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Daily Minimum Wage Up by ₱16

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga - The Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board 3 has issued Wage Order No. RBIII-20 that provides a Php16 increase in daily minimum wage for private sector workers in Central Luzon effective May 1, 2017.

“The Board deemed it best to increase the minimum wage at a reasonable and equitable level in light of the regional poverty threshold level vis-à-vis average wage, along the need to promote performance-based incentive schemes under the Two-Tiered Wage System,” the order stated.

As such, new minimum wage for the provinces of Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Tarlac, and Zambales will be Php380 for Non-Agriculture establishments with total assets of Php30 million or more, Php373 for Non-Agriculture establishments with total assets of less than Php30 million, Php350 for Agriculture Plantation, Php334 for Agriculture Non-Plantation, Php369 for Retail/Service with 16 or more workers, and Php355 for Retail/Service with less than 16 workers.

Moreover, new minimum wage for the province of Aurora is Php329 for Non-Agriculture, Php314



Photo courtesy of facebook.com/jhen.adelaram

Portion of Tarlac Public Market was burned down Easter Sunday night. See story on page 2

for Agriculture Plantation, Php302 for Agriculture Non-Plantation, and Php264 for Retail/Service with less than 16 workers. (CLJD-PIA 3)

Pres. Duterte declines UP honorary degree

MANILA - President Rodrigo Duterte on Wednesday politely declined to accept the offer of an honorary degree from the University of the Philippines (UP), saying that accepting awards is not in his personality.

“With due respect sa University of the Philippines, I do not accept even when

I was mayor. Hindi ako tumatanggap, I do not... As a matter of personal and official policy, I do not accept awards. Wala sa pagkatao ko,” the President told reporters following the ASEAN security briefing in Tagbilaran City, Bohol.

“Hindi ko naman nireject. But I... To use the word reject is not good.

I simply declined,” Duterte said.

The UP Board of Regents (BOR), the university’s highest policy making body, is reportedly keen on conferring Duterte the honorary doctor of laws degree as part of tradition.

However, some sectors are opposing the move due to alleged human rights violations in the campaign against drugs.

Earlier, Malacañang said that

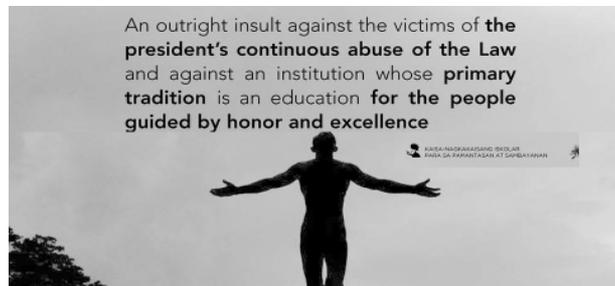
President Duterte was not angling for any awards but might accept the honorary degree if offered.

Following the development, Duterte became the third president to decline the conferment.

Former presidents Joseph Estrada and Gloria-Macapagal Arroyo have both declined honorary degrees from UP. (PNA)

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An outright insult against the victims of the president’s continuous abuse of the Law and against an institution whose primary tradition is an education for the people guided by honor and excellence

Students and alumni of the University of the Philippines aside from going to the streets, used the social media to express their disgust of the proposed conferring Pres Duterte the honorary doctor of laws degree. In the entire history of the University, this is first time a staunch opposition to a ceremonial conferment took place.

VINTAGE POINT

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Good News and Bad News

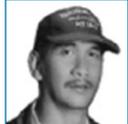


BY: REM DE LEON GALANG

MAGKASANGGA TAYO

• page 5

- LTFRB, LTO Makonsensya Naman Kayo!!!
- VP Robredo kinakabahan na kay BBM!!!



BY: NESTOR “PAKEN” CASTRO

'No sabotage in Tarlac fires' - Acting Mayor Mendoza

TARLAC CITY: Acting Mayor Genaro Mendoza belied rumors of sabotage after a fire gutted a portion of downtown public market on Easter Sunday night and two other minor fires hit the city hall's Treasury and Tourism offices last week.



MENDOZA

Mendoza said reports of the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP)

showed the market fire was caused by electrical overload. Nobody was hurt in the incident. Huge fires gutted the controversial market in the past two decades. "We are confident that our fire department is doing its job to ensure that no major fire could hit any of our establishments and cost lives," Mendoza said.

Meanwhile, the fires at the city hall's Treasury and Tourism offices were blamed on faulty electrical connections that need urgent repairs.

Tarlac City fire chief Insp. Jimmy Suba called for sustained tests of electrical connections within the city government's offices. Suba said fires are common, particularly during summer months and discourage everyone against the use sub-standard wires and extension cords or faulty electrical connections. / www.manilatimes.net

GMA and Aguas acquitted

Ibinasura kamakailan ng Korte Suprema lang apila ng mga abogado ng gobyerno na naglalayong baligtarin ang naunang desisyon nito na ipawalang-sala si dating Pangulo at ngayon ay Cong. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo sa kasong Plunder kaugnay ng ilegal o maling paggamit di-umano sa pondo P366 milyon mula sa Intelligence funds ng PCSO.

Sa botong 11-4, kinumpirma ng SC ang kanyang July 19, 2006 desisyon na nagbibigay kay Ginang Arroyo ng Demurrer of Evidence sa kanyang kinakaharap ng kaso noon sa Sandiganbayan.

Ayon kay Theodore Te, tagapagsalita ng SC, "pinaboran din ng mga hukom ang pagpapawalang-sala kay dating opisyal ng PCSO na si BENNY AGUAS sa parehong usapin.

DOLE lines up various Labor Day-related activities in Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga - The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) has lined up various activities in Central Luzon in line with the Labor Day celebration.

With this year's theme "'Matatag na Kabuhayan at Trabaho, Tungo sa Progresibong Pagbabago," a simultaneous conduct of job and business fairs will be held regionwide in collaboration with the different local government units (LGUs) in the region through their respective Public Employment Service Offices (PESOs).

The regionwide job and business fairs on May 1 will be held at SM City Malls—Baliuag in Bulacan and Pampanga, Clark, and San Fernando Downtown in Pampanga.

Binanggit din ng SC na ang pagbigay nito ng demurrer of evidence ang nagbigay daan sa pagpapawalang-sala kay GMA AT AGUAS. Dagdag pa nito, anumang hakbang upang irikonsidera ang naunang desisyon ay maituturing na "double jeopardy".

Nauna din nito, nabanggit na rin SC na dahil sa kakulangan ng ebidensiya kung kaya nadismis ang kaso ni GMA at pinahintulutan itong lumabas mula sa kanyang pagka-hospital arrest.

Nagpasalamat din ang kampo ni CGMA sa pamamagitan ni Atty. Lawrence Arroyo na nagsabing, "we thank the SC for putting an end to this case. PGMA was actually acquitted way back July 2006 when the SC granted her demurrer of evidence." / Rem Galang

Other venues on the same day include Metro Town Mall in Tarlac City, Freedom Park Capital Grounds, Cabanatuan City in Nueva Ecija, and Ayala Harbor Point, Subic Freeport Zone, Zambales.

Aside from May 1, another job and business fair will be held on May 5 at the Vista Mall in Balanga City.

DOLE Regional Director Ana Dione said at least 10,362 jobs will be at stake for this year's regionwide Labor Day job and business fairs.

Of the total job vacancies solicited, some 7,575 will be available for local employment from 143 participating companies from various industries.

The DOLE said it is also expecting

Gun, shabu seized in Pura town

Pura, Tarlac - - A high caliber pistol and 2 sachets of shabu were seized here by the police last Monday in separate incidents.

According to Police Provincial Director PSSupt Ritchie Medardo Posadas, Rommel David, 26, of Block 9, San Nicolas, Tarlac City, was arrested in a buy bust operation at Barangay Estipona here with 2 sachets of shabu.

While security guard Mar Albert Tamayo, 25, of Barangay Guiang, Rosales, Pangasinan, was apprehended for possessing an undocumented high powered pistol at Barangay Singat.

Apparently, Tamayo, who was riding a tricycle, had a minor vehicular accident with tricycle driver Zeus Novesteras at Barangay Poblacion 1. And on the ensuing altercation, Tamayo drew his gun against the latter and introduced himself as a policeman.

Fearing for his life, Novesteras run away but was chased by Tamayo who is "reeking of liquor". Policemen

manning a checkpoint led by SPO2 Roldan Capinpin subdued Tamayo and confiscated his firearm.

PSInsp Jose Natividad Jr, is the newly assigned chief of police of this town

David was charged of violation of Section 11 of RA 9165, a non-bailable offense. While Tamayo is facing illegal possession of firearms and usurpation of authority for introducing himself as a policeman. / Nelson Bolos (FB: Tarlac News Center)



FAKE POLICEMAN. Security guard Mar Albert Tamayo, 25, of Barangay Guiang, Rosales, Pangasinan, apprehended for illegal possession of a high powered pistol at Barangay Singat, Pura, Tarlac. In a minor vehicular accident, Tamayo pulled out a gun and introduced himself as policeman.

CDRRMO: Safe and Peaceful Holy Week in Tarlac City

TARLAC CITY — The comprehensive report of City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office Deputy Director Hensel Quilling reflected 14 vehicular accidents and two minor fire incidents that transpired during the Holy Week as the Lakbay Alalay SumVac 2017 frontline agencies remained on red status.

Only one of the reported vehicular accidents was considered fatal on Black Saturday at 5pm. A Toyota Innova had a self-accident in which three passengers were declared dead-on-arrival, three were brought straight to the operating room and one at the intensive care unit.

The City Government is currently undertaking a fire prevention information campaign as the two fire incidents during the Holy Week

CDRRMO has reported an overall safe and peaceful Holy Week here in the city.

CDRRMO remained active and on-the-watch at their Incident Command Post positioned along McArthur Highway at Barangay San Sebastian.

The CDRRMO personnel stationed for 24 hours were in close coordination with the Tarlac City Police Station, Bureau of Fire Protection, City Engineers Office, City Health Office, City Transport and Traffic Management Group and POSO-Traffic Management Unit, City Information Office, and City Environment and Natural Resources Office and were ready to address possible uneventful incidents during the observance of Holy Week celebration. / Tarlac CIO

were caused by the faulty electrical wiring, the leading culprit of fire cases.

around 2,787 job vacancies for overseas employment from 24 recruitment agencies as processed by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA).

Dione said that **Cont. on page 3**

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Opinions expressed by the opinion writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the position of this paper.

Nueva Ecija bus accident death toll rises to 34



CABANATUAN CITY, Nueva Ecija - The number of passengers who died in Wednesday's tragic bus accident in Carranglan, Nueva Ecija rose to 34 on Thursday as five injured persons died while undergoing treatment in the hospital.

This, as Senior Supt. Antonio Yarra, Nueva Ecija police director, said road accidents that frequently result in deaths are a major public safety concern that he wants to tackle with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and other government agencies.

He said that as DPWH is an active member of the Provincial Peace and Order Council (PPOC), he will bring out the issue in the light of the recent tragic accident in the council's forthcoming meeting.

Vehicular accidents add up to the number of crimes in a particular area. They are considered recklessness that result in homicide and damage to properties.

Investigation showed that the Leomarick Trans bus (AVZ 757) that fell into the 80-foot ravine in Sitio Nursery, Barangay Capintalan, Carranglan, passed through a damaged portion of the concrete barrier on a sharp curve portion of the road, downhill from Dalton Pass.

Records from the DPWH Central Luzon showed at least six accidents have happened in the same spot in the past few years.

Meanwhile, in a corner of a funeral parlor in Bambang, Nueva Vizcaya, Elsie dela Rosa, 55, of Poblacion 1, Marilao, Bulacan, was seen mourning for her 27-year-old son, Ace Vincent, who is one of the fatalities in Wednesday's tragic road mishap.

She said her son just went home on March 9 after working four straight years as cake decorator in Saudi Arabia to act as best man for his elder brother's wedding.

Ace Vincent spent the Holy Week with his long time girlfriend in Diadi, Nueva Vizcaya and took the Leomarick Trans bus Tuesday for San Jose City from where he would take bus for Bulacan. Dela Rosa said the two have set their wedding sometime next year.

"Napakabait na anak ko. Hindi man lang yan naninigarilyo. Napakasipag

kaya ayaw nang pauwiin ng amo (My son was so kind. Not even smoking and very industrious, thus his employer did not want him to go home)," said dela Rosa, adding, Ace Vincent was the only one supporting her and her husband.

On the other hand, John Llamas, 25, who lost his wife, 20-year-old Kriza Joy and 21-year-old sister Dyesebel, said he has been praying that his two children would soon recover from their injuries.

Their first born, Luigie Jay, 2, was confined at the Nueva Vizcaya Provincial Hospital in Bambang and the other, John Melvin, eight months old, at the Veterans Memorial Hospital, supposedly for minor injuries.

Kriza Joy, their kids and sister, were to visit him in Cabanatuan City before going home to Aurora province.

"Sabi nung ibang nakakita, inihagis daw ng misis ko yung bunso namin sa bintana bago tuluyang bumagsak yung bus" (Those who witnessed said that my wife threw our youngest outside the bus window before it fell into the ravine), Llamas said, narrating how their children survived the accident.

Working as a truck helper here, Llamas found his children in the hospital. (PNA)

DOLE Lines Up... ...from page 2

the regionwide job and business fairs adopted the Trabaho, Negosyo, Kabuhayan (TNK) Concept forged by the DOLE and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

"The TNK concept aims to achieve full employment and creation of jobs in Key Employment Generators (KEGs) specifically in the manufacturing, agribusiness, construction, tourism, IT-BPM, transportation and logistics, and retail and trade," she said.

The DOLE has also partnered with the National Housing Authority (NHA) and various local government units in Bulacan province for a special job fair for relocatees.

The event will be held in nine resettlement sites in the municipalities of Pandi, Bocaue, Norzagaray, Balagtas, and City of San Jose Del Monte.

Meanwhile, a Labor Day breakfast forum with the Paralegal Association of Region 3 (PAR-3) will be held on May 2 at the DOLE regional office here with an aim to strengthen mechanisms on social dialogue. (PNA)

Hanggang 200 kaban kada ektarya ang kayang anihin sa binhing Hybrid

PULILAN, Bulacan - Kayang umani ng hanggang 200 kaban ng Palay kada ektarya ang isang karaniwang magsasaka kung tatangkiling gumamit muli ng binhing Hybrid.

Ito ang pinatunayan ng Department of Science and Technology o DOST sa isinagawang Farmers' Field Day on Mechanized Hybrid Rice.

Ayon kay DOST Regional Director Julius Caesar Sicut, ito ay uri ng binhi na pinagsama sa iisang binhi ang Babae at Lalaking Palay na walang pollen grains.

Kanyang ibinahagi na sa Nueva Ecija, nakaka-ani sila mula 180 hanggang 200 na kaban ng Palay kada ektarya kaya kumpyansa siya na magagawa rin ito sa Bulacan partikular na sa Pulilan pagkat pareho lamang ang uri ng lupa doon.

Kaugnay nito, nais ng DOST, sa pamamagitan ng Department of Agriculture na muling maipalaganap sa mga kanayunan ang paggamit ng mga magsasaka sa Hybrid seeds.

Taong 2002 nang unang inilunsad ni noo'y Pangulong Gloria Macapagal Arroyo ang Hybrid Rice Commercialization Program upang maparami ang ani ng Palay kahit na maliit ang lupang sakahan.

Nadala sa Pilipinas ang teknolohiya ng Hybrid sa Palay bilang isa sa mga resulta ng 2001 State Visit ng dating pangulo sa China

Ayon sa tala ng DOST, mula nang ibalik ng administrasyong Duterte ang programa sa Hybrid seed, tumaas muli ang ani at kita ng mga magsasakang gumamit nito.

Halimbawa, ang isang magsasakang gumamit lamang ng inbred na binhi noong 2016 ay nakaani lamang ng 70 hanggang 90 ektarya ay kumita ng 70 libong piso habang nang nagbalik sa paggamit ng Hybrid ngayong 2017 ang kaparehong magsasaka, umabot sa 200 hanggang 220 kaban ang naani niya sa isang ektarya kaya't kumita siya ng 154 libong piso.

Samantala, ipinakita rin ng DOST na matatag din ang Hybrid Rice kung ito ay aanihin ng makinarya.

Hinalimbawa rito ang paggamit ng Combined Harvester na makinaryang sasakyan lamang ng magsasaka at sasagasaan ang aanihing mga palay.

Kapag naani, kusa na itong igigiik sa loob ng Combined Harvester at pagkatapos ay nakasako na agad ang Palay na kagagapas pa lamang at nagiiik agad.

Sa Pulilan, anim ang ginagamit para sa mga lupang sakahan ng Palay.

Dalawa rito ay alihinang ginagamit ng mga magsasaka na kasapi ng kooperatiba habang apat na mga magsasaka ang nakapagpundar ng naturang kagamitan na nagkakahalaga ng 1.7-M piso. (CLJD/SFV-PIA 3)

Stress debriefing urged for Nueva Ecija bus crash survivors

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya - Health workers here on Friday have appealed for assistance from religious and other organizations to help efforts to provide social welfare services to the survivors of the bus crash in Carranglan, Nueva Ecija.

"We are calling the assistance and help of benevolent individuals and groups to share their resources in any form such as food and other needs of the patients," said Letty Puguon, acting administrative officer of the Nueva Vizcaya Provincial Hospital (NVPH) in Bambang town.

"They also need psychological, psycho-social and spiritual services from our religious sector and from those experts in stress debriefing situations," she said.

"They are still coping with the tragedy and trauma that is why

we need the assistance of other individuals to help them cope and recover from their trauma and tragedy," said Puguon.

She said most of the patients have suffered concussions, hematoma and bruises in different parts of the body due to the bus fall on Tuesday.

Twelve survivors are still being treated at the NVPH with five from Nueva Vizcaya, four from Nueva Ecija and one each from the provinces of La Union, Isabela, and Tarlac, she said.

Puguon said Governor Carlos Padilla had instructed the NVPH to give full support and assistance to the victims still recuperating.

Officials of the Veterans Regional Hospital (VRH) in Bayombong town also said 29 patients still being treated as of this time. (PNA) SCD/BMEBREGO

Robredo to 'do everything' to block Marcos return to power

'Marami pang kautangan sa bayan na hindi pa nababayaran, at iyong kautangan na iyon, iyon din ang ginagamit para makabalik sa kapangyarihan,' says the Vice President



LAGUNA, Philippines – Despite criticism, impeachment threats, and an election case against her, Vice President Leni Robredo said she will ensure that former Senator Ferdinand Marcos Jr would not get the second highest position in the country.

Editorial “Walang sinabi iyong kakayahan [ko]...resources na pigilan siya...pero kahit hindi pantay iyong pinanggagalingan ay gagawin ko iyong lahat para siguraduhin na di siya makakabalik,” Robredo said in a forum on Friday, April 21, at the University of the Philippines in Los Baños.

(I don't have as much capacity and resources [as he does] to block him. But even if our resources are not equal, I will ensure that he won't be able to return to power.)

“I am pinning my hopes on people who have enough conviction, enough courage to fight,” she said.

Robredo made this remark as a response to a student's question regarding the election case filed against her the son and namesake of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

The Marcos scion has accused her and the Liberal Party (LP) of cheating their way to her victory.

Just last Monday, Marcos paid the first installment of the P66 million fee required by the Supreme Court (SC), sitting as the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET), for the transfer and recount of ballots.

Marcos said the P36 million he paid was pooled resources of friends and supporters.

Robredo said: “Nakakalungkot na marami pang kautangan sa bayan na hindi pa nababayaran, at iyong kautangan na iyon, iyon din ang ginagamit para makabalik sa kapangyarihan.” (It's sad that they still owe the country money. And that money is what they are using to return to power.)

Robredo's dues

But even after Marcos' payment, the election case still won't progress after the PET resolves the issues raised by the Robredo camp on the amount they also have to pay.

Robredo has been ordered to pay P15 million for the precincts she is questioning. She has failed to settle her dues, however, as her lawyers asked the PET to postpone her payment until the initial opening of ballots. Her legal team argued that this will prove if Marcos' case is sufficient or not.

The Marcos camp has filed an omnibus motion before the High Court, asking to junk Robredo's counter-protest on the basis of non-payment.

Robredo's lawyer Romulo Macalintal said they will pay after the PET says they should as resolution to their motion./ Rappler.com

BIRDS OF THE SAME FEATHER IN ONE TABLE!



UNITE!

#SilentNoMorePH

KAKAMPI MO ANG BATAS

Duterte: “I will order invasion of Jolo, if...”



BY: ATTY. BATAS MAURICIO

LIFE'S INSPIRATIONS: “... For I hear many whispering, ‘Terror on every side!’ They conspire against me and plot to take my life...” (Psalm 31:13, the Holy Bible).

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JOLO TO BE INVADED IF...: Invading Jolo to exterminate terrorist groups in the area will be ordered by President Duterte, if security threats to the ASEAN senior officials' meeting that is being held in Bohol will require such an invasion. This was clarified by the President in his media interview in Bohol last Wednesday, April 19, 2017.

Here are excerpts of the President's interview by media on the matter, forwarded to me by Vic Somintac, the Malacanang reporter of radio station DZEC, 1062 kHz, and my co-anchor at “Tambalang Batas at Somintac”, a commentary show which runs Mondays to Fridays, at 6 am, at DZEC:

“President Duterte: “Well, I hope it would not reach that point where we have to choose the last option. Because pagka ganon (if that happens) I will maybe invade Jolo. Invasion na lang talaga. But maraming ma-disgrasya diyan civilians, bata (but many will suffer, civilians, children)... But ‘pag naipit na ang bayan (if the country will have no other option), I will order the invasion of Jolo...”

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“I WILL GIVE TERRORISTS IN JOLO TOTAL WAR”: The President clarified what he meant by “invasion of Jolo”, which is believed to be the place where members of terrorists groups in Mindanao are headquartered. He said: “Lahat ng Army, lahat ng Navy magpunta doon. Iyan bakbakan na talaga iyan. Kung iyan ang gusto nila, ibibigay ko (All the Army, all the Navy will go there. There will be total war. If that is what they want, I will give it to them)...”

Responding to a question of a reporter on the terrorist elements who went to Bohol last week, Duterte said his orders, once an invasion is commenced against Jolo, is to bomb the place. Here are his direct statements: Ang sabi ko lang sa kanila na lahat dito na magpunta na sa bukid, maghanap na (What I told them was that, all of them should look for the terrorist elements in the field)...

“... But anyway I said we are doing our best. The Army is here, the place is secured. We have more than enough officers to fight for one year if need be. So you are safe. But ang atin dito (what we want here) is the interdiction that they must not reach the places... beyond the Mindanao Sea. Dapat doon lang sila (They should be confined there). And we have the capability, ‘yon ang plano naming (that is our plan)...”

-000-

TERRORISTS WILL BE BLASTED, AND NOT ALLOWED TO SURRENDER: Duterte continued: “... Parang i-tag ka namin sa satellite tapos malaman na namin kung sige ka biyahe (We will be able to tag through satellite if you continue to do your thing). There was a good intelligence report.

“Kung makita ka namin, i-tag ka na namin so habang nagbi-biyahe ka my orders to the Navy is kung positive pasabugin na (If we see your movements, you will be tagged, and my orders to the Navy is to blast them). Wala nang surrender, surrender (No more surrenders). Ang sabi ko (What I said was) kanyunin (cannon) mo na, wasakin mo (blast them with cannons, destroy them.”

The President also disclosed his plans to arm civilians in Bohol to fight the terrorist elements. He said: “ Well, I intend also to arm the civilians and I will include the civilians. ‘Pag nakapatay ka (‘If you will be able to kill), you don't have to worry. You just go to the police and make the report and state your truth. Wala kang problema (you'll have no problem), I'll take **Cont. on page 5**

Good News and Bad News



BY: REM DE LEON GALANG

GOOD NEWS

Ang mga daan na dati na masisikip at kahit tao ay halos di na makadaan ay maluluwag at malilinis na ngayon. Salamat sa pinagsamang efforts nina ENGR. JOE DUNGCA, GEN. TITO BAYANGOS at buong kapulisan sa pangunguna ni PSUPT BAYANI T. RAZALAN at of course sa leadership ni MAYOR CRISTY ANGELES na may "political will."

BAD NEWS

Sana naman ay hindi lang ito "showcase" at "ningas kugon." PLEASE. Our people deserves nothing less and nothing more: "Unfiled Public Service."

GOOD NEWS

The recent call of UNITY of Mayor Angeles is commendable and in fact, a MUST to get the much-needed people's support to fulfill and realize her administrative plans and programs with the end-in view of uplifting the economic plight of every Tarlaqueno.

BAD NEWS

Pero ano itong naririnig namin mula sa mga kapitan ng ilang barangay na pag may biyaya na binibigay ang city government, ang mga "bata" ni Mayora Angeles ay may hiwalay na grasya? This is not a good sign. Counter-productive ika nga. Divisive in fact. This, we hope, must be stopped.

GOOD NEWS

The recent pet project of putting up a TSU Annex or extension in Brgy Oddenell or CRISTO REY is highly commendable and a "Solomonic Move." Capasanos must rally behind MAYOR REYCAT's noble project for it will not only benefit present generation but even the future generations. Napakalaki ang tulong nito para sa mga kabataang Capaseno para maibsan o mabawasan ang paghihirap sa pagaaral lalo na ang mga nagmumula sa remote o malalayong barangay tulad ng Maruglu o Bueno at Patling.

BAD NEWS

Iyong basura malapit mismo sa bukana ng masalasa creek at katabi ng SM MALL San Roque ay napaka eyesore tingnan. Progress at development cannot be accomplished if cleanliness is not maintained. A clean and healthy community leads to sustainable development.

GOOD NEWS

For the people of Lapaz, you can expect a no non-sense drive against criminality lalo na sa ilegal na droga kay PSI RODDY "ROD" DE GUZMAN bilang bagong hele ng Lapaz PS. His lengthy experience on crime-busting will surely be harnessed in the area. Goodluck sir.

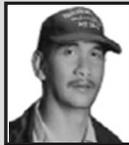
Another GOOD NEWS

MAYOR MAX ROXAS of Paniqui's leadership is in the limelight. But knowing him since he was the Brgy Chairman of Pob Norte and ABC President, he would surely deliver. Sa sariling balsa nga niya ay pinagawa ang kanilang Barangay Hall at service. Keep up the good work MAYOR MAX!

Last GOOD NEWS

MAYOR ELOY ECLAR, a Engineer by profession, is expected to boost infrastructure development of Gerona town. And with the able support of SB officials and of course P/SUPT FRANKLIN ESTORO, →

- **LTFRB, LTO Makonsensya Naman Kayo!!!**
- **VP Robredo kinakabahan na kay BBM!!!**



BY: NESTOR "PAKEN" CASTRO

VP Robredo kinakabahan na kay BBM - Alam naman ninyo mga dear readers na certified BBM and Duterte ang inyong lingkod. Ang hindi ko maintindihan sa kasalukuyang protesta ni BBM at kontra protesta ni VP Leni ay kung bakit ayaw magbayad ng fees itong si VP Leni. Nakita naman ninyo na agad ng nagbayad si BBM, Hi! Hi! Hi! Aba eh, barya-barya lang yan sa mga Marcos, kahit na bilyones pa ay sisiw lang yan! Eh, bakit itong si VP Leni ayaw magbayad, bakit kaya, isa ba na namang delaying tactic ito Madam Vice President para mapatagal ang inyong pag-upo sa inyong posisyon na may isang malaking question mark? Isa ba itong delaying tactic, drama, o ano??? Nagtatanong lang naman po mga dear readers.

####

LTFRB, LTO dapat ayusin ang sistema - Tunay na nakalulungkot ang mga nagaganap na mga aksidente ng mga public transportation na katulad ng mga bus kung saan sa isang aksidente lamang ay dose-dosena na ang mga nasasawi.

Hindi pa nagtatagal at sariwa pa sa ating isipan ang hingil sa aksidente na naganap sa isang bus na arkilado ng isang eskuwelahan kung saan ang mga estudyante na nag-attend ng retreat ang siyang mga na dedo. Ngayon naman ay mahigit 30 plus daw ang nasawi at mayroon pang mga bata at sanggol. Sobra na! Tama na ang korapsyon na siyang muli ay ng ugat ng ganitong mga nawawalang buhay ng walang saysay!!!

Ngayon, ano ang dapat na gawin agad ng LTO at LTFRB?

Eto mga dear readers ang aking opinyon:

(1) Una sa lahat ay dapat ng ipagbawal ng totohanan ang overloading.

(2) Pangalawa ay dapat ng magsagawa ng isang totohanan na vehicle inspection ang LTO hindi lang once a year kung hindi every quarter (3 months) at huwag bigyan ng certification of road worthiness ang isang public transportation o public conveyance na hindi tunay na sertipikadong road worthy o maayos na masasakyan ng riding public. Ano ba yan, nagbabayad tayo para mamatay tayo!?!?

(3) Pangatlo ay ipagbawal na ang pagpaparehistro ng ubod ang luma na mga sasakyan na dinoktor lang naman ang kanilang supporting pesos este supporting papers of importation etc, para ma-rehistro at palabasin na bagong import pa ngunit sa tutuo ay bente (20) o trenta (30) anyos na ang mga nasabing pinalulusot na sasakyan na matagal ng ginagamit sa ating bansa. Kasama sa kalokohan na ito ang Bureau of Customs at BIR.

(4) Pang-apat ay dapat na ang sinasabing Professional Drivers license ay i-issue lamang sa tunay na mga professionals na naka-attend ng mga seminar at pag-aaral at hindi lang yung mayroon pang-lagay kaya kung sinu-sinong pulpol na kayang magbayad ng additional na ilang daang piso para maka kuha ng isang Professional license ay nakakakuha na ng professional license agad. Mga BUGOK KAYO JAN SA LTO AT LTFRB - kaya nga tinawag na Professional Drivers License ay dapat nasa kamay ito ng mga tunay na professionals.

(5) Pang lima ay dapat na taasan ang multa ng mga public conveyance na mahuhuli na lumalabag sa aking mga suhestiyon na nabangit.

Mga Bwisit kayo na mga KORAP jan sa LTO at LTFRB . PWEEEE!!!! NALPAS!!!

Chief of Police and his men, Gerona is bound to progress and attain economic stability.

EL MAESTRO SPEAKS

Riding and Life



BY: CLYDE B. SACPA

Ilove driving a motorcycle. In fact I like it better than driving a car. If you use a motorcycle in the city, traffic is no big deal for you. If you are going to other places, riding a motorcycle offers a better view and ecstatic feeling than riding in a car.

Riding a motorcycle, though it's more fun, is quite difficult and a bit dangerous. Just think of this, you are riding in a vehicle with only two wheels with the speed of around 90kph or more. Well, one tiny mistake can end it there. That's why we are always asked to be very careful on the road.

Despite the danger why do I still love riding motorcycles? Well, basically because I don't have money to buy a Pajero. At the same time riding motorcycle is a constant reminder of how to live my life every day. This is what I want to share with you.

When you are riding on a motorcycle, you must have the sharpest concentration and focus. Do not let your mind go adrift or you'll find yourself crashing to other cars, or losing balance, or taking the curve a little too late. In life, when we are doing something we must put our mind into it. That is the key to perfection. Putting ourselves focused will keep us motivated and will help us achieve our goals.

When I ride motorcycle, I always use cautionary brake, and try to determine through educated guess, how the other vehicles around me move. The reason is, we might be very careful but other people are not, and they may be the cause of your accident. This remind us that in life no matter how careful we are, other people may cause our downfall. To rise against this we must caution ourselves and have advance plan how to evade such situation.

If you are riding a motorcycle, balance is very important. Placing baggage and things you need to carry must be done on the bike properly for stability. This reminds us that in life, everything must be in balance. Balance your time for your family and for your work. Balance every aspect of your life so you won't stumble down like what will happen if you lose balance on a motorcycle.

If you ride, before going to places you must check the condition of the ride. This is to avoid accidents and other unfavorable situations. This also reminds us that in life preparation beats any obstacle on the way. If we are prepared, we can guarantee an almost smooth sailing travel in life.

If we ride motorcycle, we can develop these habits which is transferrable and usable in any aspects of our life. As a matter there are hundreds of lessons we can learn from riding that is applicable in dealing with life. I am not going to tell you all of it, go ride, enjoy and learn all the lessons yourself.

Come on, time to ride!

Kakampi Mo Ang Batas ...from page 4

care of you. I'll pardon you or whatever..."

-ooo-

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MANILA - Former president and now Pampanga Rep. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo on Thursday dispelled rumors that she was after the post of House Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez.

In an ambush interview, Arroyo said she is not interested in the said position, finally pouring cold water to speculations that she is seeking to replace Alvarez as Speaker of the House of Representatives.

"Not interested," Arroyo told reporters after the launch of former solicitor general Estelito Mendoza's primer entitled "The Ocean Space or the Maritime Area of the Philippines".

Ouster plot rumors against Alvarez circulated when the House leadership stripped lawmakers of their committee and deputy speakership posts, including that of Arroyo's, for voting against the death penalty bill in March.

The rumors flared up when Alvarez had a bitter fallout with his erstwhile bosom buddy Davao del Norte Rep. Antonio "Tonyboy" Floirendo Jr.

Alvarez filed a graft complaint against Floirendo before the Office of the Ombudsman for his alleged unconstitutional "business

interest" with his family's banana firm Tagum Agricultural Development Company, Inc. (TADECO).

Alvarez also filed House Resolution (HR) No. 867 calling for a congressional inquiry into the grossly disadvantageous 25-year lease contract signed by the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) and TADECO.

Alvarez remains unperturbed by alleged threats to unseat him as speaker, saying that "they can pull the trigger and give their best shot."

Floirendo, for his part, denied that he was behind any plot to oust Alvarez as Speaker and have him replaced by Arroyo, who was removed as deputy speaker for her no vote on the death penalty bill.

"I never attempted to talk to Arroyo nor would I ever support any plot to oust Speaker Alvarez who, in the first place, is a good friend of mine and whom I fully supported during the last election and in his bid for the speakership," Floirendo said.

"If ever there is an iota of truth to the ouster plot, I am 100 percent not a part of it," he added. (PNA) *FILANE MIKEE CERVANTES*

ASG leader Radullan Sahiron tired of life on the run

MANILA - One of the hunters of Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) leader Radullan Sahiron has confirmed the willingness of the bandit chief to surrender due to old age, fatigue and incessant military pressure.

This was disclosed by Joint Task Force commander Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana in an interview Wednesday.

"There is no definite date yet for his surrender but he has expressed willingness to surrender and as reported to us, he is weak, tired and weary due to their constant movement from one place to another as our focused military operation against them is unceasing due to our constant rotation of our forces," said Sobejana in Filipino.

Sobejana declined to identify the ASG chief's emissary but said the latter is a close and respected friend of the bandit chieftain.

He also declined to give additional details as efforts are still ongoing to ensure that Sahiron's surrender will materialize.

"We believe that once Radullan surfaces (and surrenders), his followers and other (leaders)

will follow," the military official added.

Should this develop, 70 percent of the ASG problem will be solved, the Joint Task Force Sulu commander stressed.

One of the conditions set by the ASG leader is that the Philippine government will not turn him over to the US government.

Sahiron is the leading figurehead of the ASG in Sulu after most of the founding leaders of the group were killed.

The US Federal Bureau of Investigation has set a USD1 million reward for the capture of Sahiron.

Sobejana said that one of the conditions they set is that the ASG chief should also convince his followers to surrender also.

The total number of surrendered Abu Sayyaf members has reached 16, following the order of President Rodrigo Duterte to finish off the bandit group in six-month period. The deadline will lapse on June 30.

There are over 40 Abu Sayyaf members who have been killed in the island provinces of Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi since January. (PNA)

Chinese Challenge aircraft carrying Lorenzana, ranking AFP officials in Pagasa Island

PA G A S A I S L A N D - Chinese Coast Guard elements have challenged the military transport planes carrying Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief-of-staff Gen. Eduardo Ano to Pagasa Island Friday morning.

Pilots of the Airbus Military C-295 and Lockheed C-130 "Hercules" cargo aircraft received the challenge from Subi Reef, a Chinese-owned feature, some 30 to 40 nautical miles away from Pagasa Island.

"We replied that we are flying over Philippine territory," Lorenzana said when asked for details regarding the Chinese challenge.

The Defense chief added that the challenge is automatic and part of the protocol of any country claiming jurisdiction on particular area especially when ships and aircraft passes

DPWH: Multi-billion peso infra projects set to start this year

MANILA - The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) has revealed the government's multi-billion infrastructure projects that would be undertaken starting this year.

During the Duterteonomics forum at the Conrad Hotel in Pasay City on Tuesday, DPWH Secretary Mark Villar and other members of the Duterte administration's economic team shared the respective plans of the departments in the next five years.

The DPWH chief noted that for this year, the agency will be starting different projects amounting to almost PHP500 billion covering undertakings in Luzon and Mindanao.

"The infrastructure program of this administration for this year 2017 is approximately PHP450 billion. If you were to add the projects in 2010 to 2013, it would be less than what we intend to spend this year in infra, increasing every year," he said.

Among the projects in the pipeline include the Luzon Spine expressway network which is a series of ongoing projects.

These projects are connection of high-standard highway network that will connect

the northernmost province of the Philippines to the southernmost to Bicol; the TR4 high speed expressway going to Quezon and Lucena and Quezon-Bicol expressway; CALA-X, eastern alignment of the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX).

"High speed



through it.

Aside from the challenge, nothing untoward happened, Lorenzana stressed.

Other ranking officials aboard the two military aircraft are Army commander Lt. Gen. Glorioso Miranda and Western Command head Lt. Gen. Raul Del Rosario.

The former left Villamor Air Base, Pasay City around 6 a.m. and arrived in Pagasa Island around 8 a.m. along with other members of the media selected for this event. (PNA)

network would be able to bring development thru all of Luzon. If you put these in numbers for instance today to get from Bicol to Metro Manila it will take you 12 hours when this high speed standard highway is finished before the end of the term of the president you can go from Bicol to La Union in less than 12 hours," Villar said.

"The South Luzon Expressway (SLEX) and NLEX connector project which will make the travel time from Alabang to NLEX (Balintawak the entrance to NLEX) in 30 minutes," he added.

Likewise, included in the government's "Build, Build, Build," projects is the NLEX Harbor Link Segment 10, an all elevated expressway aimed at providing direct access between the port area and the northern provinces of Luzon via NLEX.

The 5.7-km expressway worth PHP10.5-billion, will decongest Metro Manila by providing an alternative entry to NLEX, bypassing EDSA and other busy streets of Manila.

Once opened, travel time from the Manila Port to the NLEX will **Cont. on page 7**

When the Saints... from page 8

church plaza known as Glorietta is lined by every imaginable fast-food chain. Each restaurant, however, has lines kilometer long and is bursting at the seams trying to accommodate hungry spectators. I settle for a 711 because of the more tolerable queue.

A few minutes later, the carroza of St. Peter rolls into the plaza

after completing the circuitous procession which started at 6 p.m.

The carroza carrying St. Joanna arrives more than two hours after it left the church's premises. It stops while the lay ministers read a brief biography of the saint and acknowledge the owner, Marcos and Enrico. After the float is blessed by a priest, they proceeded home where a feast awaits those who joined the procession.

PHL posts Php 23.7-B budget gap in February '17

MANILA - Higher government spending in February 2017 resulted a Php 23.7-billion fiscal deficit

for the month even as the main collecting agencies registered improvements in tax collections.

Data released by the Department of Finance (DOF) Thursday showed that government

expenditures in the second month this year reached Php 175.6 billion, up one percent from year-ago's Php 173.6 billion.

Revenues during the same month amounted to Php 151.8 billion, up nine percent from the Php 139 billion

same period in 2016. Of the total, the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), which collects around 70 percent of total taxes, contributed Php 105.9 billion, up 12 percent from the Php 94.8 billion it registered during same month last year.

The Bureau of Customs (BOC) collected Php 30.9 billion, 14 percent higher than its Php 27 billion revenues in January 2016.

Meanwhile, both the Bureau of the Treasury (BTr) and the Other Offices registered contractions in their collections last February.

BTr collected Php 5.3 billion, down eight percent from year-ago's Php 5.8 billion, and the Other Offices contributed Php 7.7 billion, lower by 17 percent than its Php 9.2 billion collection in February last year.

For the first two months this year, the government registered a Php 21.5 billion budget gap, 44 percent lower than the Php 38.1 billion deficit same period in 2016.

Expenditures reached Php 373.7

billion, four percent higher than year-ago's Php 359.3 billion.

Revenues were up by 10 percent to Php 352.2 billion against year-ago's Php 321.2 billion.

BIR collection rose 13 percent to Php 253.3 billion and BOC's by 15 percent to Php 66.8 billion. p>BTr registered a three percent drop in revenues to Php 13.3 billion as well as the Other Offices, which posted a 28 percent decline in collections to Php 15.6 billion. (PNA)/ JOANN SANTIAGO

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DPWH: Multi-Billion... ...from page 6

take only 10 minutes.

The undertaking is set to be completed this year.

Villar said that also expected to have groundbreaking this year is the Cavite-Laguna that will connect Cavite expressway (CAVITEX) to the Mampalasan exit in Laguna.

"The President has also instructed us to go into most ambitious bridge program in the history our country, the Panguil Bay Bridge connecting Misamis to Lanao this is in Mindanao," he said.

Villar added, "the Leyte Tide Embankment this is also a project that will mitigate disaster. We all know what happened to Leyte before and this is a long term solution. It is a 21 km embankment at a cost of Php 2.1 billion that will also serve as a tourist attraction at the same time it will permanently prevent recurrence of what happened in Tacloban Leyte in the past. This is an example of our disaster risk resiliency program in the DPWH and is also scheduled to be completed

before the end of our president's term in 2022."

"Build, Build, Build" is the mantra of the administration's infrastructure program where several government agencies are partnering to implement major projects involving roads, bridges, railways, airports, and green cities to bolster development and ease traffic congestion in the country.

Also present during the forum are: Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea, Department of Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez, National Economic and Development Authority Secretary Ernesto Pernia, Department of Budget and Management Secretary Benjamin Diokno, Department of Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade, Bases Conversion and Development Authority President and CEO Vince Dizon, Presidential Spokesperson Usec. Ernie Abella and Presidential Communications Operations Office Secretary Martin Andanan. (PNA)

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When Saints Go Marching In

By: *Raymond del Rosario*

I arrived a little past six when dusk is still settling in. The jeepney comes to a stop on a narrow road. Our driver announces that this is the last stop. Streets leading to Baliuag's poblacion have already been blocked to motor traffic for the traditional Good Friday's Prusisyon ng mga Santo (Procession of the Saints).

Unsure of where to go, I walked to the nearest intersection just in time to see the first few carrozas passed by. Leading the charge is St. Peter, followed by the rest of the 11 apostles, all borne by ornamented carrozas or floats. The order of the procession reflects the apostles' primacy in Christian tradition.

I was adjusting the settings of my camera when the image of St. Jude Thaddeus, the patron saint of lost causes, slowed down as processional traffic comes to a temporary halt. Then the sound of the staccato recitation of the Station of the Cross broadcasted from the church fades as the carroza continues on. But a scent, at once familiar but which I can't put my finger on, lingers and envelops the crowd in its wake.

The crowds are definitely thicker this year compared to the last time I went to this western Bulacan town in 2014. Both sides of the streets along the procession route are brimming with spectators. Families came prepared with chairs, food and, of course, fans to beat the blistering summer heat. Mercifully, there is a soft breeze blowing, making the night a bit more tolerable.

Two men bearing kawits made from

tall bamboo poles stopped in front of me and started to prod the tangle of Meralco cables upwards. Then what seems to be an industrial-sized generator followed by a carroza more than twelve feet high starts to roll by. A tableaux of the Pagpapatigil sa Unos (Calming of the Storm) appears complete with theatrical effects – mechanized rolling waves, boat replica and faux rain. For a moment, I fear for the man holding the electricity wire up as he got sprayed by water from the float.

The devotees

On the sidewalk opposite a Savemore store, Angelita Magat stands like a good foot soldier of god. She tells me that she is a long-time devotee of this Catholic tradition. A Baliuagño through and through, Nanay Angelita witnessed the transformation of the procession into a prominent spectacle that has come to define Baliuag's religious fabric. While she noticed the ever increasing number of visitors each year and its attendant traffic, she has no complaints, adding that the religious fervor is good especially for the young.

Meanwhile, strategically positioned in front of the plaza, Shane Hernandez and her barkada religiously take pictures of every poon that passes by using their smartphones. They were drawn to the event when a friend posted pictures of his experience on Instagram last year. They said that they came all the way from Valenzuela City, more than an hour drive south. I asked them what

they enjoy about the procession the most. "It's like being part of the Biblical stories," they chorused.

Indeed that aspect of sacred images and icons has remained unchanged since the colonial times. Spanish friars then forbade Filipinos from owning or reading Bibles. Thus, the clerics were the sole source of catechism. Architecture, paintings, sculptures and plays were used to illustrate dogma and stories from the Bible.

The poon owner
It's almost 8



p.m. For some of the participants, they have been waiting for more than two hours already. Floats numbered 102 and above are parked in front of the brick-clad church of St. Augustine of Hippo, Baliuag's patron saint.

Marcos Cruz and his party are waiting for their turn. Beside them is a more modest but lavishly decorated carroza where St. Joanna, wife of Chuza, is enthroned. Like the rest of the images being paraded, none are from the parish church, rather these are owned by individuals and families who have deep roots in this town.

Marcos shared that he had the image made right after he graduated from college 15 years ago. Instead of investing in a car or house appliance, he and Enrico Ignacio saved up so that they could commission a Manila artisan to sculpt St. Joanna's image and buy a carroza which will serve as its conveyance whenever it is taken out of their house for processions during the Holy Week and town fiesta. He said they did not mind the hefty investment.

"The cost was nothing compared to the blessings that we received," Marcos cheerfully narrated. "We haven't had any serious illness and we received so much in return."

"During Semana Santa, the poon is brought for a series of processions starting on Palm Sunday and culminating in the Good Friday procession," he continued as the men in charge with pulling his carroza prepares to join the procession.

Preparing for the procession

Marcos said that decorating the

carrozas and sourcing the flowers and other ornaments take weeks. I asked him about the aroma that wafts from the floats. He said that it's a sampaguita scent.

Aside from getting flowers and candles, they also have to feed those who will join their saint in the procession. Other parties even had shirts printed for their procession-goers.

Santa Juana's carroza takes its place at the end of procession. I bid Marcos goodbye and stayed behind until the last of the carrozas (No. 117 bearing the image of the Virgin Mary) left the plaza. The crowd thinned out but the steady oration coming out of the loudspeaker reminds the faithful of the ongoing procession snaking around the major thoroughfares of Baliuag.

Panata

Earlier, I got to talk to Ronaldo Terga, one of the men tasked to clear the way of carrozas from low-hanging electric cables. He has been doing the task for the past 20 years. He added that time has not dampened his desire to fulfill his yearly panata.

Despite the progress of Baliuag and the creeping commercialization of some traditions across the country, there is no doubt that here the spectators and participants alike are moved by faith, ascribing to their panata or religious vow their annual participation and pilgrimage, and enraptured by the collective sacred experience.

Hungry, I look for place to eat which should have been easy if it were not one of the busiest days in Baliuag. The perimeter of the **Cont. on page 6**



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