

CEBU

POPCOM to local leaders: Keep an open mind about RH Bill

BY FAYETTE C. RIÑEN

CEBU CITY (August 10) -- A pro-RH (Reproductive Health) Bill advocate urged local leaders in Central Visayas including Cebu to keep an open mind about the controversial bill and allow people to engage in active discussion about it.

Population Commission (PopCom)-7 Regional Director Atty. Bruce Ragas said the people need to be informed on the contents of the bill rather than hastily pass a judgment that it is "anti-life" because it promotes the use of artificial planning methods such as condom use.

"How can condom be abortifacient when the sperm and egg have not met yet so no life was conceived?" Ragas posed this question to reporters during the weekly Kapihan sa PIA that tackled the RH Bill.

The Church has totally opposed the bill which is now on its second reading in Congress.

Ragas admitted they have a standing order to publicly support the bill and educate the public about it as the Department of Health (DOH) recently issued a favorable stand on the matter.

Ragas said one of the urgent reasons why the bill should be supported is the rising incidence of maternal mortality rate in the country which is one of the highest in Asia.

"The Philippines is a signatory to the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan which seeks to lower maternal mortality rate from 60 to 70 deaths per 100,000 live births to 45 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births by 2015. With that target, we need to have a unified national policy in the delivery of RH services," Ragas said.

The PopCom-7 chief also said the people have the right to access sufficient RH

services which at the moment, depends on the local chief executives whether health services is a priority due to local health devolution.

Ragas said the population officers in Central Visayas have already come up with a manifesto expressing their support to the RH Bill which will be submitted to the League of Population Officers. (PIA 7-Cebu)



LEADERSHIP. Team members of the Ramon Aboitiz Foundation Inc. Micro-finance braved the waves and rains as they kayaked to the islands near and across the Hilutungan Channel as part of the Leadership Sea Expedition program of the RAFI Kool Adventure Camp last July 14-17.(PIA-7 & RAFI)

BOHOL

Coins scarcity no excuse for "candies as change"

BY REY ANTHONY CHIU

TAGBILARAN CITY, Bohol, Aug 5, (PIA) --Candies for a change, anyone? Coins may be admittedly getting scarcely circulated, but that is no reason for department stores to give candies instead of coins for a change, says Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) information Officer Lucille Autentico.

Consumer Act of the Philippines or Republic Act 7394 was enacted to protect the interests of the consumer, promote his general, welfare and to establish standards of conduct for business and industry. The same law protects the rights of consumers and to plugs abusive practices of business establishments in the country.

According to DTI, they have been warning department stores and other business establishments for not giving exact change, or worse, giving candies instead.

This is despite the fact that, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Central Visayas Regional Director Ma. Lux Berciles has admitted that the problem of lack of coins in

circulation seems to be widespread.

"The problem of loose change getting scarce from stores and business establishments is not just a common problem in Bohol," Berciles said.

In fact she added that the government has been campaigning to re-circulate these coins that may have been tucked somewhere in wallets, drawers or piggy banks.

One such campaign focuses on schools that could get computer units as incentive for depositing coins back to the banks, said Berciles.

But, that does not spare the businessmen from the responsibility to give nothing else but the exact change in the same manner that consumers must demand the exact change when they buy, DTI said.

Senate Bill 1329 which seeks to put up a policy on exact change said the practice of giving insufficient change or giving no change at all to consumers by product sellers

or service providers is something that is often taken for granted, author Manuel Villar stated.

This is usually because the change involves only a matter of five, ten, fifteen or twenty centavos, or small bills, which, when added up at the end of the day, amounts to thousands of pesos.

The failure to give the change or the exact change constitutes a trade malpractice that must be stopped, Villar pressed.

In Bohol, DTI admits having warned several department stores over violations of the Consumer Act, especially on giving candies instead of coins for change.

Bohol Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Marietta Gasatan has asked the BSP to help solve the problem by elucidating on the matter in as much as businessmen and DTI have been at odd ends over this. (PIA-7 BOHOL)

DepEd, MDC ink MOA for free computer repair in public schools

BY JENNIFER CATAN-TILOS

DUMAGUETE CITY, Aug 9 (PIA) -- The Department of Education (DepEd) and the Metro Dumaguete College (MDC) recently signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) for free computer restoration in public schools in the province.

Unserviceable or junk computers in elementary and high schools will be diagnosed, programmed and networked free of charge by MDC under its e-com tech extension services program, said MDC president Dr. Delma Manila.

DepEd Schools Division Superintendent Dr. Milagros Velez lauded the MDC's service program that significantly help DepEd's ICT efforts for the continued participation of the private sector.

"We have some existing damage computers that will be put back into working condition and these can be used again for laboratories to provide computer access to primary and secondary schools," the DepEd official said.

Dr. Manila said the extension program is also implemented together with the offices of Representatives of the three districts in Negros Oriental, Technical Education and

Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and local government units.

To ensure the continuity and sustainability of the program, TESDA and the office of the representatives will recruit and finance scholars from the identified and towns and have trained at MDC, Dr. Manila said.

The MDC is one of the recognized TESDA schools training and assessment center especially in Computer Hardware Servicing.

For his part, 2nd District Congressman George Arnaiz said with this program partner agencies should get 80 percent of the junk computers in public schools will be working to help the students on computer literacy in the province.

Cong. Arnaiz said all high schools in the province have been computerized but because many schools lack of computer technicians and funding for maintenance,

these computers laid idle.

Thus, MDC launched this program to collaborate the schools as part of college computer laboratory test of the students of



Agriculture Secretary Proceso Alcala raises the plaque of appreciation given by Negros Oriental Gov. Roel Degamo (extreme right) after Sec. Alcala's keynote speech during the opening of the 9th National Vegetable Congress held August 3-5, 2011 at the Negros Oriental Convention Center in Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental. Looking on are (L-R) Third District Rep. Henry Pryde Teves and First District Rep. Jocelyn Limkaichong. (RMN/PIA NegOr)

Siquijor LGU welcomes KALAHI-CIDSS project

BY RIZALIE A. CALIBO

SIQUIJOR, August 8 (PIA) -- The local government unit of Siquijor welcomed the Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social (KALAHI-CIDSS) - Makamasang Tugon initiative of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in the province.

During the project re-launching recently, Municipal Mayor Richard Quezon said KALAHI-CIDSS Makamasang Tugon is "the best program" as it gives locals the chance to show their abilities and learn how a small government can run and manage a community-based endeavor.

"I learned to love the project because it is community-driven," he said, expressing satisfaction that all barangays in his municipality were able to implement the projects based on their needs and priorities.

"Everything is done in the proper way and everybody is true in its implementation," he said. KALAHI-CIDSS concept spells honesty and transparency and encouraged involvement of the whole community, he added.

Likewise, Siquijor Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator Gilbert Briones, in his testimonial of success said KALAHI-CIDSS touched the lives of the people in the town's 42 barangays.

He cited the project's strong advocacy on empowering communities, improving local governance and reducing poverty anchored on genuine People Participation,

Transparency and Accountability (PTA).

He said the Makamasang Tugon project stressed out the importance of community-driven initiative so that development interventions emanated from the grass roots.

"This process gained a wide array of support from the "masa" and from our local officials," he said.

He also said harmonizing Community Driven Development to Local Planning Process is seen by the local leaders, the peoples organizations (POs) and the non-government organizations (NGOs) as essential in attaining real socio economic transformation.

"We are proud to say, that, we are now gradually moving away from our traditional methods in choosing and implementing our projects," he said.

The mayor cited the barangay folks total participation in the entire cycle of the project process-from the inception stage until the completion.

"To mention a few of the processes which are now very familiar in the barangays is the sector consultation through Barangay Assembly and Participatory Situation Analysis. Purchasing of goods and services up to the project implementation is done and managed by the community, he said.

With this development, he said, the Makamasang Tugon Project radically transformed the management approaches of our local leaders and its functionaries.

It recognizes and enhances the decision making rights of the "masa" and has

made the local leaders effective, responsive as attested by the outcomes of the project.

He also said that through KALAHI-CIDSS, the people developed a sense of ownership for community projects as they become more aware of their civic duties and their roles in making development happen.

"They feel that the success of the project is the fruit of their labor, he said.

Siquijor and Enrique Villanueva towns have been the recipients of three project cycles that was started in January 2003 where nearly P110 million in grants and local counterparts were spent for the various infrastructure and other projects.

This year another P25M grant-one year project cycle for the two towns is lined up following the previous years' successful implementation.

But this year, the DSWD said, the project will only take place for one year or one project cycle for Bohol and Siquijor since the provinces have been already covered by the project in phases 1, 2, 3A and 3B by the World Bank.

The P25M comes from the \$120M additional funding from the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) that supports the government's anti-poverty program. (PIA-Siquijormbcn/rac)

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We welcome questions, clarifications and feedback:

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SIQUIJOR

SU Physics grad named one of RP's outstanding students

BY RACHELLE M. NESSIA

DUMAGUETE CITY, August 9 (PIA) --- A fresh graduate from Silliman University in Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental was named one of the Top 10 Outstanding Students of the Philippines (TOSP).

Jonathan Andro P. Tan, a recent graduate of Silliman University's (SU) Physics program, received his TOSP award along with nine other outstanding youths from different universities around the country on August 4, 2011 at the Rizal Hall of the Malacañang Palace.

Tan is the eight student from SU who made it to top ten roster of outstanding young leaders in the country.

Tan graduated magna cum laude with a degree of Bachelor of Science in Physics this year. He was also awarded the Most

Outstanding Student of the Year by SU in February 2011 in recognition of his active involvements in the university's Student Government and organizations such as the Corps of Campus Ambassadors, said SU Office of Information and Publications Director Mark Garcia.

Considered as the country's top search for young leaders, TOSP is conducted on both regional and national levels, and includes as panelists and facilitators leaders in government, academe and business.

Since 1961, the search has become a "laboratory of leaders," producing outstanding contributors in the fields of governance, business, the academe, church and civil society, according to the TOSP website. (PIA Negros Oriental with reports from SU-OIP)

Aquino calls on Boholanos to help realize the country's dreams

BY REY ANTHONY CHIU

TRINIDAD Bohol, August 6 (PIA) -- Magkujog na ta padong sa katumanan sa atong mga pangandoy. (Let us go together towards the realization of our dreams.)

Thus urged President Benigno Simeon Aquino III to the estimated 2,500 Boholanos gathered at the Trinidad Cultural Center August 2, a few days after delivering a similar call during his State of the Nation Address.

On Tuesday, The President also urged local leaders and stakeholders to work for the country.

Later, he also unveiled the markers and inaugurated the new P28 million town building which was constructed with the inspiration of the President in the contractor's mind, Trinidad Mayor Roberto Cajes shared.

Taking on the cue from the President himself, Mayor Cajes said he has ascertained that the new spacious municipal hall features glass walls and automated offices to highlight transparency, efficiency and accountability in government service.

"Let us faithfully serve our bosses -

the masses," the President said.

Full service however can be hampered by an atmosphere of stifling heat in the office, obsolete equipment and slow internet connection.

Aquino agreed that efficient equipment and stronger capacity to serve the masses are inter-connected.

The President came to Trinidad town to inaugurate a new town hall that has been inspired by his calls for a new kind of leadership.

Trinidad, a town some 94 kilometers from Tagbilaran City used to have an old town hall that has been due for repairs, until then Mayor Judith Cajes decided to forego repairs for a new building where they can work out all the necessary technological upgrades to better serve its people.

With regular funds from then Congressman Roberto Cajes and local development funds, the new Trinidad municipal Hall stands complete.

Trinidad is also among the very few Bohol towns that has set up its own website in consonance with a Department of Interior and Local Government order to be transparent in service. (PIA Bohol)

Cebu Int'l Airport certified safest in PHL by CAAP

BY JUJU S. MANUBAG-EMPUERTO

CEBU CITY, August 10 (PIA) -- Mactan-Cebu International Airport Authority (MCIAA) has been certified by the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) as the safest airport in the country today.

The Aerodrome Certificate No. AGA-C-01-2011 was awarded by CAAP Director General Ramon S. Gutierrez to MCIAA's Chief Executive Officer and General Manager Nigel Paul C. Villarete during the MCIAA Board Meeting last July 29.

"The Aerodrome Certification issued to MCIAA is a testament to the dedication of the Authority to constantly upgrade its services to the riding public. Since the MCIAA is now the safest airport in the Philippines, it will attract more people to come to Cebu," Gutierrez said. "And since the certification was given in accordance to the International Civil Aviation Organization standards, the Mactan Airport is now globally competitive."

Villarete explained that the achievement is a step towards the realization of President Benigno S. Aquino III's marching order to upgrade the country's entire aviation industry.

Villarete bared that they made an application for the certification of the MCIAA aerodrome last January 19, 2010 and received the approval last July 14, 2011.

The following are the criteria to be certified: a) the aerodrome's facilities service and equipment are in accordance with the standards specified in the Manual of Standards for a certified aerodrome b) the aerodrome's operating procedures make satisfactory provision for the safety of the aircraft c) an acceptable Aerodrome Manual has been prepared d) the applicant would, if the certificate is granted to be able to operate and maintain the aerodrome and an acceptable aerodrome Safety Management System is implemented.

Villarete said that MCIAA cannot sit back and relax since the airport's performance will be constantly monitored and audited by CAAP.

Airport officials assigned in the Operations Department were commended by Villarete for a job well done. The official include Captain Romeo Bersond, Engr Sam Elle, Engr Manuel Lopez, Cesar Doña and Engr John Binamira.

"With the certification, MCIAA is now upgraded back to Category 1 and can now accept additional flights for the US and Europe. It is good for business, tourism and economy of the whole country," Villarete proudly disclosed. (FCR/JSME/PIA-Cebu)



New RPOC-7 Chair. Pres. Benigno Simeon Aquino III administers the oath of office of Bohol Gov. Edgar M. Chatto as the new Chairman of the Regional Peace and Order Council-Region VII (RPOC-7) in a ceremony during the Forum with the President at the Dagohoy Grand Hall of the Bohol Tropics Resort in Tagbilaran City on Tuesday (Aug. 2). Chatto takes the helm of power from Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia (beside the President) who sat since 2004. (Elvira Bongosia/PIA-Bohol)

Local info officers' network prexy lauds P-Noy, MILF meet

BY MINERVA BC NEWMAN

CEBU, Aug. 7 (PIA) -- The president of a local information officers' network of Cebu lauded the meeting of President Benigno S. Aquino III and MILF chair Murad Ebrahim in Tokyo, Japan to push forward the peace process between the PHL government and the Muslim rebels in Mindanao.

Cebu Association of Municipal and City Public Information Officers (CAOCAMPIO) president, Carlo Dugaduga said "Ako dakong uyong sa gihimo ni Pnoy nga pakigtugbo sa MILF didto sa Japan, dili kini ngay nga panghimarauton ang Pangulo sa iyang gihimo kay ang hisgutanan sa kahusay ug kalinaw tali sa nagkabang nga hut-ong manguubat sa Mindanao dili angayang gamiton sa pampamolitika."

(I strongly agree with the President's meeting with the MILF in Japan, the President shouldn't be criticized with what he did because the talks on development and peace between the warring groups in Mindanao should not be tainted with politics.)

"Kon dili ang panagsabot maghisgot sa tiunay nga pagsabot sa mga batakang hinungdan sa pagsukol niining mga Muslim nga pwersa diha sa Mindanao," ni Dugaduga pa. (The meeting should be treated as a sincere discussion and talks on how to understand fully the root causes of the Muslim rebellion in Mindanao.)

The PHL government maintains its position that the President's meeting with the MILF chair was a "political masterstroke."

Samar congressman Ben Evardone said it is the highest form of humility and sincerity of P-Noy to bring about lasting peace in Mindanao.

"Pnoy was just true to form in his desire to lift our country from unnecessary

conflict. The ball is now in the hands of the MILF to reciprocate the unprecedented move of the leader of our country," Evardone stated.

Congressman Evardone further noted that the gesture of the President was the most concrete and sincere confidence-building move of the Aquino administration.

He urged the government and MILF panels to immediately resume the talks and iron out the remaining kinks in the negotiations to hasten the attainment of peace and development in Mindanao.

"I will not be surprised also if Pnoy will again initiate bold and dramatic moves in dealing with other armed groups to attain peace and development," Evardone said.

Senator Loren Legarda, the chair of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

on the other hand also expressed her support to the meeting of President Benigno Aquino III and MILF chair Murad Ebrahim.

Legarda described the meeting as "highest level on both sides in planting trust and good faith" so necessary for the peace process to prosper.

"This can only augur well for the early conclusion of the peace process," Legarda said.

Legarda added the reported dropping by the MILF of their secessionist agenda is a major milestone in the peace process.

Mindanao is the richest part of the country in terms of mineral and other resources. The peace process will most likely result to a peace agreement which is good for all 100 million Filipinos, the senator stated. (PIA-7/mbcn)

NFA Siquijor intensifies i-rice promotion

BY RIZALIE A. CALIBO

LARENA, Siquijor, Aug.4 (PIA) -- To complement its rice stabilization activities, the National Food Authority (NFA) in Siquijor intensified its promotional campaign to alleviate the chronic problem of iron deficiency among young children and lactating mothers through the sale and distribution of NFA iron-fortified rice (I-rice) through its accredited outlets.

Information Officer Elvira M. Calibo, in her press release said, the agency sold i-rice at the same price with the NFA well-milled rice at P27 per kilo to end-consumers through the usual NFA outlets.

She said, the NFA also coordinates with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in the implementation of the newly-launched

Supplemental Feeding Program.

NFA shall supply the same I-rice variety to the DSWD-identified feeding centers, she said.

The program is being carried out on the basis of a memorandum of agreement signed by directors of NFA and the DSWD in line with the government's Millennium Development Goal I, which aims to extreme poverty and hunger.

For Siquijor province, P26,616 kilos or approximately 532 bags of rice has been allocated for the initial implementation of the feeding program.

This is intended to serve 2,218 day care children in 150 day care centers of 131 barangays in the whole province as identified by the DSWD, Calibo concluded. (PIA-Siquijor/mbcn/rac & NFA-Siquijor/emc)



Municipal government workers of Valencia, Negros Oriental on August 1, 2011 simultaneously mass voted for Puerto Princesa Underground River (PPUR) which is the country's entry to the New 7 Wonders of Nature (N7WN) around the world. The employees sent their text votes after the municipality's flag-raising ceremony in response to Pres. Benigno S. Aquino III's call for national support to the country's lone entry for the global search. (PIA-7)

PUBLIC ADVISORY

Malacañang has declared August 29 & 30, 2011 as non-working holidays.

August 29 is National Heroes' Day (as per Proclamation#84) while August 30 is the End of Ramadan or Eid'l Fitr. As of this writing, there is no Proclamation No. yet.

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