

HAWAII-PHILIPPINE NEWS EDITION

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HAWAII FILIPINO CHRONICLE

HAWAII'S ONLY WEEKLY FILIPINO-AMERICAN NEWSPAPER

HAVE FUN AND BE HEALTHY TOO AT 2011 FILIPINO FIESTA'S HEALTH FAIR

By HFC Staff

"The body is like a piano and happiness is like music. It is needful to have the instrument in good order."—Henry Ward Beecher, clergyman and social reformer (1813-1887)

The above quote aptly describes the importance of taking care of one's health. For many Filipinos, a healthy lifestyle all too often takes a back seat to the demands of a busy career, growing family and other pressing commitments.

They may not realize it, but something as simple as getting regular medical check-ups and medical tests can do wonders for one's health. One such venue where Filipinos can get these

tests for free is at the upcoming 19th Annual Filipino Fiesta and Parade, scheduled for Saturday, May 7, 2011 at Kapiolani Park.

For Fiesta organizers, it is the perfect event to kill the two birds with one stone. Delicious Filipino food? *Check.* How about live entertainment? *Check.* Fun activities for the keiki? *Check.* Cultural games and demonstrations? *Double check.*

Community health fair? *Hmmm...*

"We hope that those attending this year's Fiesta and Parade will enjoy all of the above," says J.P. Orias, project coordinator for the Bayanihan Clinic Without Walls (BCWW), which is sponsoring the health fair. "While they're at it, they might as well take advantage of the many free medical services and tests that will be available during the health fair."

According to Orias, the idea for a community health fair came about

(continued on page 4)



Free massage treatment highlights last year's Community Health Fair event

Palace on RH: Democracy Gives People a Choice

By Delon PORCALLA

MANILA, Philippines - Malacañang yesterday defended the Reproductive Health (RH) Bill that President Aquino is espousing, taking into consideration the benefits of a democratic country like the Philippines where people have a choice.

"This is part of democracy. The people cannot be forced to do only one method," Presidential Communications Office for Strategic Planning and Development Secretary Ricky Carandang said.

Carandang said the overall objective is



to give people a choice in contraception, whether the artificial or the natural method.

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UH Philippine Studies Faculty Members Garner Awards

By Maita MILALLOS

Three prominent Filipino specialists in Philippine Studies were honored for their outstanding academic scholarship and leadership at a leading Asian Studies conference, and for receiving a special award in a related book competition given to the best book in any field of history written by a Hawaii resident.

The Joint Association for Asian Studies and International Convention of Asian Scholars (AAS-ICAS) Conference was recently held at the Hawaii Convention Center and attended by



Dr. Belinda Aquino

nearly 7,000 professors, scholars, researchers and other individuals involved in Asian Studies all over the world.

The three academics honored (continued on page 4)



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EDITORIAL

Republican Plan To Overhaul Medicaid & Medicare Road to Prosperity or Slippery Slope to Poor House?

Call it daring or shortsighted, or at the most, completely honest—Republicans are taking a huge political risk with their 2012 budget proposal that includes overhauling Medicare and Medicaid.

Needless to say, the conventional wisdom is that both are in need of restructuring due to widespread abuse and long-term insolvency projections. But the most trusted voting block, elderly citizens, clearly will be at arms over the GOP's proposal that could haunt the party in the next national election.

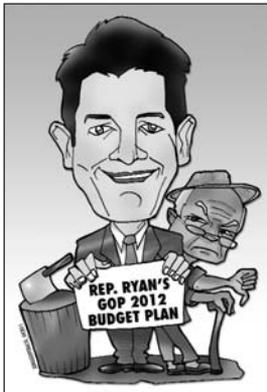
The good news first...under the new plan offered by Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wisc., the GOP 2012 budget would eliminate \$800 billion in spending over a 10-year period.

The bad news is the new system shifts costs to individuals and states that really amounts to being a new tax increase on the middle class. Patients' rights to choose doctors and medical procedures may also be minimized. The elderly no longer would receive a traditional Medicare card with choices of doctors. Instead, they would get a voucher and must select from private and federally subsidized insurance coverage. Payments would go to private insurers, not directly to hospitals and doctors, as with traditional Medicare.

In the new Medicaid system, states would receive a fixed lump-sum annual payment in a block grant. States will then determine eligibility and care to be provided. In block grant systems, there is a wide possibility for states to back away from their responsibilities in directing money to the right places. There is also the risk for additional financial burden to be placed onto states, the majority of which, are already experiencing deep budget deficits.

The independent Congressional Budget Office analysis said that most elderly people "would bear a much larger share of their health care costs than they would under the current program." The overhaul would impact tens of millions of Americans and disproportionately affect senior citizens with long-term care needs and low-income children.

The utter disregard for the welfare of such a huge percentage of the population entertains a bigger question over Republicans' true intentions with Medicare and Medicaid. Could these initial changes simply be laying down the tracks for future attempts at dismantling the two social pro-



grams entirely?

Rep. Chris Van Hollen, D-MD, a ranking member of the House Budget committee said the overhaul "will do terrible damage to Medicare and Medicaid and all the people who have paid into those programs."

Both Medicare and Medicaid were created in 1965 as an extension of the Social Security Act. Prior to 1965, nearly half of the elderly in the U.S. had no health insurance, nor did a majority of disabled and poor Americans. Today, 19 percent of the U.S. population is on Medicaid, nearly half of whom are children.

The GOP overhaul of Medicare and Medicaid will result in more Americans going uninsured, especially since their 2012 budget also includes undoing the recent Obama healthcare law. With Republicans' proposed overhaul of Medicare/Medicaid and elimination of Obama care, Americans could find themselves in even greater desperation to find af-

fordable health care.

2012 AND SEN. AKAKA'S VACANCY

In today's Democrat-controlled Senate, the likelihood of Rep. Ryan's GOP-led overhaul of Medicare and Medicaid taking off is close to zero, but the huge caveat is that it does set into motion a clear blueprint as to what Republicans are willing to do should they suddenly take control of both chambers of Congress in 2012, and more dangerously, the presidency included. It couldn't be any clearer what's at stake.

With Sen. Daniel Akaka retiring in 2012, it's even more critical that Hawaii voters educate themselves on who would be most willing to defend the integrity of Medicare and Medicaid and not allow them to slip into greater forms of privatization. The Republican agenda is transparent, so then, is Linda Lingle's position on Medicare/Medicaid should she decide to run.

But Hawaii voters must be careful in assuming that all Democratic contenders stand equally on this issue. Hawaii's traditional progressive Democrats have proven to be defenders of Medicare/Medicaid. The big question mark is how blue dog Democrats, most visibly, Ed Case, who already announced his intention to run for Senate, would side with working Americans on Medicare and Medicaid. ■



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OPINION

Vicious Political Cycle

A LAW EACH DAY (Keeps Trouble Away)

by Jose C. SISON

Less than a year after the last elections, partisan politics uniquely practiced in the Philippines, is rearing its ugly head again. This is the kind of politics that seeks to advance or protect personal or group interests at the expense of the truth or the common good by the "systematic organization of hatreds" as Henry Adams called it. In this kind of politics, those who are called to account for their past misdeeds while in power, defend themselves not with facts to disprove the accusations but with offensive moves against the accuser in the belief that "offense is the best defense". Here, the offenders convince the public that the charges are false by merely denying them and ascribing sinister motives, like political vendetta, to their accusers.

So far, this tactic seems to be successful as shown by how the Marcos family and cronies have been considerably successful in re-

pulsing government efforts to recover their ill gotten wealth, and moves to pin them down for past wrongdoings. In fact most of them are now in power again not only in politics but also in business, barely 25 years after the people power revolution toppled the Marcos regime.

Taking a cue from the Marcos experience, the allies of former President, now Pampanga Congresswoman, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (GMA) belligerently announced that they have decided to "go on the offensive" against the Aquino Administration. One of the staunchest supporters of the past regime, Quezon Representative Danilo Suarez who shouldered the expenses of the GMA entourage's scandalously lavish dinner in Washington, said that "this retaliatory move was prompted by the filing last week of a tax evasion case against Arroyo's eldest son, Party-list Representative Mikey Arroyo.

Suarez expressed his apprehension that this administration has ordered a "witch-hunt against us, that they will charge us one after the other until they finish us all off". So he cockily said that "we have to fight back".

Apparently GMA and her allies are so cocksure because they know that Filipinos have short memories and are slow to learn their lessons well enough. Hence this kind of politics has already become a vicious cycle. Actually, GMA herself has already fired the opening salvo that would perpetuate this harmful political practice by breaking her silence and speaking out on PNoy's handling of the various crises including the Luneta hostage taking tragedy and the "spiraling prices of food and fuel". She already warned PNoy of an alleged "leadership vacuum".

To be sure, a golden opportunity came up to stop this cycle when another people power revolution was successfully launched leading to the ouster of Joseph Estrada and GMA's assumption to the Presidency. Even as Estrada voluntarily stepped down from office by leaving the seat of power via the Pasig River, he was still prosecuted and subsequently convicted of the crime of plunder. After 5 years of trial, Estrada was sentenced to life imprisonment indicating some sort of political will and grit. But because of the many anomalies and scandals plaguing GMA's administration, she had also

become vulnerable to political attacks and political pressure especially from the opposition and the Estrada camp. Hence she pardoned Estrada, an act which many believed was some sort of political accommodation to the opposition. And so this cycle of vicious politics continued. Estrada even ran for, and almost won as President in the last elections in an attempt to regain power.

This is the bitchy kind of politics that GMA and her allies would now like to perpetrate in our country with their latest "saber rattling" moves against the Aquino administration. This is the kind of politics described by French Poet, Paul Valery as the "art of preventing people from taking part in the affairs which properly concern them". Will PNoy succumb to this kind of politics?

If PNoy would just be true to his pronouncement that "kayo (the people) ang boss ko", he has a chance to stop this vicious political cycle. He must first of all ensure that appointments in various government positions, particularly in the cabinet, are not primarily based on partisan political considerations or on close personal relationship or friendship (barkada). Of course it is his privilege to choose people he can trust and rely on especially in crucial or highly confidential matters; nevertheless he must see to it that his appointees are men and women of integrity, intelligence and independence, and most of all will not betray the public trust inherent in every public office. The country needs statesmen not traditional politicians.

In other words PNoy must adhere to the real meaning of politics which is the "science of (good) government, the art or practice of (properly) administering public affairs". He must not render himself vulnerable to the attacks of the opposition who are out to perpetrate the vicious politics plaguing our country for so long now. He should not provide them ammunition for attacking him and his administration.

But since the political opposition that dismally lost in the last election is starting to flex its muscles again, it means that PNoy and his administration are not really invulnerable to their frontal attacks. It is just fortunate that at this early stage of his administration, the disgraced opposition has not regained its credibility or acquired moral ascendancy to attack his administration. PNoy still has time to fortify his position. He should remove all the "vulnerable" spots in his administration.

The best way however to stop this vicious political cycle is for all public officers to be accountable to the people. In other words, if any of them is called upon to account for the past actions, like in the case of Mikey Arroyo, or Joc Joc Bolante or Cito Lorenzo, they should meet the accusations frontally by proving in court with clear and convincing evidence that the accusations are false and baseless. They should not sidetrack the issue by crying political persecution and counter attacking the accusers.

Of course all of these still belong to the realm of the citizens' wishful thoughts. (www.philstar.com) ■

EDITORIAL

Among the World's Worst

It's not the best, but it's not the worst either, and improvements are ongoing. This sums up the reaction of airport officials to reports that the Ninoy Aquino International Airport - particularly the original Terminal 1 - had been voted the fifth worst airport in the world in a travelers' website.

"The Guide to Sleeping in Airports" placed the NAIA behind two airports in France including the premier one, Charles de Gaulle, followed by the airports in Los Angeles and Moscow as the world's worst airports. The NAIA was described in the website as "a bombed-out ruin" and "a cattle yard, only worse." Those were exaggerations, but the NAIA, particularly Terminal 1 which handles most of the international flights, does pale when compared to its neighbors, giving it the dubious distinction in the website as Asia's worst airport.

Air traffic controllers at the NAIA, at least, are not yet falling asleep on the job, as several of their counterparts have done in the United States. But NAIA ramp traffic controllers could be close to it, as recent reports indicated. The possible consequences of such a lapse can only add to the woes of passengers with awful memories of being stuck in an airport that lacks the comforts they enjoy in Singapore's Changi International, voted as the world's best.

Security lapses are not only giving the country a black eye among international travelers but also allowing drug smuggling to flourish. NAIA personnel have pointed out that shabu concealed in a box of hopia could not be detected by security scanners.

Airport officials have commented that the NAIA is not designed for sleeping. This betrays a lack of understanding of

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HEADLINES (CONT.)

(cont. from page 1; HAVE FUN ...)

during planning efforts for the 1998 Filipino fiesta. Organizers wanted an event that would remind Filipinos of the importance of keeping themselves healthy and maintaining an active lifestyle.

At that inaugural Fiesta health fair, a small group of Filipino doctors, dentists, nurses and other medical professionals from the BCWW volunteered their time services. Organizers provided free medical samples and information, blood pressure readings, demonstrations and massages.

It has since expanded to include tests for blood pressure, lung function, spirometry, lung function services, osteoporosis, pediatrics, cholesterol count, sleep apnea and foot health (podiatry). Also offered are cancer screenings as well as services for prostate cancer, optometry and physical therapy.

The community health fair has proven to be a big hit at the annual Filipino Fiesta. In fact, since 1997, only two Fiestas have been without a health fair.

At last year's Fiesta, more than

3,000 visitors took advantage of the services offered by volunteers at the health fair. The numbers included approximately 200 cholesterol patients, 500 blood pressure levels checked, diabetes testing, and many more.

This year, even more visitors are expected to visit the health fair. There will be 12 booths and a dozen or more participating physicians.

"This will be the perfect opportunity for them to meet doctors who are well-versed with the unique needs of Filipino patients during curbside consultations," says Dr. Charlie Sorido. "These culturally-competent physicians and their medical services will be available for free."

A PASSION FOR SERVING

Most Filipino doctors' passion in participating in these free community fairs can be traced back to their hometowns and provinces in the Philippines. They remember the



Dr. Benilda Luz-Llena checks the blood pressure of one of the attendees at last year's event

subject poverty and the financial difficulties their own families faced in sending them to medical school.

Now blessed with their successful practices and a higher standard of living, most will never forget where they come from and willingly give back whenever they can.

"Filipino physicians are genuinely caring and take time to volunteer in community health fairs despite their busy schedules," says Dr. Nick Joaquin, who is the current president of the BCWW.

The Filipino community supports a handful of annual health fairs for the public statewide, including

the BCWW's Filipino Fiesta Health Fair, the Kailih Community Health Fair sponsored by Dr. Erlinda Cachola and the Waianae health Fair headed by Dr. Glen Pang.

In addition, volunteer physicians regularly participate in BCWW's efforts to hold community health fairs on neighbor islands including Kauai, Molokai, Lanai, Maui and the Big Island.

In general, these free community health fairs are held to increase public awareness as preventive measures of diseases as well as to raise awareness of the availability of free health care facilities, says Dr. Joaquin.

At a typical health fair, the most common ailments addressed include hypertension, diabetes and high cholesterol levels.

"These three conditions can cause stroke, heart failure and renal failure," says Dr. Joaquin. "Taking care of these problems can be life-saving for the patient."

Typically, blood pressure is checked with an instrument called a

sphygmomanometer, while diabetes and cholesterol are checked with blood tests.

The cost to organize a free health fair runs anywhere from \$5,000 to \$10,000. To defray costs, organizers solicit volunteers, sponsors and patrons who are allowed to have display tables to showcase their products and diagnostic facilities like x-ray and blood testing.

Dr. Joaquin encourages Filipinos to take full advantage of these free health fairs.

"They should encourage their families and friends to attend community health fairs to have fun as well as have their blood pressure, diabetes and cholesterol levels tested and checked," he says. "Some patients are hesitant to go to doctors' clinics but this is a way to check their illnesses which they may not be aware of."

Other sponsors for this year's Community Health Fair include Philippine Medical Association of Hawaii, Ohana Health Plan, Hawaii Filipino Healthcare, Clinical Laboratories of Hawaii, LLP and Hawai'i Filipino Chronicle. ■

(cont. from page 1; UH ...)

were Dr. Belinda Aquino and Dr. Vina Lanzona from the University of Hawaii-Manoa, and Dr. Reynaldo Iletto from the National University of Singapore.

OUTSTANDING SERVICE**AWARD**

Dr. Aquino is a retired Professor of Political Science and Asian Studies at UH-Manoa and the long-time director of the Center for Philippine Studies. She was given the Outstanding Service Award for her lifelong contributions to the Philippine Studies Group (PSG) of the AAS, the national professional association for the promotion of Asian Studies in the U.S. Aquino has been active with the PSG since 1980 as member of the Board of Directors and Advisory Committee, editor of

the Philippine Studies Newsletter, project director, paper presenter and member of several committees. She was elected twice to the Southeast Asia Council (SEAC), one of the regional councils under the AAS umbrella.

Aquino was also the founding chairperson of the International Conferences on Philippine Studies (ICOPHIL) Executive Board which has initiated or co-sponsored various international conferences in universities in Asia, the U.S., Australia and Europe that are attended by the best international Philippine Studies specialists. The 9th such conference is scheduled for May 22-25, 2012 at the Michigan State University in East Lansing. These global conferences keep scholars abreast with the current trends in the academic and professional study of the Philip-

pines as a country in Asia and in the international academic.

A dedicated academic and prolific writer, Aquino received her Ph.D. in Political Science from Cornell University as a Ford Foundation fellow, M.A. in Political Science from UH Manoa as an East-West Center scholar and B.A. in English from the University of the Philippines.

An internationally known scholar, she has served as Visiting Professor, Research Fellow or Lecturer in various international institutions, including the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore, University of the Philippines, Philippine Social Science Center and Thammasat University in Bangkok. She also served as Vice President for Public Affairs at the University of the Philippines and Consultant to the Philippine Senate.

Aquino is currently Professor Emeritus at the School of Pacific and Asian Studies at UH Manoa. She serves on various boards and review committees dealing with Philippine Studies.

KENNETH W. BALDRIDGE PRIZE FOR BEST HISTORY BOOK

Dr. Vina Lanzona of UH-Manoa was awarded the Kenneth W. Baldrige Prize for her book *Amazons of the Huk Rebellion: Gender, Sex, and Revolution in the Philippines* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009) at the annual Phi Alpha Theta conference last March 12, 2011. The award is sponsored by the Department of History at Brigham Young University-



Dr. Vina Lanzona

Dr. Rey Iletto

Hawaii, and is awarded for the best history book written by a resident of Hawaii in the period 2008-2010.

Lanzona's book examines the impact of women who participated in the Huk rebellion, first against the Japanese occupation and later as a communist insurgency against the Philippine government in the 1950s. These women were labeled as Amazons by the national press, serving as spies, organizers, nurses, couriers, soldiers and military commanders. The book also explores their personal lives in the movement, touching on relationships and raising families, often with their male comrades-in-arms.

Drawing on interviews with over 100 veterans of the movement, Lanzona's work was cited for its excellent management of the intimate and collective experiences of women in the Huk rebellion. Her work was also commended for her skillful exploration of how gender, family and sexuality helped shape the nature of the revolutionary struggle.

The book casts a new light to a significant chapter in Philippine history and raises comparative questions for scholars working on revolution and social action else-

where. It will be a required reading in courses on Modern World Revolutions.

Lanzona graduated with a B.A. in Liberal Arts from Ateneo de Manila. She worked briefly for the previous Aquino government before pursuing an M.A. in Historical Studies at the New School for Social Research in New York. She earned her Ph.D. in Southeast Asian History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Her specialty fields include modern Philippine and Southeast Asian history, Women and Revolution and general courses in Asian Civilizations and Cultures.

The Kenneth W. Baldrige Prize is normally awarded every two years but in 2008 it considered books published in the last three years. Previous awardees include Davianna McGregor for the book *Na Kua 'aina: Living Hawai'ian Culture*; Pierre Asselin for *A Bitter Peace*; Washington, Hanoi, and the Making of the Paris Agreement; Noeño Silva for her book *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawai'ian Resistance to American Colonialism*; and Leonard Y. Andaya for *The World of Maluku: Eastern Indonesia in the Early Mod-*

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(cont. from page 3; AMONG THE ...)

the needs of international travelers, the most basic of which are sufficient lavatories and a place to rest or pass the time in between flights, which could mean a wait of several hours. They're not looking for five-star accommodations.

Travelers pay an airport tax of P750 at the NAI, which amounts to about P8 billion a year, according to airport authorities. Where does the money go? Airports are the first places that greet travelers, leaving indelible impressions of the country. Travel surveys, while not comprehensive, should provide Philippine authorities with tips on what needs improvement at the country's premier airport. (www.philstar.com) ■

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Q & A

One-On-One with Waipahu Neighborhood Board Candidate Danny de Gracia

by HFC Staff

Most voters imagine making a difference in politics at the very top—either in electing a president, congressional candidate or state governor—but a few believe that the most inspiring results begin right at home in our neighborhoods.

On Oahu, the neighborhood board system provides a direct link for citizens to interface with their county, state and federal government and a forum to deliberate over important community issues that sometimes never catch the attention of officials in higher government.

The 2011 Neighborhood Board elections will be held in April and May of this year. At stake are 439 seats on Oahu's 33 Neighborhood Boards, whose volunteer members hold monthly meetings and serve as advisors on community concerns.

Elected to two-year terms, neighborhood board members are some of the most diverse individuals to serve in government. Among the candidates for the Waipahu Neighborhood Board No. 22 is Danny de Gracia, a Waipahu resident who believes that a great nation begins with safe, happy and prosperous neighborhoods.

De Gracia, 31, is no stranger to politics, government service or media. At age 18, he was already doing national interviews on Fox News and international interviews on the BBC World Service. By age 22, de Gracia had already completed his master's degree in political science, just one year after receiving his bachelor's degree.

Today, de Gracia is a growing voice in the small community of Waipahu, writing for international, national and local media alike, including regular columns with the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle. More recently, during the 2009 North Korean Missile Crisis, de Gracia was asked to discuss the threat of nuclear war and what Hawaii's preparedness was on the BBC.

As a writer, political scientist, economic advisor and ordained minister, de Gracia's expertise and passion spans several fields. For example, the current Libyan crisis is an issue he knows front and back—having studied under the Western world's top policy expert on Libya who defected to the U.S.

We had the chance to interview Danny and ask several questions about Oahu politics and the future of Hawaii.

HFC: Why are the neighborhoods important to Filipinos

living on Oahu?

De Gracia: On Oahu, there are many Filipinos who are very worried about the way things are going lately, but they work long hours and often have multiple jobs which makes it almost impossible for them to take an active role in politics. The Neighborhood Board exists to make sure that the community always has a voice and that every concern—whether it has to do with potholes or major state policies—is heard out. Filipinos need neighborhood board members who can ask the tough questions, press our government for results and make a big difference from the bottom up. Those without a voice need a voice, and that's why I believe the Board is so important.

HFC: What kind of experience and background would you bring to the Board?

De Gracia: When I was growing up, my mom wanted me to be a lawyer and my dad wanted me to be a doctor but I chose political science because I wanted to know what it takes to build and preserve a nation. Here in Hawaii, I have some seven years of experience in politics, both as a senior aide to two committee chairs and as an economic advisor and member of the board of scholars of a local nonprofit think tank.

I understand local, national and global issues and I have even been featured on the BBC World Service radio to discuss major policy topics, so I am prepared and able to tackle any community issue. I also enjoy serving people and helping others overcome difficult circumstances, which is why I chose to run for the neighborhood board.

HFC: What do you think are the most important issues to face Filipinos here in Hawaii?

What do you think can be done to address them?

De Gracia: Filipinos are hard workers but lately they've been forced to work harder than ever just to put food on the table because the economy has been so bad. With analysts predicting that gas may reach \$5 per gallon soon, food and medicine prices rising and jobs so scarce, a lot of Filipinos are wor-

ried about what the future is going to bring. Young Filipinos who are just now graduating from high school are faced with college tuition prices that are more expensive than any other time in America's history. Without money in the wallet and food on the table, everything grinds to a halt. These are very frustrating trends and people are desperate for relief. But I believe that there is still a chance to turn around this state and nation. If we can change a neighborhood, we can change a nation. José Rizal did it in the Philippines starting with just a few brave souls. We can do it here in Hawaii.

The biggest thing that needs to be done is to address the very core of the problem which deals with the weak purchasing power of the dollar. Gasoline is expensive because commodities like oil are purchased in dollars and because the Federal Reserve (the Fed) has been injecting billions of dollars backed by nothing into the market and loaning billions more to foreign countries without Congress' knowledge. The dollar has massively lost its value. Because China, Canada and the European Central Bank have raised interest rates, their currencies have gained against the dollar, which makes things harder on us here in Hawaii. This is why almost all 50 states are running budget deficits and seeing depressed revenues. We need to have people in office who understand how markets and finance work and we need to put political pressure on both Honolulu and Washington to stop the Fed from abusing any more of our money. It was just revealed a few days ago in the Fed's disclosure statements that we loaned close to \$5 billion in taxpayer dollars to Libya from 2008 to 2009 and now we're bombing Libyan facilities formerly funded by U.S. loans. That doesn't make much sense to me.

The second thing that will bring relief is for us to go over local state finances and start finding ways to plug the budget deficit, pay off the \$26.1 billion dollar debt and do it without raising taxes or asking for to be done through the courage of our elected leaders and the prayers of the people. There are a lot of dreams riding on what we do or fail to do.

HFC: Who are some of your role models and inspirations for pub-



Neighborhood Board Candidate Danny de Gracia

lic leadership?

De Gracia: My biggest source of inspiration has always been the Bible. Jesus taught that he desired mercy, not sacrifice and that is something that drives everything I do. I want to be a blessing to everyone I come into contact with and to leave things better than the way I found them.

HFC: Is there any advice you have for people who are worried about current events and concerned about the stability of their future?

De Gracia: There are a lot of things happening right now which

don't make sense and don't seem very fair. We hear reports of failing economies, earthquakes and natural disasters, wars and rumors of war. It's tempting to give in to fear but I believe that we can overcome all these things. The first nation on earth began with a small community who banded together and made a pact to survive and protect one another against all odds. From them came all nations on earth. Nations begin with neighborhoods. We don't have to live in fear so long as we love and fight for each other. If we can win back our neighborhoods, we will win back America!

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COMMENTARY

Edinburgh Tram Fiasco: Lessons For Honolulu?

by Panos D. PREVEDOUROS, Ph.D.

The Edinburgh Light Rail called Edinburgh Trams is the second great example of what's in store for Honolulu's transit project.

The first one is Tren Urbano in San Juan Puerto Rico where the system was built at twice the original cost. Five years after opening, it has failed to reach 50 percent of its opening year ridership forecast. The "usual suspect" is present in all three projects. Edinburgh, San Juan and Honolulu have the same consultant who prepared the rail project estimates.

Here are the results so far in Edinburgh, Scotland:

- Project originally scheduled to open in July 2011. Rescheduled to 2014 if at all.
- Original cost was \$640 million but now it over \$1 billion.
- 72 percent of the construction work remains to be done but only 38 percent of the budget is left.

Efforts to get Edinburgh's troubled trams project back on track

now seem certain to drag on beyond the Scottish Parliament elections in May.

"If people are delaying because they think more money will be forthcoming from any new Scottish Government, they had better think again," said Edinburgh official David McLetchie in the March 16, 2011 edition of the Edinburgh Evening News. "My party, and I believe others, are quite resolved there will be not a penny more than the original £500m that was committed and it is up to the city to meet any extra costs."

This is an important lesson to Honolulu. Federal bailout dollars are highly unlikely.

Although the disputed issues have been repeatedly described as "complex," they actually boil down to two simple facts:

1. The council has signed a legally binding contract with the tram consortium to build a tram line between Edinburgh Airport and Newhaven

2. It has insufficient money (and has secured no additional funding), to complete the works.

The council's liability for construction costs over the £500 million Scottish Government grant is desperately worrying for local taxpayers.

How, in a few short years, has the tram project gone from being the "vital" jewel in Edinburgh's shining crown to a potentially catastrophic financial millstone round its neck? The answer, again, is simple: over-optimism, arrogance, and a systemic failure on the part of professionals to protect the public interest and purse.

Fears that underground utility diversions would be significant, complex and time-consuming were patronizingly dismissed with assurances that super-duper, high-tech radar technology had located all underground pipes; and, crucially, the public need not fear significant cost increases because risk had been transferred to the private sector under "fixed price" contracts.



The army of private sector engineers, transportation modelers, transportation planners, environmental consultants, property experts, accountants and lawyers, having received protracted and generous recompense for their expertise, have also failed to ensure issues were resolved.

Honolulu is clearly no different: Subservient professionals offer politicians what they want to hear, and clueless politicians believe all of it. Poor planning and bad government guarantee a financial fiasco.

Honolulu has all the compo-

nents for a bad outcome. Meanwhile, the economic losses by both the public and private sectors are very real. Edinburgh has suffered three years of hurt for nothing. Traders whose livelihoods have been blighted by the trams project have spoken of their anger over the news that the route could be cut short. Business owners on Leith Walk have suffered three years of disruption as tram work was carried out outside their premises.

And much like Honolulu, Edinburgh ordered trains that it cannot use. ■

(cont. from page 4; UH ...)

ern Period, among others.

GRANT GOODMAN PRIZE FOR PHILIPPINE HISTORICAL STUDIES

Dr. Rey Iletto of the National University of Singapore was awarded the Grant Goodman Prize for Philippine Historical Studies by the Philippine Studies Group of the Association for Asian Studies. This prize is awarded to scholars with a distinguished career in the area of Philippine historical studies.

Iletto is best known for his book *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines 1840-1910* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University, 1979). His book explores the paradoxical character of religious ideology as a means of undermining as well as upholding an oppressive social order during the Spanish and American regimes in the country. His work attempts to

write history "from below," an alternative to more conventional research that views popular movements as aberrations or as creations by alienated individuals or external agitators.

Pasyon and Revolution was selected in 2009 as one of the most influential books on Southeast Asia by the Editorial Team of SOJOURN: The Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia. Iletto was cited for contributing to theory formation and empirical perceptions in Southeast Asia. He was also recognized for continuing to serve as pivotal reference point for contemporary scholars and for transcending the period his research material was written in.

Iletto finished his B.A. at the Ateneo de Manila University and earned his M.A. and Ph.D. at the Southeast Asia Program of Cornell University where he studied history,

cultural anthropology and literary criticism. He taught at the University of the Philippines from 1977 to 1985 before moving to James Cook University and to the Australian National University where he holds an Adjunct Professorship.

Among other positions Iletto has held include the Tañada Chair at De La Salle University in Manila, the Burns Chair in History at the University of Hawaii and senior fellowships at Kyoto University and Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. His writings have won him the Benda Prize, the Ohira Prize, the Philippine National Book Award, and the Fukuoka Asian Culture Prize.

Previous recipients of the Grant Goodman Prize have included prominent scholars such as Father John Schumacher, SJ, Alfred W. McCoy, Resil Mojares and Vicente Rafael, among others. It is awarded every two years.

HEADLINES (CONT.)

The recent awards accorded to the Filipino specialists are testaments to their dedicated efforts in bringing academic and professional studies of the Philippines to the world map. Their outstanding schol-

arship and leadership in Philippine studies will no doubt serve as inspiration to others scholars working towards greater understanding of the Philippines and its place in the international community. ■

(cont. from page 1; PALACE ...)

Last Sunday, the President hinted to graduates of the state-run University of the Philippines that he is willing to be excommunicated for supporting legislated birth control measures.

It was the strongest statement so far from the President on the burgeoning population issue.

Presidential spokesman Edwin Lacierda said Aquino has not wavered on his stand since the 2010 campaign.

Aquino said he is not afraid of threats of excommunication.

He said he is pushing for the passage of RP bill, which would "re-open, refocus and empower" Filipino couples and provide them with full public information regarding the natural and artificial methods of family planning.

Aquino claims the RP bill has a "lot of common grounds" with the RH bill now under plenary debate at the House of Representatives, downplaying speculations he is rejecting the consolidated RH measure.

"We are focused on the quality of life of all of their children and also on the idea that responsibility has to be borne by the parents together with the churches that they belong to and the state," he said.

Aquino said the RP bill — which Health Secretary Enrique Ona is drafting — is a "reorientation" of what

"the RH bill has been."

Aquino though evaded comparing approaches to the issue of population growth.

"Those who advocated one child per family are now regretting that they did so. Those that didn't have policy, regretted also," he said.

Malacañang said the Responsible Parenthood version of Aquino in the RH Bill in Congress would neither be in favor of the Catholic Church or RH bill advocates.

"The RP bill means that we will not favor one over the other. There would be no favor on family planning method," deputy presidential spokesperson Abigail Valte said.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson expressed support for Aquino for standing firm on his position in favor of the RH Bill amid threats of excommunication from sectors of the Catholic Church.

Lacson said he personally supports the RH bill as a way to curb poverty in the country but not as a means to promote abortion.

According to Lacson, the President was on the right track in pushing population management to curb the perennial problem of poverty.

"Finding ways to curb our monstrous population growth rate, which has been a major part of our poverty problem, is one sensible approach in poverty alleviation. Advocating population management is not being anti-life. In fact, it is pro-con-

(continued on page 10)

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IMMIGRATION GUIDE

Attractive Ilocana Charged with Immigration Fraud Wins Deportation Case



by Atty. Emmanuel Samonte TIPON

A young and attractive widow from Ilocos Norte with her three children entered the United States nine years ago as an immigrant based on a petition by her father. Her 5 brothers and their families were also given visas. They did not disclose to U.S. consular officers that their father was dead, otherwise they would not have been given visas. Generally, the petition dies with the death of the petitioner.

They were living happily in Hawaii all these years until an evil-minded Filipino reported them to Immigration and Customs Enforcement. In a pre-dawn raid executed simultaneously ala Nazi blitzkrieg, all of the brothers and sisters were captured and whisked to the Federal Detention Center in Honolulu where they were detained until bonded out. They were charged with obtaining a visa by fraud or misrepresentation and therefore inadmissible at the time of entry under Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) § 212(a)(6)(C)(i) [8 USC § 1182(a)(6)(C)(i)] and deportable

pursuant to INA § 237(a)(1)(A) [8 USC § 1227(a)(1)(A)].

IS THERE RELIEF FOR VISA FRAUD?

INA § 237(a)(1)(H) [8 USC § 1227(a)(1)(H)] provides that the removal of an alien who was inadmissible under § 212(a)(6)(C)(i) may be waived in the discretion of the Attorney General (or his deportation deputy, the Immigration Judge) for any alien who (1) is the spouse, parent, son, or daughter of a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident (qualifying relative), (2) was in possession of an immigrant visa, and (3) was otherwise admissible to the United States, except for the lack of labor certification or valid visa which were a direct result of that fraud or misrepresentation.

The Filipina was the first to be tried. She was statutorily eligible - daughter of a USC (her widowed mother), entered the U.S. with an immigrant visa, albeit fraudulently obtained and thus invalid, and was otherwise admissible to the U.S. except for the lack of a valid visa. Many aliens fail to meet these statutory requirements, particularly lack of a qualifying relative - "bridge to America".

EQUITIES OUTWEIGHS NEGATIVE FACTOR

However, it is not sufficient to be statutorily eligible for fraud waiver. The alien must establish that he/she is entitled to a favorable exercise of discretion by the Immigration Judge. The alien must show that he/she has more positive factors (equities) in his/her life than negative ones.

The Filipina won because she was a woman; attractive; fluent in English; had a steady job; went to church twice a week (Iglesia ni Cristo); had numerous letters of support from relatives, friends, employer, church minister, brothers and sisters in the faith. She admitted the fraud. Many Filipinos irritate the Judge by claiming they did not know that what they did was fraudulent or that it was their agent's fault. She explained that she committed fraud for the sake of her three young children whom she wanted to have a better life and that she could not care for them in the Philippines as a young widow. She had no criminal record; paid taxes; contributed to charity; baby sat in the evenings and on week-ends for her grandchild.

Additionally, she had an excellent lawyer whom she paid handsomely. The government lawyer

was relatively new. And, she married her long time boyfriend during deportation proceedings, thereby insuring she had an additional qualifying relative. One of her relatives also in deportation asked: "Will I also win?" My answer: "If you can match her qualifications." ■

(ATTY. TIPON has a Master of Laws degree from Yale Law School and a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of the Philippines. He practices in Hawaii, specializing in immigration law and criminal defense. Tel. (808) 225-2645. E-Mail: filamlaw@yahoo.com. Website: www.ImmigrationServicesUSA.com.

He is from Laoag City and Magsingal, Ilocos Sur. He served as an Immigration Officer. He is co-author of "Immigration Law Service, 1st ed.," an 8-volume practice guide for immigration officers and lawyers. Listen to the most funny, witty, and useful radio program in Hawaii on KNDI at 1270, AM dial every Tuesday at 7:30 a.m. and on KHBC at 1060, AM dial every Thursday at 8 p.m. This article is a general overview of the subject matter discussed and is not intended as legal advice. No warranty is made by the writer or publisher as to its completeness or correctness at the time of publication.)

HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

Aiea Library to Offer Preschool Storytime

AIEA PUBLIC LIBRARY WILL OFFER PRESCHOOL STORYTIME during Spring 2011 on Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. The storytime program is free and will be

conducted in the library's main meeting room.

Preschool Storytime will be offered from April 20 through June 1, 2011. Children ages 3 through 5 are invited to experience stories, finger plays, songs and a simple make-and-take craft. An adult must

accompany and sit with their child.

Contact the library two weeks in advance if a sign language interpreter or other special accommodation is needed. Aiea Public Library is located at 99-143 Moanalua Road. For more information, please call 483-7333. ■

PICTORIAL NEWS



Veterans, elected officials, community leaders and distinguished guests commemorate Araw ng Kaglitngan (Day of Valor) with special ceremonies on April 4, 2011 at Punchbowl National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. The annual ceremonies at Punchbowl are sponsored by the Philippine Consulate General of Honolulu. 2011 marks the 113th Independence Day for the Republic of the Philippines.

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try and pro-people," Lacson said.

Lacson said he filed a similar proposal during the 14th Congress, seeking for reproductive health and population management to curb poverty.

Lacson has proposed the creation of a reproductive health and population management council to implement an integrated policy on reproductive health.

Lacson's proposal contained provisions for timely, complete and accurate information and education on reproductive health and access to safe, adequate and affordable reproductive health care services, all of which are similar to the current RH bills filed in Congress.

Lacson stressed he does not support any move to promote or legalize abortion, which he said has no place in the definition of reproductive parenthood and is a crime under the Revised Penal Code.

"Any form of abortion should be condemned and punished. That much is clear," he

said.

The Senate committee on health and demography and youth and family relations has conducted several hearings on the proposed RH bill filed by Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago and so far, the supporters and critics were split down the middle on the measure.

The Catholic Church is leading some sectors against the bill, saying there is no need for a legislated birth control and in some instances, condemning the supporters of the measure.

Lacson chided critics of the bill for saying that it is anti-life.

He said population management must be addressed as most poor Filipinos do not have enough food or access to basic services.

"There is not enough food on the table, many are homeless, the poor have almost zero opportunity to have access to education, health care and the most basic social services, which they can otherwise enjoy with an efficient but moral population management program," Lacson said. (www.philstar.com) ■

■ PHILIPPINE NEWS

Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 (NAIA-3)

Lawyer Quits Fraport Case

by Edu PUNAY

Monday, April 18, 2011

MANILA, Philippines - **PUBLIC INTEREST LAWYER JOSE BERNAS GAVE UP HIS BID** to hold German Fraport AG and its local partner, Philippine International Air Terminals Co. (Platco), liable for the sloppy construction of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 (NAIA-3).

Bernas lamented the lack of government support on the anti-trust charges he filed against the firms.

Bernas filed a manifestation with the Court of Appeals (CA) that had dismissed his petition.

He said he has decided to leave the prosecution of the case up to the Office of the Solicitor General and the Department of Justice.

The CA earlier junked his appeal for lack of legal standing against Fraport and Platco. Bernas accused the two firms of excluding competitors to monopolize the operation and services at NAIA-3. He submitted the supposed addendum in the contract, but was nullified by the Supreme Court.

Bernas, however, maintained his belief that there were obvious violations of the anti-trust law and stressed the prosecution of the case is now with the OSG and DOJ.

He expressed dismay over the long undue delay in prosecution of the anti-trust case almost 10 years ago.

Bernas admitted getting disappointed over the lack of aggressiveness and resolve of the government to prosecute anti-dummy charges even as the Washington-based International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) had dismissed Fraport's compensation

claim for violation of the host country's anti-dummy law.

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) in Singapore had earlier ruled out the payment claims of Platco on this same ground.

Bernas said Philippine government lacks the determination to prosecute related local cases as shown by failure to present evidence used at the ICSID and ICC on the basis of a confidentiality rule.

He said it was ironic that instead of ejecting Fraport and Platco from the government property where they illegally built the facility, the Philippine government filed expropriation case aimed at paying the contractor.

He said the filing of the expropriation action placed the burden on the government to chase Platco to agree to payment when it should be made to work for payment.

After the ICC ruled the anti-dummy law results in forfeiture, there was no reason for government to maintain the expropriation case.

Bernas said the information against Platco and Fraport shareholders should have not been withdrawn because he seasonably filed a motion for reconsideration with the Department of Justice.

To date, the DOJ's resolution on Sept. 11, 2006 ordering the withdrawal of information has not gained finality, he said.

Bernas said concerted acts, which restrict trade and endanger the national economy especially if these pertain to an international airport, should be presented or prosecuted for national interest.

The law intends to punish the mere conspiracy or combination at which it is aimed.

(continued on page 11)

PHILIPPINE NEWS

Campaign vs Tax Cheats Boost Gov't Collections in Q1



by Paolo ROMERO/
Monday, April 18, 2011

MANILA, Philippines — **THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT SAID MONDAY** that the Bureau of Internal Revenue's better-than-expected first quarter performance could be credited to its campaign

against tax cheats and the taxpayers' confidence on the government's fiscal prudence.

"We believe that the Filipino people have every confidence that the government is fiscally prudent and that taxes collected will be spent wisely," Presidential

Spokesman Edwin Lacierda said Monday.

In the first quarter of the year, the BIR collected 199.55 billion pesos (4.62 billion U.S. dollars), or 2.51 billion pesos (57.87 million U.S. dollars) above its target of 197.04 billion pesos (4.56 billion U.S. dollars) for the period. The BIR's tax collections account for about 70 percent of the government's revenues.

Lacierda said it's too early to tell whether the BIR's first quarter performance is indicative of its collections for the whole year.

"But we hope that because of the investors' confidence in the country, a lot of foreign direct investments would come in, businesses would flourish and consequently tax collections would go up," he said. (www.philstar.com) ■

Government Warns of Evacuating Residents from Zone of Taal Volcano

by Rudy SANTOS/
Monday, April 18, 2011



MANILA, Philippines (Xinhua) — **THE AUTHORITIES WILL FORCIBLY EVACUATE RESIDENTS** who refuse to leave the danger zone of the restive Taal volcano, senior government official warned today.

Presidential Spokesperson Edwin Lacierda, in his regular press briefing, said that it is important to save the lives of the people.

"If we see that the pending eruption will pose a danger to the lives of these people, we will have to forcibly evacuate them," he said.

Lacierda is asking people living near Taal volcano to voluntarily evacuate the premises. He added that Lacierda the Department of Social Welfare and Development will help the

evacuees. The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said today that 21 volcanic earthquakes were recorded around Taal volcano in Batangas province during the past 24 hours.

It said that on one of the quakes, which occurred at 10:06 a.m. local time on Sunday, was felt by residents at Intensity 2 in Calautit village.

Water temperature at the main crater lake slightly increased from 29 degrees Celsius to 30.1 degrees Celsius, Phivolcs added. (www.philstar.com) ■

44 Repatriated Pinoys Arrive from Japan

by Rudy SANTOS/
Monday, April 18, 2011

MANILA, Philippines - **A GROUP OF FILIPINAS AND THEIR CHILDREN** who were repatriated from Japan after the Philippine government adopted a policy for Filipinos living within the 100-kilometer radius of the Fukushima power plant yesterday arrived at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 2.

Twenty-five of the 44 were minors. The Philippine embassy repatriation team in Tokyo fetched them from Fukushima City on April 16. From there they were brought to Narita, while embassy staff arranged for their overnight stay. Philippine Ambassador to



Japan Manuel Lopez, who arrived with the group, said that some 2,000 Filipinos live within the 100-kilometer radius of the nuclear power plant and most of them are long-term residents in the area. They are spouses and children of Japanese nationals.

The Philippines made possible the repatriation policy in line with its contingency plan and the Department of Foreign Affairs' (DFA) mandate of promoting the welfare of

Filipino nationals abroad.

Marianne Shike, 44, and her six-year-old son Shikesota were among those who arrived. She said her husband told her to go back to the Philippines for the meantime because he was afraid for their safety.

Evangeline Machikachi, 37, who is married to a Japanese club owner, brought her two kids with her after her husband decided to send her back home. She said they will stay here for two months and will go back to Japan if the situation becomes stable. (www.philstar.com) ■

(cont. from page 10; LAWYER ...)

The addendum dated July 6, 1999 excluded between Platco and Fraport provides that PAGS (Philippine Airport and Ground Services) and/or its designated affiliates shall be exclusively authorized to provide ground handling, catering and fueling services, construct and operate a warehouse for air-cargo handling and related services within the site.

These provisions in the contract, Bernas pointed out, are in violation of Article 186 of the Revised Penal Code, which punishes monopolies and combinations in restraint of trade.

The contract was modified with addition of five words: "As the law may allow," Bernas added.

Records showed a local court granted the withdrawal of the information and dismissed the case instead of proceeding with the determination of probable cause and culpability of the respondents.

The DOJ had consequently also ordered the public prosecutors who filed the information with the MTC to withdraw the same. The court also approved the move.

But Bernas decided to pursue the case and won in the regional trial court, which granted his appeal and overruled the MRTC since it did not evaluate the evidence to de-

termine whether probable cause exists and instead merely adopted the findings of the Office of the City Prosecutor dated Sept. 20, 2004, contrary to prevailing jurisprudence.

When elevated to the CA, however, the case was dismissed due to lack of legal standing of Bernas.

The OSG has taken the position of Bernas that there was probable cause to prosecute the anti-trust complaint and that Bernas has the personality to pursue the case.

But the appellate court did not consider OSG's comment due to alleged late submission.

The CA, in effect, also expunged Bernas' claim to legal standing to prosecute the anti-dummy case even after it granted the anti-trust motion for reconsideration that there were indeed violations of the Anti-Trust Law.

Bernas argued that there was no reason to expunge the comment of OSG because the comment was already filed when the appellate court decided not to grant the solicitor general an extension.

Bernas said the OSG's comment was expunged because the solicitor general sided with him and was in opposition to the position taken by the DOJ to withdraw the information. (www.philstar.com) ■

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PHILIPPINE NEWS

Aquino Urged to Act on Media Killings

by Paolo ROMERO
Wednesday, April 20, 2011

MANILA, Philippines - A **FORMER SANDIGANBAYAN JUSTICE URGED** yesterday President Aquino to work on ending the killings of journalists and activists in the country instead of blaming the judiciary for the violence.

Former Sandiganbayan justice Raoul Victorino was commenting on the statement of presidential spokesman Edwin Lacierda that the judiciary was to be blamed for the unresolved cases of killings of journalists in the country.

He said as a retired justice, he felt that it was his obligation "to defend the judiciary from baseless and uncalled-for criticisms, especially those coming from persons who are expected to protect and respect the institution."

"The statement of spokesman Edwin Lacierda shifting the blame over the media killings to the judiciary does not, to my mind, help any-

one. It gives no assurance whatsoever to our citizens, especially the families and loved ones of the slain journalists, that our government is doing something to address their concerns," Victorino said.

"Nor does it proffer any proposed solutions to stop the spate of media killings. On the contrary, the Palace displayed insensitivity by issuing this statement, and worse, it sowed animosity towards a coequal branch of government, which is its partner in resolving crimes against journalists and against the public in general," he said.

He said instead of finding ways with which the judiciary and the executive can work together to put an end to the media killings, "the Palace may, unfortunately, perpetrate distrust, discord and hostility."

"Being a distinguished lawyer himself, Lacierda knows that the executive branch plays a great role in the administration of justice," Victorino said.

"It is not the judiciary but the ex-

ecutive that does the manhunts, arrests, gathering of evidence and filing of cases. The executive is the very branch of government which runs after the criminals, such as those who committed the crime of murder against our journalists, and builds the cases against these vil-

lains, and it is the judiciary that, after due process and when warranted by the evidence, decides the cases for acquittal or conviction."

Victorino, who had a brief stint as chief presidential legal counsel during the Arroyo administration, pointed out that former President

and now Pampanga Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was pilloried by allies of President Aquino for her reported inaction on media killings.

"Now that President Aquino is at the helm, should he now wash his hands of any responsibility for bringing justice to the death of our journalists and putting an end to the continued spree of media killings?" he asked. (www.philstar.com) ■

Teen Summa Cum Laude Breaks 65-year UP Record

by Lawrence AGCAOILI /
Monday, April 11, 2011

MANILA, Philippines - **AFTER 65 YEARS, A TEEN BROKE THE RECORD OF A PROFESSOR** EMERITUS in political science in the University of the Philippines by garnering a weighted average of 1.016.

Nineteen-year-old John Gabriel Pelias is graduating summa cum laude with a degree in Bachelor of Science in Mathematics.

Except for only three subjects, Pelias got 1.0, the highest grade possible, in his entire stay in the UP Institute of Math. He got 1.25, the second highest possible grade, in other subjects, GMA News reported.

Prof. Emerenciana Yuvienico Arcellana, Ph.D., widow of the late National Artist for Literature Francisco Arcellana and mother of STAR desk editor Juanjui, held the previous record with 1.02 upon graduating in 1946, whose commencement speaker was President

Manuel Roxas.

Dr. Gertrude Gwen-dene M. Baron was the closest to the record of Arcellana with an average of 1.03 upon graduating with the degree in B.S. Biology.

Pelias is one of UP's poorest scholars with his family earning less than P80,000 a year.

His scholarship money supported his family for years. Instead of taking a ride, he walked from his home to school, according to the report.

The achievement of Pelias was announced on the Facebook of Jose Wendell Capili, UP assistant vice president for Public Affairs and director for of Alumni Relations, UP System.

"He has unwavering focus and maturity beyond his years. I see him discussing philosophy and political theory with former UP President (Francisco) 'Dodong' Nemenzo. I was one having a nose-bleed, not him (when they talk),"



John Gabriel Pelias and The Oblation

Capili said on Facebook.

Aside from Nemenzo, Pelias is a protégé of Math Prof. Fidel Nemenzo and College of Science Associate dean Mariano Roque, math Prof. Noli Reyes, and UP Institute of Math Director Balmaeceda.

"Pelias is a true iskol ng bayani (nation's scholar) who is ready to give back to the country and institution that supported his academic pursuits by teaching in his alma mater when classes resume in time," said Capili.

He will be this year's speaker on behalf of UP Diliman's graduating batch on April 17. (www.philstar.com) ■

Temperature Soars to 36.8°C

by Helen FLORES
Wednesday, April 20, 2011

MANILA, Philippines - **THE TEMPERATURE IN CABANATUAN CITY REACHED 36.8** degrees Celsius last Monday, the warmest recorded in the country since the state weather bureau declared the onset of the summer season on April 12.

Robert Sawi, chief of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA)'s weather division, said warmer weather is expected to prevail in the coming days.

In Metro Manila, the maximum

daytime temperature was 34.8 degrees Celsius recorded at 3:10 p.m. yesterday.

"We expect the temperatures to rise further in the coming days," Sawi said in a text message. However, PAGASA officials earlier declared that this year's summer season will be cooler than last year due to the prevailing La Niña phenomenon.

PAGASA acting administrator Nathaniel Servando said Filipinos may experience the warmest temperatures in the latter part of April.

Sawi said the La Niña event is expected to bring rains in some parts of the country which could slightly disperse the heat.

(www.philstar.com) ■

PAL Cuts Fare on Flights from Narita to Manila

by Rudy SANTOS
Wednesday, April 20, 2011

MANILA, Philippines - **PHILIPPINE AIRLINES (PAL) SLASHED ITS FARE BY MORE THAN 30 PERCENT** on flights from Narita, Japan to Manila as a way of helping Filipino evacuees from Fukushima prefecture.

The price of a one-way ticket from Narita to Manila or Narita-Cebu has been reduced for a limited time from \$500 to \$335.

PAL chairman and CEO Lucio Tan ordered the discounting of plane tickets for Filipinos following reports of high radiation levels near Fukushima.

But only those facing involuntary evacuation from areas declared as danger zones by Japanese authorities can avail themselves of the "all-in" discounted tickets, excluding Japanese taxes or fees.

They are advised to coordinate with the Philippine embassy in Japan in charge of overseeing the repatriation.



Regular passengers, on the other hand, may buy their tickets through the PAL sales office in Narita Airport. PAL ticket offices in Tokyo, Osaka, Fukuoka and Nagoya, and accredited travel agents in Japan or the PAL website.

PAL said the latest airlift assistance is the company's contribution to the Philippine government in charge of repatriating Filipino victims of earthquake, tsunami and radiation leaks.

The company said the reduced fares are just enough to recover actual cost of operating the flights such as jet fuel, landing and parking fees, crew salaries, other airport fees, among others.

A few weeks ago, PAL started shipping thousands of bottles of water to Japan.

Donated by Asia Brewery Inc., another Tan-owned company, the drinking water was sourced through the Tokyo metropolitan government.

A total of 700,000 bottles of distilled water were shipped for free by PAL to help calamity victims.

Last March 9 and 10, PAL also repatriated over 700 Filipinos and their families from Libya.

PAL flies once a day from Narita (Tokyo) to Manila using the 370-seater Boeing 777-300ER aircraft, and five times a week from Narita to Cebu using the 302-seater Airbus A330-300. (www.philstar.com) ■

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LEGAL NOTES

Wage Obligations of H1B Employers



by Reuben S. SEGURITAN

In a Q&A guideline dated February 17, 2011, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) discussed the obligations of an H1B petitioner. Among these obligations is the payment of the required wages.

In the labor condition application (LCA) filed with the DOL, the H1B employer must promise that it has paid or will pay the required wage for the worker for the entire period of the authorized employment.

The employer attests that it will pay whichever is higher between

the actual wage rate (the rate the employer pays all other individuals with similar experience and qualifications for the position in question) or the prevailing wage (the wage paid to workers in the same occupational classification in the area of intended employment)

Wage violations carry with them sanctions such as civil penalties, back wages and debarment from the H1B program. Violations may be reported to the USCIS or DOL.

To find out what the prevailing wage is, the employer may request a prevailing wage determination from the National Prevailing Wage Center (NPWC). Alternative wage sources for the prevailing wage include the collective bargaining agreement, a wage survey conducted by an independent authoritative source, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment Statistics Survey (OES) data that can be accessed online through the ICERT Portal System

and the FLC Data Center. The employer should keep documentation of the offered wage on file.

The prevailing wage is valid during the validity of the H1B petition. In no case may the employer pay a wage lower than the federal, state, or local minimum wage, whichever is higher. The current federal minimum wage rate is \$7.25 per hour.

The obligation to pay the required wage rate begins when the employee "enters into employment", which is when the employee presents him/herself for work or comes under the control of the employer. According to regulations, this includes waiting for an assignment, reporting for orientation or training, going to an interview, or studying for a licensing examination. Even when the employee has not yet "entered into employment", he/she must be placed on the payroll beginning on the 30th day after admission into the U.S. pursuant to the H1B petition, or if already in the

U.S., beginning on the 60th day after he/she becomes eligible to work for the employer.

The employer is not exempted from paying an employee on non-productive or "benched" status. If the employee works full-time, he/she must still be paid the full pro-rata amount due (if the employee is salaried) or for an entire workweek (if paid hourly). Part-time employees must be paid for at least the number of hours indicated in the H-1B petition.

Law and regulations require that the H-1B worker continues to be paid even during a temporary reduction in force or temporary shut-down. If the employee is non-productive because of his/her own decision to be unavailable for work and for a reason unrelated to employment, there is generally no obligation to pay the wage rate.

In some instances, the employer's obligation to pay terminates prior to the expiration of the LCA's validity, such as when the

H1B worker resigns, moves to another employer, or is terminated from work. When the employee voluntarily leaves, the employer may not charge the H1B worker a penalty fee outright or through deductions, but they may enter into an agreement for the payment of liquidated damages in case of early termination by the worker.

A bona fide termination also ends the employer's obligation to pay the required wage. The employer must have notified both the employee and the Department of Homeland Security, and it must also pay for the worker's cost of return transportation to his/her last place of foreign residence. This offer of transportation cost does not extend to the worker's dependents. ■

REUBEN S. SEGURITAN has been practicing law for over 30 years. For further information, you may call him at (212) 695-5281 or log on to his website at www.seguritan.com

PHILIPPINE NEWS

Erap Blames GMA for Phl Miseries

by Jose Rodol CLAPANO
Wednesday, April 20, 2011

MANILA, Philippines - FORMER PRESIDENT JOSEPH ESTRADA SAID IT IS HIS BIRTHDAY WISH to see the Aquino administration succeed in stamping out corruption and making former President and now Pampanga Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo pay for inflicting so much misery on Filipinos.

"The poor Filipino people are suffering because of the massive corruption that has transpired in the previous administration. She (Arroyo) has to pay for all of this, for turning almost all the government agencies into corrupt institutions," Estrada told reporters during his 74th birthday celebration in "Erap City," a resettlement area in Taytay, Rizal for displaced San Juan residents.

With him were San Juan Mayor Guia Gomez and their son Rep. JV Ejercito.

"I'm happy that I'm still healthy,

I can still and I was able to go around and continue my tradition of giving gifts to at least 10,000 poor Filipinos to whom I owe my successful career as an actor and as a public servant," Estrada said. "My birthday wish is justice for the Filipino people."

He said he hopes President Aquino would be able to fulfill his promises to the nation, particularly of eradicating corruption.

Arroyo succeeded Estrada after his ouster in a bloodless revolt in 2001. But Estrada called EDSA II a conspiracy among a few influential businessmen, civil society and the military.

Estrada said corruption became entrenched in institutions during the Arroyo administration, particularly in the Philippine National Police, the military, the Department of Public Works and Highways, the Department of Justice, the Office of the Ombudsman and the Department of Agriculture.

Arroyo pardoned Estrada in October 2007, months after his con-

viction for plunder.

"Her guilt is as clear as the morning," Estrada said.

Estrada tried to make a political comeback by running for president in May 2010 but lost to President Aquino. He placed second in the race but was five million votes behind Aquino. He said he was vindi-

cated by the result of the elections.

Estrada said Mrs. Arroyo should be made to face all the allegations against her, including alleged cheating in the 2004 presidential election where Estrada's friend, popular movie actor Fernando Poe, Jr. lost by a million votes.

Estrada said a recorded conversation between Mrs. Arroyo and a poll official widely believed to be then commissioner Virgilio Garcilano was enough proof of manipulation of the 2004 election results.

"In eradicating corruption we must find justice for the crimes against the people that have been done by the past administration, not only for plunder but especially for stealing the people's votes," Estrada said. (www.philstar.com) ■

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ENTERTAINMENT

Jose Mari Chan: Manhattan is in the Heart

FUNFARE by Ricardo F. LO

Back in 1986, I visited Jose Mari Chan in his office at one of the skyscrapers on Wall Street in New York City. He was manning the family's sugar business, and we sat at a sofa near a window which commanded a sweeping view of Manhattan. At that moment, I felt the inspiration that fueled Jose Mari to write *Refrain*, one of his classic songs, with this line: *I look out and I see the rain as it falls on my window pane. And the music that's in my heart is a sad refrain...Fluctuations in the market scene fill my Dow Jones with every be, and the music that's in my heart is the same sad refrain...*

That's why I was not surprised when his new album is called *The Manhattan Connection: The Songs of Jose Mari Chan* (re-leased by Universal Records). Besides the fact that Manhattan is in his heart because he and his family lived there (in the upscale Scarsdale), the album is the brainchild of Manhattan Transfer member Janis Siegel.

Unlike Christian Bautista's *Romance Revisited* (also by Universal Records) which is composed of JMC covers, all song by Christian, the 11 covers on *Manhattan Connection* are rearranged by foreign award-winning artists handpicked by Siegel and co-pro-

ducer Yaron Gershovsky, namely: *Constant Change* and *Stay, My Love* by Nic Bearde, *Like Night & Day* by Roger Treece and Lauren Kinhan, *Thank You, Love by World Hardy*, *I Have Found My Joy In You and Easier Said Than Done* by Kellye Evans, *A Heart's Journey* by Leo Sidran, *Love Lost* by Lisa Fischer, *Walking In The Moonlight* by Theo Bleckmann (with an a cappella intro by Siegel and Lauren Masse), *So I'll Go by Siegel and Kinhan* and *Spellbound* by Miles Griffith.

Asked if he had a hand in choosing the selections on the album, Jose Mari said no.

Siegel and Gershovsky requested Jose Mari to lend them his entire catalogue of songs, and the next time Jose Mari knew they had come up with CD.

"I didn't even hear the songs until I heard the finished product," Jose Mari told *Funfare* in a one-on-one after the presscon held the other day at Starbucks (Tomas Morato, Quezon City) which is selling the album in its outlets nationwide. "One day when my wife (Maryann Ansaldo) and I were in New York, Janis invited us to her apartment and played the CD. I was floored!"

I felt the same way when I played the CD on my car stereo on

my way to The STAR. Yes, I, too, was floored! Hearing Jose Mari's old familiar love songs with a refreshing, jazzy touch is an entirely new memorable listening experience.

It's not the first time that JMC's songs have been remade by other artists but this one stands out because it's done by foreign artists in a first ever tribute to a Filipino artist.

"I'm humbled," Jose Mari said, clarifying that it's not the Manhattan Transfer that sings the songs but other artists, with Siegel and Gershovsky as the only two with Manhattan Transfer "connection."

Somebody asked Jose Mari what his opinion is on foreign artists having concerts here, something frowned upon by his colleagues (foremost of whom is Kuh Ledesma who wanted foreign artists "banned" during the Valentine Season).

Matter-of-factly, Jose Mari said that he, in fact, welcomed foreign artists because music being universal, there shouldn't be any line discriminating one from the other because of race or nationality.

"You know," he said, "this is a free country. Filipinos love music and it is their freedom to go and watch what they want, whether a local show or a foreign show," recalling that once upon a time he himself produced a show by a foreign artist, Michael Johnson (*And I'll Always Love You*, etc.) who, without Jose Mari's asking him, sang Jose Mari's hit song *Beautiful Girl*.

"I watched Matt Monro when he



performed here," adding in jest, "and I even watched the Beatles at the Rizal Memorial Stadium. The ticket was so expensive that I saved for it and didn't eat breakfast for three days," then turning serious, "Besides, artists can learn from each other. Filipinos can learn from foreign artists and vice-versa. But I also hope that our Filipino will support local artists. For example, if Lady Gaga performs here, maybe she can hire a local band to back her up."

The album, added Jose Mari, has shown him that, as he said, music is universal.

"I composed the song with a Filipino sensibility but the foreign artists captured it perfectly well. The Americans easily related to the

thoughts and feelings expressed in my songs. You get the feeling that they seem to be saying, 'Yeah, I've experienced that.'"

Multi-awarded (Diamond Record Awards in sales for *Constant Change* and a Double Platinum for *Christmas In Our Hearts*, etc.), Jose Mari has kept his youthful looks and exuberance that made him an idol in his own right during his *Nineteen80s* days back in the '60s and '70s.

"What makes you look young?" Mario Bautista asked Jose Mari, a father of three boys (Michael, Joe and Franco) who all sing and a girl (Lisa) who sings with Jose Mari the carrier single of *Christmas In Our Hearts*. "I married the right woman," said Jose Mari. (www.philstar.com) ■

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MAINLAND NEWS

Phl Books \$20-Million Seafood Orders in US Trade Show

MANILA, Philippines - **FRESH CHILLED TUNA AND POMPANOS FROM THE PHILIPPINES** earned a total of \$20.196

million or roughly P869 million in booked orders and negotiated sales in the International Boston Seafood Show in Massachusetts, USA held last March 20-22, 2011.

The 14-man Philippine delegation headed by Agriculture Assistant Secretary

Salvador S. Salacup reported to Secretary Proceso J. Alcala that sales represented a 187-percent increase in the original target sales of only \$10 million for the event.

Bestsellers were Philippine fresh chilled tuna and pompano - due mainly to their excellent quality

and taste as well as its year-round availability.

Salacup reported that previous buyers and importers immediately placed an initial order and delivery of 500 kilograms per week at P10

per kilogram for the next three months beginning April 2011.

Salacup informed Secretary Alcala that there is still a vast opportunity for the expansion of Philippine aquatic resource products considering that many supermarkets and retail stores near the

exhibition site sold fish, frozen seafood products, shrimps, prawns, crabs, tilapia, tuna loins, squids and octopus.

Unfortunately, the source of seafoods products in the US currently comes from Taiwan and China. (www.philstar.com) ■



Asec. Salvador Salacup

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

FILIPINO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE'S 2011 FILIPINO ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR AND 2011 YOUNG FILIPINO ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR AWARDS/ FRIDAY
 April 29, 2011, 7pm • Hale Koa Hotel, DeRussy Ballroom • For details, contact Bernadette Fajardo at 342-8090 or Jamesner Dumlao @ 728-5767

2011 FILIPINO FIESTA / SATURDAY
 May 7, 2011 • Parade: 9 – 10am
 Fiesta at Kapiolani Park: 10am – 4pm • For more information, call the FilCom Center at 680-0451

BAYANIHAN CLINIC WITHOUT WALLS' 2011 COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELLNESS FAIR / SATURDAY
 May 7, 2011, 10am – 4pm • Kapiolani

Park • For more info, call JP Orias @ 387-8297

UNITED PANGASINAN ASSOCIATION OF HAWAII'S 43RD ANNIVERSARY AND INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS / SATURDAY
 May 21, 2011, 6pm • Pacific Beach Hotel • For more info, contact Cely Villareal @ 778-2481 or Fred Martinez @ 358-8049

UFCH'S MRS. HAWAII FILIPINA / SUNDAY
 May 29, 2011, 6pm • Ala Moana Hotel • Contact: Lynne Gutierrez-728-1700

OFCC'S MS. OAHU FILIPINA / SATURDAY
 June 4, 2011, 6pm • Hawaii Prince Hotel • Contact: Maria Etrata-392-2962

OFCC CONVENTION / SUNDAY
 June 12, 2011, 7:30am – 4pm • Philippine Consulate • For more info, Contact: Mario Palma @ 397-8626, Maria Etrata @ 392-2962 or Amado Yoro @ 699-9814

UFCH CONVENTION IN LAS VEGAS / FRIDAY
 July 15, 2011, 7:30am – 4pm • Contact: Lynne Gutierrez-728-1700

ILOCOS SURIAN ASSOCIATION OF HAWAII, DINNER AWARDS AND FUNDRAISING / SATURDAY
 August 27, 2011, 6pm • Coral Ballroom, Hilton Hawaiian Village • Contact: Danny Villaruz @ 778-0233 or Maria Etrata @ 392-2962

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GLOBAL NEWS

Saudi Pardons, Frees Pinoy Drug Mule

MANILA, Philippines – THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS SAID TODAY THAT AN OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKER (OFW) who was earlier sentenced to death in Saudi Arabia was granted pardon and freed Sunday.

The Philippine Embassy in Riyadh reported that the repatriation of the freed OFW has been arranged and she is due to arrive in Manila today.

The Embassy is not releasing his name, in deference to the request of his family for privacy. The OFW was sentenced to death by beheading in November 2009 by a tribunal of three judges for involvement in smuggling illegal drugs in Saudi Arabia.

In February 2008, he was apprehended by Saudi law enforcement agents after receiving a postal package with shabu hidden inside. Smuggling and selling of illegal drugs in Saudi is punishable by death.

Through the help of the Philippine post in Riyadh, two members of the tribunal reduced the penalty from death to 15 years imprisonment, 1500 lashes and a fine of 100,000 Saudi Riyals.



The Embassy included the OFW's name in the list submitted to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz al Saud for the grant of Royal Clemency.

The Embassy's efforts were favorably acted upon, and the prisoner was released after serving three years in detention.

Upon release, he tearfully thanked the Embassy for its relentless efforts for his freedom, while expressing gratitude to Charge d'Affaires (CDA) Ezzedin H. Tago.

"His release is testament to the hard work and tireless dedication of the men and women of the Philippine Embassy in Riyadh in safeguarding the welfare of every Filipino in Saudi Arabia," CDA Tago said.

The OFW is the third Filipino sentenced to death in Saudi Arabia whose freedom was successfully secured by the Embassy – Michael Roque was released from prison in February 2011, while Nonito Abono was released in November 2010. (www.philstar.com)

Binay Asks for P24-Million Repatriation Budget for Saudi OFWs

MANILA, Philippines - VICE PRESIDENT JEJOMAR BINAY HAS ASKED MALACANANG FOR THE RELEASE of money from the President's Social Fund for the immediate repatriation of some overstaying overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in Saudi Arabia.

In his letter to President Aquino, Binay asked for the release of P23,640,030 from the President's Social Fund or any funding source to buy plane tickets for 1,084 OFWs staying at the Hajj Terminal in Jeddah.

The Vice President, also presidential adviser on OFWs, noted that the government is paying 15 riyals daily for every OFW housed at the Hajj terminal, which creates a "serious drain" on the "limited resources" of the Philippine embassy in Saudi.

The Saudi Arabian government is extending full cooperation in providing necessary travel clearances, but we need to provide the air tickets to bring them (OFWs) home to the Philippines," he said.

Binay added that there are still around 4,500 overstaying Filipinos in Saudi who are awaiting repatriation and whose total airfare is pegged at P143 million.

"The President has previously authorized this funding, as requested by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA). But the DBM (Department of Budget and Management) simply referred to it back to the DFA. This will not solve the problem," he said.

"The DFA's Assistance to Nationals (ATN) Fund is limited to specific programs and is now depleted, and cannot possibly be tapped to fund this repatriation without disabling those programs," Binay added.

He said the DFA has absorbed a 40-percent budget cut from P19 billion in 2010 to P10.98 billion this year. This, he said, reduced the department's ATN Fund from P200 million to P109.3 million. The fund is used for repatriation, shipment of

remains, medical assistance and many others. Last month, Binay went on an official mission to Saudi Arabia and secured the Kingdom's approval to facilitate the repatriation of the 4,500 OFWs, most of whom are staying in private homes.

MIGRANTE HITS LENIENCY OF EMBASSY OFFICIALS
 Meanwhile, a migrant workers group has accused Philippine embassy officials in Saudi Arabia yesterday of leniency in handling important cases on pressing OFWs concern.

"Based on pending cases and the numerous complaints we have been receiving from OFWs, embassy officials have been noticed to have an easygoing attitude in dealing with cases to the point of neglecting these cases that need urgent intervention from the embassy," said Migrante-Middle East region coordinator John Leonard Monterona.

He said one example is the case of Sophia, not her real name, who has been sent to jail for alleged immorality case when she along with other two Pakistanis were arrested in a raid on a house in Riyadh.

"She has been detained for more than two months now and from the very beginning we have asked embassy officials to attend to her case. As per our investigation she, along with 10 other OFWs, was a victim of human smuggling," Monterona said.

Upon following up her case with the Philippine embassy, it was known that she had not been visited at Al Nisaj jail in Riyadh despite promises by embassy officials that she will be visited to get information from her and thereby provide her assistance.

"This is reflective on the poor leadership of Consul General Ezzadin, designated as charge de affaires of Philippine embassy in Riyadh, over his staff. Sadly, even Congen Tago could not give us update on high profile cases precisely be-

cause he does not know and does not even care about these OFWs cases," he said.

Monterona said another example would be the case of murdered OFW Romilyn Eroy-Ibañez, 22, from North Cotabato, whose remains have yet to be repatriated. She died on Sept. 2, 2010 in a hospital in Al-Khobar. of several stab wounds and acid ingestion.

"When I sent an email to Congen Tago last week to follow Eroy-Ibañez's case and five other OFWs for repatriation as per the request of families in the Philippines, he just simply told us not to issue statement. It's either he does not know the update of these cases or he does not want to give updated information of the status of these cases besides plea from the families," he said. (www.philstar.com)

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