

MARINE SAFETY NEWS

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

Every pot has a matching lid. - Philippine Proverb

INFOTAINMENT DVD 46

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Government Says Growth Clipped By Typhoons

MANILA - The full-year growth of the Philippines and other Southeast Asian countries, already battered by the global economic slowdown, is expected to further dip after the region was hit by two strong typhoons one after the other early this month.

Philippine Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Cayetano Paderanga Jr has said that the inter-agency Development Budget Coordination Committee which sets the country's macroeconomic assumptions, may adjust the gross domestic product (GDP) growth target for the year after assessing the impact of the two typhoons.

President Benigno Aquino III said that he still hopes to attain a low-end growth of five percent to six percent this year. But most investment banks have lowered their growth forecasts for the Philippines, with the United States-based Citigroup saying that the country's growth could slide down to 3.7% year from its original forecast of 3.9%.

The Manila-headquartered Asian Development Bank also expects the country to

grow by 4.7% while the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corp forecast a 4.3% growth for the Philippines in 2011.

The devastation brought by the two recent typhoons could have big impact on the country's growth forecast, with large areas of Central Luzon, particularly in the provinces of Bulacan, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija and Pangasinan, still being flooded even after typhoons Nesat and Nalgae have left.

According to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, the continuous rains brought about by new weather disturbances would take it almost a month for the water in affected areas to subside.

The death toll due to the floods and typhoons has already topped 100, with another 34 missing. Property damage estimate from the two storms has reached PHP14 billion. Some three million people, especially in Central Luzon, were affected by the twin typhoons, which lashed the Philippines carrying center winds of at least 140 kilometers per hour.

DOH Launches Door-To-Door Health Teams

MANILA - The Department of Health (DOH) launched on Tuesday the door-to-door community health teams (CHTs) mobilization campaign to guarantee the delivery of health services.

Health Secretary Enrique T Ona said about 42,000 CHTs are expected to do a nationwide door-to-door visit, especially among the poorest households, identified through the DSWDs (Department of Social and Welfare Development) National Household Targeting System.

"The DOH is now on the next phase of its effort to achieve 'Kalusugan Pangkalahatan', and this campaign is just one of the many programs directed to providing poor Filipino families access to quality health care," Ona said.

Likewise, the CHTs with a budget of PHP1.25 billion for this campaign, expects to cover some 10.8 million households under the NHTS nationwide starting from October 2011 to January 2012.

Santiago Dashes Cold Water On Cha-Cha Movers

MANILA - Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago has refuted the explanation of his colleagues that now is the time to amend the economic provision of the Constitution to lure more foreign investors in the country.

"I am sorry to dash cold water on all those fervent hopes about inviting foreign investments, but the truth of the matter is it does not take a constitutional amendment to invite foreign investors to come to our country," Santiago, chair of the Senate committee on constitutional amendments, revisions of codes and laws, said in a media interview Monday night.

Recently, Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile and Senator Franklin Drilon said it is now the high time to revisit the economic provision of the Constitution with the end view of attracting more foreign investments.

Santiago, a former trial judge, said the foreign investors still consider the stable and certain economic regulatory system as the important factor in pouring out their money and capital.

Mikey Arroyo, Wife Post Bail On Tax Evasion Raps

MANILA - Ang Galing Pinoy party-list Rep Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo and his wife Angela on Tuesday posted bail for the P73.85-million tax evasion case filed against them. Atty Ruy Rondain, the legal counsel of the Arroyo couple, said that he posted PHP200,000 or PHP20,000 per case before the Quezon City Regional Trial Court.

Rondain said that they posted bail even before the issuance of a warrant of arrest to show that they have no intention of leaving the country to escape the charges.

"They voluntarily surrendered to show that they will face the case filed against them," Rondain said.

Early this month, the Department of Justice found probable cause to file tax evasion case against Mikey and his wife Angela.

A total of ten cases have been filed before the Quezon City RTC against the Arroyos while another three tax evasion cases were filed before the Court of Tax Appeals. The DOJ said the Arroyo couple failed to pay their taxes properly from 2003 until 2006.

DOLE Sees 'Lapses' In Keppel's Safety Standards

MANILA - The labor department's inspection team that conducted an investigation into the Subic shipyard accident found lapses in the firm's safety standards.

"Ang hindi nakita ng mga inspectors namin ay ang approved safety plan. May findings dun sa area ng operations na walang accredited safety officer (Our inspectors found out that the firm has no approved safety plan and accredited safety officer)," Labor Secretary Rosalinda Baldoz said at the sidelines of a labor forum in Quezon City.

Keppel officials claim that the accident could be a result of human error.

Although Keppel voluntarily suspended its operations on the site where the accident happened, Baldoz said the firm cannot resume work unless the department gives a go-signal.

"We've come up with corrective actions that have to be put in place before we lift the suspension on their operations," Baldoz said. He added that the shipyard could only resume operations if the agency's proposals are complied with by the company.

REGIONAL NEWS

Northern Mindanao & Zamboanga Peninsula in Focus

News from around Northern Mindanao & Zamboanga Peninsula over the past seven days. (In tomorrow's issue: Eastern and Central Visayas)

MARINE NEWS SUMMARY

CONTAINER VESSELS: NEXT-GENERATION WILL BE LARGEST EVER

If the need is for greater efficiency for road and rail freight during an economic slowdown, standard operating procedures might be to downgrade to smaller and lighter means of overland transport. Shipping lines, however, have a different approach: they build bigger ships. The reason, they say, is better economies of scale, costing them less to send a string of three or four huge new ships across the oceans instead of a larger fleet of smaller vessels. These bigger and newer ships will also have more efficient engines and lower emissions, which also means lower fuel costs, as the company hopes an everlasting impression on its customers. One shipping giant is reportedly spending USD 1.9 billion on 10 new ships, each of which will carry 18,000 TEUs. The new Ultra Large Container Ships (ULCS) will be more than 1,312 feet long and more than 193 feet wide, and will outdo cargo capacity of the world's largest container vessel currently afloat, by 16%. The company's chief executive said that building ULCSs was not only a top priority for the firm but also for its customers, who are heavily dependent upon this in their supply chain. Five years ago, the world's largest container ship had a TEU capacity of 9,500. According to a Paris-based maritime research firm, the container carriers' answer to challenges of sustainable shipping and reduction of emissions is to build ever-larger ships, whose sizes have doubled over a decade.

4 Abducted Jail Officers Return To BJMP Service

MALAYBALAY - Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) Sec Jesse Robredo said on Monday that the four abducted jail officers who have been released by the New People's Army (NPA) will be brought back to active service in Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP). Robredo said that Jail Warden Insp.

Eric Llamasares, 27, Jail Inspector Murphy Todyog, 28, Special Jail Officer 2 Rogelio Begontes, 46, and Jail Officer 1 Rolando Bajoyo Jr, 38, can report on their office and no charges will be filed against them after NPA rebels snatched from their custody NPA leader and bomb expert Dennis Rodenas and subsequently abducted them in Quezon, Bukidnon on July 21.

"They were not at fault. They were only doing their job. They will be returned to their duties after the routine debriefing and a well deserved vacation with their families," Robredo said during a press conference and presentation of the BJMP officers to media at the National Police Commission (Napolcom) office in Makati City.

The four jail officers were seized by NPA rebels at a checkpoint in Kitaotao town, Bukidnon province while transporting Rodenas, who was convicted of illegal possession of explosives to a regional prison facility in southern Mindanao's Davao del Norte province last July 21.

Iligan City Declares October As Business Month

ILIGAN CITY - The whole month of October is declared Business Month by the Sangguniang Panlungsod of Iligan in a resolution passed last August.

This is one of the city's strategies to perk up business activities by holding events that increases the sales of products and services of the local stakeholders, explained SP Kagawad Ruderic C Marzo, one of the main authors of the resolution.

While SP Kagawad Frederick W Siao, co-main author, said this will be celebrated every year thereafter to provide the local stakeholders, such as, the local business sectors and the educational institutions, among others, a regular venue to craft their own vision, mission, plans, and strategies to advance the business climate in the city.

Activities were also lined up with a kick-off last October 3, during the flag ceremony at the city hall amphitheater, with the support of the city officials led by Mayor Lawrence Ll. Cruz, said Siao.

Hundreds Of Iliganons Get 'Cash For Work'

PAGADIAN CITY - The Department of Social Welfare and Development reported that 713 poor individuals from Iligan City have been covered by the government's 'cash for work' program in August. These beneficiaries are small scale farmers and fisherfolks from barangays Balintawak, Buenvista, Kawit, Lumad, Napolan and San Pedro.

Mayor Samuel S Co said the distribution of PHP1,803,890 worth of cash assistance was extended to the CFW beneficiaries and the second release of about of PHP9,196,550 was released to 3,635 beneficiaries from 47 barangays on September 25.

Co said PHP11 million was given by the President Benigno Simeon Aquino III thru DSWD 9 to the beneficiaries for rendering community work in 11 days in their respective barangays where each beneficiary received PHP2,530 as payment for working on community public works.

DepED Bats For Child-Friendly Public Schools

DIPOLOG CITY - Parents and students can now expect more child-friendly public schools. Public school heads under the Department of Education (DepEd) of Zamboanga del Norte have recently completed a training on Child Friendly School System (CFSS) aimed at bringing down the dropout rate in the elementary and secondary schools in the area.

The school heads were trained on the strategies in identifying students-at-risk of dropping out (SARDO) using the Family, Individual, Community and School (FICS) analysis tool.

Studies have shown that the reasons why some students left school are varied. "Students coming from broken homes are likely to stop schooling as nobody would take care for their needs," said a school head who asked not to be named.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Libya Forces Drive On Center Of Gaddafi Hometown

SIRTE - Libya's new regime forces were battling block by block towards the center of Sirte on Monday, eyeing the symbolic prize of finally capturing Muammar Gaddafi's hometown after a month-long siege. But Gaddafi diehards were putting up fierce resistance and in their other remaining bastion, Bani Walid, they mounted a fightback, killing 17 National Transitional Council (NTC) fighters.

A column of NTC troops backed by tanks thrust towards the center of Sirte from positions east along the Mediterranean coast, coming under heavy rocket and small arms fire as they moved forwards house by house. (AFP)

Mexico Braces For 'Jova'

MEXICO CITY - Mexican authorities have placed four southern coastal states on high alert ahead of Tuesday's expected arrival of Jova, a major hurricane barreling in from the Pacific.

The US National Hurricane Center said in a bulletin that Jova was packing maximum sustained winds of 195 kilometers per hour and was 255km southwest of the busy port city of Manzanillo, in Colima state.

Jova has strengthened to a category three storm on the five-level Saffir-Simpson scale and was forecast to become a category four before weakening as it makes landfall on Tuesday. (AFP)

Obama Touts Jobs Bill As New Maneuvering Looms

WASHINGTON - President Barack Obama heads to electoral battlegrounds to tout his jobs bill Tuesday, as his campaign brain trust argues voters are warming to the plan, despite its doubtful prospects in Congress.

Obama will hold events in the key electoral state of Pennsylvania, a must-win for him in 2012, and in vital swing state Florida, as an amended version of his \$447 billion package faces a symbolic Senate vote.

The day will likely evolve into a new round of partisan posturing, as Republicans and Democrats, eyeing a date with voters next year, seek political advantage from a measure that has almost no chance of passing in full.

A populist Obama has vowed to fight relentlessly for the plan, a mix of tax cuts and infrastructure spending, and plans to castigate Republicans for doing nothing to tackle the jobs crisis if it founders in a gridlocked Congress.

"The more people know about the American Jobs Act; the more they hear the President talking about it; the more they want Congress to pass the plan," Obama's political confidant David Axelrod said in new campaign memo. (AFP)

Pressure Eases On UK's Under-Fire Defense Minister

LONDON - Prime Minister David Cameron backed his under-fire defense minister on Monday, insisting he would not rush to judgment on claims Liam Fox let a close friend work as his unofficial adviser.

Fox is under intense pressure following allegations that his former flatmate Adam Werritty posed as his adviser, brokered meetings with businessmen and accompanied him on ministerial trips including to Sri Lanka and Dubai.

The opposition Labor party has questioned whether Fox, 50, put national security at risk with his relationship with the 34-year-old Werritty, who has also made numerous visits to the Defense Ministry in the past year.

Fox rejects this accusation, although he apologized Sunday for giving "the impression of wrongdoing", and admitted he allowed "distinctions to be blurred between my professional responsibilities and my personal loyalties".

After a visit to Libya at the weekend which was overshadowed by the row, Fox was due to answer questions on the scandal in the House of Commons later on Monday, and was also set to make a statement to lawmakers. (AFP)

Saudis Struggle To Find Affordable Housing

JEDDAH - Saudis, citizens of one of the world's wealthiest nations, are struggling to afford housing in a crisis spurred by urbanization and a lack of competition in real estate.

Less than 40% of Saudis are homeowners, and demand continues to outstrip supply in the property market, driving up prices and leaving low- and middle-income families with few options to buy or even rent.

A recent study by the construction and real estate conglomerate Binladin Group said the oil-rich Gulf kingdom needs one million new housing units over the next five years.

In March, King Abdullah ordered 500,000 housing units to be built within five years and set aside USD66 billion for the project, but the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said last month that more needs to be done.

FINANCIAL NEWS

STOCK INDEX

The PSE Index closed at 12:00 today with a strong rally now on its third day. The index posted 4,109.27, up from 4,040.58 yesterday, or 1.7%.

FOREIGN EXCHANGE

USD 1 = PHP43.445

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

EUR 1 = USD1.3631

European Central Bank

"To address the affordability of housing, mitigate the land prices, and increase the supply of land...the government must unlock the static supply of land," the IMF said in a report. At the core of the problem, analysts say, are the ultra-wealthy who own massive swathes of land in major cities and on their outskirts but do nothing with it. (AFP)

Japanese Scientist Unveils 'Thinking' Robot

TOKYO - Robots that learn from experience and can solve novel problems - just like humans - sound like science fiction. But a Japanese researcher is working on making them science fact, with machines that can teach themselves to perform tasks they have not been programmed to do, using objects they have never seen before.

In a world first, Osamu Hasegawa, associate professor at the Tokyo Institute of Technology, has developed a system that allows robots to look around their environment and do research on the Internet, enabling them to "think" how best to solve a problem.

"Most existing robots are good at processing and performing the tasks they are pre-programmed to do, but they know little about the 'real world' where we humans live," he told AFP.

"So our project is an attempt to build a bridge between robots and that real world," he said.

The Self-Organizing Incremental Neural Network, or "SOINN", is an algorithm that allows robots to use their knowledge - what they already know - to infer how to complete tasks they have been told to do. SOINN examines the environment to gather the data it needs to organise the information it has been given into a coherent set of instructions. (AFP)

SPORTS NEWS

Cabagnet Wins PBA Plum

MANILA - The PBA Philippine Cup may be stuffed with explosive newcomers, but trust some veterans to step up the most at the crunch.

 WEATHER

Eastern Visayas and Northeastern Mindanao will have rains with gusty winds and the coastal waters will be moderate to rough. Bicol region, rest of Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rain showers and thunderstorms becoming cloudy over Central Visayas which may trigger flashfloods and landslides. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rain showers or thunderstorms.

Such was the case of Petron Blaze's Alex Cabagnot, who did much more than just be a playmaker - lifting the Boosters to back-to-back wins and earning for himself the Accel-PBA Press Corps' Player of the Week (POW) citation for the season-opening period October 2 to 9. The southpaw point guard consistently shone the brightest for the Governor's Cup champion which continued to be undermanned by making the crucial points that pointed Petron to victories over B-MEG and Barako Bull and into the early lead.

Cabagnot bested team-mates Arwind Santos and fellow rookie Chris Lutz, as well as Rain or Shine's Paul Lee and Talk N' Text's Japeth Aguilar, for the plum despite posting only norms of 14.5 points, 5.5 rebounds, 3.5 assists and one blocked shot during the period.

Yet the bulk of Cabagnot's points came when both games were on the line, clear proof he is willing to take charge when the need arises.

It was Cabagnot's three straight baskets from beyond the arc that sparked Petron's decisive 18-4 breakaway from a 75-70 count against Barako Bull, powering the Boosters to a cruising 95-83 win last Friday.

Just two days before, it was Cabagnot who chiefly bailed Petron out of danger by scoring seven of his team's last nine points in a 73-69 opening victory over B-MEG. (PNA)

JRU Bomb Generals

EAC Generals 77 - JRU Heavy Bombers 90: Jose Rizal University ended their NCAA men's basketball elimination-round campaign on a high note by posting a superb victory over the Generals to further bolster their morale ahead of the Final Four.

The Bombers, who clinched the last Final Four slot last week, got off to a dismal start as their poor defense allowed their opponents to take a 42-32 lead. But coach Vergel Meneses' wards regained their composure after the half-time break, thanks to a 19-point scoring spree to establish an 11-point lead.

The Generals, on the other hand, refused to surrender and were able to reduce the deficit to just two, 62-64, with more than eight minutes remaining. But the Bombers went on another 18-3 scoring rampage in the late period to finally nail the Generals.

John Lopez topscored for JRU with 17 points to help register the Bombers' sixth-straight victory. **Other Results: (Seniors)** LPU Pirates 94-89 CSB Blazers; **(Juniors)** SSC-R Staglets 65-85 CSJL Squires, EAC Brigadiers 74-60 JRU Light Bombers, LPU Junior Pirates 45-118 CSB-LSGH Greenies.

Pacquiao Starts 2nd Leg Of Training In LA

MANILA - Starting this week, the Wild Card gym in downtown Hollywood in Los Angeles will breath life anew as Manny Pacquiao starts the second leg of preparation for his defense of the World Boxing Organization welterweight crown against Juan Manuel Marquez on November 12 in Las Vegas.

Team Pacquiao, including trainer and Wild Card owner Freddie Roach set their foot at the Los Angeles International Airport early evening of Saturday (Sunday in Manila) from the first stop of training that lasted three weeks under the cold and often rainy Baguio City.

Pacquiao, according to Roach, was jumpy and looked very happy as when he left Manila and was quoted as saying that he was ready to resume preparing for the fight.

"I like it when he's happy because that means he's focused and will do whatever I want him to do in the course of his training," the 51 year-old boxing guru said in an interview.

Pacquiao and Morales fought for the first time in May of 2004 when the Filipino dropped the Mexican three times in the first round but could only settle for a draw. He then sent Marquez kissing the canvas in the third round of their 2008 rematch but only managed a split decision leading Marquez to proclaim he won both fights. (PNA)

Intl Football Friendly - Azkals, Nepal Collide

Philippines Vs Nepal: The national men's football squad will carry out a new strategy when they take on Nepal in an international friendly at the Rizal Memorial Stadium tonight. The Azkals are determined to make amends for their 0-2 loss to Singapore at an exhibition game on Friday.

Team officials said the club will take a different approach when it comes to their offense and plan to launch early attacks against the Nepalese outfit.

It is the first time in two months that the Azkals will be playing on home soil and the team wants to give a deserving bout against the Himalayan Warriors, who are kicking off a one-month training stint by challenging their counterparts in Southeast Asia.

Skipper Chieffy Caligdong is likely to be fielded by coach Michael Weiss although he is still reeling from an injury he sustained at the recently concluded Long Teng Cup in Taiwan, wherein the Philippines finished second overall.

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Meanwhile, Fil-Spanish Angel Guirado will not suit up for the Azkals due to an injury. Weiss, however, remains confident that his wards will pull off a victory even without Guirado as his place will be filled by Fil-Danish Dennis Cagara and Jerry Lucena.

Orcollo Wins 9-Ball Title

QUEZON CITY - Elite pool shark Dennis Orcollo exacted revenge on Carlo Biado as he hoisted the National Pool Championship 9-Ball trophy. Biado, the newly crowned 8-Ball champion in the national circuit, built an early 6-3 lead and nearly duplicated his feat in beating the player dubbed "The Robocop." But Orcollo banked on his championship experience and drilled each shot with accuracy en route to an 11-8 victory.

Biado defeated Orcollo in the semifinals of the 8-Ball division on Sunday before beating Alan Cuartero in the championship.

"I know he (Biado) would surge ahead because he had played in the 8-ball championship and is familiar with the table's speed," said the world No 1 Orcollo, who took home the PHP50,000 top prize.

His victory tightened up the race for the grand championship, wherein PHP200,000 is at stake. The two champions also secured tickets for the World Pool Summit, the World Pool Billiard Association's last tournament of the year.

!?! THAT'S ODD

No Turkeys Fall On Arkansas Festival This Year

YELLVILLE - Turns out turkeys don't fly. The "Baxter Bulletin" reports that attendees at the Turkey Trot festival in Yellville were disappointed when no turkeys dropped from planes on Friday or Saturday. The turkey drop is a mainstay of the event in northern Arkansas, though organisers don't sanction it. Supporters say the turkeys can fly just enough to descend safely, but animal-rights advocates call it cruel.