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GenTri opens COVID-19 Molecular Laboratory

By Ruel B. Francisco

GENERAL TRIAS CITY, Cavite --The city government here recently inaugurated the city's first COVID-19 Molecular Laboratory located in Barangay Manggahan.

Mayor Antonio 'Ony' Ferrer along with Deputy Chief Implementer and 'Testing Czar' Secretary Vince Dizon led the inauguration and opening of the facility. GenTri Medical Center and Hospital President & CEO Dr. Jerrimo Genuino, MD., Vice-

Mayor Morit Sison, and members of the Sangguniang Panglungsod were present to witness the significant event.

Managed by the General Trias Medical Center and Hospital (GTMCH), the city's COVID-19 Molecular Laboratory is part of the LGU's counter measures against COVID-19 to mitigate the threat on the health and safety of Gentriseños and contain further spread of the disease.

The facility is equipped with the best technology in *continue to page 3*



Trias City Mayor Antonio Ferrer (7th) and Deputy Chief Implementer and 'Testing Czar' Secretary Vince Dizon (5th) led the formal opening of the GenTri COVID-19 Molecular Laboratory in Barangay Manggahan Dec. 12, 2020. (Photo & caption: GenTri PIO)

President Duterte signs P4.5-trillion 2021 national budget

MANILA-- President Rodrigo Roa Duterte has signed into law Monday the P4.5-trillion 2021 national budget that allocates money for the government's COVID-19 vaccine rollout and infrastructure development.

Attending the signing ceremony in Malacañang were select members of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

"I stand before you today happy and proud to sign the 2021 General Appropriations Act," President Duterte said in his message.

"This important piece of legislation attests to the importance of an active and fruitful collaboration between the Executive and the Legislative branches of government, especially at this time when the health and welfare of our people are at

stake."

The ratification of the 2021 national budget manifests the commitment of all stakeholders to set aside divisive partisan politics for national good.

The President commended the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and civil society partners, which provided extensive knowledge and technical expertise in crafting the expenditure program that will enable the country to rebuild and push the economy forward.

With the signing of the 2021 national budget, the President said his administration could continue pursuing its flagship Build, Build, Build program, revitalize the industry *continue to page 3*

DOLE aids nearly 340,000 child workers

QUEZON CITY-- The labor department has assisted close to 340,000 minors, along with their families, in an intensified implementation of the government's child labor prevention and elimination program amid the Covid 19 pandemic, the agency said on Sunday.

Children and young workers are considered among the most vulnerable as the health crisis persist to affect the livelihood of mostly poor families in urban and rural areas.

Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III said given

the government restrictions to contain the spread of the virus, the labor department profiled around 274,924 child laborers. On top of this figure, he said, about 293,318 were referred for assistance while more than 47,000 were removed from child labor.

"Along with our campaign to protect the vulnerable workers, we also stepped up our efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor," Bello said, citing DOLE's mandate under Republic Act No. 9231 or the Special Protection of Children against Child Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act.

He noted that the pandemic has drawn children of poor families into some worst forms of child labor. "This is indeed unfortunate. This is why we had to work doubly hard to arrest the situation," the labor chief added.

Underscoring DOLE's effective child labor prevention and elimination program, Bello cited the recent experience of one *continue to page 3*

Children below 15 years old not allowed inside Rizal, Paco Parks

By Jimmyley E. Guzman

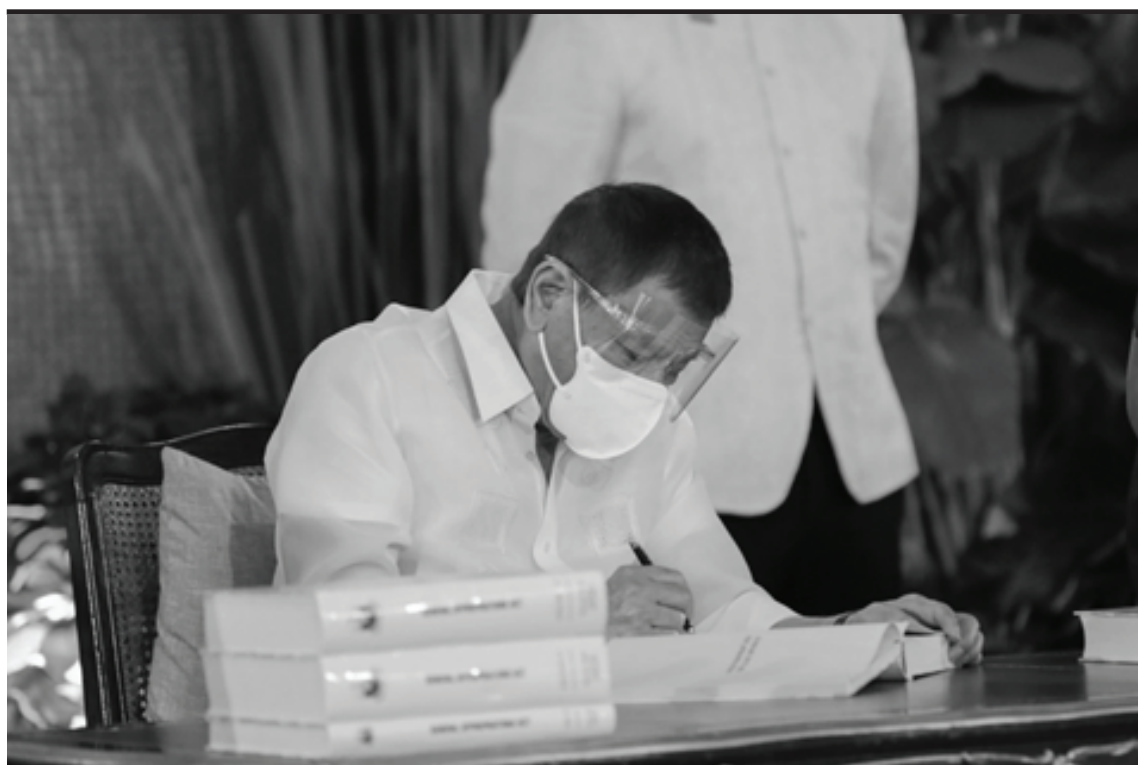
PASIG CITY-- The National Parks Development Committee (NPDC) has announced that children below 15 years of age will not be permitted to enter the historic Rizal Park and Paco Park in Manila starting on Saturday, Dec. 26.

On its Facebook Page, the NPDC announced that the restriction of entry for children below 15 years old is due to the increasing coronavirus cases and the reported new virus strain of COVID-19.

"Due to the increasing cases and the new virus strain of COVID-19, children below 15 years old will not be allowed inside Rizal Park and Paco Park effective today, 26 December 2020 until further notice. Thank you for your understanding," the NPDC said.

In July of this year, Rizal Park's central section was reopened for exercise purposes only and following a time schedule.

NPDC also issued park guidelines and map to ensure the safety of park visitors. (PIA-NCR)



President Rodrigo Roa Duterte has signed into law on Monday, 28 December 2020 the P4.5-trillion 2021 national budget that allocates money for the government's COVID-19 vaccine rollout and infrastructure development. Photo: ALFRED FRIAS/ PRESIDENTIAL PHOTO



Kuha sa loob ng PITX sa bisperas ng Pasko nitong Huwebes ng Philippine News Agency

Mahigit 55,000 pasahero dumagsa sa PITX sa bisperas ng Pasko

By Jerome Carlo R. Paunan

LUNGSOD CALOOCAN-- Libu-libong pasahero ang dumagsa pa rin sa Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX) sa Lungsod Parañaque para makahabol sa Noche Buena sa kani-kanilang probinsya nitong Huwebes.

Sa pagtataya ng pamunuan ng PITX, umabot sa mahigit 55,000 ang mga pasaherong dumagsa sa naturang terminal sa bisperas ng Pasko.

Gayunpaman, higit na mas mababa pa rin ito kumpara sa tinatayang 80,000 daily passenger sa PITX noong bago magka-COVID.

Mula nang umaga ay tuluy-tuloy na ang pagdating ng mga pasahero habang patuloy din ang paalala ng mga otoridad na sumunod sa mga umiiral na minimum health and safety protocols upang makaiwas sa COVID-19.

Sa ulat din ng mga otoridad, mayroon pa rin mga nagsama ng bata sa loob ng

terminal, gayong mahigpit na ipinagbabawal ang pagbibiyaheng mga ito sa mga pampublikong sasakyan ng Land Transportation Franchise and Regulatory Board o LTRFB at ng Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases o IATF-EID.

“Malaking kagulatan din sa atin ito pero gayunpaman, natutuwa tayo sa isang banda dahil alam naman nating ‘pag may travel na, medyo nakakatulong sa pagbangon ng ekonomiya,’ ayon kay PITX corporate affairs head Jason Salvador sa interview ng isang TV network.

“Pero gayunpaman, medyo natatakot din tayo baka ito maging dahilan ng pag-surge ng COVID-19,” dagdag pa niya.

Magugunitang nauna nang pinaalalahanan ng pamunuan ng PITX na kabilang sa mga dokumentong kailangan upang makabiyahe sa probinsya ay ang travel authority mula sa Philippine National Police at anumang valid na government ID. (PIA NCR)

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said that the government wants to make sure that the vaccine is safe and effective and will protect the Filipinos from the disease, instead of further harming them.

“Once available na ang vaccine, hindi po basta basta magpapaturok ang mga Pilipino. Ipakita natin na dapat pagkatiwalaan po ang vaccine na bibilhin po,” he said.

Go also reiterated during the interview that the government will uphold its promise to prioritize the poor and the vulnerable. He said that both he and President Duterte will also prioritize frontliners, senior citizens and indigent Filipinos, and it will be provided for free for these priority sectors.

“Kami po sa gobyerno, unahin namin ni Pangulong Duterte ang mga frontliners, at mahihirap, ‘yung mga isang kahig, isang tuka, sa mga pinakasulok ng Pilipinas, ‘yun ang unahin natin. Kasama ang mga nasa vulnerable sector, mga senior citizens, indigent Filipinos,” he said.

Go also emphasized that politicians will not be prioritized. He clarified that his

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challenge to Health Secretary Duque and Secretary Galvez to be injected first is intended to boost confidence and allay fears of the public regarding the vaccine.

“Hindi po sila (pulitiko) ang unahin. Ang punto dito, dapat ipakita nila na may kumpiyansa. Kailangan nating ipakita na mapagkakatiwalaan ang vaccine. Para sa mahihirap, dapat safe at effective na vaccine, at libre po ito dapat sa mahihirap,” Go added.

According to a government report on December 21 on the status of vaccine procurement, Gamaleya is poised to ship in the first quarter of 2021 with fifteen to twenty million doses arriving with ongoing engagements with the Russian Embassy.

AstraZeneca also committed 2.6 million doses with ongoing talks for another twenty million. Private sectors are also raising another round and local government units will also procure five to ten million doses. Its delivery is targeted to be on May 2021.

Other vaccines, such as Pfizer, Sinovac and Moderna, are still in the process of talks to secure enough vaccines for the

country.

“Wag po kayong mag-alala, ginagawa po namin sa abot ng aming makakaya at pinaghahandaan po ito. Pinag-aaralang mabuti. One step at a time kasi bago po ito, lahat po sa buong mundo pinag-aaralan po ito,” Go said.

He then reminded the public to continue to follow health protocols as advised by the government.

“Sumunod lang tayo sa gobyerno, mag-mask at face shield, maghugas ng kamay,” he said.

On the issue of implementing stricter community quarantine measures, Go said that it will depend as the government continues to monitor the situation of COVID-19 cases in the country.

“Depende po. Pag-aaralan pa ng gobyerno ‘yan kung kakailanganin. Kung tataas ang numero, baka kailangan magpatupad ng mas mahigpit na quarantine measures,” he ended.

Also on Saturday, the President ordered the educational institutions to not push through with the planned pilot face-to-face classes given the emergence of new strains of COVID-19. (OSBG)

the project’s beneficiaries.

“Napakalaking tulong po ng mga natatanggap naming libreng inputs mula sa DA. Malaki po ang aming natitipid dahil hindi na po namin kailangan pang bumili ng mga butong pananim at pataba. Bago pa man po dumating ang handog na pananim at abono na buhay ng RRP, ako po ay umaani lamang ng nasa 250 balde (isang balde ay katumbas ng 10 kilo) ng palay. Ngayon pong dumating na sa amin ang RRP, ang aking 0.75 hectare na lupa ay umaani na po ng nasa 320 balde,” Mr. Ramos proudly said.

Mrs. Prima R. Misiera, secretary and bookkeeper of the Anak Bukid Samahan ng Magsasaka ng Brgy. Sipa Inc., is a recipient of RRP’s expanded hybrid and

DA...

markets in Luzon. Antonio Ephrem Marin, head of the General Santos City veterinary office, said hog farmers in the area have leveled up operations to meet the target shipment of 15,000 to 20,000 head monthly to Luzon.

For his part, Medrano said in addition to live hogs, the country’s frozen pork inventory is more than enough, at 32,724 metric tons (MT), as of the first week of December, as reported by

inbred seed components. She expressed her appreciation to DA for its continued support towards rice farmers in their municipality.

“Ngayon pong nakakatanggap na kami ng libreng abono mula sa DA at sa proyekto nitong RRP, nababawasan po ang aking gastos. Hindi ko na po kailangan pang bumili ng mataas na halaga ng abono sa labas. Bilang isang babaeng magsasaka, ako rin po ay isang ina. Kung kaya naman lubos ang aking pasasalamat sa DA sa mga handog ninyong libreng butong pananim at abono. Sana po ay magtuluy-tuloy pa po ang inyong pagtulong sa amin. Sa pamamagitan po ninyo at ng mga proyektong gaya ng RRP ay natitiyak na namin ang masaganang ani at mataas na kita,” Ms. Misiera said.

Mrs. Emerlita Magno, member of Samahan ng Maliliit na Magsasaka ng Ibabang Kinagunan in Agdangan, Quezon and a recipient of DA RRP’s expanded hybrid seed component, shared her experience as one of the many recipients of hybrid seeds and fertilizers in their municipality.

“Noon po ay nasa 60

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the DA-National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS).

“We have also surplus supply of poultry meat, with an inventory of 43,345 MT of frozen dressed chicken as of first week of December, 46% more than last year’s level,” Medrano added.

Overall, despite the pandemic and ASF, he said there was a slight increase in the total volume of pork and chicken compared to 2019, according to DA-NMIS data. (DA/PIA-NCR)

balde lamang ang aking ani sa aking maliit na sakahan. Ang kita po mula rito ay hindi sapat kumpara sa aking nagastos sa butong pananim at abono.

Ngayon pong isa na ang aming samahan sa recipients ng RRP na regular na nakakatanggap ng libreng binhi at abono, ang akin pong munting sakahan ay umaani na ng halos 150 balde. Ramdam na ramdam po ang itinaas ng aming ani at kita kung kaya’t lubos po ang aking pasasalamat sa Kagawaran sa handog ninyong libreng inputs para sa aming mga magsasaka sa Agdangan. Sana po ay ipagpatuloy pa po ninyo ang mga proyektong kagaya ng RRP,” Ms. Magno said.

In response to this remarkable success, the regional office has started introducing the implementing guidelines on the revamped Rice Resiliency Project, also known as RRP 2, for the dry-cropping season. In line with this, rice seeds and fertilizers were already distributed across the region in a bid to support rice farmers this 2020-2021 dry season. (MAP/DA-RFO IVA, RAFIS)

34K.....

of fertilizers under the RCEF Seed Program.

Meanwhile, 3,000 hectares of inbred seed allocation were distributed for non-RCEF areas under the Expanded Inbred Rice Production, followed by 13,408 fertilizer bags. About 2,964 farmers and 3,183 farmers, respectively, have already made the most of the support by DA through their respective city and municipal agriculture offices.

On the other hand, through its Expanded Hybrid Rice Production, DA’s RRP has allotted a total of 1,187 hectares of hybrid seed allocation for 1,116 rice farmers who have farmlands suitable for hybrid rice seeds.

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Also, the regional office has distributed hybrid rice seeds to additional 6,186 hectares of rice lands. A total of 4,656 farmers made the most of this supplementary intervention under DA’s RRP. About 22,167 bags of fertilizer accompanied this hybrid distribution to a total of 5,448 farmers under RRP’s Expanded Hybrid and regular hybrid rice production.

Mr. Armando Ramos, president of the Anak Bukid Samahan ng Magsasaka ng Brgy. Sipa Inc. in Padre Burgos, Quezon, is one of the recipients of the expanded inbred seeds component of DA’s RRP. He expressed his utmost gratitude to the regional office for choosing their farmers’ association as one of

Pres. Duterte to Filipinos: Strength of character, indomitable spirit help us survive

By Jerome Carlo R. Paunan

CALOOCAN CITY-- In his Christmas Day message of hope, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte praised the Filipino's "strength of character" and their "indomitable spirit" that have helped them "survive and rise" above it all, amid the many challenges facing them this year.

The President also acknowledged that this year has been a "trying time" for everyone as many lives were affected and forever changed due to the global pandemic and an onslaught of natural calamities.

"My fellow Filipinos, this year has been a trying time for all of us. Many lives were lost and forever changed due to COVID-19 pandemic and several natural calamities," Duterte said.

"But through it all, we continue to survive and rise because of our unity, strength and indomitable spirit of (the) Filipinos," he added.

He also noted that amid the "darkness, poverty, and suffering" experienced by his Kababayans, there is always hope through the Grace of God.

"This Christmas season, let the story of Jesus Christ's birth remind us that we should always have hope even in darkness, poverty, and suffering."

The President added that part of the holiday spirit should manifest itself in Filipinos bringing love and cheer to those in need.

"Let us also allow Christ into our lives so that we could bring love and cheer not only to our families and friends but also to those who are most in need," he said.

In closing, he wished Filipinos a "meaningful" celebration and reminded them to remain hopeful for better days ahead.

To recall, this is the first Christmas celebrated in the Philippines in recent history under a global health pandemic. (PIA NCR)



President Rodrigo Roa Duterte during a public event. (PIA NCR file photo)

President....

and service sectors, and support much-needed social services projects.

"Let me stress, however, that one of the most important items in the 2021 budget is the allocation of 72.5 billion pesos for the purchase, storage, transportation, and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines," he said.

"As we look forward with hope for the coming year, let me assure the public that this administration will ensure the efficient use of our resources through a sound fiscal policy that will enable us to overcome the debilitating effects of the

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pandemic on public health and our economy," he added.

President Duterte assured the Filipino public that every centavo contained in next year's spending measure would be spent to ensure the nation's recovery, resilience, and sustainability.

Under the 2021 national budget, the education sector received the lion's share with P708 billion.

The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) came second with P694 billion while the country's health sector got the third highest allocation with P287 billion. (PND)

ATC designates CPP-NPA as terror group

QUEZON CITY -- The Anti-Terrorism Council (ATC) has designated the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA) as a "terrorist" organization, association, and/or a group of persons.

The resolution, approved on Dec. 9, and released to members of media this week, was signed by ATC chair, Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea, and the body's vice chair, National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon, Jr.

The ATC is composed of nine members of the Cabinet including the Executive Secretary, National Security Adviser, Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Secretary of National Defense, Secretary of Interior and Local Government, Secretary of Finance, Secretary of Justice, Secretary of Information and Communications Technology, and the Executive Director of the Anti-Money Laundering Council.

ATC Resolution Number 12 which designated the CPP-NPA, with its armed wing known as the "Bagong Hukbong Bayan", used as a basis the February 21, 2018 petition filed by the National Prosecution Service (NPS) of the Department of Justice (DOJ) before the Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 19, docketed as Case No. R-MNL-18-00925-CV, "praying that the CPP-NPA be declared as terrorist and outlawed organizations, associations, and/or group of persons pursuant to Section 17 of Republic Act No. 9372, otherwise known as the Human Security Act of 2007".

The NPS, in its petition, said the CPP-NPA "was organized for the purpose of engaging in terrorism and, for almost half a century, have been and are still using acts of terror to sow and create a condition of widespread and extraordinary fear and panic among the populace in order to overthrow the duly constituted authorities and seize control of the Philippine Government through armed struggle."

Gen Tri

terms of equipment, the BD Max Machine and BIO-RAD CFX 96 RT-PCR, which are expected to contribute much to the continuous facilitation of the Aggressive Community Testing in the city for a faster and efficient release of test results.

Since the ground breaking of the facility on September 14, 2020, the preparation of documents for the accreditation by the Department of Health (DOH) was fast tracked.

With the GTMCH medical team confident that the Molecular Laboratory was 100% ready and compliant with

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the standards set by the DOH and the RITM, the first visit and inspection was done November 6. Further improvements had to be made for its final approval and accreditation paving the way to the formal launching and inauguration on December 12, 2020.

Meanwhile, according to the latest COVID-19 update reported by the City Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit (CESU), there were 6 recovered patients and 1 new confirmed case recorded as of December 17, 2020.

Total Confirmed cases were 2,198 out of which 22 are

Active cases while the total number of Recoveries from the additional recovered patients are now at 2,137 and 39 fatalities from the disease brought by the COVID-19.

While these figures manifest a significant decline in the rate of infection and a high percentage of recoveries from the disease, the officers of the city government thru the city health office continuously remind the public to remain safe thru the observance of the minimum health standards set by the Inter-Agency Task Force. (Ruel Francisco/General Trias PIO/Stetoscoop-GenTri Med Center Newsletter)

DOLE....

of the young beneficiaries as a good example.

Joseph (not his real name), 14, from San Fernando, Romblon, is an orphan living with his grandmother. He used to gather and sell firewood and worked extra as a baggage boy for fish traders.

In a report to Bello, DOLE MIMAROPA Director Joffrey Suyao said Joseph was awarded a P30,000 sari-sari store package along with his grandmother. They made good on their assistance and Joseph is now

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enrolled as a first-year student at the Romblon State University taking up Bachelor of Science in Business Administration.

"The boy has been freed from hazardous work. We hope that this simple livelihood assistance help him attain his dreams," Suyao said in his report. Joseph vowed to make the most out of the livelihood package, and promised to do his best with the opportunity to get a better education, the report added.

The DOLE child labor prevention and elimination

program consists of Project Angel Tree which provides an array of social services for the child laborers and their families, and the H.E.L.P. M.E. program, which stands for health services and medical assistance; education and training; livelihood opportunities to parents of child laborers; prevention, protection, and prosecution; monitoring; and evaluation.

The labor department also implements the Child Labor-Free Establishments, Sagip Batang Manggagawa, and Philippine Program against Child Labor. (DOLE)

It also cited 12 incidents that constitute terrorist acts of murder, kidnapping, and arson to prove that the CPP-NPA continues to commit acts of terror to sow and create a condition of widespread and extraordinary fear and panic among the populace in order to topple the Philippine government which is the group's ultimate goal.

"Filing of the said petition by the NPS, DOJ clearly established the existence of probable cause that the CPP-NPA committed, or attempted to commit, or conspired in the commission of the acts defined and penalized by the ATA (Anti-Terrorism Act)," ATC Resolution Number 12 read.

In justifying its designation of the CPP-NPA as a terrorist organization, it also

invoked President Proclamation Number 374 issued on December 5, 2017, declaring the group as designated/identified terrorist organizations under Section 3 (e)(1) of Republic Act No. 10168, otherwise known as "The Terrorism Financing Prevention and Suppression Act of 2012".

The law states that among the designated persons are "any person or entity designated and/or identified as a terrorist, one who finances terrorism, or a terrorist organization or group under the applicable United Nations Security Council resolution or by another jurisdiction or supranational jurisdiction".

ATC Resolution Number 12 also cited the United States' designation of the CPP-NPA as a "foreign terrorist organization" in

August 2002 and those made by the European Union, Australia, United Kingdom, all in 2002; and New Zealand, in 2010.

"Now, therefore, the ATC, by virtue of the powers vested in us by Section 45 of ATA and pursuant to paragraph 3 of Section 25 of the ATA, finds probable cause that the CPP-NPA committed or conspired to commit the acts defined and penalized under Section 4 of the ATA and hereby designates the CPP-NPA as terrorist organizations, associations or groups of persons," it added.

Under Section 25 of the ATA, the ATC may designate individuals or groups as terrorists upon the finding of probable cause that they are in a conspiracy to commit or are committing acts of terrorism. (PIA NCR)

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EDITORIAL

Pandemic yuletide's lone bright star

"Effective communication, she says, builds trust, which in turn, allays fears about the pandemic and makes it easier for the public to follow protocols and even help implement programs.

Three days before Christmas last Tuesday, Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Singh Vergeire was still busy explaining the risks of gathering together for the holidays, pointing out that the deadly coronavirus is still very much around despite the development of vaccines, and that it would be best not to be complacent about it.

She has reasons, in her message to Filipinos, to be overly cautious. The deadly virus has seen a resurgence in several countries including Europe and the United States. There were reports it has mutated to a new highly-infectious strain, which the United Kingdom admitted was "out of control."

The World Health Organization has, in fact, called for stronger containment measures across Europe, which has passed 500,000 deaths from COVID-19.

Here at home, the Department of Health (DoH), despite what many believe are lapses in the response to the health crisis, is having its hands full, too, but is nevertheless coping, thanks to Vergeire who has been seen as the voice of reason and sobriety for the beleaguered health agency.

Vergeire has been a familiar face to Filipinos ever since the pandemic began. She is a pivotal figure in the country's fight against the pandemic health through her management roles at the DoH.

Before handling Covid-19, she was the assistant secretary for public health, which had her overseeing the department's programs on dengue, measles and polio. Acting as the DoH's spokesperson was only a second responsibility, a temporary stint turned permanent.

Aside from appearing before the nation daily at 4 p.m., Vergeire oversees data related to the global phenomenon, heads the Diagnostics group, which licenses testing laboratories and its operations, and heads a cluster that oversees the licensing of pharmaceuticals.

Last Tuesday, in the Daily Tribune's online show "Straight Talk," Vergeire revealed she had apprehensions when she took on the job as spokesperson. She pointed out that it is no easy feat relaying information on something that is unknown and unstudied. The virus, after all, was new and evolving.

"I have to read up on a lot of studies every day. Even if you're a doctor, you can get the facts wrong. I was hesitant because I know that's the challenge. I will be moving in the dark," she pointed out.

But gauging from reactions to her everyday briefing regarding the pandemic, it looks like the erstwhile medical student, who had earlier wanted to become a lawyer, is emerging as a lone bright star to an agency ridiculed for its pathetic response to the crisis.

Nevertheless, the lady who never practiced her medical profession in favor of public health service and governance would be the very first to come to the defense of the beleaguered Health Secretary Francisco Duque III.

"We have a very good working relationship with the Health Secretary. We support whatever policies he lays down," she said.

Asked whether she thinks Duque really dropped the ball in the procurement of the Pfizer vaccine, Vergeire was quick to say nobody really dropped the so-called ball as claimed by the Health Secretary's critics.

"It's a continuing process (the procurement of the vaccine), so that you can never really tell that somebody goofed when it hasn't even been finished yet," she said.

When Duque earlier in the crisis claimed the government had flattened the curve, Vergeire did not publicly contradict her mentor. She, however, cautioned the public against complacency.

Duque, notwithstanding his perceived frailties, is lucky. He is lucky to have the backing of no less than the President and luckier still with the support of an able spokesperson who knows the value of communicating effectively.

Effective communication, she says, builds trust, which in turn, allays fears about the pandemic and makes it easier for the public to follow protocols and even help implement programs.

And Vergeire, bless her heart, is one great gift in this so-called pandemic Christmas.



KAPIRASONG kritika

Ni Teo S. Marasigan

Disiplina para sa Bisita

ISA sa mga tawag-pansin na salitang tumampok sa pagbisita ni Pope Francis sa Pilipinas ang "disiplina." Sabi ni Pang. Noynoy Aquino bago dumating ang Santo Papa, "I call on Filipinos to exercise the utmost discipline, in order to ensure that our gatherings are peaceful and orderly." Sa unang gabi ng pagdating ni Pope Francis, sinabi ni Kris Aquino, kapatid ni Noynoy, sa kanyang sikat na palabas sa telebisyon na "proud" siya dahil "disiplinado" ang mga Pilipino. Pinaalingawngaw na ang naturang salita, at ang positibong pagpapahalaga rito, ng iba't ibang ulat ng midya ng malalaking kapitalista kaugnay ng pagdalaw ni Pope Francis. Sa ikalawang gabi ni Pope Francis sa Pilipinas, si Ces Orefia-Drilon ng impluwensyal na ABS-CBN ang narinig kong nagbalita nito.

Syempre pa, pumapatungkol ang disiplina sa isang disposisyon kaugnay ng mga patakaran o prinsipyo na nagmumula sa isang awtoridad labas sa indibidwal. Sa partikular, disposisyon ito ng pagsunod – at hindi nga lang ng pagsunod, kundi ng mulat at kusang pagsunod. Maaaring maging disposisyon ito ng marami, pero dahil usapin ito ng mulat at kusang pagsunod, mas matitingnang disposisyon ito ng indibidwal. Madalas na imahen nito, dahil na rin sa propaganda ng gobyerno na dumadaloy sa midya at sistemang pang-edukasyon, ang pagtawid sa tamang tawiran – gawain ng indibidwal, pagtalima sa patakaran ng gobyerno, at larawan ng pag-abante sa modernidad. Susing salita rin ito, syempre pa, ng Martial Law ni Ferdinand Marcos.

Paano gumagana ang "disiplina" sa kaso ng pagdalaw ni Pope Francis? Una sa lahat, maraming patakaran ipinatupad ang gobyernong Aquino na mapanupil sa normal na kalakaran ng mga mamamayan bago ang pagdalaw, at lampas sa panunupil sa mga protesta ng kilusang masa sa bansa: nilinyahan ng mga pulis ang kalsada; nilimitahan ang transportasyon ng mga tao sa kalsada, himpapawid, at dagat; pinatay ang signal ng mga cellular phones, hadlang sa pagpapadala at pagtanggap ng mga mensaheng text; at iba pa. Ipinatupad ang mga ito ng gobyerno nang nagsasarili, walang konsultasyon sa publiko, at mabilisan. Ipinatupad ang mga ito sa paraang wala nang magagawa ang karaniwang mamamayang gustong sumalubong kay Pope Francis kundi ang sumunod.

Pagkatapos obligahing sumunod ang mga mamamayan, papapurihan sila ng mga makinarya ng propaganda ng gobyerno dahil "disiplinado" sila, dahil nagpakita sila ng "disiplina." Maririnig din sa iba ng reporter sa midya ang linya ni Kris Aquino: Kadikit ng pagiging disiplinado umano ng mga Pilipino ang pagiging "proud" o pagmamalaki. Na kadikit naman ng tahimik na pagkilala na nanonood ang mundo sa

Pilipinas sa panahong narito si Pope Francis – at para bang pagiging disiplinado ang inaasahan nilang makita sa mga Pilipino. Sa ganito, ang diskurso tungkol sa disiplina ay nagsisilbing premyo sa mga mamamayan sa pagiging disiplinado umano, at sa gayon ay bahagi rin ng mismong mga mekanismo ng pagpapataw ng disiplina sa kanila.

Sa kabilang banda, marami-rami na ring komentista ang nagpahayag tungkol sa kababawan ng pagbabalita ng midya ng malalaking kapitalista tungkol sa pagdalaw ni Pope Francis. Pangunahin dito ang pagpokus sa maliliit na detalye kaugnay ng pagdalaw, sa kapinsalaan ng pag-uulat tungkol sa kabuluhan nito at ng mga pahayag ng Santo Papa. Sa isang pakahulugan, "walang disiplina" ang midya ng malalaking kapitalista kaugnay ng mga prinsipyo ng pamamahayag o journalism. Madalas, ang mga komentaryo hinggil sa kawalang-disiplinang ito ay inilalabas sa social media, sa pampublikong larangan na may akses ang mga komentista, para mabasa ng marami. Parang sinasabihan nila ang midya ng malalaking kapitalista: "Mahiya naman kayo!"

Kung walang disiplina ang midya ng malalaking kapitalista sa gitna ng pagdalaw ng Santo Papa, wala ring disiplina si Pang. Aquino mismo. Sa kanyang talumpati sa harap ni Pope Francis, tinuligsa ni Aquino ang lokal na pamunuan ng Simbahang Katoliko dahil sa pagiging kritikal nito sa kanya. Masasabing kawalang-disiplina rin ito: sabi ni Renato Reyes Jr., pangkalahatang kalihim ng Bagong Alyansang Makabayan o Bayan, sinamantala ni Aquino ang okasyon para i-ere ang kanyang mga isyu sa Simbahan, sa halip na tugunan ang mga isyu ng korupsiyon at kawalan ng pagkakapantay-pantay na tinuligsa ng Santo Papa. Sabi naman ni Vencer Crisostomo, tagapangulo ng Anakbayan, "isang kahihyan para sa buong bansa" ang mga pahayag ni Aquino. "Nakakahiya!"

Ang nabubuong larawan: Disiplina para sa mga mamamayan, kawalang-disiplina para sa midya ng malalaking kapitalista at kay Aquino mismo. Madali ring makita ang pakinabang ng malalaking kapitalista. Hindi katakata, sa unang buong araw ng Santo Papa sa Pilipinas, dinala siya sa Malakanyang ng gobyerno, sa Manila Cathedral ng Simbahang Katoliko, at pagkatapos ay sa Mall of Asia o MOA ng malalaking kapitalista. Mismong pamilya ni Henry Sy – pinakamayamang Pilipino, may-ari ng MOA, at pangunahing tagapagpatupad ng kontraktwalisasyon sa mga manggagawa

– ang sumalubong sa Santo Papa sa lugar. Kitang-kita rin ang pagpapanaod lang ng lokal na pamunuan ng Simbahang Katoliko, sunud-sunuran lang sa gobyernong Aquino.

(Sa isang pagtingin, sa pagpataw ng panunupil sa mamamayan, sinuspinde ng gobyernong Aquino ang mga batas, at sa gayon ay nagpataw sa bansa ng "state of emergency." Maaalala ang bantog na depinisyon ng pilosopong Nazi na si Carl Schmitt: "Sovereign is he who decides on the exception." Sa ibang salita, ang makapangyarihan ang siyang nagtatakda ng "eksepsyon" – kailan lagapas sa mga batas para umano sa interes ng publiko. Isang porma ng "estado ng eksepsyon" ang "estado ng emergency" at makikita natin sa pagtatakda nito kung sino ang makapangyarihan sa bansa. At dugtung ng pilosopong si Walter Benjamin: "Itinuturo ng tradisyon ng mga inaapi, na ang 'estado ng eksepsyon,' kung saan tayo nabubuhay, ay ang normal na kalagayan.")

Anu't anuman, mahalagang suriin ang "nakakahiya" na "kawalang-disiplina" na ipinakita ni Aquino sa talumpati niya sa harap ni Pope Francis. Mayor na pahayag ito, at tiyak na hindi aksidente, kundi sinadya. Tila mababaw na katatawanan lang ang pagbanggit niya sa kanyang pagkapanot, pero itinatago nito ang kaakibat na tahimik pero matinding panawagan kay Pope Francis na gawin sa pamunuan ng lokal na Simbahan ang pampublikong pagtuligsa na ginawa ng Santo Papa sa Curia sa Roma. Sa kanyang talumpati bago dumating si Pope Francis, ipininta ni Aquino ang worst-case scenario sa kaguluhan ng publiko. Tiyak, naghanda rin ang kanyang gobyerno sa worst-case scenario sa posibleng pahayag ng Papa na kritikal sa kanyang gobyerno.

Sa pag-upak sa lokal na pamunuan ng Simbahang Katoliko, ang gustong unahan at kung sakali'y banggain ni Aquino ay ang posibleng kritisismo ni Pope Francis sa kanyang gobyerno. Ang gusto niyang palabasin: kaaway niya ang lokal na pamunuan ng Simbahan, kaya mali o malisyoso ang ulat nito sa Santo Papa. Hindi na mahalaga kung ano ang posibleng tuligsa ng Santo Papa; ang mahalaga ay batuhin ng duda, pagkwestyon, o malisyang posibleng pinagmulan ng naturang tuligsa. Maaaring ito rin ang pangamba na pinagmumulan ng mga mapanupil na hakbangin ng gobyerno: ang takot sa kritisismong posibleng sabihin ni Pope Francis sa gobyernong Aquino. Dimidisiplina ng gobyernong Aquino ang mga Pilipino para sa sariling interes nito.

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DFA warns public against getting passport appointments from third parties

By Alehia Therese V. Abuan

PARAÑAQUE CITY-- The Office of Consular Affairs of the Department of Foreign Affairs warns the public against seeking passport appointments assistance in Facebook groups and other social media chat groups, and from unknown individuals offering passport appointments services online.

The Department recently received reports

from passport applicants who booked their passport appointment with assistance from unknown individuals online and ended up paying more than what the DFA collects for passport issuance, and receiving tampered application forms and/or incorrect instructions, such as advice to pursue their appointment at a schedule or Consular Office different from the actual appointment schedule and site.

Applicants who made an appointment with a third party, and are doubtful of the authenticity of their application, may call our appointment hotline at 8234 – 3488 to verify their appointments. Applications that were made through a third party will be accepted for processing only after the appointment and the identity of the applicant has been verified, and processing will only be done at the Consular

Office where the appointment was made.

The public is reminded that passport appointments can be booked directly through <https://passport.gov.ph>, and applicants are strongly advised to use their own email address and mobile number to ensure that they receive the correct information on their appointment schedule and receive the application packet to be presented during the appointment.

While passport appointment slots may be limited due to the reduced number of persons allowed in consular premises following social distancing protocols, applicants with urgent travel requirements, such as OFWs,

may email oca.cl@dfa.gov.ph for accommodation in DFA Aseana, or at the nearest Consular Office by sending an appointment request by email to the concerned office directly. The full list of our Consular Offices and their contact details may be found on our website <https://consular.dfa.gov.ph/directory#COS>.

The Department prioritizes the safety of the public and of its personnel, and appeals for the public's continued vigilance, patience and understanding as adjustments are made to operate under the "new normal" in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. (DFA/PIA-NCR)

CAVITEVIEW

Maria Clara and the Golden Tara

IT IS still a popular belief that Jose Rizal's epitome of the Filipina in bloom is Maria Clara. At least, not physically, as we all know she has reddish hair and cotton white skin, Caucasian features that cannot be denied (she is a daughter of a Spanish priest), but fundamentally in character – religious, virginal, loyal, patient, loving and elegantly graceful in manner.

If she really is Rizal's model of womanly virtues, why then is Maria Clara's life written to end up in the deepest pits of depravity, behind the dark and damnable walls of the nunnery. And Maria Clara's religiosity and loyalty, it must be remembered, proved to be easy to manipulate and is preyed upon to the fullest by Padre Salvi, who blackmails her to give up her love to Crisostomo Ibarra and some letters from him (which are then used to convict Ibarra). This in exchange for some scandalous letters written by her mother.

Maria Clara, in spite of her supposed virtues, succumbed to the dark forces that will eventually father a revolution.

Another character of the Noli, though seldom considered as a contender for being a model of womanly virtues, is Salome. She is clearly described as young woman who lives alone in a nipa hut. Simple in her attire and "not beauty to strike the eye at first glance....whose beauty can be appreciated only after a careful examination". Seemingly euphemistic in his description, Rizal unravels her character slowly, with her every action. At the end of the chapter, she will be wholly described as romantic, confident, sensitive, in-love, assertive and independent of mind.

Her presence in the novel is fleeting, as there is only one chapter on her (and Rizal excluded this chapter to lessen the cost of Noli's publication), but it paints a different color and perspective of the Filipina mystique. What makes her stand

out among the female characters of the Noli is that she figures with Elias in a conversation devoid of inhibition, picturesquely romantic, and compelling in portraying a woman in the early stage of independent thinking.

During the domination of the Spaniards in the Philippines, a woman with independent thinking was rare, and often curtailed by a colonized society. This state of society curtailment even became the norm for awhile.

Rizal was aware of the pre-Spanish culture of Filipinos, as he had annotated Morga's book about Philippine history and probably read about Filipino women's assertive nature. The Filipinos have never been alien to strong-willed women. There are lots of evidence to bolster this fact.

It is a fact that religious leaders of pre-Spanish era Philippines were called Babaylans or Catalanans and most of them were females. They were highly respected and people were accustomed to fearing them. They presided over rituals and ceremonies.

Just what kind of rituals were they presiding experts could only deduce, base on evidences and reports of Spanish chroniclers.

In 1917, a 41-pound golden female deity was discovered in the bank of the Wawa River in Agusan (near the town of Esperanza). Now in the Chicago Museum of Natural History, it has an ornamented headdress, cross-legged, as if contemplating. There were many theories as to the origin of the golden statuette (now known as the Golden Tara).

There is a belief that it is a Buddhist image belonging to the Indo-Javanese Kingdom of Majapahit (1200's A.D.), based on the flame-like projection in its ornamented headdress. Others suggest that the image's likeliest affinity could be in the tradition of Mahayana Buddhism, as

shown by its manner of sitting, calmness of facial experience, elongated ears and halo around the head. Still others claim that it was probably made during the Sri Vijaya era, during the Buddhist rule of the Sailendras (900-950 A.D.), based on the headdress and other ornaments.

Others likened the image to a Sivaite goddess. Siva is one of the supreme deities of Hindusim, representing the principle of destruction. He also represents the reproductive or restoring power. His symbol for this matter is the linga – the phallus.

Considered unconventional by most Hindu and Buddhist practitioners, the belief in the esoteric practices invoking yoga and meditation for the fulfillment of earthly and spiritual ecstasy is known as Tantrism and was practiced extensively in Southeast East Asia, and perhaps including the Philippines, before the coming of European colonizers. In Tantric belief achieving the highest transcendental ecstasy involves the methodical use of the sexual union.

Hindu Tantrism declares that the nondual absolute reality has two aspects: Shiva (male) is pure consciousness and transcendent passivity, while Shakti (female) is energy and mental activity. The psychosexual ritual of the Tantra can be realized metaphysically within the yogi's own body, or physically between a yogi and a female partner.

In Buddhist Tantrism, the female is the passive one, the male the active force. The Buddhist Tantric female represents wisdom. The yogi practitioner seeks to unite the male and female aspects through psychosexual rites at the psychic centre in the genital region. This produces the seed of enlightenment called bodhicitta, that will eventually bring in transcendental ecstasy and the realization of the non duality of

absolute reality.

Tantrism is Southeast Asia has been recorded by a Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, I-Tsing, in 671 A.D., specifically in the Srivijaya Empire.

A controversial pre-European era Indonesian king, Kertanagara, introduced the religion based on Tantric Shiva-Buddha mixture. He was reported to have been busy in a ritual ceremony when he was assassinated. Kertanagara was supposed to gain magical power to fight threats from within his kingdom and against the Mongol invasion.

His heir, Prince Vijaya, eventually drove the Mongols out, and founded the Majapahit Empire in 1293 A.D.

The Philippines is believed to have been part of the trading outposts of Sri Vijaya and Majapahit empires, and may have been influenced by Tantric practices prevalent during that time.

An observation by Antonio Pigafetta written in the 1500's tells of Cebuanos having their "penis pierced from one side to the other near the head, with

gold or tin bolt as large as a goose quill. In both ends of the same bolt, some have what resembles a spur, with points upon the ends; others are like the head of a cart nail...In the middle of the bolt is a hole, through which they urinate". Pigafetta was told that native women "wished" it so, and sexual union was refused by the women with men without the genital paraphernalia.

Women's rights were gradually written off with the coming of the Spaniards. The Babaylans and the Catalanans were demonized and condemned. In the 300 year-Spanish colonialistic rule of the Philippines, native women lost their ancient social and religious supremacy to be replaced by Spanish clerics with absolute power in religion and domestic affairs.

Clerics possessing power far beyond their ecclesiastical duties, which ultimately corrupted them and catalyzed Jose Rizal to write a novel of revelation on colonial priestly rapacities. The revelation became the battle cry of a revolution. (Peter Jaynul V. Ueckung (Sept 2012))



Photo of The Golden Tara of Agusan by Opacity Flickr / Travelbook.ph

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
FOURTH JUDICIAL REGION
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF COURT
TRECE MARTIRES CITY

BDO UNIBANK, INC.,
Mortgagee,

FORECLOSURE CASE NO. F-051-20

-versus-

SPOUSES SUKARNO KAMSA LAUBAN AND
LAILA ANSAL SAMAD, AS REPRESENTED BY
THEIR ATTORNEY-IN-FACT, NARCISA UDTEG
MANSOL
Mortgagors

X-----

NOTICE OF EXTRA-JUDICIAL SALE

Upon Extra-Judicial Petition for Sale under Act 3135, as amended by Act 4118, filed by Mortgagee, BDO UNIBANK, INC., with business address at BDO Corporate Center, 7899 Makati Avenue, Makati City, against the Mortgagors, SPS. SUKARNO KAMSA LAUBAN AND LAILA ANSAL SAMAD, AS REPRESENTED BY THEIR ATTORNEY-IN-FACT, NARCISA UDTEG MANSOL with residence and postal address at RH 10 Malagapas, Cotabato City, and Block 1, Lot 66, Somerset 10, Barangay Navarro, Gen Trias, Cavite 4107, to satisfy the mortgage indebtedness which as of 03 February 2020, amounts to TWO MILLION FIVE HUNDRED EIGHTY THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED ELEVEN PESOS AND 08/100 (Php2,580,211.08), Philippine Currency, including interest, penalties and other charges as of said date but exclusive of all other expenses incidental to this foreclosure and sale, the undersigned Sheriff will set at public auction on February 25, 2021 at 10:00 o'clock in the morning at the main entrance of the Government Center Building located at the Provincial Capitol Compound, Trece Martires City, to the highest bidder for CASH and in Philippine Currency the following described property with all the improvements thereon, to wit:

TRANSFER CERTIFICATE OF TITLE NO. 057-2018014334

LOT NO. 66 BLOCK: 1 PLAN NO. : PCS-04-028446
PORTION OF : LOT 1730-A & 1730-B, (LRA) PSD-366255,
LOT 1731-C, FLS-1320-D-LOT 3505 (FRS-04-005748), LOT
2449 (FRS-04-005172) LOT 2451-B, FLS-1162-D-LOT 3429
(FRS-04-005362) & LOT 3504 FLS-1320-D (FRS-04-005160)
ALL OF SAN FRANCISCO DE MALABON ESTATE,
DECREED NO. 4270, LRC REC. NO.5934
LOCATION: BARANGAY OF NAVARRO, MUNICIPALITY
OF GEN TRIAS, PROVINCE CAVITE, ISLAND OF LUZON
BOUNDRIES:
LINE DIRECTION ADJOINING LOT(S)
1-2 NE ROAD LOT 8, PCS-04-028446
2-3 SE LOT 67, BLOCK 1, PCS-04-028446
3-4 SW LOT 102, BLOCK 1, PCS-04-028446
4-1 NW LOT 65, BLOCK 1, PCS-04-028446
AREA: ONE HUNDRED SQUARE METERS(100). MORE
OR LESS xxx

All sealed bids must be submitted to the undersigned on the above-stated time and date.

In the event the public auction should not take place on the said date and time, it shall be held on March 04, 2021 without further notice.

Prospective bidders/buyers are hereby enjoined to investigate for themselves the title to the said property and encumbrances thereon, if any there be.

TreceMartires City, December 15, 2020

REYNALDO L. SALOMA
Sheriff IV RTC-Branch 131

Copy Furnished:

BDO UNIBANK, INC.,
RISK MANAGEMENT GROUP-REMEDIAL
MANAGEMENT UNIT
11th Floor, BDO South Tower, BDO Corporate Tower
7899 Makati Avenue, Makati City 0726

SPS. SUKARNO KAMSA LAUBAN AND LAILA ANSAL
SAMAD
NARCISA UDTEG MANSOL
RH 10 Malagapas, Cotabato City
Block 1, Lot 66, Somerset 10, Barangay Navarro, Gen Trias,
Cavite 4107

WARNING: It is absolutely prohibited to remove, deface or destroy this Notice of Extra Judicial Sale on or before the date of sale

Publication: Ang Cavitenewsweekly
Dates: December 21, 28, 2020 and January 04, 2021

DND: Makabayan solon's baseless tirades vs. RTC judge confirms members are CPP-NPA fronts

QUEZON CITY -- Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana on Friday said the Makabayan bloc's baseless accusations hurled against Quezon City Regional Trial Court (RTC) Judge Cecilyn Burgos-Villavert only confirmed their connections with the communist insurgents.

"With this act, the Makabayan bloc is not only impugning the character and integrity of Judge Villavert but the nation's entire justice system, as well," Lorenzana said in a statement sent to the PIA-NCR.

"More importantly, the Makabayan bloc has confirmed what we have been saying all along that their members are fronts of the CPP-NPA [Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army]," he added.

With the statement, the Department of National Defense has joined others to support Villavert in the face of the Makabayan bloc's "baseless accusations" that she had issued irregular warrants against activists and progressive groups.

"We firmly believe that a judge of the Honorable Villavert's caliber does not issue warrants without probable cause," Lorenzana emphasized.

Office of the Solicitor General

Earlier, State Solicitor Gabriel S. Villanueva, Office of the Solicitor General's spokesperson for the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF ELCAC), said the resolution filed by members of the Makabayan bloc urging the House Justice Committee to conduct an investigation on the warrants issued by Villavert against militants, does not fall under the power of inquiry of the legislative branch.

"The Legislative branch of government, much more any of its members, should not cross over the field of the determination of probable cause by the judge in the issuance of search warrants since, as earlier stated, the same is properly the domain of the Judiciary," Villanueva said.

The government lawyer was reacting to Bayan party-list representatives who have reportedly been on a media blitz trying to discredit the judge who issued search warrants that resulted in the arrest of trade union organizers and a journalist last week.

The Makabayan bloc, on Dec. 15, filed House Resolution 1427 urging the House Justice Committee to conduct an investigation, in aid of legislation.

The resolution said it was Villavert who authorized the conduct of raids in various offices of some militant groups in Tondo and Paco, Manila and in Bacolod last year.

It also pointed to Villavert as the one who issued "questionable" search warrants that led to the Dec. 10 arrest of Manila Today journalist Lady Ann Salem, and union organizers of labor group Defend Jobs Philippines namely Dennise Velasco, Mark Ryan Cruz, Romina Astudillo, Jaymie Gregorio, Joel Demate, and Rodrigo Esparago.

The seven suspects, who are reportedly officials of the Metro Manila Regional Party Committee (MMRPC) of the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front (CPP-NPA-NDF), were arrested in simultaneous operations in Manila, Quezon City, and Mandaluyong.

Separation of powers

"House Resolution 1427 is a clear violation of the constitutional guarantee of separation of powers between and among co-equal branches of the government. In this case, between the legislative branch and the judicial branch of the government," the statement added.

The determination of probable cause in the issuance of the search warrant, Villanueva said, is indisputably a function both constitutionally assigned and properly entrusted to the Judicial branch of government.

"What the Constitution underscores is the exclusive and personal responsibility of the issuing judge to satisfy himself of the existence of probable cause," he added.

The contents of the House Resolution, he said, embody accusations that the issuance of the search warrants was founded on fabricated facts.

"Clearly the resolution was drafted not in aid of legislation, as Makabayan bloc claims, rather, to accuse and impose judgment to the judge who issued the warrants," he said. "There is no re-examination of the law to speak of, as the mandate for the determination of probable cause in the issuance of search warrants is given by the Constitution itself.

Villanueva went on to say that the personal determination of the judge as to the existence of a probable cause is within the realm of its wisdom and it cannot be questioned by anybody unless there is grave abuse of discretion.

"The determination of grave abuse of discretion is also a matter lodged before the judiciary and not the legislative," he added.

Accusations against Villavert, he said, amount to nothing more than an attempt to undermine her position as an impartial judge.

Lack of respect for rule of law

"This betrays their lack of respect for the rule of law. There are judicial processes by which they could have challenged the judge's actions. If they have failed or have been remiss in their efforts to do so, it serves no one to attack a judge's credibility and impartiality," he said.

He added that a judge is under no obligation to lean to one side simply on the strength of their belief in their cause. "The rule of law is paramount, regardless of where the chips may fall. We must not erode the public's trust in the judicial system, simply because we find a judge's ruling landing on the other side of the political divide," Villanueva said. "Let justice prevail."

Meanwhile, the Sentrong Alyansa ng mga Mamamayan para sa Bayan or SAMBAYANAN expressed disgust with what the group branded as "all forms of deception and lies" reportedly committed by Makabayan solons and other alleged legal front organizations of the CPP-NPA.

"They have made their usual covers and make-up stories of arrested CPP cadres claiming anew that they are just activists and union workers' organizers. This has become a deceptive script of denial of the Makabayan Bloc," lamented Joy James Saguino, Sambayanan media officer.

"It can be remembered that the arrest of Amanda Echanis aka Ka Waya, a top cadre of the NPA's West Cagayan Front, has also been condemned by Makabayan Bloc claiming that the NPA leader Echanis is just an Anakpawis organizer in Cagayan Valley," Saguino said.

"The apprehension of Geliejorain Ngojo aka Ka Mayo and Nasria Bansil aka Ka Ash after an armed skirmish between the 27IB and Guerrilla Front 55 at Paquibato District, Davao City was also condemned by the same communist fronts claiming that the two are just volunteer teachers of Mindanao Interfaith Services Foundation Inc (MISFI). Rey Christian Sabado aka Ka Nads, another former rebel, was also arrested on October 2, 2019 in Las Navas, Northern Samar," he added.

"It can be remembered that Kabataan Partylist also claimed that Sabado was just a researcher of Northern Samar Small Farmers' Association. However, the statements of Kabataan Partylist were debunked by Sabado himself after admitting that he was indeed a cadre of NPA Guerrilla Front 2 of Eastern Visayas Regional Party Committee (EVRPC)," he furthered.

Sambayanan, as a multi-sectoral organization primarily composed of former cadres and members of the CPP-NPA-NDF, its former underground mass organizations and other organizations, which reject and condemn violence, terrorism and armed struggle, has categorically revealed the "duplicious character" of Makabayan Bloc as a front organization of the CPP deceitfully participating in the Philippine electoral system.

"The Filipino people are already cognizant of this grand conspiracy of the CPP and its legal front organizations," Saguino emphasized.

"Sambayanan believes that the arrest of these CPP cadres followed judicial process and we have high recognition of the Judiciary's professionalism and expertise in the issuance of the arrest and search warrants. It is of great insolence for the Makabayan Bloc to attack the credibility of the Judiciary and to question the determination of probable cause which led to the issuance of warrants by Quezon City Regional Trial Court (RTC) Judge Cecilyn Burgos-Villavert," he added.

"This is an orchestra anew of the Makabayan Bloc to circumvent the law and divert from the matters involving the true identity of the apprehended CPP-NPA cadres. Through its underground organization of lawyers, the Lupon ng mga Manananggol para sa Bayan (LUMABAN), the program of the CPP is always to undermine the judicial process of the government," he added.

"In this light, Sambayanan supports the continuing efforts of the Philippine Government in ending communist insurgency. We commend Judge Villavert on her will to stand with the rule of law against the lawless CPP-NPA. The recent arrest of top CPP-NPA cadres all over the country manifests the victory of the Filipino people. They have already rejected the communist program of the CPP-NPA. The whole-of-nation approach has been highly-significant and decisive in attaining peace and progress to communist-threatened communities. It has created stronger unities and convergence amongst all stakeholders towards our goal for a peaceful and progressive Philippines," he further said.

Yes for Peace

Even peace advocate and Yes for Peace-Bayanihan ng Bayan organizer Ernesto Alcanzare questioned Makabayan bloc's intent.

"I am just wondering since when did members of the legislative branch of government have the power to investigate members of the judiciary?" Alcanzare pondered.

"Will it not open the floodgates of legislative meddling on the administration of justice and therefore drain scarce government resources that should be used solely on coming up with legislation for the benefit of the people?"

To date, more than 15 million Filipinos have responded to the Yes for Peace campaign making it a cost-effective instrument that could unite the Filipino people against all forms of armed conflict. (PIA NCR)

Word Search Puzzle

Sewing

Find and circle all of the Sewing words that are hidden in the grid.
The remaining letters spell an old saying.

A R E P P I Z T G R O M M E T S S
 S H E A R S A R E K A M S S E R D
 T T F I T I T A P E M E A S U R E
 I S S A L G G N I Y F I N G A M C
 T H P O B S I G C L O T H N P R S
 C R R I K R N T S E S L A C E I E
 H M E O N I I R R E P O I P N B A
 Y E O T D C O C A H I O A S C B M
 R H L N T S U M E W R P G E I O S
 E S E A S U R S T G G S N L L N T
 D M N I S I C H H N M S I D P B R
 I A C O P T I Y I I H P T E A O E
 O S E P T M I C R C O A L E T B S
 R L E R B T A C T A E N I N T B S
 B R W L H R U A S R T S U A E I V
 M E E A T T P B S T N O Q I R N N
 E Y E S G N I N R A D E R S N I P

- AWL
- BOBBIN
- BUTTONS
- CLOTH
- DARNING
- DRESSMAKER
- ELASTIC
- EMBROIDERY
- EYES
- FABRIC
- GROMMETS
- HEM
- HOOKS
- LACE
- MAGNIFYING
- GLASS
- MENDING
- NEEDLES
- PATCH
- PATTERN
- PENCIL
- PINCUSHION
- PINS
- QUILTING
- RIBBON
- RIPS
- ROTARY CUTTER
- SCISSORS
- SEAM RIPPER
- SEAMSTRESS
- SHEARS
- SNAPS
- SPOOL
- STITCH
- TAILOR
- TAPE MEASURE
- TEARS
- THIMBLE
- THREAD
- TRACING PAPER
- TRACING WHEEL
- ZIPPER

Sagot sa nakaraan

A R E K O J E H T R I C H G I R L T H
 L M B V I E A V R E Y H Y W A D Y E T L N
 Y L A O I N B S O S O A O A A N E K W I
 A O B C G L A R A X T U N U I B C R D M A
 L S B T A E A W O E A C R K N O I D R A E
 B U E W R R R N R W I N L S R O B O I E R E
 M P O G O A T L I N M A N E O C C O B E R D
 A E N C C O H G T S L E F N R L B E S
 G R O R N O E Q U E A I U K I U G B E S
 G S T H R I U N V R D T I G L S F D R E V
 I T R I A E V I O O P Z S O A I F A F V
 E I A A E D J O C T U A W N C R U B S O
 M T G N R D R O L M S D R T L D T O E M
 A I E N F H R E P S O E A K E U T S O Y T H
 Y O D O E C E O A W U N N L T K T Y E H G
 O N Y N L L P E N M O N E I O E O S D G I
 C R A C K L I N R O S T E Y H L H S A I S N
 A K I S L A N D G I R L T V R R I I S I N
 F A M E S S A L G F O T R A E H O M E E

Sudoku

		5				9		
7					6			
		9	1				5	2
	3			1	5			
4								1
			8	2			7	
6	7				8	3		
			3					4
		2				5		

4	9	6	2	7	5	3	1	8
7	2	3	8	1	6	9	5	4
8	5	1	3	4	9	2	7	6
1	6	5	9	3	4	7	8	2
2	3	4	7	8	1	5	6	9
9	7	8	5	6	2	1	4	3
5	4	9	1	2	8	6	3	7
3	8	2	6	5	7	4	9	1
6	1	7	4	9	3	8	2	5

Sudoku hint

		10	11		12	4	1	5
39	40	41	42	32			33	
53	43	54	55		56	21	34	
2		13		22	14		23	15
6	7		57	24	44		35	25
3	8		26	9		16		17
	45	46	47		48	49	36	27
	37			28	38	29	30	18
50	51	19	31		20	52		

Fill in the blank squares so that each row, each column and each 3-by-3 block contain all of the digits 1 thru 9.
 If you use logic you can solve the puzzle without guesswork.
 Need a little help? The hints page shows a logical order to solve the puzzle. Use it to identify the next square you should solve. Or use the answers pag if you really get stuck.

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34K CALABARZON farmers benefit from DA's seeds, fertilizers support

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna --About 34,000 farmers in the provinces of Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon (CALABARZON) had been the beneficiaries of the quality seeds and fertilizers distributed by the Department of Agriculture (DA) Region IV-CALABARZON in line with the implementation of the Rice Resiliency Project (RRP) under the Plant, Plant, Plant Program.

Empowered by the goal of achieving higher rice productivity this wet-cropping season, the DA Region IV-CALABARZON has successfully delivered and distributed the quality seeds

and fertilizers to rice farmers across the region.

According to a terminal report on November 13, 2020, DA's RRP has catered for 10,222 hectares benefiting 8,736 rice farmers in the region. Through RRP, the regional office has distributed 80,995 bags of fertilizers to 24,109 farmer-recipient in CALABARZON.

For the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF)-Seed Program, 27,426 hectares of rice areas by 25,518 farmer-recipient was planted with RCEF seeds. Aside from seeds, 15,478 rice farmers received 45,420 bags

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Photo courtesy of PIA CALABARZON

DA assures Metro Manila pork, chicken supply, enough until March 2021

By Ma. Elaine P. Allanigue

QUEZON CITY--The Department of Agriculture (DA) assures the consuming public that pork and poultry products are sufficient to tide us over until yearend and onto the first quarter of 2021.

In a report to Agriculture Secretary William Dar, the DA's National Livestock Program (NLP) said more than 213,500 hogs from Visayas and Mindanao were shipped to Metro Manila and nearby provinces since May 2020 to augment the supply of pork and pork products.

"We sincerely thank our hog raisers and their respective local government officials in the Visayas and Mindanao for promptly heeding our call to transport their hogs to Metro Manila and thus ensure the supply of pork this holiday season and onto January 2021 and beyond," Dar said.

DA-NLP Head and Undersecretary for Livestock William Medrano said the bulk of the hogs comes from Region 12 or Soccsksargen, which has sent more than 88,800 head and counting since May, comprising 42 percent (%) of the total shipment, followed by Region 6 or Western Visayas, sending 52,700 head or 25%.

With the imposition of quarantine and lockdown due to Covid-19 and incidence of African Swine Fever (ASF) in Luzon, Secretary Dar has directed the respective DA regional directors in Visayas and Mindanao to coordinate with swine raisers so they can facilitate the transport of their hogs to Metro Manila and ease up the tightening supply and prices of pork.

"Due to the ASF, the country's pork inventory suffered at an alarming level, and the move to ship hogs from Visayas and Mindanao was a pre-emptive measure to arrest the worsening pork supply and prices in Metro Manila," Dar said.

"On behalf of the DA family, I would like to express our sincerest gratitude to our local chief executives for their proactive role in the unhampered transport of various food items from their respective provinces to Metro Manila, and for the hog raisers' groups for partnering and cooperating with the DA during these trying times. The fruition of our partnership is adequate and reasonably-priced food on our table," he added.

Additional supply of pork during the holidays and onto next year is expected as hog producers in General Santos City gear up to increase shipments to Metro Manila and other major

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Sen. Go reconfirms gov't continues to explore several COVID-19 vaccine options

QUEZON CITY -- In a radio interview on Saturday, December 26, Senator Christopher "Bong" Go said that the government is exploring all possible sources of vaccines available to immunize Filipinos against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

Go said that National Task Force Against COVID-19 chief implementer Carlito Galvez, Jr. has been assigned by

President Rodrigo Duterte to lead and secure the procurement of the vaccines for the Philippines.

"As of now, marami na pong ine-explore ang ating gobyerno. Si Sec. Galvez po ang inatasan ng Pangulo to check everything sa vaccine na bibilhin," Go said in the interview.

He added that various groups from the private sector had expressed willingness to aid

in the process of procuring the vaccines.

"Marami namang private sectors ang willing tumulong. Ang iba ay nagpirmahan na, tripartite agreement. Alam ko po marami na rin gustong tumulong para sa empleyado nila," the Senator added.

As the chair of the Senate Committee on Health, Go also

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Senator Bong Go said that the government is exploring all possible sources of vaccines available to immunize Filipinos against the COVID-19. Photo by OSBG.