

Front News

Overseas Absentee Voting to start on April 9 --Comelec

April 3, 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

Palace wants impartial investigation following violent North Cotabato dispersal

April 3, 2016

MANILA, April 2 (PNA) -- The Palace called for calm following a violent dispersal of protesting farmers in North Cotabato, which resulted in casualties and injuries.

"This is a very, very heartbreaking tragedy. Our farmers deserved better than to have to suffer to receive assistance and aid," Undersecretary Manuel Quezon III of the Presidential Communications Development and Strategic Planning Office, said in a radio interview on Saturday.

"All the more so because the assistance and aid is there, they have to go through the process ... and this is really..., this compounds the tragedy," he told dzRB Radyo Ng Bayan.

He said a fair, thorough, and impartial investigation must be carried out immediately to hold those accountable for the violence.

"There is no reason why people must die in order to be asking for assistance from their own government," he said. At the same time, Quezon said, "there is no reason why a tragedy must be compounded by hotheaded statements or rushing to judgment."

"It will not help anyone. There's a tremendous number of wounded people on both sides. Lives have been lost and we owe it to ourselves as a society and to the farmers themselves and people in the affected areas to find out what exactly happened and why it did lead to this," according to Quezon.

Quezon wonders why the protesters rejected government aid to remedy their hunger by going through a certain process.

The protesters were offered to go to their barangays and register for the cash for work program, and receive family packs from the DSWD but they refused. Quezon said it must be investigated.

The incident could result to the spread of misinformation and agenda setting, he said, warning it's not helpful to the affected families.

The police leadership ordered an investigation into reports that two farmers were killed while dozens were wounded after being fired upon by police in Kidapawan City.

Reports said still unidentified policemen fired at some 6,000 protesters at 10 a.m. Friday.

The protesters were demanding relief and subsidy for farm communities affected by the dry spell in North Cotabato.

North Cotabato officials said the violence started after some of the protesters attacked policemen escorting a group of social workers out to rescue minors in the barricade set up by the demonstrators along the highway. (PNA)

RMA/PND/SSC

Ejercito-Estrada clan at odds over prexy bets

April 3, 2016

|By: Yashika F. Torib, Manila Bureau Senior Correspondent

Former president and incumbent Manila mayor Joseph “Erap” Estrada and his extended family are at odds over their presidential bets come May 2016.

Guia Gomez, mayor of San Juan City and Estrada’s former partner, announced her support for Liberal Party’s standard bearer Mar Roxas.

Senator Joseph Victor “JV” Ejercito, Gomez’s son by Estrada, said he is inclined to support Grace Poe’s candidacy.

Meanwhile, Mayor Estrada has recently endorsed his god-daughter Grace Poe for presidency during his own proclamation rally for a reelection bid. The announcement was made only months after he considered his political ally and friend Vice President Jejomar Binay for the presidential post.

While Gomez pointed out that such decision merely reflects the independent opinions of their family as individual politicians and stating that each one “have their own minds”, her political rival Vice Mayor Francis Zamora thinks otherwise.

Zamora thinks that the Ejercito-Estrada clan’s decision to support different candidates could be some sort of a political insurance to assure them of favors from whoever wins the presidential post in May.

This also displays the recurring alliance shift in the Philippine politics according to a source.

Whereas Gomez suggests individual independence over their political choices, Estrada sang a different tune when he quipped in his proclamation rally in Liwasang Bonifacio that he “call the shots” in their family.

The Manila mayor remains confident that his family would likewise support Poe’s bid for presidency despite Gomez’s pronouncement of support for Roxas.

“I call the shots,” he said in an ambush interview with reporters, stressing that he could not lead the city if he could not even unite his family.

It can be recalled that Gomez pronounced her full support to Roxas’ presidency last January and described him as a “constant friend of San Juan” who showed his “genuine concern” in times of disasters when he was still the secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG).

“I will never forget his deep concern for our constituents in the city,” Gomez said.

Roxas, as interior secretary, prioritized the relocation of residents living along the waterways and other “danger zones” in San Juan.

Meanwhile, Estrada described his support for Poe as part of his decades-long friendship with her father, the late Fernando Poe Jr. who also used to eye the presidential post before he died.

“He never left me. He always supported my candidacy for mayor, senator, vice president and president,” Estrada said. He also believes that Grace Poe will continue what her father has already started.

PACQUIAO IS STILL A BOXER: COMELEC WON'T STOP PACQUIAO-BRADLEY FIGHT BROADCAST

April 3, 2016

|By RIDERGirl Manila

The Commission on Elections (COMELEC) has given in into deciding not to stop the broadcast of the Manny Pacquiao and Timothy Bradley fight on April 9, 2016 and declared this last March 29, to answer to complaints by Walden Bello, a former colleague in Congress and former Senator Rene Saguisag, as the fight ‘can give the Sarangani Representative an advantage over others who are also running for Congress’. It is important to note that the complaints were not formally filed to the COMELEC.

As it is the unanimous decision of the COMELEC Poll Body, its Chairman, Andres Bautista stated three parameters for the decision; the fight is not really within the control of the COMELEC because, one, there is no “justiciable controversy”, two, no formal complaints were filed and three, simply because the fight has not yet happened.

Technically, the COMELEC is still not allowing the fight but the Comelec Chairman said further, “was only not acting on complaints against him”.

Former Congressman Walden Bello of the Akbayan Party-List had expressed disdain over the COMELEC’s decision and that the COMELEC has taken a ‘cowardly stance’ for simply being intimidated to tell Pacquiao regarding of ‘COMELEC rules violation’. Bello is also after a Senatorial seat like Pacquiao in the coming May 2016 elections.

Well, after all, Manny Pacquiao is still primarily, more than anything else, a BOXER. Pacquiao expressed relief over the COMELEC’s decision and that would give him more peace of mind as he concentrates on his practices for the upcoming bout.

As always, Pacquiao said that he is fighting for God and honor for the country.

The first Pacquiao-Bradley fight was called “Perfect Storm” and happened on June 9, 2012 where after a 12-rounder, Bradley won by a controversial split decision where most thought the decision should be in Pacquiao’s favor. The second encounter was billed as “Vindication” where Pacquiao, after a 12-round bout won via unanimous decision finally snatching the WBO Welterweight and ending the undefeated streak of Bradley.

Pacquiao was quoted to say that he will retire after winning against Bradley.

Insights

Abstainee-SC justices asked to clarify Poe DQ

By Gina Villanueva, Associate Editor

A petitioner in the disqualification cases against senator Grace Poe has asked three justices of the Supreme Court to make a clear stand on issues involving her eligibility for the presidency.

Amado Valdez, former University of the East College of Law dean, specifically urged Associate Justices Diosdado Peralta, Mariano del Castillo and Benjamin Caguioa to reconsider their stand when they refrained from voting on whether or not Poe is a natural-born citizen qualified to be president.

Valdez said, "We ask the three justices to decide on the issue so that it could be resolved before the elections. We cannot allow this issue to drag on after the elections."

In their voting on Poe's case on March 8, the three magistrates abstained, believing there was no need for the high court to rule on it to resolve the case.

In his dissenting opinion, Senior Associate Justice Antonio Carpio said there was no majority ruling on Poe's eligibility and citizenship.

Valdez asked the high court to reverse its decision and instead rule that Poe is not eligible for the presidency for not being a natural-born citizen and not meeting the 10-year residency requirement under the Constitution.

One of the four disqualification petitioners against Poe, Valdez believes that the justices in the SC majority erred in finding grave abuse of discretion on the part of the Comelec that disqualified the senator over material misrepresentation of her eligibilities.

He argued that the high tribunal has set a dangerous precedent as it allows returning residents to merely invoke re-acquisition of citizenship under Republic Act 9225 (Citizenship Retention and Reacquisition Act of 2003) in qualifying for election as natural-born citizens.

"The clear and unequivocal terms of RA 9225 that merely 'deemed' the petitioner (Poe) 'to have re-acquired Philippine citizenship, ' and not as a natural-born citizen, cannot be replaced by misapplication and misleading of judicial precedents.

In the same vein, the definition in the Constitution of a natural-born citizen does not change with an erroneous understanding of repatriation," Valdez argued in his appeal.

The three other disqualification petitioners are former senator Francisco Tatad, De la Salle University professor Antonio Contreras, and former Government Service Insurance System counsel Estrella Elamparo, in a joint appeal filed on March 18.

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Editorial

DANGER IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER

Numerous incidents of bullying by the Chinese coast guard within the Philippine economic zone of 200 miles have been exhibited and have elicited protest from the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA).

The Philippines has just become defenseless in all of these instances. How could the Philippines utilize its own under-equipped, under-funded, and most of the time under-manned Philippine Coast Guard?

This is the only uniformed agency that is attached with the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC), and patterned after the US government Homeland Security which is not part of the US Armed Forces.

Recent news in major dailies, during the past weeks, saw the arrival of various war ships and a nuclear powered submarine anchored in Philippine ports. This must be the reason why the Philippine government has stopped continuing with its efforts to militarize the AFP with much needed funds and equipments, at least, to show its effort in guarding our territory.

As a small nation, the Philippines is dependent on the aid of bigger nations, like the US, Japan, Korea, and Australia. Each nation has each own vested interests making sure that the Philippines is equipped with whatever is needed to prepare itself in any eventuality, should a war erupts between China and US together with its allies in Asia Pacific.

Is there any imminent danger to the Philippines, should another war erupts between these two nations? Definitely, the Philippines becomes a conduit of the Americans based on EDCA, and on what has been declared as legal by the Philippine Supreme Court and further decided to be within the bounds of the Philippines Constitution.

If this occurs, the Filipino people could only be reminded by the chaos, destruction, and human lives lost during the last world war. Can this be deterred by the presence of the American forces now with their own contingent massing in these 5 Philippine military bases spread all over the Philippines?

Danger is definitely around the corner, just within territorial and economic zone of the Philippines. The bullying by a big nation like China could only be parried by a much bigger nation like a Philippine ally, the United States.

There is no turning back. The Philippines is covered by its obligation within the provisions of EDCA to uphold its commitment with the United States of America. If the US has to go to war with China, the Philippines has to stand hand in hand with the big brother USA.

Straight Talk

By Ed Libranda

OFWs the unsung heroes of the Philippines

Since the inception of the labor export by the Philippine government in the 1970s, dollar remittance has become the main product of these overseas Filipino workers (OFW) in combating economic dislocation by the families of these OFWs.

Not only do they remit their hard earned dollar to their families in the Philippines, but some of these OFWs have suffered humiliation, mental anguish, and physical abuse by their employers. Numerous cases of non-compliance of employment contracts are violated by both agencies in the Philippines as well as in their foreign contract agencies.

Domestic workers, most especially, are often the victims in all the physical and mental abuses perpetrated by their employers. Some victims have decided to end their lives just to stop their sufferings.

The contributions by the OFWs in the dollar remittance as well as labor export market have lifted the Philippine economy to a certain level. Billions of dollars are remitted by the OFWs on a continuing basis all throughout the years.

Inspite of the high incidence of unemployment in the Philippines especially with the advent of new graduates every year, how can the Philippine government address the unemployment even if the Department of Labor conducts Job Fair in all the key cities of the Philippines.

I have been following the electoral campaigns of all the presidential candidates, and not even one of these candidates have touched on the issue of unemployment. Why? No one among them would bring up the issue in any of their campaign sorties knowing how TOUCHY the issue is. But this is another topic I would present in my next blog.

I take off my hat to these unsung heroes of the Philippines, the overseas Filipino workers (OFW), they have somehow lifted the hearts and minds of their loved ones by their efforts to bring a bit of financial security and enjoyment.

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 a 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

JOHN LLYOD CRUZ VERY MUCH AVAILABLE

MANILA - Kapamilya star John Llyod Cruz, in an interview confirmed that he is very much "single na single" in a press interview.

The young actor who had a relationship with actress Angelica Panganiban broke off their relationship last June 2015, although in a separate interview, they both denied the reported break up.

And now, Cruz said that there is no truth also to the reported lovey dovey between him and his onscreen lover, Bea Alonzo, who also broke off his relationship with fellow Kapamilya actor Zanja Marudo who announced his split with Bea Alonzo.

In an interview aired Tuesday on ABS-CBN TV Patrol, John Llyod Cruz when asked about the rumor that he and Bea Alonzo are now in a relationship, Cruz denied this by saying, "wala po, wala po, magkaibigan lang po kami.: John Llyod Cruz is currently filming a movie together with Jennylyn Mercado of GMA-TV.

Sports

ANOTHER FILIPINO BOXER QUALIFIES TO RIO OLYMPIC GAMES

MANILA, April 1 (PNA) — Another Filipino boxer, Charly Suarez, has earned ticket to the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro after beating Chinese bet Jun Shan in the ongoing AIBA Asian/Oceanian Olympic Qualifying tournament in Qian'An, Hebei Province, China.

Suarez shattered the nose of Shan in the first round and forced his retirement before the start of the third in the lightweight division to join light flyweight Rogen Ladon in the gold medal bout and the plane bound for Brazil in August.

Suarez, who led in the cards of the three judges when the fight was halted, will face Otgondala Orjnyabuu of Mongolia in the final.

Never allowing the hometown crowd to get going, Suarez swamped Jun with powerful combinations that rocked the Chinese from the opening bell until he surrendered while in his corner.

Earlier, Ladon defeated Devendro Singh Laisham of India in their semifinal bout to advance in the Rio Olympics.

All three judges scored it, 30-27, for the 22-year-old Ladon, the 2015 Southeast Asian Games silver medallist who now fights for the gold against Uzbekistan's Hasanboy Dusmatov, winner over Mongolia's Gankhuyag Gan-Erdene in the other semis bout.

Ladon will be seeking vengeance after losing to Dusmatov by decision in the final of the 2015 ASBC Asian Confederation Boxing Championships.

Beaten by Russian Vasili Egorov in the semifinal last October in Doha, Ladon, from Bago City, Negros Occidental, refused to fall into an elaborate trap laid down by his crafty opponent.

Unable to lure Ladon inside, Laisham lunged in desperation and got deducted a point in the second round for excessive ducking.

Though assured of a spot in the Olympics, Ladon is not about to rest on his achievement.

"Tuloy na sa gold 'to, sir!" Ladon said. "Number one pala tayo dito. Nakakahiya kung hindi gold."

Not so lucky were bantamweight Mario Fernandez, who lost to Thai Chatchai Butdee in their semis bout – 29-27 in the cards of all three judges, and welterweight Eumir Felix Marcial, who fought with swollen knuckles on his left hand and paid the prize, a 30-27 decision to Uzbekistan's Shakhram Giyasov.

But all is not lost for Fernandez and Marcial as they still have a chance to finish No. 3.

But to advance, Fernandez has to beat a Kazakhstan fighter in a box-off on Friday while Marcial needs to upend a Mongolia opponent.

On the advice of ABAP's sports science team, Marcial's hand was immersed alternately in hot water with Epsom salt and in ice for the past two days to reduce the swelling, but the pain was another matter.

Marcial, nonetheless, vowed to fight to the end Friday in his last chance to get to Rio.

The top three boxers in each male weight category qualify for an Olympic berth.

(PNA)JMC/JFM

Tourism

Camiguin

An Island of Six Volcanoes and Sweet Lanzones

By Randy V. Urlanda. Manila Bureau Chief Correspondent

Imagine yourself on an emerald isle hemmed by ivory beaches with six rumbling volcanoes on the middle of the island, and feasting on sweet lanzones fresh from the tree while lazing on a powdery white sandbar without fear of getting roasted in case one of the craters blow up?

Yes, there is such a place—Camiguin—an island paradise with a fiery underbelly located in the Bohol Sea some ten kilometers off the coast of Northeastern Mindanao. Its name was derived from the word kamagong, a tree belonging to the ebony family.

The island's original inhabitants were Manobos, one of the non-Muslim hill tribes inhabiting Northern Mindanao.

The Philippines has more than 200 volcanoes, from the Extreme North in Batanes down to Sulu in the Deep South. Of the more than 200 craters, 23 are active while several have erupted in recent times, including Mount Pinatubo in Pampanga which erupted in 1991 and considered as the second largest volcanic eruption of the 20th century.

The pear-shaped island province of Camiguin is a creation of heaving activities of volcanoes in the past millennia. It hit the headlines in the early 1950s when one of its six volcanoes, the 1300-meter high Mount Hibok-Hibok had a cataclysmic eruption on December 4, 1951.

On that fateful day, lava and super-heated pyroclastic flows rumbled down swiftly towards the capital town of Mambajao on the northern coast of the island, obliterating 19 square kilometers of land along its scorching path. Trees and houses were incinerated, killing more than 3,000 residents in the process, many of whom were mummified by the extreme heat. News said a humongous glowing dark cloud, which had a temperature of about 800 degrees Celsius, could be seen from as far as 160 kilometers away.

The disaster created by the Hibok-Hibok eruption was the major factor which led to the establishment in 1952 of the Commission on Volcanology (COMVOL), an agency tasked primarily “to safeguard life and property against volcanic eruption and dangers”, and provide relief to victims in the event of such calamity.

COMVOL has undergone reorganizations since then and is now known as PHIVOLCS, a research and development agency under the Department of Science and Technology (DOST). It is mandated to avert disasters and mitigate hazards arising not only from volcanic eruptions but also from earthquakes and other geotectonic processes.

Rising up beyond Camiguin's forested steamy backbone are a number of craters other than the active Hibok-Hibok. These include Mount Ilihan (better known as Ginsiliban Peak), Mount Butay, Mount Mambajao, the tallest at 1580 meters, Mount Vulcan and several other dormant domes and cones that make up the scenic volcano island.

But the island's more than 80,000 inhabitants are not afraid to live under the shadows of these lofty vents, two of which are active (Hibok-Hibok and Vulcan) volcanic vents. For one, previous volcanic eruptions rendered Camiguin's soil very fertile.

The adage that says 'if you throw any seed anywhere on the island, it will grow' is true in this luxuriant island paradise—from coconuts, abaca, banana, rice and fruit trees like lanzones, considered the sweetest in the land. Like the biblical Garden of Eden, Camiguin's fertile soil is naturally irrigated by cascading waterfalls, gurgling springs and 20 meandering rivers coursing through its narrow verdant valleys.

Because of its natural beauty and friendly inhabitants, Camiguin has become a major tourist destination in Northern Mindanao.

"Nature must have fallen in love with Camiguin so much that she endowed it with lavish gifts and bounties," swoons a staff of the provincial tourism office during the "31st Camiguin Lanzones Festival" in 2015. "One is simply at a loss for words to describe this lovely island which we endearingly call 'The Island of Your Imagination'."

Some of its so-called natural gifts and geological wonders are a reality and not purely imagination, this include the 76-meter high Katibawasan Falls in Mambajao that cascades down to a rock pond surrounded by wild orchids, ferns, trees and boulders; the 25-meter high Tuwasan Falls in Catarman town; the Sto. Nino Hot Spring, also in that municipality, where cold spring gushes out from the sandy bottom of a huge two-meter deep natural pool, and White Island, a stretch of uninhabited ivory sandbar some two kilometers off Barangay Agoho near Mambajao which surfaces during low tide. From this "floating" white beach one can have a panoramic view of the misty Hibok-Hibok and Vulcan on the mainland.

Aside from these awesome natural wonders, Camiguin also has man-made relics from a distant "violent" past—the ruins of a centuries-old stone church and a seaside cemetery which were devastated by a volcanic eruption 145 years ago, that have also become tourist drawers. These are the old Catarman Church ruins in Barangay Bonbon, 16 kilometers from the Catarman town proper whose thick, mossy walls, belfry and rectory are what remained after Mount Vulcan erupted in 1871. The other point of interest is the Cross Marker and Sunken Cemetery, also near Bonbon, which was swallowed up by the sea during the volcanic upheaval. The gravestones appear during low tide as a grim reminder perhaps to the present generation of the island's catastrophic past.

In the early 1980s, cold water flowing from the four-hectare Ardent Hot Spring Resort, located some 200 meters above sea level at the foothills of Hibok-Hibok, became hot. According to PHIVOLCS, the source of the spring comes in contact with one of the hot vents of the volcano resulting in the adverse change in water temperature.

Mambajao and Catarman town on the southwestern part of the island are where the sweetest lanzones could be found. This is the reason why the most sought after lanzones in Cebu, Bohol and Cagayan de Oro comes from these towns. To commemorate the island's bountiful sugary harvest, the province celebrates a two-day "Lanzones Festival" every third week of October.

Lanzones (*Lansium parasiticum*), also known as langsat in Indonesia, is a species of tree in the Mahogany family. The plant, which originates from the western part of Southeast Asia, bears edible, sweet fruit. It bears fruit once a year, but blooming is generally after the beginning of the rainy season and fruit production some four months later.

In the Philippines, lanzones is grown mostly on the southern parts of Luzon, especially in Paete, Laguna and Dolores, Quezon. It is also found in abundance in Northern Mindanao particularly in places as Butuan, Cagayan de Oro, and, of course, Camiguin, the sweetest and most succulent of them all. The fruit tree also thrives in Kidapawan in North Cotabato.

Gauging from the abundance of the yellow round fruit and the success of the past lanzones festivals in its honor, Camiguin, with its geological aberration, if you can call it one, is on its way to jump-starting further the already burgeoning tourism industry in the region. Later on, the whole country will also reap from this plentiful harvest triggered by the good "vibrations" created by Camiguin in this part of the archipelago.

Community News

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

FILIPINO YOUNG PROFESSIONALS AT ROCKETS GAMES

- APRIL 7, 2016

The Filipino Young Professionals (FYP) will participate during the Filipino Heritage Night during the Rockets game, Thursday, April 7, 2016 at the Toyota Center at 1510 Polk St., Houston, TX 77002. The performance is set between 7pm - 10pm.

Support the FYP participation by buying tickets and cheer on the FYP Culutral Performers as they perform at the Toyota Center with the Houston Rockets playing against Phoenix Suns.

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 ceremoney, 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; Leo 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 Eme Nisnisan, advisotry panel, and Lion Annette Wierschem and Lion Amy Alidon..

Carissa Helms has announced some more dates for the activities of the FYP

April 7 - Performance at Houston Rockets Filipino Heritage Night

April 9 - Spring Dance Concert Invitation @ Berry Center, Cypress

April 23 - Cultural Dance Workshop

May 7 - Houston Dragon Boat Festival & AsiaFest

May 14 - Santacruzán

May 20 - Cultural Dance Workshop

Immigration

Allow Filipinos with dual citizenship to seek elective or appointive posts - solon

MANILA, April 2 (PNA) -- A party-list lawmaker has proposed, as early as July of 2013, to allow Filipinos with dual citizenship to seek elective or appointive public office in the Philippines without renouncing their foreign citizenship.

Party-list 1-SAGIP Rep. Erlinda M. Santiago is author of HB 840 which seeks to allow Filipino citizens who have become naturalized citizens of foreign countries to seek appointive or elective public positions without renouncing their foreign citizenship.

"It is a fact that once a person files a certificate of candidacy, he or she would declare his/her Filipino citizenship and support to the Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines," Santiago pointed out.

Under R.A. No. 9225 of the "Citizenship Retention and Re-acquisition Act of 2003", a natural born Filipino who becomes a naturalized citizen of a foreign country is deemed not to have lost his/her Philippine citizenship.

As such, Santiago noted that Filipinos who re-acquire their Filipino citizenship once again enjoy full civil, economic and political rights and be subjected to all liabilities and responsibilities under existing laws of the country.

She added that under paragraphs (2) and (3) of Section 5 of R.A. 9225, those who would like to seek appointive or elective public office must renounce their foreign citizenship prior to assumption to office or upon filing of their certificates of candidacy, as the case maybe.

"The conditions set forth in the mentioned paragraphs are surplusage because once individuals file their certificates of candidacy, the candidates declare their Filipino citizenship and their support to the Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines," the lady lawmaker argued.

HB 840 seeks to eliminate the conditions provided for in paragraphs (2) and (3) of R.A. 9225, and being a holder of dual citizenship will no longer be a hindrance when seeking appointive or elective public positions, Santiago stressed.

The proposed amendatory statute provides that "Section 5, paragraphs (2) and (3) of Republic Act No. 9225, Section 40 of Republic Act No. 7160 and all other laws, orders, decrees, rules and regulations inconsistent herewith are hereby amended or repealed accordingly."

The measure is pending in the House Committee on Suffrage and Electoral Reforms chaired by Rep. Fredenil H. Castro of Capiz.(PNA) RMA/PR/PJN