

# RP emergency plan readied vs flu

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reaction and response plan," Duque said.

He said President Arroyo has instructed the stepping up of all quarantine measures to ensure that travelers to the Philippines, especially from Mexico, the US and other European countries, are monitored.

He said incoming passengers exhibiting flu-like symptoms would be immediately quarantined. He said state-of-the-art scanning monitors would be used in ports and airports.

"We made sure the stockpile of anti-flu medicine is adequate," he said, adding the government has about 600,000 capsules for 60,000 possible swine flu cases.

He said the government is also ensuring adequate supply of N95 masks for frontline health workers, who would also be provided with other forms of protection.

**Unfair label**

The government is preparing various measures to deal with the potential threat of swine flu even as the Department of Agriculture (DA) insisted that the suspect virus is unfairly being labeled as swine flu when there is still no concrete evidence that it had been sparked by an outbreak in the hog sector.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap argued that the swine flu outbreak in Mexico, the United States and Canada is a human health issue rather than an animal health issue.

The unfairly labeled swine flu, Yap clarified, has been identified by the World Organization for Animal Health as a multi-strain virus that includes human, avian and swine components.

Yap said that according to the international agency, the virus should be more appropriately labeled as the "North American influenza."

The Department of Agriculture said it will continue to temporarily suspend pork imports from affected areas in Mexico, the United States and Canada. ■

# The bottom-line you need to know about swine flu

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A: Scientists don't yet know if it takes fairly close or prolonged contact with someone who's sick, or if it's more easily spread. But in general, flu viruses spread through uncovered coughs and sneezes or—and this is important—by touching your mouth or nose with unwashed hands. Flu viruses can live on surfaces for several hours, like a doorknob just touched by someone who sneezed into his hand.

**Q: Is it treatable?**

A: Yes, with the flu drugs Tamiflu or Relenza, but not with two older flu medications.

**Q: Why are people dying in Mexico and not here?**

A: That's a huge mystery. First, understand that no one really knows just how many people in Mexico are dying of this flu strain, or how many have it. Only a fraction of the suspected deaths have been tested and confirmed as swine flu, and some initially suspected cases were caused by something else.

**Q: What are the symptoms?**

A: They're similar to regular human flu—a fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people also have diarrhea and vomiting.

**Q: How do I know if I should see a doctor?**

A: Health authorities say if you live in places where swine flu cases have been confirmed, or you recently traveled to Mexico, and you have those symptoms, your doctor can decide whether you need treatment or to be tested.

**Q: Did last winter's flu shot protect me?**

A: Probably not. Even though it did protect against the Type A family of flu viruses that this new swine flu belongs to, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ran some preliminary tests and doesn't think it offered any cross protection.

**Q: Why are people calling it swine flu if it's not just from pigs? Did it really come from pigs?**

A: Pigs do spread their own strains of influenza and every so often people catch one, usually after contact with the animals. This new virus is a mix of human, pig and bird viruses but the name, for ease, was shortened to swine flu—and unlike typical swine flu, it is spreading person-to-person.

**Q: So is it safe to eat pork?**

A: Yes. Swine influenza viruses don't spread through food. (AP)

# Pacquiao shells out \$200,000 in Biggest Loser competition

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She was trying to shed some extra pounds.

"I'm going to kill you Manny," said Gonzalez, jokingly as she was running.

Gonzalez was among the 75 contestants in Manny Pacquiao's Biggest Weight Loser Challenge.

Each contestant was required to lose 10 percent of his or her weight in three weeks for a cash prize of \$3,000. The biggest weight loser would receive a bonus of \$10,000.

Pacquiao started the weight challenge while training to face Oscar de la Hoya. The pound-4-pound king said he did it so people especially those around him know what it feels like to be in his shoes.

"Exactly. Exactly," said Pacquiao to the *Asian Journal*. "I want them to feel how hard [it is to] being a boxer and how hard it is to make the weight."

Nick Enciso said that it was a grueling challenge. Three weeks ago, he weighed 150 pounds. He lost seventeen pounds for the challenge.

"I don't even call it a challenge. I call it an event," said Enciso. "It was very hard. All I did was exercise, eat grilled chicken, vegetables all the time."

Pacquiao's cameraman Levi Gutierrez lost 20 pounds. He said he ran three miles a day, ate healthy and got plenty of rest.

But other weren't so fortunate.

Mike Quydilla was only one pound away. With sweat pouring down his face after being inside a sauna for an hour, he stood in front of Pacquiao, and stepped on the weight scale. A look of disappointment appeared on his face when Pacquiao shook his head no.

He failed to make weight.

He became so desperate; he dropped his pants and cupped his privates to see if that would shed the pound.

It didn't.

"I'm tired. I'm dying," said Quydilla panting and asking his friends around him to get him for a bite to eat and water. "I needed one more pound [but] that was my second try. I can't make it. I give up."

Gonzalez also couldn't cut the weight. She and Quydilla were among the 11 people that were unable to meet the challenge goals.

"It's hard," she said. "If you're metabolism can keep up with you then you have an easier time but it's pretty hard."

A total of 64 out of the 75 participating in the challenge completed it. Pacquiao estimates his total payout to be over \$220,000.

The biggest weight loser was his manager Mike Koncz. The 48-year-old Koncz lost 33-1/2 pounds. He said it's all about putting your mind to it.

"It was hard but I wanted to prove to Manny and the rest of the guys that even an old man can do something if you set your mind to it," said Koncz. "Just like what Manny has said if you don't give up, you can accomplish many things and I wanted to prove these guys in our group that if you dedicate yourself and follow a routine you can achieve a lot of things."

Pacquiao said that he wants to promote healthy living. Most contestants also said that they realize how hard it is to a boxer.

But most importantly, how essential it is to stay in good shape. (Joseph Pimentel)

# Pacman's lucky charm

Mayor Evelio R. Leonardia pays Asian Journal a visit

LOS ANGELES—With the Pacquiao-Hatton fight only a few days away, the Pacman needs all the support, prayers (and luck) he can get from his fellow *kababayans*.

One of the most distinguished members of Pacquiao's entourage during his fights is none other than Bacolod City Mayor Evelio R. Leonardia. Shortly after his arrival in Los Angeles, Mayor Leonardia paid the *Asian Journal* a visit and shared his story of friendship and endearment with the pound-for-pound champ.

It is not unknown to many that the Pacman is a devout Catholic and a tad bit superstitious when it comes to his fights. Mayor Leonardia shared how Pacquiao's Catholic devotion and superstitious beliefs

became instrumental in forging a strong partnership with the mayor.

So what brought Manny to the shores of Bacolod City in 2005 and compelled him to create a lasting relationship with Mayor Leonardia? Perhaps, it's the fact that Bacolod is known for being a "relatively friendly city, bearing the nickname City of Smiles." Perhaps, it's the charm of the MassKara Festival, a noted celebration and an annual attraction that gravitates millions of tourists every year to Bacolod City. Or perhaps it's because Mayor Leonardia has personally invited the pound-for-pound champ to become "Bacolod's adopted son."

One thing is certain—Manny was moved and overwhelmed by the warm and eager reception he

got from the people of Bacolod. A beautiful, poignant and profound friendship soon entailed after his meaningful encounter with Mayor Leonardia and his townsfolk.

Soon after, Manny paid the city of smiles another visit and personally asked Mayor Leonardia to hold on to his boxing belt. It was initially unclear to Mayor Leonardia why he was afforded this privilege and he was hesitant in the beginning. He found out later on that he has become a sort of "lucky charm" for the Pacman.

Mayor Leonardia amusingly recalled Manny's reason: "*Simula noong hinawakan ni Mayor ang belt ko, di na naagaw.*" He jokingly reiterated that he was Manny's magnet—affording Manny five victory boxing belts to date.



Bacolod Mayor Evelio Leonardia  
AJPress Photo by Andy Tecson

But Manny's friendship with the Mayor of Bacolod City goes beyond superstitious beliefs. There is a symbiotic relationship—one that was forged from trust and from believing in each other's capabilities.

Superstitious or not, Mayor Leonardia will continue to be a formidable supporter of the pound-for-pound champ in all his endeavors and will be rooting for our *Pinoy* pride. (AJPress)

# Whistleblower arrested

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Reporters have been camped out on campus since Tuesday, April 28. Security is tight and media can enter the school only with the permission of Lozada's security.

Lozada briefly appeared to watch one of his young sons play on the football field.

Lozada, wearing a black shirt with a picture of national hero Jose Rizal and the words "Pepe goes to market," was whisked away in a waiting mobile unit was on his

way to the Manila Police District for processing after he was read his Miranda rights by arresting officer Alfredo Valenzuela of the Manila Police District.

Lozada was flanked by a group of supporters, including his lawyer Jose Manuel Diokno, Sr. Mary John Mananzan and other nuns of the AMRSP when he was read his rights.

The same supporters followed the mobile unit carrying Lozada in a van bearing the markings of the AMRSP. ■

# Philippines remains a model on migration and protection of migrants' rights

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ence and dynamism in migration management and development.

He commended the Philippines for its clear commitment to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW) and welcomed the size and quality of the Philippine delegation as a concrete manifestation of that commitment.

The Philippines has been the

most active advocate, in all UN fora, on the campaign to promote ratification of the Convention on Migrant Workers.

Moreover, the Philippines figures prominently in the *Guide on Ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families* as a strong supporter of the Migrant Workers Convention. ■



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**Willie Revillame**  
TV HOST

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