

Let others run in Pampanga, GMA told

by DENNIS CARCAMO
Philstar.com

A PAMPANGA-BASED Church official dissuaded President Arroyo from running for a congressional seat in her home province, urging her to give way to other candidates instead.

"Hindi na siya dapat matakbo pa matapos ang kanyang termino sa 2010. Hayaan na niya ang iba na mamuno sa Pampanga," Pampanga bishop Pablo David said last June 17 in an interview with Church-run Radio Veritas.

In a speech before her provincemates, the President jested that she might run for a congressional seat when she steps down from her office in June 2010. Critics of Mrs. Arroyo claim that she will be vying to be prime minister when the form of government shifts from presidential to parliamentary

after amendments in the 1987 Constitution are made.

David noted that the electorate in Pampanga has done away with "patronage politics" as shown in the 2007 polls.

"They expressed it in 2007 and they will express it even more in 2010 elections. The real miracle in Pampanga was not Gov. Ed Panlilio but the moral force that dared to go against the immoral politics of the underworld. Alam na ng mga taga-Pampanga kung sino ang karapat-dapat iluklok sa puwesto," the bishop said.

Panlilio, a priest on leave, is the incumbent governor who ran against influential political clans in Pampanga. ■

2 TV employees have H1N1, RP total hits 247

by THEA ALBERTO & ANNA VALERMO
Inquirer.net

THE Department of Health (DoH) confirmed last June 16 54 new cases of Influenza A(H1N1), including two employees of television network ABS-CBN, bringing the country's total number of confirmed cases to 247, the highest in Southeast Asia.

The two network employees are "safe and recovering," said ABS-CBN corporate communications head Bong Osorio. He did not give additional details.

"The network will continue its normal operations and will continue to promote safety and vigilance against the A(H1N1) virus," Osorio said in a statement.

Osorio said the network has installed hand sanitizers in its buildings, offered flu vaccinations to its employees and their dependents, and conducted random body temperature checks on studio audience and visitors.

The 54 A(H1N1) patients also include the six confirmed cases in Makati City—three residents and three students of the Mapua Institute of Technology, where classes were suspended starting June 16.

No deaths have been reported and 85 of the 247 A(H1N1) patients have been discharged from the hospital, Health Secretary Francisco Duque said.

Duque said the rising number

of A(H1N1) cases was no cause for alarm because the DoH was simply being "very transparent" in reporting new cases.

Last Sunday, the DoH declared a community outbreak of the disease in the farming village of Hilera in Nueva Ecija province north of Manila.

"Wearing masks is not advisable means to prevent spread of

the H1N1 flu. An infected person should stay at home and observe self quarantine for 10 days and have supportive treatment," Duque said, as he reiterated the importance of proper hygiene.

While the virus was "pretty stable," Duque said the public must not be complacent because the virus could mutate into a deadlier strain. ■

DILG activates response teams vs. H1N1

THE Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) has ordered the activation of emergency response teams in the villages to help stop the spread of the Influenza A(H1N1) virus.

The emergency teams will collate reports on people in their respective villages who have symptoms of A(H1N1) and

will educate the community on the disease, Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno said in a memorandum.

"Local officials should take the lead in the conduct of a massive community information campaign to inform the public on the signs and symptoms of infection and measures to prevent the spread of the said A(H1N1)

virus," Puno said.

As of June 16, the Department of Health (DoH) confirmed 247 A(H1N1) cases in the country. Over the weekend, the World Health Organization said the spread of the disease has reached pandemic proportions.

As of June 10, the WHO reported 27,737 cases including 141 deaths. (Inquirer.net)

SOLON ASKS

Why RP has more A(H1N1) cases than India?

by LIRA DALANGIN-FERNANDEZ
Inquirer.net

WHY does India, with a population of 1 billion, have fewer than 100 cases of the Influenza A(H1N1) virus, and the Philippines, with just a little over 90 million population, have more than 200 cases?

Paranaque Representative Roilo Golez posed this question Wednesday as he urged the government to step up measures, including mobilizing crisis committees in the local level, to curb the spread of the virus.

"In absolute and relative numbers, we have a bigger H1N1 problem here," he said.

Muntinlupa Representative Rufino Biazon said the rapid spread of the virus should prompt the government to consider the declaration of a state of public health emergency to enable it to deal with extreme cases of disease outbreak.

Biazon pushed anew for the passage of House Bill 72 pending



in the House of Representatives that provides for particular powers to concerned agencies to immediately address the outbreak.

Golez said the rising number of persons infected by H1N1 calls for action from the Secretary of Health to mobilize crisis committees at the city, municipal, and provincial levels and give them autonomy in taking action, under the overall coordination of the department.

The congressman said Health Secretary Francisco Duque III should be able to report to the country the action of the department at all

levels in dealing with those infected and in stopping the spread of the virus.

"What is their projection of the number of cases? Will it reach 1,000 in one week's time? Is the country through the DoH prepared to treat each case? Do we have enough vaccines? Why are the Philippine numbers higher than other countries in Asia?" Golez asked.

Biazon said steps should be beefed up to make contact-tracing easier and more responsive. Instead of keeping information about those infected secret, Biazon proposed that more information should be released to make it easier for those who have been in contact with those infected to quarantine themselves and avoid spreading the virus. ■

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Remittance, ERP to help boost RP economy this year-BSP

BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. believes the domestic economy can withstand the global slowdown and continue to post growth this year.

This even after the government further revised downward its 2009 growth target while the International Monetary Fund (IMF) now see a one percent contraction for the Philippines economy this year.

"The government is still forecasting positive growth this year, albeit slower than previous forecast," he said.

Last week, the inter-agency Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) again slashed the government's 2009 growth target to 0.8-1.8 percent from the 3.1-4.1 percent previously in line with the global developments.

Economic managers said they remain positive on the domestic economy's output, as measured by gross domestic product (GDP) this year but they expect the impact of the global economic meltdown to be larger particularly on consumption and investments.

The economy grew by a mere 0.4 percent in the first quarter this year against year-ago's 3.9 percent after domestic consumption declined on back of lower spending particularly by beneficiaries of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) despite the continued strong remittance inflows.

Economic managers, however, noted larger portion of the remittances went to savings.

A BSP survey in the second quarter this year showed that consumers remain bullish on their buying intentions in the rest of the year, thus, monetary officials said this will boost spending and buoy up the economy.

"As reported, consumption and investments, which slowed significantly in Q1, are expected to recover in the next quarters, supported by steady remittances, the full impact of the ERP (economic resiliency plan), and improvement in market confidence as more news/data are released that

the worst in global contraction may be over," Tetangco added.

The central bank project a flat growth for remittances this year as some OFWs lose jobs because of the global slowdown but monetary officials believe that remittances will post a positive growth this year on back of continued higher demand for OFWs.

Tetangco said they have not revised their remittance forecast for this year but "this will be reviewed shortly."

In end-April this year, remittances posted a 2.6 percent growth after inflows for the four-month period aggregated to US\$ 5.5 billion from year-ago's US\$ 5.36 billion. (PNA)

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