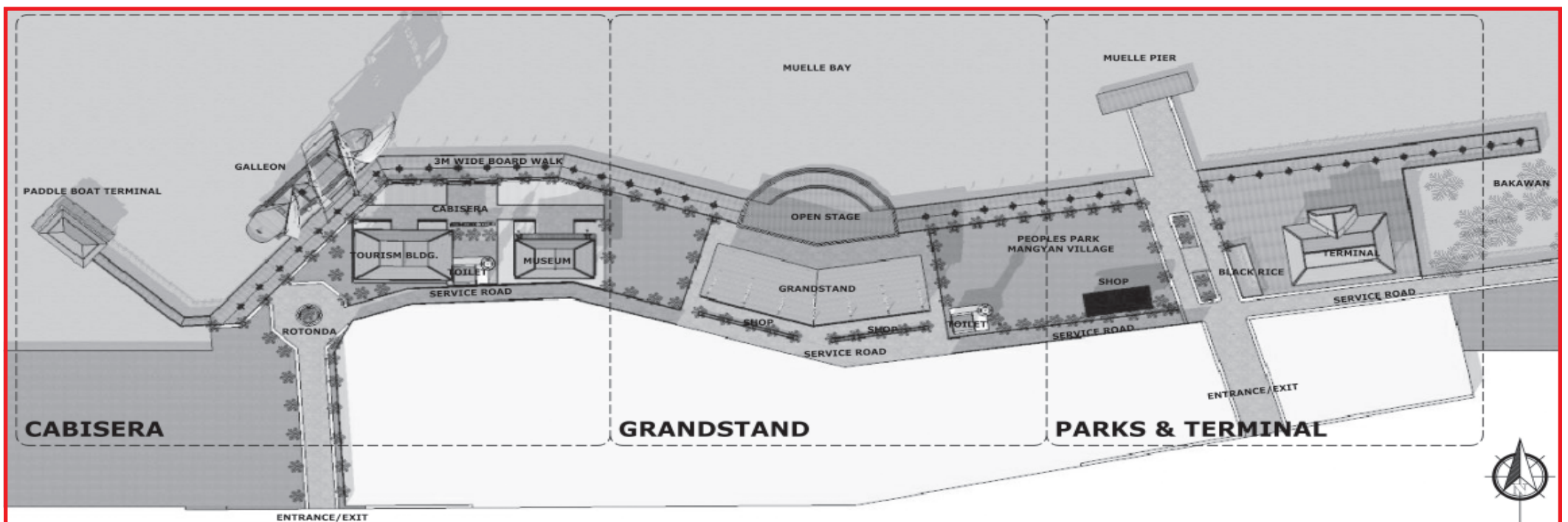


How will the new Muelle Pier Cultural Heritage Park look like?



Site Development Plan of the 60 million pesos Muelle Pier Cultural Heritage Park proposed by Mayor RDI, more photos on Page 6.

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The New Puerto Galera Fortnightly Journal

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Typhoon Nina victims to get almost 40 million pesos in aid

The Mayor's persistence paid off. DSWD acceded to the request for financial aid to be given to the victims of the strongest typhoon to hit Puerto Galera, typhoon Nina.

Mayor Rockey Ilagan said that more than 35 million pesos in total will be distributed mostly in cash, and in kind, to the victims of typhoon Nina.

The record of the municipal government shows 544 households with totally damaged houses. Each household will receive 25,000 pesos each under the emergency shelter assistance (ESA) program and 2,140 pesos for 10 days work under the cash for work program of the DSWD. The total for victims with totally damaged houses victims is nearly 15 million pesos.

The number of victims with partially damaged houses total 1,437. Each one will get 15,000 pesos ESA and 1,070 for 5 days work under the cash for work program of the DSWD. The to-



One of the damaged house in sitio Kanluman

tal for victims with partially damaged houses victims is nearly 16 million pesos.

The victims with totally damaged houses also earlier received a cash grant from the government of 5,000 pesos each.

Mayor Ilagan said that they are still working on increasing the number of the victims, submitting an additional 152 households with totally damaged houses to the DSWD.

Meanwhile, the Sangguniang Bayan passed resolution number 83-05-2017 authorizing the Mayor to sign

and enter into a memorandum of agreement by and between the DSWD for the implementation of rehabilitation project such as the ESA. Sponsored by Councilors Melchor Arago, Medel Candava and Joseph Andal, the resolution was approved unanimously, paving the way for the immediate implementation of the project by the Mayor and the DSWD.

For more information about this issue, please contact the head of the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office Mrs. Aily Cobarrubias.

SWTP project soon to commence

The long-awaited Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment Plant (SWTP) for Sabang will soon see the light of day, thanks to the efforts of Mayor Rockey Ilagan.

Mayor Ilagan recently announced that the national government has allocated 100 million pesos as initial amount for the construction of the Sabang SWTP. The bidding will soon be announced and work on the project is expected to begin immediately.

For nearly a decade, the municipality was dreaming of this project following a report from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) detailing the worsening contamination of the Sabang coastline.

The coliform level reached an alarming level that the DENR threatened to close Sabang beach to both tourists and residents.

The municipal officials then lacking the financial capacity concocted a fund raising scheme to finance the provision of an SWTP which resulted to the enactment of the EUF ordinance, where tourists must pay 50 pesos each.

Former Mayor Hubbert Dolor then signed an agreement with the so-called Consortium for a reported Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangement to construct the SWTP in Sabang. However, observers say, after the construction of the Sabang Pier, no other significant work was done.

In order to finance the construction of the SWTP, the former administration increased the EUF from 50 pesos to 120 pesos. However, after passing the ordinance, the former Mayor did not implement the 120 pesos EUF.

The question now many ask, is what will the Consortium do given that they got an existing contract to build the SWTP. We contacted them to get their reaction and we got an SMS reply from Mrs. Tet Lorenz.

She said: "The matter is referred to our legal counsel for appropriate action."

When asked about this, Mayor Ilagan simply, replied: "I am ready for any court case against me regarding the SWTP of Sabang."

Phesi installs water filtration system

After receiving a stoppage order from the municipal government, Phesi, the proponent of the ongoing multi-billion peso wind energy project is installing a new water filtration system at the source. This after a deluge of complaint was received by Mayor Rockey Ilagan regarding the "dirty brown water" coming out of the taps, allegedly a result of the Phesi construction which affected the watershed.

Phesi consultant Eric Epia said that the first phase of the filtration system has been installed and two more phases will complete the 7.2 million peso water filtration system. He said the deadline of the contractor is before the end of June.

Once finished, Mr. Epia said that this will solve the occurring discoloration of the water when it rains.



Puerto Galera water filtration system donated by Phesi

Improvement has been seen when last weekend Puerto Galera experienced heavy rainfall and yet in most parts of those connected to the Baclayan reservoir, clear water came out of the faucet. However, in Balatero and Sto. Nino, the so-called "coffee water" was again reported.

Mr. Epia added that once they are done with the installa-

tion, it will now be up to the local government to maintain and operate the filtration system. He said that the waterworks office should also clean all the water tanks as there are a "lot of silt deposited at the bottom".

"We are even willing to pay for the cleaning of the reservoir provided that it will be under the supervision of the local govern-

>>> on page 2

Phesi installs water filtration...



Workers installing the filtration system

ment officials", says Mr. Epa.

In a diagram sent to the Fortnightly, water from the source will pass 3 stages of filtration: the first stage will pass through a multi-media filter, the second stage is the activated carbon filter and the third stage is the water softener, after which clear water will come out and go inside the main water reservoir.

What shall come out is purified spring water.

Mr. Epa and other Phesi officials met with Governor Alfonso Umali Jr., Mayor Ilagan, Vice Mayor Marlon Lopez and members of the Sangguniang Bayan last May 22 at the Governor's conference hall. Heated arguments ensued as the local government officials chastised Phesi and their contractor Melekon

for the dirty water and the subsequent widespread public outrage.

Netizens on Facebook lambasted Phesi and called for action from the local government. Some even foretelling that the "choco water" will last a long time and that more doomsday scenario will soon arise.

Phesi presented their plans to prevent more siltation and erosion affecting the watershed. Deadlines were set and the meeting ended with a signed agreement.

A reliable source said, Phesi has committed a total of over 30 million pesos for the improvement of the Puerto Galera water system including the relocation of pipes, improvement of the reservoir and the new water filtration system.

Living in Puerto Galera

Puerto Galera over the years has evolved into a multi-cultural, multi-national community as foreigners continue to establish businesses and permanent residence in Puerto Galera. There are many Koreans, Australians, Germans and other Europeans who could not resist the charms of the island and had establish a home in Puerto Galera.

Legally, foreigners are not allowed to own land in the Philippines. There are however many legal ways to own a property. One is to name the land under a Filipino partner. Another is by creating a corporation which shall own the property. To know more on how to buy and own land in the Philippines, contact – info@puertogalera.org

What is it like to live in Puerto Galera?

A question many would ask and those who know less will say, its a sleepy town ideal for retirees and old people. This was indeed true 20 years ago but over the years Puerto Galera had become more active with establishments sprouting like mushrooms. Now, there are numerous open-air bars, where one can sit and enjoy drinks

with fellow customers from all parts of the world. There are entertainment centers, pool tables, tennis courts, lots of restaurants serving all kinds of cuisine.

Technology continues to play a major part in Puerto Galera's transformation into a First Class Municipality. There is high speed Internet, Cable TV, mobile and landline telephone services and power outages are at a minimum compared to 10 years ago.

Water is strong in some areas and scarce in a few. There is an ongoing project to make the water supply sufficient for the entire municipality. There is also a plan to build a huge Sewerage Treatment Plant to address concerns on the pollution coming from wastewater.

There are many schools for elementary and secondary (high school) education and a college and one vocational school in town. Most locals opt to study college in Batangas or in Calapan which is a short distance away from Puerto Galera. The more affluent study in Manila.

There is also both a government and private hospital.

Buri Resort & Spa, one of the country's best

by Mario Lutz

Buri Resort and Spa is the only resort in Puerto Galera that made it on the top 30 hotel and resorts of the Philippine list in 2017

Its official, we have one Resort, listed as Number 15, that made it in the travelers' choice for best 30 hotels in the Philippines. The only one chosen from 70 plus resorts we have in Puerto Galera! Congratulations to Toots Joaquin Aldeguer, the manager of Buri Resort and Spa and a new resident of Puerto Galera.

Manila-based travelers often go to Puerto Galera as an alternative to Boracay. Aside from the fact that it is much convenient to get there for impromptu trips, they also offer what the night scene of Boracay is famous for.

For some though, they'd rather experience Puerto Galera in a much quaint and relaxing way. Buri Resort and Spa is the best alternative if you want to stay in a place away from the busy beach area and simply enjoy the facilities and company of your loved ones.

Honestly, this is one of the best resorts I've been to in the

Philippines due to its charm that reminds me of the old days (hello! buri trees). They also have a good in-house restaurant that specializes in Western and Filipino cuisine. They also offer island hopping tours, a relaxing massage treat and they can also arrange intimate weddings and parties. I also love how spacious their family villas are, which is perfect for families and big groups. They also have villas with a private pool which will make any honeymooners swoon.

Want to escape Metro Manila or just curious about this quaint resort? Read my Buri Resort and Spa experience!

Buri Resort and Spa also offers to the public Live Music Events. But of the different kind, somethings nice and decent where older folks like me like to go.

EATS'N BEATS is one of the Specials one can enjoy at Buri Resort. 500 peso, consumable fees include a great experience and a free boat transfer from Muelle to the Resort. We enjoyed the evening immensely and we will be back for more.

HOUSE AND LOT FOR SALE IN PUERTO GALERA, POBLACION



The land have 468 sq-m, with clear title, the house have 2 floors. Each floor have 250 sq-m Ground floor with 3 fully furnished apartments, with grand bath-room and grand kitchen. The laundry, with full automatic washmashine, a big stock-room is in the ground floor too. Second floor is the flat from the owner. 3 bed-rooms, 1 big living-room, kitchen, big master bath-room, a guest CR and bath-room, a big terasse with view on the sea.

More informations: 0927 436 1238 (e, tagalog) 0917 890 1238 (d,f)

Why it is a good time to invest in Puerto Galera?

We got a local government led by Mayor Rockey Ilagan who has an MBA on business administration who seems to be more responsive to the needs and aspirations of the business sector. He being the owner of one of the biggest transport provider is presumed to know more about tourism than his predecessors, a bold statement yet one that is arguably true.

This Mayor has so far fulfilled his promises: ongoing re-

habilitation and improvement of the water supply, ongoing Sabang road construction, soon to commence sewerage treatment plant for Sabang, ongoing construction of a new dumpsite which will be transformed into a landfill, improvement of the municipal hospital, development of Tamaraw Falls into a nature park, development of Muelle Pier as a cultural heri-

tage park, strict implementation of tourism regulations and environmental ordinances.

The 6-billion peso wind energy project is expected to open new opportunities for inland or upland tour activities and increase real estate values of properties traversed by the Phesi road. The value of land in Baclayan is steadily increasing as the Phesi road nears completion.

The opening of the Abra de Ilog-Puerto Galera road will make Puerto Galera the gateway of Occidental Mindoro to mainland Luzon. This economic milestone will make Puerto Galera nearer to becoming a city as more and more business will open to cater to the commercial traffic coming from Occidental Mindoro.

The price of land at the border of Abra and Puerto Galera is

still low but once the road opens, expect the price of real estate to double if not triple in value.

The opening of the road also means easy access for cheaper agricultural products of Occidental Mindoro. The prices of fish, meat, poultry, fruits and vegetables are much, much cheaper than what we have in Puerto Galera.

The new tourism projects of

the Mayor, improvement in basic services and aggressive tourism promotion will greatly increase tourist arrival.

One of the great byproducts of the Abra-Puerto Galera road is the coming of the big ferry companies due to the expected increase of passengers and cargoes using Balatero port. Expect Fastcat, Supercat and our own FSL to usher the modernization of the transport services.

Comparative Collection of the EUF 2007-2017

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
January		703,180	686,850	388,750	419,000	419,000	405,100	695,460	803,500	860,650	923,940
February		818,350	565,600	499,550	563,000	348,600	603,260	932,700	1,049,300	1,099,900	971,600
March		1,473,600	1,183,050	608,450	523,000	1,063,950	1,156,720	1,441,400	1,291,160	1,625,840	1,351,710
April		2,418,800	2,045,400	1,730,550	1,337,200	1,862,900	1,457,080	2,214,350	2,035,100	2,445,200	2,440,100
May		1,517,140	1,104,500	1,358,653	1,248,705	1,747,750	1,239,000	2,183,400	2,229,790	1,851,980	2,000,590
June		657,850	305,600	383,000	375,000	303,850	395,300	1,056,700	1,024,240	917,300	
July		255,950	175,000	386,550	411,500	120,500	265,670	454,250	464,020	749,820	
August		621,478	244,000	418,950	141,950	76,200	170,760	529,220	560,400	537,200	
September		404,544	273,600	295,000	269,000	57,500	339,200	417,000	493,900	579,850	
October		518,650	246,500	315,000	215,900	40,700	354,740	562,100	613,860	836,600	
November	34,730	385,900	244,250	404,000	360,000	224,420	255,300	607,200	953,250	781,650	
December	222,710	479,950	474,050	497,300	259,750	544,230	364,420	567,550	567,700	813,200	
Total	257,440	10,255,392	7,548,400	7,285,753	6,124,005	6,809,600	7,006,550	11,661,330	12,086,220	13,099,190	7,687,940

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This has great development potential.
Email – rossthompson04@gmail.com

Noe Linesses SILVER BULLET

Poor service ORMECO

ORMECO's management always boast of the awards they get, besting other electric cooperatives in the country, but such accolade is a blatant lie especially to residents of Puerto Galera.

Yes they have an efficient billing and collection system; we, consumers, pay our bills on time which make ORMECO a top earner among its rank. But ORMECO fails miserably in providing the very reason why it exists, in providing reliable, stable power supply.

It is a given that if one establishes a business in Puerto Galera, he or she needs a backup generator for the business to survive. Such unreliable, erratic service is more evident during the summer peak tourist season with not only frequent brownouts but also voltage fluctuations occurring and affecting all business establishments.

This summer is no exception as brownouts plague Puerto Galera throughout the season. Many also report that either power surges or the low power voltage as the main culprit in damaging expensive electric devices and equipment which no one has dared ORMECO to pay for, at least officially. In social media, ORMECO is the most hated, most complained about service in the entire Puerto Galera.

The reason for such distaste is that ORMECO never improves its customer service relations to Puerto Galera consumers, its second biggest source of income in the province. Calling the ORMECO hotline is not reliable; sometimes they answer, most of the time they don't.

And when the brownout happens late night or early morning, one can only expect the repair after many hours of no electricity. It is never a 24/7 service, not enough repair and maintenance crews, over-all, very poor service.

ORMECO's excuses are varied. They blame the power supplier but most of the time the brownouts occur because a tree branch fell on their distribution line which could be avoided if they regularly do clearing and preventive maintenance operations. The excuses could be acceptable if ORMECO do not have the funds to run a better, efficient, service-oriented electric cooperative, but the thing is, they got millions of pesos of income and yet their service plainly sucks.

It is apparent that the voice of Puerto Galera is not heard in the board meeting of ORMECO. The feeling of helplessness must end. And it will end if the numerous complaining consumers will act instead of just talk. But who will lead us. The guy who is supposed to represent Puerto Galera in the ORMECO board is from Baco and he seems nonchalant amidst all the consternation.

Even if the local government has nothing to do with ORMECO, yet they get blamed also, we ask the Mayor to spearhead a dialogue with the management of ORMECO to improve their service in Puerto Galera – better customer relations, a working hotline, 24/7 repair crews and effective communication system, announcing as much as possible a brownout before it occurs.

Dark Streets in Puerto Galera

by Mario Lutz

Mayor Rockey D. Ilagan inherited from the former administration brand new light posts in along the national highway which, unfortunately is as dark as the backside of the moon. One wonders, what is happening with that? Most of the 593 light posts don't even have yet the light heads installed, bakit?

Fortnightly Journal looked into the situation and what we found was all but good news. First of all, the ambitious project of the former Mayor cost taxpayers 69 million pesos, and guess what, it didn't even pass the Sangguniang Bayan as required by law. How can that happen? What was going on there... back then?

On the other hand, installing 120 watt headlights would cost the municipality roughly 250,000 pesos monthly, or 3 million pesos a year. According to Mayor Ilagan, there is no money to pay the electric bill. So, it looks like we have 593 streetlight posts, that will not be lit up anytime soon. But please, the community needs to know why, when, who is responsible and what can be done now.

What to do?

In my opinion this could still be done. Wasting 69 million pesos cannot be an option!

One could install 50 watt lightheds instead of the proposed 120 watt system. It

would lower the electric bill to 1.2 million a year and would still give sufficient light, especially as most of the posts are just barely 20 meters apart from each other and on many areas are installed on both sides of the road.

Of course, that still is a lot to pay for, and my question is: considering that the road where the lights are installed is along the national highway, shouldn't it be the DPWH that should pay for the electric bill? Or, could PHESI, who is building a multi-billion wind-mill project be asked to connect the streetlights to their grid instead, and shoulder the cost, as part of their corporate social responsibility to the host municipality. Or maybe, the Puerto Galera can apply for a grant from the national government to transform the other LGU buildings and install solar technology, and the saved money could be re-aligned to cover the cost of the streetlights?

I think, we have to think out of the box here to make this happen. But one thing is very clear, we need lights on our streets! And we need the lights ASAP. I also think that the administration need to take a very close look at the project and how that could happen in the first place without the approval of our Sanguanians Bayan! Is that even legal?

Ang Senior Citizens at Ang Mga Benepisyong Makukuha Nila

Sino ang mga Senior Citizens?

Ang Senior Citizen ay ang karaniwang magalang na pagtatalaga sa ating mga nakakatanda dito sa Pilipinas. Kapag umabot na ang tao sa edad na 60, ito ay nangangahulugan nasa antas na siya ng edad ng pagreretiro. Ang terminong Senior Citizen ay pinapalitan ang salitang old-age.

Ang edad na pasok para sa mga "Senior Citizens" ay nag-iiba ng malawakan. Sa konteksto ng gobyerno, ito ay kadalasang nauugnay sa edad kung saan ang pensyon at mga benepisyong medikal para sa mga senior ay nagsisimula nang magamit nila.

Mga Benepisyong para sa mga "Senior Citizens"

Ipinatupad ng Pilipinas kamakailan lang ang Expanded Senior Citizens Act na nagbibigay eksemplasyon mula sa pagbabayad ng 12% VAT sa ilang mga kalakal at serbisyo.

Ang 1992 Expanded Senior Citizens Act na binibigyan ng 20% diskwento ang mga Senior Citizens sa mga karapat-dapat na mga kalakal at serbisyo.

Sa pamamagitan ng bagong batas, ang mga senior citizens ay kaya ng makuha ang kanilang nilalayon na 20% diskwento. Kinaklaro din ng batas na ito na ang diskwento ay nalalapat lamang sa mga regular na mga presyo ng mga nakalistang mga kalakal at serbisyo.

Pinalawak din ng Expanded Senior Citizens Act ang listahan ng mga pasok na kalakal at serbisyo, upang maipatupad ang mga sumusunod:

- Ang pagbili ng iba pang uri ng mga gamot, medikal, dental, pang laboratoryong

serbisyo tulad ng natukoy ng Department of Health (DOH) at iba pa;

- Libreng bakuna laban sa influenza at mga pneumococcal diseases para sa mga mahihirap na Senior Citizens;

- Mandatory coverage sa ilalim ng programa ng Philippine Health Insurance ;

- Home health services;

- Limang porsyentong diskwento sa tubig at electric bill na nakarehistro sa pangalan ng Senior Citizen;

- Libreng libing at serbisyo;

- Tulong benepisyong na PHP2,000 sa pinakamalapit na kamag-anak ng isang namatay na Senior Citizen;

- Buwanang suweldo na PHP500

Sinusuportahan din ng batas ang isinasagawang mga aktibidad ng mga Senior Citizens para sa self-improvement, leisure at ang kanilang pakikipagkapwa tao sa pamamagitan ng pagpayag sa 20% diskwento na ilalapat sa mga bayarin sa pagsasanay para sa sosyo-ekonomikong programa pati na rin sa mga sinehan, restaurant at iba pang mga lugar libangan.

Ang bagong batas ay binibigyan ng benepisyong higit sa 50,000,000 senior citizens dito sa Pilipinas, na tinukoy na mga mamamayan na may edad 60 pataas. Upang mapakinabangan ang mga pribilehiyo, kailangan lang na mapatunayan ng isang Senior Citizen na siya ay nasa tamang gulang na, na isa siyang Filipino Citizen sa pamamagitan ng mga dokumento gaya ng pasaporte o identification card na ibinigay sa pamamagitan ng Office of the Senior Citizens Affairs.

The Puerto Galera Fortnightly Journal

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Letter to the Editor

Attention, Bantay Dagat

I am a follower of your column in your newspaper and I would like to congratulate you for the current events that are happening here in the town of Puerto Galera. The present administration is successful in implementing the laws which results in the apprehension of drug offenders and rapists.

I am a concerned citizen and represent small fishermen who mainly fish for the table with small paddle boats without motors. Since it is not allowed to catch a fish inside Muelle Bay anymore, we are forced to paddle out for fishing thru Manila Channel which is a big effort on our side. Although it is difficult of doing but all we need is to comply.

The only question we have, "Why is it unfair?"

We wrote and sent you this letter hoping that you can help us out with our concern because we do not know who the people to approach about our problem. We don't even trust the so-called Bantay Dagat it is because if you have time to observe inside Muelle Bay there is a Muro-Ami festival that is going on every night. It is being done for sure with the consent and we don't know who gave them permission. Maybe the Barangay Captain of San Antonio didn't know anything about this also. Even some of the guests in the adjacent resorts are asking where that noise is coming from. This is really disturbing almost every night. Maybe the motorcycles noise was regulated by the DPOS but this one is worst.

This is the reason why we decided to write a message and send it to you. Since everybody knows that you are a close friend and open to talk with the Mayor, thru your kindness please relay this message.

Thank you very much for your time and kind consideration of accepting this letter of small fishermen in town.

We are here to support our Mayor for all the programs on his administration. God bless you.

*Yours truly,
Concerned Fishermen of Puerto Galera*

Important Phone Numbers

Police Station	-	043-2873043	MSWDO Head	-	0920-6131723
Mayor's Office	-	043-2873045	Tourist Police Head	-	0917-7042540
Fire Station/Rescue	-	0915-9001179	FSL Shipping (PG)	-	0927-3099601
PG Hospital	-	0917-3023312	MSL Shipping (PG)	-	0917-8392608
Rural Health Unit	-	0917-6230758	Coast Guard	-	0929-6864198
ORMECO	-	0917-8940169	Bantay Dagat	-	0927-7728909
Waterworks Hotline	-	0915-3796217	PNB Savings Bank	-	043-2873121
TV NET (Cable TV)	-	043-2873178	Rural Bank of PG	-	043-2873141
Tourism Office Head	-	0927-4392001	PG Fortnightly	-	0917-8181418
MDRRMC Head	-	0917-5620092	Printing Press Office	-	0917-7771418

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Friendly newspaper? So what.
by Noe Lineses

In a post in one Puerto Galera Facebook group, the Puerto Galera Fortnightly was criticized for being bias to Mayor Rockey Ilagan. He said that the editor and other writers are all good friends of the Mayor and that we, the people behind the newspaper, will not be able to say anything bad against this administration.

We are not, in fact, good friends of the Mayor. We are close friends of his. Actually I was one of the person he consulted before he decided to run for Mayor. And yes, he is my *kumpare* (I am ninong to one of his daughters) and he is at the same time my *kinakapatid*, being the godson of his mother.

I was before his municipal administrator and Mario Lutz, my associate editor, is one of the close confidant of the Mayor.

That aside, we still believe that we can become a voice of the community and an effective bridge between the people and the local government. We contend that we can express our opinion and publish articles that are constructive, proactive and developmental.

We believe that the Mayor is doing a good job, so far – see we now have the Fortnightly back in circulation. When we do criticize, we will do it like friends do with each other - they argue, they fight and they agree on the best solution – the keyword being, that there is a solution.

Having critiques is part of a healthy democracy, it should not be censured or condemned and the Mayor has shown considerable restraint even after his and his family's name and reputation have been disparaged incessantly by his political enemies.

Facebook can be an effective medium to measure and gauge public opinion but being open to fake news, it could also be used as political instrument of the political opposition. It can be a tool for character assassination and baseless accusations meant to advance the political agenda of the Mayor's enemies.

We would like to appeal to the reading public to be more circumspect (*mapanuri*) when reading posts and comments in Social Media, not to readily accept what is being said as truth until one has verified the information given.

Yes, we are a friendly newspaper to Mayor Ilagan but that does not mean that we are and will be biased in the presentation of the news. We will remain factual and will always provide both sides of the story as we have done for the last 25 years.

We would like to thank Governor Alfonso Umali Jr. and Congressman Doy Leachon for acceding to our request to provide financial aid to Yani Cabague, a single mom with 6 children, one of whom is 4-year old Angelmae Cabague who was confined at the provincial hospital due meningitis.

Yani is working as a helper in a resort and moonlighting as a masseuse to make ends meet.

For those who would like to help Yani and her child, please contact her cellphone number at 0975-1187306. God bless you all.

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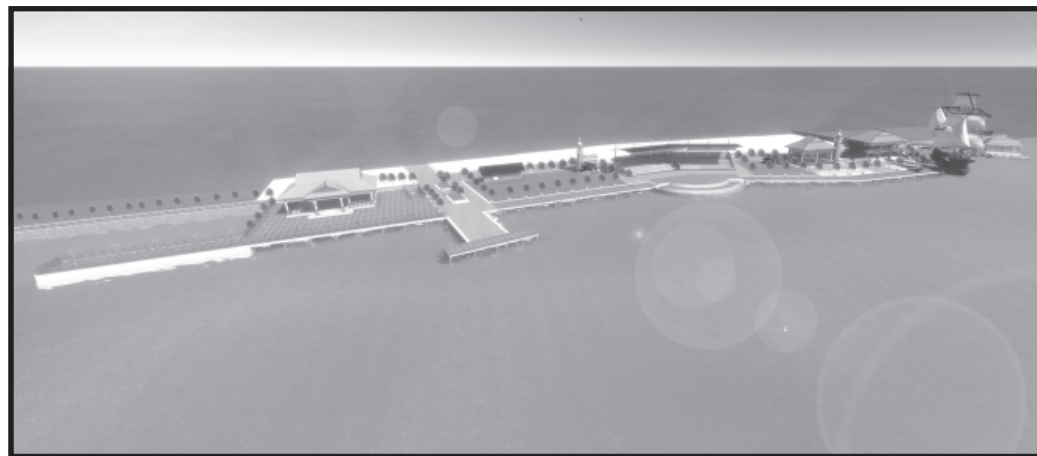
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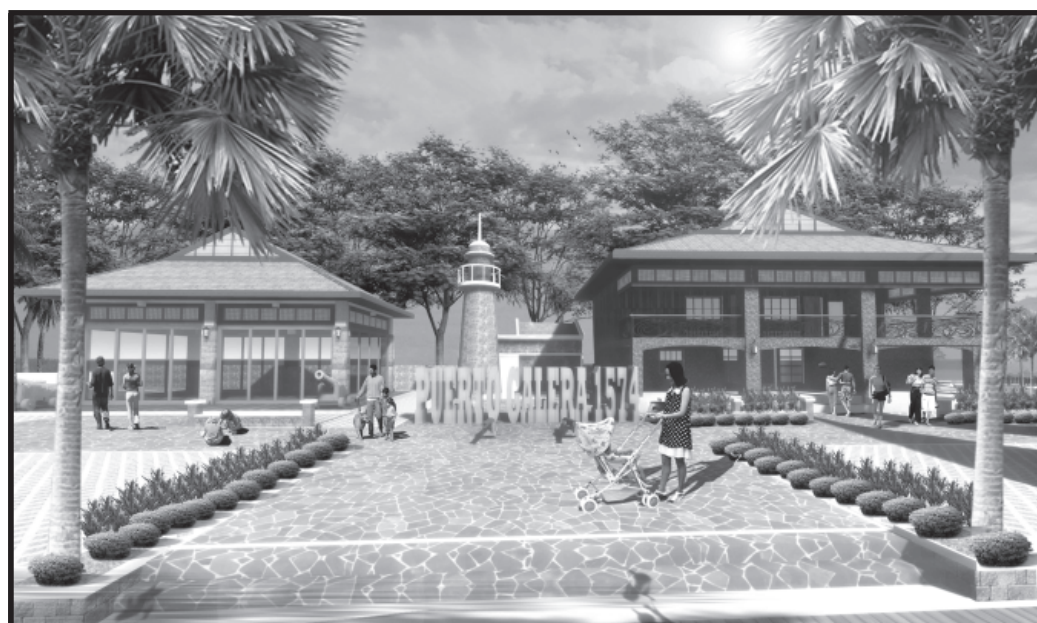
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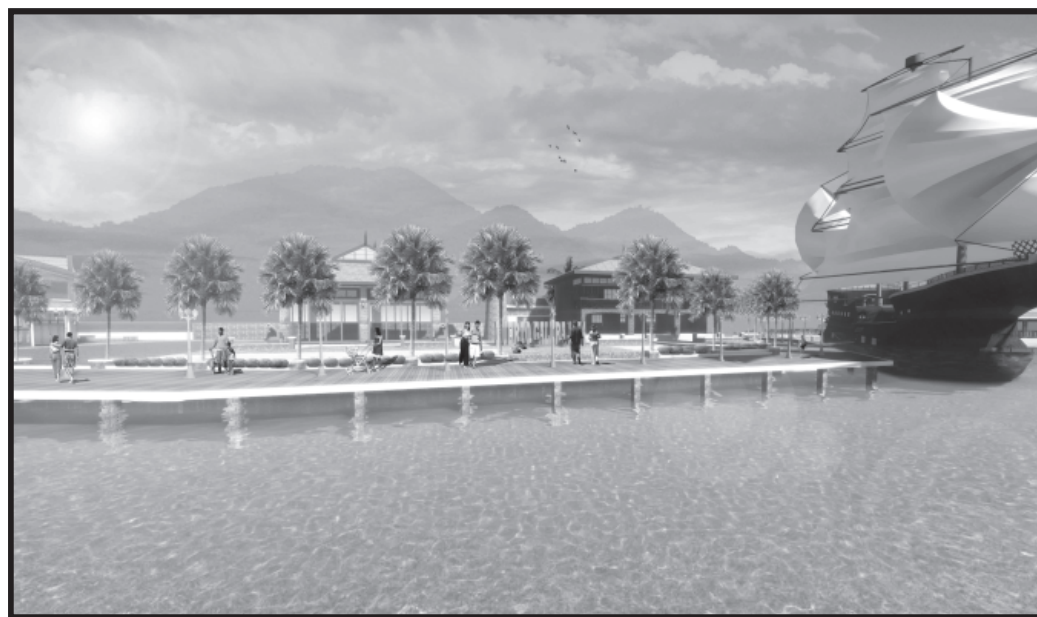
How will the new Muelle Pier look like?



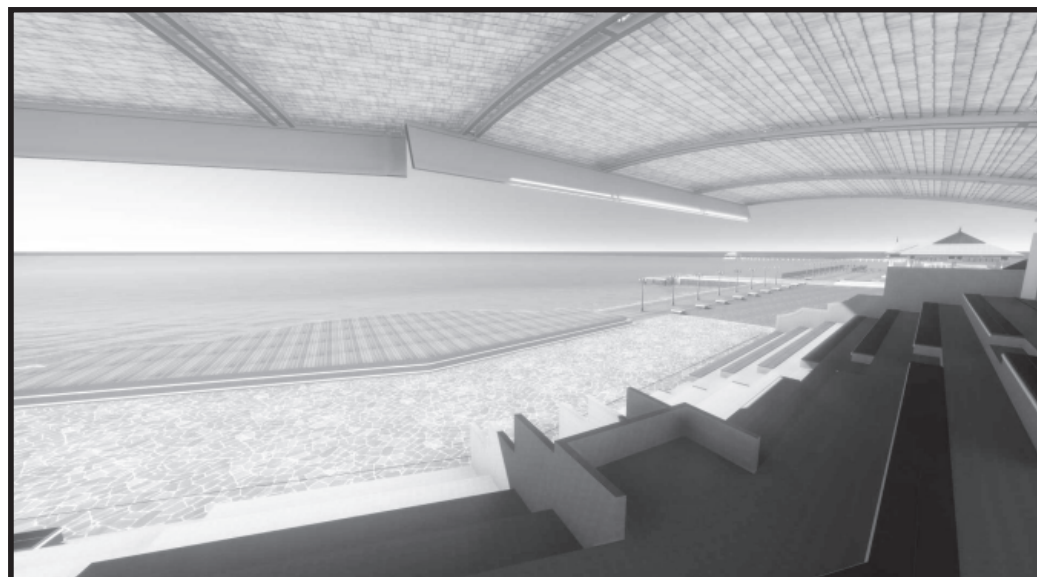
Perspective of the proposed 60 million pesos Muelle Pier Cultural Heritage Park



The Cabisera with the Tourism Building and the Mangyan Trade Center (left).



Replica of the Galera San Miguel - which shall also house the Puerto Galera Museum



One of the highlight is a large capacity Muelle Granstand where cultural shows shall be held

History of deforestation and the Mangyans in Mindoro

by Mario Lutz, 2 of 5 series

Except for extremely dangerous situations, like the approach of Moro raiders, they avoided going into the hinterland with its inaccessible jungle, large streams and impenetrable swamps. Towering behind their settlements, massive mountain ranges covered with dense forests were quite often veiled in cloud: a most frightening panorama for the pious and quite often superstitious tao (common man).

Moreover, it was said that primitive people and wild animals roamed these hostile jungles. And indeed, the Mangyan lived in small, mobile local groups in the island's interior. The Mangyan supplement their subsistence agriculture by hunting and gathering forest products as food and as raw material for housing, craft goods and lighting. Thus, the forest is an integral part of their environment. They exploit it, but they also have a deep respect for the forest, where various spiritual forces have their home. This fact is emphasized when we take the Alangan Mangyan's word for world into consideration: kubat. But this term has a

double denotation. It also means forest, i.e. the world is forest. This makes sense because, throughout the centuries the world experienced by the Alangan Mangyan was the forest which always surrounded them. The traditional living space of the Alangan was covered by dense jungle, which also covered the river valleys, the slopes of the mountains and even the lowlands. This was true until the beginning of this century. From then on, men laid their hands on the forest and almost completely destroyed it, depriving the Mangyan of their living basis.

We are thus confronted with two different perceptions of forest. For the tao it means danger, hostility, and it is to be cleared and exploited ruthlessly for agricultural purposes. The Mangyan concept is ambivalent and more complex. Notwithstanding the fact that both, lowland Filipinos and Mangyan, used trees for housing or firewood, and both made a living by shifting cultivation, deforestation only took place on a very small scale. Shifting cultivation per se, although practiced in a rather crude way by the lowlanders, should not be char-

acterized as being ecologically damaging. Shifting cultivation means clearing the trees and larger bushes and then burning the land. The land cleared in this way loses its fertility within two years and is abandoned. The period of recovery lasts 8-15 years. The Mangyan live in a more or less stable equilibrium with their natural environment, and do not regularly use new areas of virgin forest for their kaingin (swidden fields), but prefer second growth whenever possible. At the beginning of the twentieth century, due to this shifting cultivation and the different climatic conditions, there were already secondary forests on the east coast, whereas on the west coast, larger areas were covered with cogon grass. Thus, we have to take into consideration other factors which cause ecological disaster.

In the wake of the American-Philippine War, U.S. troops occupied the island in July 1901 and started establishing a colonial administration. Immediately, Governor Offley became aware of Mindoro's resources: Mindoro is one vast forest, to get rid of half of which would be of immense benefit to the

province from every standpoint, particularly as a sanitary measure. . . . The lowlands of Mindoro, and the same applies to the province, should be devoted to agricultural purposes, the mountains to forestry, where constant cutting for the next century would barely be noticeable. (RPC 1904, 1:544-45)

An inspection of the island made clear that indeed almost the whole area was still covered with forest. Even the northeastern region, Mindoro's political and economic center, was solidly wooded except for a strip two to five miles wide along the coast. It was noticed that the Filipinos used only the forest adjacent to their settlements for gathering resin for torches, buri palm leaves for mats, nipa palm leaves for thatching and bejuco for rope. Mangrove swamps provided a supply of firewood. Not much timber was needed locally, but because of a high demand and high prices, timber was exported to Manila.

The Americans concluded that this kind of exploitation of resources did not affect the virgin forest, except for areas around the larger towns where the land was cleared. But they also realized quite early that eco-

logical damage had already affected wide areas. Grass land fire and kaingin were chief among the injuries caused to the forest. They particularly blamed the Mangyan, because the loss was great near and at the foothills of the mountains where the Mangyan lived and worked unhindered for a long time. Even the area around Mt. Halkon, the highest mountain of Mindoro (2,586 meters), was affected. Mt. Halkon was still surrounded by very dense forest, but the forest in the immediate vicinity of Mt. Halkon was destroyed by the Mangyan. All over the gentle slopes of the Binabay River there were clearings, to an altitude of more than 1,000 meters. In 1912, on his inspection tour of northeast Mindoro, Assistant Forester Rafael Medina also noticed severe damage to the forest caused by shifting cultivation. However, he did not simply blame the Mangyan, but analyzed the situation thoroughly. Medina said that the Mangyan were only indirectly responsible. The Christian lowlanders induced them to make kaingin because the Mangyan had to deliver crops in order to repay their debts. He suggested the establishment of

a reservation under direct control of the provincial governor. It was necessary to deny the lowlanders access to this reservation. This was an early proposal to protect not only the Mangyan but also the environment.

In 1906 it had already been concluded that proper protection of the forest depended to a great extent on the attitude of the local inhabitants, so that every effort should be made to gain their confidence and cooperation. Thus, it would be better to regulate the kaingin than to forbid them entirely, because this was the traditional method of agriculture of the population. Every effort should be made to encourage people to apply for homesteads and occupy permanent farms. As is often the case, however, reasonable suggestions were not translated into action. The consequence was that kaingin in public forests were completely forbidden by law. It further provided for a forestry tax, which became an important source of revenue. To implement this policy, the American colonial government introduced the western concept of landownership.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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Turismo sa Puerto Galera, higit pang pinangunlad

PUERTO GALERA, Oriental Mindoro, Hunyo 6 (PIA) – Kilala na ang Puerto Galera sa larangan ng turismo ngunit marami pa rin ang kailangang ayusin upang lalo pa itong dayuhin ng mga turista.

Ito ang ipinahayag ni Puerto Galera Mayor Rockey D. Ilagan sa isang panayam ng KPSM News Team kamakailan.

Ayon kay Mayor Ilagan, kailangan pang ayusin ang ilang basic services, kailangan ding magkaroon ng mas mahusay na tourism promotions at higit pang isaayos ang tourist destinations para sa kapakinabangan ng mga turistang pumupunta sa kanilang bayan. Idinagdag din niya ang mga proyektong isasagawa ng kanyang pamunuan ngayong taon.

Ayon kay Ilagan, sa taong ito, bubuksan na ang 2.8 kilometrong zipline mula sa Tamaraw Falls hanggang sa dalampasigan ng Brgy. Villaflor sa Puerto Galera. Maituturing na ito na ang pinakamahabang zipline sa buong Pilipinas. Ito ay proyektong pinondohan ng Pamahalaang Bayan.

Itatayo rin, aniya, ang Cultural Heritage Park sa Muelle Port na may P60 milyong pisong grant mula sa Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA). Bukod pa rito, P100 milyong piso naman ang kaloob ng Department of Tourism para sa pagsasaayos ng sewerage system at road network sa Brgy. Sabang.

Binanggit din ni Ilagan ang pagkakaroon ng higit na magagandang tourism activities sa White Beach. Nilagyan na, aniya, ng designated swimming areas at pinagsama-sama na rito ang iba't ibang water sports activities. Inilipat na rin sa Minolo Port



White Beach, April 30, 2017

ang maliliit na bangka na nakadaong sa dalampasigan ng White Beach na ginagamit para sa mga beach tours.

Marami na ring malalaking kumpanya ang naglunsad ng kani-kanilang promotional activities sa Puerto Galera, ani Mayor Ilagan.

Pagkatapos ng apat na taong pagkawala, bumalik na ulit ang San Miguel Brewery ngayong summer at naglunsad ng kanilang promo campaign tuwing Sabado ng gabi. Iba't ibang promo campaign din ang gingagawa ng Globe Telecom at ang kumpanya ng Head and Shoulders shampoo.

Sa simula ng termino ni Mayor Ilagan bilang punumbayan, isa sa kanyang binigyang-pansin ay ang pagsasaayos ng Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council upang magkaroon ng higit na kahandaan ang mga mamamayan sa panahon ng mga kalamidad at trahedy.

Pinag-uusapan din nila ng Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) ang mungkahi ng ahensya na magkaroon lamang ng one point of entry sa Puerto Galera. May ordinansa, aniya, ang Sangguniang Bayan na lima ang point of entries sa kanilang bayan: Sabang, Muelle, Balatero, San Isidro, at Talipanan. Pinagtutuunan nila ng

pansin ang pagsasaayos ng water transport system upang higit pang maging maalwan ang pagbibyahe sa lugar.

Samantala, sa darating na 2018, sisimulan na ang unti-unting pagphase-out ng wooden hull vessels. May investor na rin na maglalagay ng linya ng mga fastcraft para sa byaheng Puerto Galera.

Ayon pa kay Ilagan, patuloy ang pagtaas ng bilang ng tourist arrivals sa Puerto Galera. Base sa datos, aniya, mula sa mga hotel at resort at sa kinokolektang environmental user's fee (EUF) mula sa mga bisitang dumarating sa kanilang bayan, mula Enero hanggang Marso ng taong kasalukuyan, tumaas ng 10-12 % ang kanilang tourist arrivals. May naitala namang 15% ang itinaas mula Agosto hanggang Disyembre ng nakaraang taon. Umabot naman sa 15,000 ang bilang ng tourist arrivals noong nakaraang Holy Week.

Nanawagan din si Ilagan sa mga mamamayang Mindoreño na makiisa sa pagtataguyod ng kagalingan ng Puerto Galera, ang ipinagmamalaking tourism capital ng Oriental Mindoro. (*Mula sa Philippine Information Agency - Oriental Mindoro*)

Mga Iskolar ng Bayan, hinirang

ni G. Vic Agellon

Hunyo 3, 2017 – Nagtipon sa himnasyo ng munisipyoang mga hinirang na Iskolar ng Bayan ng Puerto Galera sa ginanap na komemorasyon at paggagawad ng pinansyal na kaloob ng pamahalaang bayan para sa pagbubukas ng Panuruang Taon 2017 – 2018.

Nagpatala ang mga iskolar at kanilang mga magulang sa ganap na ika-pito ng umaga na sinundan ng programa na nagtampok sa pananalita nina G. Richard Belen, tagapag-ugnay na Punungguro sa distrito, G. Venancio Yap, Municipal Administrator at ang Punungbayan, Rockey D. Ilagan.

Napili ang mga iskolar mula sa mga magulang at mga mag-aaral na nagkumpleto ng mga dokumentong kailangan gaya ng certificate of indigence at ang report card ng mga mag-aaral. 800 mga mag-aaral sa elementarya, junior at senior high school ang pinondohan mula sa Local School Board samantalang ang 53 iba pa ay mula sa financial assistance ng Punungbayan.

Ang tulong kaloob sa mga mag-aaral na nagkakahalaga ng P2,500.00



Si Mayor habang nagsasalita sa harap ng 853 Iskolar ng Bayan

ay ipinamigay dalawang araw bago ang pasukan upang makatugon sa pangangailangan para sa mga gamit, uniporme at sapatos ng mga iskolar.

“Sa edukasyon ay nakasisiguro tayo sa matagumpay na bukas para sa ating mga anak, kung kaya't dapat nating ipagpasalamat ang tulong na ito.”, ayon kay G. Yap.

Sa entablado ay ipinamahagi ng Punungbayan, sa piniling tatlong mag-aaral mula sa bawat barangay ang tulong pinansyal. Samantalang naging maayos naman ang pagbabahagi ng tulong sa iba sa pamamagitan ng

sistematikong distribusyon ng mga manggagawa mula sa opisina ng Ingat Yaman.

“Hangad ko po, bilang inyong Punungbayan ang kayo ay matulungan lalong higit ay sa pagkakamit ng tagumpay ng inyong anak, pagtulungan po natin ito.”, pahayag ni Kgg. Ilagan.

Nagtapos ang programa sa sabay sabay na pagsasabi ng mga iskolar ng mga katagang, “Kami ang mga iskolar ng Bayan at naniniwala kaming edukasyon ang solusyon. Maraming salamat po sa inyong lahat!”

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