



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL IRRIGATION ADMINISTRATION

CURRENTS

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GROUND BREAKING AND CAPSULE LAYING OF TANJAY BAIS RIVER IRRIGATION PROJECT



DRIP IRRIGATION FARM IN PANGASINAN

REVISED MAGAT DAM PROTOCOL AFTER
CAGAYAN VALLEY FLOODING

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Graphic Resources: www.freepik.com

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MAGNIFYING NIA'S ACHIEVEMENTS WITH JUANAS OF CHANGE

Through the years, the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) has proven the vital role of irrigation in irrigated agriculture. Through the efficient management of irrigation systems, development of hydroelectric and solar power projects, adoption of new farming technologies and best practices, and good customer service management, NIA was able to intensify the magnitude of its achievements over time.

Behind these achievements are committed and resilient NIA employees who remained steadfast despite all challenges and adversities. It is true that human resources is the best asset of the Agency. The men and women of NIA have served as vital testament of what public service really mean. We have realized that the provision of selfless and whole-hearted service is what truly matters most, especially in these challenging times of pandemic.

Undeniably, women have demonstrated their immeasurable contribution in changing the economic, cultural, social, and political aspects of society. That is why, the Philippine Commission of Women (PCW) emphasized that the 2021 National Women's Month Celebration in March serves as a tribute, a platform, and a call to action that highlights the extraordinary roles of ordinary *Juanas* in the society as trailblazers and catalysts of change.

In NIA, women are creating a vast contribution to organizational success through a legacy of professional merit and public service excellence. Be it operational, technical, or management aspect, female employees of NIA are on top. In fact, six out of eight Central Office Department Managers are female. Similarly, 10 out of 20 Division Offices at Central Office are headed by equally strong and capable women. Moreover, three out of 23 Regional, Integrated Irrigation System, and Project Management Offices are also female. Overall, 3,804 out of 13,839 NIA employees nationwide, regardless of employment status, are female. Indeed, public service knows no gender and boundaries.

Let the contributions of every *Juana* radiate positive rays of new hope and better work ethics. May their dedication be an inspiration for all NIA employees to strengthen the values of commitment, integrity, and professionalism. May this serve as a challenge for us to do our best to constantly contribute to the realization of the Agency's vision, mission, goals, and objectives. May this work as a reminder that whatever we do shall be dedicated to the growth of the nation and general welfare of the farmers. Only then, we can be able to call ourselves as true *lingkod-bayan*.

Together, let us make every *Juan* and *Juana* the hero of agricultural growth and development. 🇵🇭

Photo Courtesy:
<https://pcw.gov.ph>

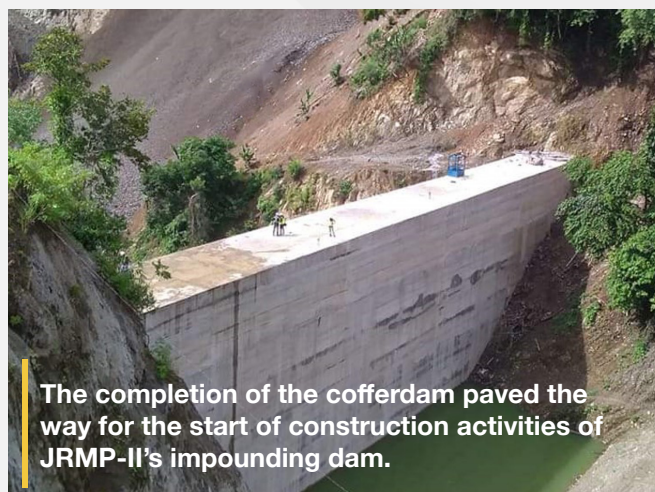
NIA CONTINUES TO FAST-TRACK IMPLEMENTATION OF BIG-TICKET PROJECTS

► Josias M. Mercado, Public Relations Officer C, PAIS-C.O.

True to its commitment of providing efficient, reliable, and sustainable irrigation service to the Filipino farmers, the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) continues to fast-track the implementation of its big-ticket irrigation projects, namely, 1) P11.212-billion Jalaur River Multipurpose Project Stage II (JRMP-II) in Calinog, Iloilo which broke ground on February 27, 2019, 2) P4.37-billion Chico River Pump Irrigation Project (CRPIP) in Pinukpuk, Kalinga which broke ground on August 08, 2018, and 3) P13.37 Tarlac Balog-Balog Multipurpose Project Phase II (TBBMP-II) located in San Jose, Tarlac which broke ground on July 18, 2017.

As of December 31, 2020, JRMP-II Project Management Office reported an actual project accomplishment of 41.90 percent against the target of 29.55 percent. JRMP-II is NIA's 8th big ticket irrigation project under the "Build, Build, Build" Program of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte and the first large-scale reservoir outside Luzon. The project includes the construction of three dams: a 109-meter high dam, a 38-meter afterbay dam across the Jalaur River, and a catch dam in Alibunan River. An 80-kilometer high line canal will also be constructed to deliver irrigation water from the dams to the rice paddies.

Upon completion, JRMP-II is expected to provide year-round irrigation water supply to 9,500 hectares of new irrigable areas and rehabilitation of 22,340 hectares covered by five existing irrigation systems in 23 municipalities and two cities in the Province of Iloilo, benefiting 22,000 farmers and their families. The project is also expected to create 17,000 employment



The completion of the cofferdam paved the way for the start of construction activities of JRMP-II's impounding dam.

opportunities during the project implementation. Similarly, rice production will increase from 3.6 to 5 metric tons per hectare. It also includes other incidental benefits such as development of eco-cultural tourism, fish culture, flood mitigation, and watershed management. Furthermore, 6.6 megawatts of hydroelectric power and bulk water supply for domestic and industrial use of 1 CMS will be later implemented.

On the other hand, December 30, 2020, CRPIP Project Management Office reported an actual physical accomplishment of 55.49 percent against the target of 58.99 percent while TBBMP-II reported an actual physical accomplishment of 37.60 percent against the target of 74.97 percent. The changes in the accomplishment is due to the ongoing revision of Overall Program of Works (POW) of the irrigation projects.

Ongoing construction of the JRMP-II Diversion Tunnel in Calinog, Iloilo



Once completed, CRPIP will provide substantial and timely irrigation water supply to 8,700 hectares of agricultural land in the Municipality of Tuao and Piat in Cagayan, and the Municipality of Pinukpuk in Kalinga, benefiting 4,350 farmers and their families. The project is expected to create 14,784 jobs during project implementation and 8,700 permanent jobs when the project becomes completely operational. Furthermore, it targets to contribute 36,217 metric tons of milled rice to the country's rice supply, incurring \$15.57 million savings from rice importation and yielding an incremental income of P75,193.00 per hectare per year.

Meanwhile, upon its completion, TBBMP-II will provide year-round irrigation to approximately 34,410 hectares of agricultural land in 10 municipalities in the Province of Tarlac, namely Paniqui, Pura, Victoria, Ramos, Gerona, San Jose, La Paz, Capas, Concepcion, and Tarlac City, benefitting around 23,000 farmers and their families. As a multipurpose dam, the hydropower project within the facility can generate at least 43.5 megawatts of electricity. The high dam can also store up to 560 million cubic meters (MCM) which can increase the cropping intensity in the project area from 124 percent to 200 percent.

NIA Top Management Officials, headed by Administrator Ricardo R. Visaya, assure that the Agency is doing its best to finish all irrigation projects within the time frame or even ahead of it because delays in project implementation mean injustice to the Filipino farmers. 🇵🇭



Ongoing construction of TBBMP-II North Main Canal



Ongoing construction of Invert Elevation Tunnel 3 at South Main Canal (SMC) of TBBMP-II in San Jose, Tarlac



Construction of Main and Diversion Canal of CRPIP in Pinukpuk, Kalinga

DRIP IRRIGATION FARM IN PANGASINAN

► Pops Marie A. Santos-Dadea, Public Relations Officer, PAIS-C.O.



Attendees look on as officials from NIA Regional Office No. I, AGA IA, Inc., and Mangaldan LGU sign the MOU.

The National Irrigation Administration (NIA)-Regional Office No. I represented by Pangasinan Irrigation Management Office (PIMO) Manager Gaudencio M. de Vera inks a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Alitaya-Gueguesangen-Amansabina (AGA) Irrigators Association, Inc. (IA) represented by IA President Juanito Z. Español and Mayor Mary Marilyn de Guzman Lambino representing the Municipal Government of Mangaldan, for the construction, operation, and maintenance (O&M) of an IA Model Farm (IAMF) in Banaoang, Mangaldan, Pangasinan on February 10, 2021.

As stated in the memorandum, NIA shall provide funds for the construction of the greenhouse, drip and/or sprinkler irrigation systems, and other facilities for the IAMF likewise, the Agency shall supervise the construction and O&M activities of the same. NIA was also directed by the memorandum to collaborate with other relevant interested parties in capacity-building activities of NIA employees and IA members who are directly involved in the project, especially the O&M activities, which includes the conduct of Farmers Field School.

On the other hand, AGA IA shall be provided at least 1,000 square meter lot for the construction of the greenhouse structure and open field area for additional crop production and other related facilities of IAMF. The IA shall manage the O&M activities and prepare Operations Plan and Budget Target for crop production and shall be coordinating with the Local Government



(L-R) Juanito Z. Español- Alitaya-Gueguesangen-Amansabina (AGA) IA, Inc. President, Oscar S. Navata - NIA R1 PRO, Engr. Gaudencio M. De Vera- PIMO Manager, Romel Aguilar- PRO Pangasinan Government Information Officers Association (PAGIOA), and Dada Austria- Correspondent, Philippine News Agency posed for a photo during the said event.

Unit, particularly to the Municipal Agriculture Office, for farm inputs assistance. AGA IA shall shoulder all expenses from land preparation, to harvesting, and marketing. It is also stated that thirty percent (30%) of the net production income shall be set aside for the repair and maintenance of the greenhouse and other facilities.

It is inevitable for the Municipal Government of Mangaldan to take part in the project for they have a significant role of providing assistance to the farmers in the availability of seedlings, recommending options on what crops are suitable to be planted at the IAMF, and provision of technical support in operation and updates on the latest farming technologies. 📺

NIA CONTINUES PARTNERSHIP WITH LR GROUP FOR SOLAR POWERED IRRIGATION PROJECTS

► Sheen Claudette C. Paz, Public Relations Assistant A, PAIS-C.O.

NIA Central Office – On February 24, 2021, the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), headed by Administrator Ricardo R. Visaya, has continued negotiations with Israeli-based firm LR Group for Solar Powered Fertigation System (SPFS).

Following the successful 2018 visit to Israel by President Rodrigo Duterte, the respective countries, through their relevant departments and agencies, have entered into an Implementation Agreement. As a result of the Implementation Agreement, the LR Group, designed Solar Powered Fertigation System (SPFS) technology systems that are optimized for any location in the country, and can deliver water and fertilizers for any type of crops. The system is designed to increase crop yields while significantly cutting farmers' costs, thus meeting the policies and objectives of our government.



NIA Administrator Ricardo R. Visaya presides the meeting with Israeli-based firm LR Group for Solar Powered Fertigation System (SPFS).

SPFS technology enables implementation of easy to install, “out of the box”, cost-effective, integrated irrigation and fertigation systems. Using precision Israeli agriculture technology, the system increases the farmers' production and profitability while significantly reducing crop cultivation cost. This features Solar Energy to replace high costs of energy generated by diesel with an efficient, maintenance-free source of energy, Shallow tube wells that facilitates the use of



NIA Top Management Officials, Department Managers, and Regional and Project Managers of Luzon Island present during the meeting with LR Group for Solar Powered Fertigation System (SPFS)



Israeli-based firm LR Group joins the discussion virtually for Solar Powered Fertigation System (SPFS).


NIA CONTINUES PARTNERSHIP WITH LR GROUP FOR SOLAR POWERED IRRIGATION PROJECTS

highly efficient submersible or surface pumps, reducing maintenance and increasing the overall system reliability, Precise fertilizer solution for integration of low-pressure fertilizer tanks into the irrigation system, Smart agriculture to undertake real time data collection, and Flexible design fit for purpose among others.

“When we proceed to the bigger G2G (Government to Government) project, just to mention, that would include training and scholarships for people from NIA to farmers and others”, Ilan Weiss of LR Group highlighted.

The pursuit for Solar Powered Irrigation is part of the undertaking of the Agency towards modernization and innovation aligned in the 10-Year National Irrigation Master Plan that provides the roadmap and sets direction for irrigation development of the country.

“We have the 10-Year Irrigation Master Plan. In so far as modernization of irrigation systems is concerned, that is embedded in this Irrigation Master Plan. So this modernization undertaking that we are in now will jive in the 10-Year Irrigation Master Plan”, Administrator Visaya said.

Administrator Visaya assured that aligned with the Agency’s continuous efforts for innovative irrigation, NIA remains committed to its mandate of providing efficient, reliable, and sustainable irrigation service to the Filipino farmers while making a strategic contribution to the development of the country’s agricultural sector. 



SPFS-32: Irrigating 32 hectares
(Photo courtesy: LR Group)



Photo courtesy: LR Group

NIA FINISHES P8-MILLION LOWER CALITLITAN CIS

► Maria Elena P. Valenzuela, Research Analyst, PAIS-C.O.

NIA Region II – The National Irrigation Administration (NIA) and the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) finished the P8-million Lower Calitlitan Communal Irrigation System CIS situated in the Municipality of Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya on February 15, 2021.

Subsidized by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program – Irrigation Component (CARP-IC), the project development began on March 16, 2020. The project is expected to give opportune and solid water system supply to 75.74 hectares of agricultural land in Barangay Bone, benefitting 94 farmers and their families.

South Bone-Calitlitan Irrigators Association (SBCIA) the recipient of the project together with the Irrigators

Association officers and its members expressed their joy and gratitude to NIA and DAR.

Engr. Roger Lazaro, SBCIA Secretary, mentioned that this will be a major assistance for the kindred farmers who have been longing for a water system for their farmlands. He also stated that he has confidence that the SBCIA will sustain the Irrigation System so that more farmers will benefit from it.

NIA Top Management Officials, headed by Administrator Ricardo R. Visaya, ensured that the Agency will remain on track to its mandate of providing efficient, reliable, and sustainable irrigation service to farming communities despite of the inescapability of the COVID-19 Pandemic.



THE NATIONAL IRRIGATION ADMINISTRATION INVESTMENT COMMITTEE ON RENEWABLE ENERGY AND DEVELOPMENT (ICRED), THEN AND NOW

► Atty. Mary Annabelle F. Cruz-Domingo, Head Secretariat, NIA-ICRED

The National Irrigation Administration (NIA), a government owned and controlled corporation (GOCC) created under Republic Act 3601 and is primarily responsible for irrigation development and management, is also a corporation empowered to purchase, receive, take or grant, hold convey, lease, mortgage, and otherwise deal with its own real, personal assets and properties. NIA in its goal to provide quality service and in its response to the Renewable Energy Act of 2008 also known as “An Act Promoting the Development, Utilization, and Commercialization of Renewable Energy Resources and for Other Purposes,” started its investment committee programs in 2011. Mainly the activities that were started by NIA included the determination and selection of potential and capable investor partners. In the process of accreditation of interested and adept Renewable Energy (RE) developers, NIA carefully screened and chose the qualified companies partners for the projects. The task is to identify and determine potential sites for the establishment of operational mini-hydroelectric power plants in the NIA owned and administered irrigation systems and non-hydroelectric renewable energy related projects.

With NIA’s mandate to formulate and adopt policies for the management and operation of its assets and irrigation areas, it has prescribed rules and regulations governing the manner in which it will conduct its general business, taking into consideration its primary mandate, Irrigation.

There were thorough and comprehensive surveys done to pick the potential sites where a number of them, canals and dams included showed that they are capable and are suitable for operational mini-hydroelectric power plants. And working on NIA’s mandate to include construction of multi-purpose water resources projects designed primarily for irrigation and secondarily for hydraulic power development, plans and designs of experts were consulted for plant constructions and in close coordination with other government agencies they were able to come up with viable projects. These steps taken did not only help the government to earn additional income but most importantly it promoted the welfare of the farmers most especially in the less developed areas as partners in these projects.

As a result of this endeavour, big firms and competitive companies responded to the call of the Government and participated in the development of renewable energy and its generation. In response, NIA crafted the first policies and framework to promote transparency, accountability, competitiveness for and in order that NIA obtains the most reasonable benefits from the projects. NIA in its activities and programs supervises and monitors the activities under the renewable energy projects with utmost care in order to ensure that partner companies and entities are complying with existing rules, regulations, guidelines, and standards for energy resources development and

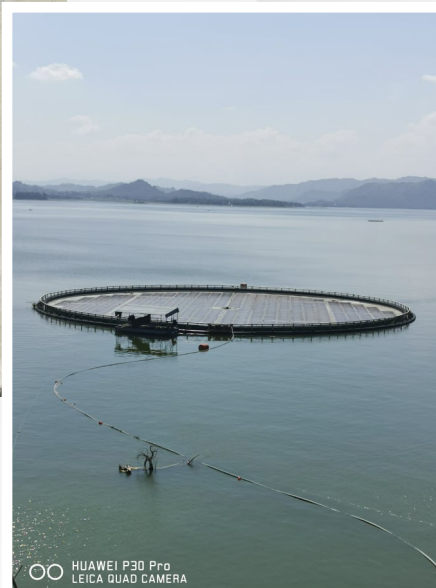


Proposed Development of NIA Idle Lands in Partnership with Organic Farm Owners

Model Hydroelectric Power Areas Providing for Irrigation Portions for Farmers



Model for the Proposed Floating Solar Project



Proposed Development of Water Sports Facilities for Eco Tourism Projects

utilization. From 2012 up to June 2020, the NIA Investment Committee for Renewable Energy and Development (ICRED) accepted and processed 32 various projects in partnership with big and known companies from July 2020.

The newly reconstituted ICRED Committee in June 2020, up to the present, received a total of 13 additional various proposals for hydroelectric power, special leases /aqua culture projects and lease of real properties were being received and currently reviewed. Today, the ICRED Committee was also consulted by companies with projects for eco- tourism promotions like partnerships in water sports facilities in NIA reservoir areas, beautification and development of idle lands and properties with potential partnerships with organic farm owners, among the few accepted proposals for potential projects that will help NIA to have an income generating projects which will help support its delivery of services to the Filipino farmers.

In order to strengthen the goal of promoting the use of clean, and environment-friendly alternative sources

of energy and inclusion of applicable technologies increasing energy sources in energy production, the guidelines and policies are currently being revise to adapt to the changing requirements as the laws applied are also being amended. With the innovations in place, the ICRED continues to improve its processes to sustain the partnerships with the qualified investors in the renewable energy projects.

ICRED aims to be at par with competent companies in order for them to trust and to be confident with NIA, the processes and guidelines should reflect the simple and reliable guidelines to be anchored upon by the parties. The ultimate goal is to have NIA become one of the primary government owned and controlled corporations promoting renewable energy sources and utilization in support to climate change program development in the country and government instrument ready to manage its real property assets. NIA-ICRED will help and serve the purpose of NIA's purpose of creation and that is the enhancement of its Irrigation projects for the improvement of our Filipino farmer's lives. 🏡

REVISED MAGAT DAM PROTOCOL AFTER CAGAYAN VALLEY FLOODING

► Sheen Claudette C. Paz, Public Relations Assistant A, PAIS-G.O.

NIA Central Office – The National Irrigation Administration (NIA) has revised the Magat Dam Protocol on Dam Discharge and Flood Warning Operation after the creation of the Dam Crisis Management Task Force dedicated to review the existing protocols and address concerns on dam management crisis following the flooding incident in Cagayan Valley during the onslaught of Typhoon Ulysses (Vamco) last year.

The House Committee on Agriculture and Food, jointly with the Special Committee on North Luzon Growth Quadrangle, has resumed inquiry on the severe and unprecedented flooding in the provinces of Cagayan and Isabela on January 28, 2021.

Administrator Ricardo R. Visaya has presented during the hearing the proposed revised protocol formed by the Dam Crisis Management Task Force chaired by Dr. Guillermo Q. Tabios III of UP Diliman Civil Engineering and National Hydraulic Research Center and Engr. C'zar M. Sulaik, NIA Deputy Administrator for Engineering and Operations Sector as Co-Chairperson. The task force is also participated by various government agencies such as National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), National Water Resources Board (NWRB), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), National Power Corporation (NAPOCOR), SN Aboitiz Power Group, and concerned local government units.

Under the revised Magat Dam Protocol on Dam Discharge and Flood Warning Operation, improved coordination with PAGASA will be made on the impending typhoon's landfall, the intensity of rainfall it

will bring, and if there are other weather phenomenon or disturbance that may affect it. Warning stations will then be activated 24 hours before the preemptive release of water from the Magat Dam, coupled with a public announcement through text blast. An acknowledgement from the affected local government unit (LGU) will also be required three hours after the public announcement of the preemptive release.

Meanwhile, preemptive release will be done when the dam reaches 190 meters above sea level (masl) and when a typhoon is expected to make landfall within 3 to 4 days in the Cordillera Autonomous Region and Regions I, II and III.

Concerned government agencies and stakeholders, such as the Office of Civil Defense (OCD), NDRRMC, DRRMC, Philippine National Police (PNP), LGUs, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Irrigators Associations (IAs), mainstream and local media, and the locals, will also be informed of the preemptive release at least three times.

The OCD Regional Office will be asked to issue SMS advisory to respective LGUs affected and if needed, NDRRM Operation Center to issue Emergency Alert and Warning Messages (EAWMs) aside from information dissemination through media.

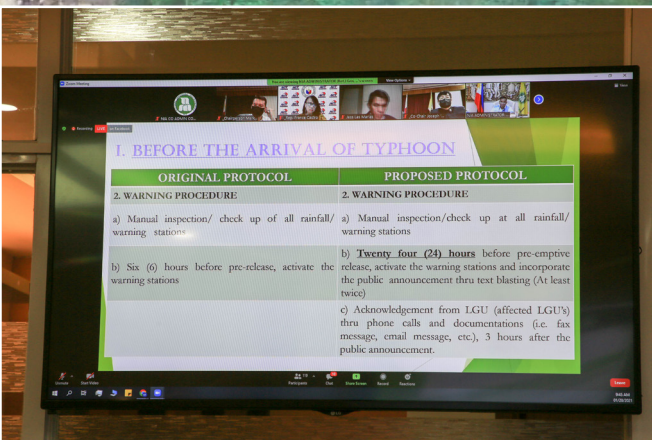
Further, the National Dam Safety Committee, spearheaded by NDRRMC, is established as an oversight body for the safety and safe operations of dams as well as the preparedness of communities downstream from the potential consequences thereof. NIA, along with other government agencies, is joining this committee to partake in its objectives for disaster risk mitigation and crisis management. 🏰



Administrator Ricardo R. Visaya attends virtually to the Joint House Committee Meeting with the Committee on Agriculture and Food and the Special Committee on North Luzon Growth Quadrangle



Administrator Visaya during the House Inquiry joined by Senior Deputy Administrator (SDA) Abraham B. Bagasin and Department Managers of NIA



Presentation of Administrator Visaya of the revised Magat Dam Protocol on Dam Discharge and Flood Warning Operation during the House Inquiry



Office of Civil Defense (OCD) Director Tecson John S. Lim discusses the creation of National Dam Safety Committee during the House Inquiry

NIA GENERATES ADDITIONAL INCOME ON HIGHLAND BALI WATER SPORTS ACTIVITIES

► Ma. Elizabeth N. Lopez, Public Relation Officer A, UPRiIS

Located in the Rice Granary of the Philippines, the Pantabangan Dam Reservoir managed by the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) provides a picturesque and relaxing view of nature that make it a perfect travel destination in the province of Nueva Ecija, while at the same time contributing as the main source of irrigation water to more than a hundred forty thousand hectares of farm in Central Luzon.

With the fast developing eco-tourism site in town, the vast waters of the reservoir cradle the operation of water sports activities of a high-end resort like the Highland Bali which offers a wide-array of water adventures.

Highland Bali's jet skiing, kayaking and rides like banana boat, fly-fish, bandwagon, and traditional boat are the most visited attractions of the resort not only during



summer but all throughout the year. Years before the outburst of covid-19, visitors have been exploring the Highland Bali Villas Resort and Spa for its must-try water adventures. It is recognized as the “Bali of the North” which primarily attracts tourists for its Balinese-inspired destination resort coupled with warm hospitality of its staff.

NIA has generated rental or disturbance fee from Highland Bali for the period of 2018- 2019 from Highland Bali, after NIA Administrator Ricardo R. Visaya eyed the resort’s use of the waters in Pantabangan Reservoir with its water sports activities.

As mandated by Republic Act No. 5499, which created the Upper Pampanga River Project, now Upper Pampanga River Integrated Irrigation Systems (UPRIIS), and thru Proclamation No. 983, series of 1972, the Pantabangan Dam was explicitly made part of UPRIIS. Hence, all waters and parcels of land within the project most especially those within the 230-meter elevation of the dam are owned by the National Government and by the law. No one may enter it and no structure and improvement may be introduced on or within it without permission.

Further, these laws designated NIA, as the implementing agency of the project and its administrator, tasked to maintain and protect the integrity and use of the project and accomplish the purposes for which it was established, i.e. furnish water for irrigation, generate electric power and energy, regulate floods and provide water supply and such other related uses.

With this authority, NIA demands necessary permission in case of plans and project proposals affecting the dam and other irrigation facilities. NIA is empowered to determine the priorities in the use of the waters in the reservoir as well as the authority to collect from the users of the project such fees or charges as may be necessary to, among other things, finance the continuous operations and maintenance of the project.

The proposal to use part of Pantabangan Reservoir for water tourism or leisure activities only and lease of a land within the reservoir this year onwards is still under negotiation, with NIA to identify and delineate the portion of land and waters of the reservoir to be leased.

With the recent development on the use of Pantabangan Dam Reservoir as eco-tourism site and additional source of income for its water tourism potential, NIA may be guaranteed of additional income with its numerous dams operating nationwide. NIA remains committed to strengthen its viability as Government-Owned and Controlled Corporation (GOCC) in adherence to the call of the government. 🏛️



TRANSFER OF NATIONAL GREENING PROGRAM TO EWMS-PPD

► Jermaine M. Donayre, Public Relations Assistant A, PAIS-C.O.



The National Greening Program (NGP) is a convergence initiative of the Departments of Agriculture (DA), Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), and Department of the Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), with the DENR serving as the lead agency. Executive Order, series of 2011 was issued to reforest 1.5 million hectares of unproductive, denuded and degraded forestland by 2016. But in 2015, Malacañang issued EO 193 which extended NGP's implementation period from 2016 to 2028.

President Aquino officially launched the program on May 13, 2011, with the symbolic planting of a narra sapling at the DENR's Heroes Park. It was created primarily as a reforestation program to restore the vegetative cover of the country's upland areas, but it also promotes poverty reduction, food and economic security, and environmental stability.

The National Greening Program, or NGP, was organized annually by all NIA offices throughout the country in support of the government's program, with the theme "Greening the Philippines, the NIA Way." The NGP has been assigned to the Public Relations and Information Staff (PAIS) Department over the years but was reassigned to the Environment and Watershed Management Section (EWMS), Project Planning Division-Engineering Department, as one of the topics

addressed during the Virtual Orientation-Workshop on the Rehabilitation and Protection of Water Resources Supporting Irrigation Systems.

PAIS formally handed over the management of NGP, as well as all of the program's results from the previous years to EWMS represented by Mr. Juanito T. Gumpal Jr., Mr. Abelardo H. Angadol Jr., both Environmental Specialist A, and Ms. Maridel P. Miras Watershed Specialist of EWMS, PPD-ED on January 5, 2021.

As a result of the pandemic, several NIA offices were unable to carry out their annual tree planting. Currently, EWMS is consolidating all data in order to fully assess the effect of NGP on the enhancement of vegetation cover in irrigation watersheds. 🌱



NIA AND MWSS TURN OVER FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO BULACAN FARMERS

► Josias M. Mercado, Public Relations Officer C, PAIS-C.O.

In consonance with the Agency's objective of securing the general welfare of the Filipino farmers, the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), headed by Administrator Ricardo R. Visaya, together with the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), headed by Chairman Reynaldo V. Velasco, conducted the Ceremonial Turnover of P16.25 million worth of financial support to 6,500 farmers of Angat-Maasim River Irrigation System (AMRIS) Federation of Irrigators Association, Inc. represented by IA President Guillermo N. Mangaluz on March 15, 2021 at MWSS Board Room, 5th Floor, Administration Building.

NWRB, through Director Sevilla D. David, Jr., proposed to MWSS an equitable cash compensation plan for Bulacan farmers who were affected by the reduced water allocation for irrigation for Dry Season of 2019. In this regard, NIA assisted in the selection of qualified beneficiaries. MWSS formally instructed its concessionaires, Maynilad Water Services, Inc. and Manila Water Company, Inc., to make necessary payment as compensation to the farmer-beneficiaries. AMRIS IA Federation President Mangaluz expressed his gratitude to all agencies who made the financial support possible.

"Labis po kaming nagpapasalamat sa tulong at financial support na ipinagkaloob ninyo sa aming mga

magsasaka. Malaking bagay po ito para sa pamilya ng mga magsasakang Bulakenyo", he said.

In his message, Administrator Ricardo R. Visaya assured that the Agency continues to serve as a conduit of agricultural development in the country. Moreover, the Agency remains firm to its stance against delays in project implementation as delays in irrigation service delivery mean depriving the Filipino farmers of the benefits that they deserve.

"As much as possible, we don't want farmers to suffer. Due to scarcity of water, hindi nabibigyan ng patubig ang lahat. Sa kabila ng nangyaring problema sa patubig, NIA delivered irrigation service in the most efficient and most effective way. We are fast-tracking the implementation of irrigation projects, as well as solar-powered pump irrigation projects that will jive with the 10-Year National Irrigation Master Plan (NIMP)", Administrator Visaya said.

Maynilad President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Ramoncito S. Fernandez, Manila Water Chief Operations Officer (COO) Abelardo P. Basilio, Bulacan Provincial Governor Daniel R. Fernando, Bulacan Provincial Agriculturist Ma. Gloria SF. Carillo, NIA Regional Manager Josephine Salazar, and other officials from NIA Central Office, Regional Office, and Bulacan AMRIS Federation of IA attended the event. 🏠



NIA Administrator Ricardo R. Visaya (2-L), together with MWSS Chairman Reynaldo V. Velasco (3-L), Maynilad President Ramoncito S. Fernandez (1-R), Manila Water COO Abelardo P. Basilio (1-L), Bulacan Provincial Governor Daniel R. Fernando (3-R), Bulacan AMRIS IA President Guillermo N. Mangaluz (4-L) and other Bulacan AMRIS IA officials during the Ceremonial Turnover of Financial Support to the farmers of Bulacan Province on March 15, 2021 at MWSS Board Room, 5th Floor, Administration Building, Diliman, Quezon City

GROUNDBREAKING AND CAPSULE LAYING OF TANJAY BAIS RIVER IRRIGATION PROJECT

► Edelyn B. Tubaing, Community Relations Assistant A, Negros Oriental Satellite Office

Despite the rising issues on this pandemic, NIA's commitment to providing quality irrigation systems endures as the long wait is over for Baisanons and Tanjayanons for the construction of the Tanjay-Bais River Irrigation Project in the Province of Negros Oriental.

Last February 18, 2021, the Groundbreaking and Capsule-Laying Ceremony was held at Barangay Sta. Cruz, Viejo, Palanas, Tanjay City, Negros Oriental where the project construction is expected to commence this CY 2021. Through this project, the farmers and beneficiaries are expected to be benefited from quality irrigation service and a productive yield.

The Tanjay Bais River Irrigation Project with a project cost of P975M is expected to benefit around 3,827 hectares of potential farmland which will provide about 1,577 farm families distributed among the cities of Tanjay and Bais and a part of the Municipality of Pamplona. The main source of water for irrigation is the Tanjay River with supplementary water sources from other rivers located in Bais City and Pamplona. Engr. Pastor said the project is expected to be completed in 2025. The said irrigation project is expected to boost the production of rice and other crops in the province.



Engr. Nestor Pastor, Head of NIA-Negros Oriental Satellite Office, leads the groundbreaking and blessing together with his officers. Other officials present during the activity were Assistant Provincial Administrator Atty. Froilan Joseph Pinili, Provincial Agriculturist Nestor Villaflores, Bais City Mayor Mercedes Goñi, and Tanjay City Government Representative Atty. Elson Bustamante together with the landowners, barangay captains, and several other partner agencies of the National Irrigation Administration situated in Negros Oriental. 🏗️



NIA REGION VIII ADOPTS SOLAR POWERED IRRIGATION SYSTEM

► Karen M. Andujar, Public Relations Officer A, Region VIII


The National Irrigation Administration – Regional Office No. VIII (NIA-R8), spearheaded by the Acting Regional Manager Ruby C. Tuan, Jr., aims to complete four Solar Powered Irrigation Systems (SPIS) this CY 2021. These projects are Bahay Small Irrigation Project (SIP), Camire Communal Irrigation Project (CIP), Kan-ipa Communal Irrigation System (CIS), and May-it SIP.

The construction and installation of three sites of solar pump works, amounting to 16.6M for Bahay SIP in San Miguel, Leyte is expected to serve a total of 108 hectares with 33 farmer beneficiaries of Bahay-San Miguel Irrigators Association, Incorporated.

The Camire-Tanauan-Leyte Irrigators Association, Inc. is a recipient of the ongoing-construction of Camire CIP, amounting to P6 million. This aims to serve a total of 50 hectares with 27 farmer beneficiaries. The construction of three sites solar pump works for Kan-ipa CIS, Baybay City, Leyte, amounting to P18 million will serve a total of 100 hectares with 117 farmer-beneficiaries. The Kan-ipa Farmers Irrigators Association, Inc. is the major recipient of the project.

Similarly, there is a construction of solar powered pump scheme and irrigation facilities for May-it Small Irrigation Project in Basey, Samar that will generate 17.34 hectares. These SPIS will enable to increase its cropping

intensity by continuously providing timely and reliable irrigation water requirement, especially to the once-a-year cropping or rain-fed areas. Thus, addressing insufficient water supply during dry season or El Niño. These will also increase irrigation development of the region with the projects' generated area.

SPIS is a cost-efficient and climate change adaptive technology with its advantages including the non-use of fuel, not affected by power interruptions, easy to operate, does not emit greenhouse gases, suitable for remote watershed and rain-fed areas, and requires minimal maintenance. The implementation of this project is in line with the program thrust of NIA Administrator Ricardo R. Visaya, particularly in providing proficient service through innovations and modernization. 



P10.4 MILLION WORTH OF SOLAR PUMP IRRIGATION PROJECT TURNED OVER

► Goldie Angeleen C. Turingan, Public Relations Officer A, Region II



The National Irrigation Administration – Regional Office No. II, through Isabela Irrigation Management Office (Isabela IMO), completes P10.4 Million worth of Solar Pump Irrigation Project ahead of the contract duration in Barangay Gappal, Cauayan City.

Five solar powered irrigation projects were inaugurated and awarded to Barangay Gappal of Cauayan City, Isabela in a simple ceremony led by Regional Manager Raymundo B. Apil, Division Manager Felipa S. Sumer, and Vice Mayor Leoncio A. Dalin on March 5, 2021.

These projects can irrigate up to 30 hectares of agricultural land within the locality, benefitting 22 farmer-beneficiaries. These irrigation systems are sustainable and diesel-free that can irrigate rice and other high-value crops all year round. It includes well drilling, casing installation, pump testing, pump installation (supply, delivery and installation of 10 Hp Solar PV submersible pumping system), and construction of control house system and solar panel mounting structure.

The activity is witnessed by the members of Gappal IA, City Councilors of Cauayan Local Government Unit (LGU) and a few Gappal residents. RM Apil also committed to include all adjacent barangays of Gappal in the conduct of feasibility study in the future, as NIA remains committed to its mandate of providing efficient, reliable and sustainable irrigation service to the Filipino farmers amidst COVID-19 Pandemic. 🇵🇭



WWD.PH 2021

► Pops Marie A. Santos-Dadea, Public Relations Officer, PAIS-C.O.



Amidst the challenges and hardships the nation is experiencing due to the pandemic, the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) headed by Administrator Ricardo R. Visaya, together with other water partner agencies like National Water Resources Board (NWRB), Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and Maynilad, to name a few, proudly showcased 19 water champions for CY 2020-2021 during the World Water Day Philippines (WWD.PH) Awarding Ceremony on March 22, 2021.

For its part, NIA conferred Outstanding Irrigators Association (IA) Awards in three categories: Most Outstanding IA-National Irrigation System (NIS) category awarded to Laposa IA of Davao del Sur (Region XI), Most Outstanding IA-Communal Irrigation System (CIS) category conferred to Padada IA of Davao del Sur (Region XI), and Most Outstanding IA-Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program-Irrigation Component (CARP-IC) category bestowed upon Anopog Paglaum IA in Cebu (Region VII), during the said virtual awarding ceremony.

NIA Regional Managers Wilson M. Lopez and Jimmy L. Apostol together with NWRB Executive Director Seville David, Jr., Maynilad President and Chief Executive Officer Ramoncito S. Fernandez, and other officials from different water partner agencies attended and witnessed the virtual awarding ceremony which is the highlight of the week-long WWD.PH 2021 celebration with the theme “Valuing Water”.

The event was an annual culminating activity of WWD.PH to honor individuals and/or organizations that promotes the water agencies’ mandate and advocacy. It is also to strengthen collaboration with each agencies relevant interested party and to build up communication and network between the water family members. 🌊



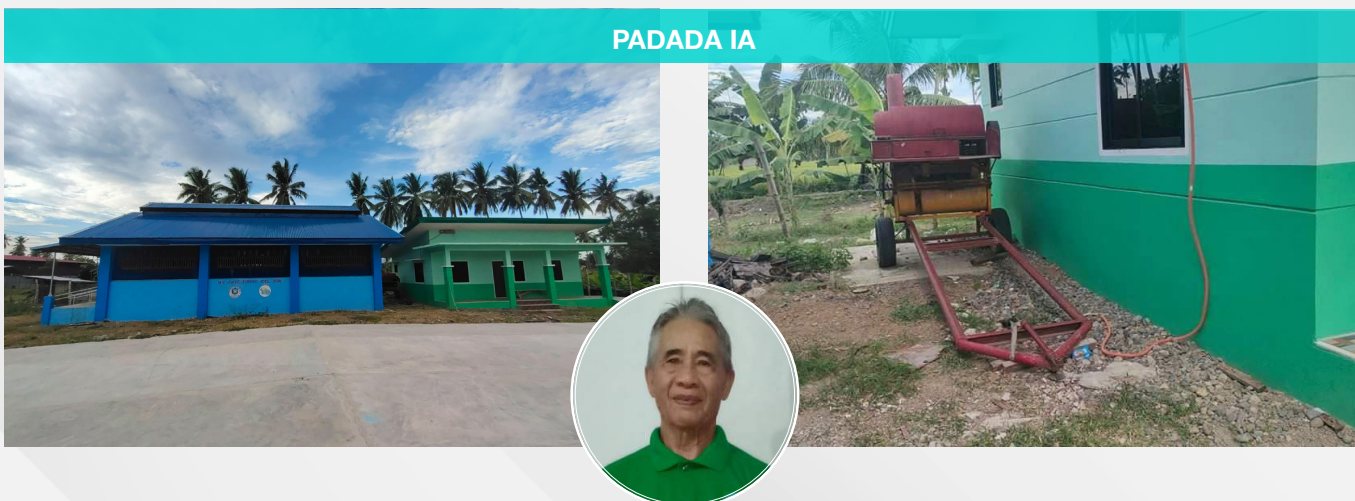
LAPOSA IA



ANAPOG IA



PADADA IA



LEADING WOMEN OF NIA CENTRAL OFFICE

► Jermaine M. Donayre, Public Relations Assistant A, PAIS-C.O.



MINENE P. EVANGELISTA

*Division Manager
Construction Management Division
Engineering Department*

“

Twenty-eight years na ko sa NIA and my first job was an Engineering Assistant. I was designated as an Acting Department Manager of CMD last June 2020. I never thought na magiging Division Manager ako kasi wala rin naman akong nakita na trinain ako as a Division Manager. Kasi ‘yong iba parang minsan very visible na parang “Ah, heto pala ang papalit” kasi lagi siya tinatawag or pinapadala. Wala akong nakita or nafeel na ako ang papalit. Hindi ako nakaramdam ng anxiety or fear when I accepted the responsibilities kasi ako yun taong kahit anong dumating sa buhay hinaharap ko.

May mga trabaho na familiar ako pero ‘yon pinakadetailed hindi ko masyadong alam. Alam mo naman CMD is implementation, very critical ‘yon. But with Ma’am Lydia’s orientation tapos siyempre araw-araw mo ginagawa at inaalaral nagiging familiar ka na roon sa trabaho sa CMD. If rerange ko ang knowledge ko sa NIA from 1 to 10, dati 1 to 4 lang. Ngayon, masasabi kong 1 to 9 na. Naseize ko din na I can lead people pala.

Alam mo sa team ang palagay ko na pinakaimportante is you listen to them. Hindi ibig sabihin na ikaw ‘yong Division Manager ay ikaw lang ang masusunod o ang may alam. If you listen to them, marami kang matututunan sa kanila. It’s give and take. You listen to them and they will listen to you. Kung ano ang natutunan mo sa kanila, appreciate them. As you can see malaki ang age gap sa Division namin, very techy sila compared sa akin. They are fast learner. Listen to their bright ideas and appreciate them.

Pinakasikreto sa trabaho ay kung ano ang assignment mo, pagbutihin mo. Be diligent, proactive and focus on your work. Dapat marunong ka makisama. Be compassionate and maging aware ka sa mga kasamahan mo, try not to hurt their feelings and watch your words. Hindi ibig sabihin na ikaw ang leader, hindi mo na alam ang nararamdaman ng tao mo. Dapat aware ka sa paligid mo and you should look around para alam mo kung anong gagawin mo sa mga tao mo. 📖



ELAINE P. VILLANUEVA

*Acting Manager
Procurement and Property Division
Administrative Department*

“

I was from MARIIS sa Procurement and Property Unit, COS lang ako nun. Iyon ang first job ko sa NIA. I got here in Central Office on 2012. July 2019 when I was designated as the Acting Division Manager of the Procurement and Property Division. Kakaassigned ko lang noon when my boss directed me to present before the Board. I don’t have any idea sabi lang ikaw na magpresent. It was my first time na magpresent na ako lang and ‘yon they approved naman. I was very nervous kasi si CabSec, nakikita ko, nakakasama ko sa mga events pero hindi kayo totally magkakilala. ‘Yon mga Board of Directors, ibat-ibang Agency ang pinanggalingan.

I learned the art of delegation, it is very important to the position of being a manager kasi hindi lahat kaya mo. Hindi ka si Superman, hindi ka si Wonderwoman. Delegate to the expert and delegate doon sa marunong talaga. Or if not naman, you delegate it para matuto yun mga subordinates mo.

Wala akong naging problema sa mga staff ko kasi very supportive sila. When I make a request or ask for something, they take action naman agad. If meron akong gustong sabihan, I talk to them personally, hindi ‘yon papahiyain sya sa harap ng ibang tao. When I conduct or hold a meeting, I don’t pinpoint. Kapag magsasabi ka dapat pangkalahatan. Hindi pwedeng nagagalit ang manager ng walang dahilan pero I know natuto sila and I’m also very supportive to them sabi ko nga.

Don’t get intimidated by anything or anyone as long as you know what you are doing and as long as ‘yon pinaglalaman mo ay tama. If you are a manager, you should not be a boss but as a leader. A good follower is a good leader. Pag hindi ka marunong sumunod sa boss mo, di ka matututo and hindi ka din pagkakatiwalaan. Mas maganda ‘yong maraming inuutos sayo, you should be confident kasi may tiwala yun boss mo sayo. If you want a higher position or aiming for a promotion kailangan magpakitang gilad ka. Not just to impress but of course ipakita mo na you deserve the position. I always tell them na promotion comes great responsibility. 📖

LEADING WOMEN OF NIA CENTRAL OFFICE



ROSALINDA A. SEGOCIO

*Officer-in-Charge
Human Resources Division*

“

Forty years na ako and my first job sa NIA was an Irrigation Community Organizer sa Region XII in Sultan Kudarat Provincial Irrigation Office so talagang Field worker ako. Naassigned din ako sa CARP-IC, sa Cotabato Provincial Irrigation Office, and sa CARAGA. I was transferred to Central Office year 2017. Both my children are working na kaya parang okay na rin na naassigned ako sa CO. With the help of internet, we can talk every day and videocall, so anytime namonitor ko din sila. July 2020 ng madesignate ako as OIC of HR Division. Never ko inexpect. Sinurprise ako ni Ma'am Ailyn, hindi niya sinabi sa akin na gumawa siya ng memo. May mga struggles in terms of adjustment sa work, sa environment pero ako kasi nagtatrabaho lang naman. Hindi ko masyado nafeel yun when you are enjoying your work.

Im very lucky na magagaling ang mga staff ko, especially the Section Chiefs. They are the kind of people na talagang they can work on their own. Magagaling sila and they are respected by their own staffs. As a Head, hands-on ako sa kanila. Ako ang lumalapit. Pinupuntahan ko talaga sila isa-isa kung may concern sila. Iba kasi 'yong friendly ang atmosphere. 'Yong pinagsamahan, 'yong personal relationship importante 'yon sa work.

Do not judge the person. In every person there is always goodness. Hahanapin mo lang yun goodness na 'yon. Kasi may times na sasabihin "ay suplada 'yan" "ay mahirap kausapin yan" pero pag kinausap mo ang tao at inintindi mo ay okay naman pala.

Communicate with your subordinates. Kausapin sila whether they are doing right or wrong. When they are doing right tell them, it's a way of recognition. Kung nakikita mo din 'yong tao na they can work without supervision, okay na 'yon. Then, give time to those who needs further supervision. 🙏



MARY CREENCIA J. de PAZ

*Acting Manager
Organization and Management Audit
Division*

“

I am with NIA for 44 years and first job ko rin dito after naggraduate. First assignment was with Administrative Department, sa Personnel Division. Nassign ako sa Salary Administration and Standard Section. After 14 years, nag-apply ako sa Management Services Division sa Management Audit Division. Tuwing mayroong bakanteng position, ina-applyan ko at lagi akong kumukuha ng test. Everytime na mapropomote ako, umiiyak ako kasi para kang binabato kasi marami kang naba-bypass. Hanggang sa naging Acting Division Manager ng Organization and Management Audit ako, marami silang sinasabi kaya sabi ko parang ayoko tanggapin. Pero ang Immediate Supervisor ko, alam niyang kaya ko kaya tinanggap ko.

As a Division Manager, proud ako sa mga staff ko. Tuwing mag-audit sila maganda ang kanilang audit report. Effective as auditors ang mga staff namin. Cooperative sila. Kahit ano sabihin ko sinusunod naman nila. Maganda ang relationship namin. May annual workplan kami so nakaplano na kung ano gagawin mo for the whole year, isusupervise mo na lang yung mga tao. May yearly assessment at quarterly meeting din kami para malaman kung ano ba ang nagiging problema nila sa field or kaya sharing ng mga experiences para magamit din ng iba.

Pag naging Division Manager ka hindi mo naman mapipili ang mga taong hahawakan mo. Kung sino yung mga nandyan icapacitate mo na lang sila doon sa gusto mong mangyari sa Division mo, Work hard. Wag mong sasagutin ang boss mo, just listen to her/him. If mali, gawin mo ulit kung ano gusto niya pero roon sa side mon a gusto mo isama mo rin. Kunwari ang boss mo pa-easy lang, it doesn't mean na gagawin mo rin. Inoobserbahan ka 'non. 'Pag wala kang ginagawa, humanap ka ng gagawin para sa Division or Section ninyo. Gawin mo lang ang best mo. 🙏

PAGSALUDO SA MGA KABABAIHAN

► Jayson B. Cabrera, Public Relations Officer C, PAIS-C.O.

Batang musmos pa lang kaming magpipinsan
Uso na ang pagalingan, kahit pati sa kasarian
Magdedebate kung sinong mas maswerte
Babae ba o kaming mga lalaki?

Unang babanat silang mga babae
Sila daw anila ang tunay na swerte
Dahil kami raw bilang mga lalaki
Dadaan sa masakit na pagtutuli

Kami nama'y agad na mayroong sagot
Kami ma'y maghirap sa tuli't matakot
Pagtapos ay di na kami maghihirap
Walang takot na taglay sa hinaharap

Habang ang babae, may takot na taglay
Mahulog ang paa sa bingit ng hukay
Sapagkat sila ang siyang nabubuntis
Magluluwal, iire nang walang mintis

S'yam na buwan, sanggol sa sinapupunan
Mayro'ng pagmamahal nilang tangan-tangan
Anak nilang laman ng kanilang laman
Sa mundo aakayin at kakalingain

May takot mang taglay sa kanilang mata
Subalit silang mga babae'y handa
Na magbuwis ng sarili nilang buhay
Upang anak nila ay siyang mabuhay

Kaming mga lalaki, di man magbuntis
Sa landas ng mag-ina'y hindi lilihis
Kaagapay nila sa pagtataguyod
Kasama nila, magsisikap na kakayod

Saludo kami sa lahat ng babae
Parehas tayo na tunay na maswerte
Nilikha nang may pagkakapantay-pantay
Tatahak sa buhay nang magkaagapay 🏠



NIA USHERING IN 2021

The National Irrigation Administration (NIA) conducted the simultaneous Ushering 2021 Activity Program on January 12, 2021 via Facebook Livestreaming at NIA Official Facebook Page.

With the theme, “NIA 2021: Fostering Resiliency and Efficiency for Proficient Service Through Innovations and Modernization”, the Aperture Optimism Board was chosen to depict all behind-the-scene moments of excellence and commitment of NIA employees to continuously strive towards the attainment of the Agency’s vision, mission, goals, and objectives despite all challenges and adversities that are coming our way.

The shape of the Aperture Optimism Board was made through the photos of all NIA employees which represent strength, resiliency, achievements, legacy, creative spirit, happiness, and optimism. The collation of smiling photos and captured moments were done by all offices in advance.

NIA Top Management Officials, headed by Administrator Ricardo R. Visaya, seized the opportunity to remind all NIAns to remain optimistic and continue serving the Filipino farmers with the best irrigation service that they deserve. 🇵🇭



NIA JOINS THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S MONTH CELEBRATION

NIA Central Office – The whole month of March is dedicated in celebrating the National Women's Month. With the theme, "Juana Laban sa Pandemya: Kaya!", the celebration highlights the extraordinary roles of women as agents of change in the society most especially this time of COVID-19 Pandemic. The National Irrigation Administration (NIA) recognizes the empowerment of women as active contributors to nation-building. 🇵🇭

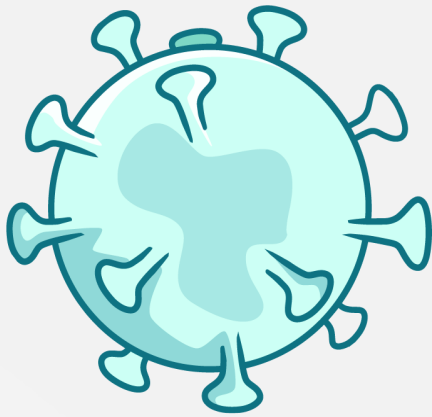


NIA WELCOMES CHINESE NEW YEAR

IA Central Office - Say goodbye to the Year of Metal Rat and hello to the Year of Metal Ox as the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) joins the nation and the Filipino-Chinese Community in welcoming the Chinese/Lunar New Year on February 12, 2021. The celebration symbolizes luck and good fortune for the coming year.

Ox is second in the 12-year cycle of the Chinese zodiac sign. As a farming partner in agricultural society, ox represents diligence, persistence, and honesty.

NIA Top Management Officials, headed by Administrator Ricardo R. Visaya, take the opportunity to remind all NIA employees to remain resilient, diligent, persistent, and honest in government service as the Agency continues to provide efficient, reliable, and sustainable irrigation service to the Filipino farmers amidst pandemic. 🇵🇭

**ELAINE P. VILLANUEVA**

*Acting Manager
Procurement and Property Division,
Administrative Department*



TRUTH BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

► Sheen Claudette C. Paz
Public Relations Assistant A, PAIS-C.O.

The following NIA Central Office personnel involved in this article voluntarily gave their consent to share their COVID-19 journey. A waiver was executed by those who gave their consent relative to special personal information under the Data Privacy Act of 2012.



I am PH 1292. We were on an official business in Palawan and the temperature when we arrived was really hot. One of our companions in our official travel was coughing. When the driver fetched us at the airport, he was the one sitting in front of the vehicle and whenever he coughs siyempre with the vent of the aircon, napupunta rin sa amin 'yong hangin. We've been travelling to and from and the change of the temperature when you're outside was too hot then you'll go inside the vehicle which is cold, hence I thought when I felt some cold-like symptoms the next day it's because of that extreme change of temperature in our body.

When I arrived home after the field work, my head was aching but I didn't mind. When I had a sore throat, that was the time I brought myself to the hospital. But RT-PCR tests then was a bit of a challenge, siguro kasi nagboom palang 'yong cases dito sa atin. So, I was advised to self-isolate for 14 days. During my isolation, I did thorough cleaning sa room and restroom ko. Then I lost my sense of smell and taste. I went to the hospital once again for my first swab test. While waiting for the result, I was really restless. My sore throat worsened that it can no longer be relieved by any home remedies that I know. I experienced shortness of breath and even lying in a supine position was uncomfortable and there came a point that I do not want to sleep anymore in fear of not waking up the next day.

I received my swab test result six days after – positive. It was really traumatizing. I can no longer sleep because mentally and physically I was really suffering. Then, I had my second swab test. I received my result April 8 in the morning – negative. On that same day, I found out that our colleague in Palawan who has been coughing died already.

Before, you need to have two consecutive negative results to be declared "free" from the virus. So, while waiting for my third swab test, I continued to eat fruits and vegetables, drank teas, suob and anything that can boost my immune system. Thankfully, my third swab test result was also negative.

'Why me? Ang daming tao, bakit ako pa?' This was my initial reaction. I had a lot of questions. I'm a mom of three, so I was asking 'paano pag nawala ako, paano mga anak ko?' But of course, being a strong person that I am, I didn't dwell on that for long. I told myself that I have to fight, I have to overcome this. Good thing I have a spiritual group and they helped me a lot on this. We are battling with an invisible enemy and we all know that prayer is our best defense.

Discrimination is real. This really happened to me. 'Yong tipong titignan ka and lalayuan ka ng mga tao, kasi noon konti pa lang talaga ang cases.

Just follow the minimum COVID-19 health protocol, boost your immune system, and pray. It has been my constant prayer since then – for me, my loved ones, and for everyone to be free from any dangers most especially from the danger brought about by the Coronavirus. Keep the faith, because it is Him who can really heal us all.





JENNIFER S. COLINARES
Librarian B
Public Affairs and Information Staff



'Yong bina-backtrack ko nga na three days nagkaroon ako ng una, nananakit 'yong katawan ko, hindi ko siya masyadong inisip. Sumasakit 'yong ulo ko, okay lang din 'yon. Nagka-sipon ako, so medyo nag-isip na rin ako na kung bakit ako nagka-sipon. Noong testing na, nilapitan na ako ng nurse na lalaki, sumagi agad sa isip ko, "Naku, parang hindi yata magandang balita ang sasabihin nito sakin". Ito na nga, sabi niya, "nag-positive po 'yong Antigen mo. Sa labas ka po muna at huwag na muna makihalubilo". Sa labas ng testing area, parang na-blanko 'yong isip ko. Tapos noong for RT-PCR testing na na ako lang mag-isa, walang pumapasok sa isip ko. Blangko talaga siya kasi parang wala ka na talagang maiisip noon kapag nalaman mo. Puno raw ang dorm, so sabi ko uuwi na lang ako since dalawa lang naman kami sa bahay ng asawa ko. For 14 days, ang ginagawa ko noon talagang nagbabasa ng Bible sa Book of Psalms tapos tinatandaan ko lahat ng verses to lift me up, emotionally distressed ka, kasi ang nasa isip mo baka anytime may maka-alam, baka anytime may maging symptoms na mas malala. 'Yon 'yong naging routine ko everyday. Halos isang buwan ako rito sa bahay. Buti nga hindi nagkaroon ang asawa ko kasi kung pati siya nagkaroon, mapapalyze kaming dalawa. Siyempre tao tayo, kapag nalaman mo talaga na nainfect ka, malulungkot ka talaga. Normal 'yon. Ang natutuhan ko? Magtiwala lang tayo na inallow ni Lord na mangyari 'yong bagay na 'yon kasi may purpose siya para maipakita niya na He is in control. Para malaman mo na may Diyos talaga and only depend on Him. Ang nagpapalakas talaga sa akin si Lord at 'yong feeling na talagang may nagpapray sa'yo, nakakapagpalakas ng loob. Wala tayong magagawa talaga sa buhay natin kung wala si God. Nagkakaroon ka ng problema, nasosolve mo naman. Pero ito, ito 'yong parang ipinakita ng Lord na higher level of faith. Ito 'yong faith mo ngayon pero ipaparanas ko sa'yo 'to para mas tumaas pa 'yong level of faith mo. Kasi si God 'yong may hawak ng buhay natin. Pahiram lang naman ang buhay natin. Anytime na gusto niyang kunin, wala tayong magagawa talaga. Kahit ikaw pa 'yong pinakamayaman na tao sa mundo, kapag hindi mo kilala ang Diyos parang wala rin sense 'yong buhay mo. God is good all the time. Maaaring iba-iba ang experiences namin ng mga taga-NIA, may mild, moderate, severe or asymptomatic cases. I know may nilapat na biyaya at grace ang Lord sa bawat isa sa amin para malampasan ito and God deserves all the praises and glory for what He has done to us. 🙏



RAFAEL F. SAHAGUN, JR.
Data Controller III
Management Information Division,
Corporate Planning Services



June last year, alam ko 'yong pinakahuling time na lumabas ako na medyo nagtagal doon sa nagpa-change oil ako sa gasoline station. Doon nag-umpisa siguro 'yong sintomas ko -- parang nakakaramdam na ako ng pananakit ng katawan lalo na 'yong lagnat. Laging sinasabi ng aking misis, parang iba na 'yan ha? Sabi ko sa kanya, gusto ko ng magpa-admit sa hospital kasi iba na 'yong nararamdaman ko. Pati kasi 'yong diarrhea, mayroon na rin ako. Nag-umpisa na 'yong pag-iisip. Nag-umpisa na 'yong stress lahat-lahat. So dire-diretso ako sa ER, sa Emergency Room. Doon pa lang sinalubong na ako ng nurse na naka-PPE. Ang nangyari sa akin diretso na agad sa isolation room during that time that was the start. Sabi ko paano na lang kaya kasi the last time I saw my wife was 'yong binigay niya sa akin 'yong bag ko na nandoon 'yong mga damit including 'yong jacket kasi nagchichill na ako sa isolation room. 'Yong buong floor pala na 'yon ay puro sa COVID patients. Pagpasok mo sa kwarto, wala ka ng kasama. CCTV lang ang makikita mo. Doon nagstart 'yong sabihin na natin kalbaryo ko sa hospital. Doon ko talaga nakita ang lahat ng hirap. Talagang hindi na ako makatulog. I almost even ask the nurse to call for a priest, gusto ko ng makausap ang pari kasi iba na ang naramdaman ko noon. Sabi ko, huli ko na, huling araw ko na ito. Maraming-maraming salamat sa Panginoon na talagang kung hindi dahil sa kanya siguro wala. This is my second life. Kaya 'yon 'yong worst na hindi ko malilimutan kasi sanay naman akong ma-hospital, sanay rin akong maoperahan, kaya lang 'yong time na 'yon COVID, talagang ewan ko. Severe COVID Pneumonia with Infectious Diarrhea ang naging findings sa akin. Mahirap magkaroon. Stress, number one na nagpahirap sa akin. Pag-iisip, biruin mo hindi mo makikita ang pamilya mo, my wife, my children and mga apo. Prayers, kilala ako sa opisina, maloko ako. Palabiro ako, lahat-lahat, kalokohan. Pero nakatulog talaga 'yong pagdarasal sa taas. Discrimination? Naranasan ko 'yon. Not to mention the name or names noong mga nasalubong ko noon kahit magaling na ako, bigla silang nag-iiwasan habang ako ay naglalakad. Hindi ko pinaparamdam sa kanila ang galit dahil sabi ko normal lang 'yon kasi sabi ko baka mahawa. Maranasan mo kung paano ka layo-layuan, parang nakakadiri ganoon na iiwas-iwasan ka. Pati na 'yong mga kasamahan ko, iniwasan nilang kausapin. Kinukuwento nila sa akin 'yong sama ng loob nila. Talagang ganoon, ayaw na nilang pumunta sa MID. Mas delikado ngayon kasi hindi mo nga malaman sa kapaligiran mo kung 'yong katabi mo mayroon na o wala. Wala naman perpekto maski sino. Sana sabihin niyo ang totoo. Hindi 'yong malalaman na lang na 'yon may lagnat, papasok pa. Huwag ng pumasok pag ganoon. Kung ano 'yong mga safety protocols, sundin kaagad 'yon huwag balewalain. 🙏



TRUTH BEHIND CLOSED DOORS



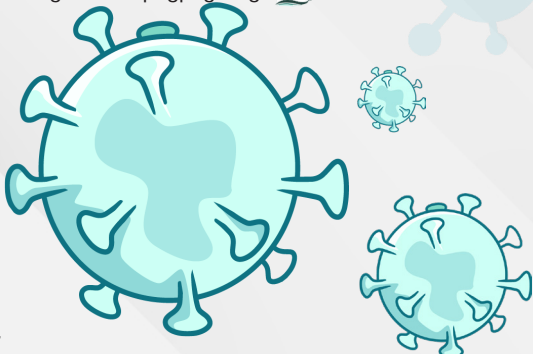
JESSER J. CELESTIAL

Driver

*Office of the Deputy Administrator
for Engineering and Operations
Sector*

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Tiningnan ko backwards kung ano talaga ‘yong nangyari, ‘yong last few months na bumabagsak na ‘yong immune system ko. Noong pagkatapos ng swab test, may percentage na talaga na magpopositive ako noon kasi talagang parang stress masyado dahil din sa trabaho. Noong nalaman ko na positive ako sa Antigen Test kasi sabi ni doc, mag-stay na lang daw muna ako rito sa may dorm pero ininsist ko sa kanila na sabi ko, doc gusto ko pong umuwi. Dinala na kami sa may Quezon City General Hospital. Nag-worry na ako kasi sabi ko parang naisip ko baka ihahalo ako roon sa may mga sintomas kasi asymptomatic ako. ‘Yon, sabi ko sa sarili ko, kung iisipin ko ‘to na ganito magiging sitwasyon ko rito, baka hindi ako ma-disgrasya sa COVID, madidisgrasya naman ako sa pag-iisip. Nag-worry kasi ako noon kasi nga, katabi mo may mga sintomas, ikaw walang sintomas. So makatagalan, habang nakikilala mo na ‘yong mga tao roon, parang nasabi ko rin na may lungkot, may saya kasi nakakatulong ka rin sa kapwa mo tao lalo na pag mga senior, lalo na pag may mga sakit na mga high blood. Habang tumatagal, hindi mo na alintana na may sakit siya, may ubo siya. Kumbaga, inisip ko ‘yong kapakanan ng lahat -- hindi ko inisip ‘yong pansarili ko. Gusto kong ipahiwatig lalo na rito sa NIA Central Office, sana naman kung magka-COVID man ‘yong tao, huwag naman sana i-discriminate. Walang gustong magka-COVID. Ang Panginoon talaga ang number one na nakatulong sa akin at ‘yong inspirasyon sa pamilya mo at sa ibang tao. Kailangan mo lang talaga lakasan ‘yong loob mo tapos kailangan lang talaga positive ka lagi. Malaking pasasalamat ko rin sa Medical dito sa NIA. Kailangan lang talaga mag-ingat. Palakasin lang talaga ang resistensya kasi wala naman talagang gamot sa COVID. Hindi mo puwedeng pandirihan ang tao. Ipakita mo sa tao ‘yong concern mo sa kanya. Gagawa ka talaga ng paraan para matulungan mo sarili mo na mapagaling kasi itong sakit na ito, ikaw lang talaga ang makakapagpagaling. 🙏



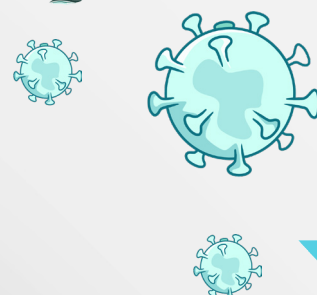
CHRISTIAN M. COLINDRES

Procurement Officer B

*Procurement and Property Division,
Administrative Department*

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Mayroon kaming isang officemate na nilagnat so nakasalamuha ko siya. ‘Di na siya pumasok pero after ilang days, nabalitaan namin positive siya so kahit paano medyo kinabahan na ako na baka kasi may direct contact nga ako roon sa nag-positive. I was tested positive last January 13. I called my parents and my siblings living in the house. Sabi ko, prepare niyo na ako ng kailangan kong gamitin kasi hindi na ako lalabas ng kwarto and then, ‘yong CR na pinakamalapit sa akin, ako na lang muna ang gagamit. Kinakabahan ako kasi senior nga ‘yong mga kasama ko roon. Noong nalaman kong positive ako na-feel ko naman na kakayanin ko. From time to time, kina-kamusta naman ako ng NIA. Sobrang fortunate ko lang din kasi I have a strong support system which is my family. Hindi ako masyadong nagsosocial media noon kasi pag may nababasa ako regarding sa COVID, kahit feeling ko hindi ko nararamdaman basta nabasa ko na ganito pala ‘yong nararamdaman nila, parang napapaisip ako baka ganito na rin ‘yong nararamdaman ko. Sinasabi sa akin na huwag lang daw ako mag-isip, actually totoo ‘yon. Kasi kapag tinamaan ka ng COVID more on ang kalaban mo ‘yong depression, ‘yong kaba, ‘yong nerbyos so kailangan mo lang talagang maging kalmado. I just focus on myself. I just focus on palakasin ‘yong sarili ko. I just tried to be strong. You can never go back to the old normal kaya new normal na siya. I’m getting back on track again sa work ko. I’m getting the hang of it. I just want to normalize kasi magiging normal na flu na lang din naman siya in the long run para sa akin. Parang influenza ‘di ba? Magiging part na rin naman talaga siya ng buhay natin. With discrimination, wala naman akong hard feelings sa mga umiwas sa akin kasi nga hindi ko naman sila masisisi. You have to be mentally strong when dealing with COVID. Just focus on your recovery. Take you vitamins daily. Actually ito nga ‘yon, more on spiritual ‘yong journey ko kasi alam mo naman ‘yong mga tao ‘di ba pag nahihirapan or in the brink of desperation na rin, doon din sila lumalapit kay Lord. 🙏





MA. LOUIELLA V. NAZARREA
Executive Secretary B
Human Resources Division,
Administrative Department

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‘Yong boyfriend ko was hospitalized in August 2020 because of a motorcycle accident. So going in and out ako sa hospital, feeling ko roon ko siya nakuha. Para akong nagka-trangkaso. May lagnat ako. Naghintay ako ng three days bago ako pina-swab test. Hindi na ako nagulat na positive ‘yong result ko, parang nag pray na lang ako na sana maging okay naman. Nilagnat ako ng first day tapos nag-positive ako, ‘yon na. Naranasan ko rin ‘yong nawalan ng panlasa. Pero bumalik din agad ‘yong panlasa ko and then tuloy-tuloy na ‘yong recovery. Hindi naman naging severe ‘yong virus sa katawan ko. ‘Yong naconfirm ko na may COVID ako, nagbigay ng assistance ang barangay na if ever daw na gusto ko ng pagkain, magbibigay daw sila. Pati yung mga neighbors ko rito, ‘yong caretaker ng bahay, nakipag-usap sa akin kung may kailangan daw ako, nandiyan lang daw sila. Nakakatuwa na ganoon. Ang naging routine ko noong isolated ako, nanunuod lang tapos minsan pag may time, nagwork-out, exercise. Tapos naglilinis ganoon lang. Noong dati ‘yong hindi ko nagagawa ‘yong magluto, natutuhan ko magluto. Inisip ko na lang na siguro part lang ito ng life, parang challenge lang ito sa akin. Life is too short. Everything can end at any moment regardless kung sino ka pa. Nakatulong talaga ng sobra ‘yong support ng family ko talaga. Although nag-uusap lang kami through cellphone lang, online pero nararamdaman ko ‘yong support talaga ng loved ones ko. I had more time with myself and also with God. Marami akong time mag-pray. Mas maraming time on life realizations. Mayroon akong isang neighbor dito na parang nagalit siya sa akin kasi sabi niya bakit hindi ko raw agad sinabi na nag-positive ako. Hindi ko pa naman alam na positive na ako that time kasi waiting ako sa result. Pero nag sorry naman ako. Sabi ko, hindi ko lang na-inform agad pero at least noong nag-positive ako, noong natanggap ko ‘yong result sinabi ko naman agad. Hindi natin kailangan katakutan si COVID. As long as alam natin sa sarili natin na nag-iingat tayo and sumusunod tayo sa mga protocols and implementations especially sa Agency natin. Discipline is the key para ma-reduce ‘yong spread ng virus. I realized that life doesn’t need to be perfect to be happy. Let us just be grateful for what we have. There are people out there who have less. 🙏



ADRIAN M. AGUILAR
Supervising Supply Officer
Procurement and Property Division,
Administrative Department

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Nilagnat ako. Ang nasa isip ko lang ay simpleng lagnat. Pagpasok ko nag-Antigen test na ako, then lumabas nga ‘yong result ko na positive ako. Nagkaroon ako ng anxiety noon, na para akong nasusuka. Biglang nandoon na ‘yong halong kaba at takot. Then, tinawagan ko agad ‘yong family ko and tawag ako sa office. Pero noong nagpositive ako sa RT-PCR, medyo tanggap ko na na positive ako. Ang worry ko talaga doon, ayaw ko mag-solo. Buti na lang dumating ‘yong isang kasamahan ko. Sa bahay naman namin, ang worry ko kasi magkakasama kami sa kwarto ng family ko. Luckily naman walang nagka-symptoms. Noon lang ako medyo windang. Siguro after ko mapunta sa facility, okay na. Parang okay, tanggap ko kasi wala akong naramdaman talaga. Sa quarantine facility, ang advise sa amin uminom ng maraming tubig. Water lang kami ng water that time then, exercise, jumping jacks, push-ups, sit-ups, jog in place, ‘yon lagi ang ginagawa namin. Kung ano ‘yong dapat kong gawin, sinunod ko lang. Gumaling na lang. ‘Yon lang talaga ang kinakatakot ko, ‘yong makahawa at the same time ayaw ko mag-solo. Sinabi ko pa sa mga barkada ko na positive ako. Actually, ‘yong mga hindi tumatawag sa akin dati, nagtawagan. Marami lang ako nakakausap that time. Nakakatulong kasi na may kausap lagi. Maraming support na nareceive from friends, relatives, officemates. Sa akin kasi hindi ako takot na sabihin na positive ako. Mas okay sa akin na ipaalam kung ano ‘yong katayuan ko. Before ako nagka-COVID, okay sa akin ‘yong nagcocommune na ako pumapasok. Pero noong nagkaroon ako ng COVID, mayroon ng konting takot na ayaw ko ng maulit sa akin ‘yon. Na-experience ko na, ayaw ko ng maulit. Puwede kang gumaling on your own. As long na alam mo ang dapat mong gawin, may virus man o wala, ingat lang. Para na akong frontliner after ko magka-COVID kasi ako rin ang nagtuturo sa family ko kung anong gagawin. Ako ‘yong nagpa-facilitate kung ano ‘yong dapat nilang gawi at hindi nila dapat gawin. Well, naging knowledgeable ako kung anong dapat gawin dahil naranasan ko na. 🙏



TRUTH BEHIND CLOSED DOORS



ATTY. MARTY P. CACHAPERO
Acting Department Manager
Legal Services

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I contracted the virus when I had a field work in Palawan. I was with two other NIA employees, and we were there to conduct procurement post-qualification activities. When we were in Palawan, we worked from 8:00 o'clock in the morning until 10:30 o'clock in the evening, unaware that we were already sharing a car with an unsuspected COVID-19 positive person. That's how I got the virus.

My first symptom was fever. I had about 38.8 temperature. Just to be sure, I began to isolate myself from my wife, Mija when I came home after my fieldwork. The following day, I already had cough and slightly having difficulty of breathing. But I did not believe I had COVID-19 just yet. The following day was different. I had severe sore eyes and then followed by a severe headache the next day. On the fourth day, I lost my senses of smell and taste. That was when I thought what I had could be something else. So, we went to the hospital and I got tested. But the result of the test did not come out until after 7 days. When the result came out, I was positive for COVID-19.

After 31 days from the hospital, I self-isolated for another 30 days at home considering I still had symptoms at that time. My knees and feet were still inflamed, I still had a clogged nose, and I feel very weak. As I recovered, I did not only try to get my physical body back in shape, but I also made sure to keep my mind sharp and stir away from the worries and stress brought by my COVID-19 ordeal.

I am thankful that COVID-19 did not take a toll on my mental health because I have a strong support system in my family, relatives, friends, and workmates at NIA. I never felt alone in that ordeal. Without their help and support, I could not imagine Mija and I having overcome that ordeal. But what helped me the most was my recourse to God and when I submitted everything to Him. I was praying all the time during confinement, praying for my fellow patients in that hospital and to all those who have to experience being sick with COVID-19.

Now, I am trying to live a normal life for my mental health and that of my loved ones. I feel like I am quite back to my old self. I am back at biking and running, which I have not done for a long time due to my condition. I had pneumonia because of COVID-19, which hindered me from doing some strenuous activities. The only things that have not recovered since I contracted the virus are my clogged nose and dry throat. They say there are some coronavirus "long-haulers," whose symptoms linger for quite a while.

What I learned from all this experience is my resiliency. I have been down so many times in my life, but no matter what life throws at me, I always get up and I never give up. I have overcome so many challenges in life, and I remained standing and unperturbed. If there is something that I want people to learn from my story, that is, I want them to believe in themselves, believe that there is nothing that can put them down. If I did it, so can anyone else. 🙏