIG contributions. They can also pay and file for their taxes among others.



The vast tourism potential of the Philippines cannot be overemphasized, with its rich resources—both natural and man-made. Case in point: Are we harnessing these resources well? Are we taking an active role in protecting it?

Now, all eyes are on Boracay, but all for the wrong reasons. And we hope that all of us, both LGUs and private citizens, learn from it. What is growth and success if you can't enjoy the place in years to come?

League's April-May issue is a call, not only to discover our motherland, but to make its tourism growth sustainable.

Misamis Oriental is primed to become one of the country's "it" destinations. Find out on page 52 how Governor Bambi Emano's progressive and innovative leadership is helping the province achieve its unprecedented growth, despite challenges in peace and order.

On page 60, we look back at Baguio City's poignant story—how it rose from the rubble and blossomed every season after that. Indeed, how it has maintained its stature as the country's Summer Capital is something to reckon with.

Pakil, Laguna (page 66) shows us how one of the oldest towns in the Philippines is embracing change, while being a model of competitiveness and public service in these modern times.

This issue, we also got to know Jolo, Sulu better as Mayor Kerkhar Tan debunks wrong notion about their municipality, and reveals his plans and priorities (page 72).

Also in this issue, we train the spotlight on another model barangay that goes by the name Marcelo Green. Find out how it has achieved a drug-free community, and is able to deliver efficient service to its people.

We've got a lot more stories to offer you, so leaf through the pages. We'd love to hear from you. Send us an email at editorial@leaguemag.com.ph.

Lakambini
Lakambini Bautista



HARVESTED AND PRODUCED
IN THE PHILIPPINES

DISCOVER THE TASTE OF FINE FILIPINO CHOCOLATE

Auro is a proudly Filipino bean-to-bar chocolate company that sources cocoa beans directly from local farming communities in Davao.



Auro Chocolate

www.aurochocolate.com



COLORFUL 'PARAWS' PARTICIPATE IN ILOILO PARA REGATTA

The City of Iloilo held the 46th Paraw Regatta Festival in the district of Arevalo with the theme “Unity Amidst the Waves of Change.” The regatta is an annual 30-km race starting from the front of Tatoy’s Manokan and Seafoods in Arevalo towards Bundolan Point in Jordan, Guimaras, and back to Arevalo. The competition was divided into three categories; Category A has a waterline length of 16 feet and below, Category B with 16.1 to 22 ft., and Category C has 22 ft. and above.

Dubbed as the oldest sailing event in Asia, the two-week celebration saw 44 colorful *paraws* (double outrigger sailboats native to the Visayas region) participating in the event. The *paraw* is also one of the modes of transportation used by the Malays when they settled in the Philippines from Borneo.



OVERSEAS FILIPINO BANK OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED

A ceremonial launch for the Overseas Filipino Bank (OFB), formerly known as Philippine Postal Savings Bank (PPSB) or PostBank, was held last January 18 at the head office in Liwasang Bonifacio, Manila. This is pursuant to Executive Order No. 44 signed by President Rodrigo Duterte September 28, 2017, which approved the acquisition of PSSB by Land Bank of the Philippines as a savings bank subsidiary. PSSB initially closed in 1976 due to a competitive banking industry but was reopened in 1994 by the Philippine Postal Corporation.

OFB now seeks to address the financial needs, handle remittances, and support investments of overseas Filipinos, not only of OFWs but also of Filipino immigrants with resident visas. It shall operate domestically and internationally with plans to deploy representatives to Philippine embassies abroad. The Department of Finance, the Department of Labor and Employment, and the Department of Foreign Affairs, among various government agencies, will also contribute their efforts towards the success of OFB.



DAVOR PARTNERS WITH PHILFIDA TO BOOST ABACA INDUSTRY

The Provincial Government of Davao Oriental (DavOr) has partnered with the Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority (PhilFIDA) to develop and address the problems faced by the abaca industry. DavOr is one of the biggest producers of abaca in the Philippines contributing 10.11% to the country’s total national fiber production with 7,352.43 metric tons produced in 2016. The towns of Manay, Baganga, Caraga, Cateel, and Boston will be prioritized by the program, covering about 450 hectares of abaca farms this 2018.

One of the programs involved is the Sustained Abaca Disease Management Program. The Provincial Government also aims to further increase production as well as improve the quality of the abaca fiber. PhilFIDA also partners with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to assist in the province’s post-harvest facilities through the Shared Service Facility for abaca farmers. Other programs include funding for abaca seed production, abaca expansion and rehabilitation, and livelihood training support under the Payapa at Masaganang Pamayanan (PAMANA) of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace Process (OPAPP).



P125M KIDS' WELLNESS CENTER TO RISE IN KALINGA

Tabuk City, the provincial capital of Kalinga, is set to construct the Kalinga Children’s Ward and Wellness Center. The groundbreaking ceremony was held on February 16 with Kalinga Governor Jocel Baac and Rep. Allen Jesse Mangaoang at the site, leading the “songa,” a local ritual to repel bad spirits. They were joined by Sen. Joseph Victor Ejercito, who was visiting the province with Raymart Santiago and the rider group, Adventure Team Philippines.

The Children’s Ward and Wellness Center will be a three-storey building with a 60-bed capacity, built at the compound of the old provincial hospital. The provincial government has allotted P56 million for the project with P60 million more from the national government, courtesy of Rep. Mangaoang and Sen. Ejercito who is the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Health and Vice-Chairman of the Committee on Finance. Both lawmakers assured the Kalingas of their support to obtain additional funding needed to complete the project.



CAMSUR GIVES DONATIONS TO LOCAL FISHERMEN, YOUTH, AND RESIDENTS

Fishermen from Brgy. Casuna, Municipality of Tigaon, province of Camarines Sur were grateful as they received 30 new fibreglass boats from Governor Migz Villafuerte as part of the latter’s livelihood program. The Camarines Sur Provincial Government awarded qualified fishermen beneficiaries from Tigaon who needed the new boats and found hope in receiving them.

A fibreglass basketball ring and board was also given as part of the province’s sports and development programs to turn the local youth away from illegal drugs and vices. Donations were also made to different barangays in Tigaon to aid with their ongoing construction projects. As such, 40 pieces of corrugated G.I. sheets, 500 meters service dropwire #6, and 100 bags of cement were given to Brgys. Casuna, Tinawagan, and Libod.

MARAWI: A TRIUMPH OVER TERROR

Last March, President Rodrigo R. Duterte and Lt. Gen Rolando D. Bautista, Commanding General of the Philippine Army (PA), officially opened the module on the five-month battle for Marawi City at the PA Museum in Fort Bonifacio.

The impressive audio-visual display recounts the hard-fought victory of Joint Task Force (JTF) Marawi—consisting of units from the Army, Navy/Marines, the Air Force, and the Police—against the ISIS-Maute terrorist group. The first segment of the display dwells on the start of hostilities on May 23, 2017, when the terrorists—reinforcing embattled Isnilon Hapilon, the “emir” of ISIS in Southeast Asia—started burning and occupying buildings and taking hostages.

In response, President Duterte declared martial law in Mindanao and unleashed JTF Marawi against the terrorists. The second segment dwells on the troops’ grueling test in urban warfare against a well-funded, well-equipped enemy, which used civilians as human shields. Filipino soldiers, seasoned in countryside counter-insurgency operations, maneuvered from block to block—while evading improvised explosive devices (IEDs)—to neutralize enemy snipers and to flush out heavily-armed terrorists from buildings, mosques, and houses.

Meanwhile, information and civilian-military operatives waged an equally critical battle for hearts and minds, which constitutes the third segment. They repulsed the enemy terror-cum-propaganda onslaught in the mass media, in the Internet, in social media, and on the ground. These efforts, which included the orderly evacuation of civilians and the timely rehabilitation of areas outside the main battle zone, paved the way for a long-term victory.

Armed with popular support, masterful strategy and superior battle technology, JTF Marawi systematically gained the upper hand—decimating the terrorists and hemming them in for a final assault. This is the focus of the fourth segment, which also pays tribute to the heroic exploits of the troops.

By October 17, following the downfall of top terrorist leaders Hapilon and Omar Maute, Marawi had been liberated. A week later, the troops, which suffered their own share of casualties, went home to a heroes’ welcome, as depicted in the final segment. This marked the swiftest victory against an entrenched ISIS group anywhere in the world.

The exhibit is open to the public. Catch a piece of history and visit the Philippine Army Museum today. Viewing hours: 9am-4pm, Monday to Friday. Entrance fee: P30.



DSWD, NDRRMC SENDS HUMANITARIAN CARAVAN TO ALBAY

The “Hatid Tulong sa Apektado ng Mt. Mayon Eruption Caravan” arrived at the Albay Sports Complex in Guinobatan, Albay. Organized by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) along with other agencies of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), it is the first of a series to provide and deliver assistance to affected municipalities and displaced residents of Albay.

The humanitarian caravan comprised of more than 30 trucks from the DSWD, Armed Forces of the Philippines and Philippine National Police through the Office of Civil Defense (OCD), Department of Transportation (DOTr), World Food Programme (WFP), and Philippine Disaster Resiliency Foundation (PDRF). The fleet carried 36,100 food packs and non-food items amounting to almost P13 million. DSWD Officer-in-Charge Emmanuel A. Leyco led the send-off of the goods from the Department’s National Resource Operations Center (NROC) in Pasay City, together with NDRRMC Executive Director Undersecretary Ricardo B. Jalad and DOTr’s Assistant Secretary Eymard D. Eje.



FESTIVE CELEBRATIONS THIS SUMMER

What are some of the fun activities and celebrations your barangay is hosting this summer?

INTERVIEWS BY SHIMICO DIANNE NAKAMURA



"Every 15th of May, we celebrate the feast of San Isidro Labrador Elejer (Patron Saint of Farmers). We also host activities such as Anos Got Talent, wherein we showcase both individual and group talents of the residents in our barangay. We also hold medical missions and our annual barangay parade that is highlighted by a fireworks display at night."

Kap. Celerino Balasoto Jr.
BARANGAY ANOS, LOS BAÑOS LAGUNA



"In line with the Women's Month celebration, we conducted a parade to pay tribute and also showcase the capabilities of the women in our barangay. Barangay staff spearheaded the said activity, which includes free medical and dental missions, free Zumba sessions, free makeovers and a lot more. The most awaited and participated celebration is the Summer Basketball League where the barangay sponsors the players' jerseys."

Kap. Rodolfo S. Palma
BARANGAY BAGONG PAG ASA, QUEZON CITY



"March is not just a season of summer in our barangay, we also highlight and celebrate the Women's Month. During this time, we hold an activity called 'Palaro Para Kay Tita,' which is a project of Mayor Joric Gacula. The 'Palaro Para Kay Tita' includes games such as badminton and volleyball, which are geared towards women. This project also aims to give women a break from their everyday routine and let them have fun and exercise. Since we are celebrating with women, only women can join the games. Our Barangay Captain commends this celebration because it also serves as a means to foster stronger friendships among women in our barangay."

Councilor Michell B. Bermundo
BARANGAY SAN JUAN, TAYTAY RIZAL



"During summer, our barangay, with the help of the local government and provincial government, head to different regions to facilitate medical and dental missions as well as join tree planting activities, anti-rabies vaccination and feeding programs(pakain). Recently, with the help of Upsilon Sigma Phi, we built three water pumps/ deep wells that help address our water and sanitary needs. This contributes to our U.N. sustainable development goals, ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. For the first time, with the help of San Miguel Foundation and the AFP Reserve Command, we were able to facilitate all programs within one day that benefited 1,000 inhabitants."

Kap. Anita S. Casupanan
BARANGAY NABUCLOD, FLORIDABLANCA, PAMPANGA

Aromatic Rituals



Bergamot Oil dispels anxious feelings as it purifies the skin and provides a calming effect. For a bitter fruit, it produces sweet oil that brightens the mood. Known to build confidence, this refreshing oil can help stop the growth of bacteria, minimize marks, lessen skin irritations, and relax tensed muscles.



Chamomile Oil is one of the gentlest essential oils on the planet. Its unique floral scent was often used in Ancient Rome for its ability to calm the raging nerves of soldiers. This natural mood-booster is also known for its soothing abilities. It improves skin condition, relieves tired muscles, mollifies flaring pores, and helps slow down the aging process.



Eucalyptus Oil has a cooling fragrance that freshens up the air and keeps stench away. It has anti-acne, antiseptic, and antibacterial properties that help detoxify and purify the skin. It also helps tone the hair and give a refreshing feeling that creates a soothing massage experience.



Frankincense Oil is considered the king of essential oils. Its balsamic aroma offers comfort, helps relieve stress and anxiety, and naturally induces sleep. It also works to detoxify skin and reduce muscle pain. It also helps diminish the appearance of dark spots, acne blemishes, and reduce signs of aging by helping tighten the skin and firm pores.



Lavender Oil is on the most coveted essential oil today because of its powerful antioxidant, mood-boosting, and antibacterial properties. A quick whiff of its floral aroma naturally calms and relaxes the mind. It also helps fight aging, reduce acne, and revitalize complexion.



Lemongrass Oil has a stress-relieving herbaceous aroma commonly used in massage oils for its muscle-relaxing abilities. Rejuvenating, this famous oil detoxifies, deodorizes, and tones the skin. It has natural antibacterial, antiseptic, and astringent properties that help protect and promote healthy skin.



Orange Oil has a delicately fresh, citrus aroma that uplifts the mood and promotes mental activity. Its calming and soothing effect actively firms, strengthens, softens, and moisturizes your skin. Orange Oil also effectively combats noxious elements to keep acne at bay.



Peppermint Oil has refreshing mint aroma that drives bugs away while its calming effect enlivens the senses and allows you to focus more while relaxing sore muscles. Its cooling sensation has natural astringent, antiseptic, antibacterial and anti-acne effects that help balance, tone, soothe, and detoxify skin and promote healthy hair.



Tea Tree Oil is best known for its ability to purify and cleanse the skin and stimulate healthy complexion. Its aromatic scent helps freshen the air and offer natural protection while its cooling effect relaxes tired muscles, soothes dry and flaking skin, and eliminates odor-causing bacteria. It also helps get rid of dandruff to promote healthy hair growth.



Ylang-Ylang Oil is highly sought for its healthy hair growth boosting and calming properties that drive away stress and relax the body. This soothing oil softens, moisturizes, and firms the epidermis while keeping oiliness under control. It has a rich, sweet and flowery scent that promotes a positive outlook as it invigorates your overall appearance.



SM North Avenue 2/F Fronting Watsons and Fit Tops
SM Megamall A 4/F Fronting Fitness First and Ricks
SM Southmall 1/F Fronting National Bookstore
(area where JAM is located)

SM MALL MAIN MALL 2/F near the Cinema and Lovers
Ayala 20th Mall 2/F Fronting Mango and Switch
Fairview Headquarter located along Rigado Highway
near AMA University on the corner of Bicol Street

Venus and Mary Botanicals
vmarbotanicals
vmarbotanicals.com

APRIL FESTIVALS

BANGUS FESTIVALS

(April 6-30)

The milkfish — *bangus* in Filipino — is the country's national fish, so it's not surprising that it has a festival of its own. The Bangus Festival is held yearly on April in Dagupan City. It promotes Dagupan as the bangus capital of the country.

Festival Tidbits: The festival started in 2002, and has evolved to become a two-week socio-economic program of activities, highlighting *bangus*. The city won a Guinness Book of World Records recognition for organizing the longest barbecue in 2003. A grand parade is part of the celebration wherein participants wear a *bangus* costume, dancing and cheering with the crowd.

How to get there: Some of the bus lines with routes going to Dagupan include Five Star and Victory Liner, which both have terminals in Cubao and Pasay. The travel time from Manila to Dagupan is 4 to 5 hours via the North Luzon Expressway and TPLEX and the bus fare will cost you around 350 to 400.



LAMI-LAMIHAN FESTIVAL

Basilan
(April 14 to 16)

Started in 1983 by former mayor Wilfrido

Furigay, the festival showcases the rich Yakan traditions. This is highlighted by a parade and a race.



KADAUGAN SA MACTAN (April 27) Cebu

This is mainly the re-enactment of the Battle of Mactan along the islands' beach.



FLORES DE MAYO Whole month

Literally translated, it means "Flowers of May" and highlights the procession, honoring the Virgin Mary. Coinciding with it is the Santacruzan, which is the re-enactment of the search of Queen Elena for the cross upon which Jesus Christ was crucified. The town or city's loveliest ladies grace the occasion.



MORIONES FESTIVAL

(April 10 until April 16)

This is marked by the presence of men wearing masks ("moriones") and garbed in what passes off for Roman centurion costumes, to dramatize the story of Longinus, the blind centurion whose sight was restored by the blood that spurted from the side where Longinus speared Christ. This is held during the Holy Week in Marinduque.

HUROM

Quench your thirst this summer!

Get healthy this summer with 100% Hurom juice—
A delicious refreshment everyone will surely love.



H-AA series is also available in Rose Gold (available in Rustans),
White, Black Gold, and Dark Gray



The World's No.1 Slow Juicer



Source: Euromonitor International Limited,
in terms of retail sales volume 2014 based on
consumer research conducted between February-April 2015 in
19 countries with a 71% share of global juice-extractor sales in 2014.

10 years warranty on motor
2 years on other parts



Slow Squeezing Technology

Hurom's patented slow squeeze auger
retains the natural tastes, colors and
nutrients of ingredients.



Quiet yet strong

Durable and hygienic stainless steel body
and a near silent AC motor
for convenient and safe use.



Healthy juices

With the HAA slow juicer,
you can make fresh juices.
Full of nutrients, full of tastes.



@huromph / www.hurom.ph

Available in:

Rustan's

THE LANDMARK

THE STORE

Anson's

ABENSON

TrueValue

SM-appliance

MAY FESTIVALS

PASALAMAT FESTIVAL

May 1 La Carlota, Negros Occidental
This is a labor and thanksgiving festival marked by street dancing and a parade of farm products.



TAPUSAN FESTIVAL

(Whole month of May Alitagtag, Batangas)
This is a month-long celebration honoring the Holy Cross.



BARANGAY BOAT FESTIVAL

May 11 Aparri, Cagayan
This is a fluvial festival held annually in honor of Saint Peter Thelmo, the town's patron saint.



MAGAYON FESTIVAL

May 1 Albay Province
This is a showcase of Albay's culture and arts marked by exhibits, parades, shows, and sports.



PISTA Y DAYAT FESTIVAL

May 1 Pangasinan
This is a seaside festival and a Thanksgiving Day by local fishermen for a bountiful year.



CARABAO-CAROLLA RACE FESTIVAL

May 3 Pavia, Iloilo
An event where carabaos (water buffaloes) pull decorated bamboo carts in a 400-meter course race.



BALANGHAI/BALANGAY FESTIVAL

(Butuan) May 1-31
This commemorates the coming of the early migrants from Borneo and Celebes. It is said that they came to Agusan in *balanghai* or wooden boats.



CARABAO FESTIVAL

(May 15) Pulilan, Bulacan
This is an event honoring San Isidro Labrador, the patron saint of farmers. Carabaos are paraded and blessed by the town priest.



PAHIYAS FESTIVAL

(May 15) Lucban and Sariaya, Quezon
This is a thanksgiving festival in honor of San Isidro Labrador, celebrating the past year's bountiful harvest. The event is popular for the elaborate edible decorations that cover entire houses like fruits and vegetables, most prominent of which are the brightly colored rice wafers known as "kiping". The image of the patron saint is also paraded around town, assuring the farmers of a bountiful harvest in the years to come.



OBANDO FERTILITY RITES FESTIVAL

May 17 to 19 Obando, Bulacan
This festival involves the different dance rituals held for three consecutive days honoring three patron saints: May 17 for St. Paschal (for couples who want a male child), May 18 for St. Claire (for couples who want a female child) and May 19 for the Our Lady of Salambaw (patroness of fishermen).



cherry mobile

DESIRE FOR MORE



Desire R7

ANDROID 7.0 NOUGAT • 13MP REAR & 8MP FRONT CAMERA
FINGERPRINT SENSOR • 700MHZ LTE-READY
5" HD IPS DISPLAY

Desire R7PLUS

ANDROID 7.0 NOUGAT • 13MP REAR & 8MP FRONT CAMERA
FINGERPRINT SENSOR • 700MHZ LTE-READY
5.5" HD IPS SCREEN



Desire R8

ANDROID 7.0 NOUGAT • 13MP + 5MP DUAL REAR & 8MP FRONT CAMERA • FINGERPRINT SENSOR • 700MHZ LTE-READY
5.5" FHD DISPLAY

7 Man-made Wonders in the Philippines

There's no shortage of natural wonders in the Philippines—from the famous Banaue Rice Terraces, to the majestic Mount Mayon, to the azure waters of Coron. With thousands of islands, mountains, rivers, valleys, and lakes offering breathtaking views, the beauty of nature is artfully scattered all over the archipelago. And thanks to the use of technology and innovation, Filipinos have been able to boost the country's charm and allure with the creation of man-made attractions. Ranging from the sporty outdoors to aquatic parks, from cultural sights to modern appeals, here's a list of exciting new manmade destinations all over the country.



1 SANDBOX AT ALVIERA

SandBox is a two-hectare outdoor attraction found in Alviera, an Ayala and Leonio land development in Central Luzon. This adventure destination has a multitude of activities like ATV rides, archery, kite-flying, mini-golf, camping sites and more. Find the country's tallest swing here aptly called the Giant Swing, here and experience "flying" 10 meters above the ground. Try the adventure course called the Aerial Walk Challenge, featuring a series of nets and rope walkways. See Asia's first roller coaster zipline, a thrilling ride going around a 180-meter course and dipping from 12 meters high. Climb, rappel, or free fall from a 15-meter wall known as the Adventure Tower. It's definitely the perfect adventure getaway for the family.

Address: Alviera Subdivision, Sapang UWAK Rd., Bayan ng Porac, Pampanga
Contact Number: 0917-8033099
Email: info@alviera.ph
Business Hours: Wednesday to Sunday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.



2 INFLATABLE ISLAND

It's the biggest floating playground in Asia. At Inflatable Island, find 3,400 square meters of inflatable slides, monkey bars, trampolines, bridges, ramps, and more floating on the open waters of Subic Bay. They also have the 10-meter High Tarzan swing and the 9-meter Human Launcher, if you feel like being a cannonball. Get splashed (two-hour pass), sprayed (half-day pass) or soaked (whole-day pass). All passes have whole-day access to the Samba Beach, Bali Lounge and Floating Zoo, with the last two areas on a first-come, first-served basis. A kid's cove is soon to open on March 2018.

Address: Subic Bay Waters, Samba Bluewater Resort, Purok 6, National Highway, Lower Kalaklan, Olongapo City, Zambales
Contact Number: 0917-1501103 | 0917-8352665
Email: play@theinflatableisland.com
Business Hours: Everyday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.



3 SKY EXPERIENCE ADVENTURE

Sky Experience Adventure will take you to new heights with amenities like the 6D theatre, bars and restaurants, mini-golf, and kids' playroom. On the country's first ever Sky Walk Extreme, you can walk on transparent glass floors from 126.55 meters above Cebu. Ride the Edge Coaster to enjoy a panoramic view of the city at 130.84 meters above ground. This unique coaster can also tilt up to 55 degrees so you're literally at the edge of your seat. The Paramount Climbing Wall is a 32-foot wall atop a 40-storey building, the first of its kind in the world. Traverse the two buildings at the country's first and only urban zipline, the Tower Zip.

Address: Tower 1, Crown Regency Hotel and Towers, Fuente Towers, Fuente Osmeña Blvd., Cebu City
Contact Number: (032) 41-8888 | (032) 418-7777
Website: http://skyexperienceadventure.com/contact
Business Hours: Weekdays, 2 p.m. to 12 m.n. | Weekend, 10 a.m. to 2a.m.



4 LAS CASAS FILIPINAS DE ACUZAR

Las Casas Filipinas De Acuzar Heritage and Convention Center is a sprawling park developed by Jose 'Gerry' Acuzar of New San Jose Builders. Spread over 400-hectares, it is home to Spanish-era buildings, several restaurants, a beach, and a swimming pool. The heritage park is home to a collection of heritage houses, uprooted and rebuilt, stone by stone, brick by brick from all over the Philippines. Ride a *calesa* or go on a Heritage Walking Tour and relive the old days. Try the River Tour as well, along the Umangol River while riding a *balsa*, or the Hotel de Oriente Tour to see Binondo's first luxury hotel from the Spanish colonial era replicated onsite. Make it a day trip or stay overnight at the resort.

Address: Brgy. Ibaba, Bagac, Bataan
Contact Number: 0917 8729361 | (632) 332-5286 | (632) 877-4501
Email: reserve@lascasasfilipinas.com
Business Hours: Open 24 hours; Check Schedule of Tours



5 AQUA PLANET

Aqua Planet is a new and modern theme park located inside the Clark Freeport Zone, Pampanga. It can accommodate up to 3,500 guests daily. Set over a 10-hectare property, it has 25 water attractions fit for all ages with 8 shops and dining areas. The Spiral Slide has four wide slides featuring different speeds and courses. The Super Bowl is a four-person raft ride, sliding down a spacious slide and navigating through surprising twists and turns. There is also the Flow Rider, a surf machine simulating surfing, where you can choose to stand up or lay down on a board. Slide down from a standing position in the Aqua Loop and free fall from 100-meters.

Address: J.P. Rizal Ave., Clark Freeport Zone, Pampanga
Contact Number: (045) 499 828
Email: info@aquaplanet.ph
Business Hours: Daily, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.



6 PILILLA WIND FARM

As an alternative to the more popular yet extremely far Bangui Windmills in Ilocos Norte, drive to nearby Rizal for a nearer yet still breathtaking view of 27 imposing wind turbines standing on sloping hills at 300 meters above sea level. See the endless plains of Tanay, Rizal with a panoramic view of Laguna de Bay. The Pililla Wind Farm, operated by Alternergy Wind One Corporation, is the product of a wind energy service contract under the Department of Energy (DOE). It was awarded to the Alternergy Philippine Holdings Corporation (APHC), who undertook construction of the project amounting to US\$177.9 million.

Address: Bgy. Halayhayin, Pililla, Rizal
Contact Number: 0922-674189
Website: https://www.facebook.com/pilillawindmills/
Business Hours: Open 24 Hours

7. OKADA MANILA'S THE FOUNTAIN

Okada Manila is a hotel resort and casino complex located in Manila's Entertainment City. Set as Manila's grand icon, it presents a five-star luxury experience, with lavish suites, posh restaurants, and high-rolling gaming. Developed by Tiger Resort, Leisure and Entertainment, Inc., a subsidiary of Japan's Universal Entertainment Corporation, the project cost US\$2.4 billion. Its signature attraction is The Fountain, spanning 37,464 square meters and is said to be the largest multi-color dancing fountain in the world, rivaling those in Dubai's Burj Khalifa and Las Vegas' Bellagio. This grand musical fountain, inspired by the sampaguita, has



more than two-thousand lights, dozens of high-fidelity speakers, and more than 700 high-power jets.
Address: New Seaside Drive, Entertainment City, Parañaque City, Metro Manila
Contact Number: (632) 888-0777
Website: http://www.okadamanila.com
Business Hours: Check Fountain Show Schedules

"I take photos not just to see through my eyes,
but to live theirs - the nature."
#DoAwesome



Norman King
Nature Photographer/First Aeta UP Graduate

CLouDFONE

GOOD



GOVERNANCE

THE NEW SOUTHBOUND POLICY OF TAIWAN

BY HERMAN JOSEPH S. KRAFT

The mantra of “build, build, build” properly illustrates the lack of urgency given to the development of infrastructure in the Philippines following the end of the martial law regime. It also partially explains the emphasis given by the Duterte administration to the maintenance of excellent relations with China. Xi Jinping has pushed for the establishment of an extensive economic network linked by infrastructural foundations laid by Chinese capital, technology, management, and, in many cases, even Chinese labor. Once known as the One Belt, One Road (OBOR), the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is arguably the most ambitious and extensive program at building an international economic network ever since the establishment of the WTO. It is not surprising that the Duterte administration has been lobbying to be part of this.

While this has been going on, a less expansive but no less ambitious program was launched by Taiwan in May 2016, intended to expand its links with Southeast and South Asia, as well as with Australia and New Zealand. Known as the New Southbound Policy (NSP), this is a re-establishment of the Southbound Policy that Taiwan initiated in the 1990s that sought to increase its economic footprint in Southeast Asia. The NSP is a renewed effort to do that with an expanded geographical scope, and a more wide-ranging context.

The NSP was started by the administration of President Tsai Ing-wen when she took office in 2016. To a certain extent, this became the signature foreign policy of Taiwan. It has two general objectives. First is to foster links between Taiwan and the nations of ASEAN, South Asia, and Australia and New Zealand in the areas of economics and trade, science and technology, and culture. This could be done through resource-sharing, market-expansion, and the creation of a cooperation modality that emphasized “mutual benefits and win-win situations.” Over the long term, it is hoped that this will help forge a “sense of economic community” among the participants. Secondly, it intends to establish mechanisms for wide-ranging negotiations and dialogue that would contribute to the formation of consensus for cooperation between and among Taiwan, the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), countries in South Asia, as well as New Zealand and Australia. This would be an important step towards the resolution of related problems and disagreements, and gradually build up mutual trust that would strengthen the building of a sense of community.

The NSP has four areas of activities, three of which are fundamentally economic in nature. These emphasize economic and trade collaboration, resource sharing, and the promotion of institutional links. This has led to observations that the NSP is essentially a strategy intended to extend Taiwan’s economic footprint regionally. It is undeniable that the policy intends to enlarge Taiwan’s role as an economic player in the



region, with the specific objective of reversing the trend towards the increasing predominance of China’s economic involvement in Taiwan. There is, however, an aspect of the NSP that emphasizes people-to-people exchanges – an aspect that emphasizes educational exchanges, particularly the recruitment of students from the targeted countries in either short-term exchange or full-degree programs, either undergraduate or graduate. And it is in this area that the Philippines can expand its involvement with Taiwan.

In a guidebook produced by the Office of Trade Negotiations of the Executive Yuan (the executive branch) and the Bureau of Foreign Trade of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, the people-to-people exchange aspect of the NSP is explained as being focused on education and training. The former is about trying to increase the number of students and researchers from the target countries coming to Taiwan and affiliating with formal educational institutions, as well as getting Taiwanese students and graduates to go to these target countries. The latter involves tapping Taiwan companies to send their staff to other countries

(especially those that they have an interest in investing in) in order for them to understand and facilitate future expansion of economic opportunities. In either case, the Philippines and Filipinos can benefit from the exchange technically and economically.

In December 2017, an agreement was signed by the representatives of the Taiwan Economic Cooperation Office (TECO) in Manila and the Manila Economic Cooperation Office (MECO) in Taipei which renewed, strengthened, and expanded the scope of a bilateral investment agreement originally signed in 1992. The renewal of this agreement (and others similar to it across the region) was one of the principal objectives under the NSP when the Tsai Administration came to power. It also illustrates the increasing importance of the Philippines to the success of the New Southbound Policy. As the country closest to Taiwan geographically and its recent economic success, the Philippines is one of the priority targets under the NSP being seen as an “important gateway” to ASEAN. The renewed agreement also came with six other deals resulting from trade and economic consultations



ILLUSTRATION BY AMIEL RUFO

held in Manila on December 6 and 7. These include memoranda of understanding on “green” energy, insurance industry supervision, and professional training. Some effects could already be felt as a modest but increasing number of students from the Philippines have been making their way to Taiwan mostly on short-term exchange programs but also as full-time graduate students. There are also nascent plans intending to bring more students and technical people in Taiwan to intern and/or immerse themselves in programs, institutions, and companies in the Philippines.

The NSP, however, is not without controversy as it brings geopolitical complications into what is seemingly an innocuous effort to help facilitate regional economic and socio-cultural integration. China has opposed any expansion of Taiwan’s

involvement in the region that could consequently have implications for questions of sovereignty. It has insisted on a stricter interpretation and implementation of the “One China Policy.” There is a sense that the NSP is seen in Beijing as a challenge to the BRI regardless of obvious asymmetries in scale. More than the economic aspect, however, is the political implications of the NSP – that it represents an attempt to achieve political and diplomatic goals asserting Taiwan’s presence as a regional player.

China registered its protest to the signing of the renewed agreement between MECO and TECO in an obvious attempt to undermine it just before it was finalized. A spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was quoted as saying after the signing that “the investment protection agreement and other cooperation documents...are obviously official in character...We hope

the Philippines will abide by the one-China principle and avoid having the Taiwan-related issue undermine the larger picture of China-Philippines relations.” China’s attitudes and preferences have already reportedly affected the behavior of certain institutions in the Philippines. Attempts on the part of Taiwanese teaching institutions to establish language schools met with a lack of enthusiasm because of possible complications with China’s pursuit of establishing Confucius Institutes in Philippine educational institutions.

These issues, however, bring possible opportunities for local communities. The issues associated with sovereignty in cross-strait relations between China and Taiwan don’t loom as large (or at least they should not) when relations involve local municipalities. The questions over federalism in the Philippines, in fact, do not need to find an answer in these possible engagements under the NSP. The objectives and modalities that are identified under the NSP could be pursued and implemented in cooperative ventures that involve local governments, industries, and institutions. Geopolitics is messy because it involves nation-states and “national interests.” International relations involving local communities and/or business entities (especially micro-, small-, and medium-enterprises), however, open new vistas for cooperation and collaboration.

Herman Joseph Kraft is an Associate Professor at the Department of Political Science at the University of the Philippines, and currently a research fellow at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at the National Sun Yat-sen University in Kaohsiung, Taiwan under the Taiwan Fellowship Program

2GO EXPRESS



Domestic



Sea



International



E-Commerce



Retail



77-99-222

*Metro Manila Hotline

**Contact your professional
Logistics Consultant today!**



2GO EXPRESS

We deliver what matters,
when it matters.

www.2GO-Express.com.ph





Plaza explains that ecozones are PEZA's way of helping the President implement federalism. The ecozones in every city, region, and province will spur economic growth and make them self-sufficient.



PEZA Director Charito Plaza

In the Zone

PEZA Director Charito Plaza reveals her agency's strategies to boost the country's economic growth

BY MARIDOL RANOA-BISMAR
PHOTOS BY MEL CORTEZ

Business is the lifeblood of a country's development. This is why choosing the right people to run business-oriented agencies in government is crucial. President Rodrigo Duterte appointed Dr. Charito "Ching" Plaza as Director General of the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) because her long track record in the government and academe shows that she's capable of doing the Herculean job.

The former Butuan representative forged healthy partnerships with government leaders from the barangay up to the provincial and overseas levels. She is a catalyst of change. She has built bridges of friendship where none used to be to bring the benefits of public service down to the masses, where they belong.

Known as the "Mother of the Caraga Region," Plaza authored a bill making Caraga the 17th region in the country. Because of this, the area down South enjoys most, if not all, of the benefits of development other regions in the country do. In the same manner, the country benefits from developing Caraga's rich natural resources.

FORCE TO RECKON WITH

As brigadier general of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Reserve Force, Plaza has the innate discipline to keep on going, even when the situation seems tough.

Now that the government is poised to implement the second part of TRAIN (Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion) Law, PEZA has launched a nationwide campaign eyeing the countryside as engines of growth. Plaza's office aims to do this by tapping basic crop industries to make sure every Filipino has access to food.

In so doing, Plaza's office wants to lower imports to raise local productivity and the country's ability to manufacture goods. PEZA also aims to maximize the use of local products and supplies, raise export levels, and address the issue of domestic needs and supplies.

PEZA is also tapping as many financial offices as it can so more investments could flow into the country. It has reached an accord with 23 institutions, including six Japanese banks, state universities, and government offices.

Plaza said the Japanese banks PEZA has memorandum of agreements with are Mizuho Bank, Bank of Tokyo Mitsubishi, Sumitomo-Mitsui Banking Corp., Resona Bank, Ogahi-Kyoritsu Bank, and Tokyo Star Bank.

These banking institutions have extended credit financing facilities to Filipino companies.

BUILDING ECOZONES

Since PEZA also takes care of registering and administering investments, Plaza has reached out to government agencies and forged agreements to make sure public lands are tapped as economic zones.

One of this aggressive campaign's landmark results is PEZA's tie-up with the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP).

Five-hectare ancestral domains are being eyed as ecozones, and PEZA will reach out to indigenous people on how to make their pieces of land more productive and earn more through rentals. This will also create jobs and raise income levels.

PEZA also wants to make ecozones out of lands owned by PSALM (Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management), which manages the Energy Department's properties. These properties are adjacent to power

stations, so they're a magnet for investors.

Another agreement, this time with the Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges, targets the construction of a Knowledge Innovation Science Technology (KIST) park in these State Universities and Colleges (SUCs). Plaza explains that these SUCs have land assets that make up thousands of hectares, most of them idle.

No wonder Plaza is upbeat about investments in the country this year. She thinks her office, which is now on its 23rd year, can beat last year's track record of P237.57 billion in investment pledges and \$51.28 billion in realized export sales.

The target this year is a 10 percent increase in investment pledges, even as Plaza expressed concern over the prospect of investors backing out if the incentives they're banking on are challenged.



John Hay Special Tourism Ecozone, Baguio City. Photo by Joma Rivera courtesy of Baguio Tourism Office

Now that the government is poised to implement the second part of TRAIN (Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion) Law, PEZA has launched a nationwide campaign eyeing the countryside as engines of growth. Plaza's office aims to do this by tapping basic crops industries to make sure every Filipino has access to food.



Plaza with PRRD after joining oath-taking ceremonies in Malacanang last Oct. 2016



PEZA remits P623M to the Bureau of Treasury as its income for 2016 during the Investors night at the World Trade Center in April 2017.

DREAMING BIG

Plaza told *LEAGUE* that her office will open a PEZA Institute and team up with industries, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), SUCs, and the Department of Education to come up with a training curriculum in every region. This, in turn, aims to make world-class workers out of every Filipino.

PEZA will also put all ecozones in the Philippines in a Philippine Ecozones Map. This way, prospective investors can pinpoint areas they want to put up shop in or expand their operations.

Plaza said she will transform public ecozones into environment-friendly areas that won't harm the health of its workers.

"PEZA has further expanded its ecozone programs to include agro-forestry ecozones. This is to create sustainable sources of wood for furniture industries, which will locate in such zones," states Plaza.

She added that halal production hubs will cater to demands of Middle East countries for halal food. MariCulture Ecozones will produce and process marine products such as the carrageenan extract. Defense Industrial Zones will introduce advance weapons technology to the country.



A relaxed PEZA family photo before Ching Plaza's appointment as Director General of PEZA in 2016

Plaza also envisions developing the country's uninhabited lands. "We will create island cities and ask investors to put up hotels, resorts, and landmarks such as those found in Beijing. We can have our own Beijing Island that will become a tourist attraction," she says.

Plaza also dreams of creating mineral processing zones to process minerals within the Philippines and raise its export value.

KIST hubs situated in SUCs will enhance creative technology and promote research, design, and development.

Plaza explains that these ecozones are PEZA's way of helping the President implement federalism. The ecozones in every city, region, and province will spur economic growth and make them self-sufficient. ■

WHAT IS YOUR SOFTWARE QUALITY CONTROL PLAN?



Independent Verification and Validation (IV&V) establishes technical, managerial, and financial independence, as required in IEEE Standard for Software Quality Control.

Talk to us.

+63-2-888-CHEQ | info@cheqlabs.com | www.cheqlabs.com

CHEQ

Building Eco-friendly and Sustainable Communities

Senator Cynthia Villar urges LGUs and government agencies: 'Everyone must be involved!'

BY CYNTHIA U. SANTIAGO
PHOTOS BY ED L. SANTIAGO



Senator Cynthia Villar, chair of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, graced the Bulong Pulungan at the height of the Boracay issue, which sparked when President Rodrigo Duterte announced on March 6 that he would declare a state of calamity in Boracay. He also ordered the closure of the resort island for 60 days based on recommendations by the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG).

It may be recalled that local governments in the area, who were supposed to develop and manage the holiday island, have been blamed for not properly protecting Boracay from environmental degradation. Establishments not complying with the country's environment protection laws are said to be transforming the country's top tourist destination, famous for its powder-like white sand beach, into what the President called a "cesspool."

At the Bulong Pulungan, Senator Villar said that she and some senators visited Boracay in preparation for the Senate hearing on the issue. During their visit, she observed two major problems in the island: some business establishments have no connection to sewer lines and so their wastes are drained into the sea; and some establishments have put up buildings beyond their property line, and even on wetlands. Senator Villar pointed out that wetlands—land areas saturated with water—have an important role in environment protection, because they serve as catch basins to prevent flooding in Boracay.

"*Tanggal lahat.* All establishments put up on wetlands will have to be removed," Senator Villar said.

She called upon the local government units to cooperate with the national government's effort to implement laws to protect the environment.

One law, Republic Act (RA) 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, passed in 2001, mandates the establishment of a National Solid Waste Management Commission and Solid Management Board in each local government unit, to be represented by public officials in their ex-officio capacity, and the private sector. The law says LGUs must divert at least 25% of all solid wastes from waste disposal facilities "through reuse, recycling, and composting activities." The law further mandates LGUs to establish Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) in each barangay or cluster of barangays designed to receive, sort, process, and store compostable and recyclable materials efficiently. Apparently, Boracay is now in such a dire situation because the LGUs have not efficiently implemented the law.

"It is so easy to follow the law," Senator Villar pointed out. "You can connect your establishment to the sewer line in just a week, or even just a day. We just have to have the will to implement the law."

NO ONE IS ABOVE THE LAW

Senator Villar also clarified the issue about her family's business interests in Boracay—Vista Land, which owns Boracay Sands Hotel, and investments in Costa de la Vista, a residential condominium. Earlier, she had told media that she was not involved in the management of those properties. She said she had made sure that they are following the laws, lest she be embarrassed when she begins probe of the issue.

She reiterated that what the President had said about the total closure of Boracay was just a warning. "*Sabi lang niya 'yon para sumunod lahat,*" she said, explaining that without the President's warning, it would be difficult to make everyone toe the line.

Senator Villar added that her committee recommends closure only of establishments not complying with the law. "Total shutdown of Boracay is like punishing those who are following the laws," she added. Not to mention, depriving the country's top tourist attraction of a hefty income during the summer, the peak season of tourism on the island.

EVERYONE MUST BE INVOLVED

The LGUs have a key role, not only in implementing the laws, but getting everyone to share in building environment-friendly communities.

For example, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is mandated to develop markets for items produced out of the recycled wastes. The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) can train the jobless so they can work in the recycling factories. The Department of Social Welfare and Development

(DSWD), through its Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) Program, can provide monetary benefits for those who will work in the factories.

The senator also shared her own initiative through the Villar Social Institute for Poverty Alleviation and Governance (SIPAG), which has tapped the government agencies to help in transforming collected plastic wastes into school chairs. The Foundation has built a recycling plant in Las Piñas City, longtime bailiwick of the Villar family. The recycling plant can produce one chair from 24 kilos of plastic waste—such as sachets and those used to wrap items bought in wet markets. The plant can produce a total of 1,000 armchairs per month.

"We have asked LGUs to establish such recycling plants in their areas," Senator Villar said. The plant costs P5 to P8 million to build, which the senator pointed out, is a good investment. Aside from being a measure to protect the environment, the plant serves as an instrument for alleviating poverty as it provides jobs for the poor who are hired as factory workers.

Senator Cynthia Villar observed two major problems in Boracay: some business establishments are not connected to sewer lines and so their wastes are drained into the sea; and some establishments have put up buildings beyond their property line, and even on wetlands.



By Choi2451 (Own work) [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)] via Wikimedia Commons



Senator Cynthia Villar spearheaded the Mangrove Planting, cleanup and toilet bowl project in Baseco



THE BASECO EXPERIENCE

As part of her environment advocacy, Senator Villar has led the cleanup of Baseco, a marginalized community at the port section of Tondo, Manila. She said some 5,000 out of 10,000 families or an estimated population of 60,000, have no toilets. So, they inevitably dispose of their waste into the Manila Bay.

The pollution destroys mangroves, the tangled roots of which slow down the movement of tidal waters and reduce erosion of the coastline, thus preventing flooding in the city. The mangrove forest also provides food and shelter for fish and other organisms escaping from predators, so destroying the mangroves also means depriving the sea creatures of their sanctuary.

Thus, Senator Villar has been passionate about rehabilitating Baseco, which, she said, also includes developing skills and other means of providing livelihood for the residents to lift them up from poverty.

MAKING POVERTY HISTORY

It may be an elusive, if not totally impossible dream, but making poverty history is one reason Senator Villar chose to lead one the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, which covers all matters regarding food production, food security, agro-business, education, technical services, agricultural support prices, and fisheries aquatic resources. “Majority of our poor are farmers,” Senator Villar pointed out. “So if you are after poverty reduction, you do it in agriculture.”

She said the average income of a farmer is P4,500 per month, way below the prescribed minimum wage of P14,250. “*Kailangan, pakitain pa sila*. Increase their income,” she said.

“We are changing the mindset of the young, so they will see farming as a desirable occupation.”

She laments the perception that farming is not only backbreaking but also far from being lucrative. Thus, children of farmers are not motivated to pursue it. She adds that there may come a time when there will no longer be farmers—or farms—because it seems it is better to use the fields for other more profitable businesses.

The senator said, however, that contrary to common belief, food security does not depend on corporate-run farms. “It’s the small farms that feed the world,” she pointed out. “So, we are changing the mindset of the young, so they will see farming as a desirable occupation.”

A program, which presents great promise for farmers, is farm tourism. As mandated by Republic Act 10816, it aims to maximize the benefits that can be derived from agriculture and tourism. The law touches both the Committees of Environment and Agriculture headed by Senator Villar as it seeks to promote environment-friendly, efficient, and sustainable farm practices—to provide alternative recreation facilities and farm tourism activities for families, students, and other clientele, as well as promote health and wellness with high-quality farm-produced food. The law prescribes activities carried out on farms that will allow visitors to enjoy a farming or fishing experience, through education, recreation, or leisure.

In the same way as protecting the environment, just about everyone is involved in developing farm tourism. The law mandates the creation of the Farm Tourism Board composed of the Tourism Secretary as chair, and the Agriculture Secretary as vice chair. Members include the Trade Secretary, presidents of national organizations involved in farm tourism— education institutions, federation of farmer coops, and tour operators’ association.

The law prescribes government linkages with corporations and instrumentalities providing

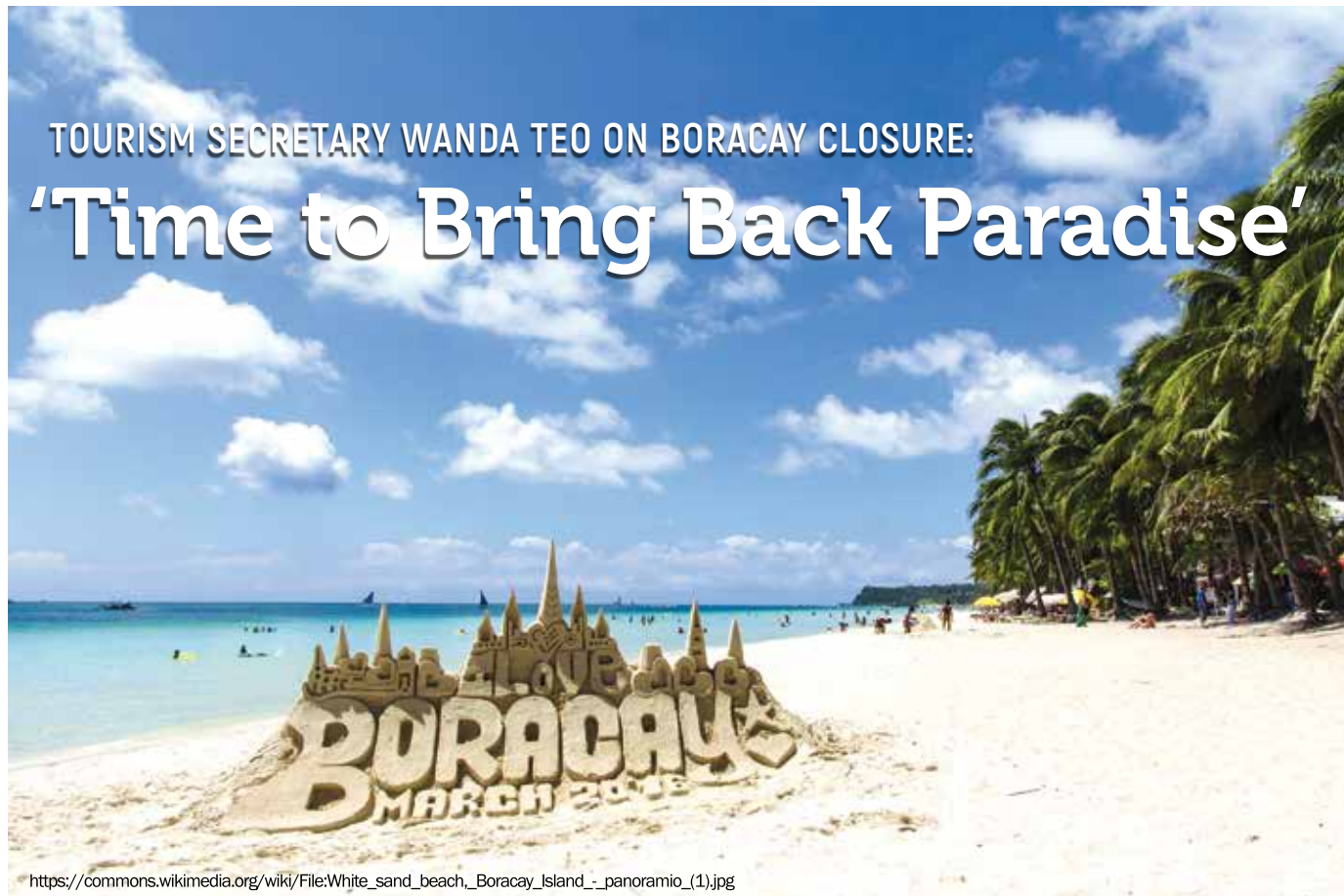
financing programs to provide lending incentives for the development of farm tourism camps and activities.

Indeed, not one person, not just one agency or institution can get the job done. “Everyone must be involved,” Senator Villar reiterated. And definitely, the local government units have a key role in making the dream come true. ■



Senator Villar believes farm tourism presents great opportunities for farmers.





TOURISM SECRETARY WANDA TEO ON BORACAY CLOSURE:

'Time to Bring Back Paradise'

We don't have time to waste. Boracay is fast deteriorating. Let us not wait until it is no longer livable.



President Rodrigo Duterte wanted to close Boracay for six months. Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu said close it for one year.

BY CYNTHIA U. SANTIAGO
PHOTOS BY ED L. SANTIAGO

I recommend two months only," Tourism Secretary Wanda Corazon Teo said when she graced the Bulong Pulungan media forum at Hotel Sofitel earlier last month. As we go to press, the government announced Boracay would be closed for six months of rehabilitation, starting on April 26, 2018. In early March, President Duterte said he would declare a state of calamity in Boracay and order to close the resort island based on recommendations of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG).

Secretary Teo said the declaration of the state of calamity is being scheduled on April 26, and henceforth, the rehabilitation will go forward full speed.

WHY DECLARE STATE OF CALAMITY

Secretary Teo explained President Duterte is thinking of declaring a state of calamity because this would spare the government from facing temporary restraining order (TRO) suits opposing groups might file, or delays in allotting funds for the rehabilitation program.

The Tourism Secretary added that the DILG based its recommendations from findings, mainly by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources led by Secretary Roy Cimatu, that environment laws have been violated in Boracay, and that the place has ceased to being the paradise it used to be.

TWO-MONTH LOCKDOWN

"We don't have time to waste," she said. "Boracay is fast deteriorating. Let us not wait until it is no longer livable."

She added that she's haggling for a two-month period in fixing Boracay because since the President ordered the closure, establishments have on their own started demolishing facilities they had built beyond the easement lines, or the limited space on the shore they are allowed to occupy.

"As we speak here, rehabilitation of Boracay is already ongoing 24/7," Secretary Teo said. "So, I think the major tasks would be accomplished by June."

"Closure," she explained, means tourists or tourism activities will not be allowed inside the island resort. "We don't want tourists or even residents to get hurt while the companies are demolishing their facilities," she pointed out.

Construction of new facilities, such as the casino being proposed by the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) is being put on hold. "Throughout the demolition period, the water supply will be cut, so you cannot have much activity there," she added.

SHOW THE MONEY

Boracay tourists pay P75 environment fee, and since Boracay's disaster has been exposed, there have been calls for the past Local Government Departments as well as the local government units which received the fees to explain where the money has all gone.

"Maybe the DENR or Congress should be the one to investigate," Secretary Teo suggested. She pointed out that the main concern of the Tourism Department is to enable tourism agents, airlines, hotels, and event coordinators to fulfill contract agreements they had previously signed.

"We are trying to offer alternative venues, because we do have other great tourist destinations—in Cebu, Palawan, and up north," she said. Secretary Teo said the Boracay problem may be a blessing in disguise, since other tourist destinations like El Nido in Palawan are already, on their own, working on fixing their resorts so that they may well follow what the laws require.

READY FOR THE JOB

Many think Wanda Teo got the Tourism post not just because of her husband but also because she is a Tulfo. She is the fourth child and second daughter of retired Philippine Constabulary Brigadier General Ramon Tulfo and Caridad Teshiba—and her brothers, particularly Ramon, have openly supported the candidacy of Rodrigo Duterte. And so people speculate the Tourism post must have been granted to her as a reward for the support. But Teo comes to the Tourism department with two decades of experience in the industry.





Funny, we endeavored to promote Boracay, and now with the tourist influx, we are being blamed for over-promoting the resort. If Boracay becomes a success, one claim could be that ‘It’s a Paradise in the Philippines.’



With a Bachelor of Science degree, major in Business Administration, which she earned at St. Theresa’s College, she co-owned and managed Mt. Apo Travel and Tours for 20 years before her appointment as Tourism Secretary. She has also served as president of the National Association of Independent Travel Agencies (NAITAS), and member of the Davao Travel Agencies Association, Davao Association of Tour Operators, and Davao Regional Tourism Council.

She came to Bulong Pulungan already with a substantial report on her accomplishments during her first year as Tourism Secretary.

She pointed out that despite the problems besetting the tourism industry when she came in, the Department of Tourism has met its target number of increase in tourist arrivals in 2017 from 6.2 million to 6.6 million. In January 2018, the number of arrivals is up by 15%, and in February 2018, up by 16.4%.

“Funny, we endeavored to promote Boracay, and now with the tourist influx, we are being blamed for over-promoting the resort,” she chuckles.

She said during her first year as Tourism Secretary, she travelled to target markets like China, Japan, and Russia to know what the markets demand.

“They hear news about President Duterte, and they want to know how to get to Davao, so I tell them from Manila, you go down south to Mindanao where Davao is,” she added. She said she’s undaunted by



Tourism Secretary Wanda Teo and Region VI Director Helen Catalbas with Deedee Siyangco, moderator, and Bulong Pulungan core members, standing from left: Pete Dacuycuy, Mila Alora, Frank Evaristo; Cynthia Santiago, Aida Sevilla, Bob Zozobrado, Joy Fong, Domini Torrevillas, Mandy Navasero, and Rose Libongco.



REVIVING BORACAY

Att. Helen Catalbas, director of the Department of Tourism Region VI (Western Visayas) Tourism Center, lays down the scope of Boracay’s rehabilitation.

1 Strict implementation of the solid waste management law.

2 Improvement of the drainage system and requiring companies to connect their facilities to the drainage line, instead of dumping their wastes into the sea.

3 Demolition of buildings companies had built beyond the 30-meter shoreline easement or the limited space on the shore allowed by law to be used by companies doing business in Boracay.

4 Demolition of establishments built on wetlands or land areas which have caused flooding in Boracay.

5 Demolition of establishments built beyond the 12-meter allowed space on the roads going which cause traffic problems on the island.

Director Catalbas shares that in 1991, the national government had a master plan for the development of Boracay. Unfortunately, the plan has not been executed as management of the resort island was transferred to the local government units.

terrorist threats which people fear would discourage people to come to the Philippines.

She pointed out France, despite the terrorist bombings, remain a top tourist destination, and so too Israel, which is a top destination for pilgrims, despite terrorist threats in that country.

NEW TOURISM PRODUCTS

This year, Teo said she is traveling to various regions in the country to find new products to be offered as tourist destinations.

For the Lenten season, Secretary Teo said the Department has developed Intramuros as a one-stop pilgrimage destination. “You can do everything there during the Holy Week—Visita Iglesia in seven churches, Stations of the Cross, and even a *sinakulo*, a dramatic reenactment of the Passion of Jesus Christ.”

Secretary Teo added that she is looking at the potential of farm tourism, culinary or food tourism, and pilgrimages to religious destinations. She may also change the tourism slogan “It’s More Fun in the Philippines.” ■

The science behind Miss Earth

BY MAIELLE MONTAYRE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAR CONCENCO

ON HER WIN: “I’m not just a person who wants it for the crown but I’m a person who really knows my purpose, my vision, and what I’m called for—and that’s what makes me different.”

ON APATHY AND IGNORANCE: “We need to be agents of change and the catalyst of this generation to really help our earth transition from what it is now to a greener future before it’s too late.”

ON ENVIRONMENTAL WOES: “It’s the greed of people alongside undisciplined hearts that causes climate change.”

ON HER EXPERIENCE: “I give a voice to people but I’m also learning because the environment and the people around me are teaching me things so I can be a better advocate for the environment.”

Miss Earth is not your typical beauty pageant, and neither is Karen Ibasco your quintessential beauty queen. In this global microcosm of politics, conflict, and diplomacy, Mother Earth takes a back seat to more pressing matters. But for one glorious night, the Miss Earth Beauty Pageant shines bright on environmental awareness. Organized in 2001, this beauty and environmental event inspires everyone to become “Beauties for a Cause” in the preservation and protection of Mother Earth.

THE APPLIED ROOTS OF THE PAGEANTRY

Miss Earth is an annual international beauty pageant organized by Carousel Productions in 2001, and is one of the four major international pageants aside from Miss Universe, Miss World and Miss International. Since its inception, the pageant has been mostly held in the Philippines, although Vietnam and Austria have also hosted the event. Manila, Pampanga and Boracay are some of the local government units (LGUs) which have hosted Miss Earth, and the event continues to draw excitement as well as have helped boost tourism. This beauty and environmental event, with gathers over 80 delegates from all over the world, inspires everyone to become ‘Beauties for a Cause’ in the preservation and protection of Mother Earth.



THE FUNDAMENTAL FRUITS OF MISS EARTH

Karen Ibasco, the current titleholder for Miss Earth 2017, serves as the spokesperson for the Miss Earth Foundation and the United Nations Environmental Programme, among others. Established in 2004, the Foundation's priorities lay in raising awareness about conservation, preservation, and the rehabilitation of the environment. To ensure that it meets its objectives, they work with several partner NGOs including Plastic Solutions, an environmental conservation organization. For 2018, they've chosen to prioritize projects for the seas as it's the third International Year of the Reef, after 1997 and 2008. "Since we're fighting against climate change and the ocean is one of its victims, it's good for us to focus on this area, considering the alarming effects," shares Ibasco. Climate change, among other things, has caused loss of livelihood, agriculture, and in worst cases, loss of life.

Over the years, Miss Earth has diligently done its work and spread its advocacies in many countries. In the Philippines, they've partnered with LGUs who are receptive of Miss Earth programs and have also initiated their own local projects. One of the major projects of Miss Earth, "I Love My Planet School Tours," promotes environmental awareness to the youth, and was recently conducted in the City of Manila.

Miss Earth also participated in a nature conservation read-along in partnership with Inquirer in Mandaluyong City. Delegates also visited eco-tourism places in Valenzuela City, such as the fishing village of Tagalag and the Valenzuela City People's Park. It's been a whirlwind ride for Ibasco as she participates in Miss Earth's biggest activities throughout the year such as medical missions, tree and mangrove planting ceremonies, coastal clean-up activities, media guesting, speaking engagements, and eco-fashion shows.

Internationally, Miss Earth also promotes eco-tourism, environmental education campaigns, and campaigns on proper waste disposal and segregation. Some of these events took place in Ghana, Chile, Angola, Puerto Rico, Mauritius and Reunion Island.

Ibasco, herself, attended climate change conferences; even speaking at one in Catbalogan, Samar. Being a physicist herself, she speaks passionately about her advocacy on conservation of energy through renewable energy in exchange of fossil fuels. "When I joined, I tried to bring my field of study to Miss Earth. I put into light the conversation of energy since physics focuses

on energy. I can connect everything since I'm a scientist and I understand that carbon emission is one of the biggest factors of climate change."

This is what makes Ibasco different from other previous Miss Earth titleholders. "There was no one before who was a scientist; I was the first one. It's very apt for a scientist to join Miss Earth, and, although I'm not an environmental scientist, I can still be their voice in the scientific community."

THE BEAUTY PAGEANT CONTINUUM

Miss Earth is not the ordinary glitz and glam pageant. Revolving as it does around the environment, so eponymously named, this pageant-for-a-cause shines light on the pressing issues our Earth faces today. From plastic waste to climate change to carbon emissions, these things are at the heart of Miss Earth. "We want to maximize the platform to make people aware that this is a big threat happening worldwide, and we are the ones needing to be the change for people to see," Ibasco adds.

When asked whether the country is on the right track to becoming 100 percent environmentally-friendly, she says, "We've made great leaps in amping up our efforts. But we have a long, long way to go with that. When it comes to just talking about climate change and lessening the greenhouse gas emissions, we have a long way to go." She returns to her advocacy, saying these harmful emissions—caused by the burning of fossil fuels—are a big problem and briefly discusses the Paris Agreement. "We have to continually convince people to honor the terms when they sign it and continue even after generations to come. It's a continuing threat and it's progressing aggressively, and we have to stop the accelerating carbonization with environmental policies to be implemented in different countries."

In the Philippines, Karen has noticed that the Filipinos are transitioning to becoming more eco-friendly. "Hopefully, I was able to use my reign to open the eyes of people and it won't stop there, and it would continue until after my reign as I will continue my part even if I am no longer reigning."

Miss Earth 2017 inspires people, LGUs and other organizations to work hand-in-hand in saving the environment. For the current titleholder, the preservation and protection of Mother Earth begins with making ourselves and everyone else aware. "We cannot just do it on our own. I hope we open our eyes and understand what we have to do in order to save planet earth. It's not just for our generation but for the people who will inherit it next." ■

When I joined, I tried to bring my field of study to Miss Earth. I put into light the conversation of energy since physics focuses on energy. I can connect everything since I'm a scientist and I understand that carbon emission is one of the biggest factors of climate change.



Winning the War on Waste

The Laguna Lake Ecology Center delivers a win-win solution to Laguna Lake's pollution problem

BY JOYCE REYES-AGUILA

A healthy planet depends on all of us.” In a few, powerful words, the United Nations Environment Programme is able to underscore not only the urgency to act for the well-being of the world, but also on the need to do it in a unified manner. For despite geographical distance and differences, the resources of the planet are all interconnected. The conservation efforts in one area will be worthless if we push another area to the brink of destruction.

It is with this pressing need to act in concert that the Laguna Lake Ecology Center (LLEC) has been proposed. The awareness of the lake's role in the ecosystem of the country's capital is increasing, especially with current government efforts to develop it as a balanced and vibrant economic zone. The third-largest freshwater in Southeast Asia is facing challenges brought about by land conversion, pollution, and watershed destruction. And the negative impacts are affecting many of the country's most vulnerable populations, including those who depend on Laguna Lake for food and livelihood.

The current stressed state of the multi-use lake will have long-term effects that can adversely impact the country's entire ecosystem, including the more progressive cities that fringe the lake's waters. Waste management is one of the main priority areas. If accomplished, it will address the polluted waters of the lake, which is

caused primarily by the dumping of unprocessed sewerage. A recent study of the World Health Organization revealed that while 83% of the households surrounding the lake have mobile phones, only 73% have working toilets.

The LLEC is seeking to create a unified area for Metro Manila's waste-to-energy requirements. Its establishment will provide a stage to generate clean energy via solar and wind power and promote ecotourism at the same time. Waste-to-energy efforts, according to the United States Energy Information Administration (USEIA), can process municipal waste that includes biomass or biogenic (plant or animal products), food waste, non-combustible materials, and non-biomass combustible materials to produce energy. LLEC's waste-to-energy site is planned by a consortium among energy technology provider and project financier Hitachi Zosen Corporation, property developer and co-project financier Triangle Mint Corporation, waste management and environmental consultant Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation (SMEC), and reclamation methodology and management consultant Surbana Jurong.

The 500-hectare site already has a zoning plan. In it, energy from waste plants and ancillary facilities will share the complex with solar panels, a Venice complex, as well as a theme park to support its ecotourism goals. The theme park will house a hotel complex, museum, wind turbines, and a wind farm. The office of the Laguna de Bay Development is also keen on tapping the transportation routes of the waters of Laguna de Bay to bring visitors to and from the many cities in Metro Manila, as well as the surrounding provinces of Cavite, Rizal, and Laguna. These areas are known for their historical sites, natural wonders, and lifestyle activities.

THE LAGUNA LAKE ECOLOGY CENTER IS SEEKING TO CREATE A UNIFIED AREA FOR METRO MANILA'S WASTE-TO-ENERGY REQUIREMENTS. ITS ESTABLISHMENT WILL PROVIDE A STAGE TO GENERATE CLEAN ENERGY VIA SOLAR AND WIND POWER AND PROMOTE ECOTOURISM AT THE SAME TIME.



The concept of waste-to-energy facilities and tourism being combined has been applied in different countries. As many of us know, hotels and restaurants generate waste and play a pivotal role in its correct management. Exposing citizens to institutions that practice environmentally sound waste management practices contributes to their education and awareness.

In Sweden, in line with the people's desire to be *kretsloppssamhället*, or a society that chooses to reuse, waste-to-energy efforts is one of its pillars. And according to Enviro Sweden on envirosweden.se, they allow visitors to visit the site so they can understand how sorting of waste has “proven to be a prerequisite for recovering useful material from waste and ensuring hazardous waste does not go astray.” They welcome over 10,000 guests into their treatment sites every year, with the belief that “seeing is believing,” and people learn when they are able “to see, smell, or talk to the operators managing” the site.

The London EcoPark also holds tours to its facilities to enable the public to see how household

waste that cannot be recycled is converted to electricity. The 40-acre site is managed by the London Energy Ltd., responsible for providing waste management services to seven North London boroughs. Aside from a waste-to-energy facility, it also houses a compost center, waste transfer, and bulk recycling center.

In the Philippines, the proposed Laguna Lake Ecology Center is aligned with President Rodrigo Duterte's plan of exploring waste-to-energy facilities, which he talked about in his 2017 State of the Nation address. In it, he mentioned the availability of technology to address the waste disposal challenges of the country. Solid waste facilities are already available for some municipalities in Metro Manila, such as Quezon City. Private corporations, foreign governments, and international organizations are also establishing partnerships to build facilities such as the LLEC to promote renewable energy in countries like the Philippines where urbanization and economic development is ever increasing. ■

WASTE MANAGEMENT INC.



ONE TEAM

ONE TEAM

- People working together effectively as one team.
- Our leader and team player should have sense of Responsibility
- Sense of Ownership and sense of Urgency.



ONE PLAN

ONE PLAN

- Nationwide campaign for eco-friendly waste management system, as measured by: Client, Partner, Supplier, Employee and community satisfaction.



ONE GOAL

ONE GOAL

- An exciting viable WMI delivering profitable growth for all.
- Resolutely focus in providing first-class integrated waste management solution nationwide.



Collection and Handling
Garbage Bins System
Waste Management Consultant
10-Year Solid Waste Management Plan

Material Recovery Facility
Transfer Station
Sanitary Landfill
Waste to Energy



INTEGRATED SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT
SOLUTION PROVIDER

8th Floor Galleria Corporate Center,
Ortigas Avenue Corner EDSA, Quezon City
Telephone Numbers: (02) 936-3979 / (02) 285-6367 /
HP: (0917) 520-7894

Website: www.wmiphils.com / Email: inquiry@wmiphils.com

DAVAO • CEBU • METRO MANILA • ILOCOS

FEATURES



MINDANAO'S NEXT BIG THING

Misamis Oriental Governor Bambi Emano capitalizes on the province's natural beauty and harnesses its tourism potential

BY MARCO NICANOR

PHOTOS COURTESY OF PROVINCIAL TOURISM
OFFICE OF MISAMIS ORIENTAL

White sand beaches and breathtaking waterfalls, lush mountains and exciting caves, rich marine ecosystem and pristine dive spots — these are but a glimpse of what Misamis Oriental has to offer. Gifted with so much natural beauty, abundant resources, and easily accessible terrain and geography, the province, nestled in the northern part of Mindanao, is primed to becoming the next major eco-tourism destination of the country. Such are the challenges and opportunities given to Governor Yevgeny Vicente “Bambi” Emano, who has prioritized the development and strengthening of its tourism program, since taking the helm of the province.

“Our province is so blessed with tourist destinations: we have two hot springs, two white islands, numerous beaches, more than 70 waterfalls, abundant agriculture, vast variety of fish species (around 80% of the world’s fish species can be found in Misamis Oriental), and more. Imagine the kind of economic activity we could generate for the people and the province once tourism is fully realized,” says Emano, explaining Misamis Oriental’s vast raw potential.

Agutayan White Island, Jasaan



ENABLING SUCCESS IN TOURISM

One of the most pivotal moves by the governor was issuing a memorandum which formalized the creation of a department dedicated to tourism. Atty. Jeffrey Saclot, the first and incumbent head of the provincial tourism department, reveals that Governor Emano takes his flagship tourism program seriously, allowing it to have its own budget and department to make it more effective in seeking out and developing new tourism sites.

He further shares how they empower municipalities by turning over tourism projects after they have created the necessary structures and facilities to make it operational and attractive to tourists. The tourism department also ensures that tourism sites are properly maintained and well managed.

The good governor highly commends his tourism team and Saclot for doing what should be rightfully done for tourism in the province.



Aqua Marine Park, Laguindingan



Sagpulon Falls, Jasaan

REASSURING PEACE AND ORDER

Governor Emano admits that there are lots of challenges in promoting tourism in the area. One of the most glaring is the issue of Mindanao's security. He acknowledges that part of addressing the challenge in tourism is informing the people that Misamis Oriental is a place where peace and order prospers. He observes, "Media sometimes sensationalizes the news; even if the conflict zone is only in a part of Mindanao, tomorrow's headlines will read 'War in Mindanao,' as if we are at war in all of Mindanao."

The head of tourism also adds that even when there was a war going on, "immediately after the declaration of Martial Law, Miss Earth still went on with their visit to the province and saw for themselves that peace and security were well maintained in the area." He also admits that there was a brief

period when many cancelled their flights due to the then ongoing conflict. But he also noted that because of the successful operations of the military and the police, the people were reassured and tourism has continued to flourish ever since.

SUSTAINING TOURISM GROWTH

Emano is positive that Misamis Oriental is headed in the right direction because every quarter, there are

new resorts mushrooming in the province. He says, "This year alone, there are four new beach resorts opening up in the province, complete with hotel and facilities, in Laguindingan, Tagum, Initao, and Talisayan. For a businessman to open a resort, which is not cheap and easy to operate, they, too, see and believe in the potential of the tourism industry in our province."

He also believes that with Misamis Oriental being the gateway to Mindanao, the whole

This year alone, there are new beach resorts opening up all over the province, complete with hotel and facilities, in Laguindingan, Tagum, Initao, and Talisayan.



Photo by cagayan de Oro Tourism Office

island will benefit from the rise of eco-tourism and will greatly contribute to the efforts in preserving the natural beauty of the region and to promoting responsible tourism. “I do not want my future kids to tell me that I have not protected nature for their generation to enjoy,” the governor quips.

Atty. Saclot is exuberant in sharing that “Misamis Oriental is blossoming. It is not hard to implement tourism programs here, because the province is so well connected and accessible to the rest of the country.” He adds that the international standard airport in Laguindingan (which will soon accommodate international flights) and two seaports in Cagayan de Oro City and Tagoloan, will be able to handle and support the economic upswing of tourism in the province.

ESTABLISHING A CULTURE AND TRADITION OF TOURISM

One of the governor’s innovations for promoting a culture of sustainable tourism and celebrating the bounty of the province is the Kuyamis Festival. “It is a week-long festivity where we honor the Feast of the Black Nazarene and showcase our province’s produce and best practices,” shares the proud governor. The first festival successfully launched in January of 2014 during the province’s



By Riel Diango [CC BY-SA 3.0 (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0)], from Wikimedia Commons

84th founding anniversary.

Kuyamis is a local variety of a small and sweet coconut. “Story has it that the Spaniards referred to it as ‘Misamis’ and from there came about the origins of the province’s name,” shares Emano.

The celebration is also the official festival of Cagayan de Oro City, Misamis Oriental’s capital, which showcases cultural shows, friendly competitions among municipalities, and pageants, culminating with the coronation of Miss Kuyamis.

Governor Bambi concludes, “The Kuyamis Festival is gaining popularity as one of the regional tourism festivals in the country, and our total development plan of the province anchored on tourism is now a reality.” ■

Daily flights to
CORON

Daily flights to
BORACAY

Daily flights to
BATANES

Daily flights to
SIARGAO

EXPERIENCE SPEED AND COMFORT

The fastest flights to your dream destinations

| | | | |
|-------------------|---------|-----------------|---------|
| Caticlan, Boracay | 35 mins | Busuanga, Coron | 35 mins |
| Basco, Batanes | 70 mins | Siargao Island | 80 mins |

FREE 10 kg. check-in baggage allowance

FREE in-flight drinks and snacks

Comfortable seats and spacious leg room

SkyJetAirlines.com

8 SKYJET
8 7 5 9 5 3 8

I am proud to say that in all my years of public service, not a single case of graft and corruption has been filed against me. I make it a point to have started clean and I will finish without a stain.



INNOVATIVE AND PROGRESSIVE LEADERSHIP

Governor Bambi Emano's administration is anchored on transparency and honesty, helping the indigent, and empowering the youth

BY MARCO NICANOR
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BON ASERIOS OF "ONE HAPPY STORY"
AND OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR OF MISAMIS ORIENTAL

Governor Yevgeny Vicente "Bambi" Emano has known no other profession aside from being a dedicated public servant. At the ripe age of 23, he was proclaimed as the youngest elected mayor in the history of the Philippines. Having served nine years as mayor of the municipality of Tagoloan and six years as congressman, now he is on his second term of governorship in the province of Misamis Oriental; his brand of progressive leadership has geared the province towards achieving greater success and development.

As a kid, he has shown leadership potential by consistently being the class president from his elementary to his high school years. He confesses, "I'm not quite sure if the training I had growing up was the training for a politician or if I inherited the gene from my father, witnessing him in his dedication to public service beyond self." He is the son of politician Vicente "Dongkoy" Emano, who also served as governor of the province.

And as with any child who follows the same path as their father, there will always be the lofty expectations and comparison. "There is no escaping that pressure," the younger Emano admits. "But I just do what is right and serve the people and give justice to the opportunity they have given me and not bother comparing myself with my father." He also reveals that his leadership is not beholden to the traditional way of governing and of doing things. While he is thankful for the achievements of others, he is also aware that the solutions then might not be the best solutions now. "I am more into venturing and creating new programs that I think are more suitable during this time," adds the young governor.



Just recently, Governor Emano led Misamis Oriental officials in receiving top awards from President Duterte during the Gawad Saka Awards held in Malacanang Palace. Misamis Oriental was the lone province recipient of the “Provincial Agricultural and Fishery Council” Award, while the municipality of Laguindingan garnered the “Malinis at Masaganang Karagatan” Award.

VOW OF HONESTY AND TRANSPARENCY

Part of Emano’s leadership is his refreshing openness and honesty even on embarrassing events of his past. He does not shy away from admitting that he was the first student in his high school to have been suspended because he got caught cheating. “I do

not deny it because I learned a lot from it. I know that the consequences of cheating are dire and bitter and I vowed to myself to never to do that again,” he says.

He was supposed to be barred from graduating. But upon pleading his case, he was allowed to join but was stripped of all his would-be accolades (from his Sportsman of the Year award as basketball team captain, to his award as battalion commander, and many others). But his most bitter memory was during the graduation day itself when his mother, who was forced to work abroad to support his and his siblings’ schooling, flew all the way back from the US just to join his graduation. “Tears fell from my eyes because my mom worked so hard, my dad worked

so hard, for me to have a good education and yet I could not even give them the honor of going up the stage and place a medal on my neck because of the stupidity that I had done. So I had to wipe the tears off and promise myself that in this lifetime, I will never cheat again,” recalls Emano.

Now serving for almost two decades in government, Emano declares, “I am proud to say that in all my years of public service, not a single case of graft and corruption has been filed against me. I make it a point to have started clean and I will finish without a stain.”

Even while the Freedom of Information Act is only imposed on the executive level, the governor has taken strides in upholding transparency. Provincial information can be accessed through its website and

bidding protocols and documents (e.g. project details such as winning contractor, contract amount, project duration) are posted out on the open billboard for the public to see.

INNOVATIVE HEALTHCARE AND SOCIAL SERVICES

When the young Emano first assumed governorship of the province in 2013, his mettle would be tested as he quickly found out that he inherited a P240 million headache from the previous administration in the form of a massive debt to PhilHealth.

With the threat of PhilHealth’s services being discontinued in his province, Governor Emano demonstrated his ability to think outside the traditional framework of governance and trailblaze his new, innovative program. He decided to create their own healthcare system and called





Being poor should not stop you from reaching or achieving your dreams and I am just an instrument to help them get there.



it MisOr CareS (Misamis Oriental Care System). He allocated 40% of his total provincial budget to the health services prioritizing the marginalized and the indigent (those with P15,000 or below monthly income), providing hospitalization and even medicine at no charge.

The program was also able to add social services components such as scholarship programs for the indigent and out of school youth, and services for the deceased (free embalming, casket, and transportation).

The governor proudly shares, “We have already served over 1.2 million residents of the province and we are very happy that the healthcare system was recognized by the DOH. There is a saying by our constituents which goes, ‘Kung taga Mis Or ka, secure ka!’”

EMPOWERING THE BARANGAYS

Emano’s concern for the welfare and wellbeing of the people of Misamis Oriental is evident in his programs that he himself is involved in, even down to the barangay level – the most basic form of local governance, and the most intimate and direct to the people.

“There are 424 barangays in my province but only 364 days in a year. But I make it a point to visit each one of them every year. In fact, it makes me happy being in the barangay rather than in the office,” smiles Emano as he recounts his determination to see to it that each barangay is doing well.

“In each of our visits per year, we empower the barangay by giving them P300,000 as allotment for projects that they see best fit and which are beneficial to their village and situation,” continues Emano. He reasons that while the national government gives budget to projects for the barangays, some, if not most of them, do not really address the needs and programs that could have positive impact on their community. Emano adds, “In our barangay empowerment program, the barangay decides what projects to implement; they make the program of works, they conduct bidding for the project, and they do proper liquidation through the provincial

accounting. And I also make it a rule that the barangays themselves benefit from the economic activity by hiring people from the community for its labor, masonry, carpentry, and other works.”

Since starting the programs, barangays have implemented programs ranging from seed and fertilizer acquisitions, installation of water systems, construction of health centers, barangay halls, multipurpose covered courts, or even purchase of CCTV equipment.

LOVE FOR EDUCATION

Evident in Emano’s brand of governance is his commitment to alleviate the plight of the poor and give the marginalized a fighting chance in life. He quips, “Being poor should not stop you from reaching or achieving your dreams, and I am just an instrument to help them get there.”

Now on its 11th year, his program “Iskolar Ko ni Bambi” has already aided more than 19,000 students to graduate from college courses and vocational trainings, and will be joined by 3,000 more college graduates this year. The province has been a recipient of two Kabalikat Awards, the highest award bestowed by TESDA to the local government unit in recognition of their scholarship programs.

The dedicated bachelor has also made it a point to celebrate every Valentine’s Day with his scholars, keeping them inspired and motivated to pursue their dreams. Emano fondly shares, “I tell my scholars that when they graduate, they do not owe me anything. But if they feel indebted, I encourage them to help their neighbors who are poorer than them to be able to finish school. too.”

He also shares a fantasy that when he is old and sickly, some well-dressed and successful lady or gentleman will approach him and will offer him a ride on their luxurious car. Inside, the lady or gentleman will regale him with the things he or she has done to help others achieve their dreams too because he is paying forward the scholarship that Governor Bambi was able to provide. He shares that in that moment he will pray, “Lord, You can take the life You have lent me, for I have seen that with the opportunity You have given me when I was governor, I was able to help people and they were able to pay it forward by helping others. I know and feel that things that I work hard for today, the people will be able to reap the benefits in the future.” ■■





SMI President Dra. Irene Floro with children from Marawi

SMILES brings HOPE to Marawi

BY MARCO NICANOR
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BON ASERIOS OF "ONE HAPPY STORY"
AND SKILLS MASTERY INSTITUTE

The aftermath of the recent conflict in Marawi has left thousands of families, residents, and neighboring citizens homeless. Cramped in evacuation centers, these Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) have no means of generating income and are, thus, solely reliant on relief goods and donations. Canned goods and instant noodles could only do so much to satiate hunger and provides little nutrition. The inactivity in the temporary shelters also worsen post traumatic stress disorders (PTSD) and feelings of helplessness and negativity among IDPs. Something had to be done.

Answering the call for help of our Muslim brothers and sisters is the Skills Mastery Institute for Learning, Employment, and Success (SMILES) Foundation Inc., based in Northern Mindanao, who initiated Project HOPE (Halal Organic farming Productivity Enterprise). Together with KI-KAPAMAGOGOPA, Inc. (KI), a non-profit and local volunteering organization based in Marawi City, and help of TESDA and the local government, they initially mobilized distribution of fish, rice, vegetables, and spices to the IDPs of the Lanao Regions, notably even to the Municipality of Butig, the hometown of the Maute brothers. The program then evolved into a productive exchange of skills and training, wherein the families were taught farming crop production, processing, and markets development.

DISCOVERING NEW LIVELIHOOD

SMILES Foundation provided venues and accommodations to properly train the families in organic farming. Over the course of three months, they were given basic farming tools and equipment and seedlings. They were trained on proper farming methods especially for cash crop production. Not only were they being positively productive, but they also found food security through the fresh vegetables and produce they were making.

Once they were able to ascertain and demonstrate the quality of produce, SMILES Foundation also helped them into establishing linkages to



SMI President Dra. Irene Floro helping market the produce of the trainees (top); with the smiling IDP trainees (bottom).

sell to the markets. During their graduation ceremony, several produce of the graduates were showcased and sold. It was worth highlighting that several of the families were already engaged in selling their vegetables locally.

Not only was food security addressed by Project HOPE but the activity also helped provide a positive outlook for the IDPs because of the alternative economic livelihood which can meet and sustain the needs of their families. Several trainees expressed having vacant lots in Marawi and neighboring areas that they hope to get back to and plant cash crops now that they have the skills and knowledge to do so.

SKILLS MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

SMILES is the foundation of Skills Management Institute (SMI), the leading provider of technical, vocational education, and training (TVET) in Mindanao, recognized for its innovation and excellence. SMI offers State of the Art Facilities to provide quality training for sure employment and certification of graduates based on industry standards. SMI deploys experienced and dedicated trainers with solid track record to ensure that SMI is going the extra mile for the very poor, their communities benefit, and programs succeed and sustained.



Having an animated discussion with Gov. Emano

Even Misamis Oriental Governor Bambi Emano trusts and partners with SMI for his scholarship program Iskolar Ko Ni Bambi (IKNB). The governor shares, "I am proud of organizations like SMI, who helps not only the people of Marawi but all individuals who needed to rise from poverty by giving them skills and training to make their lives better."

SMI now offers 29 technical vocational courses, providing a wide array of training options for students. SMI produced 19,005 graduates across courses from 2007-2018. The Certification Rate of SMI graduates from 2007-2018 showed 97.5% and 90.14% Employment Rate. These, among others, are testaments to the Institute's world-class training, networking capabilities, and leadership direction.

SMI's ultimate measure of success is becoming a model of sustainable TVET. In less than a decade in the business, SMI has taken the role of a leader, and has set the course for others to follow.



Skills Mastery Institute
Jacinto Tan Building,
Capistrano St.,
Cagayan de Oro,
Misamis Oriental.
Telephone number
(088) 850-0528

The Panagbenga Festival is probably the most blooming festival in the country. Each year, thousands of tourists would troop to the City of Pines just to enjoy the festivities and revel in the colorful, flowery floats that parade its main streets. Yet behind the beauty and the allure of Panagbenga is a story of valor, perseverance, and redemption. Unknown to many, the Panagbenga is an embodiment of Baguio redeeming itself from the aftermath of the disastrous earthquake in 1990.

REMEMBERING THE QUAKE

On July 16, 1990, Baguio City was reduced to rubble after a 7.7-magnitude, 45-second killer quake unexpectedly hit. Followed by numerous aftershocks, the quake was noted to be the deadliest throughout the history of the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), accounting for more than 1,600 people dead, hundreds of buildings and roads destroyed, and thousands of families displaced from their own homes. On that fateful day, various narratives from the community would describe how helplessly devastated the city was, and how they needed a lot of help to get back on their feet.

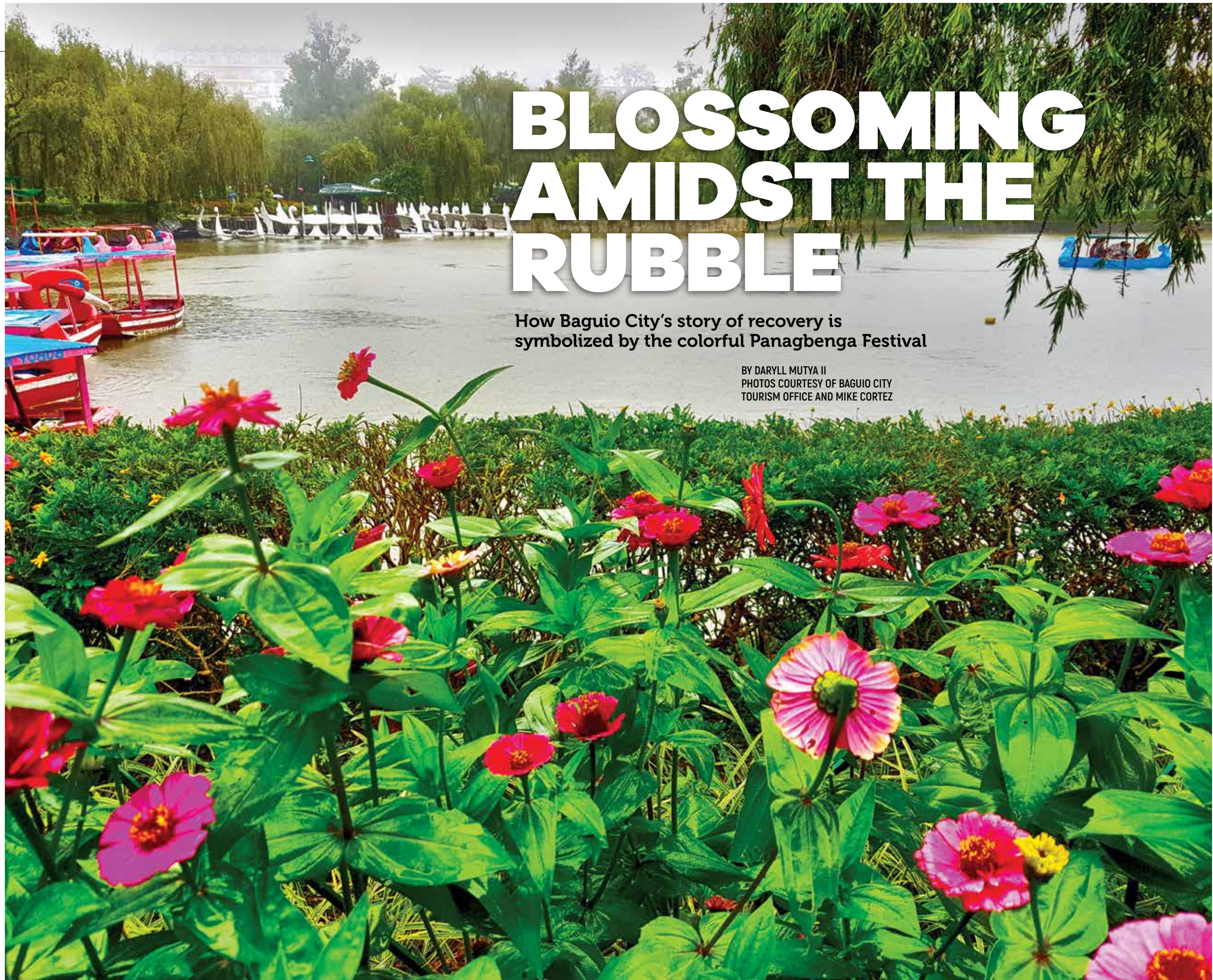
The city knew that rising above the devastation could not be possible without a leader who would serve as a guiding light to its people—leading, empowering, and unifying them—through the struggle to rebuild and recover.

Photo by Joma Rivera

BLOSSOMING AMIDST THE RUBBLE

How Baguio City's story of recovery is symbolized by the colorful Panagbenga Festival

BY DARYLL MUTYA II
PHOTOS COURTESY OF BAGUIO CITY
TOURISM OFFICE AND MIKE CORTEZ



STEPS TOWARDS REHABILITATION

Baguio's rehabilitation from the earthquake has been considered as the greatest legacy of incumbent Baguio City Mayor Mauricio G. Domogan. It was his first term as mayor at the time when the city was at its most disaster-stricken and challenging state. Mayor Domogan's brand of leadership was to be a source of hope back then, the kind of authority that inspired the people to rebuild what was destroyed. "It was a big challenge," Domogan recalls. By working with various non-government organizations (NGOs) and other Local Government Units (LGUs), he was known to have veered away from politics in order to work efficiently on development projects and programs that would help Baguio and its citizens rise above the effects of disaster.

One of Mayor Domogan's first steps was to rebuild the city's roads so as to make it more accessible to all the communities. He also invested in equipment, such as garbage trucks that came all the way from Japan, complemented by a garbage disposal system to

aid management of waste. He founded the "Alay sa Kalinisan" program, that aimed to: (1) sustain an efficient solid waste disposal system; (2) monitor and maintain clean, breathable air; (3) preserve the cleanliness of rivers and potable water; and (4) keep the city green and filled with flowers and trees. Because of this program, Baguio City was inducted into the National Clean and Green Contest Hall of Fame after being declared champion three years in a row.

Back then, the people rallied in support of the mayor after seeing a devastated city garner such recognition on the national level.

ON TEAMWORK AND INCLUSIVITY
In order to rise up from the ruins, the city also engaged in several initiatives in cooperation with the other affected Cordilleran provinces.

BLISTT, an urban planning project, was an effort of the Regional Development Council of the Cordillera Administrative Region (RDC-CAR) to promote



Photos by Mike Cortez

The secret to our success boils down to teamwork, discipline, and principled leadership. With these three, even small cities like Baguio can make the impossible, possible.



Photo by Jeremias Talva

the joint development of Baguio, La Trinidad, Itogon, Sablan, Tuba, and Tublay to which the acronym BLISTT stands for. It was formed to respond to the staggering damages of the earthquake. The government, non-government organizations, and individuals have pitched in their share in terms of relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction efforts.

The members developed a vision of a better Baguio after the earthquake, with emphasis on the following:

- That the devastation of Baguio brought about the chance to change what they do not like in the city; Sustainable development must be incorporated into the rebuilding;
- Sustainable development must be achieved inclusively through empowering people

and other social institutions such as non-government organizations; and

- Such developmental plans should be done in behalf of the needs of the city's children in the present and for the future.

BLISTT's vision is seen to be promising. And it did not remain on the drawing board, as some of the progressive steps have already been actualized, serving as a catalyst for more development projects which steered its surrounding cities and provinces to modernity. Infrastructure, such as the Western Link Road and the BLISTT Circumferential Road, have been constructed. Water drainages studies, such as the BLISTT Water Resources Study, the Water Distribution and Leakage Study, and the Flood Mitigation and Drainage Work

Study, have been conducted and used as developmental frameworks. Also included were other studies on land delivery units for low-cost housing and town development feasibilities. BLISTT, in fact, did not limit itself to the purpose of rehabilitation and reconstruction. It also tried to address the issues of traffic, overcrowding, inner-city decay, and other forms of congestion.

TRANSCENDING INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Baguio may have been burdened with rehabilitation and restoration. But one thing admirable about its efforts was how it became socially-inclusive and socially-empowering at the same time. Mayor Domogan, through his current projects, has given premium for the



We were discriminated for a very long period of time; it's time to reverse it.

protection of the Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and other marginalized sectors of the community. “We were discriminated for a very long period of time; it’s time to reverse it,” says Mayor Domogan. Because of his social advocacies in his earlier terms in office, he was even selected as the Outstanding Indigenous Leader of the Philippines at the Global Conference of Indigenous Peoples in 1996. Domogan proved that nobody gets left behind in the recovery process—no matter what social sector one belongs to.

Recovery was not an easy task. But for his efforts at reviving Baguio after the disaster, Mayor Domogan does not fail to give credit to his constituents who have rallied behind him. He recognized that Baguio’s journey of development would hinge on the values and discipline of the people, knowing that the process of restoration was a shared responsibility. “Teamwork is important. *Kung nawala ‘yung teamwork, ang daming makakaligtaan* (If there is no teamwork, a lot of things will be missed),” Domogan adds.

CELEBRATING PROGRESS AND BEAUTY

So, how did the Panagbenga Festival become the embodiment of Baguio City’s redemption? After the earthquake, a lot of people left the city. Tourists were afraid to visit Baguio, wary of the aftershocks that usually followed in the wake of a major seismic activity. The mayor knew that something had to attract visitors back to Baguio, as well as revitalize the city’s flagging spirits.



Photo by Raniel Jose Castaneda



Photos by Joma Rivera

In February 1995, Baguio shifted its eyes from despair to a collective smile as it celebrated the multi-colored flowers that grew and bloomed on its farms and mountain slopes. The festival (commemorated annually since the year it began) was called Panagbenga, a Kankanaey term that means a “season of blooming.”

And from that year on, Baguio has continued its steady climb out of the rubble. These days, the city has regained its prominence as the country’s prominent summer capital, enjoying tourist arrivals surpassing figures even before the earthquake. It has also been recognized in 2017 as one of the Creative Cities cited by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

“The secret to our success boils down to teamwork, discipline, and principled leadership. With these three, even small cities like Baguio can make the impossible, possible,” ends Mayor Domogan. ■



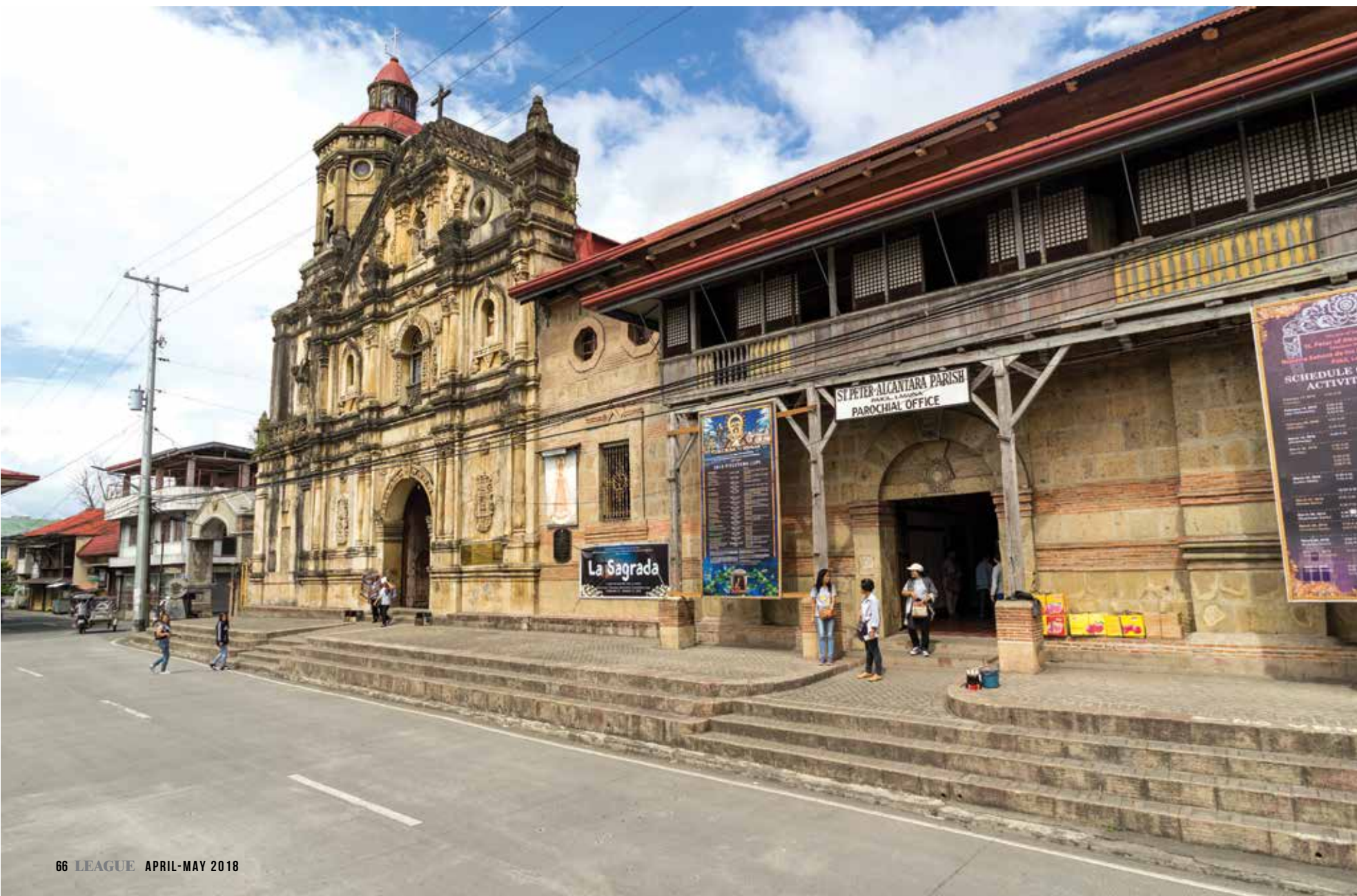
ALL ROADS LEAD TO PAKIL

Pakil, one of the country's oldest towns, enters a renaissance of unprecedented growth through good governance

BY JOSELITO M. EBRO JR.
PHOTOS BY DANIEL SORIANO

A three-hour drive east of Manila leads to a town in Laguna with two non-contiguous parts. Separated by Laguna de Bay, the town shares a boundary with the province of Rizal in the west, while the other shares a border with Quezon province and other municipalities in Laguna.

"It's like I am the mayor of two municipalities. I have to travel 30 to 35 minutes through the towns of Pangil, Siniloan, Famy, and Mabitac before I get to the other side," says Vincent Soriano, the young mayor of the town of Pakil. Despite the obstacle, the municipality has exceeded expectations as it breaks records in good governance.



“A small town is like a blank canvas on which you can build your own Rome,” says Mayor Soriano. And true enough, it seems Pakil has found its own Augustus.

Soriano is a seasoned public servant, who joined politics when he was 18, a year before graduating cum laude from the University of the Philippines Los Baños. He is an educator and a published writer, and through his leadership, he hopes to bring Pakil to its Golden Age.

STEEPED IN HISTORY

Pakil is one of the oldest towns in the Philippines. First organized in 1588 as a *visita* of Paete, it became an independent town on May 12, 1676. Since then, the town has served as a home for people who love to express themselves through

their culture and tradition. At the heart of Pakil’s *poblacion* is their old-aged church of San Pedro de Alcantara. This baroque church has served to represent the rich heritage and culture of *Pakilenyos*.

Pakil is also known for being the site of one of the oldest festivals in the country. Each year, around the months of April and May, *Pakilenyos* honor the *Nuestra Señora de los Dolores de Turumba*. A celebration which started in 1788, people dance their hearts out to express gratitude to the miraculous Virgin Mary. Due to the popularity of the festival, neighboring municipalities and cities participate and send their best brass bands to compete.

“Imagine, Pakil is a small town yet we have three brass bands,” shares Soriano. This

love for music is apparent among Pakil’s people, and exemplified through the works of National Artist Marcelo Adonay, a *Pakilenyo* and an icon of church music in the country.

Another pride of Pakil is its athletes, many of whom have represented the country in numerous local and international swimming competitions. Known for their extreme athleticism, young *Pakilenyos* are trained well, given the availability of the Turumba springs swimming pool, which is open to everyone.

But culture and sports are not the only areas that *Pakilenyos* are proud of.

LEAP IN COMPETITIVENESS

Pakil grew rapidly in 2017. Based on the National Competitive Index of all municipalities in the country,



Pakil ranked 90th in the fifth class municipality category, a significant jump from its previous rank of 378. Measured through key indicators such as economic dynamism, government efficiency, and infrastructure, Pakil has scored well in areas pertaining to good public service complete with the presence of investment promotion unit, availability of basic utilities, and efficient land use plan.

Through efficient government service, the town has secured additional investments such as the presence of a gasoline station, cockpit arena, and a hollow block factory.

This big step in Pakil’s competitiveness was due to the good mix of clear vision, technical competence, and “a



Inspired to maintain the old plaza system practiced during the Spanish colonization, the LGU of Pakil aims to show that economic and social development, with culture and history as the backdrop, is possible.



Measured through key indicators such as economic dynamism, government efficiency, and infrastructure, Pakil has scored well in areas pertaining to good public service complete with the presence of investment promotion unit, availability of basic utilities, and efficient land use plan.

good sense of morality,” which the local government leaders and employees of Pakil aspire to follow.

PLANNING FOR CHANGE

Mayor Soriano believes that the huge leap in competitiveness is a direct result of good governance initiatives he sought to implement as soon as he sat as the local executive.

After almost two years since he won the mayoralty race, government transactions in Pakil are now computerized, making public service quick and efficient. It also helped in the promotion of more businesses and in turn generated more livelihood for the people.

Law enforcement was also modernized. The Pakil police force is now equipped with body cameras using the same technology found in the US and Israel to ensure better public service and security.

Pakil is also preparing for the implementation of the MARINA project, which will soon connect Pakil with Taguig by boat via the Laguna Lake. Through this project, the cost of traveling from Pakil to major cities in the National Capital Region will be reduced.

The town also joins other cities that transferred their public service operations to a government center to better address the needs of their constituents. The service provided by this hub will be extended through various branches stationed in major areas around town.

As the recent projects of the LGU exemplify a harmonious partnership with all concerned parties, Mayor Soriano emphasizes that good relations with the public and private sector is also key in the promotion of numerous services for the people.

The government is responsible for securing a conducive environment for investment and economic growth. Once achieved,

the civil society and the business sector would cover the cost needed to execute numerous projects.

Efficient planning has also played a prominent role in Pakil’s growth. Soriano, who adheres to the value of planning over unprepared action, puts emphasis on the roles of the public officials in promoting a mindset of foresight.

TRANSFORMING THE OLD, EMBRACING THE NEW

Soriano admits that the perspective of the people presents a stumbling block in his leadership. The LGU desires to widen the horizon for *Pakilenyos* by changing their mindset and removing their passiveness. They need to believe in the idea that even a small town can accomplish great things. *“Hindi dapat tayo ang susunod, tayo ang susundan. Hindi dapat tayo ang tutulad, tayo ang tutularan* (We shouldn’t follow, we should lead. We shouldn’t copy, we should be emulated),” says Soriano.

Yet, amidst all the progress that has been changing the landscape of Pakil, Mayor Soriano knows that this could never happen at the expense of Pakil’s rich history and heritage. “How can we accomplish the challenges of the future if we cannot appreciate our past?” he asks.

To achieve this goal, one of the priority projects envisioned by the LGU of Pakil is the construction of a heritage plaza. This public space would serve as the heart of art and culture in Pakil. The heritage plaza will feature monuments, civic buildings, and a gymnasium to cater to the needs of all *Pakilenyos*.

Inspired to maintain the old plaza system practiced during the Spanish colonization, the LGU of Pakil aims to show that economic and social development, with culture and history as the backdrop, is possible.

Through this balanced view of governance, the town aims to show that the old is never a hindrance to the new.

COMPETING WITH CITIES

This year, the town aims to be included in the top 50 municipalities of 2018. Cityhood may seem to be a tall order for Pakil at the moment, but the possibility certainly lies in the foreseeable future. For now, Pakil strives to outdo itself in the next years to come.

“I don’t want to compete with fellow municipalities, I want to compete with cities,” says Soriano. He envisions Pakil as a model community that other municipalities may draw inspiration from. “This will take some time,” admits Mayor Soriano.

After all, Rome wasn’t built in a day. But through a decisive leadership and a relentless pursuit of good governance, Pakil will continue climbing its way to the top. 📌



JOLO ON ITS WAY TO THE FUTURE

Mayor Kerkhar Tan outlines what he sees is in store for the Municipality of Jolo, Sulu

BY JOHN LEE CANDELARIA
PHOTOS BY GABRIEL MALVAR

Ask any tourist, local or international, if they ever plan of going to the Philippines's southernmost islands, and pretty sure they will respond in the negative. The Sulu Islands, off the tip of the Zamboanga Peninsula, have gathered so much bad rep because of abductions, killings, kidnappings, terrorism, and more, to a point that it would be difficult to promote these as the next big island destination.

Kerkhar Tan, mayor of Jolo, Sulu, is aware of all these. But he still thinks Jolo could be something greater in the future.

JOLO, "GOOD COMMUNITY"

The name Jolo actually means something positive, since it comes from "ho lāng," which means "good people" in Chinese. The Chinese traders of old had good relations with the people from this place, oftentimes leaving their wares in Jolo's shore and finding these untouched when they return. Later on, *ho lāng* became *ho lô*, which meant "good community".

Jolo is part of the Sulu archipelago, a scenic group of islands that in the midst of Sulu and Celebes seas. Because of its history of conflicts, it seems as if the islands and islets of the archipelago have been untouched by the evils of modernity. American documentary and travel photographer Jacob Maentz even pined for the Sulu sea, which he refers to as "one of the most beautiful seascapes on earth."



With or without the award, I will continue improving leadership and bureaucracy in the town by ensuring all requirements of the DILG are complied with and that all of the town's leaders live by the Local Government Code.



Nature splurged itself when it created these islands. Diving sites abound in the seas of these islands, such as the Tubbataha Reef in Sulu Sea, the first site in the Philippines to make it to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1993. The underwater ecosystem and marine wilderness of Sulu is the envy of other countries, and is frequented by divers from all over the world. While the Tubbataha is accessible through Palawan, many sites in the Sulu archipelago itself have been inaccessible because of the bad reputation these islands have garnered through the years.

Aside from the natural wonders, the people of the Sulu archipelago are also a wondrous culture. The Tausugs of Sulu are known to be kind to guests and foreigners, but unrelenting and defiant in defending their homelands. In fact, 300 years of Spanish colonialism was not enough to subjugate them. This is the reason why they remained untouched by Western influences and continued to develop their own culture. Being the first people in the Philippines to embrace Islam, the archipelago is home to magnificent mosques and other Islamic cultural properties.

Spanish attempts to enter Sulu are also immortalized in here, in the form of a walled city that is touted as the smallest in the world.

Surely, the archipelago has much to offer local and international tourists upon arrival. Unfortunately, it is not as easy as that. It is ironic that these days, the name “Jolo” has been harboring negativity, and conflict and security issues in the area are all that makes it to the mainstream media. Mayor Kerkhar Tan believes that all this bad press is hampering the prospects of development in the area, but he does not blame the media. “We



understand the security issues. Jolo is a small municipality with just eight barangays; we are able to easily secure our municipality, but adjacent areas not belonging to Jolo are not within our jurisdiction.” Thus, it is easy for conflicts and violence to spill over to the small municipality.

POTENTIALS UNDERMINED BY MINDANAO'S SECURITY ISSUES

Upon winning the position of mayor in 2016, Kerkhar Tan is aware of the challenges he will face. He remains undaunted, seeing that his priorities for the town form part and parcel of the whole strategy to drive growth in this part of the Sulu archipelago. He notes that Jolo has been well on its way towards better local governance, since the former municipal administration received the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG)'s Seal of Good Local Governance. “I am building on the successes I inherited from the previous administration. I am inspired to maintain this honor for the town, a proof that we are making change happen here in Jolo.”

The Seal of Good Local Governance by the DILG has been a rare feat for the towns and cities of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). However, since 2016, Jolo has been a recipient of the award, a feat that Mayor Tan credits the good



foundations by the previous administration, and his own team. “With or without the award, I will continue improving leadership and bureaucracy in the town by ensuring all requirements of the DILG are complied with and that all of the town’s leaders live by the Local Government Code.

He also seeks to improve the conflict situation in the town. He understands that security concerns undermine the economic viability of the town’s many industries. They hold regular meetings with the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines. He also cites the town’s participation in the campaign of the Duterte administration against drugs as a way by which they can improve the peace and order of the area. “My topmost priority is to eliminate drug-related cases in the municipality and ensure the safety and security of my constituents,” he claims.

FROM BARANGAY LEADER TO MAYOR

Tan says his political career started with the most basic political unit of the country—the barangay. “I started as Barangay Captain of Asturias, which I saw as a means for me to continue the legacy of my father, who was so well-loved by the people of our barangay and also served as captain,” he shares. Later on, he moved on to the municipal level by being elected as Municipal Councilor, and then, in 2016, as Mayor.

On his leadership philosophy, he believes that he is a hands-on leader. “I make sure I personally listen to issues of my people directly, than hearing it from other intermediaries.” This consultative style of government makes it possible for him to know the issues of his constituents firsthand. “By

listening first, I know that even the most common people of the town will contribute to the way I am running the municipality.”

He also shares that his leadership model is former Governor Abdusakur Tan, the patriarch of Sulu. “He is a seasoned leader who engages with everyone and speaks his mind even when he talks with the land’s highest leaders. He also has a clear vision of what he wants for Sulu in the future. He stands as a proud Tausug, and I am proud to emulate his leadership style.”

Yet, when it comes to leadership, he also recognizes that he cannot do it alone. “I value shared governance,” he says, “I can’t rule on my own. The success of Jolo is only possible with the combined efforts of all its leaders, such as the Sangguniang Bayan of Jolo headed by Presiding Officer Hon. Abdel Razi Amin, and the many heads of the municipal government.”

MAYOR TAN’S JOLO OF THE FUTURE

The vast potentials of the Sulu archipelago is staggering, and it is, indeed, a disservice to the people of this beautiful province that these potentials are not realized because of the host of issues. But Mayor Tan is defiant. “My vision remains the same, from the time I started as barangay captain until now that I am mayor. I see Jolo to be improving little by little, day by day. With good governance initiatives, we can improve traffic, cleanliness and sanitation, and security.”

He also notes that at the end of the day, topmost in his priorities is the people of Jolo. “I dream to see Jolo in a place where it has never been before, where the people live in peace and prosperity.” It is a challenging dream, but it seems that Jolo is already on its way to the future. ■■



I make sure I personally listen to issues of my people directly, than hearing it from other intermediaries.



PROVINCE OF FREEDOM AND VALOR

Best known for the annual Araw ng Kagitingan celebrations that fall on April 9 (also known as Bataan Day), the province of Bataan is a beautiful place that is rich in World War II history. One way to get to know the place better is through these historic landmarks...

BY GERALD P. GRANA

MOUNT SAMAT SHRINE

What lies in these historic halls are memories of our beloved fallen Filipino hero soldiers who fought during World War II. The most recognizable is the Shrine of Valor, with relics such as old cannons, ammunition, and WWII memorabilia. It also has an underground museum.

BATAAN WORLD WAR II MUSEUM

Containing relics from World War II such as historic documents, infantry uniforms, water canteens, military dog tags, maps, ammunition, rifles, and hand held guns, this place reveals the horrors of what war can do.

SURRENDER SITE MARKER

Located inside Balanga Elementary School in Balanga City, this marker is a reminder that the site was used as a command post by Japanese Lt. Gen. Masaharu Homma at the time of Bataan's surrender. Major Gen. Edward King and his party signed the documents for the surrender of the USAFFE forces in the Philippines under a mango tree on April 9, 1942. That mango tree still exists up to now.



www.1Bataan.com

Flaming Sword Monument

PLAZA MAYOR DE CIUDAD DE BALANGA

Most areas in Bataan seem like the typical sleepy countryside, but Balanga City, its capital, paints a different picture—it exudes European vibe and old world charm. The grand Plaza Mayor de Ciudad de Balanga, located at the heart of the city, can't be missed. The charming Plaza Hotel is both beautiful and quaint. During nighttime, the Plaza comes alive with the regal spectacle of lights and dancing fountains.

BATTLE OF BATAAN

With Bataan being a key figure in World War II, the Bataan Death March celebrated on April 8 is no longer just a day of mourning for our fallen Filipino soldiers, but a day to renew and reawaken the spirit of heroism that is in each and every Filipino.

ZERO KILOMETER DEATH MARCH MARKER

Visiting KM 00 in Mariveles, Bataan is a surreal experience,



Philippine Army joined the 160-km march from Mariveles, Bataan to Capas, Tarlac to commemorate the 76th Year of Bataan Death March.



www.bataan.gov.ph/tourism - Kurt G. Ibañes

Km Zero in Mariveles, Bataan, where the Bataan Death March started.



By Leovienes1 - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=21545403>

Mt. Samat Shrine



www.1Bataan.com

Two of the only remaining WWII heroes alive today.

as one learns about how the Filipino prisoners of war were rounded up for the Bataan Death March under the scorching heat and humidity for five days straight.

PHILIPPINE-JAPANESE FRIENDSHIP TOWER

After the savagery of World War II, Philippines and Japan made moves to seek friendly ties, and in 1975, the Philippine-Japanese Tower in Bagac was inaugurated as a gesture of reconciliation between the two countries.

FLAMING SWORD MONUMENT

Near the Pilar Municipal Hall is a majestic monument standing tall fronting the national highway—called the Flaming Sword. It depicts the bravery and heroism of the Filipino soldiers during the second World War. It is at the KM42 point that the captured USAFFE soldiers from Mariveles and Bagac converged in the infamous Bataan Death March.

BATAAN TOURISM CENTER

Constructed through the efforts of then Governor Enrique T. Garcia Jr., Congressman Albert S. Garcia, Bataan Tourism Council Foundation Inc. and the Philippine Tourism Authority, the Bataan Tourism Center houses the Provincial Tourism Office, an Exhibit Hall, and an Audio Visual Room. It also has the Pasalubong Center, showcasing the finest products made by the locals such as handicrafts and delicacies.



Philippine Navy soldiers pose for a souvenir photo at the San Fernando Train Station during the 2nd day of the Freedom Trail 160km march.



Final Battle Site in Diwa, Pilar

By Judgefloro - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=45003818>



Philippine-Japanese Friendship Tower

FAST FACTS

Population: 735,152
Annual Growth Rate: 2.11%
Municipalities: 11
City: 1
Barangays: 237
Congressional Districts: 2
Income classification: 1st Class

Major Industries:

Petroleum Industry
 Petrochemicals
 Agriculture
 Fisheries
 Special Economic zone
 small scale and cottage industries

Major Investors:

Petron
 B Meg Premium
 Total
 Ayala Land
 Dunlop
 PNOC
 Unioil
 Orica
 Herpa Shipyard Inc.

Investment Priority Areas:

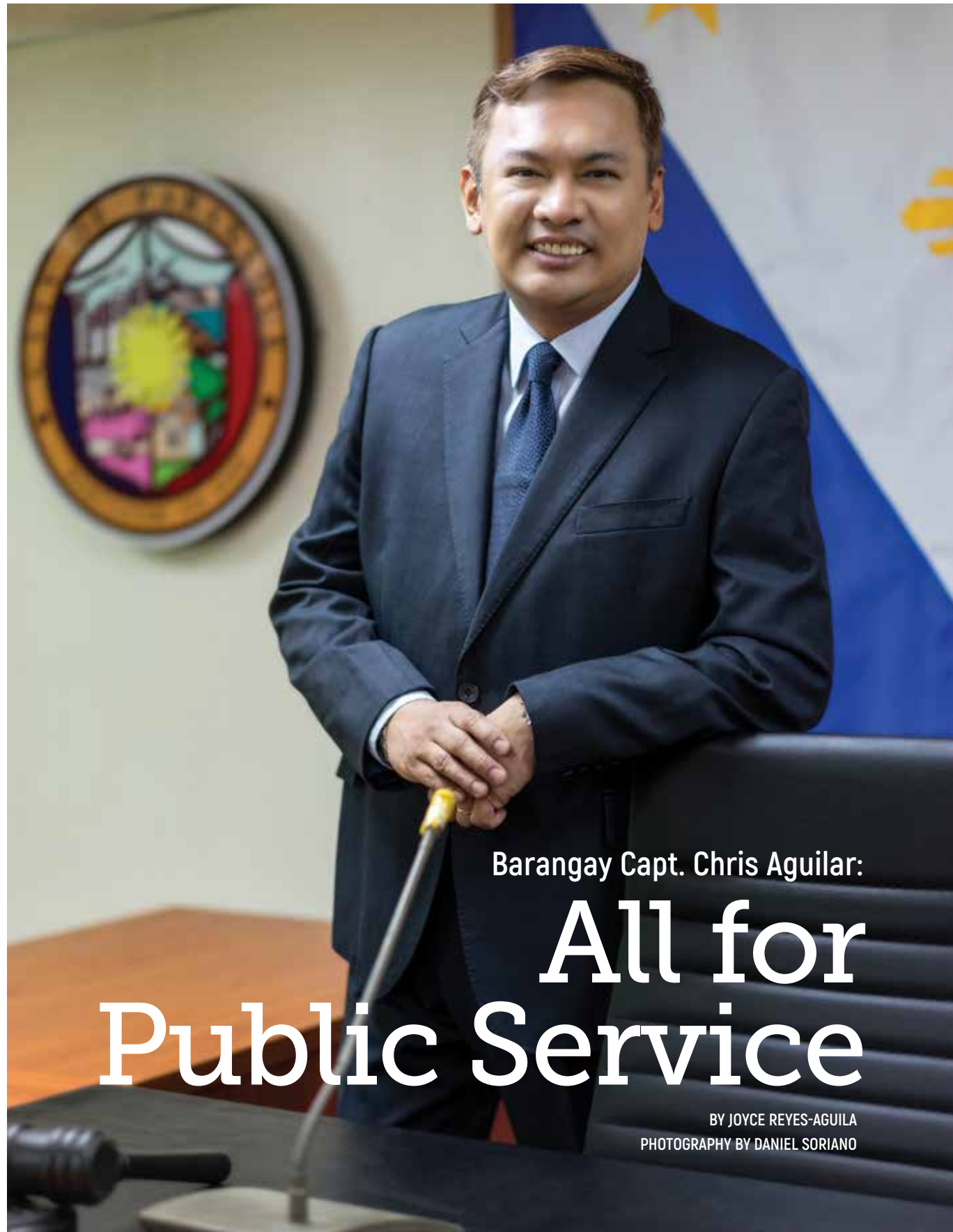
Manufacturing using available raw materials
 Manufacturing and Processing Plants
 Tourism Oriented Enterprises

- This beautiful island has a total land area of 1,373 sq.km. It has an estimated density of 535 persons / sq. km with its coastline amounting to 188 km.

- The Province of Bataan is the 7th Most Competitive Province in the country in 2016 according to the National Competitiveness Council (NCC). It also ranked 1st in Central Luzon in 2016.

- Easily accessible to Metro Manila, Clark, and Subic, Bataan is a good investment potential for major tourism projects in Central Luzon—both domestic and foreign.

- Bataan is also primed to become an industrialized province, with two freeports (Mariveles and SBMA), Bataan Petron Refinery, Hermosa Ecozone Industrial Park, among others.



Barangay Capt. Chris Aguilar:

All for Public Service

BY JOYCE REYES-AGUILA
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANIEL SORIANO



Barangay Captain Chris Aguilar is the leader of all barangay captains in 16 areas in Parañaque. The post affords him an ex-officio seat in the city council, where he is able to take part in drafting and shaping legislation for the city.

Marcelo Green Barangay Captain Christopher Aguilar was certain early on in his life that he wanted to be in public service. The former student council president began to serve his community as Sanggunian Kabataan (SK) Chairman from 1996 until 2002.

“When I was with SK, I recall seeing students who had to endure long walks just to get to their schools in other barangays,” the Parañaque-based leader remembers. “That is why during my first term in office, one of my priorities was to build a school in Barangay Marcelo Green.” Through the help of the barangay council, they were able to buy the land. They then applied for a loan from the Development Bank of the Philippines for purchase of land so that it can be endorsed to the LGU for construction. “Our IRA (Internal Revenue Allotment) from the national government helps us pay for our amortization.”

Construction of the school building was a project of Parañaque Mayor Edwin L. Olivarez. The school is now operational for grade school and high school students. “Now, they no longer have to take long walks,” he says. “And we even offer free shuttle services to bring the children to school.”

LEADING A DRUG-FREE COMMUNITY

As his dream establishment for his constituents rose, Aguilar also pursued a more demanding role in the barangay. Aside from being barangay captain, he was also elected President of Liga ng mga Barangays in the city in 2016. The group is under the Liga ng mga Barangay ng Pilipinas, an umbrella organization of barangay leaders in the country.

In this capacity, Aguilar heads all barangay captains in 16 areas in Parañaque. The post affords him an ex-officio seat in the city council, where he is able to take part in drafting and shaping legislation for the city.

A major accomplishment the San Beda College alumnus is proud of is how the Liga’s actions have supported the Duterte administration’s Oplan Tokhang (war on drugs) operations. In a speech delivered at the City Hall Grounds earlier this year, he shared that he believes the campaign is effective in curbing illegal drug operations in the city. To further support the national drug policy, Aguilar discussed an ordinance passed to the city council that aims to promote a drug-free workplace in the barangay. “It will mandate all barangay officials and employees to be subjected to random drug-testing twice a year,” he explains,

We have motorcycle riding units in the West Service Road to allow our officials to patrol the area. More importantly, it will allow them to be able to assist should there be any accidents. We always work with the PNP personnel. Our tanods are always instructed to respond to incidents with a police officer.



while also underscoring the importance of having good working relations with the Philippine National Police (PNP).

Aguilar is also known to be active in implementing MASA MASID (Mamamayang Ayaw Sa Anomalya, Mamamayang Ayaw sa Illegal na Droga), a community-based program for the prevention of illegal drugs, corruption, and criminality in barangays. The initiative of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) was launched last September 2016 and seeks to bring communities together against illegal drugs.

MASA MASID is pillared under four areas, according to the DILG official page: information and education campaign in communities for government programs against corruption, illegal drugs and criminality; creation of a reporting mechanism on illegal drugs-related activities; formulation of community-based rehabilitation programs; and revival of the spirit of volunteerism by creating a volunteer-friendly atmosphere for organizations that wish to be partners for change.

“In our barangay, we have a moral recovery program for drug returnees every weekend for a period of 12 weeks,” he shares. “We encourage them not to use drugs anymore. We provide livelihood programs and training for food processing, reflexology, candle-making, and the like.” The moral recovery program for drug returnees is in coordination with church organizations within the barangay.

SAFETY FIRST

Maintaining peace and order is also aligned to Aguilar’s goal of providing a safe community for his constituents. To date, his office has professionalized the barangay *tanods* (officers) by providing them with the proper equipment. “They have uniforms, they have name labels to make them identifiable,” he reports. “We give them self-defense training and ensure that we deploy vehicles for their peace and order functions.

“We also have motorcycle riding units in the West Service Road to allow our officials to patrol the area. More importantly, it will allow them to assist should there be any accidents. We always work with the PNP personnel. Our *tanods* are always instructed to respond to incidents with a police officer. This way, in case it is a police matter, they are already there. And if it’s a barangay matter, our officials are also present,” the Barangay Captain elaborates. Marcelo Green also has closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras in strategic locations to enable their team to respond to any incident immediately. Aside from CCTV, electrical lamp posts and solar lights were installed in major thoroughfares, parks, and other key sites in the barangay.

The Barangay is fully equipped to serve its constituents with an accessible Barangay Hall, Health Center, Lying-in Center, joint Tanod and PNP Headquarters, Senior Citizens Center, Livelihood Center, ongoing development of Ecopark, Rescue Vehicles, ambulance, firetruck, and dump truck.

In his role as an ex-officio member of the Parañaque City Council, Aguilar was instrumental in passing an ordinance that provides free legal assistance to barangay officers, barangay *tanods*, and members of the police force.



During his first term in office, one of Barangay Captain Chris Aguilar’s top priorities was building a school for Barangay Marcelo Green. The school is now operational for grade school and high school students.

“We want to be able to support them in case they face legal problems stemming from their official functions,” Aguilar, who previously worked with petrol corporation Chevron Philippines, Inc., says. “I consider it one of my major accomplishments as a member of the council.”

EFFICIENT AND BUSINESS-FRIENDLY

Aguilar shared several ordinances that have been passed in the council in different areas. “We have formed the Business One-Stop Shop to enable our citizens to have easier transactions in our city,” says Aguilar who has worked with multinational companies and is now a successful entrepreneur. Business One Stop Shop (BOSS) is not a City Ordinance; it is a directive of President Duterte and is fully supported by the 16 barangays. “Parañaque has been awarded as one of the most business-friendly cities in the metro and we aim to also provide that ease to our citizens.”

Other ordinances that Aguilar reported are the proposed establishment of a Bikeway Department under the Traffic Management Office, a local Juvenile Intervention Plan of Parañaque City, and

the creation of a Parañaque City Green Card and Hospitalization and Health Care Benefit. “It has also been an honor to have worked with Councilor Roselle Nava-Tan, my co-sponsor, in the ordinance that provides help to our indigent constituents who have breast cancer,” he mentions during the speech. The said ordinance is in support to one of the advocacies of Parañaque First Lady Janet A. Olivarez.

Aguilar also supports plans for a milk-feeding program for daycare center students and a dedicated medical desk for check-ups of persons arrested. “We have accomplished a lot because of the support and help of the members of the council,” he adds.

The public servant is also focused on a third straight term in his barangay. “I have no plans of running for higher office yet because it’s been very fulfilling to be a barangay captain. We have programs that we still want to implement.

“When you do good to others, the world will be good to you. Public service is a way for me to do good for the community. It is really a passion that allows you to help others and create projects that become your legacy”. ■■

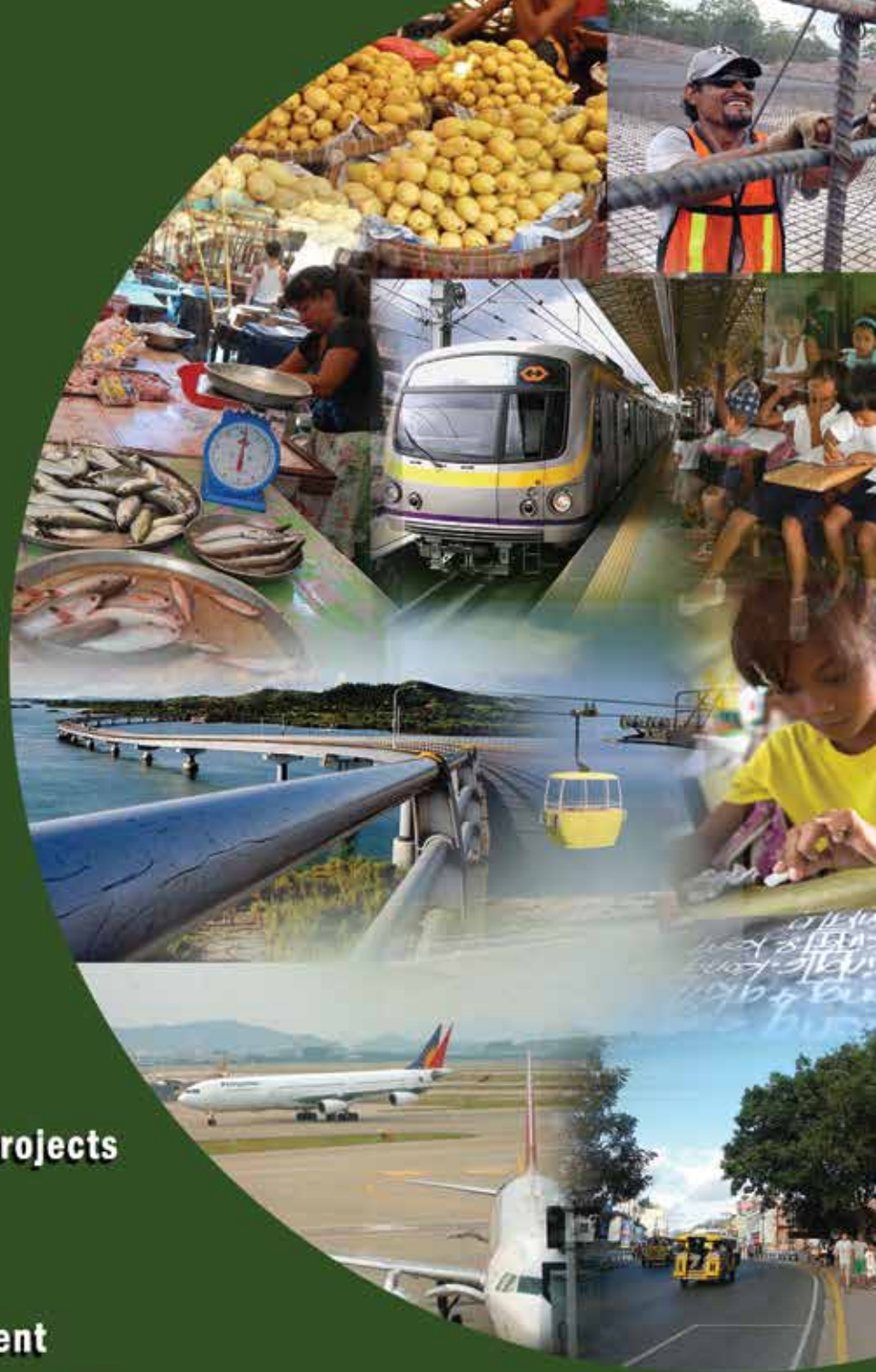
A STRONG REPUBLIC THROUGH PROGRESSIVE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS

Feasibility Study for Flagship Projects
Environmental Management
Ecosystem Management
Urban Planning and Development
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC)



**Partner for the Development
of LGUs and Government Entities
in the Philippines**

Unit 1810 Prince David Condominium, 305 Katipunan Avenue,
Loyola Heights, Quezon City, Philippines 1108
Tel Nos. 02) 238-3698 (02) 436-2880



PROGRESS



Guess which government agencies make the grade?

The Civil Service Commission releases the 2017 anti-red tape survey results

The Civil Service Commission (CSC) released the results of the 2017 Anti-Red Tape Act Report Card Survey (ARTA RCS), showing that out of the 583 offices that have been surveyed, 81.65% or 476 offices passed.

The CSC conducts the RCS annually to check an agency's overall client satisfaction and compliance with Republic Act No. 9485 or Anti-Red Tape Act, a law that aims to improve frontline service delivery in government agencies.

"The CSC noted a consistent increase in the percentage of service offices passing the survey, from 78% in 2010 to 81.65% in 2017," CSC Chairperson Alicia dela Rosa-Bala said.

Of those which passed, 61 (12.81%) received an Excellent rating while three offices (.63%) were rated Outstanding. A total of 328 (68.91%) garnered a Good rating, and 84 offices (17.65%) got Acceptable. For not meeting set standards, 92 offices (15.78%) Failed the RCS; 15 offices had zero respondents, thus did not get any rating.

In 2017, the survey focused on agencies contributing to ease of doing business as well as service offices of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of Health (DOH) hospitals, Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), and local government units.

The survey's focus is aligned with the 2017-2022 Philippine Development Plan whose thrust of upholding public service excellence is linked to increasing competitiveness and ease of doing business, as well as building trust in public institutions.

Frontline service offices covered were: Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), Bureau of Customs (BOC), Department of Health (DOH) hospitals, Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Government Service

Insurance System (GSIS), Home Development Mutual Fund (HDMF), Land Registration Authority (LRA), Land Transportation Office (LTO), Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PHIC), Philippine Ports Authority (PPA), Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Social Security System (SSS), and local government units.

A total of 31 service offices or 77.50% of the surveyed local government units passed the RCS; 258 or 75.22% of the national government agencies passed the survey; and 187 or 93.50% of the government-owned and controlled corporations met the demands of the RCS.

THE REPORT CARD SURVEY

Since 2010, the CSC, through the Report Card Survey, has been preparing a report card of government offices to check overall client satisfaction and compliance with the ARTA.

The RCS checks two core areas:

1 Compliance with ARTA provisions (presence of Citizen's Charter, employees' wearing of IDs, observance of No Noon Break Policy, Anti-Fixing Campaign, No Hidden Costs, and Existence of Public Assistance and Complaints Desk); and

2 Overall client satisfaction (Frontline Service Provider, Service Quality, Physical Setup, Basic Facilities, and Client Satisfaction).

The adjectival and numerical ratings are:

Excellent (90-100) with no failed/delinquent rating in any sub-area
Outstanding (90-100) with a failed/delinquent rating in any sub-area

Good (80-89.99)

Acceptable (70-79.99)

Failed (69.99 below) or with a failed rating in any of the two core areas.

DEKADA NA ANG ARTA

Last January 22, 2018 the CSC held a culminating activity to celebrate ARTA's 10 years of implementation by recognizing ARTA RCS Achievers, Frontline Service Champions, and Seal of Excellence Hall of Famers. The CSC also recognized partners who helped ARTA achieve its milestones.

CSC recognized local government units with highest ratings in the ARTA Report Card Survey from 2010-2016: City of Santiago, Tagum City, Compostela Valley, Borongan City, Arayat, Iriga City, Mamasapano, Maguindanao, Dolores, Talipao, Jolo, Sulu, Upi, Maguindanao, and Labo.

The Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PHIC), and Landbank of the Philippines (LBP) were recognized as Frontline Service Champions for the agencies' exceptional performance in complying with the ARTA provisions which enabled them to deliver excellent frontline service. GSIS, PHIC, and LBP were surveyed under the ARTA RCS for at least three years between 2010 and 2017, and garnered the highest agency rating among surveyed GOCCs.

These GOCCs were also conferred the Seal of Excellence Award Hall of Famers for earning the most number of Seal of Excellence Awards from 2010- 2016. PHIC received a total of 67 Seals, GSIS earned 53 Seals, and LBP, 24 Seals. The Seal of Excellence is conferred on service offices that garnered an Excellent rating in the RCS through a "mystery client validation," and passed the second-phase validation.

In the 2017 ARTA RCS results, GSIS got the most number of service offices with Excellent rating (17 offices). In the LGUs surveyed, Tagum City, Davao del Norte was rated Outstanding, while Iligan City, Isabela received an Excellent rating.

R.A. 9485 was signed into law last June 2, 2007. The CSC promulgated the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of the said Act through CSC Resolution No. 081471 on July 24, 2008. The IRR took effect on September 5, 2008. To obtain feedback on how ARTA provisions are being followed and how agencies are performing, the CSC started the conduct of the ARTA Report Card Survey (RCS) in 2010 with just 50 pilot service offices in 16 regions. To date, a total of 5,904 service offices nationwide have undergone the ARTA RCS.

The CSC has also successfully mounted eight ARTA Caravans nationwide, a campaign that aims to bring government services closer to the public. The ARTA Caravan was brought to UP Diliman, Quezon City (January 2016), Mindanao State University (February 2016), Leyte Normal University (February 2016), UP Manila (March 2016), City Government of Puerto Princesa,

Palawan (September 2016), Independence Day Celebration, Rizal Park (June 2017), 5th Public Sector HR Symposium, PICC, Pasay City (July 2017), and Philippine Festival in Tokyo, Japan (September 2017).

Included also in ARTA's milestones is the integration of the violations of ARTA provisions into the 2017 Rules on Administrative Cases in the Civil Service. For instance, fixing and/or collusion with fixers in consideration of economic and/or other gain or advantage is now categorized as a grave offense which is penalized by dismissal and perpetual disqualification from public service (Rule 10, Section 51, Item B.I.).



The CSC continues to urge government agencies and the public to join the campaign against red tape to improve frontline service delivery. Government agencies that offer frontline services are expected to comply with the ARTA and provide excellent public service. The transacting public, on the other hand, are encouraged to give feedback on their government transaction experiences (positive or negative) through the Contact Center ng Bayan or CCB. The public may access CCB through 1-6565, 0908-8816565, email@contactcenterngbayan.gov.ph, and contactcenterngbayan.gov.ph. ■■

The Game Plan

Surbana Jurong on building the New Clark City and a more disaster-responsive Philippines



An artist's impression of New Clark City, which occupies 9,450 hectares of prime land in Central Luzon, north of Manila

THE LAGUNA LAKE ECOLOGY CENTER IS SEEKING TO CREATE A UNIFIED AREA FOR METRO MANILA'S WASTE-TO-ENERGY REQUIREMENTS. ITS ESTABLISHMENT WILL PROVIDE A STAGE TO GENERATE CLEAN ENERGY VIA SOLAR AND WIND POWER AND PROMOTE ECOTOURISM AT THE SAME TIME.

Surbana Jurong is a Singaporean firm master-planning cities and improving housing and buildings for sustainable urban development. It has 50 years of experience in consultancy helping build Singapore's city and infrastructure to landscape.

On February 12, 2018, the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with Japan Overseas Infrastructure Investment Corporation for Transport and Urban Development (JOIN) and Surbana Jurong to develop New Clark City, a model metropolis envisioned to rise in the Clark Special Economic Zone in Capas and Bamban, Tarlac.

According to the agreement, Surbana Jurong "will assist BCDA and JOIN in drafting the development management framework, design standards guidelines, and environmental guidelines to complement the masterplan of New Clark City." It will also work with Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Center, under the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), to entice investors to New Clark City.

The New Clark City is projected to host 1.12 million residents and about 800,000 workers. In the plan, "offices of select government agencies such as the Departments of Justice, Environment and Natural Resources, and Science and Technology will also be transferred to the new city, a move aimed at easing congestion in Metro Manila." To improve access to the new city, a Manila-Clark Railway (PNR North Railway) project to be completed in 2021 is expected to cut down travel time from Manila to Clark from the current two to three hours to one.

The collaboration aims to present New Clark City as a model smart and green city to the world at large. To do this, Surbana Jurong will assist in the establishment of a framework which will have fully integrated infrastructure and utilities for power, water, sewerage, information and communication technology (ICT), security, and traffic management.

Relevant to the rest of the Philippines and other cities, Surbana Jurong likewise offers its urban planning consultancy services for disaster prevention. In April 2017, Surbana Jurong's Loh Chi Kang

delivered a presentation entitled, "Reclamation Solutions: Challenge of Rising Sea Levels and Climate Change" at the Land Reclamation Summit in Manila. In it, he discussed coastal adaptation strategies, which include, among others, multi-functional design as flood defense during extreme events, beach nourishment as a buffer for breaking waves, the rehabilitation of coral reefs to reduce wave heights and wave forces up to 97%, and the creation of living shorelines. According to him, a shoreline that is enhanced with innovative and sustainable solutions to create ecological benefits to the local biodiversity and environment ensures coastal protection.

Surbana Jurong makes its expertise in problem-solving available to the Philippines having pioneered land reclamation in Singapore's Pulau Tekong. It developed a unique method to significantly reduce Singapore's reliance on sand and help save on upfront construction costs.

A polder is a low-lying tract of land that has been reclaimed from the sea. The new method adopted in Singapore for the first time is called the polder development method, where a wall or dike is constructed to prevent seawater from entering the polder, while water levels within are controlled by a network of drains and pumps. Upon completion, the project will add 810 hectares of land to Pulau Tekong and will increase Singapore's land size by approximately one per cent. Polders are historically used by the Dutch, and the Netherlands has the highest standards for dike safety in the world. To pioneer Singapore's new reclamation method, Surbana Jurong partnered with Dutch engineering consultancy firm Royal Haskoning DHV to draw on the Netherlands' experience and gain advance



(Top) Singapore Ambassador to the Philippines Kok Li Peng, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister of Japan Hiroto Izumi, and Philippines' Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III and other members of the Cabinet witnessed the signing led by BCDA President and Chief Executive Officer Vivencio Dizon, JOIN President and Chief Executive Officer Takuma Hatano, and Surbana Jurong Group Chief Executive Officer Wong Heang Fine. (Below) Rendering of New Clark City

knowledge of the polder reclamation method.

Surbana Jurong conducts broad and in-depth studies understanding unique local conditions and creating a design acceptable to all owners and users; integrating different knowledge disciplines to revitalize and create a "cycle of life" which will sustain or even enhance the overall biodiversity of a site; and designing with nature to ensure that the eco-shoreline implemented is viable and sustainable in the long term and suitable for the unique local conditions. To tackle rising sea levels due to global warming, Loh Chi Kang cites Charles Darwin: "It's not the strongest species or the most intelligent species which will survive, but it is the one most adaptable to change."

In an interview by Singapore's *The Business Times* in July 2017, Surbana

Jurong's Chief Executive Officer, Wong Heang Fine said, "We are designing a system to clean a lake in China. We are proposing an integrated resort in Vietnam. We are building hydroelectric dams in Malaysia as well as in Nepal, road projects in India and Bangladesh, and MRT and mining projects in Australia." Adopting best practices to enable its global operations, a "deliberate strategy to deepen its talent pool" has allowed Surbana Jurong's success across Asia, Australia, the Middle East, Africa, and the Americas with over 7,000 ongoing projects operating through over 13,500 employees in 120 offices in over 40 countries.

Surbana Jurong's motto to encapsulate the urban planning firm's principles and ideals: "Your partner in building cities that are socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable; empowering communities to thrive." ■

Hungarian Water Technology Laguna Lake Cleanup: A Clean Drop in the Philippine Ocean

Hungarian Water Technology offers solutions to the issue of pollution and waste water treatment in Laguna Lake.

In Hungary, drinking water is safe and can be consumed without any constraints in most settlements, according to the Hungarian Water Technology Corporation, whose business is the planning of successful water systems, the design and implementation of drinking water treatment plants, the production of recycling technologies for industrial wastewater, and the proper management and treatment of sewage to prevent water contamination, among others.

Water is life. Our bodies are made of up to 60 per cent water; the brain and the heart are 73 per cent water. And the average human adult needs to drink at least two liters of clean water a day. Yet many villages, towns, and cities around the world are plagued by the mismanagement of this precious resource. It is a tragedy, therefore, that at this point in history, when technology to address the problem of unsafe drinking water should already be available to everyone in the planet, there are still people who struggle to find access to safe drinking water essential to every human being, because the water has become polluted or profitable to the point of promoting economic inequality.

In the case of Hungary, the European Union (EU) founded projects for technological improvements in order to upgrade the quality of water in the areas where some restrictions prevented an optimal water system. On average, the availability of water reserves in Hungary and the region are adequate and the security of supply is guaranteed, mainly due to the adoption of best practices in water treatment and technology. Fortunately for the Philippines, in response to an investment campaign in Europe in 2017 by a delegation of Philippine officials, the Hungarian government pledged \$510 million in loans for technical assistance in water management, and to bring what they learned in water management to the country.

Last February 2, Hungarian Water Technology Corporation chief executive officer Adrian Kiss met with Department of Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol and Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) General Manager Joey Medina to discuss the initiation of a feasibility study at the Laguna Lake District. Based on the LLDA report on the meeting, “The Laguna Lake rehabilitation program is proposed as a government-to-government engagement to tap the Hungarian expertise towards addressing the issue of pollution and wastewater treatment in Laguna Lake through their state-of-the-art facilities and technology.”

Laguna Lake is significant to the cultures of the communities that developed around its shores. The birthplace of many a local folklore, its biodiversity has been threatened in recent years by pollution, as well as illegal fish pens owned by large corporations. In 2017, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) conducted demolition operations in line with the moratorium in December 2016 of LLDA to show its commitment to the cleanup of Laguna Lake, suspending the operation of fishpens on the lake, and carried out with the help of the Philippine National Police Maritime Command and the Navy, among other concerned agencies. Laguna Lake is a small portion of the vastness of Philippine waterways that have to be kept clean for the health and well-being of the community. Nevertheless, it is a step in the right direction, whose success will benefit all.

Time and time again, the Hungarian government has shown the importance of



Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) General Manager Jaime “Joey” Medina met with Adrian Kiss of the Hungarian Water Technology Corporation (HWTC) as he played host to the weeklong visit of the Hungarian CEO from January 30 to February 6, 2018.



water and sanitation for empowerment and equal economic opportunities. With existing water diplomacy projects in Pakistan, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia, to name a few, Hungary has proven how water is the way to bridge gaps between nations across the world. ■

Success is in the Bun



How a baking hobby and a couple's desire to ensure a bright future for their kids created a multimillion-peso business



Camiguin is a small island located at the northern coast of Mindanao. You must have heard about it and its viral tourism promotion campaign last year, or that it has the sweetest lanzones in the country. But another sweet product that hails from this small province—in fact, the second smallest in the Philippines—has been gaining attention all over the world.

This product is sweet-filled buns, or pastel, which is popular all over the country, thanks to VjANDEP (pronounced with a silent J), an enterprise that started in Camiguin. Pastel is a remnant of the Spanish colonial period in the Philippines, a time when the oven or “horno” was introduced to the country. The buns, filled with all sorts of sweet concoctions, offer an enchanting taste that will have you reaching for another piece, and then another...and then another.

Pastel has been a local favorite, most commonly as *pasalubong* or a homecoming gift here in the Philippines and even abroad. This has all been made possible through the efforts of the couple, Virgilio Jose and Eleanor Popera, whose initials, VJ and EP, resulted in VjANDEP.

The sweet success story of the VjANDEP pastel started with Eleanor, a housewife, married to Jose, a retired lieutenant colonel. They have

three children whom they needed to put through college. They attempted to start several small businesses that failed one after the other. Anyone who experienced such failures would easily get disheartened, but not Eleanor.

Baking was her hobby, and one Christmas season, she baked sweet buns with some custard (*yema*) filling. Her family and friends liked it, so she thought, why not sell her baked goods? It was January 8, 1990 when she used what remained of her husband's Christmas bonus, all 120 pesos of it, to buy ingredients for her pastel, bake them, and go around the small island to sell them.

On that fateful day, she doubled her capital. She took it as a sign.

Eleanor's entire family helped with starting the business. Everything was improvised at first: bun molders from recycled evaporated milk cans, pasty brushes from sanitized disposable cock feathers, tin drums and coco husks for the oven, and makeshift boxes with handwritten labels for packaging. As they become more popular, they accessed microfinancing support and assistance from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). They grew and grew, and in 2009, they were granted a loan of P20 million as a beneficiary of the One Town, One Product (OTOP) program of DTI, which further modernized their production facility. “We started growing with government support, especially with DTI,” Eleanor reminisces.

Now, VjANDEP has a complete product line of bread loaves, cakes, pastries, and other baked assortments, but pastel remains to be the most popular. In 2016, they also launched three sub-brands: Samuel Restaurant, Ba'ay Hostel in Camiguin, and Gasa souvenir boutique in Cagayan de Oro.

They also made sure that their community was included in their growth. “Most of our staff come from the grassroots,” Eleanor says. They hire people who have no formal education, and even persons with disabilities (PWDs). Her employees, now more than 200, are all given capacity trainings and enjoy complete employee benefits. They also make sure that their environmental footprint is at a minimum, as they practice recycling, reuse waste products, and generate and consume renewable energy.

“Our parents knew that if they wanted their dreams for their children and our dreams for ourselves to come true, then finances would be the hardest hurdle,” says Viel, the eldest of Eleanor and Jose's children, and now the company's operations manager. True enough, it was the couple's desire to support their children that gave birth to the pastel, which is now enjoyed all over the country and in many parts of the world. It's testament to the fact that sweet success awaits those who dream and persevere—success that might even be sweeter than VjANDEP's pastel. ■■



Most of our staff come from the grassroots,” Eleanor says. They hire people who have no formal education, and even persons with disabilities (PWDs). Her employees, now more than 200, are all given capacity trainings and enjoy complete employee benefits.





LEAGUE offers the best subscription rate ever!
Enjoy one-year subscription (6 issues) for only

P999 within Metro Manila.

For inquiries, call LEAGUE office
at Tel Nos. (02) 238-3698; (02) 436-2880
email: editorial@leaguemag.com.ph



Branches

- Puerto Galera, Mindoro
- Santiago City, Isabela
- Iligan City, Isabela
- Lemery, Batangas
- Roxas, Isabela
- Pansol, Laguna Hotspring

For reservations, please call us at:
0977-191-2988