



Sitel cuts the ribbon on their brand new Tarlac 3 expansion (L-R) Genaro M. Mendoza, Vice Mayor, Tarlac; Haidee Enriquez, Chief People Officer, Sitel PH-ANZ; Ravi Iyengar, Chief Operating Officer, Sitel Asia Pacific; Olivier Camino, Global Chief Operating Officer, Sitel; Zameer Basha, Vice President and CFO, Sitel; Jason Skaria, Global Chief Information Officer, Sitel; Satish Vijayakumar, Vice President Strategic Accounts, Sitel; Geoff Domigpe, Vice President Operations, Sitel Tarlac; Allan Datahan, OIC Deputy Zone Administrator; Philippine Economic Zone Authority

New Clark City secures hosting rights to Asian Aquatics meet

NEW CLARK CITY, Tarlac - The Best Aquatics athletes in the continent will converge in 2020 as New Clark City (NCC) secures the hosting rights of the 11th Asian Swimming Championships (ASC).

In a press conference, Philippine Swimming Inc. President Lailani Velasco said the quadrennial meet organized by the Asian Swimming Federation (AASF) consists of five disciplines namely swim-

ming, diving, water polo, artistic swimming and open water swimming.

It will be held from November 7 to 17, 2020 at the 2,000-seater NCC Aquatics Center.

Aside from the actual competition, AASF will also hold a General Congress on Nov 8 that will bring the top brass of Fédération internationale de natation in the continent.

“We would like to thank

the AASF for confidently entrusting our country to host this mega event despite the interest shown by our experienced regional neighbors to do the same. We see this as an opportunity to not only maximize the use of the world-class facilities at NCC but also to strengthen the local community, promote tourism and showcase our hospitality to our foreign delegates,” Velasco added.

For his part, BCDA

President and CEO Viven-cio Dizon emphasized the readiness of NCC and its facilities to host the event.

“Thank you for offering us this opportunity to be part of a big project. We agree that this is a great occasion for us to inspire the next generation of elite athletes as well as project a positive image of the Philippines to the world,” Dizon furthered. (CLJD-PIA 3)

Sitel bolsters countryside operations with new expansion creating 1,500 new jobs in Central Luzon

Tarlac, City - Sitel, a leading global customer care provider, today announced the opening of its 14th customer experience center in Tarlac that will create additional jobs for roughly 1,500 talents in the region. Philippine Government officials, Sitel executives, and industry partners announced the opening of the new site this morning at the Robinsons Luisita Complex.

With the official inauguration of their latest center – their 3rd in Tarlac and 14th in the country – Sitel sustains its steady growth trajectory in the Philippines and reiterates its commitment to bringing jobs to the countryside.

“We are very excited to expand our operations in Tarlac,” Ravi Iyengar, Sitel Chief Operating Officer-APAC, shared. “Since opening our doors here in 2016, we have experienced tremendous growth in the region and have been able to recruit highly skilled local talents with strong customer service skills and aptitude for complex outsourcing processes and emerging technologies. From three (3) clients in 2016, we now have eight (8) global and local logos being serviced out of our Tarlac facilities.”

Since entering the Philippine BPO market in the Philippines in 2000, Sitel has enjoyed growth due to the country’s business-friendly climate, large pool of readily available and trainable talents, reliable infrastructure, and cost competitiveness. Currently, Sitel employs over 23,000 passionate and talented associates across centers in Metro Manila, Baguio, Tarlac, and Palawan.

“We don’t just do business in Tarlac, we also make sure that we work with the local government, the academe, and the socio-civic society, actively contributing to the development of the local community,” said Haidee C. Enriquez, Sitel PHANZ Chief People

Officer. We established partnership with local schools and universities, providing OJT and immersion opportunities for their graduating students. Early this year, we also established a Sitel Academy Hub in our Tarlac location, which provided free training to near-hire candidates and this year alone, we were able to hire more than 300 from our Sitel Academy training graduates. Our Sitel Tarlac associates also actively participated in initiatives like Brigada Eskwela, Dugong Bayani, and outreach activities to the Aeta community.”

The new Sitel Tarlac 3 highlights the latest innovations in workspace technology, design aesthetic, and amenities. “We know our associates spend so much of their time in the office and we wanted to be sure we created a space conducive to productivity and growth. A workplace that they can call their second home,” explained Cher Retirado, Sitel Asia Pacific Project Management Office Director. The site provides ample spaces for employees to interact, work, collaborate, brainstorm, and innovate. /Michelle Alejandro

BCDA gives Aetas Notice... from page 8

jungle survival skills to american soldiers. BCDA is displacing them to accommodate Chinese businesses in reality, using New Clark City as an excuse. This is highly treasonous, evicting Filipinos to accommodate their Chinese clients in return for money.”

Interestingly, the same 9 points were stated in the Statement issued by the BCDA in its official website on the same day, December 5. It appears that the NCIP just copy-pasted the BCDA statement and adopted it as its own, point by point.

On December 6, the Facebook page of Pokus Gitnang Luzon Multimedia posted that the Aetas, through the help of Atty. Tony Laviña, filed an answer to the 7-day notice. Salient points in the answer, it says, are as follows:

1. RA 8371 or Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act of 1997 (even as it is riddled with loopholes and had failed to protect IP rights) defined ancestral domain and ancestral lands as follows:

a) Ancestral Domains - Subject to Section 56 hereof, refer to all areas generally belonging to ICCs/IPs comprising lands, inland waters, coastal areas, and natural resources therein, held under a claim of ownership, occupied or possessed by ICCs/IPs, themselves or through their ancestors, communally or individually since time immemorial, continuously to the present except when interrupted by war, force majeure or displacement by force, deceit, stealth or as a conse-

quence of government projects or any other voluntary dealings entered into by government and private individuals, corporations, and which are necessary to ensure their economic, social and cultural welfare. It shall include ancestral land, forests, pasture, residential, agricultural, and other lands individually owned whether alienable and disposable or otherwise, hunting grounds, burial grounds, worship areas, bodies of water, mineral and other natural resources, and lands which may no longer be exclusively occupied by ICCs/IPs but from which their traditionally had access to for their subsistence and traditional activities, particularly the home ranges of ICCs/IPs who are still nomadic and/or shifting cultivators;

b) Ancestral Lands - Subject to Section 56 hereof, refers to land occupied, possessed and utilized by individuals, families and clans who are members of the ICCs/IPs since time immemorial, by themselves or through their predecessors-in-interest, under claims of individual or traditional group ownership, continuously, to the present except when interrupted by war, force majeure or displacement by force, deceit, stealth, or as a consequence of government projects and other voluntary dealings entered into by government and private individuals/corporations, including, but not limited to, residential lots, rice terraces or paddies, private forests, swidden farms and tree lots;

2. Aetas existence, ownership, and cultivation of ancestral domain and ancestral lands are recorded in Philippine National Archives as far back as 1846. Spanish friars and colonizers attested to the presence of a thriving ‘Negritos’ ‘Black’ ‘Baluga’ community. The terms were derogatory but they were indicative of vibrant Aeta settlement.

3. Their presence to the ancestral domain and lands were only briefly interrupted during Hukbalahap, Martial Law imposition, and when Pinatubo erupted. All falls under exception of the law.

4. That being said the Aetas right to Free Prior Informed Consent provision should have been respected and BCDA should consult and respect Aetas land rights assertion and right to self determination.

Pokus Gitnang Luzon Multimedia further quoted the sentiments of the community leaders. “Kahit nasaksian namin ang karanasan ng mga kapwa katutubo at magsasaka na nakaranas ng palayasan at halimbawa ng militarisasyon sa pagtatayo ng Phase 1A na naroroon ang sports complex na pinagdadausan ng SEA games, lalong lumalakas pa, at mas determinado ang mga Ayta na tindigan ang kanilang istorikal, moral, at makatarungang mga karapatan,” claims Petronila Muñoz, Tribal Chieftain in the NCC affected ancestral lands.

“Wala daw kaming titulo kaya walang lupang ninuno at walang mga Ayta, ayon sa NCIP, pero wala pa pong NCIP may lupang ninuno na, at wala pang NCIP, may Ayta na. Ang aming mga titulo ay ang aming mga palad na nagkalyo,” reiterated Casamira Maniego, Chairman of Asosasyon ng Katutubong Mahawang (AKMA), and recipient of the first notice of eviction. /BDF

Editor’s Note: This is a running story. On our succeeding issues, you can read the full details of the rights, grievances, the history of Aetas in Capas; how did the government local and national address the Aetas’ concerns, etc.

Aeta workers praise New Clark City for job opportunities

Aeta workers in New Clark City got to experience the world-class facilities during the 30th South East Asian Games held at Capas, Tarlac.

“Masaya po...kasi marami pong kapwa ko na nanonood,” says Ernesto De Guzman while watching the recent games at the Aquatics Center. “Hindi na po lumalayo yung ibang mga katutubo na manood pa sa ibang bayan. Dito na lang po sa amin,” he added.

De Guzman also shared about his life before he was employed in New Clark City. “Nasa bundok lang po kami, nagbungkal ng lupa,” he said.

Another aeta worker in New Clark City is Corazon Capiz, a grandmother who watched the games with her two grandchildren. “Masaya kaming lahat,” she said citing that she could not help but compare the difference now that they have jobs and better roads.

“Ngayon po, lahat ng mga tao kulot o ‘di kulot, may trabaho at saka po ‘yung daan napaganda. Cont. on page 3

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Korean firm provides P1-M financial aid for Filipino vets

CLARK FREEPORT, Pampanga -- Korean firm Donggwang Clark Corporation (DCC) and Kapampangan Development Foundation Inc. (KDFI) inked an agreement on Monday to provide funding assistance to the members of the Philippine Expeditionary Forces to Korea (PEFTOK).

In a ceremony, DCC chairman Lee Shin Kun and KDFI president Benny Ricafort gave PHP1 million for the Filipino veterans during the Korean war.

The funding is provided by DCC as its way of gratitude for the heroism and bravery demonstrated by

the Filipino soldiers during the Korean war.

DCC partnered with KDFI, a private foundation that is apolitical, in the delivery of medical and educational assistance to the veterans and descendants.

KDFI has been selected as a partner because it has already existing programs on cataract operations, prosthetic equipment, harelip medical procedures, and training programs on livelihood.

"This project, by DCC chairman Lee, which is helping the PEFTOK is terrific," Ricafort said.

He said the PEFTOK

during their survey numbers around 60 to 70 who can be found mostly in Capas, Tarlac, Pampanga, and Bulacan.

Ricafort said they initially target to support persons with disabilities who are members of the PEFTOK.

PEFTOK is the first contingent of a large number sent by the Philippine government to the United Nations forces that fought in the Korean War in 1950.

PEFTOK's 10th Battalion Combat Team president Maj. Maximo Young (retired) said there are 68 PEFTOK members who were still alive as of 2018. (PNA)

12 Filipino brands set to feature PH food exports in SIAL Middle East

PASAY CITY - Twelve (12) Philippine food producers and manufacturers are set to take on the demand of the global market in the country's return in the 10th edition of Salon International de l'Alimentation (SIAL) Middle East at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Dubai on December 9-11, 2019.

Led by the Department of Trade and Industry through the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions (DTI-CITEM), the country's delegation under the FoodPhilippines country brand will showcase food products across various segments that are certified as Halal in the Philippines.

Part of the SIAL Network, SIAL Middle East is backed by more than 50 years of experience, industry know-how and a broad international network of 8 leading B2B events. SIAL Middle East is jointly organized by Abu Dhabi National Exhi-

bitions Company (ADNEC) and Comexposium.

"Our product lineup includes fresh and processed fruits and vegetables, seafood products, ethnic and gourmet products, non-alcoholic beverages, confectionary, biscuits, and pastries, among others," said DTI Undersecretary Abdulgani Macatoman, who heads the agency's Trade Promotions Group (TPG).

Part of the country exhibits are selections of coffee, baking and dairy products, banana chips, peanuts, dried chips, calamansi and dalandan concentrates, cooking mixes and spices, and a va-

riety of coconut products, among others.

The Philippine food companies exhibiting in SIAL are Edna and Rebecca's Banana Chips & Coated Peanut, Filipinos Oro de Cacao, Inc. (Auro Chocolate), Fruits of Life, Inc., JNRM Corporation, Mapagmahal Foods, Marigold Manufacturing Corporation (Mama Sita's), Miguelitos International Corporation, Mira's Turmeric Products, MS3 Agri-venture Corp., Prosource International Inc., RPO Fine Foods Corporation and See's International Food Mfg. Corp.

"As a member of the Muslim community and someone who only eats halal food, I can assure you that the food products from these 12 companies are of high quality and full of flavors," he added.

Featured under the Philippine pavilion in SIAL is the recently awarded Filipino chocolate brand, Auro Chocolate, which was lauded in the International Cocoa Awards (ICA) of Salon Du Chocolat last October for producing one of the top 20 best cacao beans in the world—the first recognition for a Philippine brand.

"Another good find in our pavilion is the Instayum Mushroom Chips from JNRM Corporation, which reinvented mushrooms into tasty and nutritious snacks. This product won the SIAL Middle East Innovation Bronze Award last year," Macatoman added.

PH culinary demonstration and food sampling

Another highlight of the

DENR awards 30 residential patents in Zambales

IBA, Zambales - Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) awarded a total of 30 residential patents (land titles) in Batonlapoc village, Botolan town covering 9,200 square meters.

DENR Regional Executive Director Paquito Moreno said this is part of the government's "Handog Titulo" program.

"The program aims to fuel progress in communities and improve economic productivity of the people by expediting the processing and issuance of public land patents to qualified beneficiaries," Moreno explained.

Botolan Mayor Doris "Bing" Maniquis expressed her gratitude for the prompt action of the government

to address land concerns in Batonlapoc village.

Since 2011, a total of 31,743 residential land titles covering 629 hectares have already been distributed in Central Luzon benefiting over 158,000 residents and their families.

DENR is set to distribute another 2,100 residential free patents in 2020. (CL-JD-PIA 3)

DOT celebrates PH's Leading Dive Destination citation

Muscat, Oman - The Philippines continues to enjoy recognition as one of the world's premier diving destinations, this time bagging back-to-back diving accolades at the World Travel

Awards (WTA) Grand Final Gala Ceremony held recently at the Royal Opera House Muscat.

Winning WTA's 2019 World's Leading Dive Destination award for the first

FoodPhilippines exhibit is the cooking demonstration and food sampling activities conducted by UAE-based Filipino chefs under the FILFOOD Program, which is a collaboration of food and beverage operators to innovate Philippine food and ingredients for residents, global citizens and tourists in the UAE.

"Dynamic cooking demonstration will be conducted under the FoodPhilippines pavilion to highlight our flavorful offerings," Macatoman added. "Among the food that will be served in our three-day food sampling are fresh vegetable spring roll with peanut sauce, beef sirloin steak wrap, chocolate-covered fruit delight, chicken satay, and chocolate oatmeal and peanut cookies—all of which will highlight the use of the products displayed in our pavilion."

The tasting menu was prepared by Filipino chef Edward Dinoso, who is a Corporate Chef of Asia Gulf Companies, along with other culinary icons under the FILFOOD program.

DTI aims to strengthen food promotions in UAE

Led by DTI Undersecretary Macatoman, the Philippines will lead an Outbound Business Matching Mission (OBMM) at the Novotel World Trade Center in Dubai, UAE on December 8.

He also shared that the DTI is planning to conduct the first in-store promotion for Filipino food products in Carrefour in February 2020.

"The in-store promotions in Carrefour shall further highlight new and existing Philippine food products catered for both the Middle Eastern market and the large Filipino community that resides across the UAE," Macatoman explained.

"We want to take advantage of our promotion momentum to launch the PH Food Promotion Program and form valuable alliances with sustainable global and regional organizations in the UAE in time for the Expo 2020 Dubai," he added.

This participation under FoodPhilippines is led by DTI-CITEM in partnership with Philippine Trade and Investment Center in Dubai and the Foreign Trade Service Corps (FTSC), Export Marketing Bureau (EMB), the Philippine Exporters Confederation (PHILEXPORT) and the Philippine Embassy in UAE as part of the government's unified effort to promote the Philippines as a source of quality food products in the global market.

DTI-CITEM is committed to developing, nurturing and promoting globally competitive small and medium enterprises (SMEs), exporters, designers and manufacturers by implementing an integrated approach to export marketing in partnership with other government and private entities.

For more information on its services and events, please log on to www.citem.gov.ph/sialme/ (DTI-CITEM)

time, the Philippines bested eight other global dive destinations also nominated under the same category, namely Azores Islands, Bora Bora in French Polynesia, Cayman Islands, Fiji, Galapagos Islands, Great Barrier Reef in Australia, Maldives, and Mexico.

"Dubbed by marine experts and scientists as the heart of marine biodiversity in the world, our country is home to the highest concentration of coral reef life and astounding variety of marine species. This latest recognition is a validation that the Philippines is truly a premier dive destination," said Philippine Department of Tourism (PDOT) Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat.

Meanwhile, Palawan's prestigious Amanpulo Resort also emerged victorious as the World's Leading Dive Resort at the gala event.

Last October, WTA held its gala event for Asia and Oceania in Vietnam, where the Philippines earned its first Asia's Leading Dive Destination award after multiple nominations since 2006.

The PDOT has hosted a number of dive-centric events including the Anilao Underwater Shootout photography competition, and the Travel Trade Support through Dive Travel Exchange (TRAVEX) business-to-business (B2B) meetings.

Recently, the PDOT hosted the first Philippine International Dive Expo (PHIDEX) exposition, the only event in the world with the Dive Travel Exchange or business-to-business (B2B) meetings. The exposition gave foreign buyers the opportunity to see and experience first-hand Philippine dive products and knowledge of the

Cont. on page 7

Aeta workers... from page 2

Dati, 'di ka makakasakay ng motor diyan. Ngayon kahit na gabi magmotor ka, pwede," Capiz shares.

"Malaking pakinabang na dumating ang trabaho dito. Lahat po nagkatrabaho. Dati trabaho ko, 'naggagapas ng cogon... nangunguha ng puso [ng saging] sa bundok tapos binebenta sa baba. Ngayon po may trabaho na," she added.

Lourdes Rivera, is also grateful for her job as a gardener in New Clark City. "Ang trabaho ko dito sir, nagtatanim ng bougainvillea, carabao grass at tsaka yung peanut....Dati walang trabaho, nagkakalap ng gulay na tinitinda namin sa bayan. Nagtatanim kami ng palay."

When asked if she will come back again to watch the games, she said yes. "Ngayon lang kami nakakita ng ganyan... mula noong bata pa ako," Rivera added.

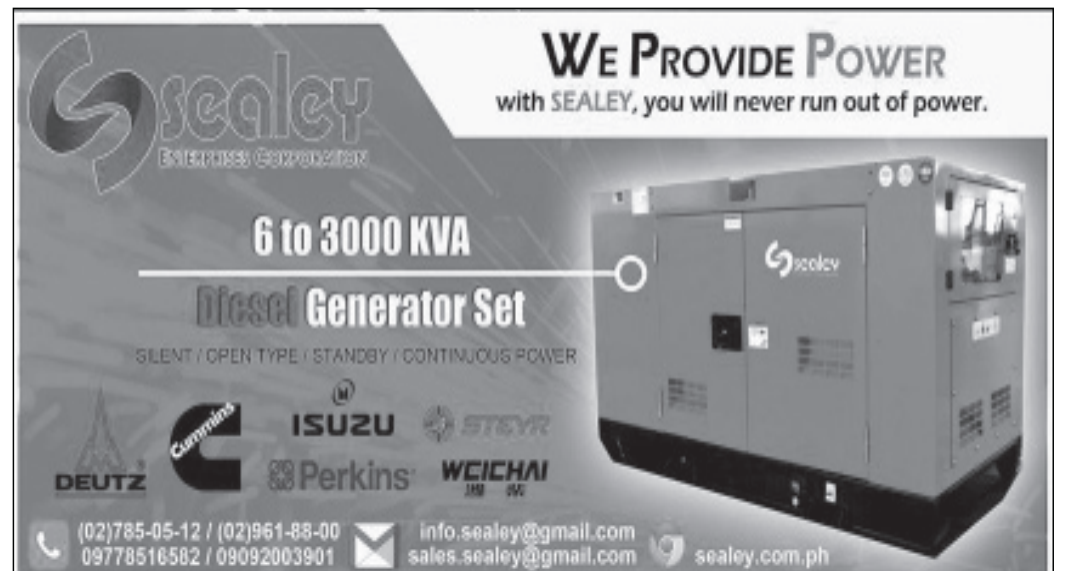
About 500 aetas were employed in New Clark City since development started.

BCDA holds regular dialogues with Capas local government and the communities to assure that they are part of the New Clark City development.

Financial assistance packages amounting to P300, 000 per hectare (or P30.00/sq.m.) were made available to project-affected people. This is the highest compensation package provided by government, to project-affected people.

Further, relocation sites within New Clark City were also provided for those whose residential structures were affected.

BCDA worked with credible institutions such as the Asian Development Bank in master planning and ensuring the sustainability and inclusivity of New Clark City. (BCDA)



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Dirtied waters

By: Antonio Contreras (www.manilatimes.net)

We love to say that water is free. Thus, some would argue that those who profit from it are basically committing an ethical and moral sin.

Indeed, and ideally, water is a commodity that is produced by nature. Technically, water is produced by the natural processes inherent in the water cycle. Precipitation produces rain, snow or ice, which fall into rivers, lakes and oceans, and stored as groundwater in our aquifers, which eventually comes out in springs and creeks that would feed into rivers, lakes and oceans. These bodies of water then evaporate and form into clouds, which eventually become precipitation.

But we are not just talking here of water in general, but water fit for consumption not only by humans, but by plants and animals. And it is potable water that becomes a scarce commodity. Gone are the days when we could just go to the nearest spring, well or lake to get water for our domestic consumption. A growing population has made it necessary to install distribution systems that would draw

water from natural sources such as deep wells and natural bodies of water, or rely on precipitation and impound this in human-made dams. There is also now a need to treat the water so that it is rendered fit for domestic and commercial use — from simple filtration and purification to desalination of salty water from the sea.

Compounding the problems of greatly reduced natural sources of water and accelerating treatment costs are the effects of the so-called effluents of affluence or the impact of wastes from domestic and industrial activities on the quality of water supply. Massive deforestation has greatly compromised the capacity of watersheds to hold water, and to regulate its quality and flow. This leads to the siltation of rivers, lakes and human-made dams, which further reduces not only the quality, but also the quantity of potable water. In addition, the development of built environments that led to the concretization and asphaltting of land to build human habitats, highways and urban infrastructures caused a reduction of water seeping into aquifers and the increase of surface run-off. Lack of forest cover and too much infrastructure development also lead to a situation where monsoon rains bring destructive floods that bring a lot of water that is of poor quality, only to be followed by drought episodes. This is because there is very little ground water as well as water flowing from springs, wells and creeks. These are the result of large amounts of surface run-off where water from heavy precipitation directly flow into the lakes and seas and thus fail to adequately replenish the aquifers.

Thus, we are now confronted with the situation that water ends up being implicated in a complex supply and distribution problem. In order to address this, investments have to be made in infrastructure to impound, treat and distribute clean and potable water; there is also a need to manage the recycling, treatment and disposal of waste water and those polluted by toxic wastes. All of these activities would require high levels of capital expenditures.

Ideally, it is the responsibility of the state to invest in these kinds of activities, considering that water is a public good and even a human rights issue. Unfortunately, our history has shown that public institutions are not efficient and have dismally failed in so many instances. Before 1997, the state had full control over water distribution. But the sheer weight of government inefficiency led President Fidel Ramos to move for the privatization of water distribution. The conventional wisdom at the time was that private entities, such as the big water concessionaires and the local water districts, because they are driven by market forces, would be more efficient.

The downside of this argument, however, is that private entities are also primarily driven by profit-seeking, hence would see water no longer as a public good, but as a commodity. They would weigh into their equations the cost of their investments in infrastructures and would expect to recover this from the revenues that they would be collecting from domestic, commercial and industrial consumers. Operating under the premise of a business, they would necessarily expect that they will profit from the undertaking. No sane private entity will invest in something where they would just break even. After all, they are not philanthropists but business corporations.

It is in this context where the allegedly onerous provisions in the contract, which the Philippine government, through the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, entered into with Maynilad Water Services Inc. and Manila Water Co. Inc., emerged. Desperate to entice parties to invest in the distribution of water, at a time that the country was facing a water crisis, our government designed the contracts with provisions that may have appeared logical at the time, but would come back to haunt us.

It is easy to paint Maynilad and Manila Water as greedy companies owned by heartless oligarchs. But it is not the obligation of private companies to force themselves to



KAKAMPI MO ANG BATAS

Juan, Isabel, at Zacarias sa
kuwento ng Pasko



BY: ATTY. BATAS MAURICIO

INSPIRASYON SA BUHAY: "... 'Huwag kang matatakot Zacarias; dininig na ang iyong mga panalangin. Magsisilang ang iyong asawang si Isabel, at tatawagin mo siyang Juan'..." (Lucas 1:13, Bibliya).

-ooo-

BAHAGI NG PASKO SINA JUAN, ISABEL, AT ZACARIAS: Ang paniniwala ng marami sa kanilang pagbabasa ng Bagong Tipan ng Bibliya, ang pagsilang ni Jesus, ang ating Diyos at Tagapagligtas na Siyang Diyos Ama, Anak, at Espiritu Santo, ay ipinahayag lamang noong nagpakita ang anghel kay Maria, ang birhen, at kay Jose, ang kanyang katipan.

Ngunit kung babasahing mabuti ang Lucas 1, may isa pang kuwento sa Bagong Tipan na nagpapahayag, ng mas maaga, sa pagsilang ni Jesus. Ang pangatlong kuwento ay ang pagsilang ni Juan Bautista, na "pinsan" ni Jesus (ang nanay ni Juan, si Isabel, at si Maria, ang nanay ni Jesus, ay magpinsan).

Si Juan ang naging anak ni Isabel at ni Zacarias, bagamat sila ay parehong matanda na at baog pa, kaya wala silang anak. Ngunit silang dalawa ay mga Israelitang maka-Diyos mula sa lahi ni Aaron, ang pari. Si Zacarias ay isa ding pari na nagsisilbi sa altar.

Isang araw, noong nagpunta siya sa altar, sinalubong si Zacarias ni Gabriel, "ang anghel na nakatayo sa harap ng Diyos". Natakot si Zacarias pero sinabi ni Gabriel na di siya dapat matakot dahil dininig na ng Diyos ang kanyang panalangin, sapagkat magsisilang si Isabel ng sanggol na lalaki at tatawagin niyang Juan.

-ooo-

JUAN, IHAHANDA ANG TAO SA PAGDATING NG DIYOS: Nagpahayag ng duda si Zacarias sa sinabi ni Gabriel: "Papaanong mangyayari ito? Matanda na ako, at matanda na rin ang asawa ko." Nagalit si Gabriel, at sinabihan nito si Zacarias na siya, si Gabriel, ay lumalakad sa harap ng Diyos, at dahil di naniniwala si Zacarias sa sinabi sa kanya ukol kay Juan, di muna makakapagsalita si Zacarias.

Ang kamangha-manghang punto sa kuwentong ito ay ang pahayag na si Juan ay isisilang upang ganapin ang isang layunin: ihandang ang isang sambayanan para sa pagsilang ni Jesus. Basahin po natin ang salin ng New International Version ng kuwentong ito, sa Lucas 1:12-17.

Sa kuwento, kausap ni Gabriel si Zacarias: "Huwag kang matatakot Zacarias; dininig na ang iyong mga panalangin. Ang iyong asawang si Elizabeth ay magsisilang ng sanggol na lalaki, at tatawagin mo siyang Juan.

"Magdudulot siya ng kaligayahan sa iyo, at marami sa Israel ang masisiyahan dahil sa kanyang pagsilang, sapagkat mahalaga siya sa Panginoon. Hindi siya titikim ng alak o ng iba pang nakakalasing na inumin, at mapupuspos siya ng Banal na Espiritu bago pa man siya isilang. Ibabalik niya ang marami sa bayang Israel sa Panginoong Diyos.

operate at a loss. It is the job of government to ensure that these companies work for the public interest. Beyond the cursing and bravado, the Duterte administration is doing the right thing to pressure the concession owners, the Ayalas and Manuel Pangilinan, to renegotiate the terms of the government's contracts with the Manila Water and Maynilad.

Part of the duty of government is to ensure that the water that is distributed is not dirtied not only by the effluents of affluence, but also by the greed of the affluent. And this could not just be solved by forcing Manila Water and Maynilad to exercise some social responsibility and moderate their greed. It would also involve ensuring that the operations of water districts all over the country do not fall into the monopolistic hands of other oligarchs who may be described as "good" but will be just as profit-seeking as any other oligarch.

MAGKASANGGA TAYO

Mayor Eloy Eclar
ng Gerona, ANO PA
INAANTAY MO?!?!
BY: NESTOR "PAKEN" CASTRO



Nitong nakaraang lang na kolum ko ay aking binati at pinuri itong si Mayor Eclar hinggil sa kanyang pagi-isyu ng temporary closure order sa ilang mga poultry sa kanyang lugar (Gerona).

Para sa kaalaman ng lahat, ang pahayagan na ito ay naka-ilang isyu na kung saan malaking espasyo sa pahayagan na ito ay ating ginamit para ilabas at ipakita ang mga gagawing hakbangin ni the good Mayor Nora Modomo (Sta. Ignacia) sa darating na renewal ng mga business permits sa kanyang lugar. Ang mga impormasyon na sa pahayagan na ito ay ating ipinarating through formal letters (2 letters so far) sa halos lahat ng mga Mayor sa probinsya ng Tarlac at ang hindi lang namin na inform ay ang munisipyo ng San Jose sapagkat sa aking pagkakaalam ay wala naman silang mga insidente ng mga environmental issue on piggeries and poultrys.

Base sa aking pagsisiyasat, mukhang itong si Mayor Eclar ay magaling lang na showman at baka puros pakitang tao lang ang istilo mo Mayor? Base sa kasalukuyang front page story ng pahayagan na ito at info nagmula sa taga Brgy. Pinasling nagsabi daw si Mayor Eclar na ipaghaharap daw niya ang mga nagrereklamong residente at ang may-ari ng poultry ngunit ito ay hindi niya ginawa, bakit kaya?

Bagama't ayoko pang husgahan itong si Mayor Eclar, dala na rin na ang mga LGU ay mayroon ng sapat na pruwetang upang hindi i-renew ang mga Business/Mayors Permit ng mga matitigas ang ulong poultrys at piggeries sapagkat dapat nating sundin ang tamang proseso with the intent and purpose to see to it that poultrys and piggeries will be fully compliant.

Huwag natin kalimutan ang kasabihan na we are a country of laws and not of men. Ang ibig sabihin ay kumilos tayo ng naaayon sa panuntunan ng batas este batas.

I rundown ko uli ang ilan sa mga aspeto na dapat sundin ng mga poultrys and piggeries bago sila mabigyan ng kinakulangang renewal ng business permit:

1. Compliance with National building code hinggil sa building and related permits (Engineering office)
2. Compliance with local taxes

Cont. on page 5

"At mauuna siya sa Panginoon, taglay ang diwa at kapangyarihan ni Elias, upang ibalik ang puso ng mga magulang sa kanilang mga anak, at ng mga suwail sa karunungan ng mga matuwi---upang ihandang ang isang sambayanan sa pagdating ng Panginoon..."

-ooo-

REAKSIYON? Tawag po sa 0977 805 9058, 0918 574 0193, 0933 8251308 o sa aking Messenger account sa Facebook: Melanio Lazo Mauricio Jr. Email: batasmauricio@yahoo.com, mmauriciojr111@gmail.com. Maaari din po kayong mag-post ng inyong mga reaksiyon sa aking Facebook page, www.facebook.com/attybatas.

Magsumbong sa Weekender!

>Meron ba kayong issue na matagal nang pinaabot sa mga liderato natin ngunit di kayo pinapasin?

>Meron ba kayong sumbong ngunit di niyo alam kung paano at kung kanino ito ipa-aabot?

Mag text lang sa 09175069123 (Globe) or 0932-907-9810 (Sun), mag e-mail sa tarlacweekender@yahoo.com, o di kaya ay mag PM sa ating Facebook account na Tarlac Weekender!



Hulaan!! Sino sila?

BY: NELSON BOLOS
(Guest Columnist)



Sino-sinong mga city councilors ang nagtangkang harangin ang Lease Contract ng Puregold at city na kung saan magbabayad ng P810,000/month sa lungsod ang Puregold sa pag-okupa nito sa halos kalahati ng Downtown market? Clue: Gusto daw nilang humihingi sa Puregold ng “SIGNING FEE” bago nila pirmanan ang SP Resolution Authorizing city mayor Cristy Angeles to Enter into Contract.

(Nauna rito, kinansela ni Mayor Cristy Angeles ang Manalang-Laddaran lease contract na P70,000/month, at pina-renta ni Laddaran ang espasyo ng Doentoewn Market sa Puregold ng P700,000/month). Clue: ang isa dito ay may mga puwesto sa Downtown market pero hindi daw nababayad ng renta at nasa P3 Million na ang utang sa renta. At ang isa pa sa

HATAW NA KAIBIGAN

The Best talaga ang TARELCO
1 (Part 6)

BY: ROLDAN RAMOS

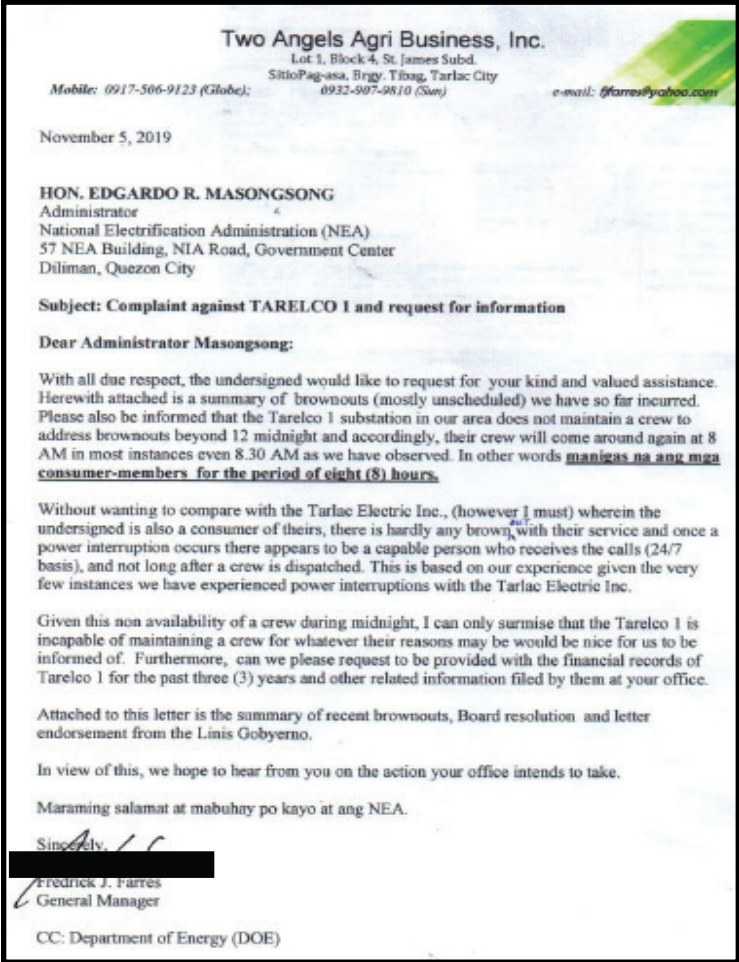


Mukhang dededmahin ng Tarelco 1 ang letter request for information ng isa nilang member-consumer. Sana ay huwag naman ganuon ang mangyari sapagkat karapatan ng isang member-consumer na mabigyan ng mga hinihinging impormasyon at hindi naman ito masasabi na confidential in nature sapagkat ang pagbibigay ng impormasyon ay hindi naman makakasama sa operasyon ng Tarelco 1, unless of course ay mayroong itinatago ang pamunuan ng Tarelco 1 na ayaw nilang ipaalam sa publiko o sa kanilang mga miyembro?!!

Napag-alaman ko rin na ang General Manager ng Tarelco 1 na si Engr. Allan Bermudez at si Mr. Owen Dizon ng finance ay parehong naka-bakasyon mula pa daw nung November 9, 2019 ngunit malapit na raw bumalik (buti pa kayo mga BOSS-ING, mukhang bakasyon grande kayo ha, saan ba kayo nag babakasyon sa Europa , sa USA, sa Cayman Islands, etc Hi! Hi!). Kaya siguro ay hindi pa naa-aksonan ang isang letter request na ipinadala sa office of the GM. Aantayin natin.

Maliban dito ay malinaw na malinaw ang pakay ng member-consumer na kaya lamang niya inaalam ang mga impormasyon na ito ay nais niyang mag-boluntaryo ng kanyang serbisyo (panahon at oras) para sa ikabubuti ng operasyon at serbisyo ng kooperatiba. Yaan naman ang essence and spirit of a cooperative which is for the members to voluntarily lend their time and resources for the good of the cooperative.

Nung isang araw ay ibinigay sa akin ng consumer-member ang reply ng Tarelco 1 hinggil ng kabuuang sagot sa unang liham sa NEA. Aking ihahayag ang portions ng liham at ang kaukulan komentaryo.



Makikita ang liham ni Freddie Farres sa NEA kung saan kanyang inireklamo ang pagka walang crew ng Tarelco 1 sa oras ng 12 PM (midnight) hanggang 8.30 AM ng umaga at kung magkaroon ng brown out sa nasabing oras ay mistulang “manigas” na nga lang ang tatamaan ng brownout sapagkat walang crew (linemen) na haharap sa problema. Talaga naman nakakatawa ang ganitong sistema ng Tarelco 1 sapagkat napakalaki ng kinikita ng kooperatiba at magpasahod lamang ng 3 to 4 na katao para sa isang team ay hindi nila magawa. Ang aking maipapayo sa mga KATAAS – TAASAN AT KAGALANG-GALANG NA MGA OPISYALES NG TARELCO 1 AY KUNG HINDI NINYO KAYANG GAMPANAN NG TAMA ANG INYONG MGA TRABAHO AY MAG-RE-SIGN NA LANG KAYO, TUTAL NAMAN MARAMI ANG MAY KAPABILIDAD NA PUMALIT SA INYO. HUWAG KALIMUTAN YUN KASABIHAN NA “NO ONE IS INDISPENSIBLE”.

kanila ay dating vice-mayor.

oo0 ^ 0oo

Sino ang nagsabi ng: “GARAPAL NAMAN NG ILANG MGA SP, GUSTO PA NILANG KUMITA SA PUREGOLD SAMANTALANG PUMAYAG NA ANG PUREGOLD NA MAGBAYAD NG P810,000 PER MONTH, KUMPARA SA IN-APPROVE NILANG CONTRACT NOON NI MANALANG NA P70,000 LANG PER MONTH”?

Hindi pa sila kuntento sa kinita nilang milyon-milyon noong i-approve nila ang Manalang-Laddaran contract?

oo0 ^ 0oo

Sinong city councilor ngayon ang kasamang tumanggap ni Manalang ng milyon-milyon noong ipa-lease sa Uniwide ang 7 hektaryang lupa sa Aquino Boulevard?

oo0 ^ 0oo

Sinong opisyal ng DAR Tarlac ang sinampahan ng kaso sa Ombudsman ng dahil daw sa pagpapahirap sa mga taong humihingi ng clearance? Clue: Kung wala daw padulas hindi raw nagbibigay ng clearance o certification ang babaeng DAR opisyal.

oo0 ^ 0oo

Sinong kapitan sa Concepcion ang nahuli-

Cont. on page 6

POWER FAILURE SUMMARY
TWO ANGELS AGRI BUSINESS, INC. (TWO ANGELS MALIGAYA POULTRY)
PUROK MALIGAYA, STA. INES EAST, STA. IGNACIA, TARLAC

April 18, 2019:	5:00 PM to 5:02 PM 6:00 PM to 6:15 PM 6:20 PM to 7:10 PM	October 18, 2019:	8:01 AM - 9:25 AM 8:09 PM - 8:38 PM; 10:12 PM - 10:36 PM
April 25, 2019:	9:12 PM to 10:33 PM	October 20, 2019:	7:06 AM - 7:09 AM 3:56 PM - 3:59 PM 6:05 PM - 8:24 PM
May 4, 2019:	2:00 PM to 2:15 PM	October 21, 2019:	8:51 AM - 10:05 AM 1:14 PM - 4:07 PM
May 7, 2019:	5:30 AM to 9:46 AM	October 22, 2019:	8:44 AM - 8:46 AM 5:32 PM - 5:35 PM
May 8, 2019:	2:39 PM to 3:27 PM	October 23, 2019:	10:13 PM - 10:15 PM 7:41 PM to 8:16 PM
May 11, 2019:	6:45 PM to 9:46 PM 10:22 PM to 11:05 PM (intermittent)	October 27, 2019:	1:59 AM - 3:38 AM
May 13, 2019:	11:50 AM to 8:20 PM	October 31, 2019:	
May 18, 2019:	12:45 Midnight to 1:06 AM	November 1, 2019:	
BROWNOUTS WERE NOT RECORDED FROM MAY 19 TO MAY 28 2019			

May 29, 2019:	8:00 AM to 6:00 PM
May 30, 2019:	11:AM to 11:52
May 31, 2019:	3:00 AM to 9:18 AM
June 17, 2019:	5:20 PM to 5:35 PM
June 22, 2019:	5:47 PM to 7:23 PM
June 26, 2019:	12:11 PM to 1:13 PM
July 12, 2019:	7:00 PM to 7:49 PM
July 14, 2019:	4:37 PM to 5:26 PM
July 17, 2019:	9:00 AM to 12:00 noon

BROWNOUTS WERE NOT RECORDED FROM JULY 18 TO AUGUST 8, 2019

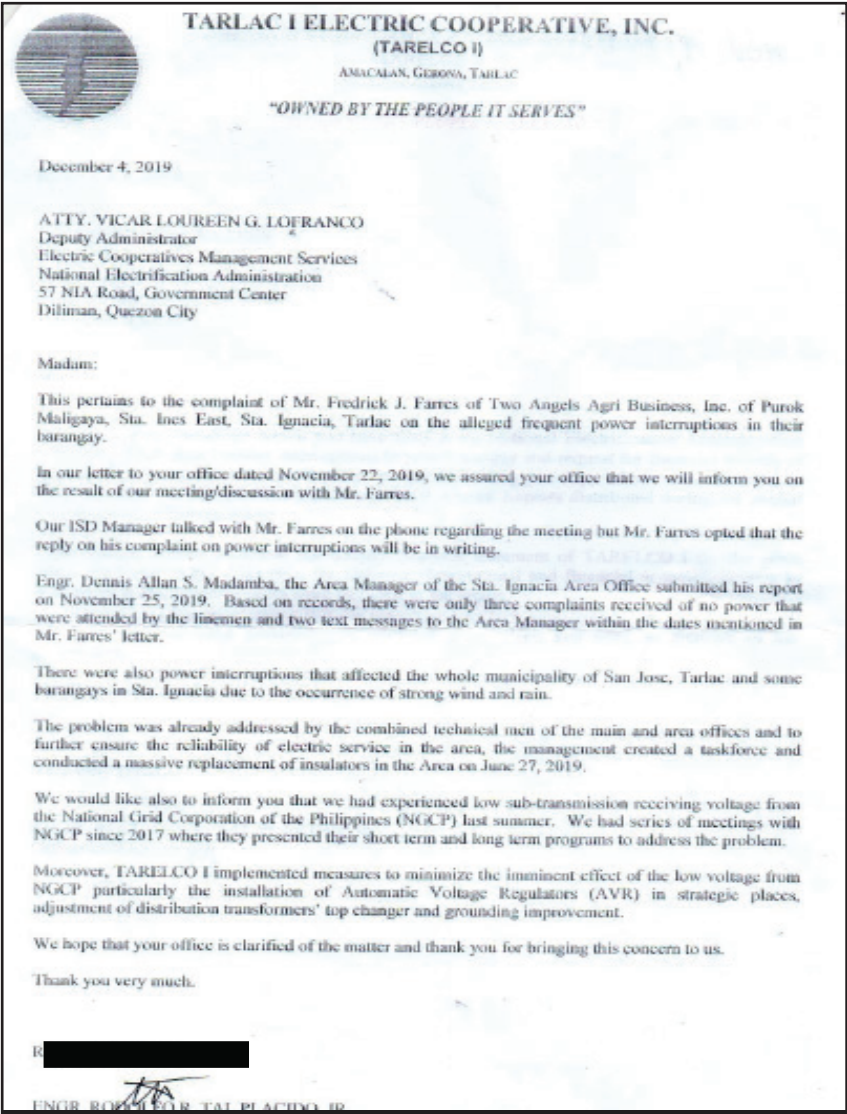
August 9, 2019:	5:44 PM to 5:58 PM
August 10, 2019:	2:50 PM to 3:03 PM
August 21, 2019:	1:55 PM to 2:07 PM
August 24, 2019:	6:45 PM to 6:51 PM
August 31, 2019:	5:03 PM to 10:04 PM
September 5, 2019:	2:16 PM to 3:03 PM 5:57 PM to 6:00 PM
September 7, 2019:	4:27 PM to 4:36 PM 4:40 PM to 4:43 PM
September 8, 2019:	10:51 AM to 11:10 AM

BROWNOUTS WERE NOT RECORDED FROM SEPT 8 TO OCT 2, 2019

October 3, 2019:	2:45 PM to 3:33 PM
October 4, 2019:	1:41 PM to 1:44 PM
October 5, 2019:	5:05 PM to 5:10 PM
October 7, 2019:	2:25 PM to 2:28 PM
October 9, 2019:	8:42 AM to 9:42 PM
October 14, 2019:	9:30 AM to 10:00 PM

Makikita ang summary ng mga naganap na brownouts sa Brgy. Sta Ines East mula sa petsa April 18, 2019 hanggang November 5, 2019. Beginning on the Month of April 2019 - 4 instances, May 2019 - 6 instances, June 2019 - 3 instances, July 2019- 3 instances, August 2019 - 6 instances, September 2019 - 5 instances, October 2019 - 16 instances, November 2019- 3 instances for a GRAND TOTAL OF 46 times NAG BROWN OUT OF VARYING LENGTHS OF TIME. WOW HANEP, PALAGAY KO LANG KUNG MAG KAK-ABIGAYAN NG AWARDS SA PINAKAMARAMING BROWN OUT SIGURADO KO TOP AWARDEE ANG TARELCO 1. By the way hindi na nilista ang mga brown outs na naganap sa pet-sa May 19 to 28, 2019 , July 18 to

August 8, 2019 at Sept 8 to Oct 2, 2019. CALLING Tarlac Electric Inc., panahon na siguro na subukan ninyong makapasok o ma-take over ang TARELCO 1 para gumanda ang serbisyo ng TARELCO 1!!!



Magkasangga Tayo
...from page 4

on land, building and machineries and proper declaration for new structures (Assessors Office)

3. Land re-classification, if property is not yet agro –industrial, base on the CLUP of Municipality (City or Municipal Council)

4. Compliance on locational clearance (CLUP Officer/Zoning)

5. Compliance of salaries and wages (DOLE)

6. Compliance on legal benefits-SSS, PAG-IBIG and PHILHEALTH

7. Compliance on Fire Safety (Bureau of Fire)

8. Compliance on Sanitary concerns (health office)

9. Compliance on Environmental concerns:

(9a) Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) and terms therein

(9b) Accredited pollution control officer (PCO)

(9c) Waste water discharge permit

(9d) Air pollution control permit

(9e) Register as hazardous waste producer

Ilan lamang ito na kailangan na ma-komplayan ng mga poultry at pig-gery bago ma-isyuhan ng renewal of Mayors/Business Permit, bagamat hindi ko direktang sinasabi na huwag i-renew ang mga permits and licenses na ito, ang sinasabi ko at tutumbukin ka na ay huwag pairalin ang aspeto ng KORA-PSYON sa pagre-renew ng Mayors/ Business permit at possible sigurong bigyan muna ng provisional o temporary permit pending the full compliance within certain number of months (sa aking suhestiyon 90 days or 3 months) for full compliance otherwise ire-revoke ninyo ang temporary/provisional permit. SUHESTIYON LANG NAMAN ITO MGA HONORABLE MAYORS.

Sa tutuo lang kasi, ang mga Mayor ay umaasa rin naman sa kanilang mga staff at department heads. Sa aking pagkakalam ay ministerial ang kanilang function sa pag-pirma ng mga permit bagamat they can be held liable for violation of the Anti Graft and Corrupt Practices Act (RA 3019) and other violation of law for their negligence in the exercise of their functions. Kaya sa pagkakaintindi ng kolumnistang ito pipirmahan na ni Mayor ang permit, yun pala sa tutuo lang ay kulang-kulang pa pala ang dapat na i-comply ng poultry o piggery owner.

NALPAS!

Makikita ang Letter reply ng Tarelco 1 addressed to the NEA Deputy Administrator and copy furnished member-consumer F. Farres. Makikita sa 4th paragraph ng letter ang isang katawa-tawang submitted report daw ng Tarelco 1 Area Manager na si Engr. Dennis Allan S. Madamba and we quote “ ...Based on records, there were only three complaints received of no power that were attended by the linemen....”. Sinisiguro ko sayo Engr. Madamba na ang summary ng mga naganap na brownouts are a faithful transcription of actual handwritten records of recorded brownouts na naganap sa mga panahon na yan. Simple lang naman ang proseso sa farm, at tuwing may brown out ay trabaho ng genset operator at ng manager na ilista ang mga nagaganap na brownout/power interruption. Tanungin mo lang mga security guards ninyo (mga guards kasi ang taga tanggap ng call or text kapag nag-brownout) kung gaano kadalas nila natatanggap ang text and calls mula kay Mr. Farres and his staff. O baka naman marahil, kayo mismo ay walang records sa nagaganap na brownouts? Kung sabihin natin sa Ilocano AGA-AMMO TAY-ON!!!

Siyanga pala Engr. Madamba, kinukumusta ka ng isang farm sa Camiling na nabigyan mo raw ng napakaraming tulong nung ikaw ay area manager duon.

Pope Francis declares Orani Church as ‘Minor Basilica’

Orani, Bataan -- Pope Francis on Thursday conferred the revered title “Minor Basilica” to the Church of Orani here that is more popularly known as the Miraculous Virgin of the Most Holy Rosary Church.

Bishops from Central Luzon and priests from the Balanga Diocese assisted Bataan Bishop Ruperto Santos in a Holy Mass following the solemn declaration read in Latin by Father Perry Medina.

Santos led in the removal of the white cloth covering the Papal chair in the altar, signifying it was ready for use by the Pope.

“We must lead to Mary, love her and live like her,” Santos urged the faithful in his homily.

Mary refers to the Miraculous Virgin Mary of the Most Holy Rosary, the patron Saint of Orani.

An image of the Virgin Mary on the beautiful altar of the 309-year old church is believed to be 303 years old.

“Ang Minor Basilica ay

isang pribilehiyo na ipinagkakaloob ng Santo Papa. Kapag ang isang simbahan ay Minor Basilica, ito ay tahanan na o simbahan ng Santo Papa (The Minor Basilica is a privilege given by the Pope. Once a church is Minor Basilica, it is already a home or church of the Pope),” said Father Abraham Pantig, parish priest of the Orani Church.

He said that basilica symbols like the Papal chair, umbrella, bell, Vatican logo, among others, can be seen in the altar.

“Kapag dadalaw dito ang Santo Papa, doon sa Papal chair siya mauupo (If the Pope visits here, he will sit at the Papal chair),” Pantig said.

The parish priest said Orani Church has become the 16th Minor Basilica in the Philippines.

He said there are only four Major Basilica located in Rome – St. Peter Basilica, St. Paul Basilica, St. Mary Basilica and St. John Basilica.

“Kaya napakalaking biyaya sa mga taga-Orani, sa

buong diocese ng Balanga, sa Bataan na tayo’y pinagkalooban ng Santo Papa. Hindi natatapos sa titulo ng pagiging Minor Basilica, kailangang ipakita nating buhay ang simbahan (Thus, it is a big blessing for the Orani people, in the whole Diocese of Balanga, in Bataan, that the Pope has provided us. It does not end with the title of being a Minor Basilica, we need to show that the church is alive),” Pantig said.

Rep. Geraldine Roman of Bataan’s first district, dressed in a beautiful terno, was among the huge crowd of people inside the church, who attended the Mass and witnessed the conferment of the Minor Basilica title.

Other officials included Governor Albert Garcia, Representative Jose Enrique Garcia III of the province’s second district, Orani Mayor Efren Pascual Jr., Samal town Mayor Aida Macalinao, and members of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan and Sangguniang Bayan of Orani. (PNA)

DOLE pays P8.4-M for employment beneficiaries in Pampanga

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga – A total of PHP8,428,000 was released by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) for the salaries of emergency employment beneficiaries in this province under the Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers (TUPAD) program.

The beneficiaries, numbering 2,107, are the Nanay Community Workers from the province’s fourth district.

Governor Dennis Pineda led on Thursday the distribution of their salaries.

The Nanay Community Workers voluntarily helped the provincial government in its quick dissemination and response campaigns regarding issues concerning health, peace and order, natural disaster, and education.

Pampanga DOLE chief Arlene Tolentino said the TUPAD program is aimed at providing emergency employment for the unemployed and displaced work-

ers. “They (beneficiaries) will be receiving a total of PHP4,000 in terms of salaries for 10 days of work. Plus, we call it the personal protective equipment, which consists of the hat and the T-shirt that cost PHP350. Plus, our beneficiaries are insured to the GSIS (Government Service Insurance System). So, all in all, the government will be spending a total of PHP4,400 for each beneficiary,” Tolentino said. (PNA)

Provincial drug center in Nueva Ecija opened



DRUG TREATMENT AND REHAB CENTER. Governor Aurelio Umali (left) and Fr. Arnold Abelardo (right) lead the ceremonial ribbon-cutting during the opening of Nueva Ecija Provincial Government Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Center in Barangay Ganaderia, Palayan City, Nueva Ecija on Monday (Dec. 9, 2019). The 100-bed capacity drug center is said to be the first in the country to be run by a local government unit. (Photo by Marilyn Galang)

PALAYAN CITY, Nueva Ecija -- A new drug treatment and rehabilitation center with a 100-bed capacity was built on a three-hectare area in Barangay Ganaderia this city.

Governor Aurelio Umali led on Monday the opening of the drug rehabilitation center, which is said to be the first in the country to be run by a local government

unit.

Umali said the facility called the Nueva Ecija Provincial Government Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Center (NEPG DTRC) was aimed at providing an opportunity to change and bring hope to people addicted to drugs.

The governor said the drug menace is not the sole problem of the drug-depen-

dent, but their families and the community as well, and requires unity in action.

Fr. Arnold Abelardo, the center’s executive director, said it will ensure a family-like environment for patients who may stay from six months to one year, depending on the gravity of addiction.

“This is a collaboration on which the orientation —>

WANTED IMMEDIATELY

The Weekender Group of Publications is in need of the following for the launching of its various publications:

Pampanga Weekender, Nueva Ecija Weekender and Bulacan Weekender will

begin circulation on the 3rd week of January 2020. All interested applicants are requested to please e-mail their respective resumes to tarlacweekender@yahoo.com

- **2 Lay-out artists**, with ample experience with Adobe In-design and Adobe Photoshop. Compensation to be discussed.
- **Researchers/reporters** on a per project basis. Compensation to be discussed.
- **Sales/Account Executives** (area based). Generous commissions up to 35%, transportation allowance and other benefits.

Successful applicants can expect all legal benefits as required by law, generous incentives and other perks.



PRO3 Regional Director PBGEN RHODEL O SERMONIA attends the 30th SEA Games Closing Ceremony and ensures that the different defense units in Central Luzon are doing their duty to secure and maintain peace and order at New Clark City, Capas, Tarlac all throughout the weeklong event./Photo by @TarlacPPOPCR

Spin UP ...from page 5

han ng drugs at dalawang beses nag-positive sa drug test pero naka-upo pa hanggang ngayon bilang barangay chairman?

oo0 ^ 0oo

Sino ang bagong halal na presidente ng Vice Mayors’ League Tarlac Chapter ngayon, o Liga ng mga Vice Mayors? Clue: First time vice mayor siya. (Vice Mayor Ronald ‘Nonoy’ Tanedo-Go, Gerona)

oo0 ^ 0oo

Sino naman ang bagong halal na presidente ng Philippine Councilors League Tarlac Chapter? Taga-saan ba siya?

oo0 ^ 0oo

Sinong Barangay Kagawad ng Gerona na wala daw kasundong kapitbahay pati kapa-

tid at kamag-anak? Clue: Ang asawa niya ay isang public school teacher.

oo0 ^ 0oo

Sinong brgy. Kapitan ang na-convict ng korte kamakailan ng kasong Reckless Imprudence Resulting to Damage to Property worth P557,000? Clue; Taga second district si kapitan.

oo0 ^ 0oo

Sino ang matapang na babae na bini- gyan ni Ex-mayor Manalang ng maraming puwesto sa Tarlac City Uptown Market at ipinapa-upa niya ang mga puwesto sa halagang mahigit times 2 to times 3 sa itina-takda ng Tarlac City Market Code? Clue: Asawa daw siya ng isang mayor.

oo0 ^ 0oo

To public officials: WE ONLY WRITE WHAT YOU DO

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FTI jump-starts refrigerated services project, 'bagsakan' for Filipino farmers



TAGUIG CITY -The Food Terminal Inc.(FTI) being true to its mission to provide accessible and modern facilities and buildings that will not just cater for the needs of agricultural producers but for the needs of food producers, manufacturers, exporters and other sectors in the food industry recently inaugurated its modular cold storage facility as well as launched Kadiwa Project at FTI Economic Zone, Taguig City on 6 December 2019 in partnership with Manila Economic and Cultural Office.

This cold storage facility that would be initially available in Taguig City would be beneficial to prolong shelf life as well as maintain the inventory of essential produce

to sustain supply during the lean and peak season. Further, Kadiwa ni Ani at Kita project will provide farmers and fisher folk as well as small and medium enterprises a venue for trade of their agricultural produced goods and products.

“In the formulation of our strategic map and direction, nakita po naming that we need to cope up to the original mandate of FTI and we need to help our stakeholders especially the farmers, fisher folk and other stakeholders in the agricultural sector by providing facilities in order to alleviate their economic condition,” FTI President and CEO Ariel P. Buenaventura said.

Additionally, Department of Agriculture Assistant Secretary for Agribusiness Marketing Kristine Y. Evangelista mentioned that one of the main problems in price increase of goods and products is due to non-availability of storages for our farmers’ products so they often resorted to traders or middlemen.

“Isa sa mga problema ng ating mga magsasaka, they have no facility, whether its cold storage or warehouse. Malaki kasing bagay yan sakanila because without that dyan papasok ‘yung mga traders. Since DA wants to eliminate some layers of traders to be able to give our farmers a better opportunity para makapagbenta ng kanilang produkto ng mas mataas

na value at the same time ang consumers naman po natin ay hindi masyadong masasaktan.”

Asec. Evangelista further highlighted the importance of Kadiwa project initiated by FTI. “We realized that since FTI is going to go back to their original mandate, ito rin po ang partner na kailangang-kailangan ng DA. We are not just talking about the cold storage facility but we are talking about a bagsakan,”she added.

The ribbon cutting of facility was led by FTI Board of Directors Chairman Lt. Gen. Raymundo B. Ferrer (Ret) together with Taguig Vice Mayor Ricardo “Ading” Cruz, Jr. as well as other Government Officials such as MECO representative Dennis Araullo; Governance Commission for GOCC Kenneth Rafols;NFA Deputy Administrator for Marketing and Operations Maria Mercedita Yacapin; and FTI Board of Director Richard De Jesus. KSBA | PIA-CENTRAL)

No liquor consumption in government offices - CSC

QUEZON CITY - The Civil Service Commission reminds government workers nationwide on the prohibition on the consumption of alcoholic beverages in government offices even during office Christmas parties.

Pursuant to CSC Resolution No. 1100039, the consumption of alcoholic beverages such as, but not limited to malt, wine and intoxicating liquor in workplace among government officials and employees during office hours is prohibited.

CSC Chairperson Alicia dela Rosa-Bala stressed that mere consumption of alcoholic beverages in the workplace during office hours as

well as reporting for work while under the influence of alcohol shall be considered as an administrative offense, separate and distinct from the offense of Habitual Drunkenness.

However, the consumption of alcoholic beverages may be allowed during programs and rituals such as ceremonial toasts and observance/honoring of local customs and traditions. In such instances, the alcoholic beverage must be limited to malt and wine, and the consumption shall not result to intoxication which is defined as, “the impairment of a person’s mental faculties ensuing to the loss of control over his/

her behavior and/or actions”.

Should an untoward incident happen as a result of such consumption, both the head of office and the officials or employees concerned will be held liable.

Officials and employees caught in the act of consuming intoxicating liquor and other alcoholic beverages during office hours, as well as those who will be reporting for work under the influence of alcohol shall be held liable for Misconduct which is punishable by suspension for one to six months for the first offense, and dismissal from service on the second offense. (CSC)

FDA OKs redistribution of Mekení pork-based products

MANILA -- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has given the go signal for Mekení Food Corporation, one of the country’s leading food processors, to redistribute its pork-based products to the market.

In a letter to Mekení Food, FDA said that upon due evaluation, it “allows the redistribution of processed pork meat products that tested negative for ASF”.

Mekení sought FDA clearance to redistribute its products after specific batches of the firm’s Picnic Red Classic Hotdog and Skinless Longaniza tested positive for DNA traces of the dreaded ASF virus.

On November 22, Mekení presented to DOH Undersecretary and FDA officer-in-charge Rolando Enrique Domingo all corrective actions taken by the company, including results of independent tests conducted by SGS, the world’s leading inspection and verification company.

After thorough review of documents and test results, the FDA gave Mekení the clearance to redistribute its products.

The FDA clearance and SGS results provide assurance that Mekení’s facilities, equipment, raw meat materials, and all pork-based finished products for release in the market are 100 percent negative for ASF virus DNA.

As a food business operator, FDA said Mekení has the responsibility to be proactive in monitoring its products’ compliance to existing regulations, as well as to ensure that

appropriate measures and controls are in place to prevent the possible use of contaminated raw materials.

Earlier, Mekení voluntarily withdrew all its pork-based products to help prevent the continuous spread of ASF. The pullout was done while waiting for the official laboratory results from SGS and Bureau of Animal Industry. The proactive measure was commended by both the Department of Agriculture (DA) and FDA.

“During that difficult time, even if we knew that the business would be greatly affected, we chose to uphold our core values and put the welfare of the general public above all else,” Mekení president Prudencio Garcia said.

He said Mekení pulled out its products from the market to help the local hog industry and to mitigate the possibility that their products inadvertently become ASF carriers.

“Despite assurances from the DOH that ASF poses no risk to humans, we took the issue seriously and spared no expense to thoroughly clean our plant, improve our processes and open it for inspection,” Garcia said.

As an additional safety measure, the company has com-

mitted that 100 percent of its raw meats sourced in the Philippines and abroad will undergo thorough testing for ASF.

A periodic environmental swabbing of its facilities will also be conducted to prevent potential contamination.

A dedicated food safety and quality officer has also been appointed to lead second layer of testing.

Garcia said these measures are on top of the company’s strict compliance with all government regulations and certifications.

“The procedures we adopted in product testing and in our manufacturing facility are in line with our commitment to provide only the highest standards of food quality. We’re happy that these tests have yielded negative results and we can again share our products to our customers,” he said.

Garcia further said that while Mekení’s ASF incident was an isolated case that could happen to any meat processor using the same processes and the same raw meats, the firm will continue working with the DA, DOH and NMIS for the implementation of a more comprehensive plan to mitigate the spread of ASF and prevent other processors from encountering the same problems. (PNA)

DOT celebrates... from page 3

country’s dive destinations, and stressed the Philippines’ competitive advantage in the region, not only as a diving destination, but also as a business hub.

“Through the Philippine Commission on Sports Scuba Diving (PCSSD), we also ensure that diving safety and operating standards in the country are at par with the rest of the world,” added Puyat.

Founded in 1993, the WTA or World Travel Awards has been recognizing brands and organizations from the travel, tourism, and hospitality industries all over the world that have raised the bar for global tourism standards, through its annual Grand Tour, a series of six regional gala ceremonies with a grand final ceremony held at the end of each tour. (DoT)



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Chicken Crates and Coops

Why are Electricity Rates in the Philippines the highest in Asia?

By: Lala Rimando and Emil Mercado

Filipino consumers paid the highest rates of electricity in Asia.

Why, we paid an average of 9 pesos and 14 centavos per kilowatt hour a month in 2011 or about 25 dollar cents in 2012, more expensive than Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, and even industrialized Japan.

The electricity bill reflects the following, the power plants that process energy from sources like coal and fuel turn them into electricity that lights up our homes, streetlights, powers or gadgets, and keeps our factories going. These generation charges account for over half of the bill then the cost of transporting the electricity still in its high wooded form from the power plants through transmission powers to the power distributors is reflected in the transmission charges.

Distributors charged for bringing power already reduced to 220 volts to us users.

Systems losses refer to the electricity wasted because they were lost in transmission or were pilfered.

Universal charges are various cost passed on to consumers and subsidies are discounts given to senior

citizens and lifeline consumers who are using less than 100 kilowatts a month then of course government taxes.

All these are moving parts. They go up or down and usually they go up. The bill is high because some cost of operations increased. For example, almost half of our energy sources are coal and oil mostly imported from the Middle East, but these are capital intensive businesses that also have to recover through profits.

To encourage investments, the government guarantees their margin. When companies import, the foreign exchange fluctuations may be expensive and aid to their guaranteed profits. They can be covered through the ICERA or the Incremental Currency Exchange Rate Adjustment Mechanism.

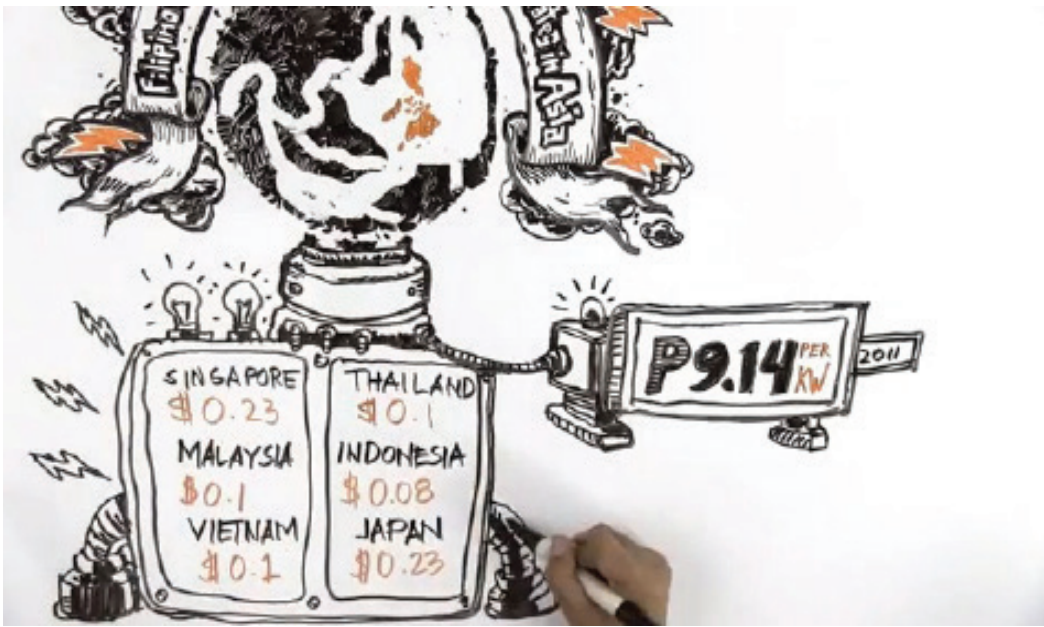
The power plants formerly owned by state owned NAPOCOR can also recover profits. If the purchased power and fuel costs aid into these guaranteed margins refill this via GRAM or Generation Rate Adjustment Mechanism which increases the generation charges. The same for state owned TRANSCO.

If the cost of transporting high voltage power to retailers pull down their assured profits of 15%, they can be covered through TRAM

or Transmission Rate Adjustment Mechanism and NAPOCOR, which is lifted bringing light to far-flung areas or islands also pass on the cost of SPUG or Small Power Utilities Group most of them using expensive diesel.

These are added to our bill through universal charges and because they are public utilities, what goes up and down in our electric bill required the approval of the Energy Regulatory Commission. In the past, the state owned NAPOCOR was inefficient. In the 1990s, ruling blackouts prompted government to promised investor it will buy all the supply generated by the independent power producers. When the Asian financial crisis struck in 1997-1998 demands load down, but consumers still pay for excess supply. Worst in 2002, the government did not let NAPOCOR which had incurred a lot of debts charged higher fees. These resulted in NAPOCOR's massive losses that we are now paying for.

The Electric Power Industry Reformed Act or EPIRA was introduced in 2001 to address the sins of the past. The new law broke apart NAPOCOR's monopoly of generation and transmission businesses. Through Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Board



or PISAM, the state owned power plants were sold to private investors. The transmission service was sold to a Filipino-Chinese consortium called National Grid Corporation of the Philippines or NGCP. The debts of NAPOCOR amounting to \$6.5 billion in 2001 were partly assumed by national government and the rest are charged to our bill over time. This is reflected in the universal charges.

PISAM, while it was supposed to earn revenues from the privatized power plants incurred debts because it was not able to immediately sell some of them so it had to maintain this aging plants. PISAM will recover this debts worth about P130 billion via universal charges. NGCP on the other hand are

recovering some of NAPOCOR's debts.

Before the transmission assets were turned over through TRAM, these profit related reasons and sins of the past are passed onto us consumers and are tucked in the electricity bill.

Another item is the feed in tariff. This is to encourage investors to tap renewable sources like geothermal, hydro, wind, solar, biomass, and run of river energy. Because these are from indigenous sources, they could eventually reduce electricity prices. These are not dependent on coal and oil imports, which are vulnerable to foreign exchange volatility, but what should really drive electricity down are market forces.

The EPIRA created the

WESM or the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market. It is where power producers sell their electricity units and customers buy at a price they want.

These systems, the EPIRA promised were supposed to be placed in 2011. However, there are still few generation players and those who have built new power plants are not generating enough electricity to make trading at WESM a truly competitive and thriving one. Buyers are not yet bidding for the lowest price but for the available supply. When there are more new power projects and the private sector will stake more power capital in them then electricity bill will soon be lowered.

BCDA gives Aetas Notice... from page 1

City. The seven-day notice issued by the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) is a standard follow-up letter sent to all claimants who rejected the financial assistance offered by the government.

2. There are no targeted Aeta communities. The notice was given to all claimants to inform of the need to start the construction of the New Clark City to Clark International Airport access road in the particular area.

3. As part of the process, BCDA has always been in consultation with, and seeks the clearance of the Capas local government on these matters.

4. The New Clark City located within the Clark Special Economic Zone, is a government land owned by BCDA as stipulated in R.A. 7227.

5. There are NO declared ANCESTRAL DOMAINS or Certificates of Ancestral Domain Titles (CADT) in the area. Therefore, Aeta communities are not displaced.

6. A financial assistance package amounting to Php300,000 per hectare (or Php30.00/sqm) has been made available by BCDA to all project-affected people, including indigenous peoples (IPs) and farmers even at the start of the development. Relocation sites have also been provided by BCDA WITHIN New Clark City for those whose residential structures were affected.

7. New Clark City continues to provide opportunities for everyone especially for the IPs/farmers who may be affected in the development of roads and other infrastructure.

8. There are 500 Aetas employed in the New Clark City project - an opportunity that was not available to them before the development started.

9. Credible institutions such as the Asian Development Bank worked with BCDA in ensuring the sustainability and inclusivity of the New Clark City.

This statement of NCIP gathered a lot of negative reactions, some of which as follows:

"Stum Casia - Dapat nasa panig kayo ng mga katutubo, dapat kayo ang nagtitiyak na walang karapatan ng katutubo ang matatapanan lalo at ipinaglalaman nila ito, kayo dapat ang una nilang kakampi. Pero sa tono ng pananalita ninyo, halata na tagapagsalita kayo ng BCDA."

"Jim Leandro Cano - Iyong tipong ang agency na nagdedefend dapat ng rights ng ating mga katutubo ay naging

spokesperson ng ibang agency na nagpapaalis ng indigenous peoples. Anyare?"

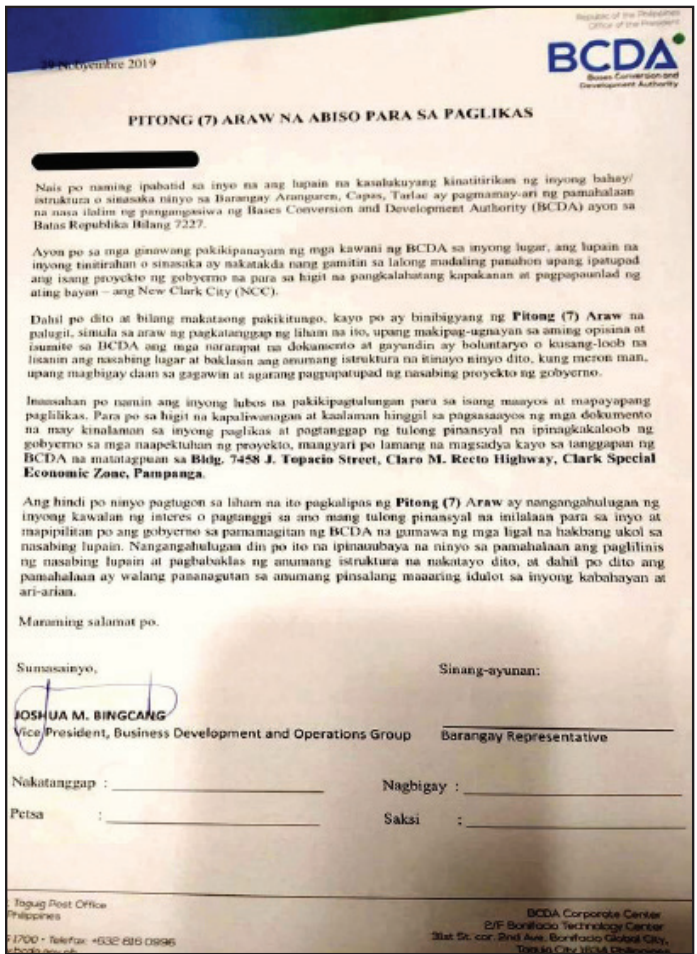
"Essa Sayosa - More like a BCDA statement than NCIP" "Rycy Pinks Rice - It so sad to see the crash of credibility and reputation of an Institution."

"Jenilyn Manzon - Sa himig pa lang ng statement, alam mo kanino kumakampi. Nakakahiya kayo!! Naturingan kayo na representasyon ng mga katutubo sa Pilipinas pero hindi niyo naman ginagawa trabaho niyo.

Financial assistance? Land owned by government? No CADT? Relocation site? Employed 500 aetas?

Mga palusot dahil hindi niyo naman talaga tinitindigan ang mga katutubo kahit pinapalayas sila. Kinakampihan niyo mga kapitalista at foreign investors. Kahihyan kayo!!"

"Hex Dagooc - NCIP, bakit kayo ang naglabas ng statement na ito? Parang ipinalabas ninyo na mali ang mga IPs (na dapat pinoportektahan ninyo) sa claims nila. Regardless kasi kung totoo o hindi man ang nangyayaring eviction, the best move that you can do is to issue a statement that you need to investigate the matter since it involves the IPs (again, the people you're suppose to protect) and after such investigation, if found false, only then will you release a final statement. Ang lagay sa statement nyo dito, parang hindi kayo NCIP. Parang kayo ang BCDA. Hindi kaya BCDA talaga ang gumawa ng statement na to tapos binigay sa inyo



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at inutusan kayong ilabas ito para sabihing ito ang official statement ninyo? No wonder maraming mga kaso na hindi kayo pinagkakatiwalaan ng mga katutubo dahil sa mga gantong statement. Matagal na ba kayong apologist ng BCDA? LOL"

"Edgar Dizon - I am 72 yrs old and been living in this area since 1947. Worked at Clark AB 64-77 and the Aetas has been part of the community since I am 72 yrs old and have known Aetas to live in their community since I was born. Clark employed thousands of Aetas and helped them do business to improve their lives. They did not displaced the Aetas to build their air base, instead they employed them to teach them

Cont. on page 2