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DOST honors Mang Tani, other Science Achievers

By Angelica A. de Leon
S&T Media Service, DOST-STII



The Department of Science and Technology’s National Research Council of the Philippines (DOST-NRCP) honored outstanding Filipino scientists, technologists, and researchers including TV weather man Nathaniel A. Cruz, more popularly known as “Mang Tani,” during the 82nd NRCP General Membership Assembly and Scientific Conference held last March 11, 2015 at the Philippine International Convention Center.

The 2014 NRCP Achievement Award is bestowed on individuals in various fields of basic and applied sciences including social science and humanities, for their pioneering efforts and sterling contributions to community development and to the advancement of their field of specialization.

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DOST-PAGASA’s storm surge warning now more user-friendly

By Maria Luisa S. Lumioan
S&T Media Service, DOST-STII

Now people can understand storm surge warnings better with the new color-coded warning system launched during the Department of Science and Technology -Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration’s (DOST-PAGASA) 150th anniversary celebration recently.

The new storm surge warning system, a shift from a general weather forecast to impact-based storm surge forecast and warning, stresses the threats posed by the coming storm surge and safety measures to be done by affected communities.

In this new warning system, green means no threat of storm surge. Yellow alert, meanwhile, indicates a possible storm surge of of .5 to one meter. People are advised stay away from the coast or beach.

Further, orange alarm means that storm surge of one to three meters is expected. All marine activities must be cancelled and evacuation must be carried out.

Finally, red indicates a coming storm surge greater than three meters that can cause severe damage to coastal and marine infrastructure. In this scenario, communities need to be evacuated.

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STORM SURGE Color-Coded Warning System

STORM SURGE WARNING LEVEL	EXPECTED HEIGHT	ACTION TO BE TAKEN
RED TAKE ACTION	3 meters above	Storm surge is CATASTROPHIC. There is significant threat to life. Mandatory evacuation is enforced.
ORANGE ALARM	1.1 to 3 meters	Storm surge is EXPECTED. Conditions could become life threatening. All marine activities must be cancelled. Follow evacuation guidelines from local authorities.
YELLOW ALERT	0.5 to 1 meter	Storm surge is POSSIBLE. Stay away from the coast or beach. Preparation measures must be carried out.
GREEN NO ALERT		No action required.

DOST-PAGASA | PCDSPD | DOV.PH

(Image courtesy of DOST-PAGASA)

Ma. Cecilia A. Monteverde, OIC of Hydrometeorology, Tropical Meteorology and Instrument Research and Development Section of DOST-PAGASA, mentioned that the new warning system was developed after the experience in Haiyan (Yolanda).

She said that the agency was able to accurately forecast the track and intensity of the typhoon Yolanda and was also able to give reasonably accurate storm surge forecast. Likewise, PAGASA was able to issue warnings beforehand.

However, the high death toll of Yolanda only shows the lack of understanding on the impact of storm surge threat. She noted that most of those who died during the typhoon were swept away by the storm surge.

She explained that a two-foot storm surge is strong enough to sweep away a vehicle.

Monteverde added that green and yellow storm surge warnings will be incorporated in PAGASA's severe weather bulletins. In case

of an orange or red storm surge warning, PAGASA will issue separate bulletins four times a day.

Likewise, DOST-PAGASA now adopts the super typhoon category in its public storm signal warnings to emphasize the impact of the weather hazards and elicit sense of urgency and action.

Under the current tropical cyclone classification of PAGASA, a tropical depression indicates a maximum sustained winds of 61 kph; tropical storm means wind speeds of 62-117 kph; typhoon means 118-220 kph; and super typhoon packs a maximum sustained winds of more than 220 kph.

150 years of dedicated service

Meanwhile, DOST Secretary Mario G. Montejo commended PAGASA for its commitment to move forward amidst numerous challenges in history during his opening speech in the 150th anniversary celebration.

He said that we can expect PAGASA to be "one-step ahead in the ever changing times."

Montejo added that DOST and PAGASA are moving toward technological self-reliance by improving our capacity in developing our own technology and human resources. He revealed DOST was able to develop its own weather sensors and technologies in the recent years.

The humble beginnings of the state weather bureau started in 1865 through the efforts of the Jesuits scholars in Ateneo Municipal de Manila. In 1894, Under the Royal Decree of Spain it was officially established as an institution. It was reorganized in 1901 and formally named as Weather Bureau under the administrative control of the Department of Interior. In 1972 the Bureau was renamed as PAGASA. After transferring to various departments, PAGASA was finally transferred under the National Science and Technology Authority (now DOST) in 1984.

DOST tour makes Cagayanons "feel" science and technology

By Angelica A. de Leon
S&T Media Service, DOST-STII

The Department of Science and Technology's (DOST) "Science Nation: Agham na Ramdam" makes its next stop in Cagayan Valley Region starting March 24, 2015 as the nationwide roadshow aiming to make science "felt" by the average Filipino moves to its second leg in Tuguegarao City.

A premier showcase of DOST's science and technology (S&T) programs and success stories, "Science Nation: Agham na Ramdam" is set to tour the country's 17 regions in 2015 to allow Filipinos of varying social and economic brackets to see and experience how science affects their daily lives.

The event featured activities reflecting DOST's bid to integrate science in efforts toward progress and inclusive growth in various venues in the city.

Foremost of these is the SETUP Summit. SETUP, or Small Enterprise Technology Upgrading Program, is a DOST centerpiece program which extends assistance to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the country via funding, technology upgrade, and manpower training. SETUP Summit will feature product exhibits from SETUP beneficiaries in the region.

Another highlight is a project visit to Tuguegarao City's Food Innovation Center (FIC) on March 24. The FIC serves as the regional base for breakthroughs in food technology. DOST establishes FICs around the country to help MSMEs become more competitive both in

the local and global markets via food testing, packaging and labeling design, training and consultancy, and other services.

In another major event, DOST honored the city of Cauayan in Isabela for being the first local government unit in Region II in adopting the Philippine Standard Time or PhST, through DOST's campaign called "Juan Time." The city also was the first LGU in the entire country to provide all of its 65 barangays with precision timepieces synchronized to PhST.

DOST-II also named its science ambassadors during the opening ceremony at the Red Eagle Gymnasium, Cagayan State University Carig Campus on March 24. The science ambassadors will support the Department in its advocacy and other programs.

Other activities in the event were S&T for MSME owners and staff, career guidance and leadership training for the youth, inauguration of a ceramics water filter project in Santa Maria, Isabela, groundbreaking ceremony for the Cauayan City Science Museum in San Luis, Isabela, and launching of the Smarter City initiative in Cauayan City, the first urban local government to adopt the Smarter City concept in Region 2.

Smarter City is part of the Smarter Philippines masterplan which aims to jumpstart the economy of secondary cities' through DOST-sponsored technologies, and cause spillover progress to neighboring communities.

Other activities were a zumba session, science film showings and a concert titled "Science and Music: Aghamtahan" that featured Marcelito Pomoy, among others (S&T Media Service).

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DOST honors...
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As Mang Tani, Cruz has captured the attention of TV viewers with his effective method of weather reporting, allowing the general public to clearly understand scientific and technical information and disaster preparedness tips on typhoons. Further, he is engaged in various activities in relation to climate change, climatology, vulnerability assessment, and applied meteorology which have helped enrich the field and further improve practitioners' knowledge and skills. Some of his research-based recommendations have been adopted and used by both the government and the private sectors in their program designs for disaster preparedness and mitigation.

A former chief weather forecaster of DOST-PAGASA, Cruz is now an active member-researcher of NRCP's Division of Earth and Space Sciences.

Philippine television Mang Tani is joined by 10 equally brilliant scientists and researchers in the roster of honorees for the NRCP Achievement Award. They are Belinda V. de Castro for her studies on shadow education in the Philippines, Roberto B. Corcino for his publications in local and international journals as well as his contributions to math education and development, Cynthia I. Valencia for promotion of good clinical practice in the country, Judilynn N. Solidum for her outstanding research on dengue management,

Teresita H. Borromeo for her contribution to crop/plant genetic resources and gene bank management, Allan N. Soriano for his sterling works on thermodynamic characterization of novel carbon dioxide capture solvents, Maria Ela L. Atienza for her outstanding performance in her undergraduate and graduate degrees, Percival F. Almoro for his research works and contributions in holography and optical metrology, Gerardo C. Janairo for his breakthrough in organic synthesis, and Carmencita D. Mateo for her accomplishments in animal nutrition and health.

NRCP also handed out the National Institution Award to the National Institute of Physics of the College of Science in UP Diliman for being the country's leading hub of physics research and education.

Other awardees were Wilson O. Garcia, Felix P. Muga II, and Jose S. Buenconsejo for the Service Award; as well as Domingo B. Nunez, Leopoldo V. Abis, Leoncio A. Amadore, and Mariano A. Estoque for the Member Emeritus Award.

NRCP is the government arm for basic research, the oldest collegial research body in the country with 3,800 members in the Philippines and abroad. (S&T Media Service)

DOST chief names Science Amabassador

By Angelica A. de Leon
S&T Media Service, DOST-STII



Sec. Montejo (second from left) with one of Davao's S&T ambassador, Sen. Bam Aquino (middle). Others in photo: (from left) Asst. Sec. Raymund Liboro, DOST-XI Regional Director Anthony Sales, and DOST-ARMM Regional Director Myra Alih.

Department of Science and Technology Sec. Mario Montejo announced recently science and technology (S&T) ambassadors who will champion S&T programs in Davao Region.

The initial batch of science ambassadors include Senator Paulo Benigno "Bam" Aquino IV, chair of the Senate Committee on Youth; Representative Mario U. Piamonte, senior vice chair of the Committee on Science and Technology of the House of Representatives; Maria Belen Sunga-Acosta and Marissa S. Abella, Davao City councilors; Joey Ayala and Ronulfo "Popong" Landero, both Davao-based singers-songwriters.

Sen. Aquino, the youngest senator of the 16th Congress, is a member of the Senate Committee on Science and Technology. He authored the S.B. 1091: Magna Carta for Philippine Internet Freedom which includes provisions on security and privacy of data and information, establishment of an executive department for information and communications technology, and penalties for cybercrimes and other prohibited acts, among others.

Moreover, in 2013, Aquino was unanimously adopted by all the ten tribes of Davao City as "Datu Matulangod", meaning "the dependable, sincere and trusted leader."

"This DOST plaque is very special to me," announced Compostela Valley Vice Governor Manuel "Way Kurat" Zamora. "When I get home, I can throw away all of my awards and keep this one."

Way Kurat was not kidding 100 percent. His humble beginnings had him working as a farmer and an agriculturist who relied on science and technology to be more productive. In fact, he even invented a bicycle pedal-powered peanut sheller that won him third prize at an inventor's contest in Mindanao in the early 1980s.

Meanwhile, Rep. Mario U. Piamonte of the A-Teacher Party List is considered as a true advocate of science in the House. Among the bills he authored or co-authored include House Bill 3512, which mandates the provision of computer laboratory in every school campus, the computerization of teaching modules and the equipping of teachers through training programs.

Other named S&T ambassadors include Davao City Councilors Maria Belen Acosta and Marissa Salvador Abella, as well as Joey Ayala and Ronulfo "Popong" Landero, both Davao-based performer-song writers and environmental advocates.

The S&T ambassadors were awarded with plaques and officially charged with their envoy duties during the ScienceJam concert recently at the University of Southeastern Philippines Gymnasium - Obrero Campus, Davao City. The concert likewise featured Lloyd Edisonne Montebon, World Championships of Performing Arts - Grand Junior Performer of the World, and a new band called BOB Band.

The announcement of S&T ambassadors is a part of the campaign called "Science Nation Tour" which aims to bring to the regions relevant science and technology programs that help boost the economy of local governments. The campaign uses conventional and alternative activities, such as concerts and physical fitness, to make people appreciate how S&T weaves into their daily lives.

Earlier in the day, Sec. Montejo turned over 56 hydro meteorological sensors to local chief executives in Davao Region. The Hydromet project, a component of Project NOAA or Nationwide Operational Assessment of Hazards, uses state-of-the-art weather tracking equipment to provide a better picture of the country's surface waters. (Text and photos by S&T Media Service, DOST-STII.)

Looking for a Financing Opportunity YOU MAY FIND IT AT DOST-TAPI ?

By Ma. Luisa S. Lumioan
S&T Media Service, *DOST-STII*

Thanks to the assistance of the Department of Science and Technology-Technology Application and Promotion Institute (DOST-TAPI), Alan B. Lastimosa and his wife Wellcie, owners of A&S Handcrafted Arts, are confident that they will be able to fulfill their clients' purchase orders on time.

Their company recently received P618,554 under DOST-TAPI's Venture Financing Program-Purchase Order Financing Facility which provides funding assistance to qualified Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises for the purchase of raw materials needed to meet their customers' orders.

This is actually the second time that A&S Handcrafted Arts received such type of financing from DOST-TAPI.

For the first assistance, TAPI provided P804,167.07 to A&S Handcrafted Arts cover the cost of raw materials needed to serve the required Purchase Orders of the company's clients from United Kingdom.

"Malaking bagay (It's a big thing for us)," Wellcie said of their first experience with the program. "Ang kalakaran kasi kailangang bayaran muna ang suppliers bago sila magdeliver sa amin. Dahil sa financial assistance na natanggap namin nung 2012, nabili agad namin ang mga materyales at nagawa agad namin ang mga order (We have to pay our suppliers upfront before they deliver.

With the financial assistance we received back in 2012, we were able to acquire our materials right away so we were able to immediately produce our goods)," she explained.

The financial assistance provided by TAPI also helped boost the profitability margin of the company by 50 percent and generated an income increase of 15 percent.

In addition, the company was able to develop three more new products and hire additional staff. With a higher production capacity, the company easily met its delivery schedule.

Alan mentioned in the submitted completion report for the project that "the DOST-TAPI PO Financing Project is a laudable one."

Meanwhile, Wellcie added that compared with getting financing from banks, which they have also tried before, DOST's program is lighter for small entrepreneurs like them because of the reasonable payment scheme plus the fact that the loan is interest-free.

The couple's business started out as a manufacturer and exporter of Christmas and Easter decors and other accessories. Later renamed as A&S Handcrafted Arts, the company evolved by creating new lines of design from old crafts using all natural materials portraying ethnicity and exoticness in abaca mache sculptures and figures, lamps, candleholders, vases and other seasonal accessories.

The process of making the laminated abaca mache was developed by Alan himself and had

won him awards locally and internationally.

Filipino-owned companies that are involved in manufacturing goods in line with DOST priority sectors namely food processing; furniture; gifts, housewares, and decors; marine and aquatic resources; horticulture and agriculture; metals and engineering; health products and pharmaceuticals; and information communications technology and electronics may avail of TAPI's Purchase Orders Financing Program. In addition, the proponent must have valid purchase order/s for local and foreign markets.

On the other hand, qualified MSMEs must cover the production and labor costs as well as other expenses. Likewise, they must refund the financial assistance to DOST-TAPI after a specified period and satisfy other requirements.

Interested parties may inquire at the nearest DOST regional office or provincial science and technology centers or log on to <http://tapi.dost.gov.ph>, or email tapi.dost@yahoo.com for more information.

Alan and Wellcie Lastimosa of A&S Handcrafted Arts Inc. receive Php 618,554 financial assistance from DOST-TAPI represented by Jovito Rey Gonzalez (middle), chief of Investments and Business Operations Division during the MOA Signing/Orientation and Awarding of Check activity held last 11 February 2015. Bottom photos: Sample products in a showroom

in focus

MOA SIGNING FOR DOST'S PHIL. HEALTH INFO EXCHANGE

Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Sec. Mario G. Montejo (center) together with Department of Health (DOH) Undersecretary Dr. Vicente Belizario (left) and Philhealth President and CEO Atty. Alexander A. Padilla sign the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the Philippine Health Information Exchange (PHIE) during the 33rd anniversary of DOST's Philippine Council for Health Research and Development (PCHRD) held at the Dusit Thani Manila Hotel last March 17, 2015. A project of PCHRD and DOH, the PHIE is a system that will better manage the country's health and medical information via the harmonization of data records from hospitals and other health systems and institutions across the archipelago. The MOA signing officially sets the ball rolling for the PHIE which will ultimately improve access to information, generate better decision making based on real-time health statistics, and upgrade healthcare delivery services from the national down to the barangay level, even in rural areas. In the same event, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to set up the Philippine Biomedical Devices Consortium was also inked among representatives from the Technological University of the Philippines, Technological Institute of the Philippines, University of Santo Tomas, Ateneo de Manila University, De La Salle University, Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology, UP systems, and the University of the East-Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Medical Center. The MOU aims to help develop a lab-to-market roadmap for biomedical devices in the Philippines. (Text by Espie Angelica A. de Leon / Photo by Ceajay N. Valerio, S&T Media Service, DOST-STII)

