

5,000 students rally against constituent assembly

by SANDY ARANETA
Philstar.com

SOME 5,000 students from different universities and colleges opposed to constituent assembly (con-ass) held a rally at the Liwasang Bonifacio last June 30.

Students from the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila (PLM), Adamson University, University of the Philippines (UP) Manila and Diliman, Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP), De La Salle University (DLSU)-St. Benilde, St. Scholastica's College and Arellano University raised their fists and chanted slogans against Charter change by way of con-ass.

Militant groups like Bayan, party-list group Bayan Muna, Gabriela and Anakpawis also joined the rally of the students in a show of support.

Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim, who is strongly against con-ass, showed up in the rally.

Lawyer Harry Roque started the program with the singing of the Philippine national anthem.

Anti-Charter change (Cha cha) advocates also attended the rally to mark the one-year countdown before President Arroyo steps down from Malacañang.

Sister Mary John Mananzan, co-chairperson of the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines (AMRSP), said they would exercise caution in their demonstrations in light of reports of bombs found in Metro Manila.

She said they are also willing to be flexible and change their plans to avoid any danger.



An anti-Charter change slogan is written on a demonstrator's cap during a protest march on España in Manila yesterday. Philstar.com Photo by Jonjon Vicencio

"We would take everything into consideration and we would be on alert. During the march, we could change our route or make changes in the program. We could even stop," if the need arises, she said. ■

RCBC eyes smaller bank to boost nationwide network

THE Yuchengco-controlled Rizal Commercial and Banking Corp. (RCBC) is looking to acquire a small commercial bank or a medium-sized thrift bank with an extensive network in the Metro Manila area, the bank's top executive said.

"We would like to reach 400 branches the soonest possible time, of which half will be located in the Metro Manila area," RCBC president and chief executive officer Lorenzo V. Tan said in a press briefing.

"We want to expand our distribution network, and we are prepared to grow organically and through acquisition," he added.

RCBC currently has a combined 330 branches, including the 117 branches of RCBC Savings Bank. It also operates a combined infrastructure of 424 automated teller machines (ATMs) nationwide.

In 2007, RCBC acquired thrift bank Merchants Savings and Loan Association Inc. with 21 branches located within Metro Manila and outside the metropolis.

Last February, it bought Pres. JP Laurel Rural Bank with 10 branches in Batangas, Laguna and Mindoro Oriental. This acquisition, Tan said, not only triggered the commercial bank's foray into microfinance, but like-

wise solidified RCBC's presence in the Southern Tagalog area.

RCBC is presently the country's fourth largest commercial bank in terms of loans and assets, servicing 1.8 million clients.

Over the past three years, RCBC had raised Tier 1 and Tier 2 capital amounting to a combined P21 billion, a large amount of which has been set aside for possible acquisition, funds to meet capital adequacy and risk management levels, and for sustainable capital expenditure.

Meanwhile, Tan said that they are looking at a 20-percent growth in net earnings for 2009. (Philstar.com)

FROM KUWAIT TO KIDAPAWAN

Pardoned maid reunites with family

by CARLO AGAMON
Inquirer.net

KIDAPAWAN CITY, Cotabato—The Filipina maid who was pardoned for the murder of her ward in Kuwait was finally reunited with her family on the evening of June 30.

May Vecina arrived at the Davao International Airport aboard Philippine Airlines flight 821 shortly before 9pm.

She was fetched by her husband Leo, together with their children Queeny and King James.

"I thank God for giving me a second lease on life," she said in Filipino by phone over Radio dxND here.

Vecina said she regretted her crime and that she did it out of extreme stress brought about by the abuses she suffered in the hands of her employer.

Vecina was sentenced to death by a Kuwaiti court, which found

her guilty of killing her employer's seven-year-old son in 2007. But she was later granted full pardon by the Emir of Kuwait Sheik Sabah Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah due to the appeal of the Philippine government.

"Nang nalaman ko na binigyan ako ng full pardon ng Amir ng Kuwait, masayang masaya ako. Hindi ako makapaniwala pero sa tulong ng ating guberno lung-lalo na sa ating Pangulong Arroyo, Vice President Noli De Castro, at sa kagalang-galang na ambassador na nakabase sa bansang Kuwait Ricardo Endaya, sa tulong ng buong sambayanang Pilipino, sa dasal nila na mailigtas ang buhay ko maraming, maraming salamat sa inyong lahat (When I learned that I was given full pardon by the Emir of Kuwait, I was so happy. I could not believe it, but I would like

to thank everybody for the help of our government, especially President Arroyo, Vice President Noli De Castro, and our honorable ambassador in Kuwait Ricardo Endaya, and for the help of the Filipino nation, with their prayers)," she said.

Vecina urged the government to look at the plight of other abused migrant workers.

"Humihingi ako ng karagdagan tulong para sa mga naroroon pa sa bansang Kuwait at sa ibang bansa na nasa death row (I ask for additional help for those in the death rows of Kuwait and of other countries)," Vecina said.

She named other Filipinos on death row and those whose death sentences were commuted to life imprisonment such as Marilou Ranario, Maria Fe Crusado, Minerva Tayag, Jakatia Pawa, and Bienvenido Espino Jr. ■

DILG chief not on sick leave—spokesman

Puno in US for daughter's wedding

by TARRA QUISMUNDO
Inquirer.net

INTERIOR Secretary Ronaldo Puno is not ill and is in the United States to attend his daughter's wedding, his spokesman said last July 1.

Puno's spokesman, Brian Yamsuan, issued the clarification after Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita announced that Puno left the country because of poor health.

Yamsuan said it was Ermita who signed Puno's leave request, which covered June 27 to July 15.

"There is no health reason for it. In fact right now he's having dinner with his family," Yamsuan told the Philippine Daily Inquirer (parent company of Inquirer.net) on July 1, Wednesday, (Tuesday night in San Francisco).



Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno

Puno's daughter, Tami, will get married in San Francisco on July 4, Yamsuan said. ■

OFW inflows seen to continue growing this year

PAGE A7 ◀

peso in March to April.

However, even central bank officials were not willing to call it either way, especially since there are underlying indications that remittance inflows could really decline for the first time in history.

Data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) indicated that remittances from the US declined by 10 percent in the first four months of the year and if this continued for the rest of the year, total remittances could post the first decline since the country started sending workers abroad.

From January to April, remittances from the US reached only \$2.286 billion, accounting for nearly half of the \$5.498-billion total remittances for the period this year.

BSP data indicated that the four-month level was 10.43 percent lower than the \$2.552-billion level posted over the same period in 2008,

with the largest decline recorded in sea-based remittances which dropped by 16.15 percent.

Out of the total remittances coming from the US, inflows from sea-based workers accounted for \$635.83 million while land-based workers accounted for \$1.917 billion.

The BSP has been careful about breaking down remittances that come from the US since these also include inflows that only pass through the US financial system but do not actually originate from US-located Filipinos.

A clearer indicator, according to the BSP data, were remittances that came from land-based workers which presumably represented workers located in the US as well as immigrants.

Nevertheless, inflows from both sources showed a decline in the first four months, indicating that if the trend continued for the remainder of the year, total remittances could decline as expected by everyone except the BSP. ■

> Sometimes life in the U.S. is so fast-paced, nakaka-stress! That's why, mas nakaka-miss ang Pilipinas.

NOW, HERE'S THE SOLUTION - GET

DIRECTV!

Have the 'feel of the Philippines' right here, right now with DIRECTV.

With 10 of the most popular Filipino channels, you're closer to the Philippines... closer to home.

PinoyDirect™ (DZC, DMM, Pinoy TV, and MDO) + over 120 English channels

\$44.98 MONTHLY + TAX FOR ONE YEAR!



Sign up na. See you on DIRECTV!

Gerald Anderson / Actor



>FREE HBO® SHOWTIME starz for 3 months

with PREFERRED CHOICE™ package or higher†

>FREE HD DVR or HD Receiver upgrade

with PREFERRED CHOICE™ package or above along with any DIRECTV International a la carte service††

>FREE Standard installation up to 4 rooms

*Price reflected includes \$11 bill credit for 12 months after online or mail-in rebate, plus an additional \$5 bill credit for 12 months when you register account on directv.com with PREFERRED CHOICE™ package. Valid email address is required. PREFERRED CHOICE™ package requires activation of any International service. PREFERRED CHOICE™ regular price \$35.99/mo. PinoyDirect regular price \$34.99/mo. International customers must first subscribe to DIRECTV BASIC (\$12.99/mo) or any DIRECTV base package (\$29.99/mo) or above. Offers end 7/20/09, on approved credit, credit card required. New customers only. Lease required, must maintain programming, DVR and/or HD Access. Hardware available separately. Lease fee \$5/mo. for second and each additional receiver. \$19.95 Handling & Delivery fee may apply.

Tawag na!

1-800-378-5191

Our Filipino customer service agents will be glad to assist you.



Credit card not required in MA & PA. *BILL CREDIT/PROGRAMMING OFFER: Free HBO, Starz and SHOWTIME for 3 months, a value of \$188. LIMIT ONE PROGRAMMING OFFER PER ACCOUNT. In order to receive full \$16 credit, customer must submit rebate form online and register account on directv.com prior to rebate redemption. Requires valid email address and must agree to receive emails. UPON DIRECTV™ SYSTEM ACTIVATION, CUSTOMER WILL RECEIVE REDEMPTION INSTRUCTION (INCLUDED IN CUSTOMER'S FIRST DIRECTV BILL, A SEPARATE MAILING, OR, IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK, FROM RETAILER) AND MUST COMPLY WITH THE TERMS OF THE INSTRUCTIONS. Rebate begins 6-8 weeks after receipt of online redemption (8-12 weeks for mail-in). Timing of promotional price depends on redemption date. Account must be in "good standing," as determined by DIRECTV in its sole discretion, to remain eligible. DIRECTV not responsible for late, lost, illegible, mislabeled, incomplete, misdirected or postage-due mail. IF BY THE END OF PROMOTIONAL PRICE PERIOD(S) CUSTOMER DOES NOT CONTACT DIRECTV TO CHANGE SERVICE THEN ALL SERVICES WILL AUTOMATICALLY CONTINUE INCLUDING THE \$5.00/MO. LEASE FEE FOR THE 2ND AND EACH ADDITIONAL RECEIVER. DIRECTV™ System has a feature which restricts access to channels. In certain markets, programming/pricing may vary. **INSTANT REBATE: Advanced equipment instant rebate requires activation of the CHOICE XTRA™ package or above; FAMILIAR ULTRA™ or above; JadeWorld™; or any qualifying international service bundle, which shall include the PREFERRED CHOICE™ programming package (valued at \$35.99/mo.). DVR service (\$6.00/mo.) required for DVR and HD DVR lease and HD Access fee (\$10.00/mo.) required for HD and HD DVR lease. LIMIT ONE ADVANCED EQUIPMENT REBATE PER DIRECTV ACCOUNT. INSTALLATION: Standard professional installation only. Custom installation extra. SYSTEM LEASE: Purchase of 24 consecutive months of any DIRECTV base programming package (\$29.99/mo or above) or qualifying international services bundle required. FAILURE TO ACTIVATE ALL DIRECTV™ SYSTEM EQUIPMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE EQUIPMENT LEASE ADDENDUM MAY RESULT IN A CHARGE OF \$150 PER RECEIVER NOT ACTIVATED. IF YOU FAIL TO MAINTAIN YOUR PROGRAMMING, DIRECTV MAY CHARGE A PRORATED FEE OF \$400. RECEIVERS ARE AT ALL TIMES PROPERTY OF DIRECTV AND MUST BE RETURNED UPON CANCELLATION OF SERVICE OR ADDITIONAL FEES MAY APPLY. VISIT directv.com OR CALL 1-800-DIRECTV FOR DETAILS. Programming, pricing, terms and conditions subject to change at any time. Pricing residential. Taxes not included. Receipt of DIRECTV programming subject to DIRECTV Customer Agreement, copy provided at directv.com/legal and in first bill. ©2009 DIRECTV, Inc. DIRECTV and the Cyclone Design logo, PREFERRED CHOICE™ and all DIRECTV International, a la carte service marks are trademarks of DIRECTV, Inc. All other trademarks and service marks are the property of their respective owners.