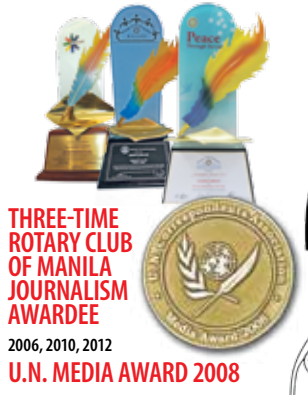


JAPAN'S ABE OFFERS SUPPORT TO ASEAN MEMBERS ON SEA DISPUTES WITH CHINA

→GlobalEye»C1



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■ Sunday, June 1, 2014 Vol. 9 No. 232

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May FPI showed clear signs of recovery—BSP

BY BIANCA CUARESMA



SHORT-TERM investments in the country made by foreign investors had shown clearer signs of recovery in May after being battered by negative sentiment in the early months of the year.

Latest data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) showed that foreign portfolio inflows (FPI) recovered for the second consecutive week in the week ending May 16.

FPI are more popularly known as "hot" or "speculative" money because they are easily pulled in and out of the market, based on the change of sentiment. Thus, these are more volatile than other types of foreign investments.

Data showed that FPI posted a net inflow of \$317.38 million, up from the \$62.85-million net inflows in the same period last year.

This was the largest weekly net inflow for the entire year.

But the year's flows of FPI are still in the net outflow territory, although trimmed lower at \$1.61 billion.

These numbers still do not include the negative sentiment brought

SEE "FPI," A2

GOOGLE MOVES TO COMPLY WITH E.U. RIGHT-TO-BE-FORGOTTEN RULING



MCT

THE European Union Court of Justice ruled on May 13 that citizens' fundamental rights could be harmed by information on the Web and where there's no public interest in publishing it. The right-to-be-forgotten ruling was a surprise for Google and other companies already facing greater scrutiny over privacy practices in the 28-nation EU. →GlobalEye»C3



LARRY PAGE, Google chief executive officer, said the ruling may encourage repressive regimes seeking to censor the Internet. "It will be used by other governments that aren't as forward and progressive as Europe to do bad things." BLOOMBERG

'DESTABILIZING,' SAYS U.S. OF SINO ACTIONS IN SOUTH CHINA SEA



HAGEL BLOOMBERG

U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel on Saturday spelled out a series of Chinese actions in parts of the disputed South China Sea (West Philippines Sea) and said they were destabilizing the region.

While China has said it wants a "sea of peace, friendship and cooperation," in recent months it "has undertaken destabilizing, unilateral actions asserting its claims in the South China Sea," Hagel said in prepared remarks at an annual security conference in Singapore.

"It has restricted access to the Scarborough Reef; put pressure on the long-standing Philippine presence at the Second Thomas Shoal; begun land-reclamation activities at multiple locations; and moved an oil rig into disputed waters near the Paracel Islands" off the coast of Vietnam, Hagel said, listing for the first time Chinese infractions in the region that are alarming Southeast Asian nations.

The stepped-up US comments followed Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung's appeal for a "stronger voice" from the US against China after clashes between coast-guard vessels near the right placed in contested waters. The Philippines, dwarfed militarily by China, has sought support from the US and the United Nations to counter China's encroachment into shoals off its coast.

Under President Xi Jinping, China has taken a more assertive approach to its territorial claims. During a visit to Beijing in April, Hagel was told by his counterpart, Gen. Chang Wanquan, that China would make "no compromise, no concessions" in its disputes with Japan and the Philippines.

Standing alongside Hagel at a briefing last month, Chang said "the Chinese military can assemble as soon as summoned, fight any battle and win." China can't be contained, Chang said, and the Pacific is "huge enough" to hold both countries.

International order

IN Singapore Hagel said the US "will not look the other way when fundamental principles of international order are being challenged," including moves by China to restrict overflight or freedom of navigation.

US-China military ties have been tested after the US Department of Justice indicted five Chinese military officials on charges of economic espionage linked to computer hacking of US nuclear power, metals and solar companies. China has suspended the US-China Cyber Working Group.

CONTINUED ON A2

Inflation to remain major focus of BSP policy moves

AFTER some statements in the past that many interpreted as hawkish, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Governor Armando M. Tetangco Jr. sought to clarify matters by explaining the "principles" behind a potential rate increase, saying that inflation—which has moved toward a higher path in the past months—would still be the major focus of any possible policy action this year.

In a recent speaking engagement, Tetangco reiterated the BSP's readiness to "deploy appropriate measures" to maintain a "non-inflationary growth" in the country.

The BSP is known to drop "hints" to the market as a form of guidance to its plans on monetary policy and

macroprudential environment.

In Tetangco's statements on May's inflation forecast and on the gross domestic product (GDP) growth of the country in the first quarter, the governor put emphasis on the central bank's readiness to tweak policies—a move that was interpreted by several market analysts as hawkish hints favoring policy adjustments in the near future.

"I know that many of you are aching to find out when the BSP is going to raise its policy rates. No one has a crystal ball, even Nostradamus missed. Instead of giving you a day and date, let me give you principles," Tetangco said, giving three main points on policy actions.

SEE "INFLATION," A2

PESO EXCHANGE RATES ■ US 43.9270 ■ JAPAN 0.4317 ■ UK 73.4416 ■ HK 5.6682 ■ CHINA 7.0397 ■ SINGAPORE 35.0295 ■ AUSTRALIA 40.8357 ■ EU 59.7671 ■ SAUDI ARABIA 11.7123 Source: BSP (30 May 2014)

97.9 HOME RADIO MANILA	89.3 HOME RADIO DAGUPAN	89.5 HOME RADIO ILOILO	92.3 HOME RADIO LEGAZPI	93.5 HOME RADIO CAGAYAN DE ORO
Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/979homeradiounatural • Follow us on Twitter: www.twitter.com/homeradiounatural	94.3 HOME RADIO PALAWAN	95.1 HOME RADIO NAGA	98.3 HOME RADIO GENERAL SANTOS	98.7 HOME RADIO DAVAO
				106.7 HOME RADIO CEBU

'Destabilizing,' says US of Sino actions in South China Sea

CONTINUED FROM A1

Even so, "we will continue to raise cyber issues with our Chinese counterparts, because dialogue is essential for reducing the risk of miscalculation and escalation in cyberspace," Hagel said.

Speaking on Thursday at the Shangri-La security forum, former Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Fu Ying said China and the US need to "work very hard to try to understand each other."

Misread, misunderstand

"THERE is a tendency that we misread each other, that we misunderstand each other," said Fu, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress. "I think we don't have any other choice, we have to work together. And there are no differences that are big enough for us to separate from each other."

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe also addressed the territorial disputes, giving a speech on Friday night to the Singapore forum where he said Japan would spare no effort in helping Southeast Asian nations secure the seas.

"Japan will offer its utmost support for the efforts of the countries of Asean as they work to ensure the security of the seas and the skies, and thoroughly maintain freedom of navigation and freedom of overflight," Abe said, referring to the 10-member Association of South-east Asian Nations.

Abe has moved to toughen Japan's defense posture in the face of



IN this May 16, 2014, file photo, Vietnamese expatriates and Filipinos display placards as they join together in a rally in front of the Chinese Consulate in Makati City to protest the recent moves by China to construct an oil rig near the Vietnamese-claimed Paracels off the contested Spratly group of islands and shoals in the South China Sea. AP/BULLIT MARQUEZ

the country's own territorial spat with China. Abe has repeatedly accused China of trying to change the status quo by force, and reiterated offers to Asian allies of military equipment and training.

Vietnam options

CHINA claims much of the South China Sea under its "nine-dash line" map, first published in 1947, which extends hundreds of miles south from China's Hainan Island to equatorial waters off the coast of Borneo, taking in some of the world's busiest shipping lanes. Brunei Darussalam,

Malaysia and the Philippines also claim parts of the sea.

Vietnam has prepared evidence for a lawsuit challenging China's claim and is considering the best time to file it, Dung said on Friday in an interview.

If open conflict were to erupt in the South China Sea, "there will be no victor," Dung warned, saying that two-thirds of global maritime trade passes through shipping lanes in the area. "Everyone will lose," he said. "The whole world economy will be hurt and damaged immeasurably."

Vietnam said China rammed

and sank one of its fishing boats on May 26 near the oil rig. The standoff over the rig triggered anti-Chinese riots in Vietnam that killed at least three Chinese nationals.

The sinking happened two days after Chinese fighter jets flew within tens of meters of Japanese surveillance planes in the East China Sea.

'Dangerous encounters'

CHINA blamed the boat-sinking on Vietnam and accused Japan of infringing on a no-fly zone it set up for its first bilateral naval exercises with Russia in the East China Sea.

"We do not welcome dangerous encounters by fighter planes or warships at sea," Abe said.

Japanese and Chinese coast guard vessels have tailed one another around the uninhabited East China Sea islands since Japan bought three of them from a private Japanese owner late in 2012. Bilateral ties have been rocked by the dispute over the islands, known as Senkaku in Japan and Diaoyu in China, and Abe has not held a summit with China since taking office almost 18 months ago.

Abe said his plans for Japan to make a more active contribution to security have been broadly welcomed overseas. Abe increased Japan's defense budget for two years in a row after it had slid for more than a decade.

"Japan intends to play an even greater and more proactive role than it has until now in making peace in Asia and the world something more certain," he said. *Bloomberg News*

FPI... CONTINUED FROM A1

about by the disappointing gross domestic product (GDP) growth in the first quarter, which hit 5.7 percent.

BSP Governor Amando M. Tetangco Jr. said the continued and stronger inflows seen in early May are indicators of a recovery from the early months' slump due to the risk aversion of foreign investors to emerging-market economies. This risk aversion was due to the negative sentiment brought by the decision of the United States Federal Reserve to taper its asset-purchase program.

"The spillover effect of the US monetary-policy normalization has gradually tapered off. In particular, we could see that portfolio investments are now posting inflows following outflows registered during the latter part of 2013 to the first three months of 2014," Tetangco said.

The government's assumption for the year is for FPI to hit \$2.1 billion at the end of 2014.

Inflation... CONTINUED FROM A1

He said the BSP was "focused on inflation"; that it would not think twice before acting "pre-emptively," if the inflation target was at risk; and that the BSP was not "wedded to a pre-set course of action."

The central bank's primary mandate is to maintain price stability in the country.

For five consecutive years, the BSP has been able to keep inflation within the set target for the year. In 2013 full-year average inflation hit 3 percent—falling at the lower end of the government's official target of 3 percent to 5 percent.

Tetangco said that although the current inflation is seen to be "manageable over the policy horizon," the path of the growth of consumer prices has "somewhat moved higher" in the previous months.

Potential increases in power rates and higher food prices as a result of El Niño are among the key potential price risks on the upside. The downside risk, meanwhile, remains on the global front, as emerging markets will potentially slow down and the risk of deflation in advanced economies is still evident.

"Going forward, to help ensure that the BSP is able to sustain the "trend" of meeting the inflation target, we will continue to watch devel-

opments. We will deploy appropriate measures as needed to ensure sustainable, non-inflationary and inclusive economic growth," Tetangco noted in that speaking engagement.

The central bank's target for the year is for inflation to fall between 3 percent and 5 percent. In its latest policy-setting meeting in May, monetary officials forecast inflation to hit 4.3 percent this year, higher than the earlier projection of 4.2 percent. The next policy meeting will be on June 19.

The forecast inflation for next year is also seen to be near the upper ceiling of the inflation target. The BSP said it expects 2015 inflation to hit 3.4 percent, higher than the 3.2 percent that was earlier projected.

The government assigned a target range of 2 percent to 4 percent for inflation in 2015.

Some analysts, including economists from international banks Standard Chartered and Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corp. said they were expecting a rate increase in the second half of the year.

But other economists are weighing their biases on the BSP keeping rates on hold a little longer following the disappointing GDP numbers in the first quarter of the year. *Bianca Cuaserna*



BusinessMirror
A broader look at today's business

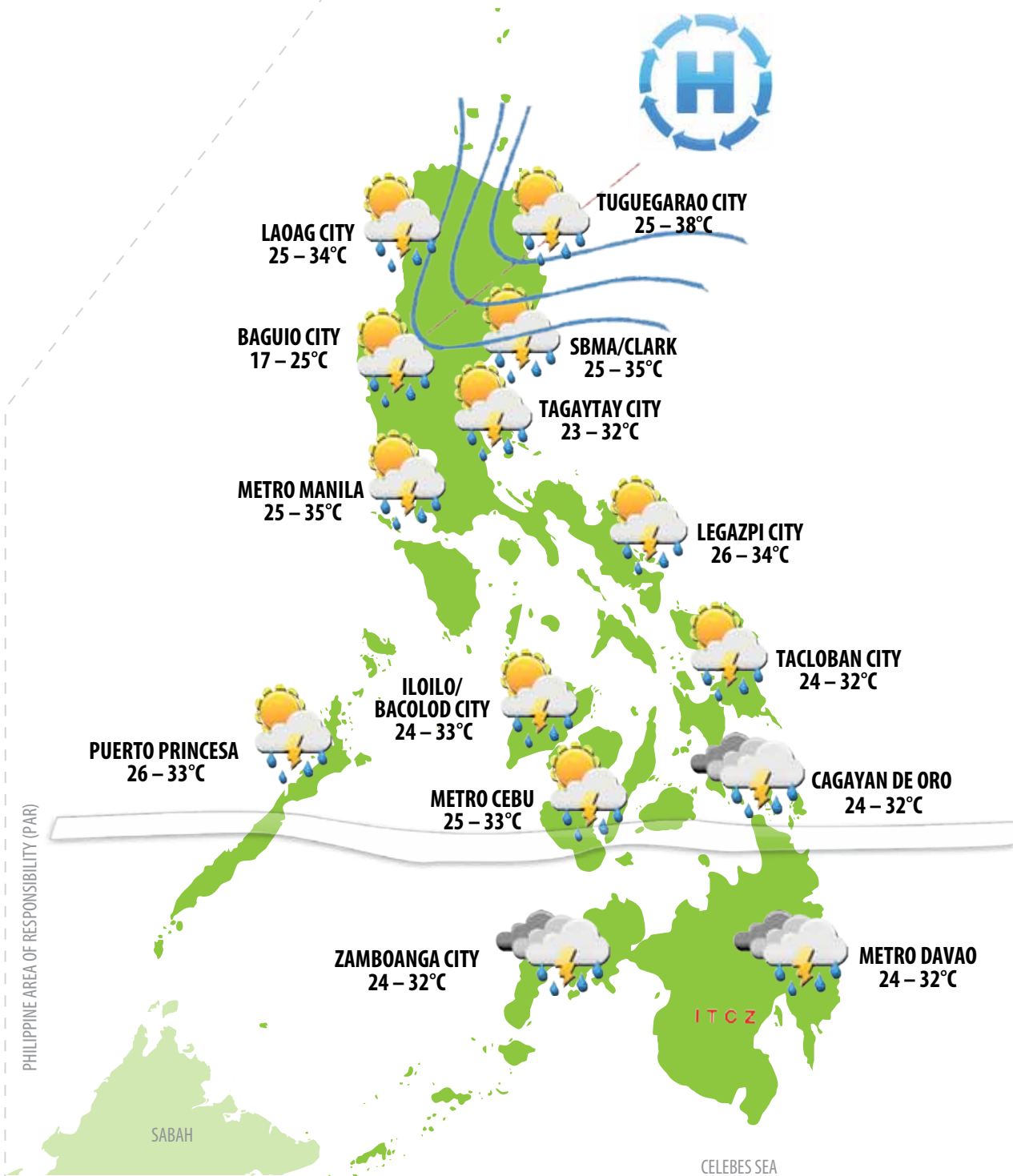


TODAY'S WEATHER

RIDGE OF HIGH PRESSURE AREA (HPA) EXTENDING OVER THE EASTERN LUZON BRINGING FAIR WEATHER TO THE COUNTRY EXCEPT FOR AFTERNOON OR EVENING ISOLATED RAINSHOWERS AND THUNDERSTORMS.

JUNE 1, 2014 | SUNDAY

RIDGE OF HIGH PRESSURE AREA (HPA) EXTENDING OVER THE EASTERN LUZON
INTERTROPICAL CONVERGENCE ZONE (ITCZ) AFFECTING MINDANAO (AS OF MAY 31, 5:00 AM)



3-DAY EXTENDED FORECAST

	JUNE 2 MONDAY	JUNE 3 TUESDAY	JUNE 4 WEDNESDAY
METRO MANILA	25 - 35°C	24 - 33°C	23 - 32°C
TUGUEGARAO	25 - 37°C	25 - 37°C	24 - 37°C
LAOAG	24 - 34°C	24 - 33°C	24 - 32°C
BAGUIO	17 - 25°C	16 - 25°C	15 - 25°C
SBMA/CLARK	24 - 33°C	24 - 33°C	23 - 32°C
TAGAYTAY	22 - 31°C	22 - 31°C	21 - 31°C
LEGAZPI	25 - 34°C	25 - 33°C	25 - 33°C
PUERTO PRINCESA	25 - 32°C	25 - 32°C	24 - 31°C
ILOILO/BACOLOD	24 - 32°C	24 - 31°C	23 - 31°C

3-DAY EXTENDED FORECAST

	JUNE 2 MONDAY	JUNE 3 TUESDAY	JUNE 4 WEDNESDAY
METRO CEBU	26 - 33°C	25 - 33°C	24 - 33°C
TACLOBAN	25 - 33°C	24 - 33°C	25 - 34°C
CAGAYAN DE ORO	24 - 32°C	25 - 32°C	25 - 33°C
METRO DAVAO	25 - 33°C	25 - 34°C	26 - 34°C
ZAMBOANGA	25 - 33°C	24 - 33°C	25 - 33°C

SUNRISE	SUNSET	MOONSET	MOONRISE
5:25 AM	6:22 PM	9:55 PM	8:12 AM

LOW TIDE	HIGH TIDE
8:44 PM -0.01 METER	11:41 AM 1.16 METER

- Partly cloudy skies
- Partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms
- Cloudy with rainshowers or thunderstorms
- Rain with gusty winds

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Pamalakaya doubts Jica's plan will address Metro Manila woes

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

THE Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) is skeptical of the development plan proposed by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) for the National Capital Region (NCR), Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog to solve traffic, infrastructure and housing problems.

In fact, Pamalakaya Vice Chairman Salvador France said the Jica study titled "Roadmap for Transport Infrastructure Development for Metro Manila and its surrounding areas" is "a recipe for destruction" and "will not bring genuine development" to millions people in the NCR, Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog.

France said the Jica proposal is "bereft of any genuine land reform, negates free land distribution and does not entail national industrialization" which he said, are "sound fundamentals to ease congestion and address the housing problems in Metro Manila."

"This dream plan of Jica is actually a recipe for destruction. It denationalizes everything in the name of capital accumulation and exploitation. The Tokyo technical agency intentionally did not prescribe thoroughgoing land reform and economic nationalization to keep modern-day slavery in our midst," he said.

The study, conducted from March to December 2013, recommended public and private sector investments of up to \$57.3 billion through 2030 to realize the overall impact encapsulated in five "Nos"—"No traffic congestion, no excessive transport cost burden for low income groups, no households living in high-hazard risk areas, no barriers for seamless mobility of people, and no air pollution" in the Mega Manila area.

But France noted that it was Jica that prescribed the export-bane industrialization program of the Marcos regime in the 1970s.

"It is the same think tank group that deluged succeeding regimes with the

same prescription on privatization, deregulation and liberalization. Four decades after, where are we now? We are still languishing in the jails of economic prisons due to absence of genuine land reform and national industrialization," France added.

Jica's development plan calls for the rehabilitation of major roads like the 23-kilometer Epifanio de los Santos Avenue, development of secondary roads; and completion of the so-called missing links, which refer to flyovers, interchanges and bridges and completion of the North Luzon Expressway and South Luzon Expressway connection to cite a few.

The plan also pitches call for the development of a new international airport to replace the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, which Jica maintained can be closed and converted into a business district.

Jica said about 500,000 people live in "high-hazard risk areas" in Metro Manila and 1.4 million people in similar areas

in Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog. On the other hand, about 700,000 people reside in "moderate-hazard risk areas" in the NCR and 1.8 million people in similar communities in Regions 3 and 4A.

The agency also reported that there was a "backlog of 800,000 housing units in Metro Manila," and the "need to resettle 300,000 additional households," including squatter families.

It proposed that squatters living in high-risk areas and those who need affordable housing can be accommodated in "planned new urban areas with good accessibility and living environment" in the provinces of Bulacan, Cavite and Laguna.

"The Jica paper instead of advising the Philippines government to ensure genuine land reform and pursue a patriotic path toward economic nationalization is prescribing the outright displacement of nearly 2 million Filipino families through the grand sell out spurred by this Marshal Plan for Greater Capital Region," France said.

Aboitiz Equity Ventures unit buys Vietnamese feeds firm

AS part of the expansion of its feeds business and entry into the Vietnamese market, a subsidiary of Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc. (AEV) is acquiring an aqua-feed producer from Vinh Hoan Corp. (VHC) for \$28 million.

AEV's Singapore-based unit Pilmico International Pte. Ltd. (Pilmico International) has executed a Share Sale and Purchase with VHC to initially acquire

a 70-percent equity stake in Vinh Hoan 1 Feed JSC set for closure in July 2014.

Equivalent to 21 million shares, each is priced at \$0.93, or a total of \$19.53 million.

As per the pact, Pilmico International will then buy the remaining 30 percent within five years at a pre-agreed price.

"We are delighted to have this opportunity to expand our feed business and to enter Vietnam with such

a strong and well-respected partner as VHC," said Sabin Aboitiz, president and chief executive officer of Pilmico Foods Corp., AEV's food subsidiary.

For his part, VHC Chairman Truong Thi Le Khanh noted: "Pilmico is a highly reputable feed producer and we look forward to working closely with Pilmico in the future."

He added that VHC and Pilmico are set to conduct a joint research in

feed formulation so as to produce the highest quality products to their customers globally.

Business Development Asia (HK) Ltd. acted as financial advisor for the deal as Honor Partnership Law Co. Ltd. served as legal advisor to VHC.

For Pilmico, Indochina Capital Corp. acted as financial advisor and Gide Loyrette Nouel A.A.R.P.I. served as legal advisor. *Roderick Abad*

Power Situation Outlook for Sunday, 1 June 2014			
NGCP			
	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao
Available Capacity (MW)	8,916	1,603	1,337
System Peak (MW)	6,842	1,437	1,197
Gross Reserve (MW)	2,074	166	140

* Based on data computed as of 10:00AM May 30, 2014.
** Subject to change depending on actual power system conditions.
*** To view required regulating and contingency reserve levels, please visit <http://www.ngcp.ph>.

Power supply restored in some parts of Legazpi City, Albay town

LEGAZPI CITY—After three days of whole-day blackouts, electricity was restored in most parts of this city at about 12 midnight on Friday.

The power restoration came after an arrangement was reached between the San Miguel Electric Corp. (SMEC) and the Embarcadero Land Ventures Inc. (Elvi) after the latter agreed to have their 10-megavolt ampere (MVA) transformer be used by the Albay Power Electric Corp., a wholly owned subsidiary of the SMEC which won the concession to operate and manage the Apec (formerly the Albay Electric Cooperative), was successful.

"As much as possible, we at the Elvi would like to help in easing the power supply problem of our community," Annie Sumanga, president of the Sunwest Group of Companies that includes the Elvi, said.

With the agreement, Apec Technical Operations Department crew headed by Engr. Russell James Serrano immediately installed the metering facilities and other accessories needed for energization, according to Jane M. Rogando, Apec Customer Services Department head.

Initially energized was Feeder 3, which serves the following barangays: Legazpi City port area and southern villages—part of Tahao Road, Vel-Amor Subdivision, part of Cabangan, Puting Daga, Guevarra Subdivision, Barangay 17, Barangay 15-Ilawod East, Barangay 14-Ilawod, Maoyod, Tula-Tula, Estanza, Taysan, Maslog, Homapon, Mariawa, Bagacay, Imalnod, Banquerohan, Bariis, San Francisco, Buenavista and Cagbacong.

In the Albay District Area, power was restored along Marquez Street, Sikatuna Street, Rosario Street C. Imperial Street, Msgr. F. Reyes Street, Diego Silang Street and Alegre Street.

The entire town of Manito was also energized. "Load curtailment, however, will still be implemented after the energization of the Elvi substation. Feeder 3 and Feeder 4 will have a rotational energization but there is no schedule yet of intervals of rotation," Rogando said.

She added that there will be two units of 10-MVA transformer that are expected to be delivered anytime soon within this week and the timetable to normalize the power supply is expected later this weekend or early next week.

The power problem was caused by the conking out of the 35-year-old transformer at the Bitano substation.

During the blackout period, Albay Gov. Joey Sarte Salceda and Legazpi City Mayor Noel E. Rosal had worked hard to solve the problem that had caused inconveniences to residents and loss of millions of pesos by local businesses.

"We mobilized the entire senior officials of the Aquino administration to accelerate the return to normalcy, i.e., regular power supply—from Executive Secretary Jojo Ochoa, Cabinet Secretary Rene Almendras, Environment Secretary Ramon Paje and others," Salceda said.

Albay, he said, would have expanded capacities: 1.) standby working arrangements with the Elvi and potentially with other power sources, if needed; and 2.) two 10-MVA transformers arriving soon and new modern capacities. *PNA*



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editorial

New Indian premier needs to reset ties with Pakistan

At his inauguration as India's prime minister last Monday, Narendra Modi scored an international political coup. In the audience sweltering atop Delhi's Raisina Hill, where the British once presided over their Indian empire, stood leaders of the various nations that had once made up that empire. Modi's unprecedented decision to invite them to the ceremony was deft public relations, signaling his confidence, impatience with hoary tradition and conviction that India's fortunes depend on those of its immediate neighborhood. The presence of Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, in particular, and Modi's hourlong meeting with him last Tuesday have raised hopes for a thaw in relations between the subcontinent's two nuclear powers.

India and Pakistan have witnessed many moments of hope and optimism since their twinned birth in 1947—all of which have been dashed. To really reset relations with Islamabad, Modi will have to move fast to exploit the current bonhomie.

The most obvious front to move on is trade. Here the ball would seem to be in Pakistan's court. Islamabad still hasn't fulfilled a two-year-old pledge to reciprocate India's grant of "most favored nation" trading status. (Pakistani negotiators can't even say the words; they talk only of offering India "nondiscriminatory market access.") But India, for its part, maintains various nontariff barriers, from domestic agricultural subsidies to product-labeling requirements, which complicate the import of Pakistani goods.

If barriers were lowered on both sides of the border, trade between the two countries, now less than \$3 billion annually, could grow to \$40 billion. India stands to gain at least as much as Pakistan would, not least because of the potential to ship Indian goods through Pakistan to Afghanistan and the rest of Central Asia. An effort by Modi to lift some of India's unofficial trade restrictions might give Sharif some political leverage with his government. At the same time, Modi's big infrastructure plans should include improvements to ports, roads and border facilities that link the two countries, which the World Bank suggests would exponentially increase the gains from most-favored-nation status.

Even if it is too soon for Modi to visit Pakistan, he could revive back-channel talks over the status of Kashmir—the issue that has bedeviled the region since the partition. Modi will probably never have more political strength to negotiate a lasting deal on Kashmir than he has at this moment, when his huge electoral mandate is still fresh. If reports are to be believed, the previous Congress government came very close to agreeing on the outlines of just such a grand bargain—one that would soften the border between the Indian- and Pakistani-controlled halves of Kashmir to allow the free flow of local goods and people.

Delay only gives the jihadi groups fighting to wrest Kashmir from Indian control a chance to dictate events. And while Modi controls his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party now, even he couldn't resist the backlash that would greet anything like another Mumbai terrorist attack. Indian hardliners argue that, before relations between the two countries can improve, Pakistan first needs to rein in its extremist groups, some of which are backed by elements in the Pakistani military. But the most realistic way for Sharif to tame his own hardliners is to point to the real prospect of a deal on Kashmir.

Modi and Sharif should start talking, as well, about their mutual roles in Afghanistan after most US troops withdraw at the end of the year. Abdullah Abdullah, the front-runner to become Afghanistan's next president, is seen as friendly to India. The last thing Afghanistan needs is a suspicious Pakistani military bulking up the Taliban as a counterweight to the Kabul regime.

Finally, Modi needs to reach out to Indian Muslims. Until he does, doubts about his Hindu prejudices will linger, undermining relations with Pakistan. Modi has been smart to start off by tamping down fears that he would heighten tensions with India's neighbor. Still, it will take work to erase them completely. *Bloomberg editorial*



Unfinished business

THE government's economic think tank, the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda), has updated the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) with a catchy "Unfinished Business" chapter that the Aquino administration would pursue. The revised plan shows it is aware that the "benefits of growth have not been broadly shared among the population"—or the so-called lack of inclusive growth.

The Neda said poverty incidence has only declined marginally between 2009 and 2012, with about a quarter of the population, or 25 million, considered income poor. Another notable yardstick is that "employment has not grown fast enough, and nearly a fifth of the population want additional work." The big challenge then is to have the benefits of the economic growth trickling down to the bottom poor.

Inclusive growth is now the mantra of the updated PDP, which will end in 2016, a big challenge that the Aquino administration is taking pains to achieve. And on this aspect, the government is now looking at a multi-dimensional measurement of poverty from the old way of measuring the poverty incidence on how much each household earns.

The updated plan, for instance, has set forth a new definition of poverty: "A state of being deprived of goods and services necessary to basic functioning." In capturing the incidence of poverty, based on this definition, would show an annual poverty-indicator survey at 28.2 percent in 2008. Thus, the infrastructure spending, which sometimes bedevils motorists, is part of the administration's approach against poverty.

What the government is zeroing in on are the problems of lack of education; insufficient nutrition and poor health; inadequate living standard, such as access to clean water and sanitation; electricity; poor housing quality; social exclusion; and unstable and poor quality of work and employment. The infrastructure spending is a key to addressing multidimensional poverty.

Turkish flour
WHO is afraid of Turkish flour? This



is what a leaflet that was distributed during a press briefing was asking. The briefing was meant to give the side of the Turkish exporters, now that the government is about set to impose an additional duty on imported flour, now with a 7-percent customs levy tacked on, due to allegations of dumping or the sale of Turkish flour lower than its domestic price, a trade-related issue.

And for the Turkish exporters, they believe there are some powerful groups behind the antidumping charge. To buttress their point, they pointed out that in 2008 Turkish flour imports were categorized as toxic. "We made headlines in the Senate and the media," the leaflet said, but "these accusations were proven false." The issue then was about the presence of aflatoxin in the Turkish flour imports.

"Now, it's dumping," the leaflet decry, as it ticked off three benefits of the Turkish flour, which, because of low prices, has accounted for 90 percent of total flour imports, although it just represents 11 percent of total flour use in the country. These benefits, the leaflet trumpeted, are that the Turkish flour is pro-free trade, pro-Philippines labor and pro-Filipino.

As for the pro-Filipino benefit, the Turkish exporters say that because of low prices of Turkish flour, the country's 7.9 million families, who consider

themselves food-poor, may not be able to afford *pan de sal* anymore with the projected rise in prices by 20 percent should the additional customs duty be levied on Turkish flour.

Malls make beeline for SSS branches

MALLS are making a beeline for Social Security System (SSS) branches that they provide free of rent in the continuing challenging environment to attract foot traffic. With citizens transacting with the SSS for various reasons, from following up on their retirement pension to getting an SSS ID, the malls have started to offer not just mall space but other freebies.

SSS Vice President Marissu Bugante is ecstatic about the development, as the malls have even provided the necessary signages and other facilities. "All that we need is to move SSS computers," she said. And that is good news for the SSS, which has been showing up with better financial yardsticks than before.

The competition for foot traffic has become intense lately with the challenging environment nowadays, especially with the poverty incidence still considered high. This is why it is not only the SSS that is getting free mall space but even the other government departments, such as the Department of Labor and Employment and the Department of Foreign Affairs.

BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business

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GAGNI'S
GLEANINGS
Lito U. Gagni

BusinessMirror is published daily by the Philippine Business Daily Mirror Publishing, Inc., with offices on the 2nd Floor, Dominga Building (Annex), 2113 Chino Roces Avenue corner De La Rosa Street, Makati City, Philippines. Tel. Nos. (Editorial) 817-9467; 813-0725. Fax line: 813-7025. (Advertising Sales) 893-2019; 817-1351, 817-2807. (Circulation) 893-1662; 814-0134 to 36. E-mail: news@businessmirror.com.ph.

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NOW the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw Him they worshiped Him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded You; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."

— MATTHEW 28:16-20

‘Utot ng amo’



FREE FIRE
By Teddy Locsin Jr.

THERE is good-intentioned but ignorant opposition to the adoption of genetically modified Golden Rice. It adds vitamin A to rice to prevent blindness and death among the poor who don't go to Healthy Options or GNC. I do not know what is about the poor that they can't take the trouble to get their vitamin supplements there.

My own opposition to GMOs that are pushing for more abundant and nutrient-rich foods—to borrow the word that can get you beaten up in a condo unit—is that genetically modified foods can be made sterile with a terminator gene. That way, no seeds can be saved for the next planting. For those, you gotta go back to the GMO owning patent to the more abundantly productive and nourishing cereals. Without seeds for the succeeding planting, the GMO can stick up a thumb and point a finger at you—so no illegal possession of firearms or threats with them—and say to the farmer, “Your money or

your children's lives.”

Sure, GMOs give out their genetically enriched cereals free at first; but they can, theoretically, charge through the roof when their patented super cereals are the only ones left. So either you buy them on their terms or starve to death.

Four things stop this from happening.

No. 1, Golden Rice seeds and, more important, the know-how and technique for making them has been given out free. So unless you are an exceptionally stupid race or you elect really bad presidents, any country can mass reproduce the Golden Rice seed even without a license once it has the technology down on paper.

No. 2, assuming it is hard to replicate these enhanced seeds in a native lab, the hungry populace can torch the local GMO office and then the presidential palace with everyone in it for letting the GMO go so far.

No. 3, the Chinese probably have

the secret already and will sell it cheap; especially if we give them the Spratlys. Well, we can come up with a mutually satisfying deal.

And, No. 4, GMOs have never sterilized their cereals. They can do it but they haven't because word would have gotten around by now and many of their officers and staff would have been castrated by the natives by now to international acclaim.

Meanwhile, poor people are malnourished. Nature, as usual, is incompetent to provide adequately for the mouths that Nature so lavishly produces, because Nature by definition is wild. Which is to say, wacko. The crazy are not productive as we can see from observing government officials.

Nature needs science to work well or at all.

And finally, no one eats naturally vitamin A-rich *camote* in lieu of rice. You cannot always blame the sleeping dog for your fart. “Hoy, aso, aliskad'yan, baka ka pa malason sa utot ng amo mo.”



“Boys will be boys. They make mistakes.”

—Former Indian Chief Minister and Samajwadi Party chief Mulayam Singh Yadav, in a much-criticized statement questioning the death penalty for rape during a rally in Moradabad. He said his party opposed a law calling for gang rapists to be executed. State officials in north India fired two police officers on Friday for failing to investigate the disappearance of two teenage cousins, who were gang-raped and later found hanging from a tree.

Funding ‘pasahe, baon’ for kids via cyberspace



PEREGRINE NOTES
By Alegria Imperial

WHAT would a child do if he has money for fare to get to school but nothing for food, or has a meal allowance but would have to walk two hours through dirt roads, singling along highway sides—a choice that, either way, cancels the possibility to be in school, doesn't it? Yet, children in countless Philippines rural towns apparently anguish over this dilemma every day. If some make it to school with what their parents could scrape for fare, they would be drowsing, known to pair with hunger, by midafternoon; most simply drop out as has been commonly reported.

I suppose those who recognize that such a problem has long existed would find comfort on learning that this, too, rears its ugly head, though in another guise, in American schools, where the state, under the National School Lunch Program subsidized by the federal government, provides food either for free, at reduced prices, or paid in full, depending on parents' income. The program, started in 1946, has since served 224 billion lunches and cost \$11.6 billion in 2012; its implementation, though, has not only differed per school charter but also among states, causing a few controversies.

The practice of stamping or marking out a child who gets lunch for free or whose account had run low, hence embarrassing him or her, had led to the alleged firing of Noelle Roni, a former principal in Peak to Peak, Colorado, as recently reported in *The Huffington Post*. On the other hand,

commiserating with his classmates who had been shamed by the practice has inspired Cayden Taipulus, a 3rd Grader, “to launch a fund-raiser online and collected nearly \$11,000 enough to buy his classmates lunch for the rest of the year” through a social-networking site and posted on Facebook a few weeks ago.

No basis of linking the topic to Filipino schoolchildren who have nary a hint that free lunch could be possible, right? Wrong. I do know of an initiative, though hardly resembling the US program—its funds, for one, to provide what parents can't ever afford to send their children to school can take in only four students per class year from Grade 7 to fourth-year high school. Not of an organization but an informal alumni group of Bacarra National Comprehensive High School (BNCHS) in Ilocos Norte, nothing about it sounds like something already known to have rooted, even if still quite fragile, so far.

Iliw, its name, a fanciful acronym for a quixotic dream on Innovative Learning Initiatives and Ways for Bacarra, in truth, describes a sentiment its members on a Yahoo! group site Tony Ponce owns that fired them to set up the sponsorship. In Iluko, *iliw* not only means nostalgia, it could also conjure up gestures that burst with longing, which, in this case, happened on cyberspace and not just for a night but nightly for about a year. So gripping had the memory-swapping affected the otherwise amorphous camp



BACARRA, Ilocos Norte, prescreened elementary graduates listen to instructions on their final screening to be recipients of Iliw ti Bacarra, an informal alumni group sponsorship focused on fare and meals for Bacarra National Comprehensive High School students from Grade 7 to fourth year.

of alumni from varied class years, at first merely exchanging patchy messages about reunions, that when an author joined with a book on collective memories of their town in mind, Tony's site soon swarmed with “raucous regulars,” tossing in what they recalled, unraveling years in Bacarra long misted by exile.

From corners on syncopated time zones in the US and Canada, some in Europe, a few in the Middle East and in the Philippines, the virtual

friends “prowled” Bacarra's streets, “talking” of the same everything; they even discovered blood kinship among them, charted the town's map by memory, though possibly extant by now, and revived their tongue by then lost in their alien lives with lessons in Iluko 101 that Rufino Tangonan, a math teacher in Texas, started with word-meaning quizzes. But life eventually began to creep on their idyll on cyberspace—if one of them had not gone home

and driven by memories dropped by BNCHS, bringing back to the group a poignant picture of some students trudging miles or hungry in school, the group could have just thinned out into air.

But their boldness held up and birthed Iliw ti Bacarra, a sponsorship they funded with disparate amounts out of their pockets, wired to a PNB account in Laoag City and disbursed by an officer to the school. While the book that triggered memories remains cached, and most Iliw members now at least have “met” on Facebook, the third batch of graduates finished this year with two of them from the Special Science Class (not a scholarship, Iliw expects only passing average but most of all, the will to graduate).

As upperclassmen in the program will be assessed, about 30 would soon be gathered again to be screened at the BNCHS library—Victoria Albano, not an alumna but a Bacarra in Vancouver and donor, nonetheless, prays for those not chosen. Would they face each day without *pasahe* or *baon* like perhaps thousands somewhere in the islands? I know this sounds old news oft-repeated, so much so that instead of drawing compassion the image invites indifference. Or how else could one explain the yawning gap in schooling between over-privileged and more-than-poor Filipino children? Maybe we could all storm the heavens for a duplication of Iliw or for more to hop in on it.

Kawanaka's Robredo: Power in a PHL city

By TITO GENOVA VALIENTE
titovaliente@yahoo.com

LAST May 27 was declared a holiday in Naga City. The day happened to be the birth anniversary of Jess Robredo, the man credited for the rise of this city by the river. Multiawarded, Robredo became a secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government and his death by accident made him a hero, if not almost a hero. But the holiday was not about Robredo; it was to celebrate the foundation of Camarines Sur, the province heavily linked and identified with the Villafuertes. Robredo must have laughed at the irony of the day.

On that day, however, as the province celebrated with trade fairs and beauty pageants, there were forums and talks about Robredo and his contribution to local as well as national politics. But I grappled with all the talks. Most of the talks were nostalgic and hortatory. The praises would have embarrassed Jess himself. Those who knew him to be socially self-effacing would know. Or, the *sinelas* politics—with reference to his propensity to wear flip-flops to show he was hands-on and ready for action—would not have meaning at all.

How was Robredo before his death?

There is a book that looks into the Robredo phenomenon more than a decade before his accident. The book is entitled *Power in a Philippine Society*; the author is a Japanese scholar, Takeshi Kawanaka, a political scientist.

More than ever, this book, which is part of the Occasional Paper Series of the Japan-based Institute of Developing Economies, provides a significant perspective about the success of Robredo even as it demystifies so many things about the man. All for the best, I would realize.

The first three chapters theoretically situate the leadership of Robredo and the development of Naga from a backwater economy to a city/community empowering the urban poor and discovering the power of class structures in the city and its surrounding.

Kawanaka or Gosan, as I fondly refer to him, had the benefit of gaining entry into the inner circle of Robredo early on in his career. His source of materials range from the classic documents of Domingo Abella to the keen insights of Norman Owen in his books *Prosperity Without Progress: Manila Hemp and Material Life in the Colonial Philippines* and *The Bikol Blend: Bikolanos and Their History* to the local paper called *Handiong*.

He attended meetings and accompanied election sorties. He was there in the social and political moments.

The description of the movement of politicians and other leaders from one political party to another, following Kawanaka's description, is in itself a marvel of objective observation.

What is a book on Robredo without the famous or infamous rift between him and Luis Villafuerte? Kawanaka implies how Villafuerte got Robredo so the former could gain control of the city. How after one year, the rift began. But as I read on, I realized how fleeting the loyalties and links in politics. In fact, fleeting should not be the word but expedient. Villafuerte was against Raul Roco first; Robredo trounced Roco's brother, Ramon, in 1988. But in 1992 Villafuerte formed an alliance with Roco. As Villafuerte's opponent, Kawanaka noted how Robredo could not join LDP. Robredo then threw his support to Fidel Ramos, who was endorsed by Cory Aquino, whose party in the previous election was the party of Purita Magtuto, the sister of Villafuerte and, by kinship, Robredo's aunt. The movement went on and on. Perhaps, it was the social and cultural distance of Kawanaka, as a researcher and as a social scientist, that made his

analysis astute. But, that is not being fair to this man whose grasp of theory in politics and governance are really the tools well used in this documentation of power in a Philippine city.

There are many gems in this documentation. There is, for example, the profiles of the city *kagawad*, most of whom were classified as not belonging to the elite of the city. A significant number of them were not from Naga either. In his reading, Kawanaka underscores that, given their background, these local leaders could and would derive their power only from a charismatic person like Robredo.

We have not seen each other for a long time but as I began writing this piece, I got hold of the e-mail address of Go san. I wrote him about the development—political, economic and social—in the city. I also relayed to him how Robredo's persona has increased a thousandfold after his death.

Here is an excerpt of what I wrote Kawanaka:

Your book is an amazingly (in hindsight) refreshing and startling way of assessing the Robredo phenomenon. Now, that the view about him is nearly hagiographic, your analysis gives us a real picture, now missed by those who admire Robredo, of Robredo as a politician, an

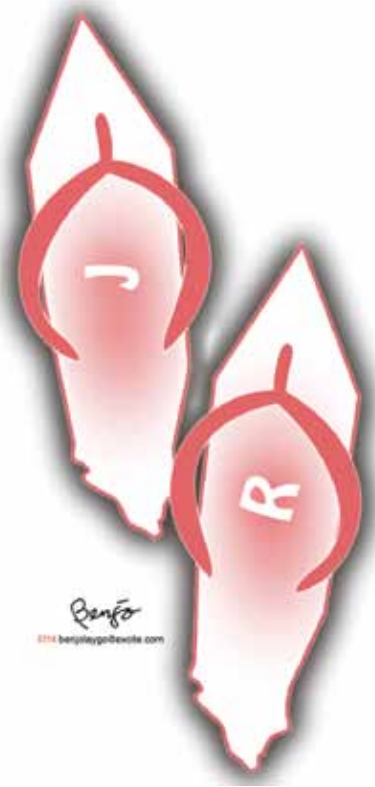
astute one and not a saint or a mystic.

Here is Kawanaka's response: I get frustrated whenever I encounter comments on my book like “this book is praising Robredo.” Those who make such comments never read my book, or have no capability to understand the argument.

What I intended to claim in my book is that even an innovative leader like Robredo needed to employ traditional means to hold on to power. Robredo calculated the optimal political strategy within the state institutions and socioeconomic circumstance where he was placed.

Finally, Kawanaka says: What makes me respect Robredo is that he never lost his “goodwill” even if he needed to employ old traditional political tactics. He could separate the goal and the means.

In the book, Go san acknowledged my late brother, Pempe Valiente, an activist and cultural worker, as his “adviser in the field.” Dr. Kawanaka Takeshi is now the Director of the Southeast Asian Studies Group I of the Institute of Developing Economies, in Chiba, Japan. Prof. Kawanaka specializes in Comparative Politics, New Democracies, Political Institutions and Southeast Asian Politics.



Groups demand deeper probe of workers' death in Pasay fire

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

THE Institute for Occupational Health and Safety for Development (IOHSAD) on Saturday urged the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) to investigate the death of eight female workers who were trapped inside a warehouse that caught fire in Pasay City on Friday.

The IOHSAD expressed alarm that based on reports, those who perished in the fire were padlocked inside the warehouse.

The group challenged the DOLE to swiftly act on the incident, noting that the workers' right to safe workplace was violated.

Reports said the nine workers who survived with injuries escaped by destroying iron grills or passed through a narrow hole in the building.

"This is a clear violation of Rule

1943.03 of the Philippine Occupational Health and Standards [OHSS] that outlines the need to have at least two exits in every floor and basement capable of clearing the work area in five minutes," the group said.

IOHSAD in a statement said, "The incident confirms our country's recent inclusion in the International Trade Union Confederation [2014 Global Rights Index] report as one of the worst countries to work in."

"More and more workers are forced to work under unsafe and inhumane conditions. In the case of the eight workers, they have to endure working and staying in a padlocked warehouse that eventually caused their precious lives," Noel Colina, IOHSAD executive director, said.

On May 9, 2012, 18 female workers of Novo Jeans and Shirts Department Store were killed when they were trapped inside a burning

building in Butuan City.

"Justice must be given to all workers who have died due to work. Occupational health and safety is a basic right of every worker. We reiterate our call to the government to criminalize OHSS violations to protect the workers and make companies liable for work-related deaths," Colina added.

Meanwhile, the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) blamed the death of the workers on the failure of the Aquino administration to uphold health and safety standards at the workplace.

"Incidents leading to the death of workers, such as in Eton Towers in 2010, where 10 were killed; Keppel [2011, five dead]; Ali Mall [2012, four dead]; Novo [2012, 17 dead]; and SPC Malaya Power Corp. [2013, five dead], are a result of government neglect, the group said.

KMU condemned Juanito Go and

Samson Co, owners of Asia Micro Tech, which was housed in the multistory electronics warehouse that was razed by fire, over the tragedy.

Netita Gonzaga, KMU vice chairman for women's affairs, said widespread violations of workers' rights and rabid defense of capitalist profiteering by the Aquino administration have emboldened capitalists to take workers' lives for granted.

"Worse, this administration has failed to attain justice for workers who were killed at the workplace," Gonzaga added.

"Numerous violations of workers' health and safety under the Aquino government have compelled us to craft a bill that will criminalize such violations. We do not expect the Aquino administration, given its anti-worker record, to act on its own to uphold the dignity of workers' lives," Gonzaga said.

Belmonte rejects House probe of pork-barrel scam

SPEAKER Feliciano Belmonte Jr. said on Saturday that the Lower Chamber should focus on legislation as he rejected the call of the minority bloc and some members of the majority for a separate House investigation of lawmakers who have been implicated in the P10-billion pork-barrel scam allegedly operated by Janet Lim-Napoles.

Belmonte told reporters that it would be best if the investigation were left to investigating bodies, such as the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Office of the Ombudsman.

Belmonte added that the Senate Blue Ribbon Committee is already investigating the scam, adding that another investigation by the House of Representatives "would further confuse the people."

"Investigation should be conducted, but not in this House when only few are involved. Also, we want to get on with our work and not be affected by

the issue, as many economic bills are pending," he said.

"Also at the end of the day, the legally mandated investigators are the DOJ and the Ombudsman," Belmonte added.

He also said that one of the main reasons he does not want an investigation in the Lower Chamber is to avoid being accused of partiality, since no one among the accused will admit that they were recipients of the scam.

Of the 290 members of the House, only a few lawmakers were mentioned in the affidavit of Napoles.

"Most of those on the list were identified with former President [and now Pampanga Rep.] Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, which represent 80 percent. In the 16th Congress, only 20 percent were involved and have no concrete evidences against them," Belmonte said.

Several present and former senators and congressmen have been implicated in the pork-barrel scam.

Jovee Marie N. dela Cruz



BELMONTE

DENR contractors abducted in ComVal

By MANUEL CAYON
Mindanao Bureau Chief

DAVAO CITY—Armed men abducted on Friday six persons contracted for reforestation work by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Compostela Valley province, the Army said.

Capt. Ernest Carolina, of the Public Affairs Unit of the Army's 10th Infantry "Agila" Division, identified the six contractors but

requested later that their names be withheld after relatives requested for the anonymity of the victims.

He said the six persons were subcontractors of the Manila office of the environment department.

In a statement, Carolina said the victims were conducting validation work of Malacañang's National Greening Program in Maco, Compostela Valley, when they were forcibly taken by still-identified armed men.

The incident happened somewhere in Barangay New

Leyte in Maco.

The victims' whereabouts remained unknown as of Saturday. Maco town is one of the hot spots in insurgency-ridden Compostela Valley.

Search-and-rescue operations for the safe recovery of the victims have been launched by military and police forces.

It was not immediately learned if the local government has activated its crisis-management committee to work for the immediate safe release of the victims.

Bill empowers barangay chairmen to administer oaths

THE House of Representatives recently approved on third and final reading the measure empowering barangay chairmen to administer the oath of office of any government official, including the President of the Republic of the Philippines.

House Bill 2729, filed by Liberal Party Rep. Salvio Fortuno of Camarines Sur, amends Section 41 of Executive Order (EO) 292, otherwise known as the Administrative Code of 1987, as amended.

The bill reads: Section 41 of EO 292, or the Administrative Code of 1987 is hereby amended to read as follows: "Section 41. Officers Authorized to Administer Oath. The following officers have general authority to administer oaths: President; Vice President; members and secretaries of both Houses of Congress; members of the Judiciary; secretaries of departments; provincial governors and vice gover-

nors; city mayors; municipal mayors; punong barangays; bureau directors; regional directors; clerk of courts' registrars of deeds; other civilian officers in public service of the government of the Philippines whose appointments are vested in the President and are subject to confirmation by the Commission on Appointments; all other constitutional officers; PAO [Public Attorney's Office] lawyers in connection with the performance of duty and notaries public."

The measure was passed by the House in plenary session by a vote of 195 affirmative with no negative vote and no abstention.

"This is in recognition of the very important role of the punong barangay in the political structure of government," said Fortuno, main author of the bill.

He recalled that the euphoria generated by the pronouncement after election in 2010 of then-

President-elect Aquino to take his oath before a punong barangay in his hometown in Tarlac has brought to the fore the issue as to whether or not the barangay chairmen can administer the oath to the highest official of the land.

"The great enthusiasm experienced by punong barangays at that time had practically been doused with cold water when several legal luminaries expressed their legal views that the punong barangay has no power to administer oath except "in connection with any matter relating to all proceedings in the implementation of the *katarungang pambarangay*," he said.

Fortuno said that, when enacted into law, the proposed amendment should give elected officials, including the President of the Republic, an appropriate choice on who among the public officials would administer one's oath of office. Jovee Marie N. dela Cruz

This Week

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Is Leyte in danger of losing its children to weak structures?

HOUSE OF CARDS

HOUSE OF CARDS

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That is the question

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Malacañang welcomes release of two Abu Sayyaf hostages

MALACAÑANG on Saturday welcomed the release of a Filipino resort worker and a Chinese tourist abducted by the Abu Sayyaf group in Sabah, two months ago.

Filipino resort worker Marcelita Dayawan and Gao Hua Yuan, a Chinese, were seized by Abu Sayyaf bandits in April.

"Mainam na balita 'yan at subject nga ito for verification, ikinalulugod ponatin ang balitang tulad niyan sapagkat hindi po tayo tumitigil sa paglaban sa mga aksyon na ganyan na kriminalidad at nakakaapekto sa imaheng ating bansa," Communications Secretary

Herminio B. Coloma Jr. said in an interview on Saturday.

Coloma stressed the importance of cooperation among neighboring countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines in resolving such cases.

Malaysia expressed its gratitude to the country's security forces for helping it solve the kidnapping incident.

"Ganoon nga ang ating saloobin tungkol diyan at maaari din sigurong matukoy dito iyong mainam na pakikipag-ugnayan ng ating bansa sa ating mga kapit-bansa tulad ng Malaysia at maging ng Indonesia sa pagreresolba ng mga ganyan

usapin," he said.

These neighboring countries share coast border issues such as crimes being committed in a particular location and criminals relocating to other nations, he said, noting the necessity of close cooperation among these countries.

The two women were snatched from Singamata Adventures and Reef Resort in the town of Semporna in Sabah on April 2.

The victims were first taken by their captors to Tawi-Tawi before they escaped by boat to Sulu and reportedly handed the hostages to another Abu Sayyaf group. PNA

Retired Supreme Court justice is new UE Law dean

RETIRED Supreme Court Associate Justice Dante O. Tinga has been appointed as the new dean of the University of the East (UE) College of Law.

Tinga, an outstanding UE alumnus-achiever, is a UE graduate twice over.

He earned in 1956 his Associate in Arts degree, major in English and History, with high honors, from what is now the UE College of Arts and Sciences-Manila; and his Bachelor of Laws degree, as valedictorian, magna cum laude and Ozaeta awardee, from the UE College of Law in 1960.

Tinga is also a former UE professor, having taught at the UE Colleges of Business Administration-Manila and of Law from 1967 to 1992. His current UE deanship is his second such stint, being the UE Law dean from 1988 to 1992.

He has been a congressman,

representing the former Taguig-Pateros district for three terms, from 1987 to 1998.

Tinga also holds a Master of Laws degree, with high honors, from the University of California Berkeley Boalt Hall Law School in 1970.

He was recognized as one of UE's 60 Most Outstanding Alumni during its 60th foundation anniversary in 2006. He later became the chairman of the 2008 Bar Examination Committee. In 2009 UE conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa.

Tinga, who is also a member of the UE board of trustees, takes over the deanship of the UE College of Law after it was relinquished by Dean Amado D. Valdez, to devote himself as chairman of the Board of Regents of the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila and the Board of Directors of the Ospital ng Maynila.



TINGA

Construction projects increase 20.8% in Q1

CONSTRUCTION projects from January to March of this year increased by 20.8 percent, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported.

Total number of projects in first quarter this year reached 29,468 with a total floor area of 6.25 million square meters (sqm) amounting to P61.15 billion. This is higher than 2013's first quarter of 24,400 projects with floor area of 4.79 million sqm amounting to P58.65 billion.

Majority of the construction projects during the first three months of the year are residential development with 20,498 projects; followed by non-residential projects with 3,496 developments; and additions, alterations, and repairs with 5,474 projects. Bulk of construction or 21.4 percent of the total projects in first quarter were situated at Calabarzon accounting for 6,301 developments.

Central Luzon shared 13 percent of the total construction in first quarter with 3,833 projects; Central Visayas contributed 12.7 percent or 3,745 projects; Metro Manila shared 3,036 projects or 10.3 percent of the total; and Davao Region accounted for 7.8 percent or 2,303 projects in Q1 2014. PNA

400,000 ha. of 'CARPable' lands still not covered by program—TFM

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

AROUND 400,000 hectares of agricultural lands supposed to be covered by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program-Extension with Reform (CARPer) have not been issued their notice of coverage (NOC) by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR).

This was stressed on Friday by the Task Force Mapalad (TFM) as it reiterated its call to President Aquino to take over the CARPer's implementation of the government's land-transfer program.

"Contrary to the DAR's claim that it is proceeding quickly with the NOC issuance, the agency's own data show otherwise, as there are still almost 400,000 hectares of farmlands that have not yet been issued NOCs," TFM President Alberto Jayme said.

Based on data obtained by the TFM from the DAR as of December 2013, there are still more than 396,000 hectares covering some 47,800 landholdings that have not yet been issued NOCs, he said.

Of the total landholdings without NOC, 43 percent, or about 170,400 hectares, are still undergoing research; 22 percent, or more than 87,000 hectares, remain under preocular inspection; 11 percent, or close to 49,000 hectares, await NOC service; and the rest, about 4 percent or 16,000 hectares, are under the DAR's project landholding on land-classification map.

He said the issuance of the NOC "is the first major critical step" in the process of acquiring and distributing lands to farmer-beneficiaries.

"The issuance of the NOC will ensure that the landholding will be subject to Section 30 or Republic Act 9700 or the CARPer law. The said section of the law provides that the DAR can continue the acquisition and distribution of landholdings even beyond 2014, the ending year for the extended CARP-funding period," the TFM president said.

Jayme said that if an NOC is not issued, a landholding can never be processed for acquisition and distribution to its farmer-beneficiaries and, thus, "will remain under the control of its present landowner, thereby defeating the CARPer's land-to-the-tiller objective."

TFM urged the DAR officials to be transparent in its reporting to the public of the details of its land acquisition and distribution process, especially on the issuance of the NOC.

The group had accused the DAR of keeping farmers in the dark about the

true state of CARPer implementation.

"The transparent, complete and objective reporting both of its accomplishments and perennial under-performance will banish beliefs that it is aiding recalcitrant and influential landlords in evading CARPer," Jayme said.

The TFM cited the case of landless tillers in Mindanao. Based on initial data gathered by the Alliance of Land Rights Movement in Mindanao (Alarm-Mindanao), there are about 10,000 hectares of agricultural lands that have not yet been issued NOCs.

The landholdings without NOCs include the 590-hectare Ayala farmland in Davao del Sur; 845 hectares owned by Sodaco (Consunji) in Davao provinces; 764 hectares owned by NAIDCOR-Cojuangco in Agusan del Sur; 111 hectares owned by Lapanday Group of Companies in Davao City; and the 1,178 hectares of untitled lands claimed by the Fortich family in Bukidnon.

In Negros Occidental, preliminary data gathered by the TFM showed that there are over 128,000 hectares of agricultural landholdings covering 188 haciendas in 12 municipalities that remain without NOCs.

In February this year, DAR Undersecretary for Field Operations Jose

Grageda was quoted in news reports as saying that the issuance of NOC for landholdings under compulsory acquisition "was proceeding apace."

Moreover, reports quoted the DAR as saying that it had begun fast-tracking preliminary work that resulted in the issuance of NOCs starting in 2012.

"But its own data are a clear proof of its sluggish performance and the high probability of breaking the commitment of President Aquino that the CARPer's land acquisition and distribution [LAD] component will be completed before his term ends in June 2016," Jayme said.

As of December 2013, the DAR is still left with a LAD backlog of 771,995 hectares. The January 2014 LAD accomplishment only stood at 26,400 hectares.

Minus the March 2014 accomplishment of 26,400 hectares, this means that in the last 27 months of P-Noy's term from April 2014 to June 2016, the DAR has to acquire and distribute close to 508,000 hectares or about 253,000 hectares per year in the last two years of the Aquino administration, Jayme said.

But based on the agency's data, the DAR's average yearly LAD accomplishment from 2010 to 2013 never reached 150,000 hectares, and only stood at nearly 114,000 hectares.

System can provide 6-hour warning for impending floods

BY RAMON EFREN R. LAZARO
Correspondent

THE government is expected to complete the integrated flood-warning system (IFEWS) on the 18 major river systems in the country and install 1,000 automated weather sensors along rivers and watersheds in the next two years.

This was the message of Executive Secretary Paquito N. Ochoa Jr. on Friday during the "Iba na ang Panahon: Science for Safer Communities-Early Warning, Early Action" forum.

The secretary said IFEWS could provide local government units (LGUs) and communities at least a six-hour warning for impending floods and noted the inroads the Aquino administration made in the field of disaster-risk reduction and management (DRRM) through the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) in response to President Aquino's policy to tap science-based tools to reduce the impacts of calamities in the country.

The DOST, in partnership with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the Office of Civil Defense (OCD), started the information, education and communication campaign in the National Capital Region as part of efforts to enhance the capacity and ability of LGUs and disaster managers in disaster-risk reduction and mitigation in the face of the increasing occurrence of mega disasters like last year's Super typhoon Yolanda.

The completion of IFEWS is crucial in providing DRRM officers, LGUs and communities the ample time to prepare and a graphical understanding of the full extent of the floods that may come their way, he said.

Additionally, Ochoa said the DOST has established its Intelligent Operations Center (IOC) to give a dramatic lift in the government's national capability in making forecasts more timely and

relevant in terms of predicting impacts on communities. Through the IOC, a storm's path can be projected and laid over thematic maps containing vital information that can give a view of the potential damage a storm would bring to affected areas.

"This will be helpful in arriving at a forward estimate of how much relief goods need to be pre-positioned or even how many GI sheets need to be in stock even before a storm arrives," Ochoa said.

Ochoa noted the establishment of the Philippine National Earthquake and Tsunami Monitoring and Communication System by the Philippine Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) which is deemed to serve as an early warning protocol using state-of-the-art equipment.

To date, Phivolcs has 69 seismic networks covering the entire country. This number will be increased to 85 by 2016, supported by smart sensors for earthquake monitoring.

Under the tsunami early warning system are the tsunami scenario database, tsunami hazard mapping for Metro Manila, Bolinao Tsunami Detection, Lingayen Warning System, Corregidor Tidal Gauge Station and the sea-level detection sensors.

"We continue to find better solutions for an effective disaster risk-reduction management system. To be successful in our efforts to mitigate disasters, we must remain steadfast and proactive by bringing down science-based knowledge products to the communities at risk," Ochoa said.

Ochoa challenged LGU executives and local DRRM officers to continue to play their crucial roles in times of disaster and crisis.

"Now, the challenge rests on our shoulders. We now have all these science-based tools and technologies. But these are all nothing if we do not use them," he said. "Remember that you perform dual responsibilities: that you are the first receiver of information and you are also the first responder in times of crisis."

Pampanga gov wants DPWH to transfer fund to capitol

BY JOEL P. MAPILES
Correspondent

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—In a bid to fast-track the payment of claims of residents in Lubao, Pampanga, affected by the road widening of the Santa Cruz, Lubao-Dinalupihan Section, Pampanga Gov. Lilia "Nanay" Pineda proposed to officials of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) to transfer the intended funds to the provincial government.

This came as hundreds of affected residents and even officials of the DPWH brought the issue to the attention of the governor for her speedy intervention.

The affected residents said they have long been awaiting the payment of their affected lots and structures since 2012 but to no avail until now.

In a Friday meeting with the governor, she told the concerned DPWH officials led by Juanito Regual to allow her office and the offices of the Provincial Assessor and Lubao Municipal Assessor to assist in the processing of the papers of the claimants.

The governor said upon completion of the required documents, they will submit in bulk to the DPWH higher-ups for proper and speedy disposition.

However, with the approval of the DPWH officials, the provincial government will enter into a memorandum of

agreement (MOA) with regard to the fund transfer proposed by the provincial government.

"Kung may MOA kami ng DPWH at papayagan nila kaming kumilos para matulungan kayo na mapabilis ang pagpoproseso at pagkukumpileto ng inyong mga dokumento at hayaan nilang mai-transfer sa kapitolyo ang pambayad ay mabilis kayong mababayaran," the governor said.

After two years of failed transaction and processing of payments, the governor maintained this was not the time for blaming and finger pointing but rather, for cooperation and understanding.

She thus asked the cooperation of the DPWH and the affected residents of Lubao to come up with a solution to this emerging problem.

The governor suggested that due to procedural complications, the DPWH should initially pay for the affected structures, seconded by the claimants.

The affected barangays for the road-widening projects of the DPWH in Lubao include Santo Niño, San Roque Arbol, Lourdes, San Isidro and Santa Cruz.

Based on DPWH records, only Santa Cruz has completed its documents, while the rest of the barangays are still completing their documents. This was opposed by the residents who claimed they have already passed their complete documents.

The governor said the province and

Leyte senior-high schools graduate pioneer batch



FORGOTTEN FLAGS A couple of Philippines flags along the central business district in the city of Baguio are drenched by the sudden rain that poured over the city on Saturday. The flags were hoisted last week in celebration of Flag Day, but were apparently forgotten to be taken down. MAU VICTA

LEYTE—Education Secretary Bro. Armin A. Luistro, FSC led the graduation rites of the first batch of senior high-school students in Leyte under the K to-12 program.

A total of 100 graduates—27 Automotive students, 22 Metals and Engineering students, 26 Tourism students and 25 Information and Communications Technology (ICT) students—marched from the Merida Vocational School and the Palo National High School.

They finished Grades 11 and 12 under the Department of Education program.

"Ang pag-akyat ninyo sa entablado ay patunay na hindi [Super typhoon] Yolanda ang lakas na nananaig sa Leyte. I can say that I have 100 reasons to say that Yolanda is not the last word," Luistro said.

Among the 100 graduates, 81 are holders of the Technical and Skills Development Authority National Certificate (NC) II, and 45 are already listed for employment. Seven will continue on to higher education.

Luistro encouraged the graduates to use their experience as motivation to improve the current situation of the Yolanda-affected areas. "We hope that you will all use your new skills and talents to help rebuild Leyte."

Senior high-school students under the K-to-12 program chose from four tracks: Academic, Technical-Vocational, Sports, and Arts and Design. A total of 54 schools were selected for the SHS Modeling Program ahead of the projected nationwide implementation of the SHS in school year 2016-2017.

the municipal government will take over the completion of the papers and said she would do everything within her power for the speedy disposition of this nonpayment issue on road widening in Lubao.

The national government is working for the completion of the P590.85-million Santa Cruz, Lubao-Dinalupihan Section of the Gapan-San Fernan-

do-Olongapo Road Project Phase II, consisting of P485.4 million from loan proceeds from the Korea Economic Development Cooperation Fund and a P105.42-million counterpart.



BROOMS IN THE MOUNTAIN CITY OF BAGUIO CITY A vendor arranges colorful brooms in a stall at the Baguio City public market, where lowland products such as these soft brooms find opportunity to be sold to tourists. The product is made of boyboy usually grown in nearby La Union. MAU VICTA

Pfizer pilots NayBahay to save lives, one baby at a time

In the hot summer month of May, residents of a quiet, far-flung community in Bicol are going about their usual activities, not fully aware that their lives serve as a silent testament to the winning war being valiantly fought against important women's and children's health issues.

Pfizer Philippines Foundation Inc. (PPFI) contributes to the observance of Safe Motherhood Week, designated by the Department of Health (DOH) in the second week of May, with the continuing success of its pioneer NayBahay birthing facility in Minalabac, Camarines Sur.

The Ligtas Paanakan Center, which now serves as the birthing facility at the rural health unit of the municipality, is a partnership among the DOH, the local government unit and other stakeholders in an effort to improve healthcare access and conditions in underserved communities.

NayBahay in particular is one of Pfizer Philippines's corporate social responsibility (CSR) projects—strengthening health-care delivery in places where health services and information are scarce.

In these rural areas where the prevalent option is traditional home birthing, facility-based deliveries are preferable enough—if residents are indeed able

to access such. NayBahay's goal is simple: To provide a ready and more accessible alternative for women to carry pregnancy and give birth in a safe environment supervised by skilled birth attendants, thus reducing mother and child mortality rates.

In the simplicity of such a concept as NayBahay also lies the immediacy of its positive impact and results. In the year of the project's launch in 2012 alone, the percentage of home deliveries comprising the total number of births in the community decreased to 21 percent from 40 percent in 2011. Of the number of facility-based deliveries, as much as 42 percent was at NayBahay.

By 2013 NayBahay births comprised as much as half of facility-based deliveries. Most important, no maternal deaths have been reported at the facility. As of the first quarter of 2014, NayBahay has helped bring to this world a total of 826 healthy newborns.

NayBahay—a rhyming portmanteau of the Filipino words meaning "mother" and "home"—provides a two-bed delivery room and a two-bed ward. It is well-equipped, has ample medical supplies for patients, and is professionally run by municipal midwives with assistance from public health nurses. The local government of Minalabac funds the day-to-day operation of NayBahay.

These facilities, equipment and services are available and accessible to all mothers and their families in the community. Pregnant women are accommodated at NayBahay as long as they have a prognosis for normal delivery. More complicated childbirth cases are referred to nearby hospitals for more appropriate care.

Aside from birthing, post- and pre-natal checkups at NayBahay are also available, enabling better pre-natal care and follow-ups. Those enrolled in the government insurance system or Philippine Health Insurance Corp. enjoy professional consultation and medicines under the coverage.

Minalabac officials such as Mayor Nestor Villegas recognize NayBahay for helping change the culture of giving birth at home in their community.

In recognition of its impact to the community and public health, NayBahay received an award of merit at the 5th Global CSR Summit in April 2013 for being one of the most successful CSR projects in the Philippines.

Mothers and their precious babies can look forward to additional havens of care, as PPFI gears to replicate the success of NayBahay in more underserved communities across the Philippines.



MAKATI

Serbisyong may Puso



Makati Mayor Jejomar Erwin S. Binay carries on his father's legacy of a caring and compassionate government, a legacy of selfless service to the people



February 1986: Human rights lawyer Jejomar Binay is appointed by President Cory Aquino as officer-in-charge of the then municipality of Makati

Ito ang Makati. Nangunguna sa pagbibigay ng de-kalidad na edukasyon sa kabataan, serbisyong pang-kalusugan sa lahat ng mamamayan, at hindi mapapanatayang benepisyo sa mga nakatatanda.



Comprehensive health care program and universal health insurance coverage



P11.9-billion collected in 2013, deficit-free since 1987

Ito ang Makati. Dati'y lubog sa utang, ngayon ay financial center ng Pilipinas at nangunguna sa pagbibigay ng serbisyo sa mga mamamayan. Kung dati'y walang pagkalinga, ngayon ay tunay, matatag at may puso ang pamamahala.



Free access to quality education, modern learning facilities for global competitiveness

Ito ang Makati makalipas ang 344 taon.

Masaya at Maunlad.

Tunay ang Serbisyo.

Tapat at May Puso ang Pamamahala.

Ito ang Makati. Maganda ang buhay dahil sa mga benepisyong hatid ng pamahalaan at mga oportunidad para umunlad ang bawat isa. Bawat mamamayan, mahirap man o mayaman, kasama sa pag-unlad ng bayan.



Unparalleled benefits and privileges enjoyed by the elderly that include cash gifts, free movies, birthday cakes, medicines

344th Makati Foundation Day

1670-2014



BusinessMirror Envoys & Expats

B1 | Sunday, June 1, 2014



The singing diplomat

By ESTRELLA TORRES

After 35 years, Swiss envoy Raoul Imbach returns to the Philippines to discover its many treasures

SWISS Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Raoul Imbach wowed the media a few weeks ago during the launch of the Swiss Cultural Fund Philippines. In just a few hours that afternoon, he showed guests the many facets of his personality.

First, he joined Swiss Ambassador Ivo Sieber in welcoming guests to his cozy home in Makati City. After they had settled down, he took off his jacket, sat at his white piano and started singing songs, many of them his own compositions, including one with Tagalog words he calls "Binibini." After entertaining guests, he donned an apron, led guests into the dining room, and personally served them raclette, the Swiss delicacy of especially melted cheese.

After all, Imbach is an artist first before a diplomat. In fact, he is having a grand time during his stay in the Philippines that he would like to share with them his love and passion for music. In fact, he is excited over his concert in the country this afternoon at the Rizal Park Open Air Auditorium. With this show, he formally debuts his musical career in the Philippines with his band, the Wild Tortillas.

The singing Swiss diplomat was born in the scenic town of Sion, the capital of the Swiss canton of Valais. It is a town where the old Romansh language is still widely spoken by its 20,000 people. Switzerland has a population of only 8 million, yet its people speak four different languages: French, German, Italian and Romansh.

Imbach started his music career at a very young age. He remembers receiving his first paycheck worth \$500 when he was 12 years old.

"I bought myself a bike when I got my first money," he confesses.

Prior to his diplomatic stint in the Philippines, he had visited the country as a tourist 35 years ago on his first trip in Asia. He spent almost a month traveling around the country, going to Cebu, Leyte, Pagsanjan in Laguna, and Baguio City. He says he was fascinated by the pristine and unspoiled white-sand beaches where he found himself spending most nights, as there were not much hotels and resorts then.

He just loves to travel around the country, seeing sights that only the locals know. He recalls his first jeepney ride was a memorable one as he rode on top of it, saying it gave him a

better view of the places he was going to rather than being cramped inside the vehicle.

Becoming a diplomat, was never part of his plan as he already had a successful music career in Switzerland as a singer, performer and composer. Imbach has so far released 11 albums, 10 of them containing his own compositions. His performances extend to many parts of Europe. His latest album, *Souvenir Made in USA*, was recorded in New York.

While pursuing a career in music, he also worked as an economist for Gulf Oil Switzerland, which is based in Zurich, during the early 1980s, and as office manager of Shell Oil in Lausanne.

It was in 1984 when fate led him to diplomatic work. His wife then wanted to spend their years together outside Switzerland. He turned to newspaper advertisements for possible openings and found career opportunities with the Foreign Ministry of Switzerland.

"It was a complete coincidence and a circumstance in my life," Imbach says, adding he was only trying to please his wife when he took a qualifying test. He eventually passed the examinations and was among the 10 chosen from 250 candidates.

His first diplomatic posting was to Vienna, Austria, followed by consular work in Los Angeles, Lagos in Nigeria and Costa Rica.

It was in Costa Rica where he learned to speak Spanish. He did not go to a language class the way most people would. Instead, he took dancing lessons to learn the language.

His diplomatic journey has also taken him to Russia. Eventually, he was assigned as Switzerland's *chargés d'affaires* in Bolivia and Vietnam. It was in Hanoi where he met his second wife, a Vietnamese. He returned to Switzerland after his stint in Hanoi, and served as desk officer for Southeast Asia. He was then assigned as counselor for culture and trade in South Korea.

As his stint in Seoul was about to end, he requested to be posted to the Philippines so that he would be nearer his wife, who is living in Vietnam. It was also a chance to get him reacquainted with the country.

Imbach says the Philippines is a wonderful country to return to, as the people are very simple, content, happy and hardworking. He adds that he is also fascinated at the Filipinos' natural love for singing, and enjoys going to videoke bars with his Filipino friends.

He looks forward to opportunities to go

out of town on assignment to check up on small development projects being implemented in poor communities. His travels have taken him all over Cebu, General Santos City, Davao City, Ilocos Norte, El Nido and Coron in Palawan, and Koronadal and Lake Sebu in South Cotabato.

On his trips to the countryside, he likes interacting with the locals and experiencing the simple lives they live.

"The feeling is more gratifying," he says, as he sees how his government has a direct role in the development of communities, such as establishing public water systems in far-flung areas.

He says the people in rural communities are "very grateful, friendly and nice" for the blessings and opportunities that they receive.

He finds that there is no time wasted living in a country whose people share his passion for music. Imbach spends his weekend rehearsing with his band, as well as giving free dance lessons to his friends on the salsa and bolero at his house.

"It's good exercise and good way to keep fit," he says.

Growing up in the world's most developed country with its majestic castles, medieval cities and picturesque countryside, it might have been difficult for the Swiss diplomat to bear Manila's tortuous traffic, humid weather and cramped city space. But Imbach delights in the opportunities the new surroundings offer him. Imbach takes his motorbike when going around Makati City. He just wishes that Filipinos will someday learn to bike or walk to work to give more space to the metropolis.

While he enjoys his work pursuing his government's development programs and his passion for music, he yearns to one day spend a quiet summer in Bicol.

"I look forward to spending a day swimming with the *butanding* [whale sharks], not as part of a tourist activity, but just to quietly swim with them," he says.

Despite the many imperfections the Philippines might possess, he believes the country remains a promising one because of the positive attitude of the people. He says the Philippines is a great country worth discovering over and over.

"No matter what you say, the complaints and everything, it's still more fun in the Philippines," he declares.



A DIFFERENT VIEW
By Rodel Alzona

Pass the vibes

After the United States of America and South Korea, hip-hop is biggest in France

ONE afternoon early last week, I accompanied a journalist friend to a shop in Makati City to have his turntable fixed while also getting himself a new amplifier to boot.

We have been friends for a very long time, and have shared the same passion for music and girl watching. The last part is a story that can be told another time. I cannot help but smile right now just thinking about it. But I guess the better option would be not to talk about it, or else his wife will have the license to kill us both.

Anyway, I was really surprised that such a shop existed. It was an eye candy. Inside, there were lots of turntables, home-theater systems, rock shirts and bags, and vinyls—make that tons of vinyls or, as a certain age group would like to call, long-playing albums. Hard-to-find, brand-new and pre-owned vinyls were there, from the classical music of Bach to legendary punk band Sex Pistols. But then again, the prices were a bit prohibitive, so I was satisfied with just going through them and reading their sleeves.

I told my friend that this is one area I envy him a lot. He has lots of vinyls in his collection. I was imagining how cool it was when he told me that he had just played his Steppenwolf vinyl full blast at home.

As he always tells me, "Music is cheaper than hiring a psychiatrist." That is so true.

Fast forward to later last week. I played *Pass The Vibes*, a various-artist compact disc of old-school rap music while on my way to embassy of France and Alliance Française de Manille event in that mall-that-will-not-be-named in Taguig City.

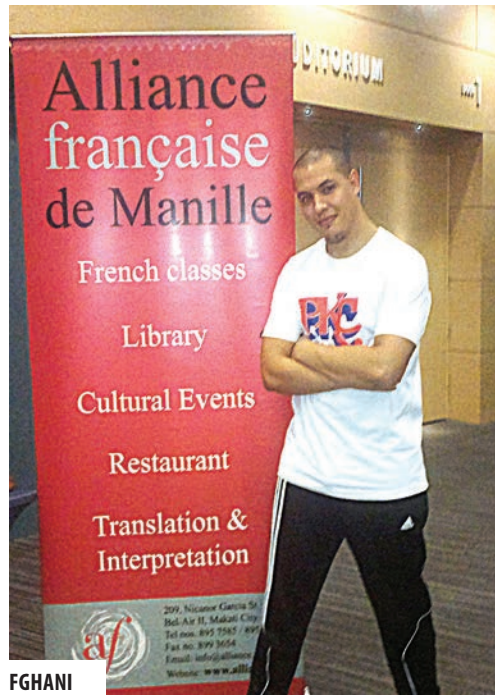
It was an album that I have not played in a very long time and, at the end of the day, it made perfect sense to me, as the event I attended featured French hip-hop dance world champions Pockemon Crew.

Hip-hop, for all intents and purposes, embodies a whole culture that includes rap music, DJing, dance, fashion and art. Here is a quick course on hip-hop, I guess—Eminem inducting Run DMC to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame: www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXSAdXIVCxc. Yup, two turntables and a microphone.

With that thought, I really wanted to hear and see for myself how the French see and adapt to the hip-hop culture and, in a way, try to come out with something that is uniquely, well, French.

Before the Pockemon Crew's performance, some members of the media had a good chat with the group's artistic director, Riyad Fghani, who has been with the dance group since 2005.

Just to get it out of the way, yes, they were intentionally named after that cartoon character to break away or distinguish them-



FGHANI

selves from all the other groups with gangsta-sounding names.

First thoughts on the guy before he even spoke a single word: I love his muscles. Awww. It was the same with most of the 10 members of Pockemon Crew who performed. They were tall and well-built. Think Color Me Badd, and you can imagine how they look like.

Kiddies, if you are not familiar with Color Me Badd, they were one of the pioneers of the New Jack Swing—that is another lesson for you about hip-hop.

What struck me the most with the things Fghani mentioned is that, according to him, after the United States of America and South Korea, hip-hop is biggest in France.

What? Amazing. South Korea? No offense to Psy or whoever rapper is out there, but South Korea?

As for France, he mentioned someone named Booba, who is supposed to be a very popular rap artist in his country. Look what I just found: Tony Parker—yes, that San Antonio Spurs superstar French point guard—with Booba, rapping to "Bienvenue Dans Le Texas" (www.youtube.com/watch?v=zD1np0coEQE). With the Jazz a year or two away from really competing, I say—go Spurs!

Fghani said their members learned their moves on the streets, and it is also the same place where they practice and improve on their craft. Now, that is really nice and inspiring.

He said French hip-hop is more diverse, and they want to show that in their performances. Their show was dubbed *Silence, On Tourne! And... Action!* and featured music from 1930s and 1940s movies.

It allowed them to incorporate some hip-hop moves with the music, while also giving

the audience a glimpse of Lyon, their hometown and the place where Lumiere brothers invented the cinema.

Fghani claims that in their research, hip-hop can be traced all the way back to that era in the 1940s. That is basically the big-band era. Thinking. Well, there was this rap group Us3, which incorporated jazz into its music. To some extent, the same can be said about PM Dawn, a rap duo that I like a lot.

It was a fun and entertaining one-hour show the Pockemon Crew put on. Everyone had a great time, including the kiddies, who were brought along by their parents.

Their Philippines performance is part of the dance group's eight-nation tour of Asia. Afterward, they will start their preparations for the October world championship in London.

According to Fghani, among the Asian countries competing, there are South Korea, Japan and Taiwan. I wonder why the Philippines is not there?

Before we ended the chat, I asked Fghani the music he listens to these days. He said he likes old-school rap, Motown and funk music. I was nodding in approval. I asked him if he listens to Justin Bieber. With a shocked face, his reply was, "Who?" Laughter all around.

For comments, suggestions, and reactions, I can be reached at raalzona@yahoo.com.

MEETING THE RENEWABLE-ENERGY CHALLENGE

By REUBEN LEVERMORE

Ambassador of New Zealand to the Philippines

THE Philippines may seem like an unlikely place for a collaboration between Iceland and New Zealand. But when it comes to geothermal energy, it is a partnership that makes perfect sense.

I joined representatives of Icelandic company Orka Energy (www.orkaenergy.com), and some of its New Zealand partners and personnel to travel to its development site in Biliran province.

Like neighboring Leyte province, Biliran sits atop an area of significant volcanic activity. But unlike Leyte, it is yet to harness geothermal steam for energy generation.

Biliran is one of the Philippines's smallest provinces, home to an estimated 160,000 people, who make a living from basic agriculture and fishing, as well as remittances sent to the families of seafarers trained at the academy of the local Naval State University. I was relieved to see on my visit that Biliran had been spared the very worst effects of Super typhoon Yolanda (international code name Haiyan) despite being less than three hours drive from Tacloban City.

According to Orka Chief Executive Officer Eirikur Bragason, the Biliran geothermal proj-



LEVERMORE

ect will create up to 600 jobs during its construction phase, hoped to commence around April this year, and the plant is expected to be in

full operation within two years. The project has already helped to develop essential infrastructure in the area, with the local airport now able to receive charter flights.

Tests from the first drilled wells have returned very positive results and Orka's CEO told the local community in Biliran that he expects the project to be one of the most developed plants in the Philippines, complete with a visitor center, and with minimal environmental impact.

There has been much debate lately in the Philippines about electricity prices, which are among the highest in Asia. And the Philippines needs to build more energy-generation capacity in order to meet growing demands. New Zealand, with its strengths in renewable energy—hydro and geothermal in particular—is well-placed to help meet this challenge.

New Zealand's involvement in the Philippines geothermal energy sector dates back to its beginnings in the 1970s when NZ government-funded technical work contributed to the development of the first geothermal sites in the country. Today, the Philippines is the world's second-largest generator of electricity from geothermal steam, and New Zealand companies provide consulting services and technical support to partners in the Philippines. Additionally, scholarships provided by the New Zealand aid program have included those for postgraduate study at Auckland University's geothermal institute including, in recent times, an official from the Department of Energy's geothermal energy division. I was pleased to be joined on my visit to Biliran by Mario Marasigan and Ariel Fronda of the Department of Energy's renewable energy management bureau.

I understand that the Biliran project is on course to be the first geothermal project since the enactment of the Philippines's Renewable Energy Bill, and others are set to follow. A successful project in Biliran will significantly develop the local economy, make a further contribution to Philippines energy needs, and hopefully pave the way for further New Zealand involvement in the Philippines's renewable-energy development.

Reuben Levermore has been New Zealand Ambassador to the Philippines since February 2012. Since joining the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in 1999, he has worked on multilateral trade negotiations, been posted to the New Zealand Mission to the European Union in Brussels, and most recently was the Private Secretary for Trade Negotiations to New Zealand Trade Minister Tim Groser. He has also worked in London as a financial markets advocate while on leave from the Ministry.



THE drilling site at Orka Energy's geothermal project in Biliran



NEW Zealander Steve Rout briefs the delegation at the Biliran geothermal site



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Norway to assist Marina in completing Emsa requirements

TO continue the maritime cooperation between Norway and the Philippines, the Norwegian government has decided to assist Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) in improving the deficiencies that was discovered after several European Maritime Safety Agency (Emsa) inspections.

The Norwegian Maritime Authority will cooperate with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Manila on following up on the requirements that have been presented after several Emsa inspections. Within a year from now, Norwegian representative Torben

Vik will be present in the Philippines to assist Marina in meeting the named requirements. Vik will particularly work on issues related to systems for quality control and implementation of this, as well as improvement of the seafarers curricula.

While working on this project, Vik is working in the Department of Education, Certification and Staffing, which is a part of the Norwegian Maritime Authority. Although Vik is the only representative based in the Philippines, several other maritime experts will assist him from Norway. In his work, Vik will use earlier experiences and

solutions when assisting Marina in finding the best solutions for improving the education, certification and control of Filipino seafarers. The goal is that Emsa will approve a continued employment of Filipino seafarers on European ships.

In the last years, Vik has worked as a senior adviser at the under department of Fishing Vessels at the Norwegian Maritime Authority. As a lawyer, Vik also has long and many experience on working with implementation of regulations and law, both from his time in at the Norwegian Maritime Authority and with earlier employers.

USAID helps fishermen increase income, strengthen climate resilience



MEMBERS of the Mabini Fisherfolk Association take turns in managing their fish cages.

BAGANGA, Davao Oriental—All his life, Edilberto Bohol lived off the sea. On good days, he catches just enough fish to provide for his family. In the months influenced by *amihan* and *habagat*, however, he and his colleagues struggle just to meet their basic needs.

Bohol catches fish in the traditional hook-and-line method, which can bring meager returns. As a result, he and many of the province's 15,000 fishermen live below the poverty threshold.

"I have been fishing since I was small. The same is true with my father. I only finished high school, and this is the only livelihood I know," Bohol said.

Seeking to improve the plight of these fishing communities, government agencies, such as the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), conducted agriculture and aquaculture training and distributed seedlings, fish fry and other production inputs to help improve livelihoods in the area. Unfortunately, Typhoon Bopha (Pablo) struck the province before these programs could reap their intended results. And the very resources that these fisherfolk relied on for their survival were wiped out. More than 400 fishing boats were damaged, and almost all fish-rearing structures in Boston, Baganga and Cateel, municipalities severely affected by Pablo, were decimated. Projects that were underway were likewise wiped out.

During the immediate aftermath of Pablo, local governments tried to focus on underlying poverty issues of their areas and resume daily fishing activities. There was an obvious need, however, to introduce alternative livelihood opportunities that could be more profitable and sustainable.

The US Embassy Manila's United States Agency for International Development (USAID), through its Growth with Equity in Mindanao (GEM) Program, supports this idea. Following a rapid assessment, USAID designed and implemented a multicomponent disaster-recovery program in Davao Oriental and Compostela Valley provinces, under the oversight of the Mindanao Development Authority.

USAID/Philippines Mission Director Gloria D. Steele said, "The recovery program is part of the US government's P768-million disaster assistance to help Typhoon Pablo victims recover from the catastrophe. This consisted of education, infrastructure, climate-adaptation strengthening, agriculture and aquaculture livelihood assistance for the most severely affected municipalities."

The multicomponent approach included the introduction of high-value aquaculture to typhoon-affected fisherfolk in both provinces. The provincial government of Davao Oriental was also provided with a high-value aquacul-

ture industry development plan, which presents the results of a study on the viability of grouper (*lapu-lapu*) production to help drive sustainable economic growth in the province.

The plan was formally handed over to Davao Oriental Gov. Corazon Malanyaon in August 2013. It notes that grouper is expected to give better returns to growers compared to traditional aquaculture commodities, like milkfish and tilapia. This target commodity presents the most potential for promotion and development in the area, considering its high market price, local- and export-market demand, availability of suitable mariculture sites and advances in technology.

The short- to long-term strategies presented in the plan may also take off from the activities implemented by USAID through GEM. USAID, in collaboration with the provincial government and BFAR, conducted a series of workshops on grouper farming for select growers associations in coastal towns. To help strengthen their climate resilience, the skills-expansion effort included the construction of weather-resistant fish cages using locally sourced materials. Fisherfolk in landlocked towns were trained on inland freshwater aquaculture. They were also taught climate adaptation and mitigation techniques to address flooding and unstable oxygen levels that occur in fishponds when water temperature rises.

Majority of these growers received hatch-



AT about P500 a kilo, grouper (*lapu-lapu*) commands higher market prices than lower-value milkfish, which sells for approximately P100 per kilo, presenting an alternative, nontraditional livelihood option for marginalized fishing communities in Davao Oriental.



LEE FORSYTHE, US Embassy Manila's United States Agency for International Development (USAID) general development officer (center), and Andrew Holland, USAID supervisory and contracting officer (left), visit a climate-adaptive aquaculture project site in Compostela Valley. They are accompanied by Cary Andigan, USAID's Growth with Equity in Mindanao Program Aquaculture specialist (right).

ery-bred grouper juveniles, milkfish fingerlings, formulated feeds and other start up materials from USAID.

"The project reached about 2,000 fisherfolk. The technologies we introduced are cost-effective, highly replicable and will also avert potential losses due to adverse weather conditions," said Lauro Tito Ilagan, USAID-GEM Aquaculture Team Leader. "*Lapu-lapu* farming can be very profitable and sustainable. At two production cycles per year, a four-compartment fish cage will allow a net income of as much as Php200,000," Ilagan explained.

Bohol and members of the Kinablangan Fisherfolk Association, which he chairs, are about to enjoy their first harvest of grouper.

"We can sell these at about P500 a kilo," he said, thanking USAID for helping his hometown. "We will reinvest part of our income to buy fingerlings

and other inputs so that we can continue to improve our lives."

Other growers groups that participated in the project, such as the Mabini Fisherfolk Association, are also on their way to recovery. Prior to their foray into grouper production, the members were engaged in traditional cage culture of low-value milkfish, which they sold for about P100 per kilo in local wet markets. On their first cycle of production, they stand to earn approximately P260,000.

"The seeds of recovery that we planted a year ago through a strong partnership between the Philippine and United States governments are beginning to bear fruit. The US government will continue to work with our Philippine government partners to help Typhoon Pablo-affected provinces recover and achieve lasting peace and greater prosperity for all of its residents," Steele said.

SPANISH OPULENCE NOW IN MANILA

MEMBERS of the diplomatic corps, the expat community, celebrities and Manila's stylish set recently gathered at SM Aura Premier for the opening of the first UNO de 50 store in the Philippines, in partnership with the SM Retail Group. UNO de 50's artisan-handcrafted jewelry is known for its creativity, unique style and bold spirit. More of these exquisite pieces will be showcased as the store expands to SM Megamall, Mall of Asia on June 11 and SM Makati toward the end of the year.

Spanish Embassy Consul General Don Ignacio Perez-Cambra was the guest of honor during the opening of the brand's store in the Philippines. UNO de 50 Expansion Director Jose Luis Pardo and Franchise Director Riccardo Ranieri, who both flew in to the Philippines, welcomed guests along with SM's Elizabeth Sy and UNO de 50 Business Unit Head Christine Syjuco.

"UNO de 50 is a very special brand, originally only 50 pieces each design are marketed, but because of its vast growth across Europe and America, definitely the brand had to produce more than 50 pieces," says Spanish Embassy Consul General Don Ignacio Perez Cambra during his speech at the grand opening.

Madame Sylvia Tay, wife of Belgian Am-

bassador Roland Van Remoortele, also attended the event, as did artist Betsy Westendorp, Immaculada Pardo of the Spanish Embassy and members of the Latin American Women's Club.

"I feel it is a total success story, a brand achievement I can be proud of," says UNO de 50 President and Chief Executive Officer Jose Azullay on the opening of the first store in the region and the partnership with SM Retail.

He goes on to say, "We started out in Europe because we are a Spanish brand, and European market was a natural place for us to grow. In America, the acceptance of UNO de 50 has been fantastic right from the beginning."

"And with regard to Southeast Asia, it's a region with a red-hot retail industry, and in the specific case of the Philippines, three key factors converge in our decision to enter the market. First, it is a big market with a growth trend in fashion consumption; second, a brand with a difference like ours has a considerable niche there. Thirdly, we have the best possible partner in the country, the SM Retail Group."

UNO de 50 has 501 of its own shops in Spain and over 25 abroad in some of the world's top fashion capitals—New York, Miami, Las Vegas, Paris, Milan, Rome and Amsterdam.



SPANISH Embassy Consul General Don Ignacio Perez Cambra was the guest of honor during the opening of the first UNO de 50 store in Southeast Asia at SM Aura Premier. He is shown with UNO de 50 Expansion Director Jose Luis Pardo, Franchise Director Riccardo Ranieri, and Elizabeth Sy, as well as Uno de 50 Business Unit Head Christine Syjuco.



INES QUINTANA, Paqui Navarro, Barbara Aprait, Gabriela de Leste and Alejandra Lopez



MARIA PEREZ, Alejandra Lopez Maureta and Ines Quintana from the Latin American Women's Club



SYLVIA TAY



IMMACULADA Pardo of the Spanish Embassy with Cabby Martinez and Carolina Unzeta



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Swiss music over fondue and raclette

Swiss Ambassador Ivo Sieber introduces the Swiss Cultural Fund Philippines to encourage exchanges between the two countries.

By SUZETTE JESSICA
Photos by Stephanie Tumampas

WHEN we think of Switzerland, we think of watches, chocolates and its banking system. Rarely do we think of culture and the arts. This mindset is about to change with the creation of the Swiss Cultural Fund Philippines.

Swiss Ambassador Ivo Sieber said the fund was created "to foster cultural exchanges between Switzerland and the Philippines. It will give the people of the Philippines more opportunities to discover Swiss artists and get acquainted with Swiss culture, while Swiss artists will get to appreciate Philippine culture and, where possible, create synergies."

The fund is sponsored by Swiss companies, which are active in the Philippines. Presently, sponsors to the fund include Nestlé, Bühler and Swatch.

Ambassador Sieber said there are 5,000 Swiss nationals in the Philippines, making it one of the largest Swiss communities in Asia. On the other hand, there are about 20,000 Filipinos in Switzerland.

He said the fund would give the citizens from both countries an opportunity to discover each other's culture.

The Swiss Cultural Fund Philippines was officially launched during a VIP event at the Swiss Ambassador's Residence on May 26. The launch coincided with a private concert by Swiss jazz artist Claude Diallo, who was in the country last week for a series of concerts.

On the other hand, the fund was introduced to media in a private get-together held at the residence of Swiss Embassy Deputy Head of Mission Raoul Imbach, who also happens to be a multitasking musician. Imbach, who is performing in a concert at the Rizal Park Open Air Auditorium today at 6 p.m., is known in the diplomatic circle here and abroad as the "Singing Diplomat."

It was an intimate gathering that gave media a chance to chat with Ambassador Sieber and Counselor Imbach on all things Swiss. In fact, much of the talk that afternoon centered on Swiss food, particularly raclette, as the diplomats talked about this delicacy to the guests.

Ambassador Sieber says almost all homes in Switzerland has a raclette machine of some kind, since the dish of melted cheese, boiled baby potatoes, cocktail onions and gherkins is a must in all



SWISS Ambassador Ivo Sieber welcomes Envoys & Expats editor Joseph Cortes.



CORTES, Ambassador Sieber and Suzette Jessica



SWISS Counselor and Deputy Head of Mission Raoul Imbach entertains guests with his original compositions.

Swiss gatherings, along with that other staple, cheese fondue. And there were more culinary discoveries that afternoon, including roesti, pan-fried shredded potato pancakes.

Imbach wears a lot of hats; he is not only a diplomat and musician, he is also a restaurateur, having run a restaurant during his assignment in Bolivia. In the short time that he has been in the Philippines, he has picked up enough Filipino to integrate the language into his compositions. The audience at his Rizal Park show will surely be enthralled by his romantic compositions, the same way he has charmed his audience around the world.



SWISS Ambassador Ivo Sieber (right) and Counselor and Deputy Head of Mission Raoul Imbach

Bavarian Youth Jazz Orchestra jams with UST Jazz Band

THE Bavarian Youth Jazz Orchestra from Germany dropped by Manila as part of its 2014 Southeast Asian tour and to grace the celebration of the 60th anniversary of Philippine-German diplomatic relations.

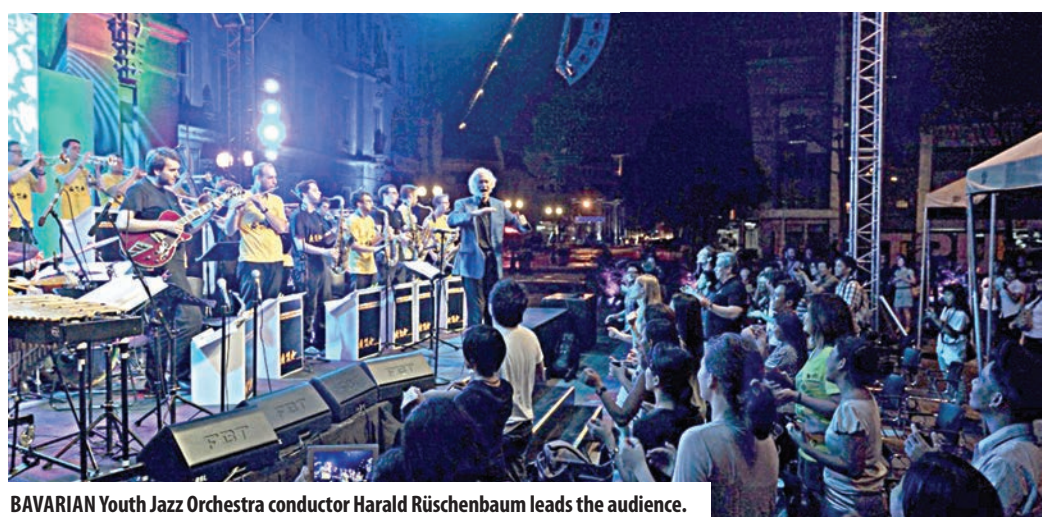
Their stay and performance in Manila was held on May 23, 2014 at the Plaza Mayor in the University of Santo Tomas (UST) campus and was organized by the Goethe-Institut Philippinen and UST, together with the German Embassy Manila.



THE two orchestras, celebrating the successful collaboration, pose for a souvenir with the concert organizers Deutsche Botschaft Manila Chargé d'Affaires Michael Hasper (front row, second from left), Goethe-Institut Philippinen Director Dr. Petra Raymond (front row, third from left), and UST Father Rector Rev. Herminio Dagohoy, O.P. (front row, fourth from left).



THE Bavarian Youth Jazz Orchestra and UST Jazz Band perform together.



BAVARIAN Youth Jazz Orchestra conductor Harald Rüschbaum leads the audience.



DEUTSCHE Botschaft Manila Chargé d'Affaires Michael Hasper



GOETHE-INSTITUT Philippinen Director Dr. Petra Raymond

From strength to strength: Surviving 'Yolanda'

By JINGER S. CABILLEN

ALFREDO PODERNOS is a broadcaster for 98.7FM station Radyo Abante, but a once-in-a-lifetime event threw him into the limelight when Super-typhoon Yolanda (international code name Haiyan) struck his hometown of Tacloban. The once picture-postcard seashores of his town was devastated on November 8, 2013, crumbling everything in the howler's path, demolishing the residents' hopes and dreams, and laying waste to what was once a tourism hot spot.

The very disaster that brought 15 minutes of fame to a simple broadcaster from a community representative to station manager was also responsible for the destruction of Podernos's hometown and his neighbors' laments.

The typhoon killed more than 6,000. Four million residents were displaced, 28,000 injured, 1,000 missing and 4 million houses smashed. The total cost of destruction of the strongest typhoon to make landfall in the cities of Samar and Leyte is estimated at P36 billion.

Thankfully, the combined efforts of all good samaritans, various organizations and unnamed donors were able to combat the prospective loss of the Visayan region.

Over 200 humanitarian organizations from all over the world were quick to respond in the aftermath of the disaster, focusing their help on the devastated cities, bringing smiles in the sea of sorrow and providing a glimmer of hope that kept the survivors clinging to life after six months.

To date, the Red Cross and the Red Crescent Movement's relief distribution have reached over 1 million survivors, contributed 25 percent to the emergency shelter support in the disaster-stricken areas, gave the biggest unconditional cash grants in their 67 years of operation, promoted hygiene and assisted patients in its emergency health facilities.

For Red Cross Secretary Gwendolyn Pang, Yolanda is the worst disaster she had seen in her 17-year stint working in humanitarian aid.

"Six months after the super howler, we still have to hold the hands of the residents and guide them toward recovery," she relates. "Up to this day, we can still hear the echoes of suffering and the cries for love and care. We cannot stop at six months, at one year, at two years."

The Philippine Red Cross has collected a total of 320 million Swiss francs for its three-year recovery plan, while the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement have raised 315 million Swiss francs for the Yolanda emergency appeal. Their contributions include constructing shelters with durable ma-

terials to withstand the next typhoon season.

May 8, 2014 was World Red Cross Day, the day marking the sixth month after Yolanda struck the country, and the organization has dedicated its foundation day to the benefactors of the toughest relief operation it has assisted. The event was called My Red Cross Story.

Likewise, the European Union's humanitarian aid and civil protection (Echo) celebrated the significant progress made by Yolanda survivors as part of the Europe Day on May 9, 2014.

Echo, in partnership with ACF International Philippines, Plan International, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Save the Children, CARE and FAO, organized the photo exhibit *The Road to Recovery: Rebuilding with Communities after Typhoon Haiyan*.

The occasion included an exchange between media and the organizing panel, comprising of representatives from contributing partners and Tacloban community representative Alfredo Podernos, and the presentation of IOM's book, *Portraits of Recovery*.

Philippines Country Director for ACF International Javad Amozegar zeroed in on livelihood programs for the typhoon-stricken areas, calling on the government to focus on them. Carin van der Hor of Plan International stressed the importance of coordinating humanitarian organizations for quicker aid and relief mobility.

In spite of the difficulties they face, David Sevick of Echo said the team would continue to work hand in hand with the government and other humanitarian organizations to "mitigate the effects of future disasters" as the typhoon season is just weeks away.

Podernos and his colleagues did their part in the recovery efforts through *Abante Karaoke*, a Sunday radio program. This Pinoy pastime of listening and singing along with a karaoke machine is one of the ways the victims of Yolanda air their problems. It is a way of stress debriefing.

He said *Abante Karaoke* is successful because people of all ages, those who can sing and those who can't, kept coming to join in the program, so much that the supposed four-hour program frequently extends beyond its set time. The success of the program owes a lot to the broadcasters, who chose to commit their time to their work even if it means not being able to avail themselves of the relief operations.

"Communication is aid. We're part of the humanitarian response on the side of communication. Without it, there would be chaos," Podernos explained.

Although the road to recovery is still a long way ahead, the long-term efforts of the government and the aid organizations will be not in vain because of the irreplaceable spirit of the Filipino people.

Carin van der Hor of Plan International said, "That is why we don't call them victims. We call them survivors."