

## Self-quarantine urged for OFWs

RETURNING Filipinos were advised last June 8 to quarantine themselves for 10 days from arrival to avoid the spread of A(H1N1) influenza, as a Filipina nurse in Saudi Arabia has been hospitalized after showing symptoms of the virus.

Administrator Jennifer Manalili of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) said they have issued the advisory to protect the health of families of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) and those of the rest of the nation.

"We are encouraging our returning OFWs, particularly those coming from countries with confirmed H1N1 cases to go on 10-day self quarantine for the protection of their loved ones as well as other Filipinos," she said.

Manalili said all Philippine embassies and labor offices are closely monitoring the situation of the millions of Filipinos working abroad.

"Our embassies are coming out with the necessary advisories to inform OFWs on how to protect themselves from influenza A(H1N1)," she said.

Manalili said the Filipina nurse is confined in a hospital in Saudi Arabia, while her husband and three children have been placed under quarantine.

"She and her family who traveled to various countries before going back to Saudi Arabia are still in isolation, but she is responding well to the medication and will probably be released from hospital soon," she said.

Manalili said the POEA has adopted the necessary measures to protect employees attending to returning OFWs from the virus.

"Our employees were told to wash their hands frequently and to wear masks, particularly those who are assisting OFWs who are suffering from cough and cold," she said.

The POEA observed all the precautionary measures recommended by the Department of Health to avoid the H1N1 virus, Manalili said. (Philstar.com)

## No recession in RP, BSP says

Managers pin hopes on remittances, BPO

AMID persistent concerns that the Philippines is headed for a slump this year—fueled by the surprisingly disappointing growth in the first quarter—the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas stressed that the economy would not slide into a recession.

"There will be no recession," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said last June 5 when asked if the Philippines would follow the lead of its neighboring economies that had already contracted.

Tetangco had said that there were reasons to be optimistic as remittances remain strong, inflation is easing, investor appetite is slowly recovering and the BPO sector continues to grow.

The BSP has projected that remittances sent by overseas Filipino workers, which largely determine the level of household consumption, would reach \$16.4 billion this year, or about the same as last year.

The BSP said many other labor markets—including Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and Japan—were opening up and have announced their need for labor.

An economy is said to be in recession if it records two consecutive quarters of year-on-year decline in gross domestic product.

GDP, the most common measure of how wealthy an economy is, refers to the sum of the values of goods produced and services rendered within an economy in a given period.

Tetangco also said that the slowdown in inflation would encourage the public to spend more.

The National Statistics Office reported last week that the annual inflation rate dropped further to 3.3 percent in May.

For 2009, BSP said inflation would settle at only between 2.5 and 4.5 percent, from last year's average of 9.3 percent.

## Fil-Brit fails to get EU Parliament seat

FILIPINO-BRITISH Gene Alcantara lost in his bid for a seat in the European Parliament, it was learned last June 8.

Alcantara, who ran as an independent and campaigned on the issues of migrants' rights among others, got 1,972 votes according to the United Kingdom Office of the European Parliament in its website.

"All the seats were won by the established parties, and I came second to the last. It was an interesting result which shows how much we need to work with the community. But this is a start!" he said in an e-mail to *Inquirer.net*.

The top two parties got the most seats: The Conservative Party, which got 479,037 votes, took three seats and the Labour Party, which got 372,590 votes, took two seats.

Tetangco said the BSP was prepared to implement more measures that would help accelerate growth of the economy following the near-zero growth in the first quarter.

He said the cut in the BSP's key interest rates by a total of 175 basis points since December last year was expected to sustain economic activities. (*Inquirer.net*)

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