

PH, US relations won't be affected if Duterte doesn't visit Washington

By GENALYN D. KABILING

The country's robust relations with the United States will remain intact even if President Duterte declines an invitation to visit Washington, Malacañang said Sunday.

Presidential Spokesman Salvador Panelo said although the President has yet to make a final decision on the proposed US trip, the bilateral relations could still be promoted with the help of the country's ambassador.

"It doesn't mean na porket hindi ka pumunta roon ay may masamang mangyari sa relasyon (It does not mean that just because you can't go there, something bad will happen to the relations)," he said in a radio interview.

"Hindi naman kailangan pumunta sa

isang bansa para magkaroon ng diplomatic relations precisely kaya tayo may mga ambassador (You don't have to go to another country just to have diplomatic relations. That's precisely why we have ambassadors)," he added.

Asked if the President was inclined to visit the US, Panelo acknowledged that the Duterte was known to be averse to taking long-haul flights.

"Ang pagkakaalamatin natin kay Presidente kasi ayaw niya sa malamig, ayaw niya sa mahabang biyahe. Hindi siya kumportable doon (What I know of the President, he does not like cold climates, long haul flights. He is not comfortable with that)," he said.

The President has been invited to visit the US but he has yet to accept the invitation. Duterte, annoyed by foreign interference in local affairs, previously said he would never

go to "lousy" America during his term.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. recently said they have conveyed to the President the US invitation. He added that they would have to wait for the end of the May elections before making any arrangements if Duterte agrees to visit the US.

He made the remarks after US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo's recent visit to the Manila that included a meeting with President Duterte.

Malacañang recently said the President was optimistic about the prospects of "stronger and more meaningful" ties with the US particularly on defense and security, peace and order regional stability, as well as the rule of law in the conduct of activities in the West Philippine Sea to prevent escalation of tensions.

Bong Go: Healthcare still a major issue that should be addressed

DAVAO DEL SUR - Former Special Assistant to the President (SAP) and aspiring senator Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go reiterated that healthcare was still a major issue in the Philippines and that measures must be put into place to make quality healthcare more accessible to Filipinos, especially the poor.

"Kailangan pa ring magpasok ng mga pagbabago sa medical services natin. Malaking issue pa rin ang healthcare sa bansa at kailangan itong matugunan (We should introduce changes in our medical services. Health care remains a huge issue in our country that needs to be addressed)," Go said Saturday.

The former SAP was in his hometown of Davao City where he attended a medical mission held at the Barangay Bulhangin Gym in the city's District II.

The medical mission, organized by concerned individuals and organizations in cooperation with city government officials and doctors from Southern Philippines Medical Center, featured various individuals from different backgrounds assisting in

the service-oriented activity. "Para sa akin, malaking bagay po ang tulong na ibinigay ninyo sa event dahil marami po talagang Davaoeno ang nakinabang at natulungan dito (For me, what you did for this event comes a long way because you were able to help many Davaenos who availed of the free services)," said Go, lauding the event organizers and participants.

"Panahon na po talaga para ang mga tao sa iba't-ibang sector ng ipunan, lalo na po ang nasa private sector, na tumulong sa kapwa nilang Pilipino. Magtulungan po tayo, gobyerno at private, para maiakyat ang antas ng serbisyong medikal sa Pilipinas, serbisyong tunay na nagmamalasakit sa mga maysakit (It is high time for all sectors of society, especially those in the private sector, to help their fellow Filipinos. Let's all help each other, government and private sector, to uplift the quality of medical services in the Philippines with genuine service that truly cares for the sick)," Go added.

Bong Go, who had worked with President Rodrigo Duterte back when Duterte

was still mayor of Davao City, discussed why healthcare has always been a topic of his.

"Matagal po akong nagserbisyo kay Boss (President Duterte). Sa haba ng panahon na nagtrabaho po ako sa kanya, nakita ko na ito talaga 'yung isa sa pinaka-kailangang ayusin isyu sa Pilipinas (I've worked for President Duterte for so long. In that long stretch of time when I worked for him, I really saw why this is really the most important thing that should be fixed in the Philippines)," Go stated.

Go cited the the Malasakit Center program, foremost among the programs for improving the healthcare services.

"Kung noon po ay palipat-lipat ng opisina po ang mga pasyente at kamag-anak nila para humingi ng tulong sa PCSO, DOH, DSWD, and PhilHealth po, halos maubos na 'yung panahon nila, mamasaha sila, papatak 'yung bill nila, ngayon po, with the Malasakit Center sa isang bubong, sa isang kuwarto, nandoon na 'yung mga representative ng PCSO, DOH, DSWD, at PhilHealth," Go explained.

It's all up to clergymen to accept police security or not - CBCP official

By LESLIE ANN G. AQUINO

A church official said the decision on whether to accept or not the offer of the police for security was all up to the individual bishops and priests concerned.

"It is up to those who are in this situation whether to accept the offer or not," Father Jerome Secillano, executive secretary of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines Public Affairs Committee, said in an interview. He explained that not all priests and bishops were "under threat."

But, Secillano said such an offer was most welcome especially at this time.

"To secure the church and the people especially at these dangerous moments is most welcome," he said.

Earlier, the Philippine National Police (PNP) offered to provide security to bishops and priests, who are facing death threats.

This, after Manila Archbishop Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle revealed that there were bishops and priests that have been getting death threats. Among them Calocan Bishop Pablo David.

David, a staunch critic of President Duterte's bloody war on drugs, already admitted receiving death threats.

"I have been receiving them but I do not know who they are coming from," he said.

To note, a number of priests in the country have already been killed last year.

Fr. Mark Ventura was killed in Gattaran, Cagayan on April 29 only four months after Fr. Marcelito Paez was killed in Nueva Ecija.

In June, Fr. Richmond Nilo was also killed by unknown gunmen in Cabañatuan.

On the same month, Fr. Rey Urmeneta of the St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Calamba, Laguna, was wounded after being shot by unidentified suspects.

Gordon says Dengvaxia case vs Garin bound to fail

By VANNE ELAINE P. TERRAZOLA

The Department of Justice's (DOJ) charge against former Health Secretary Janet Garin and 19 others over the deaths

cause ng pagkamatay nitong mga naturukan ng bakuna. Wala pa talaga tyong evidence (Nothing yet says that Sanofi was the principal cause of the deaths of those injected with

S. No. 192
H. No. 8110

Republic of the Philippines
Congress of the Philippines
Metro Manila
Seventeenth Congress
Third Regular Session

Begin and held in Metro Manila, on Monday, the twenty-third day of July, two thousand eighteen.

[REPUBLIC ACT No. 11227]

AN ACT MANDATING THE PHILIPPINE OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT ADMINISTRATION (POEA) TO DEVELOP, PUBLISH, DISSEMINATE AND UPDATE A HANDBOOK ON THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MIGRANT WORKERS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8042, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE MIGRANT WORKERS AND OVERSEAS FILIPINOS ACT OF 1995", AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10022

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. *Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Handbook for OFWs Act of 2018".

SEC. 2. *Creating a Handbook for Overseas Filipino Workers.* - The handbook for overseas Filipino workers, known in this Act as "Handbook", shall be created and issued to every land-based and sea-based worker free of charge. It shall serve as a ready reference for migrant workers when they need to assert their rights and responsibilities. It shall also deal with key issues that they need to know in order to maintain decent employment conditions overseas.

The contents of the Handbook shall be written in English with translations in local languages as may be necessary.

SEC. 3. *Objectives of the Handbook.* - The objectives of creating a Handbook are as follows:

(a) To empower every overseas Filipino worker (OFW) by making them fully aware of their rights and responsibilities;

(b) To complement the worker education program of various agencies;

(c) To provide a basic information on the labor and living conditions in the country of their destination;

(d) To make the workers well aware of the benefits and drawbacks of working overseas; and

(e) To provide necessary information for their reintegration into the Philippine society.

SEC. 4. *Amendment.* - Subparagraph (b.1) of paragraph (b) of Section 23 of Republic Act No. 8042, as amended, is hereby further amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 23. *Role of Government Agencies.* - The following government agencies shall perform the following to promote the welfare and protect the rights of migrant workers and, as far as applicable, all overseas Filipinos:

"(a) Department of Foreign Affairs - x x x

"(b) Department of Labor and Employment - The Department of Labor and Employment shall see to it that labor and social welfare laws in the foreign countries are fairly applied to migrant workers and whenever applicable, to other overseas Filipinos including the grant of legal assistance and the referral to proper medical centers or hospitals;

"(b.1) Philippine Overseas Employment Administration - x x x

"In addition to its powers and functions, the Administration shall inform migrant workers not only of their rights as workers but also of their rights as human beings, instruct and guide the workers how to assert their rights and provide the available mechanism to redress violation of their rights.

"The Administration is hereby mandated to develop, publish, disseminate and update periodically a Handbook on the rights and responsibilities of migrant workers as provided by Philippine laws and the existing labor and social laws of the countries of destination that will protect and guarantee the rights of migrant workers. The Handbook shall be written in simple words that can be easily understood with translation in local language as may be necessary.

"It shall also be responsible for the implementation, in partnership with other law enforcement agencies, of an intensified program against illegal recruitment activities. For this purpose, the POEA shall provide comprehensive gender-sensitive Pre-employment Orientation Seminars (PEOS) that will discuss topics not only on the prevention of illegal recruitment but also on the content of the Handbook on the rights and responsibilities of migrant workers.

"x x x."

SEC. 5. *Implementing Agencies.* - The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), in coordination with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACT), Commission on Filipino Overseas (CFO) and Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), is mandated to implement this Act.

SEC. 6. *Appropriations.* - The amount necessary for the continuous publication, distribution and update of the Handbook shall be taken from the appropriations of the POEA. Thereafter, the amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be provided for in the General Appropriations Act of the year following its enactment into law and thereafter.

SEC. 7. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, rules or regulations that are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 8. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act is held unconstitutional or invalid, such holding shall not affect other provisions not affected thereby.

SEC. 9. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* and in at least one (1) newspaper of general circulation.

Approved.

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
Speaker of the House

VICENTE C. BOTTO III
President of the Senate

H. No. 5565

Republic of the Philippines
Congress of the Philippines
Metro Manila
Seventeenth Congress
Third Regular Session

Begin and held in Metro Manila, on Monday, the twenty-third day of July, two thousand eighteen.

[REPUBLIC ACT No. 11225]

AN ACT DECLARING JANUARY 24 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL WORKING HOLIDAY IN THE PROVINCE OF PALAWAN AND THE CITY OF PUERTO PRINCESA IN HONOR OF THE MARTYRDOM OF GOVERNOR HIGINIO ACOSTA MENDOZA, SR., TO BE KNOWN AS "GOVERNOR HIGINIO ACOSTA MENDOZA, SR. DAY"

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

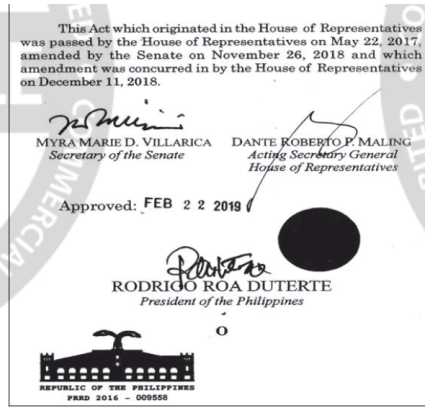
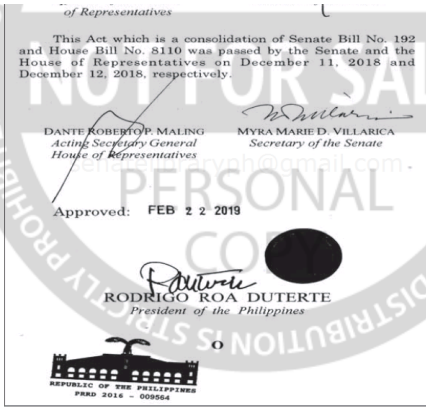
SECTION 1. January 24 of every year is hereby declared a special working holiday in the Province of Palawan and the City of Puerto Princesa in honor of the martyrdom of Governor Higinio Acosta Mendoza, Sr., to be known as "Governor Higinio Acosta Mendoza, Sr. Day".

SEC. 2. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* and in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved.

VICENTE C. BOTTO III
President of the Senate

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
Speaker of the House of Representatives



blamed on the anti-dengue vaccine Dengvaxia is bound to fail, according to Senator Richard Gordon.

Gordon, chairman of the Senate Blue Ribbon Committee, which probed the controversy of the government's P3.5-billion dengue immunization program, on Sunday aired his belief that the case of reckless imprudence resulting in homicide against Garin and her fellow respondents will not stand up in court, and may be dismissed for lack of evidence.

In an interview over radio DZBB, Gordon maintained that there has been no scientific study yet proving that the Sanofi Pasteur-manufactured Dengvaxia caused the deaths of children who received shots of the vaccine.

"Hindi pa naman talaga nasasabi na Sanofi ang principal

the vaccine. We really have no evidence yet," the senator, who is also a lawyer, said.

He recalled this was also found in the blue ribbon committee's inquiry.

"Eh hindi mo mapo-prove na namatay 'yong tao sa dengue, madi-dismiss 'yong kaso kaagad Tapos na, makakalimutan na, wala nang katarungan (Since you cannot prove that they died due to dengue, the charge will be dismissed right away. It will be forgotten, there is no justice at all)," he added.

Gordon, on Saturday, expressed disappointment in the non-inclusion of former President Benigno Aquino III and former Budget Secretary Florencio "Butch" Abad in the DOJ's charges relating to the Dengvaxia mess.

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