

Front News

Overseas Absentee Voting to start on April 9 –Comelec

April 10, 2016

MANILA, April 3 (PNA) -- With less than a week to go before the start of the Overseas Absentee Voting (OAV), the web application of the Commission on Elections (Comelec), created to assist registered voters abroad find the places where they must cast their votes, is still under maintenance.

At present, the Post Finder feature at the Comelec website (<http://www.comelec.gov.ph/?r=OverseasVoting/PostFinder>) is being repaired.

The said feature is an application for overseas voters and seafarers in finding the Philippine posts abroad, where they are assigned to cast votes. To be able to see their Posts on the screen, Filipinos abroad are required to enter the necessary personal details.

"If their registration as an overseas voter has been approved by the RERB (Resident Election Registration Board), their record shall be displayed after entering their details that are required," the poll body said.

With this, the commission said the voters may send an e-mail to info@comelec.gov.ph for their concerns.

Last week, the official Comelec website was defaced by hackers group Anonymous Philippines which affected some web applications in the website such as the Precinct Finder, Video Demonstrations, and the Search Function.

Several hours after the unauthorized access, some of the functionalities of the website had been restored by the Comelec–Information Technology Department (ITD) and the Comelec Web Development Team. They also continue working to make the website accessible.

There are a total of 1,376,067 registered overseas absentee voters -- 1,326,728 representing land-based and 49,339 sea-based.

Three systems will be used in the OAV -- the automated election system (AES), personal manual voting system, or the manual casting of votes in the designated polling precincts, and the postal manual voting system, wherein the ballots will be mailed directly to the registered voter, who will then mail it back to the polling center after accomplishing it.

A total of 85 Philippine posts overseas will be using the AES while 26 posts are participating through the personal manual voting system and another 26 posts overseas will adopt the postal manual voting system.

Three Philippine posts will not be conducting any elections due to prevailing uncertainty in the host countries.

The voting for the OAV will begin on Saturday, April 9 (8 a.m., host country time), to Monday, May 9 (7 p.m., Philippine time). (PNA)

SCS/FGP/SSC

FBI joins international probe on Bangladesh bank heist

April 10, 2016

By: Yashika F. Torib, Manila Bureau Senior Correspondent

United States' Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has now joined the probe on the "biggest transnational crime" in Bangladesh which involved several South Asian countries.

Cyber criminals attempted to steal last month nearly \$1 billion from Bangladesh's account at the New York Federal Reserve but said hackers reportedly had over 30 other transfer requests blocked. \$20 million of the stolen money was supposed to be transferred to a bank in Sri Lanka but was halted by the country's central bank, while the remaining \$81 million were funneled into Philippine bank, Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation (RCBC), and several casinos where the stolen money were converted into gambling chips – a common money-laundering tactic.

In a bid to hasten the tracking down of their stolen money, the Bangladeshi government has tapped the assistance of the FBI.

An FBI official met with Bangladeshi police in Dhaka to trace the origin of a fraudulent transfer request for the \$81 million which was funneled to casinos in the Philippines.

"This is the biggest transnational organized crime ever seen in Bangladesh and so we sought both technical and human assistance (from the FBI)," Mirza Abdullahel Baqui, a senior police official said in a separate interview with Reuters.

Baqui disclosed that the perpetrators are believed to have hailed from six different countries.

As international investigation on the money laundering case escalates, Bangladesh central bank's governor Atiur Rahman and several other top officials resigned amid accusations of negligence.

Meanwhile, one of Bangladesh's cybercrime experts and a whistleblower to the case, Tanvir Hassan Zoha, was kidnapped while participating in the investigation.

He was abducted from an auto rickshaw in Dhaka just over 24 hours after he revealed to the police and media that he knew three of the user IDs involved in the heist.

PHL senate investigators tap INTERPOL

Meanwhile in the Philippines, senators investigating the said case tapped the assistance of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) to track down two Chinese casino operators allegedly involved in the heist.

The Senate has started coordinating with Interpol to hunt down Beijing-based Gao Sua Hua and Macau-based Ding Zhie Zi.

“They were the ones who laundered the money. They should face the Senate and answer why and how they received the money. Let's see if their testimonies will jibe (with other witnesses),” Sen. Sergio Osmeña said.

According to casino junket operator Kam Sin Wong, Gao and Ding brought the laundered money to the Philippines using RCBC and the casinos.

Wong has already returned \$4.62 million to the Philippine Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC) while the Solaire Hotel and Casino management vowed to return to the government about P100 million after it was learned that they were recipients of the “Bangladesh hot money”.

Senators are also trying to track down as much as \$30 million more of the stolen money and another \$17 million from the Philippine Remittance Service Group (PHILREM).

Denver Post: Houston Texans created Broncos' Super Bowl 50 win

April 10, 2016

By Gina Villanueva, Associate Editor

Aaron Wilson of the Houston Chronicle, banners, 'Osweiler's attitude will serve him, Texans well.'

Since signing his \$72 million contract, Texans quarterback, Brock Osweiler, number 17 -- has been busy getting to know his new teammates and coaches.

His blockbuster deal includes \$37 million guaranteed and a \$12 million signing bonus.

Players say that Osweiler's initiative in reaching out to his new teammates "reflects leadership qualities."

Osweiler says he does not feel rancor towards Broncos for being benched, in favor of 39-year-old Peyton Manning, even if he was instrumental in sending the Broncos to Super Bowl 50.

The Texans offseason program starts April 18, and "The goal for me right now is not on the field, but to be the best teammate possible, and get to know everyone," Osweiler announces.

Troy E. Renck of the Denver Post, writes that "the Houston Texans created a path to the Broncos' SuperBowl 50 championship."

"Could they also be responsible for road blocking a sequel," he wonders.

Renck continues, "About those Texans. Houston is dangerous to the Broncos' blueprint."

Yahoo Sports' Charles Robinson notes that the Texans introduced mystery to the NFL combine.

"Osweiler fits in Houston," Robinson continues, "and this is where it becomes greasy for the Broncos."

"Worth sharing with Texans," Renck writes, "inquiries, ineffectiveness and a spiral of the organization would not shake conspiracy to cost Gary Kubiak his job as Texans' coach in 2013. He landed in Baltimore as an assistant and became John Elway's handpicked leader to elevate the Broncos' playoff success."

"That Kubiak brought along many of his Houston coaches, namely defensive coordinator Wade Phillips and defensive line coach Bill Kollar, proved pivotal in reshaping the Broncos' image of finesse into one of barbed wire and bare knuckles," says Renck.

Renck concludes, "Houston, once the solution, could become the Broncos' biggest problem this offseason."

Married to Erin, born in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, Osweiler's parents Kathy and John Osweiler, raised Brock in Kalispell, Montana.

He attended Flathead High School, has an older brother, Tanner who played college football in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) at Montana, Butte. Their father received scholarship offers to play but ultimately chose to enter the military out of high school.

Brock attended Arizona State University. He stands 6'8" tall, and weighs 243 lbs.

His career with the Broncos was from 2012-2015. His passer rating stands at 86.0.

He is now, officially, the quarterback, number 17, for the Houston Texans.

Arriba Houston Texans!

The law firm at the heart of the Panama Papers scandal

April 10, 2016

By Ivana Kottasova @ivanakottasova

You're unlikely to have heard of Mossack Fonseca before today. Now the Panama law firm is a global name.

Reports published Sunday, based on leaked documents from the firm, allege it helped world leaders, officials and celebrities hide billions of dollars. Mossack Fonseca denies any wrongdoing.

So who is Mossack Fonseca, and why Panama?

Mossack Fonseca was created 30 years ago through a merger between two Panamanian law firms, one headed by Ramon Fonseca, the other by German immigrant Jurgen Mossack.

The firm specializes in helping clients incorporate firms in offshore jurisdictions.

Related: The murky world of offshore tax havens

Shell companies and offshore accounts are not illegal, but they can be used to mask the origin of financial transactions and ownership.

The reports, based on 11 million documents leaked from the company, claim Mossack Fonseca's clients included at least 33 people and companies blacklisted by the U.S. government because of links to drug trafficking and terrorism.

The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, which coordinated the yearlong investigation into the leaked documents, described Mossack Fonseca as "one of the world's five biggest wholesalers of offshore secrecy."

Ramon Fonseca told CNN late Sunday that the information published about the firm was false. In a statement to CNN Monday, the firm said it had done nothing wrong, and the reports would create confusion about offshore finance.

In a detailed response to the ICIJ, the firm said many of the parties "are not and have never been clients of Mossack Fonseca."

"The facts are these: while we may have been the victim of a data breach, nothing we've seen in this illegally obtained cache of documents suggests we've done anything illegal, and that's very much in keeping with the global reputation we've built over the past 40 years of doing business the right way, right here in Panama," it told CNN.

Related: Rich and powerful respond to claims they hid billions offshore

The company also offers an array of other services, from handling trading permits and customs regulations, wealth management and immigration services, to registering yachts and private jets.

Global network

Mossack Fonseca has around 40 offices globally, including several in mainland China and others in countries and regions identified as tax havens by the European Commission, such as the Bahamas, British Virgin Islands, Seychelles, and Anguilla.

The leaked documents reveal the offshore holdings of individuals and companies from more than 200 countries and territories.

The ICIJ said the firm's controls were inadequate. "The leaked files show that in some cases Mossack Fonseca's loose procedures allowed blacklisted individuals and other questionable clients to slip by without the firm itself knowing who they were."

The firm told the ICIJ it carried out due diligence procedures in accordance with the law.

Related: Rich and powerful respond to claims they hid billions offshore

High risk location

Until February, Panama was on an international watchlist of countries with weak anti-money laundering laws. And global organizations are still concerned about its legal framework.

"The 'Panama Papers' revelations have shone the light on Panama's culture and practice of secrecy," said Angel Gurría, secretary general of the OECD, in a statement Monday.

"Panama is the last major holdout that continues to allow funds to be hidden offshore from tax and law enforcement authorities," he added.

The International Monetary Fund said two years ago that Panama's open economy, strategic location, and developed offshore financial services sector put the country at a high risk of being used for money laundering.

The small central American country has been one of the fastest growing economies in the world, and a champion in the region. Data from the IMF show it grew 6% last year and it's forecast to exceed that this year, and next.

Financial services is the biggest local industry. The Panama Canal is also crucial to the economy, generating around 6% of the country's GDP, according to official documents.

Panama's low taxes and favorable visa system make it a popular retirement destination

-- Jethro Mullen contributed to this article.

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Like a stream of lava: a thumbsketch of an election

April 10, 2016

By Gina Villanueva, Associate Editor

The carnival of the presidential election, Chris Hedges writes, is a public display of the deep morbidity and artifice that have gripped (any) society.

Political discourse has been reduced by design to trite patriotic and religious cliches, sentimentality, sanctimonious peons to the Filipino voters, a sacralization of militarism, and acerbic, adolescent taunts.

Reality has been lost to a labyrinthian maze of empty rhetorics.

If the main purpose of elections is to serve up pliant legislators for lobbyists to shape, such a system deserves to be called "misrepresentative or clientry government," Sheldon Wolin wrote in "Democracy Incorporated: Managed Democracy and the Spector of Inverted Totalitarianism." "It is, at one and the same time, a powerful contributing factor to the depoliticization of the citizenry, as well as reason for characterizing the system as one of antidemocracy."

The whole election cycle is a carnival act, full of sound and fury and signifying nothing.

It is an example of the deep cynicism among elites who, like all other con artists, privately mock us for our gullibility and naivete. We are treated like malleable children.

Benjamin DeMott calls out this infantilization, this "babying of the electorate, spoiling of voter-age 'children' with year-round upbeat Christmas tales, the creation of a swelled-head citizenry, morally vain and irremediably sentimental."

In what he calls "junk politics," he wrote, "distinctions vanish between foundational democratic principles and decorative pleasurable tropes."

"The familiar apparatus of constitutional government and party organizations survives seemingly untouched," he wrote. "In time, though, the language of justice and injustice comes to strike

ordinary ears as Latinate and archaic -- due for internment -- and attachment to old forms weakens."

Aren't politicians a little more than brands?

They sell skillfully manufactured personalities.

These artificial personalities are used to humanize corporate oppression.

They cannot--and do not intend to--end the futile and ceaseless wars, dismantle the security and surveillance state, half the fossil fuel industry's ecocide, curb the predatory class of bankers and international financiers, lift the Filipino voters out of poverty or restore democracy.

They practice anti-politics, or what Benjamin DeMott dubbed as "junk politics."

Ours is a politics that personalizes and moralizes issues and interests instead of clarifying them. A politics that maximizes threats from abroad while miniaturizing large, complex problems at home.

It is a politics marked not only by impatience (feigned or otherwise) with articulated conflict and by frequent panegyrics on the Filipino voter's optimistic spirit and exemplary character, but by mawkish fondness for feel-your-pain gestures and idioms.

DeMott asserts, "Great causes--they still exist--nourish themselves on firm, sharp awareness of the substance of injustice. Blunting that awareness is a central project of junk politics."

Our constitutional democracy is dead.

Or, rather, it does not work for us.

No politician or elected official can alter anything of substance.

None of those elected to the highest office of a sovereignty, the Congress, have the power, and they know it, to challenge the corporate disemboweling of a sovereignty.

"One cannot point to any national institution(s) that can accurately be described as democratic," Wolin wrote, "surely not in the highly managed, money-saturated elections, the lobby-infested Congress, the imperial presidency, the class-based judicial and penal system, or, least of all, the media."

That a revolt (in mind, spirit, and conscience) is coming is incontrovertible. The absurdity of the election proves it.

The seeds of destruction of corporate power, however, are embedded within its own structure. The elites have no internal or external constraints. They will exploit, manipulate, lie and oppress until they create an ideological vacuum.

Corporations control the three branches of government (including the fourth branch, called the fourth estate, which is the media, because they determine the media narrative and public debate, not to mention that they also own the weather). They are turning public education into a system of indoctrination. They profit from permanent war, mass incarceration, suppressed wages, and poor health care.

Corporations demand "austerity."

Corporate power is unassailable, and it glides wantonly, like a stream of lava.

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Insights

Activists to US troops: PHP not your playground

By Gina Villanueva, Associate Editor

That some Filipinos welcome American 'support' in strengthening the Philippines' territorial 'defense' (or, is it 'occupation') may be true.

Yet still, left-wing activists and nationalists have opposed a rapidly growing US military presence in what some call, the still 'secret,' not 'former' American colony, or, as some others still -- say, the Americans "never left," the Philippines. They just "took a 24-year sabbatical." More, or less.

The protesters at the US Embassy, on April 4, had placards of "US troops, Philippines is not your playground."

The Associated Press reports US Secretary Ashton Carter flies to the Philippines for the 11-day Balikatan exercises, an annual drill, purportedly to 'defend' the Philippines from a range of potential crises, (manufactured, or perceived) including the disputed South China Sea, in physical cooperation with Australian and US defense forces.

Heading the formidable 5,000 (from just 1,500, 32 years ago) American military personnel taking part in the maneuvers, US Marine Lt. Gen. John Toolan says the joint drills that have been staged 32 times "underscores the importance Washington places on the "rock solid" relationship it has with Manila.

Seriously?

Great photo-op for Carter, too.

Spaces of Security and Insecurity

There have been extensive criticisms of the 'patron' role of the US by some Filipino nationalist politicians and some media who see dangers of growing dependence on the US in dealing with home-grown 'terrorist' threat -- perceived, or otherwise.

In particular, the Balikatan has been criticized as unconstitutional and undermining the sovereignty (sic!) of the Philippines.

But then, the circus show must go on - there's no business like show business, remember?

Except that this carnival show is veered toward the achievement of more conquests by the imperial presidency (the 'pivot' to Asia), like it, or else...

Opposition leaders question, for instance, the sudden 'constitutional-' ality of the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA), being the sequel to the erstwhile Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA)-- that has fluidly extended the 'legality' of the Balikatan exercises. The Philippines has practically bowed down like a slave -- laying all its military installations open to the US defense forces.

Then there is the deployment of US troops in Mindanao (main south island of the Philippines) and the motive for holding joint 'military exercises' in that part of the country, as opposition leaders worry about the Philippines becoming a second Vietnam, especially if US forces are targeted.

(Or, even a second Libya, for that matter.)

Whatever the immediate outcome of the Balikatan, it provides an ideal opportunity for the US military to test out its troops, equipment, and tactics for deployment, not just in the Philippines (which is just their 'model'), the South East Asia region, and further ahead -- worldwide, in the classic standard of the insatiably gluttonous desire of the US (and its handlers) for perpetual hegemony.

It is just a 'warm-up,' of 'sound and fury,' without any substantial meaning. A portention of upcoming conquests/occupations/pre-emptive aggressions.

No worries. Business as usual or the no-bid contractors of profitable (only to them) perpetual wars.

For the chosen (dis)honorably few, for the best and the brightest (mercenaries/angels of death) -- whose expertise lies in fleecing humanity, not to mention annihilating those who are minding their own business, in their own sovereignties that are abundant in natural resources.

This International Military Education and Training (IMET) program is the largest in the Pacific, and third-largest in the world, and a Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA) was signed in November 2002. 2016 is the thirty-secondth year of the US-based military exercise, Balikatan

This 'pivot' on South East Asia has nothing to do with the presumption of a threat to US security from Islamic terrorist organizations, much less, to defend the Philippines against China.

Far from it. Not even close.

It smells more of a prelude to the globalists' program on the 'Agenda 21,' (CODEX Alimentarius, or Food Code) -- or, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP, or global trade that is immune to any law).

Simply put, it has everything to do with the goal of attempting to re-assert US hegemony in a part of the world conceived as home to China - the next 'great power' threat to US hegemony and one of the world's most dynamic and promising regional economies in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

It's all about gold, oil (of every type, especially the sweet crude oil), palladium, and much much more, stupid.

The ASEAN exhortatory stance diverges from the highly military-oriented approach of the US, advocating a more holistic treatment to the terrorism in the region.

To some extent, the need to anchor the Philippines' policy with ASEAN's position also serves a strategic purpose.

Given the uneasy domestic tensions arising from direct US interventions, the Philippine government should be wary of being judged as simply a mere shadow of US unilateralist initiatives in the region.

Can the Philippines' membership with ASEAN offer some respite, as a 'balancer,' then -- as this Balikatan is merely one of the minor (front act) episodes -- a tele-novela (daytime soap TV) of the much bigger episodes towards the consummation of the tapestry of the New World (dis)Order?

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Editorial

SPIN DOCTORS FROM ALL PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

All the presidential candidates have their own spokesperson doing all the talking and press releases, but besides these "walkie-talkies", the candidates have their own spinners in charge of disseminating all the falsehood about the May 9 elections.

One good example is the recent poll survey conducted by Pulse Asia stating that Davao City Mayor Rudy Duterte has overtaken Sen. Grace Poe. The spin was denied by the Duterte camp as coming from them.

Of course, anything that is perceived to be an advantage to their campaign, and orchestrated by people either to condition the mind of the Filipino voters will not work out. Filipinos have, through all the years, been taught that choosing and voting for the wrong person will definitely boomerang to them in terms of broken promises, most especially healthcare, the 4Ps initiated by the Aquino government, etc.

The choice by now, 28 days to the election day, has dwindled down to 2 presidential candidates, Davao City Mayor Rudy Duterte and Sen. Grace Poe. Vice President J Binay is still hounded by his alleged graft and corruption committed during his term as mayor of Makati City.

Mar Roxas, it appears, has denied the reported cancer that Mayor Duterte somehow is afflicted with. What about the reported 40 million pesos that the Davao City government has not accounted for. Roxas camp has always maintained that Mayor Duterte needs to say about the unliquidated government money released to the Davao City government.

As we know, Mayor Duterte accused Mar Roxas as not a product of Wharton School of Economics.

All these presidential candidates are set to play seesaw game battle, and hope not to lead to mudslinging tactics.

Do we need to listen to traditional political gimmickry, and vote for the candidates with the most number of promises to the Filipino voters? Or just vote on what we believe will lift us from the illness of the Philippine government of denying us our basic needs to survive?

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Straight Talk

Who are we?

By Ed Libranda

Since the Philippine Sentinel has gone global when we launched our digital newspaper last January 18, 2016., we have reached 40 countries with the United States and the Philippines as the main source of the report by Google.

The invitation that I have extended to my cousin, former Panorama Magazine editor Randy V. Urlanda, is highly appreciated, and so with my former Philippine Sentinel editor, Gina Villanueva have indeed given a strong journalistic clout to our newspaper.

Randy, a product of San Beda College, while Gina came from University of Santo Tomas and Oxford College in London, England. Both have a combined of more than 50 years of solid experience in journalism.

My comrade with the Philippine Coast Guard Auxiliary, a civilian uniformed volunteer group Lt. Commander Yashica Torib is the Press Relations Officer (PRO) of the Philippine Coast Guard and the Philippine Coast Guard Auxiliary. Yash has added her years of experience in radio broadcasting as a regular host of a radio show called "Ang Marino." Her journalistic prowess is evident in her style of newspaper reporting.

Acey Aenelle Cruz, writing under her own nom de guerre RiderGirl Manila, is a well-known blogger and is well-known among netizens. Click on her pen name and it will lead you to her blog "Behind My Pink Helmet."

She is best described as a "rider welfare advocate and a free-spirited woman who will do everything for her riders."

All of these Philippine Sentinel writers are bent on demonstrating "only the facts and not a personal attitude towards the facts."

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News at a Glance

Duterte assures media protection

If elected, Presidential candidate Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte vows that the news practitioners will be protected under his presidency.

He announced that he will establish special courts and prosecution panels to handle cases of media killings, offer rewards and incentives for the immediate arrest, prosecution, and conviction of the killers, when the National Press Club challenged the presidential candidates to lay down their agenda for the media, and their plan to address media killings in the country.

Duterte will order police investigators and prosecutors to resolve the cases in a limited time, to hasten the delivery of justice to slain journalists. "If not, they might as well look for another job," he emphasized.

Peter Lavina, spokesperson to Duterte claims the mayor has been a staunch protector of media rights, respecting the media's role as the "Fourth Estate" even if they write adverse issues critical to his administration.

The National Union of Journalists in the Philippines records a total of 170 journalists killed since 1986, 30 of which occurred under the current administration.

What happened to House Resolution 2013?

In House Resolution 2031, Bayan Muna Representatives Neri Colmenares and Carlos Zarate urged the Philippine government to conduct a "diplomatic offensive," through international parliamentary networks because the country "cannot rely on the duplicitous United States of America," to defend its territory and its exclusive economic zones (EEZ)

"While the Philippines raised diplomatic protests and has announced to bring the issue to the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea, President Benigno Aquino III was also quick to call on the United States to interfere in the regional dispute, and come to aid the Philippines against China," the resolution said.

Colmenares claims the US was only committed to reaffirming its "military superiority" and political power, hegemony in Asia, citing its Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) with the Philippines, which has now been pronounced "constitutional."

He adds that the US Department of States Bureau of East Asian Pacific did not express its support for the Philippines.

The lawmaker's "diplomatic offensive" calls for engaging other countries to back the Philippines in its stand on the maritime disputes, and to denounce China's aggressive approach to its claims.

Entertainment

ANA CAPRI REQUESTS NBI TO PROBE SEXUAL HARRASSMENT

Ana Capri sought the help of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) in initiating a probe into the sexual harassment incident that occurred at the Palace Pool Club in Taguig City last April 5:

(Photo by: Courtesy of Moon 13 Photography / Ana Capri's Instagram account)

Read more at <http://www.pep.ph/news/62748/ana-capri-initiates-probe-into-sexual-harassment-incident#Uuy3sPWW1WVQJH3u.99>

Former sexy actress Ana Capri filed a formal complaint with the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) against an unnamed VIP guest at Palace Pool Club which occurred April 5 in Taguig City. Ana Capri claims she was harassed by unidentified guest at the Palace Pool Club. According to Ana Capri, she felt humiliated and has suffered mental anguish after the incident,

Based on the report filed by the actress with the NBI, the Chinese VIP guest of the said club, touched her buttock and when she complained with the club management, the guest slapped her face. Ana said further, "Grabe. Sobra ang stress at trauma ko dahil sa lalakeng yon. Hindi ko kasi nakuha ang pangalan nya, e (Its too much of him. I have suffered too much stress and trauma because of him and the incident and I was not able to get his name."

And now, she has to face lawyers and investigators from the NBI so she can properly file the sexual harassment against the VIP guest of the club, who according to some sources, is from China. Ana Capri said that she doesn't even know the name of the VIP club guest and she hopes that the club will voluntarily provide the name and identity of their VIP guest.

She feels the investigation being conducted by the NBI will result in a positive outcome against the suspect who remains at large. Ana Capri will celebrate her birthday on April 24, and said she hopes to enjoy her birthday without any untoward incident that will spoil her birthday celebration.

Sports

PACQUIAO DEFEATS BRADLEY FOR WBO WELTERWEIGHT CROWN

Filipino boxing icon Congressman Manny Pacquiao of the province of Sarangani defeated WBO welterweight champion Timothy Bradley, Jr. of the USA in a championship boxing match at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, Saturday, April 9, 2016.

Manny Pacquiao beat Bradley 116-110 with all the judges having an identical scores.

Bradley was knocked down twice by Pacquiao in fifth and ninth rounds, and there was no turning back after pounding the American champion against the ropes on numerous occasions.

Pacquiao, who prior to the bout was interviewed about his plans after the bout, and he said, "After the fight, I have already said that my mind is to focus on my job (as an elected congressman), Paquiao said. "If I win a senate seat, I have a big responsibility and I need to focus on that. I cannot say right now that I am going to retire. I dont want to say that because I dont know what the feeling is when you leave boxing. I will give it great thought when I return home. My mind right now says to retire, but we dont know."

Pacquiao earns \$20 million and Bradley \$4 million from their third fight.

Outside the ring, although there have been some controversies, as as hic recent comments against gay rights, he is known as a compassionate, humble and hugely charitable man with a devotion to helping Filipinos who are less fortunate in life. Pacquiao is a two-term congressman and is eyeing a senate seat this May national elections as a member of the United Nationalist Alliance (UNA) led by its presidential bet Vice President Jejomar Binay.

It appears from the fight that Pacquiao is not bothered by his shoulder which needed a surgery after he complained that he was hurt during his fight with Floyd Mayweather on May 2, 2015. The fight with Bradley was his first fight after his shoulder surgery.

Whether this will be Manny Pacquiao's last fight is predicated on the newly-crowned WBO welterweight champion overall view of his life as a boxer and a politician.

Tourism

Jail Birds protect Mindoro's Endemic Birds

By Randy V. Urlanda. Manila Bureau Chief Correspondent

The small forest green bungalow with tin roof and ranch-type horizontal terrace railings stands out in the straw-colored yard parched by the early onset of summer. A huge white sign board on its left façade announces that it is the Siburan Sub-Prison Guest House.

For local guests, the freshly-painted two-bedroom concrete inn with a verdant rain forest looming at the background, the hostel's spartan accommodation of wooden double deck beds in each flamingo-pink fan room, and a white tiled sink beside a shower-less toilet and bath, is just a place to rest for lack of a better facility to stay in for the night after attending to some business inside Siburan Sub-Prison, one of the four prison clusters inside the 8,193-hectare Sablayan Prison and Penal Farm (SPPF), that is home to 2,384 colonists, as its inmates are called. Siburan Sub-Prison is a peaceful and orderly penal community, like the other three sub-prisons, of 336 medium and minimum security convicts or those spending time 20 years and below.

But, for a select group of foreign and local visitors with “lofty” ideals, the lodging is like a cozy boutique hotel, which serves as a halfway house in pursuing their much-loved profession—bird watching! What matters most is that the feathery kind that they will admire and study are not those commonly found in other places. The rare fowls inhabiting the 1,500-hectare Mount Siburan, the largest remaining lowland forest in this part of the archipelago, is home to Mindoro's eight endemic bird species found nowhere else in the world!

Located in the central midwest section of Mindoro in the progressive town of Sablayan in Occidental Mindoro, the jump-off point to the world-renowned Apo Reef Nature Park, acclaimed as the best diving destination in Asia, the Siburan lowland rainforest is the emerald “holy grail” for global birdwatchers. It's probably the safest place in the Philippines to watch wildlife at its best simply because it lies within a sprawling gated (and fenced) 8,000-hectare penal farm.

Another reason why these colorful rare bird species are safe from being caught in fine-mesh nets of bird hunters is that the forest, which is part of the Mount Igit- Baco mountain range, is the ancestral home of the aboriginal Tau-Buhid and Alangan Mangyan tribes that fiercely protect wildlife in their jungle domain.

The second line of protection for these *rara avis* is the two-meter-high barbed wire fence mounted on white coconut trunks surrounding the vast penal colony that bars game hunters from coming in the protected wilderness.

With contented inmates who raise their own vegetables, rice and catch their own fresh fish in their own lake, not to mention married prisoners availing themselves with three-day conjugal visits weekly, and have adequate sports and entertainment facilities for relaxation, including their own houses of worship to practice their faiths, harming each other or taking visitors hostage inside the well-maintained, university campus-like prison camp are the farthest from their minds. Because of this peaceful community atmosphere and cordial relationships between the prisoners and their guards, a jailbreak is practically unheard of at the 58-year-old penal colony.

Through word of mouth from foreign tourists who stays for weeks on end at Sablayan's other popular tourist destination, the Pandan Island Resort, birdwatchers in their homelands have learned that Sablayan is the "birdwatchers capital of the Philippines."

"All a birdwatcher has to do is go to the municipal tourism office at the town plaza, which is a free wi-fi zone, and register for him to be booked at the Siburan guest house, if he plans to stay for awhile to observe as many rare birds as he can," explains the energetic Sablayan Mayor Eduardo B. Gadiano. "Foreign ornithologists and birdwatchers have been coming here since last year because they read online in our website that Philippine endemic birds abound here in Sablayan."

Gadiano says that the local government unit of Sablayan is an active partner of the national government through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and international and national non-governmental organizations like the International Union of the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and the Haribon Foundation in the conservation of wildlife and other forms of endemic flora and fauna within Sablayan's 2,188-square kilometers land area, which makes it almost three times the size of the province of Cavite. The good thing about the country's biggest town is that 77 per cent of its land area are pristine woodlands and mountains with cascading waterfalls, green lakes and flowing rivers.

"Out of the 23 world's species of birds listed as threatened and endangered by the IUCN, eight of them are still flying freely and increasing in number here in Sablayan," enthuses Gadiano, who is pursuing the upgrading of Sablayan's macadam runway and terminal of the unused Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo Airport to accommodate A319 passenger jets and of the old port for easy docking of roll on-roll off ferries from Batangas and Manila in anticipation of the influx of more tourists and investors who would like to partake of what the biggest town in the Philippines has to offer.

The eight endemic birds found in Sablayan's Siburan forests are the Mindoro "tarictic" hornbill; the Mindoro Imperial Pigeon (balud); the Blue-Crowned Racquet Tail Parrot (*Prioniturus discurus mindorensis*); Philippine Coucal (*Centropus viridis mindorensis*); Mindoro Scops Owl

(*Otus mindorensis*); Scarlet Collared Flower Picker (*Dicaeum retrocinctum*); Black-Hooded Coucal (*Centropus steeni*), and the Mindoro Bleeding-Heart Pigeon.

A kilometer north of the Siburan Guest House is the scenic 24-hectare white lotus-strewn Libuao Lake that was adjudged three times as the cleanest inland body of water in the Philippines where inmates get their daily supply of tilapia, gourami and other fresh-water fish that teems under its green, two-meter deep waters. Birdwatchers can also watch wild ducks, locally called papan that skims the lake for their meal, like its resident white sea eagle (*bulik-bulik*) that nests in one of the many bare branches of the ramrod straight taloto trees hemming the lake. The bird of prey, with its outstretched wings swoops down to snatch an unsuspecting tilapia in between lotus plants for its dinner. The name of the lake was derived from the Mangyan word for lotus, libwa.

So, if you love to dive in pristine coral reefs, swim alongside giant human-friendly sea turtles, love tuna sashimi as its freshest, and watch eight of the 23 endangered bird species in the world, Sablayan is the place for you to go.

Community News

Houston Royal Oaks Club Elects Its Officers For 2016-17

The Houston Royal Oaks Lions Club, established in 2008 elected its new sets of officers for the year 2016-2017.

The officers were first nominated according to its by-laws in March 2016, and recently held its elections in which they elected Lion Nelvin Adriatico as its president.

In a photo released by Lion Eme Nisnisan, zone chairman of the Lions District 2S2, the other officers elected are the following: Lion Nelvin Adriatico, president; Lion Steven Okoronkwo, vice president; Lion Eme Nisnisan, secretary; Lion Avinahs Thadhani, treasurer; Lion Marivic Gamache, membership director; Lion Vic Tabierdo, tamer; and Lion Jun Amores, tail twister

Elected to the board are the following: Lion Rozaida Dy Cruz, one year; Lion Norma Mercado, one year; Lion Myrna Achico, two years; and Lion Salindeg Gallegos, two years

Formal induction of officers and new members of the Houston Royal Oaks Club are scheduled to be held after the Lions Club International Convention in Fukuoka, Japan, on June 24-28, 2016.

The 16th Biennial Filipino American National Historical Conference returns to New York in 2016!

The Metro New York Chapter of the Filipino American National Historical Society is delighted to be hosting our biennial conference in 2016! We hope that conference attendees and participants will enjoy their time in the city that never sleeps. The conference will be held from June 22- 25, 2016, primarily at John Jay College of Criminal Justice located at 524 W. 59th Street in Manhattan. Visit www.fanhs2016.com for more information. If you have any questions, please email fanhs.mny@gmail.com.

Call for Proposals

PROPOSALS DUE: DECEMBER 15, 2015 at 11:59PM, EASTERN TIME

This year's conference theme is Building with Our Roots. As we engage our families and communities, how has our individual and collective history/ies allowed us to build and grow? What can we learn from our experiences as Filipino Americans? We encourage and invite sessions that explore this theme as well as any other topics pertaining to Filipino-American experiences or histories.

Proposals may be submitted for individual papers or presentations (to be grouped with other individual submissions); panels (three or four papers or presentations on a single topic); roundtables (several individuals presenting personal accounts of specific historical events or experiences); and workshops (teaching research techniques or sharing research skills or sources). Proposal is a 500 word synopsis of your presentation topic. Only one submission is necessary for a panel or roundtable.

To submit a call for proposal for your workshop, panel, presentation or roundtable, please visit: <http://proposals.fanhs2016.com>

This year's conference theme is "A Pinay/Pinoy State of Mind: Building with Our Roots." FANHS- Metro New York chose this theme to focus on our history while building our future legacies.

Our conference will feature all the traditional components of previous FANHS Conferences:

- A Tour of the City
- Phenomenal Keynote Speakers
- Plenary Sessions and Workshops
- FANHS Town Hall Meeting
- Filipino American Authors Reception
- Banquet/ Gala with Dancing, Silent Auction, and More

Our newest components that we will be adding this year, to add our New York City flare include:

- A Fashion Show with local, established Filipino American designers
- A Filipino American Film Festival featuring contemporary and fan favorite films from the past.

Majority of the Conference will be held at John Jay College of Criminal Justice (located in central Manhattan). Hotel blocks have been reserved for three hotels in Midtown Manhattan (just

blocks from the conference location). And our banquet/ gala will be held on the Hornblower Infinity – a cruise boat that will tour the Hudson River, with up close views of the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, the Brooklyn Bridge, the World Trade Center, and more!

Texas Gawad Kalinga sponsors dinner fundraising, April 23, 2016

Texas Gawad Kalinga will sponsor a dinner dance fundraising with DJ Egay on Saturday, April 23, 2016 at the San Lorenzo Ruis de Manila Community Center, 16411 West Bellfort St., Sugar Land, Texas 77498. The cost of the ticket is \$30.

Proceeds of the event will benefit Gawad Kalinga projects in the Philippines.

For more info, pls call the following:

CAROL - 713-907-8047;

JUN 832-274-2341;

ALEX 713-471-5159,

and MARIE 713-732-0738

HOUSTON ROYAL OAKS LEO CLUB INDUCTS NEW OFFICERS AND MEMBERS

HOUSTON - The Houston Royal Oaks Club of Houston, sponsor of the Houston Royal Oaks Leo Club held their induction of officers and members, Saturday, March 12, 2016 at the Grace United Church of Christ, 8515 Broadwulf Drive, Houston, Texas 77072.

Lion Minette Chiu, Leo Advisor, called to order the ceremony, and Lion Annette Wierschem gave the invocation while Leo President Ahmed Emara enjoined the Leos, Lions and guests to recite the pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States of America. All Leos then recited the Leo Pledge.

Lion Eme Nisnisan, zone chair of Lions District 2S2 and immediate past president Leo Helbert Anderson gave the opening remarks. Lion Minette Chiu, District Leo Advisor and Leo Advisory Committee inducted the new officers and members. The new officers are: Leo Ahmed Emara, president; Leo Helbert Anderson, vice president for outreach; Leo Ana Baleva, vice president for education; Leo Jai Mai Marks, Secretary and Treasurer; Leo Bethel Garriel, membership

director; Leo Brendan Garriel, tail twister. Past presidents of the Houston Royal Oaks Leo Club are: Lion Joy Nisnisan (charter president); Lion Jasmine Emara; Leo Mara Nisnisan, and Leo Helbert Andersen. Members are: Leo Steven Okoronkwo; Leo Maxine Sencil; Leo AJ Adriatico; Leon Cassandra Schaeffer; Leo Annaliza Suerte; Leo Marisa Garcia; Leo Tatiana Okoronkwo; Leo Hanna Sencil; Leo Addisen Schaeffer; Leo Kathleen Kae Dela Rosa, and Leo Christine Wierschem.

The Leo Club Advisory Committee is composed of the following: Lion Minette Chiu, advisor; Lion Niesan Emara, co-advisor; Lion Emea Nisnisan, advisory panel, and Lion Annette Wierschem and Lion Amy Alidon.