

House OKs government pay hike

THE House of Representatives approved last May 21 a four-year salary upgrading program for government personnel, including teachers, soldiers and policemen.

The program that will benefit 1.1 million government workers is contained in Joint Resolution 36. The pay increase will be paid over the next four years starting on July 1 this year for workers in the national government and state corporations.

In the case of local government units, the adjustment would be given starting Jan. 1, 2010.

Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr. earlier said funds for this year's increase are already included in the P1.415-trillion national budget for 2009.

The salary upgrading program doubles the salaries of high-ranking officials, including the President, Vice President, senators, congressmen, undersecretaries, assistant secretaries, and directors.

"It is important to note that the salary adjustment for the President, the Vice President and members of Congress takes affect only after the expiration of their respective terms," Speaker Prospero Nograles clarified.

The President would get a monthly basic pay of P120,000; Vice President, P103,000; senators and congressmen, P90,000; undersecretaries, P78,946; assistant secretaries, P73,099; and directors, P67,684.

The lowest pay in government would be adjusted from about P5,000 to P9,000.

The chamber also concurred with the Senate amendments on four other local bills on education, the judiciary and grants of franchises.

Aside from their basic pay, congressmen receive allowances for travel and district office expenses. All told, they get between P300,000 to P350,000 a month.

Quirino Rep. Junie Cua, principal sponsor of Joint Resolution 36 as appropriations committee chairman, rejected proposals to further upgrade the salaries of teachers, nurses, soldiers, and policemen, who comprise the bulk of government workers.

Cua said the government is not in a position to fund such a huge adjustment.

Most of these personnel presently hold salary grade 11 with a basic pay of about P12,000. They will receive an increase of about P6,500 over four years. (Philstar.com)

NBI subpoenas Kho, Belo

Doc has 40 sex videos, Revilla says

by JEANNETTE ANDRADE & TINA SANTOS
Inquirer.net

SUBPOENAS have been issued to three people, including celebrity cosmetic surgeon Vicki Belo and her ex-boyfriend Dr. Hayden Kho, in connection with the inquiry of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) into the raging sex video scandal.

One Dr. Eric Johnston Chua will also be invited to explain how the videos featuring Kho in sexual encounters with actress Katrina Halili and other women ended up on the Net, according to Vicente de Guzman, head of the NBI Anti-Fraud and Computer Crimes Division.

"We will be inviting all personalities mentioned by Ms Halili in her statement, as well as other personalities whose names will surface in connection with this case," De Guzman said.

He said the inquiry would be "focused on the case of Halili," and that subpoenas would be issued later to the other "victims."

Halili said she heard that Belo also had a sex video with Kho.

"I heard that rumor . . . That was also gossiped about," she said.

"We shouldn't be afraid to fight back. If we don't do anything, it's like we're tolerating him. There are lots of victims out there. Most are not from show

biz—women who were victimized by their ex-boyfriends with cell phone and webcam videos," Halili said.

On Tuesday, May 19 Sen. Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr. delivered a privilege speech assailing Kho for filming his sexual encounters with Halili and other women.

Kho has a "library" of 40 sex videos with different women, apparently filmed without their knowledge, Revilla said in a statement Thursday, May 21. He called on "other victims of Kho" to come out and press charges, saying this would be an "act of vindication," particularly for those in videos making the rounds of the public domain.

On Wednesday, May 20 Halili filed a complaint with the NBI against Kho for videotaping their lovemaking without her consent. The video has been circulating in the Net and is now being sold in DVD form.

Thursday, May 21 the actress went to the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) and filed an administrative complaint for immorality and dishonorable and unethical conduct against Kho.

She asked the PRC to revoke Kho's license and ban him from practicing medicine.

De Guzman said Kho and other persons suspected of in-



JUST FRIENDS. The coupling of doctors, Hayden Kho and Vicki Belo, was sizzling hot when this photo was taken in March 2008. Nine months later, Kho's video with actress Katrina Halili was orbiting in cyberspace. And Belo turned off the heat. Belo's camp says that despite the split, the ex-lovers are still friends and consulting their lawyer on the summons of the NBI.

Photo courtesy of Inquirer.net

volvement in the production and proliferation of the sex video may be charged with violation of Republic Act No. 9262 (or the Anti-Violence against Women and Children Act of 2004).

"We will look into other [charges] that could possibly be filed," he said, noting that "laws against cyber crime, particularly pornography," were nonexistent.

De Guzman also said the NBI would seek the help of the maintainers of the website where the Kho-Halili sex video was posted, in determining who had uploaded it on the Net.

Still friends

Leah Salterio, public relations officer of Belo Medical Clinic, said Belo broke up with Kho in December 2008 because of the sex video but had remained friends with him.

Salterio said Kho and Belo were consulting the company's lawyer, Adel Tamano, concerning the NBI subpoena.

She said Belo had yet to read the subpoena because it was delivered to the clinic's branch on

Tomas Morato Avenue in Quezon City.

Kho resigned from the clinic in December 2008.

In the complaint she filed with the PRC, Halili said she met Kho between June and July 2007 when she went to the Belo clinic.

She said she and Kho became sweethearts in August 2007, but that she decided to end the relationship in January 2008. She also admitted having had a sexual relationship with Kho.

This was how Halili narrated the subsequent turn of events:

Sometime in December 2008, she got wind of talk that a sex video featuring her and Kho was making the rounds. She confronted him about it, and he said that there was no such a video.

On Dec. 26, 2008, Halili's road manager, Omar Sortijas, received a text message from Kho also denying any sex video with any actress.

But another text message sent by Kho to Sortijas on that day stated that no one could watch

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Gabriela solons want probe on sex video

THE House of Representatives has joined the fray of groups investigating the sex video of actress Katrina Halili and Doctor Hayden Kho.

Representatives Liza Maza and Luz Ilagan of Gabriela partylist filed House Resolution 1184 asking the committees on public information, civil service and professional regulation, and justice to conduct an immediate inquiry into "how the right to privacy can be best protected in the light of the various cases of proliferation of videos of women's intimate acts with their partners

without the victims' consent and knowledge."

Citing the Katrina-Hayden sex video, the lawmakers also urged the recommendation of measures to hold accountable those responsible for the video and to ensure the protection of right to privacy and the dignity and well-being of the victims.

Lawmakers had lamented the lack of laws to penalize those who take and circulate these videos. A number of measures have remained pending in the House such as the anti-pornography bill and the anti-cyber *boso* (peep) bill. (Inquirer.net)

GMA calls on PHAP to work closely with govt vs. deadly AH1N1 virus

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo on Thursday, May 21 called on the country's pharmaceutical and health care companies to work hand-in-hand with the government in order to keep the Philippines free from swine flu.

Speaking before the general membership meeting of the Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines (PHAP) at the Philam Tower in Makati City, the President cited the vital contribution of the pharmaceutical and healthcare industry in maintaining the country's free against the deadly influenza AH1N1 virus.

"By the grace of God and the carefulness of all of us, there is still no swine flu in our country. But, let us continue to pray and work hand-in-hand as we did during the SARS and bird-flu outbreaks in order to keep the Philippines free from swine flu," she said.

World Health Organization (WHO) latest report showed that there are more than 8,829 confirmed cases of AH1N1 virus in 40 countries, mostly in the United States and Mexico.

With the emergence of more new diseases, the Chief Executive said the pharmaceutical companies played an important

role in developing drugs to protect the citizenry.

"The role of the pharmaceutical industry in developing and distributing cutting edge drugs to combat back disease has become even more important," she said.

The President also lauded the PHAP for putting up PHAP Care Foundation which provides indigent people free medicines, medical missions, participation in emergency and disaster response activities, prevention and treatment of major diseases.

Likewise, she also took the opportunity to thank the public for their cooperation and trust with the government that keep the country remain resilient amid the global financial uncertainties.

"The world is once again on high alert to the emergence of the deadly influenza AH1N1 virus. We thank the providence of God Almighty and the cooperation of the government and the people for the continued resiliency of the Philippines against the swine flu, just as we are so far relatively resilient from the global economic crisis," she said.

The President said she earlier instructed the Department of Health (DOH) to put a stock of more one million tamiflu capsules as a precautionary measure against AH1N1 virus. ■

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