

HONG KONG NEWS

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OFWs to gain from welfare programs



GOOD times ahead! The year 2017 is turning out to be a good year for OFWs as they are set to gain more from the favorable exchange rate, and various investment options. The PCG is also set to push more projects for the welfare and well-being of the OFWs here in Hong Kong. (File photo)

By Maia Lopez

THE year 2017 is shaping up to be a good year especially for overseas Filipino workers. With the recent weakening of

the Philippine peso, allowing OFWs to use their money.

Here in Hong Kong, Philippine officials will continue to seek measures to protect the welfare of the 200,000 Filipinos living and working in the city, most of whom are

domestic workers.

Peso to hit P50-P52 to a dollar

The Philippine peso, which was South

Turn to page 11



A 45-year-old former domestic helper is sentenced to five years in jail time after pleading guilty to trafficking shabu.

Page 12-13



Be mesmerized by the many attractions of Yogyakarta, the other face of Indonesia that is not Bali.

Page 20



Camille Prats takes another chance at love by marrying John Yambao.

Kata Selfie LTE

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Lawyer of grandma in bank fraud case says:

'P2.5 billion check a donation'

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE lawyer of the 75-year-old Filipina tourist who was arrested for allegedly trying to encash a fake P2.5 billion check in Central last month said that the check was a "donation" from another Filipina.

The lawyer told the High Court during a hearing that the check was a donation from a certain Cynthia De Guzman to the defendant's charity—the Friends of Mama Mary 2000 charity foundation.

He added that the defendant—with initials M.I.G.—and her accountant went to the Hang Seng Bank headquarters only to "verify" if the check and its two accompanying letters were legitimate.

"Since (the year) 2000, the charity has been helping poor people in the Philippines, those who have no home, or no education. This was a donation given by a certain Cynthia De Guzman," the lawyer



High Court

told the tribunal during a bail hearing on December 29.

"It's a donation as far as the defendant understands," he added.

But although the Filipina offered to post a \$350,000 bail bond, the High Court rejected her bail petition.

The defendant was arrested on December 9 at the headquarters of Hang Seng Bank along Des Voeux Road in Central after she allegedly tried to encash a fake check worth US\$50 million (around HK\$388 million or P2.5 billion).

She was accompanied by an accountant, a Hong Kong local, who was also arrested but was later released on bail.

According to her lawyer, the defendant and her accountant did not know if the check was a fake and so they went to the bank to look for the signatories of the two letters, which purportedly bore the signatures of Hang Seng Bank Chief Executive Rose Lee Wai Mun and Chief Operating Officer Eunice Chan.

"They were waiting for the two signatories but the police arrived instead," the lawyer said.

He also said that the elderly Filipina could not have successfully encashed the check in Hong Kong because it was "payable in Hang Seng Taiwan."

"It's impossible. It would not have been

a successful fraud. It would have been a 100 percent failure attempt to do any misrepresentation," the lawyer said.

He said that the prosecution would also have a hard time proving that the Filipina knew that the check was false.

"She has a good chance of acquittal," the lawyer said, adding that the professional accountant who accompanied the defendant also did not know if the check was genuine or not.

But according to the prosecution, the defendant went to the bank and wanted to "open a bank account to have the check honored."

The prosecutor in the case said the accountant in the case asked bank officials if the check was genuine and "may be honored."

The accountant told investigators that he had known the Filipina for 12 years and had helped her set up numerous companies in Hong Kong and other countries.

The accountant claimed that the defendant asked him to accompany her to the bank to find out if the check was genuine and that he was paid \$2,000 for his help.

The prosecutor said that investigators suspect that this might have been part of a money laundering scheme.

The High Court judge denied the Filipina's bail petition and told her she could again ask for bail once the police finished their investigation.

The Filipina was charged earlier with "using a false instrument" at the Eastern Magistrates Courts in Sai Wan Ho. The offense carries a penalty of up to 14 years of imprisonment. Her previous bid for bail was also denied by the court.

300 Filipino nurses training for Germany

By Peter Castillo

ELEVEN more Filipina nurses passed the recognition examination under the Triple Win Project as Qualified Nurses (Gesundheits-und Krankenpflgerin) in Frankfurt, Germany, according to Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III.

Bello said the nurses are now qualified to work in Germany, thus bringing the total number of Filipina nurses who passed the Recognition Examination under the Triple Win Project to 66.

The 11 Filipino nurses who passed the Recognition Examination were: Homer Aliling, Jane Anonuevo, April Diaz, Lizette Gutiza, Krischelle Fenequito, Elizabeth Salomon, Virtue Solis, Reza Canoy, Jo-Ann Zapparilla, Joey Maniaol, and Georgina Musa.

As of September 2016, there were 170 Filipino nurses deployed under the Triple Win Project. Some 300 nurses are either undergoing language training or awaiting training schedule.

The Triple Win Project started in March 2013 after Germany's Federal Employment Agency (BA) and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) signed a bilateral agreement.

Under the agreement, the BA's International Placement Services (ZAV) recruits hospital employers willing to support Filipino candidates, while the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) prepares the nurses to be deployed and provides integration services and monitoring of candidates onsite.

The POEA, on the other hand, recruits and deploys qualified nurses whose immediate goal is to fulfill their requirements for recognition and German language proficiency level.

Labor Undersecretary Dominador Say earlier said that Filipino nurses are welcome to fill the need of Germany and Russia for 22,000 nurses. He added that the monthly salary will be at least P150,000.



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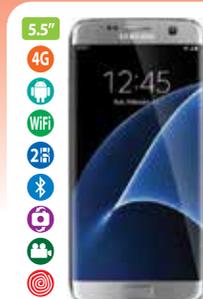
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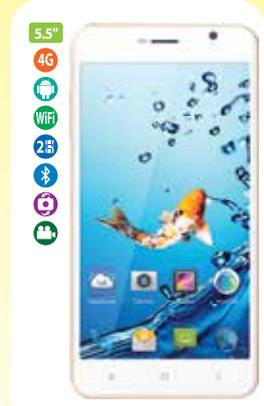
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0% Interest

Labour shuts down agency

By Peter Castillo

THE Labour Department (LD) has closed down an employment agency which was accused by nearly 100 Filipino domestic workers of overcharging.

In a statement, the LD said on Dec. 29 that it revoked the license of Ka Ying Employment Agency in Cheung Sha Wan. Its licensee was convicted of overcharging a Filipina job-seeker in January last year.

“Operators of employment agencies (EAs) are reminded to conduct their business in compliance with the law, or they may be subject to prosecution and risk having their licences revoked or not renewed,” an LD spokesman said.

He said the licensee had appealed to the Administrative Appeals Board (AAB) but the appeal was dismissed.

“Under the Employment Ordinance, the Commissioner for Labour may refuse to issue or renew or may revoke a licence of an EA if the person operating or intending to operate an EA has contravened any provision of Part XII of the said Ordinance such as overcharging job-seekers, or if he is considered not a fit and proper person to



Labour Department

operate an EA,” the spokesman said.

On January 20 last year, the Kowloon City Magistrates’ Courts convicted the licensee of Ka Ying and ordered it to pay a fine of \$7,000.

The court also ordered Ka Ying to refund \$2,089 to the Filipina job-seeker for the excessive placement fee it collected.

“Unang hearing namin ito pero nagplead guilty na sila,” the Filipino worker told Hong Kong News outside the court-

room.

She was waiting to testify against Ka Ying when the prosecutor came out and told her about the agency’s guilty plea.

Besides the worker, 77 other Filipino women have accused Ka Ying of overcharging.

Hong Kong law allows employment agencies (EAs) to collect a prescribed commission from job-seekers but this amount should not exceed 10 per cent of

their first month salary.

The Filipino woman filed the complaint against Ka Ying at the Employment Agencies Administration (EAA) in March 2015 for overcharging.

The EAA conducted an investigation and found sufficient evidence showing that Ka Ying collected an excessive placement fee from the Filipino domestic helper.

With the FDH willing to act as a prosecution witness, the LD decided to pursue the case against Ka Ying.

“We are glad that the FDH concerned was willing to come forward to report her case to the EAA and act as prosecution witnesses,” an LD spokesman said.

“LD will not tolerate any EAs overcharging job-seekers and will act promptly upon receipt of any complaints,” he added.

The spokesman also said that the Commissioner for Labour will consider revoking, or refusing to renew, an EA’s licence upon its conviction.

“Job-seekers who suspect that they have been overcharged by EAs should report their case to the EAA as soon as possible and act as prosecution witness,” he added.

The Philippine Overseas Labor Office

(POLO) had also forwarded to the LD the complaints of 77 Filipino domestic workers who accused Ka Ying of overcharging.

The complainants had written Consul General Bernardita Catalla to complain against Ka Ying. Of the 77 complainants, 35 executed sworn affidavits detailing their allegations against the agency.

The POLO forwarded the case to the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) so that Ka Ying’s partner agency in the Philippines could be investigated.

The 76 workers accused Mariz Manpower Services, Ka Ying’s partner agency in the Philippines, of demanding P23,000 from helpers before their visa’s are approved. Job-seekers were also allegedly made to pay P15,000 for their medical check-up and P9,000 for training fees.

The workers said they were also made to sign a piece of paper saying they “did not pay any single money” to Mariz for the processing of their documents.

In their letter to Catalla on January 11 last year, the workers said Ka Ying’s owner collected 7,500 from applicants but were not issued a receipt.

Nakatulong ang lotion sa Pinay na kasali sa contest upang gumanda

FEEL ni Mary Gay Mangaring ng Kowloon ang pumayat, kahit nga raw alam niyang sakripisyo to death ang daranasin niya. Marami na siyang nagamit na produkto with different function na nabili niya separately. Sa laki raw ng nagastos niya just to improve herself, never daw siyang na-satisfied sa naging resulta nito. Nakumbinse lang daw siyang gumamit ng Dream Love 1000 5 in 1 lotion nang mabasa niya sa pahayagan ang real-life experiences ng mga Pinay na gumagamit nito.

Nadiskubre niya na pati pala mga kaibigan niya ay nakaranas din ng napakagandang pagbabago dahil lang sa paggamit nito. Nakabili si Mary ng ilang tubes mula sa Victory Supermarket sa World Wide Plaza. Naisip niya na very reasonable ang presyong HK\$98 lamang dahil sa 5 different functions nito. After 7 weeks

of constant use, nakita ni Mary at mga kaibigan niya ang kahanga-hangang pagbabagong idinulot ng lotion kay kanya. Naging gorgeous at slim siya ngayong tingnan. Ang 32 inches waistline niya ay naging 29 inches na lang. Dahil naging naturally white ang kutis niya sa tulong ng UV-whitening effects ng lotion, nabawasan pati ang pimples, dark spots at fine lines niya sa mukha. Nagmukha pa siyang 7-8 years younger dahil sa kalakip nitong anti-aging ingredient. Habang tumatanda tayo, extra weight can accumulate in areas under chin, cheeks, neck even body. Kaya nga feel natin ang tanda nating tingnan. Pero ayon kay Mary, ang Dream Love 1000 raw ang nakapagbigay sa kanya ng sense of confidence.



Before After

Mary Gay B. Mangaring

(Article provided by: LT)

POEA warns vs. fake Canada jobs

By Peter Castillo

THE Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) has reiterated its warning against fake job offers proliferating through email and social media.

In a statement, the POEA on January 6 said it recently received a forwarded email informing a recipient that he was selected for a supposed employment in Canada with employer representatives already in the Philippines to interview applicants.

The sender promises non-payment of placement and processing fees, but applicants are asked to pay P3,800 for slot reservation.

The email sender claims existing partnership with a licensed recruitment agency in the Philippines for the supposed conduct of the seminar and processing of employment documents.

Various jobs are offered including farm laborers, fruit pickers, factory workers, medical staff, caregivers, engineers, truck drivers, and office workers.

The scammer entices applicants by offering too-good-to-be-true remunerations such as high salaries, 250 percent overtime pay, and paid vacation.

The applicants are instructed to send the reservation fee through a money remittance company.

After receiving the payment, however, the scammer stops communicating with the victims.

The POEA warned that falling for this scam would leave victims saddled in debts.



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Duterte OKs SSS pension hike

By Ally Constantino

PRESIDENT Duterte has approved a P1,000-pension increase for over two million pensioners of Social Security System, which will be funded through an increase in contributions.

The hike will be implemented as ear-

ly this month, and the remainder of the proposed P2,000-hike will be paid out by 2022 or earlier, said SSS Chairman Amado Valdez. The SSS, meanwhile, declared its support to Duterte's decision.

Duterte instructed the SSS to incorporate the proposal of the economic managers to ensure the sustainability

of the pension fund by implementing an additional 1.5-percent contribution rate and lifting the maximum monthly salary credit (MSC) to P20,000 from the current P16,000 by May 2017.

Duterte said that "SSS should be seen as long-term savings and not an expense," adding that actively-paying members en-

joy six types of benefits and loan privileges.

The President added that legal enforcement of the SS Law will be strengthened through issuance of Executive Orders to ensure social protection of workers.

"This shows that the President truly cares for our elderly who have been

waiting for the outcome of the proposed P2,000 increase. At the same time, his decision to implement the pension increase with a corresponding contribution hike and increasing the MSC limits supports the continuing reforms in SSS to consider the welfare of the greater population of over 30 million members," Valdez said.

Ex-FDH gets five years for 'shabu' trafficking

By Philip C. Tubeza

A 45-year-old former domestic worker was sentenced to five years in prison for trafficking methamphetamine hydrochloride (shabu) in Wan Chai.

High Court Judge Esther Toh sent defendant A. Gonzales to prison after she admitted to trafficking at least 25 grams of shabu. The police also confiscated from her tablets and three bottles that contained traces of other illegal drugs.

"The starting point is seven and a half years. Taking into account the guilty plea of the defendant, the sentence is reduced to five years imprisonment," Judge Toh said last month.

"She does not know what's going to happen (to her). This is going to be hanging over her like a black cloud while she is (in jail) in the next few years," Gonzales' lawyer told Judge Toh on December 6.

Gonzales was arrested on June 25, 2015 after the police received a tip that there was a Filipina involved in drug trafficking in a building in Wan Chai.

At around 10:05 a.m. that day, investigators at the North Point police station decided to conduct a surveillance operation.

Four hours later, Gonzales came out of the flat that the police were watching. She was carrying a recycled bag.

The police intercepted her and, when they checked the recycled bag, they found a re-sealable plastic bag with 25.7 grams of shabu and several tablets of another illegal drug.

They also found three bottles of a liquid that contained traces of methamphetamine



Shabu

inside the flat. The drugs confiscated from her had a street value of \$10,688, Judge Toh said.

Gonzales said a Chinese man gave the illegal drugs to her and she was going to meet him again in Causeway Bay.

Gonzales first arrived in Hong Kong in 1991 to work as a domestic helper but, after her last contract ended in 2001, she did not go home to the Philippines and overstayed here.

In 2007, she had an American boyfriend who was a drug user. He was the one who "encouraged her to take drugs," her lawyer said.

The lawyer also said that, when Gonzales became hooked on drugs in 2008, she stopped sending money to her son and daughter back in the Philippines.

However, her daughter, now 23, was present during the court hearing to show her support for her mother.

"There has been reconciliation and a period of forgiveness. It almost makes her feel worse because she stopped supporting her son and daughter," Gonzales' lawyer told the judge.

"She will have to work very hard after letting them down," he added.

House eyes bill to protect home buyers

By Ally Constantino

THE House committee on housing and urban development is set to pass various measures which provide further protection for buyers, including overseas Filipinos, of subdivision and condominium units.

Rep. Jose Christopher Belmonte (6th District, Quezon City), committee vice chairman, gave the assurance, saying their panel will vote on House Bill No. 1337, authored by Rep. Scott Davies Lanete, HB 3150 by Rep. Gary Alejano and HB 4534 by Rep. Victor Yap when session resumes this month.

Belmonte said Presidential Decree No. 957, otherwise known as "Regulating the Sale of Subdivision Lots and Condominiums, Providing Penalties for Violations Thereof" issued on July 12, 1976, is an antiquated Marcos order that needs updating and strengthening in order to guarantee further protection for property buyers.

"We must ensure the law that protects those that have the capacity to purchase subdivision or condominium units is made responsive to the needs of the times," he said.

Alejano said his bill seeks to amend certain provisions of P.D. 957.

Mga Dayuhang Kasambahay - Rekisito para sa paglilinis sa mga bintanang may pananggalang sa harap

Council ng Kaligtasan at Kalusugan sa Trabaho

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3. Simula sa Enero 1, 2017, kasama ng Pamantayang Kontrata sa Trabaho ng mga banyagang kasambahay ang isang bagong sugnay tungkol sa paglilinis ng mga bintana na nakaharap sa labas upang pangalagaan ang kaligtasan sa trabaho ng mga dayuhang kasambahay.
4. Iniaatas ng bagong sugnay na, kapag inuutusan ng mga taga-empleyo ang kasambahay na linisin ang labas ng anumang bintana na wala sa unang palapag o tabi ng balkonahe (kung saan makatwirang masasabing ligtas para sa kasambahay ang magtrabaho dito) o sa pinagsaluhang pasilyo, kailangang gawin ito sa ilalim ng mga sumusunod na kondisyon.
5. Una, ang nililinis na bintana ay nalagyan ng rehas na nakakandado o nakapirme sa paraang hindi mabubuksan ang rehas;
6. Mariing hinihikayat ang mga taga-empleyo na may mga dayuhang kasambahay sa ilalim ng mga kontratang pinirmahan noon o bago 2016 na sundin ang mga hinihinging nabanggit sa itaas upang matiyak ang kaligtasan ng mga dayuhang kasambahay sa trabaho.
7. Pangalawa, walang bahagi ng katawan ng mga dayuhang kasambahay ang ilalabas lampas ng pasamano ng bintana maliban sa mga braso.
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Domestic helpers urged to report racial discrimination

By Peter Castillo

THE government's Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) has reminded foreign domestic workers that they can file a complaint if they fall victim to racial discrimination.

In a statement, the EOC said the Hong Kong Government has fixed a minimum allowable wage for foreign domestic workers, and it is an offence for an employer to pay her/his domestic worker below the minimum wage.

"A foreign domestic worker can lodge a complaint to the Labour Department if she/he receives less than the statutory minimum wage," the EOC said.

It said Hong Kong's Race Discrimination Ordinance (RDO) also prohibits discrimination based on race, colour, and de-

scent, as well as national and ethnic origin.

"A person may claim discrimination under the RDO if she/he is treated less favorably because of her/his race. Therefore, an employer should not pay a worker of a particular race less than another worker of a different race," the EOC said.

It said other entitlements such as rest days, annual leave, and statutory holidays are also covered by the Employment Ordinance, which is applicable to all workers in Hong Kong, including foreign domestic workers.

"Therefore, it is unlawful for employers to grant different employment benefits to their workers based on the race," the EOC said.

It said the RDO also prohibits racial harassment or any unwelcome conduct towards another person on the ground of



Equal Opportunities Commission

his or her race.

There are two types of racial harassment: unwelcome conduct harassment and hostile environment harassment.

"The RDO prohibits an employer (and in a domestic worker's case, other household members) from engaging in unwelcome conduct on the ground of the employee's race," the EOC said.

It said examples of unwelcome conduct harassment include: oral or a written statement containing racially derogatory remarks or insults; or racial jokes, banter, ridicule or taunts.

It added that the RDO also prohibits an employer, alone or together with other persons, from engaging in conduct which may create an environment that intimidates employees including domestic workers "on the ground of her/his race."

"For instance, an employer allows other household members to put up a poster or newspaper clipping which contains derogatory remarks about the domestic worker's race," the EOC said.

"This could make the domestic worker feel offended or intimidated even though the employer or the household members did not intend to offend or intimidate their worker," it added.

The EOC said the RDO allows employers to select their domestic worker based on their race but it is unlawful for an employer to terminate her/his foreign domestic worker's contract based on the worker's race.

"If you have experienced discrimination or harassment, we suggest you to tell the discriminator/harasser to stop," the commission said.

"Speak to your employer if the discriminator or harasser is not your employer and always record the incidents and content of the conversations which took place regarding the discrimination and/or harassment," it added.

For more information on the EOC, the anti-discrimination laws, and how to lodge a complaint to the EOC in Tagalog, please visit: <http://www.eoc.org.hk/eoc/GraphicsFolder/tagalog.html>.

You can also contact the OEC thru its hotline (2511 8211) or email (eoc@eoc.org.hk) for assistance.

"We can also provide you with an interpreter upon request, subject to availability of the interpreter. The Equal Opportunities Commission is set up to protect you!" it added.

OFWs benefit from OSSCO

By Peter Castillo

NEARLY 220,000 overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) benefitted from the One-Stop Service Center for OFWs (OSSCO) that opened in Metro Manila and 15 provinces.

As of December 7, OSSCO has already served 219,697 clients, the bulk of which came from the branch at the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) main office in Mandaluyong City.

The branch at the main office served a total of 51,373 clients who availed of documentation of workers on leave or the Balik-Manggagawa and inquired about OFW concerns.

One-stop shop centers were also opened at the Manna Mall in San Fernando City, La Union; at the City Tourism Office in Tuguegarao City, Cagayan; the Baguio Convention Center in Baguio City; the Clark Freeport Zone, Pampanga; OWWA Regional Office 4A in Calamba City; Robinson's Place, Puerto Princesa City, Pacific Mall, Legaspi City; SM City, Cebu City; Robinson's Place, Iloilo City; Robinson's Place, Bacolod City; DOLE Regional Office No. 8, Tacloban City; Goodwill Center, Zamboanga City; OWWA Regional Office No. 10, Cagayan de Oro City; Butuan City Hall Complex, Butuan City; and New City Hall, Koronadal City.

Through the OSSCO, government frontline services are made accessible to Filipinos who are currently working or planning to work overseas. It operates from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Mondays to Fridays.

The OSSCO was launched on August 15, 2016 at the POEA main office in an effort to improve government services for OFWs.

Aside from shortening the time to process documents, the one-stop shop also aims to reduce the expenses of OFWs since the services of concerned government agencies can be availed in just one location.

The government agencies at the OSSCO are Department of Foreign Affairs, Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Professional Regulation Commission, Maritime Industry Authority, Home Development Mutual Fund, Philippine Health Insurance Corporation, Social Security System, Philippine Statistics Authority, Bureau of Immigration, and the National Bureau Investigation, among others.



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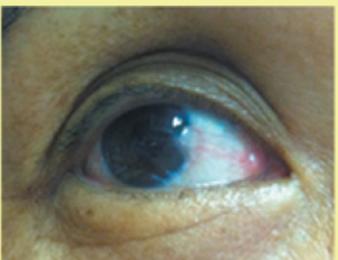


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PCG takes on 'passport for debt' scheme

By Cheryl M. Arcibal

THE Philippine Consulate General will crack down on the passport for money scheme whereby Filipinos here in Hong Kong pawn their passports so they could borrow money from creditors.

Vice Consul Alex Vallespin told Hong Kong News that they are set to file formal police and immigration complaints against those pawning their Philippine passports and those requiring passports as collateral.

He said this is the first time that the PCG would be taking such an action.

"Mayroon kaming tinututukan ngayon na ang tapang na nagsasabi na pinoproteksyunan daw namin ang mga nangungutang. Ang sa amin, pwede namang hindi passport ang kunin na collateral," Vallespin said.

He added that they have uncovered the scheme whereby a domestic worker would pawn their passport, and when they need to renew it, they will take it back temporarily, and once they have processed their new passport, they would inform the PCG that they have lost their old one, instead of having it cancelled.

"We have our sources. Alam namin na nakasanla ang passport pero ang ire-report



Philippine passport

sa amin nawala daw. Sino ang niloloko nila?" Vallespin added.

Danilo Baldon, an assistance to nationals officer at the PCG, said Filipino domestic helpers should not engage in lending activities as their visa specifically states that they should not engage in other work besides their employment contract.

Vallespin also revealed that they have learned about an employer who has been lending money to domestic workers and accepting their passports as collateral.

He said the activity was illegal as the employer is not paying tax for their in-

come out of it.

"Wala silang lisensya para gawin iyan at hindi din sila nagbabayad ng tax diyan," he said.

The employer, Vallespin added, started lending in February last year, and since then has been able to lend to some 800 domestic helpers here.

"Nagkaroon siguro ng bright idea mula sa domestic worker niya na nagsabing pautangin 'yung ibang domestic worker dito at gagawing collateral ang passport.

"Ang runner niya ang domestic worker niya. Ang kaso iyong domestic worker, may mga galamay pa, kaya dumami ng dumami," Vallespin said.

He said the scheme is "very lucrative". Even those acting as "runners" profit from the scheme.

"Mayroong mga runner na kapag kinontak, kukunin nila ang passport at isasanla ng \$3,000. Itong runner pupunta sa financier, isasanla ang passport ng \$5,000 at para sa kanya na iyong \$2,000.

"Minsan 'yung kontak sa financier, magpapatong pa ng \$1,000. So iyong umutang, nagugulat. Hindi na alam kung ano ang gagawin niya," said Baldon.

Vallespin said they discovered that "many cells" are using this modus to gain profits.

Two illegal workers in Fanling jailed

By Peter Castillo

THE Sha Tin Magistrates Courts sent two Bangladeshis to prison after they were caught working illegally in Fanling.

The tribunal on December 30 sentenced the two Bangladeshi asylum seekers to 22 months and two weeks' imprisonment after they were found guilty of taking illegal employment.

Immigration investigators got on the trail of the illegal workers after getting a tip from the Hong Kong Police. They found the two men, both aged 25, conveying goods in Fanling.

The two produced for inspection recognition forms issued by the Immigration Department, which prohibit them from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that they were non-refoulement claimants. A Hong Kong resident employer suspected of employing the two Bangladeshis was also arrested and the investigation is ongoing.

An Immigration spokesman warned that, under the Immigration Ordinance, illegal immigrants or people who are the subject of a removal order or a deportation order are prohibited from taking any employment, whether paid or unpaid, or establishing or joining in any business.

Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to

three years' imprisonment. The Court of Appeal has issued a guideline ruling that a sentence of 15 months' imprisonment should be applied in such cases.

The spokesman also reiterated that it is a serious offence to employ people who are not lawfully employable. The maximum penalty is imprisonment for three years and a fine of \$350,000.

The High Court has laid down sentencing guidelines that the employer of an illegal worker should be given an immediate custodial sentence.

According to the court, employers must take all practicable steps to determine whether a person is lawfully employable prior to employment.

Besides inspecting a prospective employee's identity card, the employer has the explicit duty to make enquiries regarding the person and ensure that the answers would not cast any reasonable doubt concerning the lawful employability of the person.

The court will not accept failure to do so as a defense in proceedings. It is also an offence if an employer fails to inspect the job seeker's valid travel document if the job seeker does not have a Hong Kong permanent identity card.

The maximum penalty for failing to inspect such a document is imprisonment for one year and a fine of \$150,000.

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OFWs...

From page 1

east Asia's worst-performing currency in 2016, appears to be in for another tough year with forecasters saying it could weaken by more than 4 percent.

Private financial institutions said the peso may weaken to a range of P50-P52 to a US dollar toward the end of the year, with the most pessimistic view seeing a scenario of worsening risk sentiment in case of a hardline trade stance between China and the United States.

The peso closed at P49.72 against the greenback at the end of last year. For the entire 2016, the peso depreciated by 5.35 percent from the year earlier.

Among the four institutions that provided the forecasts, Fitch-owned BMI Research placed the peso at its strongest position at P50:\$1 by end-2017.

But ING Bank Manila said it expects the peso to trade on the weak side for most of 2017, finishing the year at P52:\$1.

"A hardline trade stance between China and the US is not our base case. But if such a hardline stance develops, risk sentiment would worsen, leading to an even weaker Philippine peso. A more difficult local political environment would also lead to a significantly weaker Philippine peso," ING said.

"It's a challenging situation for the peso for the next couple of years," added ING's Joey Cuyegkeng.

The government has an exchange rate assumption of P48 to P50 per US dollar in 2017 to 2018.

"We are comfortable with P50:\$1 as an upper bound assumption for the exchange rate because we have a steady inflow of dollars. In the past, we had a crisis in our dollar reserves but that is no longer the case," Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno said.

Investment bank First Metro Investments Corp. (FMIC) sees the peso trading this year at P51 against the greenback, remaining under pressure amid a strengthening of the US currency.

FMIC's forecast is in line with that of global financial firm UBS, which said in an earlier report that the peso could fall to P51 to a US dollar on the back slower economic growth, deteriorating external position and a higher inflation rate.

PERA

Meanwhile, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has officially launched the Personal Equity Retirement Account or PERA, the country's first-ever voluntary retirement account with tax incentives, eight years after Republic Act 9505 or the PERA Act of 2008 was signed into law.

"Many Filipinos have not been accustomed to saving or investing. It's best to start saving early on, and the PERA law gives Filipinos an incentive to do so," said Senator Juan Edgardo Angara, who was then still a congressman when he authored the law. The counterpart measure was pushed in the Senate by his father, former Senator Edgardo Angara.

The PERA law aims to promote savings mobilization and capital market development to contribute to fiscal sustainability through the provision of long-term financ-

A national survey on financial inclusion conducted by the BSP showed that only 10.8 percent of Filipinos save for retirement or old age.

"We're happy that the BSP finally launched this investment tool that will help and encourage Filipinos save up for their sunset years or for emergency medical situations," Angara said.

The PERA law allows individuals to open up to five PERA accounts through accredited PERA administrators, which can be a bank or a financial company, and invest up to P100,000 annually.

Overseas Filipino workers can invest up to P200,000 annually.

Individuals who invest in PERA are entitled to a 5-percent income tax credit.

All income earned from PERA investment products—which include unit investment trust funds, share of stock of mutual funds, insurance pension products, government securities, and other financial products—upon reaching retirement or death are tax-exempt.

Payments will be made when the individual reaches the age of 55. This can be either in lump sum, a pension for a definite period, or lifetime pension.

Early withdrawals will be subject to a penalty, except in cases when the individual is totally disabled due to an accident or hospitalization.

OFW Bank

The Land Bank of the Philippines, on the other hand, will set up a lender partly-owned by overseas Filipino workers by September after it finishes its acquisition of Postal Bank.

Land Bank president Alex Buenaventura said the OFW Bank will have an authorized capital of P3 billion and a subscribed capital of P2 billion.

The bank will consult with the public on what services the OFW Bank should offer, he said.

While the OFW Bank is being established, Land Bank will set up a representative office in Saudi Arabia to serve some 800,000 Filipinos in one of the Philippines' largest overseas labor markets, Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez said.

**Vallespin**

Dominguez said Postal Bank is best positioned to cater to overseas Filipinos because of its ties with the postal service.

The thrift bank's total assets stood at P12.07 billion as of March 2016, according to central bank data.

In October, President Rodrigo Duterte said creating an OFW bank, one of his campaign promises, will help make life comfortable for overseas Filipinos workers.

Programs for Hong Kong OFWs

In Hong Kong, meanwhile, the Philippine Consulate General will continue to push for measures that will protect the welfare and well-being of Filipino workers here.

Vice Consul Alex Vallespin told Hong Kong News that they will bring to the Technical Working Group, a meeting among Philippine officials and Hong Kong's Labour and Immigration officials, the issues of food allowance and rest hours of Filipino domestic workers.

"We will have another TWG meeting this January and we will include the food allowance and the hours of rest of Filipino domestic helpers [in our agenda]," Vallespin said.

The PCG official earlier said that they

have sought the inclusion of food allowance to the minimum allowable wage (MAW).

"We cited the suitability and sufficiency of the food employers provide to Filipino domestic workers.

"We told them that Filipinos love to eat rice for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and we heard so many stories that the food the employers provide to their domestic workers were leftovers of their wards," Vallespin earlier said.

As for the bid of migrant domestic workers to have 11 hours of continuous rest, Vallespin said that as long as there is a valid clamor and mass support for the 11 hours of uninterrupted rest for domestic workers, they could take it up with the TWG.

On December 18, the International Migrants Day, a group of migrant workers turned over to the office of Hong Kong Chief Executive C.Y. Leung a petition asking for standardized working hours, particularly "11 hours of uninterrupted rest."

The petition, said Eman Villanueva, chair of Bayan Hong Kong and Macau, was signed by migrant workers from the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, and Nepal.

"We are asking the government to give us 11 hours of uninterrupted rest," Villanueva said in an interview.

"So instead of defining our working hours, we are asking that the government should just ensure that we have several hours of uninterrupted rest. This is more workable because we live with our employers," he added.

The PCG has also lined up "pro-active programs and projects" to help OFWs here be more prudent in handling their finances as well as take care of their health, Vallespin said.

"May mga kausap kami para sa financial, legal, and health concerns ng mga kababayan natin dito. Ang concern namin, iyong mga nagtatrabaho dito, uluwag silang malubog sa utang. Paulit-ulit naming sinasabi sa kanila iyon," he said.

With Cheryl M. Arcibal

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Yogyakarta, the oth

By Daryll Saclag

What comes to your mind when you think of Indonesia?

It would come as no surprise if you thought of Bali. You probably picture yourself lying on a beach, enjoying fresh coconut water, as the sun kisses your skin.

If you are bold and adventurous, you might see yourself on a surfboard, riding gigantic walls of water that could drag you into the abyss. Or if you are a party animal, you get thrilled by the vibrant nightlife in Bali that stretches until daybreak.

I have several friends who have traveled to Indonesia. When I ask them where they went, they all gave the same response: Bali.

As the world's largest archipelago with over 17,000 islands, I was curious whether there is anything else that this vast country can offer. This is not to say that Bali is not worthy of a visit but I was merely looking for an experience different from all the stories I have heard about traveling to Indonesia.

So I did my research and came across this quiet city called Yogyakarta (fondly referred to as Jogja by locals) which is some 547 kilometers away from the country's capital. I booked roundtrip tickets from Manila to Jakarta and from Jakarta to Yogyakarta. I am glad I did.

Imagine this: You are riding a motorcycle before the crack of dawn, with cool breeze blowing through your hair. A couple of hours later, you are atop an ancient Buddhist temple, watching the sun rise behind the mountains of Java. Darkness slowly surrenders to the light as the first rays of red, orange, and yellow make their way through the night sky. The early morning mist gently clears the fields, while birds create beautiful melodies in the background.

That's how I will always recall my recent trip to Yogyakarta. From stunning cultural sites, exciting outdoor activities, and to interesting places to go shopping, Yogyakarta has something for everyone.

The city is located in the Special Region of Yogyakarta and is home to around 400,000 Indonesians. A former colony of the Netherlands, Yogyakarta boasts lovely examples of Dutch colonial-style architecture, most of which are now being used as government offices.



Borobudur serves as a tourist attraction and as a pilgrimage site

Given its significant role in the country's war for independence, Yogyakarta was granted a special administrative status and is the only region that is ruled by a precolonial monarchy, the Sultan of Yogyakarta. The sultan's residence, known as

kraton, is located in the city and is often part of itineraries of visitors.

The main attractions of the city, however, are its two UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Borobudur and Prambanan. While the country is now predominantly Mus-

lim, proofs of its Buddhist and Hindu past still stand tall up to this day.

Borobudur is the world's largest Buddhist temple and was built in the ninth century, 300 years before the Angkor Wat in Cambodia was constructed. It has sur-



More than 500 statues of Buddha can be found on Borobudur.



Indonesia is a Muslim country, but traces of its Buddhist past can still be seen in Borobudur.



Yogyakarta is a smaller and busy city compared to Jakarta.

vived countless earthquakes and volcanic eruptions from nearby Mount Merapi.

The monument, which resembles a stepped pyramid, serves as a place of worship and pilgrimage. Each level is heavily ornamented with bas-reliefs that depict daily scenes of that time, including life in the palace court, moments of worship, and common scenarios in the village. Also shown are images of kings, queens, noblemen, priests, soldiers, and common village folk. Each level also has several Buddha statues, each sitting inside a perforated bell-like structure or stupa.

For centuries, Borobudur lay hidden deep in the jungle. It was rediscovered only in the 19th century during the Dutch occupation and has since then sparked the interest of archaeologists, historians, pilgrims, and tourists alike.

Not far from Borobudur is Prambanan, the largest Hindu temple in Indonesia and one of the biggest in Southeast Asia. Built in the ninth century, Prambanan is a collection of towering temples that measure up to 47 meters high. More than 200 temples used to dot the area but now there are only eight. According to popular legend, the temples were erected by Prince Bandung Bondowoso as a sign of his love for Princess Rara Jonggrang.

The princess initially refused to marry the prince because he had dethroned and killed her father. Eventually, the princess agreed to marry but on one condition: the prince must build a thousand temples in one night.

The prince asked for help from spirits and succeeded in building 999 temples. When he was about to fulfill the condition, the princess woke her palace maids and ordered them to begin their daily chores and set a fire in the east wing of the temple to create an illusion that the sun was about to rise.

As the roosters began to crow, the spirits fled, leaving the last temple unfinished. Furious, the prince cursed the princess to stone, turning her into the last and most beautiful of the thousand temples.

If you fancy the outdoors, Yogyakarta is also sure to deliver. As I loved being with nature, I searched for places that I could visit and get an adrenaline rush.

One of the top searches is Goa Jomblang, a cave located just a few minutes outside the city. Even then, on the way to the cave, you will feel that you are already full of majestic views of Yogyakarta – from vast rice fields, thick jungles, and long mountain ranges.

Upon reaching the entrance of the cave, I was instructed to wear a helmet and a safety gear like all the other tourists as we would be hauled down some 50 meters below to enter the cave.

Goa Jomblang is similar to a tunnel. It is 250 meters long, around 4 meters high, and 7 meters wide. Even though the cave is not that long, the trek inside seemed forever because the ground was muddy and everything was pitch black.

However, upon reaching the destination,

er face of Indonesia

I felt that all of the struggle I had just endured was all worth it. I was greeted by light at the end of the tunnel. Literally. The roof of the cave has a hole that allows light to come in from the outside, creating a heavenly atmosphere that is perfect for your Instagram.

To wash off all the dirt and mud, I, along with a few travelers I met during the tour at Goa Jomblang, opted to do the river rafting at nearby River Oyo.

The river is about 10 meters deep, with strong current that makes for an exciting ride. There is also a small waterfall along the way where we stopped to take pictures and jump from the cliff to the flowing river.

If you want to bring home traditional Indonesian items, Yogyakarta has them

too. I went to Jalan Malioboro, a major shopping street in the city, to buy some goodies.

Sidewalks on both sides of the street are lined with small stalls selling a variety of goods such as household items, paintings, traditional Indonesian dress or batik, sweets and delicacies, woodcrafts, and silverware.

Everything is cheap in Yogyakarta, including food and accommodation. One can already have a decent meal under HKD20, while a simple room with air-conditioning, WiFi, and breakfast will cost you less than 120 HKD per night.

In my case, I got a free accommodation because I stayed at a local's house that I booked through Couchsurfing. My host

brought me to places where locals normally eat as well as provided me with insights into the daily life, culture, and politics in Indonesia.

There are some places you travel to

where you just feel comfortable immediately. For me, Yogyakarta is one of them. It is calm, rich in heritage, and proud of its identity. Although thousands of tourists flock to this city every year, it does not get

too crowded and intimidating.

It was a short but sweet stay and I am willing to share a different side to Indonesia. After all, this lovely country is more than just Bali.



Tourists finish their trek inside Goa Jomblang.



Sunlight flooding in through a hole on the roof of the cave


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Digong, Leni's ratings down

By Maia Lopez

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte's approval and trust ratings slipped three points in the last quarter of 2016 but remained high, the latest Pulse Asia survey showed.

The survey, conducted among 1,200 respondents nationwide, showed that Duterte's performance and trust ratings went down three points from 86 percent in September.

Among geographical areas, Duterte's ratings remained highest in his hometown Mindanao with 91 percent approval rating, followed by Visayas (84 percent), National Capital Region (79 percent), and Balance Luzon (78 percent).

Dissatisfaction was highest among members of the Class ABC, slipping 13 points to 69 percent, while support remained high among Class D and E with 84 and 85 percent, respectively.

"We are grateful for this continued show of public support and confidence in the President. The high approval and big trust



Robredo (middle), and Duterte (right)

service," Andanar said. Meanwhile, the Pulse Asia survey showed Vice President Leni Robredo's trust rating slipped seven points from 65 percent in September to 58 percent in December.

Robredo's approval rating also fell four points to 62 percent in December from 66 percent in the third quarter.

An earlier survey of the Social Weather Stations also showed a double-digit decline in Robredo's approval rating, from 49 in September to 37 in December.

The period covered by the latest Pulse

service," Andanar said.

Meanwhile, the Pulse Asia survey showed Vice President Leni Robredo's trust rating slipped seven points from 65 percent in September to 58 percent in December.

Robredo's approval rating also fell four points to 62 percent in December from 66 percent in the third quarter.

An earlier survey of the Social Weather Stations also showed a double-digit decline in Robredo's approval rating, from 49 in September to 37 in December.

The period covered by the latest Pulse

Asia survey did not include the possible effects of criticism against the Vice President for being out of the country to attend a family reunion while a powerful typhoon punished her hometown in Bicol.

It covered, however, her resignation from the Cabinet as Duterte's Housing Secretary due to her "irreconcilable and public" differences with the President.

Despite the lower rating, Robredo thanked Filipinos for their "continued trust and support."

"We assure you that we are listening to your voice so we can serve you better. Through the Angat Buhay, the Office of the Vice President's poverty alleviation program, we are determined to continue our mission to uplift the lives of the poor and the marginalized," Robredo said.

The same survey also showed that only half of Filipinos trust Senate President Aquilino Pimentel III, while 41 percent trust Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno and 38 percent find House Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez trustworthy.

2 taxi drivers nabbed in NAIA

By Bing Jabadan

TWO taxi drivers were arrested, one for overcharging, while the other for robbing passengers.

The Mobile Patrol Security Unit of the PNP-Aviation Security Group personnel arrested a taxicab driver for charging a newly arrived overseas Filipino worker of P1,500 for a 50-meter ride from the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3.

The suspect was identified as Ivan G. Incirto, a driver of Al-Rose taxi with plate no. ABX-5137. The victim was Brian Jaen, 33, married, a seafarer and a resident of Bangkerohan, Davao City.

Jaen told investigators that on January 8, 2017, he arrived at the NAIA Terminal 3 and queued at a white taxi metered lane at about 12:30 p.m.

The victim said he boarded the white taxi cab bearing body markings "AL-ROSE" with plate number ABX 5137 driven by the suspect.

He said he told the suspect to take him to SM Bicutan, but 50 meters away from NAIA Terminal 3, he was surprised when the suspect charged and demanded a P1,500 -fare.

When he refused to pay, the suspect threatened him and forced him to alight from cab before reaching the exit gate of NAIA Terminal 3.

Fearing for his safety, Jaen alighted from the taxicab and chanced upon a police outpost. He then immediately sought police assistance. The suspect was charged with violation of Article 318 (other deceit) of the Revised Penal Code before the Pasay City Prosecutors Office.

Meanwhile, NAIA Airport Police Department Special Task Group operatives led by APO2 Roderick Mejia; APO2 Jesus Ducusin and APO Victor Mallari arrested a taxi driver for robbing his passengers he picked up from NAIA Terminal 1. The suspect was identified as Daniel Sallan, driver of a taxicab with plate number TYS-197.

Jemma Amoroso said that she and her three-year-old daughter rode on the taxicab driven by the suspect going to Manila after sending off her partner at the airport. While traversing Roxas Boulevard, the suspect took out a gun and robbed her of US\$250 and P250.



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Terror leader killed in Sarangani

By Maia Lopez

SECURITY forces have killed a terrorist leader with ties to the Islamic State (ISIS) and captured three of his companions in a beach resort in Sarangani province.

Killed in the attack was Mohammad Jaafar Maguid, commander of the Ansar Al-Khilafa Philippines (AKP), a local group with links to ISIS.

Chief Supt. Cedric Train described the 32-year-old Maguid, who goes by the alias Tokboy, as a notorious kidnapper and a bomb expert.

"Tokboy is a notorious bandit leader with affiliation to ISIS. He and his

group have escaped several government operations to neutralize them," Train said.

"They fly the ISIS flag in their camps. They want to be recognised by the ISIS," the police officer added.

Maguid, who carried a P300,000-bounty on his head, was wanted for murder, arson, robbery, extortion and attacks on military detachments in Mindanao.

Government agents seized two M-16 rifles, two hand grenades, eight magazines, short magazines, bandoleers, various ammunition and documents from the group. Interior Secretary Ismael Sueno warned that Maguid's death could result in violent repercussions.

Emails show 'oust' Du30 plot

By Maia Lopez

VICE President Leni Robredo has been dragged into an alleged plot to oust President Rodrigo Duterte in a series of leaked emails and conversations in public Yahoo Group that posted online by known Duterte supporters.

The leaked e-mails purportedly showed exchanges among critics of the President on how to drum up support for the "Duterte Resign" campaign of the Global Filipino Diaspora Council.

Among those included in the conversation were billionaire Filipino American lobbyist Loida Nicolas-Lewis, her sister and former Commission on Filipinos Overseas chairwoman Imelda Nicolas, CFO Commissioner Jose Molano Jr., Inquirer US Bureau columnist Ted Laguatan, ABS-CBN Europe News Bureau correspondent Gene Alcantara,

and Northern Europe civil society leader Filomenita Mongaya Hogsholm.

"I don't know what my participation is," Robredo said when asked to comment on the so called "#Lenileaks."

"I was told my name was mentioned, but I'm not part of that group. They said there were emails circulating, but there's none. I'm also not part of that thread," the Vice President added.

Robredo also categorically denied being a part of a plot to oust Duterte, saying any move to displace him would not bring any good to the country.

"I am sure that I did not take part on any plot to oust Duterte, if there is indeed such a plot. First of all, I am being accused of joining rallies against him. That is not true. The president was misinformed on that," Robredo said.

Nicolas-Lewis also denied accusations that there is a conspiracy to unseat Duterte.

2 Pinoys jailed in Saudi

By Maia Lopez

TWO overseas Filipino workers were jailed in Saudi Arabia for allegedly killing their female employer in November.

Vice Consul Alex Estomo of the Philippine Consulate in Jeddah said one of the two jailed OFWs admitted killing their employer.

The OFW, identified only as Rina, claimed that her employer attacked her with a knife, and that she only defended herself. Rina, however, insisted that her co-accused Filipina was innocent.

Estomo said according to Saudi authorities, the female employer sustained 14 stab wounds in the body.

Estomo said that with Rina's testimony, they are hoping the other Filipina will be released next week.

"Rina admitted to prosecutors that she alone committed the crime and her colleague had nothing to do with it," he said.

The other arrested Filipina said she ran and locked herself in the bathroom during the attack, and she only went out of the room when the Saudi police have arrived. Estomo said Rina could have been a victim of maltreatment, which led to the killing.

Meanwhile, a 62-year-old Filipino was arrested in San Francisco, United States and was charged with 21 counts of theft, grand theft, and forgery.

Roberto Daguman reportedly stole more

than 20 checks from his elderly neighbor and wrote them out to himself in amounts ranging between \$400 and \$15,000. The total amount of the theft reportedly reached \$65,000.

"Preying on the elderly is particularly cruel and callous. We're taught to love our neighbors, and yet victims of these heart-breaking crimes are often preyed upon by those depend upon," said District Attorney George Gascón.

The arrest came after J.P. Morgan Chase bank employees alerted authorities about suspicious checks being written to Daguman from the elderly victim's account. The Filipino was arrested while accompanying the victim to the bank.



Jeddah

Stolen diamonds seized from balikbayan box

By Maia Lopez

AT least 22 pieces of stolen diamonds worth millions of pesos were seized by the Bureau of Customs which were brought into the country through a balikbayan box sent from Kuala Lumpur.

Customs Commissioner Nicanor Faeldon said that the diamonds were in a re-sealable plastic pouch hidden in the pocket of a balikbayan box sent by a certain Arturo Rivera.

The package was consigned to a certain Lajane Basilio of Bataan.

Faeldon said they received an information from the National Bureau of Investigation that an illegal shipment from Malaysia will be arriving.

"It is disheartening to confiscate a balikbayan box, believing it contains gifts and items for love ones of overseas Filipinos in the Philippines," Faeldon said.

"We will not tolerate Filipinos abroad using these boxes for all forms of smuggling as it violates our laws," he added.

The diamonds were shipped as part of 246 loose packages in a container van onboard the liner Sima Genesis 0231 from Port of Klang in Malaysia.

Faeldon said the package was only valued at P56,000, but based on global prices,

diamonds are pegged at \$1,400 or P70,000 per carat.

Faeldon said the diamonds are now under the custody of the Bureau of Customs - Manila International Container Ports.

Balikbayan boxes with a value of up to P150,000 sent by overseas Filipino workers abroad are exempted from duties and tax.

These, however, should only contain personal and household effects and not in commercial quantities, and OFWs can only avail of this privilege up to three times in a calendar year.



Balikbayan box

Fil-Am wins P5M in Lakers' basketball challenge

By Maia Lopez

A Filipino-American basketball fan made himself richer by \$95,000 (around P5 million) after hitting a halfcourt shot during a Los Angeles Lakers game at Staples Center early this month.

Jerald Acoba, 30, from Tulare, California, not only won himself cash but also got to celebrate with the Lakers themselves after they defeated the Memphis Grizzlies, 116-102.

Acoba, who identifies himself as a Filipino in his Instagram account, took the shot between the third and fourth quarters as part of the Aria Big Shot Jackpot.

The lucky fan said he intends to use the money to buy his mother a new car.

"She's always been there for me when I need her," Acoba said in an NBA.com article.

"She's always there to help me out. It's my turn to repay the favor to her," the Filipino added.

Meanwhile, a lucky overseas Filipino worker based in Jeddah won a brand new Renault car in a Christmas raffle draw at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

Pinay convicted in Kuwait over terror links

By Maia Lopez

A Kuwaiti court has convicted a Filipino woman for joining the terrorist group Islamic State and for plotting attacks against the emirate.

The 32-year-old woman, whose name has been withheld, was slapped with a 10-year prison term. She will be deported immediately after serving her jail term.

The woman was arrested in August, two months after arriving in the oil-rich Gulf state to work as a domestic helper.

The Interior Ministry claimed she confessed to being a member of the ISIS.

The woman reportedly told interrogators that her husband was an active ISIS fighter in Libya and he had asked her to come to Kuwait as a domestic helper, the Ministry said.

Security forces monitored one of the email accounts run by the woman and found messages in which she had contacted the Libyan militant group.

She had been using "fake name and nickname to evade monitoring," the

Ministry said.

"The accused confessed that she was ready to carry out any terrorist attack once circumstances and means were available to target a specific section of the society in order to undermine security and stability in Kuwait, as well as ignite sedition," the official news agency KUNA said.

Foreign Affairs spokesman Charles Jose said the department will provide assistance to the woman since she is a Filipino citizen.

"Our embassy is prepared to extend legal and consular assistance to the overseas Filipino worker and make sure that she gets due process and her rights are not violated," Jose said,

Dozens of Filipinos were reported to have been recruited by ISIS, while some have been undergoing training in the militant group's camps.

However, the Philippine military said it has not received any intelligence report supporting such claims.



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Island journey for a cause

By Vicks Reyes Munar

WITH their love for and belief that spending time in nature gives a healing energy, friends coming from three organizations went on an island trip on January 2.

CARD Financial Literacy trainers, Balikatan sa Kaunlaran (BSK) officers and Domestic Workers Empowerment Project (DWEP) members went exploring Cheung Chau Island. They also cleaned and picked up rubbish from one the island's beaches.

The group took the 10:30 a.m. ferry ride to Cheung Chau, a laidback island with its car-free streets and low-rise buildings.

Besides enjoying the scenery, the group made their adventure more meaningful and challenging by collecting trash from the shore of a less busy and smaller beach



Participants of the island trip

in the island known as Kwun Yam Wan.

"It is sad to see that there are lots of trash in this very quiet beach, I believe that with our collected efforts we can do so much", said Ching Baltazar, BSK president.

Catherine Del Valle Lumbang, a DWEP member who is also into photography said: "It was so fulfilling that aside from enjoying nature and taking photos, I can do something for mother nature."

OFWs sumali sa CARD

By Vicks Reyes Munar

DAGSA ang umuwi sa Pilipinas tuwing buwan ng Disyembre upang makapiling ang kanilang mga pamilya sa holiday season.

Ngunit bukod sa kadahilanang ito, nakatutuwang malaman ang ilan sa mga OFWs na dumalo na sa Center for Agricultural and Rural Development Mutually Reinforcing Institution (CARD MRI) Financial Literacy Seminar/Workshop dito sa Hong Kong ay nagkaroon ng pagkakataon na bumisita sa iba't ibang sangay ng CARD sa Pilipinas at maging full-fledged members ng isa sa mga nangungunang microfinance institution sa Pilipinas.

Ayon kay Joselita Lanao, isang opisyal ng CARD sa Pilipinas at liaison officer ng CARD OFW HK Foundation, mula ika-16 hanggang ika-28 ng Disyembre 2016, may 21 OFWs mula sa



Ilan sa mga CARD members

ang naging bahagi ng institusyon.

Umaasa ang mga nagpatalang OFWs na magiging kaagapay nila ang CARD Isa is Yvonne Caspe Lom-Oc, dating OFW sa HK, na umuwi nang biglaan sa Pilipinas noong May 2, 2016 at naging miyembro ng CARD noong June 2, 2016. Nagpapasalamat si Yvonne sa CARD sa pag-alalay sa kanya sa pagsisimula ng kanyang sari-sari store.

Sa mga nais na dumalo sa mga sunod na CARD Seminar at workshop sa Pebrero 26, tumawag lang sa 54238196 o 95296392.

GALLERY

2017 Board of Directors of the Philippine Association of Hong Kong (PAHK) pose with ConGen Catala after being inducted on Jan. 11 at the PCG.

Rex Aguado, Louise Vas, Euvi Regis Kay, Steven Co, Edna Hui, Fred Valencia, Senen Glinoga Gary Flores, Mark Dexter Yabut, Tom Magno Joel Almeda, JP De Guzman, Chad Del Valle, Emilie Veringa-Tobias and Edith Gomez are the new PAHK officers.



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UMELA recognition rites at the PCG

By Imelda Mae Bustinera

THE United Migrant Entrepreneurship and Livelihood Association (UMELA) has successfully trained 92 migrant workers in various skills that could be their source of income once they return to the Philippines for good.

The training is part of UMELA's mission to help migrants hone their skills.

The migrants spent 72 hours of training in various programs such as massage therapy, beads-making and knitting or bag macramé making with their respective trainers.

The graduation rites of the migrant workers were held at the Philippine Consulate General on Consul-General Bernardita L. Catala congratulated and thanked UMELA for their perseverance and patience in encouraging and helping OFWs.

UMELA President Ofelia Baquirin and the trainers, meanwhile, expressed their gratitude to Yan Yan Boyce, Adrielle Pinares of the International Social Service, and other sponsors for their support to the program.



The trainees with PCG officials

'Jill Jill' for your authentic designer bags

QUALITY and authenticity are never cheap, but they can be had at a discounted price.

"Jill Jill Buy for You", an online retailer of authentic designer brands and luxury leather bags, recognizes that buyers and clients can actually have it all - quality, and authenticity at reasonable prices.

Henry, marketing manager of "Jill Jill Buy for You", said the online shop began its operations in early 2014 through Facebook and Instagram. Messaging app "WhatsApp" is also now being used by the shop to communicate with their clients.

On these social media and messaging platforms, the online shop posts photos of its products - mostly Coach handbags and accessories - and interested buyers contact them through these channels. Once arrangement for a meet up is finalized, the buyer then gets the merchandise and payment will be made upon delivery.

Those wanting to buy other designer bags that may not be among those posted by the online shop could also opt to ask it to procure the specific product for them.

"Reliability and integrity are critical when selecting an online shop in Hong Kong. 'Jill Jill' sells authentic designer brands and luxury leather bags, and all items are imported from the USA.

"Jill Jill's' hand delivery service appeals to more consumers. Moreover, we bring the latest designs to Hong Kong as stocks, and clients receive their orders three days after confirmation and there is no long waiting time like in other proxy shopping services," Henry said.

Being an online retailer helps them save costs as they need not pay high rent and utilities, labor costs for long hours of shop keeping, expensive renovation, decoration and display units.

"Jill Jill Buy for You' saves the costs



A Coach bag that is being sold by 'Jill Jill' at a much lower price



Coach pouch

and rebates the same to our clients. Our prices are just half of retail prices [of other shops] and much lower than the counters in department stores," Henry said in a recent interview with Hong Kong News.

This clever business strategy has allowed the online retailer to sell over 1,000 pieces of designer and luxury bags in

2016, translating to about 10 deliveries every Sunday, and three to five deliveries every week day.

Its products, Henry said, were sourced by "Jill Jill Buy for You" owners Mabel and Kathy, who are two senior buyers from the buying office of international brands.



The iconic Coach logo is prominent in one of the more popular bags of the designer brand

For 2017, the online shop is looking to double its sales performance.

And Henry expressed confidence that they would be able to achieve this, noting that they have always delivered satisfaction to their clients. He said that on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/JillJill-BFY/>), they had received nearly 200 good reviews and feedbacks from their clients.

To date, the Facebook page of "Jill Jill Buy for You" has over 13,000 Filipino fans and followers.

Besides their good service and authentic luxury bags, Henry said the favorable exchange rate for Filipinos working in Hong Kong will give the latter higher disposable income.

"The Philippine peso plunged by about 10 percent in the last six months, and people can [remit higher amount to their family]. We hope [to] double our sales as the US dollar keeps rising in 2017," he said.

The online retailer is also set to be more active and aggressive in promoting its products to the Filipino community and is set to sponsor activities of Filipino organizations in March and April.

First LD Tour for 2017 held

By Vicks Reyes Munar

LAKBAY Dangkal, a historico-cultural group known for conducting walking tours around Central area for OFWs and interested foreigners, started 2017 with a well-attended trail on January 8.

Through the tour "Walk for Dignity", the group aims to raise awareness of the historical links between Hong Kong and the Philippines and to further develop their own sense of self-esteem and identity.

The group's officers, led by its president, Maritess Mapa, and Cecil Eduarte, lead of its research team, spent time to share historical facts and pieces of trivia to several CARD trainers, Domestic Workers Empowerment Project (DWEP) members, and friends who joined the tour.

George Manalansan, one of the participants and a CARD Financial Literacy

trainer gratefully said, "The trail was very informative and inspiring, I felt happy and proud that I was able to visit Dr. Jose Rizal's clinic and residence here in Hong Kong and it was a first of a kind experience because the officers truly gave interesting information on history matters, amazing!"

Gegerma Montero, a DWEP member, said she enjoyed the tour as it was her first time to learn more about the historical connection between Hong Kong and the Philippines.

Emma Bautista, another participant, said: "My co-OFWs should try this worthwhile activity".

Lakbay Dangkal is happy to offer the tour to interested persons or groups and also welcomes new members. Those who are interested, please SMS or call 94167012/96066810.



Lakbay Dangkal tour participants pose for the camera.

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SSS pension hike

RIGHT after the new year, Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno was quoted as saying that the people should differentiate President Duterte from the presidential candidate who made promises to get the public's vote.

The Duterte supporters and those who campaigned for the P2,000-pension hike were relying on the chief executive to deliver on his campaign promise.

And they rejoiced when Duterte, despite warnings from his Cabinet members that granting the hike could reduce the actuarial life of the SSS, approved the P1,000-pension hike this year.

We commend the President for keeping his word and recognizing the need to

augment the meager monthly pension that pensioners receive.

But we also note that Diokno was right to say that the SSS should look for ways to fund the pension increase and not the President.

We hope the SSS becomes more efficient in its collection efforts because merely increasing the monthly contribution of employees will not just cut it in the long run.

What we need is a long-term and more sustainable solution to extend the actuarial life of the state pension body and ensure that those who are contributing now will also get a reasonable amount of monthly pension when time comes that they retire.



Haplos at Bigwas

Jun
Concepcion

Will we see a crime-free Philippines?

A culture of death and violence has descended to the Philippines. Congressmen, senators, administration officials are all calling for the restoration of death penalty.

After the death penalty is restored, President Duterte wants at least six convicts executed everyday, but an anti-crime group is more radical -- it wants 20 criminals put to death daily.

No one questions the need to fight crimes vigorously. But wholesale killings of convicts and suspected criminals?!?!@%?

Which country in this planet has successfully eliminated crimes by executing as many criminals as possible?

Countries with death penalties -- such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, as well as certain states in the US -- have not completely eliminated crimes.

But jurisdictions with no death penalties, such as Hong Kong, Japan and Britain, surprisingly have low crime rates.

Pinoy here in HK can certainly attest to this hard, cold fact -- killing criminals is not the answer to having a peaceful community that is largely free of violence and crimes.

Proper and corruption-free enforcement of the law and a fair, judicious and impartial operation of the legal system explain to a large extent why Hong Kong has a community with very few crimes -- even without death penalty and vigilante killings.

Incidentally, are there extra judicial killings (EJKs) or summary executions in the Philippines today amid the government's war against drug offenders? Government officials and most lawmakers deny there are any -- even if nearly 6,000 have died from July 1 up to this month in the drug war. So are there really EJKs? EJKs that forced American singer James Taylor to cancel his February 2017 concert in Manila?

Every Pinoy and non-Pinoy is gifted with intelligence. The answer can be easily figured out.

To contact this writer, please visit www.ofws4change.com & listen to Pinoy Life radio show aired on Radio Television Hong Kong Radio 3 every Sunday at 4-6 p.m.

As We See it



Currents

Norman Uy
Carnay

Tanggalin na ng Tuluyan ang OEC

ITO naman kasing DOLE at POEA, hindi inaaral mabuti ang kahilingan ng mga migrante. Matagal nang sinabing ibasura ang OEC, hindi pa rin iyon ang ginawa. Ipinilit pa rin nila ang kanilang gusto. Dahil dito, dumanas na naman ng perhuwisyo ang mga OFW nitong bago ang Kapaskuhan at ngayong Bagong Taon.

Bumalik ang mahabang pila sa Konsulado noong Nobyembre at lalo na nang Disyembre. Hindi na ito para makakuha ng OEC kung hindi diumano ay para ma-"exempt" nga sa pagbabayad ng OEC. Hindi mo alam kung matatawa ka o maiiyak. Dapat nga ay exempted ka di ba? Hindi na nga dapat magbayad. Pero para ma-exempt ka, kailangan mo pa ring pumila! Anong raket ito?

At iyon na nga ang tumambad sa atin - ginawang raket ng ilan pang tusong kababayan ang proseso ng pag-apply sa BM Online para makasingil sila ng HK\$100

kada aplikante. Sa gipit na kalagayan, lumabas pa ang mga bagong buwaya.

Sa sobrang dami ng kukuha ng OEC, hindi kinaya ng kanilang sistema na magbigyan ng appointment ang mga kababayan para makapagrehistro sa tinatawag nilang Balik Manggagawa. Parang namalimata ulit tayo dahil nanumbalik ang mahabang pila.

Tapos nitong Enero, nang pabalik na ang marami nating kababayan, aba ay may pila muli -- ngayon naman ay sa NAIA dahil kailangang i-validate ang OEC. Ayun, marami pa sa ating mga kapwa OFW ang naiwanan ng kanilang mga eroplano dahil sa kalokohang ito.

Bakit kasi ayaw pang makinig sa atin ang DOLE at POEA? Bakit kailangan pang irehistro sa BM Online bago makuha ang OEC? Di ba nga ang argumento na ay hindi na kailangan ang OEC bilang patunay na OFW dahil NAPAKARAMI

nang pruweba na ika'y isang OFW -- ang iyong visa, ang kontrata na sila rin ang nag-authenticate, ang iyong HK ID card, atbp. Dahil sa burukrasya, heto at napahamak na naman ang mga OFW.

Tama ang mga nagsasabi na ang kailangan ay ABOLITION o pagbabasura at hindi ang EXEMPTION. Dapat nang tanggalin ang napakaraming proseso para i-exempt lang ang mga OFW sa OEC. Pinaka-simple na ginawa nila, tinanggal na lang nila ang OEC. Kung gusto nilang irehistro ang mga OFW sa kanilang Balik Manggagawa program, eh di gawin nila kapag nag-authenticate ng bagong kontrata.

Sa susunod, dapat sabihan ni Pres. Duterte ang mga opisyal na niya na makiting kasi sa panukala ng mga OFW na siya mismong nakaka-alam ng sitwasyon nila. Huwag kasing unahin ang interes na maka-kolekta.

Dear Editor

Dear Hong Kong News,

Gusto ko ho sanang ibahagi ang aking karanasan nang magbakasyon ako sa atin ngayong Pasko at Bagong Taon.

Pagdating ko sa NAIA noong Disyembre 23, tulad ng inaasahan, ay marami ang nag-aabang para salubungin ang kanilang mga mahal sa buhay.

Madali naman akong nakakuha ng taxi kasi hindi na ako nagpasundo dahil wala naman akong halos dala. Kaunting pasalubong lang naman ang iniuwi ko.

Nagulat din ako na hindi naman ako kinontrata at tanging metro lang ang siningil sa akin. Nagbigay na

lang din ako ng kaunting dagdag dahil Pasko naman at maayos naman ang pakikitungo sa akin ng driver. Hindi din masyadong mabigat ang trapiko noong hapon na iyon.

Kinailangan kong magtungo ng DFA para sa mabilisang pagre-renew ng passport dahil nawala ang passport ko at kailangan ang madaliang balik sa HK. Bagama't dumog ang tao, mabuti naman at natapos ko sa isang araw ang mga kailangan kong gawin.

Noong Bagong Taon naman ay kaunti naman ang nagpaputok, hindi gaya ng mga nagdaang taon. Pabalik ko dito, kahit na may kaunting trapik, hindi

naman ito kabigatan at hindi naging dahilan upang maabala ako sa pagtungo ko sa airport.

Pagdating nga lang sa airport mahaba ang pila. Dagsa kasi ang mga paalis.

Ang punto ng liham na ito ay ang pagkilala na may mga improvement naman kashit paano sa ating bansa. Hindi naman laging masama ang nangyayari sa atin. Nawa ay magtuloy-tuloy naman ang mga ganitong pagbabago sa atin. Kahit na mabagal, ang mainam ay may pagbabago pa din.

Gumagalang,
Lisa T.

Bingi ba o di nakakaintindi?

By Imelda Mae Bustinera

GINANAP ang taunang party tuwing Pasko ng kompanya sa bahay ng isang kasosyo ng amo ni Ana.

Pagdating nila sa lugar ay dumireto na agad si Ana sa kusina para tumulong. Nang matapos na sa paghimay ng mga iluluto ay ang mesa naman na kakainan ang inalam niya kung ayos na ba.

Nadatan niya ang lalaking nagbukas ng pintuan na unang pagkakataon pa lang niya nakita. Nahalata ni Ana na nangangapa sa ginagawa kaya tumulong na siya at maya-maya pa ay sa kanya na nagtatanong kung paano at ano. Iyon pala ay baguhan at unang beses pa lang kaya hindi pa alam ang gagawin.

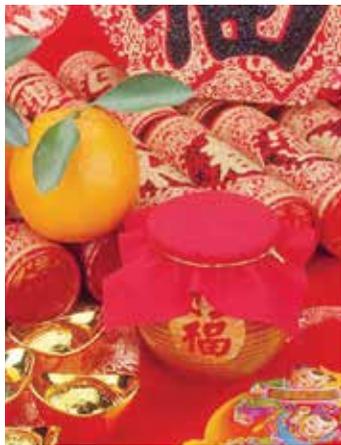
Nang oras na kainan ay itinalaga iyong lalaki para magsilbi. Maya-maya pa lumapit ito kay Ana para magtanong kung ano ang iinuutos at hinihingi ng amo niya. At sasabihin naman ni Ana na itanong sa kasama niyang kasambahay dahil sila dapat ang nakakaalam kung ano ito.

Kung alam ni Ana kung ano ay itinuturo niya at kung hindi ay sinasabihan niya na tanungin uli ang amo nila. Hanggang sa sinabihan na ng amo na kapag hindi maaayos ang pagtrabaho ay tatanggalin siya sa trabaho.

Sinabihan naman siya ni Ana na intindihin maigi kung ano ang sinasabi at kung hindi naiintindihan ay ipaulit sa amo para hindi siya nagkakamali at huwag mag-alala kasi hindi naman nagtatanggal ng kasambahay ang amo niya.

Nang pauwi na sina Ana ay iyong kasambahay pa ring lalaki ang usapan nung mga amo at sinabi kay Ana na pagsabihan ang kabababayan niya na intindihin mabuti ang sinasabi ng amo para hindi nagkakamali dahil mahirap ang manghula lang kung ano ang hinihingi at iniuutos.

Unang amo ng lalaki dito sa Hong Kong. Ito ay 28-taong gulang may asawa at anak tubong General Santos.



Aburido sa mga instructors

By Imelda Mae Bustinera

SA loob ng mahigit 12 taon na paninilbihan ni Margaret sa kasalukuyang amo ay pangalawang beses pa lang siya isinama ng amo sa party ng kaibigan dahil umuwi raw at may problema sa pamilya ang isa sa dalawang kasambahay.

Aleman at Malaysian ang mag asawa na parehong abogado at hitik sa palamuting pamasko at ilaw ang palibot ng hardin hanggang sa loob ng bahay.

Pagdating nila sa bahay ng kaibigan ay humawak agad ng gagawin si Margaret sa kusina at may nadatnang tatlong mga kaibigan ng amo na tumutulong sa paghanda at isa-isa nang ipinapapasok ang mga handa.



Minabuti na lang ni Margaret na maghugas ng mga pinggan.

Nang lumabas na ang may-ari ng bahay ay ipinabalik sa pinaka kusina at sinabing hintayin ang kanyang instruction bago ipasok ang mga pagkain.

Sa inis ni Margaret na halos magkandapaso na sa pagmamadali na maihain ay hindi napigilan ang sarili sa pagsabing

“so many instructors” sabay talikod, bitbit ang ilan sa mga pagkain.

Alam ng amo ni Margaret ang ugali ng kaibigan na kahit hindi niya mismo kasambahay ay iinuutusan at binibulyawan kaya sinundan siya at sinabing ang pakinggan at sundin lang ay ang kaibigang amo.

Dumating na ang oras ng kainan at sinabi ng kaibigang amo na ihain na ang pagkain at maglagi lang daw ang mga kasambahay sa komedor para magsilbi at mag-abot ng mga kailangan.

Hindi naglagi si Margaret na minabuti na lang sa kusina at naghugas ng mga pinaggamitan at maruruming malalaking pinggan. Hanggang mag-uwian ay hindi na humarap si Margaret sa kaibigan ng amo niya at ang humingi ng paumanhin at nagpasalamat sa kanya ay ang amo mismo at sinabing sa susunod daw ay magdadahilan na lang sila na umuwi siya para magbakasyon.

Humingi ng paumanhin at nagpasalamat na rin si Margaret 43 balo may isang anak at tubong Ilocos sa amo niya.

Huwag magsiguro

By Imelda Mae Bustinera

PARANG lagi na lang naghahabol ng oras si Nora, 28, dalaga at tubong Iloilo, dahil sa hatid-sundo sa alaga.

Madalas alas-otso na ng gabi nakakauwi si Nora at ang kanyang alaga. Kaya't laking pasalamat niya nang sabihin ng among lalaki na may dinner meeting ito kaya hindi maghahapunan sa bahay. Wala rin ang among babae.

Sa mga pagkakataong ganito, kahit ano lang ang maisipan na madaliang ihanda ang iniluluto ni Nora. Naisipan niyang maglagi ng gulay at kung may natirang ulam sa tanghalian, at saka kung ano pang mailuto sa oras na.

Nagdesisyon siyang itlog na lang idagdag kasi paborito ng alaga. Bago umalis

para sunduin ang alaga ay hinugasan na niya ang gulay at nagsaing na rin para pagdating magpiprito na lang ng itlog.

Laking gulat niya nang pagdating ay naabutan ang amo at sinabing hindi natuloy ang dinner meeting kaya sa bahay ito kakain. Pero kung hindi raw siya kasali sa inihanda niyang hapunan ay sa labas na lang siya kakain.

Ang ginawa ni Nora dinagdagan niya ang itlog na pinirito para kahit tinapay na lang ang kainin niya kasi para lang sa dalawa ang sinaing. Nagpasalamat kay Nora ang amo at kahit hindi siya dapat kasali ay nakakain pa rin at nakatipid pa din.

Nasabi na lang ni Nora na mabuti at matino ang pagkaing naisipan niyang ihanda. Kung nagkataon ay baka napagalitan siya ng kanyang amo.

Iwasan ang inggitan

By Imelda Mae Bustinera

HINDI talaga nawawala sa samahan ang may inggitan at selosan. Hindi tuloy maiwasan ang pagsisiraan, ang samaan ng loob at kampilan.

At mayroong mga taong gusto lagi ang atensyon. Katulad ng kinabibilangang grupo ni Mikee. Likas na matulungin, napakalikot o napaka-aktibo at hindi tuma-

tangi itong si Mikee sa ano mang ipapagawa sa kanya.n.

Ito tuloy ang dahilan kung bakit siya lagi ang hinahanap at napag-uutusan ng mga nakatataas at kasamahan. Ang kaso may mga kasamahan na parang nagseselos o naiinggit kung bakit siya na lagi ang unang hahanapin sa tuwing may kailangan gawin. Si Mikee, 48, may asawa at anak, at tubong Camarines.

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CAMILLE

Camille Prats, naging bride muli

By Cristy Kasilag

SA isang pribado at taimtim na okasyon ay ikinasal ang actress at television host na si Camille Prats sa kanyang boyfriend na si John Yambao nuong ika-7 ng Enero taong 2017.

Tatlong taong naging magnobyong si Camille at John, na isang businessman na naka-base sa United States, bago sila nagpakasal sa Nayomi Sanctuary Resort sa Batangas na pag-aari ng pamilya ni Camille.

Suot ni Camille ang isang white, laced off-shoulder wedding gown.

All smiles ang 31-angyos na si Camille, na ang tunay na pangalan ay Sheena Patricia Camille Quiambao Prats, habang naglalakad papunta sa altar. Samantala si John ay suot ang isang three-piece suit at may white bow tie.

Bago ang oras ng kanilang kasal ay nag-post pa sila ng kani-kanilang messages at litrato sa kani-kanilang Instagram account.

Sa litrato ay makikita si John na nag-drive papunta sa kanyang kasal. Kalakip pa nito ang mensahe na, "It's about time to marry the love of my life."

Samantala, isang group picture na nag-papakita ang bride kasama ang kanyang mga bridesmaids ang video na pinakita ni Camille.

Pangalawang beses na itong kasal ni Camille. Una siyang ikinasal kay Anthony Linsangan na namatay ng sakit na cancer nuong taong 2011. Mayroon silang isang anak na lalaki na si Nathaniel Caesar Linsangan.

Matagal nang magkakilala sina Camille at John dahil magkababata sila. Nagkahiwalay lang sila nang magtungo si John sa United States at muling nagtagpo sa

Facebook. Matapos ang dalawang taon na relasyon ay inaya na ng pakasal ni John si Camille.

Dati nang nasabi ni Camille na may mga nagsasabi sa kanila na maaring ang dati nitong asawa na si Anthony ang nagdala kay John muli sa kanyang buhay dahil nung mga panahon na yon ay masaya naman siya at hindi niya inaasahan na muli siyang iibig.

Naramdaman daw ni Camille kay John ang sinseridad na hindi naman niya karaniwan hinahanap sa isang tao. Naramdaman niya na gusto ni John maging bahagi hindi lamang ng kanyang buhay, ngunit pati buhay ng kanyang anak na si Nathan.

Sa kanilang kasal ay may napauso pa na hashtag, "YambaosTakeVows" kung saan madami sa mga bisita at kamag-anak na dumalo sa kasal ang nag-post ng mga litrato na kinuha nila nung araw ng kasal.

Oro, iniimbestigahan dahil sa animal cruelty

By Cristy Kasilag

Oro na naging bato pa.

Ito malamang ang kinahihinayangan ng ibang cast and crew ng pelikula na "Oro" na kinatatampukan nila Irma Adlawan, Mercedes Cabral at Joem Bascon.

Ang pelikula na "Oro" ay isa sa mga napili sa 2016 Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) kung saan ay nanalo si Irma ng Best Actress. Ginawaran din ang pelikula ng FPJ Memorial Award for Excellence at ang Best Ensemble Cast.

Pero ang parangal ay hindi nagtagal nang mag reklamo ang animal rights group na PAWS (Philippine Animal Welfare Society) at ilang nakapanuod ng pelikula na nagalit nang makita ang eksena kung saan pinatay diumano ang isang aso.

Naguluhan ang ibang manonood sa kanilang nakita at hindi nila matanggap na kinailangang pumatay ng hayop para lamang gawing makatotohanan ang pelikula.

Ayon sa PAWS executive director Anna Cabrera, "An animal was killed in making a movie and that is unac-

ceptable not just in the law but also as a responsible filmmaker, no one should do this."

Nilabag daw nang gumawa ng pelikula ang Republic Act no. 10631 o ang Animal Welfare Act.

Nagsinungaling din daw ang mga gumawa ng Oro nung sabihin nila sa MMFF Screening Committee na walang hayop ang nasaktan sa paggawa ng pelikula.

Ngunit may mga taong kasama sa paggawa ng pelikula ang umamin na may asong pinatay.

Ang grupo naman na People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) ay hinihiling na ihinto na ang pagpapalabas ng pelikula sa mga sinehan.

Gusto din sana ng PETA na gumawa ng malalim na imbestigasyon ang MMFF tungkol sa bagay na ito nang malaman kung dapat bang kasuhan and director at producer ng pelikula.

Si Alvin Yapan ang director at writer ng "Oro" samantalang si Mark Shandii Bacolod ang sinasabing producer.

Maging si Senator Grace Poe ay hiniling din sa MMFF na alamin kung tunay bang may pinatay na hayop sa pelikula.

Paolo arangkada ang career noong 2016

By Cristy Kasilag

ANG taong 2016 sa showbiz industry ay taon ni Paolo Ballesteros.

Bago magtapos ang taong 2016 ay itinanghal na best actor sa katatapos lamang na Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) ang 34-taong gulang na myembro ng Dabarkads.

Malaking bagay ito kay Paolo na manalo sa kauna-uahan niyang starring role sa isang pelikula.

Matagal na sa industriya ng showbiz si Paolo. Madalas siyang makitang nag-host sa "Juan For All, All For Juan" at "Kalyeserye" segments ng pinakamatagal na noontime show sa Pilipinas ang "Eat Bulaga!"

Pero hindi sa kanyang pag-host na mayagpag si Paolo. Nakilala siya hindi lamang sa Pilipinas, ngunit pati sa iba't-ibang bahagi ng mundo dahil sa kanyang husay sa paggaya ng itsura ng ibang tao sa pamamagitan ng make up transformations.

Ngayong taon ay pinagsama ni Paolo ang galing sa panggagaya at pag-arte sa pelikulang "Die Beautiful" kung saan gumanap siyang isang transgender na si Trisha.

Sa awards night ng MMFF sa Kia Theater ay hindi nakadalo si Paolo. Kaya naman ang award para sa best actor ay tinanggap na lamang ng direktor ng pelikula na si Direk Jun Robles Lana.

Nuon lamang Nobyembre ay nakamit din ni Paolo ang best actor award sa 2016



PAOLO

Tokyo International Film Festival. Nagkaroon din siya ng special mention award mula sa 21st International Film Festival sa Kerala sa India para sa pagganap niya sa pelikulang "Die Beautiful".

Ngunit para kay Paolo, kahit na may tanggapan siyang parangal galing sa ibang bansa ay wala nang tatamis ang pagkap-analo niya sa MMFF kung saan kinilala ang kanyang talento ng kapwa niya Filipino.

"Winning 2 acting awards internationally is quite overwhelming. But being recognized as the Best Actor in your own country gives a different kind of joy," ang sabi ni Paolo.

Dagdag pa niya: "To the MMFF, maraming salamat and congratulations for a very successful festival. It is only the beginning and we will continue making movies that will be competent both locally and internationally."



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Anne at Erwan, engaged na

By Cristy Kasilag

ANG "It Girl" na si Anne Curtis Smith ang susunod na ikakasal sa kanilang grupo na binubuo ng mga sikat at fashionistang babae sa Pilipinas.

Tinuldukan na ni 31-anyos na si Anne at Erwan Heussaf ang anim na taon nila

bilang mag boyfriend. Ipinaalam na nila sa publiko na engaged na silang dalawa sa isa't-isa.

Pumunta si Anne sa New York nuong Nobyembre para sumali sa New York Marathon na kinikilala bilang pinakamalaki at sikat na ginaganap na marathon sa buong mundo. Isa si Anne sa mahigit na

51,000 na katao na nakisali sa pagtakbo.

Sinamahan ni Erwan ang nobya sa kanyang pagtakbo.

At sa kanilang pamamasyal sa Estados Unidos ay dito ginawa ni Erwan ang pag-propose sa nobya.

Sa isang park, kung saan tahimik at madaming puno at halaman ay lumuhod

sa isang tuhod si Erwan at dala ng emosyon ay naiyak siya na nag-propose kay Anne.

"I have never been sure of anything in my life," sabi nito nang mag-propose kay Anne

Nagulat at naiyak sa tuwa si Anne dahil sa pangyayari.



ERWAN at ANNE

Sunshine, atras na sa kaso laban sa mister

By Cristy Kasilag

KUNG dati ay todo ang laban, ngayon ay umatras na ang Kapuso actress na si Sunshine Dizon sa kanyang kaso laban sa kanyang estranged husband na si Timothy Tan.

Ang dahilan? Ang kanilang dalawang anak na sila Doreen at Anton.

Para hindi ma-deprive ng aruga at attention ng isang ama ang kanilang mga anak ay pinasya ni Sunshine na hindi na ituloy ang kaso laban sa asawang pinaghihinalaang nambababae. Nagsampa si Sunshine ng kasong paglabag sa Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004 at concubinage laban kay Timothy.

Nakipag hiwalay ang 33-anyos na si Sunshine sa asawa matapos na pag hinalaan niyang may ibang babae ang kanyang mister, na isang piloto at nagmula sa isang may-kayang pamilya sa Pampanga.

Naghain na sila ng desistance sa korte na ang ibig sabihin ay hindi na niya itutuloy ang kaso laban kay Timothy.

Nangibabaw ang kapakanan ng mga anak sa paghiganti sa asawa. Masakit daw para sa kanya, na isang anak, na hindi na maibabalik ang isang buo na pamilya paras sana sa mga bata. Ang isang magagawa niya para kina Doreen at Anton ay gumawa ng paraan para hindi masira ang relasyon ng mga bata sa kanilang ama.

Pero ipinaliwanag niya na hindi ibig sabihin nito na magkakabalikan sila ni Timothy, dahil itutuloy daw niya ang pag-sasampa ng annulment petition.

"I owe it to myself," ang sagot ni Sunshine na makawala sa pagka-kasal niya kay Timothy.

Unang isinawalat ni Sunshine ang di umanong pagtataksil ng asawa sa kanya sa kanyang Instagram account.



SUNSHINE at TIMOTHY

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Horoscope



Capricorn December 22 to January 19

Huwag pilitin ang hindi pwede. May mga bagay talagang hindi para sa iyo kahit na ano pang gawin mo.



Aquarius January 20 to February 18

Maging totoo sa nararamdaman mo. Hindi mainam na kinikimkim mo ang iyong damdamin. Magsabi sa taong tunay mong pinagtitiwalaan.



Pisces February 19 to March 20

Kung may gusto kang tapusin, gawin ito nang malinis at tama. Buong ingat na gawin ang mga susunod na hakbang.



Aries March 21 to April 19

Buksan ang sarili sa mga iba pang oportunidad at tao. Mahirap na ikulong o limitahan mo ang iyong mundo. Wala itong mabuting maidudulot.



Taurus April 20 to May 20

May mga bagay na hindi pinapalampas. May mga araw na wala ng bukas pa. May mga nawawala sa paghihintay.



Gemini May 21 to June 20

Pahalagahan ang mga taong totoong nagmamalasakit sa iyo. Mahirap hanapin ang mga ganitong tao.



Cancer June 21 to July 22

Magpakatatag. Malapit mo nang makuha ang iyong hinahangad. Ituloy lang ang pagsisikap.



Leo July 23 to August 22

Ipaliwanag sa mga mahal sa buhay ang iyong tunay na kalagayan. Kailangan nilang maintindihan na hindi madali ang kumita ng pera.



Virgo August 23 to September 22

Imbes na matakot, matutong magplano. Maigi nang pinaghahandaan mo ang alam mong parating na.



Libra September 23 to October 22

Gumawa ng oras para sa mga bagay na gusto mong gawin. Tandaan na magkakaroon ka lang ng malinaw na hangarin at pag-iisip kung nakakapagpahinga ka din.



Scorpio October 23 to November 21

Alamin ang buong kuwento. Kung gagawa ka ng mabigat na pasya magiging malaking tulong ito.



Sagittarius November 22 to December 21

Magsinop ng iyong kita. Mabuti nang may naitatabi ka para sa mga plano mo sa kinabukasan.

What's Cooking?

Shrimp, Pasta and Pesto with French Toast. This pasta recipe by student Flora E. Bermudo won the silver medal in the Chef's Competition of the Culinary Arts Centre

Ingredients:
For Grilled Shrimp:
 2 pcs. King Prawn
 1Tbsp. BBQ sauce
 1/2tsp. turmeric
 Butter
 Salt&Pepper to taste
For French Toast:
 1 egg
 1/2 cup Fresh milk
 1/2tsp. cinnamon powder
 2 pcs. white plain bread
 Cooking oil
For the Pasta and Pesto:
 1/2 package of Fettuccine Pasta
 1/4 cup olive oil
 1/8cup butter
 1Tbsp. garlic
 1/4kg shrimp, medium size, devein
 1Tbsp. capers
 1 pc red bell pepper sliced
 Asparagus trimmed and sliced
 1/8 cup pesto

- 1 Tsp. chicken powder
- For grilled shrimp, simply mix all ingredients and grill prawn for 2-3 minutes only. Set aside.
- For French toast, mix all ingredients and pan fry with butter. Set aside.
- Boil pasta until al dente. Let it cool.
- In a pan, sauté shrimps with remaining ingredients with butter, asparagus, bell papers, and capers until well blended. Pour in pasta until well coated with seasonings.
- Arrange plate with pasta mixture top with king prawns and French Toast.
- Ready to serve.



For more recipes enroll at Culinary Arts Centre M/F Cockloft Wing Tat Commercial Building, #97 Bonham Strand East Sheung Wan Hong Kong. For more recipes, you can call us at 28507724, 28507714, 28507408, or 28507438.

By Chef Jay Dator



Juan: Bakit sikat si sadako?
Pedro: Bakit?
Juan: Kasi lumalabas siya sa TV

Nagnakaw si Juan at Pedro Isang araw, may isang grocery ang ninakawan! Nag-imbetiga ang mga pulis at ayon sa mga witness ay magkakasama ang magkaibigang Juan at Pedro na nagnakaw Dinala sa presinto ang magkaibigan...

Pulis: Totoo bang kayo ang nagnakaw sa grocery?
Juan: Hindi ah!
Pedro: Aminin na natin Juan. Totoo po sir, pero pinilit lang ako ni Juan! (Nagalit si Juan kay Pedro)
Pulis: Wala kaming pakialaman kung pinilit lang o hindi ang pinaguusapan dito at magkasama

kayong nagnakaw. Ang parusa ninyo ay hahampasin kayo pareho ng dos por dos sa liod.
Pedro: Bad trip, ang sakit nun.
Juan: Ikaw kasi, umamin ka eh!
Pulis: Pero dahil birthday ko ngayon, choice ninyo kung ilang palo ang gagawin pero 10 na hampas ang minimum. May bonus pa, dahil feeling serious ako, bibigyan ko pa kayo ng isang kahilingan. Ang bawal lang ay ang humiling na walang palo.
Pedro: Ako muna. Ang hiling ko ay 10 na hampas lang ang gagawin ninyo sa akin. Sinunod ng pulis ang kanyang hiling at dahil may unan ang likod niya ay hindi masyadong nasaktan si Pedro.
Pulis: Ikaw naman Juan, ano ang hiling mo at ilang palo?
Juan: Chief, gusto kong hampasin niyo ako ng 1,000 beses.
Pedro: Hahaha! Ang dami kaya nun eh!
Pulis: Hmm...sige, ano ang ikalawa mong kahilingan?
Juan: Itali ninyo si Pedro sa likod ko!

Juan: Pare nabalug daw si Pareng Jose.
Pedro: Bakit daw?
Juan: Napagkamalan daw niyang Visine ang

Mighty Bond
Juan: Tanungin mo ako ng English, sasagutin kita ng Spanish.
Pedro: What is more important? Heart or Mind?
Juan: Spanish!
Juan: Pareng Pedro, may cellphone ka ba?
Pedro: Meron.
Juan: Globe o Smart?
Pedro: Samsung eh. Sorry.
Juan: Pareng Pedro, may cellphone ka ba?
Pedro: Meron.
Juan: Globe o Smart?
Pedro: Samsung eh. Sorry.
Pedro: Alam mo Pareng Juan, kung magugunaw man ang mundo, malamang mahuhuli ang Pilipinas.
Juan: Bakit naman?
Pedro: Filipino time eh!
Maria: Alam mo love, iyong pagmamahal ko sa iyo, parang ulam namin kagabi.
Juan: Bakit? Dahil masarap?
Maria: Hindi, ubos na

Crossword Puzzle

PAHALANG

- Iniba
- Rahuyo
- Ihango
- Siguro
- Sobra
- Tulo
- Api
- Alaga
- Tongue; Tagalog
- Pinagmulan ng kuwento
- Leon Guerrero
- Oropil
- Kaye ___
- Ginambala
- Tatak ng sabon noon
- Ika
- Ilog ___
- Black; Tagalog
- Kartilya
- Inom ng alak

39 Pagandahin

PABABA

- Kula
- Ilala
- Tungkol sa paglalayag
- Muhammad ___
- Pantakip sa sugat
- Other World
- Alpabeto
- Gamit ng karpintero
- Ihanda ang baril
- Lagim
- Basiyad ng babaw
- Dantayan
- Estado sa Amerika
- Sambit ng nasaktan
- Uri ng ibon
- Sinasamba ng mga katutubo
- Kabaligtaran
- Tinig
- Katulong
- Patong
- Liyab
- ___ Sayyaf;
- bandidong grupo
- Not Applicable

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
11							12			
13						14				
15				16	17					
18			19		20					
			21	22						
23	24	25					26	27	28	29
30						31		32		
33						34	35			
36						37				
38						39				

Answer to last puzzle

M	A	B	I	S	A		K	U	T	A
A	L	A	G	A	W		I	M	A	N
S	A	G	A	N	A		L	A	L	A
A	L	A	T	A	N		A	Y	O	S
M	A	S				G	I	L		
A	Y	O	K	O		M	A	L	A	T
					A	N	S		I	T
A	R	A	B		A	T	I	P	A	N
M	A	N	I		P	A	Y	A	S	O
E	M	I	L		I	L	A	N	A	N
N	I	T	A		N	I	N	A	N	G



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