

CHIZ ASKS AUTHORITIES TO HASTEN PROBE ON NEWS TEAM'S AMBUSH

Sen. Francis "Chiz" Escudero condemned in the strongest terms the ambush of a three-member ABS-CBN News team in Marawi City, Lanao del Sur on Dec. 26, as he called on authorities to speed up the investigation and bring the perpetrators to justice.

Escudero said the assassination attempt on reporter Ronnie Enderes, cameraman Emelito Balansag and driver Garry Montecillo was "a serious attack against press freedom."

"There is no doubt that the ambush was work-related. Although no one was seriously injured, it is important that authorities go after those responsible for the incident and put them behind bars, otherwise there will be no end to the culture of impunity against journalists," Escudero said.

The Iligan City-based news crew was in Marawi to gather updates on the Dec. 24 bombing of a tower of the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines in Ramin town when they were attacked by motorcy-

cle-riding gunmen.

The three survived unscathed but the shooting damaged their vehicle.

This year alone, seven Filipino journalists were killed; the latest among them is Jose Bernardo, a radio dwIZ correspondent and columnist of tabloid Bandera Pilipino.

A lone gunman shot dead Bernardo in front of a restaurant in Barangay Kaligayahan, Quezon City on Oct. 21. He suffered two gunshot wounds in the head and died on the spot.

Bernardo was the 32nd journalist to be killed under the Aquino administration and the third in Quezon City. Many of the killings of journalists remained unresolved.

Last August, Escudero also denounced the strafing of the coffee shop owned by ABS-CBN broadcaster Anthony Taberna by still unidentified gunmen.

The veteran lawmaker said that all means must be exhausted to put a stop to the crime against media personnel, who are only doing their job.

Duterte-Cayetano to declare war on drugs: Dreams of a drug-free Philippines

Sharing the dreams of Sparents and Filipino families of a "drug-free Philippines", the tandem of presidential aspirant Davao City Mayor Rodrigo "Rody" Duterte and Senate Majority Leader Alan Peter

Cayetano is eyeing on taking down half of the 3-5 thousand drug lords in the country through an "all-out war against drugs."

Speaking in his Sunday television program, Gikan sa masa, para sa

EARN \$60 A DAY (OR P65K A MONTH) WORKING AT HOME!

A career in Video Captioning and Subtitling can make this possible.

Who should attend this FREE Orientation?

- >Those who want to earn \$, £, € without having to leave the country.
- >Those who want a real part time or full time home-based job.
- >Those who are planning to go to Canada, US, Australia, & UK.
- >Those planning for a career shift (Call Center Agents, IT prof Transcriptionists, ESL teachers)

Transcripro-IT Dynamics

Rm. 411 Mount Crest Hotel, Legarda Rd., Baguio City
Tel. No.: (074) 422-4215 CP: 0917-506-1005(GJ)

www.itdynamicsphil.net

Notice: The career orientation is meant to let the attendees understand the job description of a Professional Video Captioner/Subtitler, demand forecast, and industry requirements.

Going to Canada?

Increase your chances, add to your skillset.

Take our Medical Transcription Course and get a certificate verifiable in Canada.

Visit us for daily FREE career orientation to find out if this is something you can do.
Distance learning (home study) modules now available!
Study at your own pace and time.



American Correspondence Inst. ACI Learning Systems
Find us on Facebook: FB: ITDynamicsGroup
In support of TESDA's Job Creation Program
Industry Partner:
www.transcripro.net



Tourists flock the Mansion House in Baguio City hoping to have a glimpse of President Benigno Aquino III who celebrated New Year in the city. (RMC-PIA CAR)

talking mayor said he will not hesitate to use the military and the police and exercise the extraordinary powers of the president to stop the country's drug problem. "In three to six months, everything has to stop. Corruption, drug, criminality. You are oppressing the Filipinos, and I hate it," Duterte said, referring to criminals.

For his part, Cayetano said they have a comprehensive plan and strategy as well as the political will to win the war against drugs. Part of the strategy is the dual

task of disciplining and improving the salaries and benefits of the police/Law enforcers.

"Under a Duterte-Cayetano government, minimum take home pay for law enforcers will be at P 50-60 thousand plus allowances. We will also impose harsh punishment for 'banta salakay' law enforcers. We will leave no excuses for corruption nor sleeping on the job," Cayetano said.

Cayetano said they received reports that big drug syndicates based in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao have linked up

to put up a united front against their electoral campaign.

"We will not be cowed. We will hit them where it hurts the most. We will strike at the belly of the beast. We will bring the war to their doorsteps," Cayetano quoting Duterte.

"For the sake of our families' safety and the future of our children, Mayor Duterte and I will end this social menace. Hindi na pwede ang pateka teka. Sawa na tayo sa pamedya medya.

Cont. on page 6

Linis Gobyerno is an anti-graft, corruption prevention and detection office.
Tired of Graft & Corruption?
Contact Nos. (0917) 5069123, (074) 422-4215 or you can write to P.O. Box 1588, 2600 Baguio City e-mail: linisgobyerno@yahoo.com website: www.linisgobyerno.org

MABUHAY ANG PILIPINO!!!

BAGUIO CITY AND BENGUET

VOL. XIX NO. 14
ISSN 0119-7487

Treated unfairly by news-papers that refuse to publish your response? Write us.

PPI
Philippine Press Council c/o Philippine Press Institute
Rm. 206 BF Cond. Bldg.
A. Soriano Ave., Intramuros Mla.
Tel. No. 5279632 or 5274478 Fax 527-3390
Email - ppi1@mozcom.com

Notice To The Public
Want to know more about the cult - Jehovah's Witness? Visit www.earm.org/jehovahs-witnesses
This advertisement is paid for by Pastor Jules Samanigo of the Good Samaritan Everlasting Christian Ministry
Email : gsecministry@yahoo.com

LONG LIVE THE FILIPINO!!!

Comelec: Postal voting for 75,000 overseas voters

Filipinos living and working overseas, who are registered voters, will be using postal voting in the May 2016 elections.

Based on Comelec data, a total of 75,363 voters will be
Cont. on page 6

Kung talagang gusto natin na tumaas ang turn-out sa election para sa mga kababayan abroad, gawan natin ito ng maayos at convenient na paraan.

Mayor Mauricio Domogan and Philippine Military Academy Assistant Commandant of Cadets, Col. Monico Batle, lead the wreath laying ceremony at the Rizal Shrine at Burnham Park, during the 119th commemoration of the death of Dr. Jose Rizal on December 30.



Abra dad plays Santa Claus to Duterte-Cayetano to declare war on drugs: juvenile offenders •page 2 Dreams of a drug-free Philippines •page 8

PRO-Cor suspends offensive police operations vs NPA for Yuletide season •page 2

DOH records 9 firecracker related injuries in CAR •page 7

Global economic growth in 2016 down to 2.9% •page 6

Troopers engage communities in pre-Christmas activities •page 3

Maligcong Rice Terraces as national cultural heritage •page 6

KAKAMPI MO ANG BATAS

Separation does not annul a marriage

•page 4 BY: ATTY. BATAS MAURICIO



Tree disease training held •page 2

Ad Rates	
1 page : P19,000.00	Paper/Page Size: 9"x12" (22.5cm x 30.5cm)
1/2 page: 9,500.00	
1/4 page: 4,750.00	1 column length: 28.5 cm
1/8 page: 2,375.00	@ 7 columns per page for judicial ads
1 col. cm. 85.00	

Above rates are for black and white. For colored Ads, add 30%.

Generous rate discounts available depending on volume of ad placements

Judicial Publication Rates: 80% of commercial advertising rates as per PD 1079 and SC A.M. No. 01-1-07

All Baguio and Benguet Judicial Publication Rates are standard as agreed with the IBP and RTC as follows: Baguio City - P180/column inch; Benguet - P160/column inch

Published every weekend except during election season when publication is on a bi-weekly basis.

Your no-holds-barred on-line talk show with personalities that make a difference.

PRANGKAHAN TAYO

Brutal kung brutal. Walang Paikot-ikot.

Watch it now at www.junctionnews.com

f prangkahan.tayo5 YouTube Prangkahan Tayo

Abra dad plays Santa Claus to juvenile offenders

BANGUED, Abra, 29(PIA) -- Governor played Santa Claus to juvenile offenders at Bahay Pag-asa here last December 22.

The provincial government through the efforts of the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office (PSWDO) threw a party to these children and their families to celebrate their transformation and to reunite them this Yuletide season.

The program started with celebration of the Holy Eucharist followed by parlor games, cash and gift-giving by Bersamin and a lunch.

Bersamin bared he could not fail being present on occasion such as this because one of the

greatest ways to show his love and support to these children is giving them his time. He also shared pieces of advice to the parents.

“As a father and grandfather to a few, I feel the need to say this. Love your children. The greatest poverty they may feel is the feeling of being unloved. If you take good care of your children, there is no reason for them to do unlawful acts.”

Bersamin also said that while these children may have done transgressions in the past, their families should all the more rush to their aid instead of being one with the society in condemning them.

The Bahay Pag-asa

is a rehabilitation center here established to treat and prevent juvenile offenders and youth who are at risk from escalating into chronic criminals. It has been in operation for two years now giving treatment, services and intervention programs to child offenders with the help of professionals, explained PSWD Provincial Head Decimia Cabang.

Aside from some interventions like face to face counselling, psychological and psychosocial assessments that are proven to help these children, Cabang said they also hold retreats for them once in a while.

To date, there are 26 CICL currently being served at Bahay Pag-asa. /JDP/GBB – PIA CAR, Abra

Tree disease training held

BAGUIO CITY - Trees as provider of much-needed oxygen to man, as with other economic and practical uses, was emphasized during the Training on the Management of Tree Diseases of the Benguet Pine, held at the Diplomat Hotel, Dominican Hill recently.

The training spearheaded by the city government through the City Environment and Parks Management Office (CEPMO) had resource persons from the Benguet State University (BSU); Lucille Foroden, Dr. Marissa Parao, Paquito Untalan and Dr. Asuncion Nagpala.

Head of the CEPMO

Forestry Division Beatrice Gajete, pointed out that (Benguet Pine) trees should be planted and cared for until maturity.

Among the topics discussed during the forum was the identification of beetles associated with pine tree, specifically the Pinus kesiya or commonly known as the Benguet Pine; proper care and maintenance of pine trees, factors contributing to pine tree infestation, and other matters considered in pine tree disease control.

Specifically identified in the region as the culprit in cases of pine tree rotting, deterioration and eventually, death, is the

Ips calligraphus beetle and related species. These insects detect stressed and weakened trees; converge and multiply within the coverings, some species having 8 to 10 generations within a year, thus further endangering the tree and its neighbors. It was known that beetles are inactive during cold weather and increase in number during warm weather.

Trees susceptible to beetles are those mechanically damaged, with exposed barks, lightning struck, unhealthy and freshly-cut pine. Insecticides are rarely used, biological control

Cont. on page 3

PRO-Cor suspends offensive police operations vs NPA for Yuletide season

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet, Dec. 26 (PIA) -- The Police Regional Office – Cordillera declared Suspension of Offensive Police Operations against the New People’s Army (NPA) in the Cordillera region in line with the Christmas truce declaration by both parties in observance of the Yuletide season.

PRO-Cor Regional Director Police Chief Superintendent Ulysses

Abellera said that the Suspension of Offensive Police Operations region-wide would be effective starting 12:00 midnight of December 23, 2015 to 12:00 midnight of January 1, 2016.

Abellera said that the as part of the yearly tradition, the Suspension of Offensive Police Operations is observed and respected by all units and personnel of the PRO-Cor that prohibits the troops

from initiating offensive police operations against the NPA.

Said suspension, however, does not cover normal law enforcement operations including the serving of warrants of arrest, Abellera said. All units still remain on-guard and maintain a high state of operational readiness to respond to any hostile actions, he added. /JDP/RMC- PIA CAR

Duterte-Cayetano vows to hunt down lawless elements, bats for federalism and development in Mindanao

In response to the recent attack by the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) in Central Mindanao that killed almost ten civilians on Christmas eve, the tandem of presidential candidate Davao City Mayor Rodrigo “Rody” Duterte and Senate Majority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano said, if elected, they will increase the number of government security forces.

“I will add 3,000 more regular men in the armed forces, and train them either as scout rangers or special forces to combat lawless elements. Matapang ang mga kriminal. Kaya kailangan matapang din ang solusyon. Hindi pwede dito ang pateka-teka. This problem is not

for the faint-hearted,” Duterte said.

“If they will continue with their atrocious acts despite our efforts to spread economic development, decentralize governance, then we will meet them head on. We will hunt them down. I will not subject my people to worse suffering,” Duterte added.

For his part, Cayetano said

inclusive economic growth is also necessary to achieve peace in Mindanao. The senator said he and Duterte are pushing for a Mindanao Peace & Development Plan, which will address the region’s decades-old problems on economic instability and armed rebellion, among others.

“Through this plan, Mayor Duterte and I want to allocate at least P800 billion worth of guaranteed funds for 10 years in order to harness the potentials of various sectors in the region, including education, health, agriculture, livelihood, housing, tourism, infrastructure, and transportation. On top of this, we plan to allot P1 billion per region, particularly to Mindanao for micro, small, and medium enterprise financing,” Cayetano explained.

Cayetano added that they are pushing for Federalism as a unifying peace framework in Mindanao. They said any discussion about peace & development in Mindanao must be based on a just, inclusive and lasting framework among all stakeholders.

“We will be inclusive and talk to all relevant stakeholders to achieve real and lasting peace. That’s why we see Fed-

eralism as a unifying framework for peace and governance,” Cayetano said.

“Ang Pederalismo ang sasagot hindi lamang sa kawalan ng pagkapanat-pantay sa ating bayan. Ito rin ay pundamental na konektado sa ating layunin na ipamahagi ang kaunlaran sa iba pang rehiyon at probinsiya at makamit ang hinahangad na kapayapaan sa Mindanao,” Cayetano said.

The Duterte-Cayetano tandem is also advocating for the establishment of the Mindanao Railway System - to connect all food-producing provinces in the region to seaports or cargo-loading airports, and ensure a more efficient and low-cost transport of food commodities throughout the country.

“The Mindanao Railway Project (MRP) would link major cities including Cagayan de Oro, Iligan, Zamboanga City, Butuan, Surigao, Davao and General Santos. It will play a major role towards improvement of Mindanao’s intra island accessibility, linkages and seamless multimodal transport networks,” Cayetano concluded. /Office of Senator Alan Peter Cayetano

FEATURE

DR. VIRGILIO ‘GIL’ C. BAUTISTA NATIONAL OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER AWARDEE (INDIVIDUAL – ADULT CATEGORY)

“Show your love for God by serving His people”. This is the guiding principle by which the 2015 National Outstanding Volunteer Awardee (for Individual – Adult Category) and 2015 UP Virata School of Business Distinguished Alumni Awardee, Dr. Virgilio “Gil” C. Bautista lives by. He grew up in an atmosphere where his parents, Dr. Fernando and Rosa Bautista, founders of the University of Baguio, were constantly providing assistance to people in need. His first exposure in doing volunteer work as a child was during his formative years with the Boy Scouts of the Philippines, where all scouts were encouraged to abide by the slogan “Do a good turn daily”. For children, this can be as simple as carrying teachers’ books, cleaning the chalkboard, or picking up pieces of trash from the playground. This progressed to helping the elderly or handicapped cross the street, directing traffic or giving first aid to summer visitors in parks where they were assigned. It is instilled in the scouts to always remember their duties: first to God, their country, to others, and to self. Until his adult years, and in his capacity as head of professional, social, service and volunteer organizations, such as the Jaycees, the Rotary Club, The University of Baguio, the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities, Red Cross, Philippine Mental Health Association, the Baguio Heritage Foundation, and government entities that invited him to serve as Private Sector Representative, Dr. Virgilio C. Bautista found fulfillment in sharing his time, talent

and resources to others, as his way of giving back for blessings received. It has become his personal mission to be of service whenever and wherever help is needed, without thought of recognition or reward.

A born leader, Gil, as he is fondly called, has been recognized for his commendable performance while holding top management and leadership posts in civic and community service, business and the academe. He is incorporator of educational foundations that offer scholarships to poor but deserving students; established and financed livelihood programs, conducted leadership training seminars on community development nationwide, and was actively involved in reforestation projects; strengthening of cooperatives, established community water systems. He organized, financed and personally participated in mercy/rescue and relief operations for landslide victims. For his efforts, he was recognized and given Humanitarian and Merit Awards by the Baguio Jaycees, the Philippine National Red Cross and the Community Chest Council. He was recipient of the Most Outstanding Jaycee Award. In the early 1970’s, he organized and financed summer work camps in Baguio City for the youth and the mentally challenged, and instituted projects to solicit donations in the form of reference books, textbooks, laboratory equipment and computers for use by elementary and secondary public schools.

A visionary leader and trailblazer, Dr. Virgilio C. Bautista is an organizer. He established or co-founded the following organizations: Rotary Club of Baguio Summer Capital, Educational Capital Corporation Growth and Income Fund, Association of Private Technical

respect accorded to him as a result of his dedication to be of service. He finds fulfilment in being able to touch other people’s lives, motivate and inspire them to do good.

Dr. Virgilio C. Bautista incorporated various educational foundations that offer scholarships to poor but deserving students; established and financed livelihood programs, conducted leadership training seminars on community development nationwide, and was actively involved in reforestation projects; strengthening of cooperatives, established community water systems. He organized, financed and personally participated in mercy/rescue and relief operations for landslide victims. For his efforts, he was recognized and given Humanitarian and Merit Awards by the Baguio Jaycees, the Philippine National Red Cross and the Community Chest Council. He was recipient of the Most Outstanding Jaycee Award. In the early 1970’s, he organized and financed summer work camps in Baguio City for the youth and the mentally challenged, and instituted projects to solicit donations in the form of reference books, textbooks, laboratory equipment and computers for use by elementary and secondary public schools.



Dr. Bautista (front row, middle), Chairman of Organo Gold Philippines, PSD Corporation & Bridge Auxiliary Finance Corp., was also awarded as one of the Distinguished Alumni of the University of the Philippines Virata School of Business, the highlight of the celebration of the UPVSB Alumni Homecoming held last December 5, 2015. He is shown here with the members of the Board of Directors of the UPVSB and the other awardees namely: Dionisio R. Gil, Jr. (Founder of AMROP Phils., and YES Multi-purpose Cooperative); Ramon B. Segismundo (SVP, Human Resources & Corporate Services of MERALCO); Polly Santiago-Cortez, Ret. Federal Banking Regulator, US Dept. of Treasury; and Alma Hidalgo-Onrubia (Chief Financial Officer & Proprietor, Apex Homecare Services & Affiliated Home & Health Services, Glendale, California).

DOH records 9 firecracker related injuries in CAR

BAGUIO CITY-- Despite the call of the Health Department for the total ban of firecrackers to prevent injuries during the celebration of the Yuletide season, nine firecracker-related injuries were already recorded in the Cordillera Region.

Department of Health Emergency Management Coordinator Clark Dizon reported that as of December 29, five cases were reported in Baguio City and four cases in the province of Abra. Almost all the cases were due to the illegal firecracker ‘piccolo and at least three of the victims are aged 8-12 years old.

“Wala pa yung January 5 na deadline ng reporting pero umaarangkada na ang bilang ng napuputukan dito sa Cordillera,” Dizon said.

Last year, the Cordillera region recorded at least 54 firecracker-related cases. The New Year revelry. All hospitals are on Code White.

Earlier this month, the DOH launched the “Iwas Paputok” campaign with the theme, “Sa Ingay Walang Sablay, sa Paputok Goodbye Kamay Kaya Wag Pasaway”, which calls for public support anew in doing away with firecrackers as these may harm; instead use other safer means of noise and merry making this holiday season.

The DOH and other authorities continue to call for the ban on the use of firecrackers and fireworks and the use of guns in celebrating the New Year and welcoming 2016 to avoid more injuries and even deaths. (JDP/RMC- PIA CAR)

Institutes, Personnel Management Association of the Philippines - Baguio Chapter, Sagip Kapatid Foundation, the Kalayaan International Development Foundation and the Baguio Heritage Foundation, whose vision is to foster a culture of caring and advocate a better future for Baguio. Several organizations have recognized Dr. Bautista: Outstanding Citizen of Baguio, Most Outstanding Rotarian for District 3790 with about 2,000 members, Leadership Excellence Award, Gintong Tala Award by the Baguio Elderly Assembly, Asian Father of the Year, “Haliging Tahanan” Golden

Awardee for Father of the Year, Awardee for Excellence in Public Service by the Leadership Organization of the Philippines, Teodora Alonzo Award for Education, twice Most Outstanding Baguio Jaycee, and Most Outstanding New Jaycee for Northern & Central Luzon, to name a few. He is an adopted son of Kiangnan, and was conferred the Ifugao name “Amtalao”, meaning “star”. In all these, a lot of people have benefitted, and in all his humanitarian and community-based endeavors, Dr. Bautista serves as a role model to others in doing their own part in helping uplift other

people’s lives in their own communities.

In all his endeavors, Dr. Bautista maximized his network of resources as he synergized and merged the private sector and the different line agencies within the local government units in order to sustain the projects and effect positive impacts in the development of the region.

After forty five years of doing volunteer work, The National Outstanding Volunteer Award is truly a fitting reward for one who never passes on a chance to be of help, inspires others to do good and to become closer to God.

The Junction is printed and published by Farco Trimedia Ventures, Inc. (FTV, Inc.) every weekend, with office address at Ambuculo Road, Sitio Maroo, Itogon Benguet, and c/o Linis Gobyerno, Bldg. 2 Ground Floor PCEC Bldg., Happy Homes, Campo Sioco, Baguio City; Mobile Phone No. (0917) 5069123 Tel. No. (074) 422 - 4215

E-mail Address: thejunctionnews@yahoo.com
Mailing Address P.O. Box 1588, 2600 Baguio City
Entered as Second Class Mail at the Baguio City Central Post Office PCC-CAR 01-04-99

Member: Press Foundation of Asia
Philippine Press Institute
Beyond Borders Reporting

Website: www.junctionnews.com

Opinions expressed by the opinion writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the position of this paper.

**Our articles and stories (news/features) are ready to go for printing without the involvement of the editor and publisher who happen to be on leave.*

Bing Dawang-Farres: Editor (on leave)
Freddie J. Farres: Consultant

Support Staff:
Nelson Tunaño
Gerry P. Binwagan
John T. Bagayan
Annabelle Pedronio
Bradenburg Sawac

Regular Columnists:
Atty. James S. Valeros
Atty. Batas Mauricio
Atty. Jesus Dureza
Emilio Liwanen
Nestor A. Castro
Marvin Lidawan

Comelec...

from page 1

using postal voting, where the 26 embassies or post from three regions will send ballots to voters through mail. Voters will have to fill it up the ballots and send it back to the sender before the deadline.

The posts includes: Lisbon (European Region); Bangkok, Brunei, Chongqing, Dhaka, Dili, Guangzhou, Islamabad, Jakarta, Macau, Manado, Meco Kaohsiung, Meco Taichung, Meco Taipei, New Delhi, Phnom Penh, Shanghai, Vientiane and Xiamen (Asia Pacific Region); Abuja, Amman, Cairo, Muscat, Nairobi, Pretoria and Tehran (Middle East and African Region).

On the other hand, a total of 1.1 million voters for the Overseas Absentee Voting (OAV) from 30 posts in regions such as North and Latin America, Europe, Asia Pacific and Middle East will adopt automated election system by using the Voter Counting Machines (VCM).

The OAV voters will only be voting for the following positions, President, Vice President, Senators and a Party-List group.

The voting will start on April 9 until May 9, 2016. The posts will be closed at 3 p.m. (Philippine Time).

Counting of the votes will be conducted after the posts have closed. (PNA) RMA/FGP/rsm

Duterte-Cayetano...

from page 8

Panahon na para sa matapang na solusyon at mabilis na aksyon laban sa salot na droga sa ating bansa. To our growing supporters, stay calm. Change is coming,” Cayetano ended.

Before Duterte entered the political picture, the issue of illegal drugs was not in the front and center of the electoral agenda. With Duterte running as President many look forward to him to end the country’s growing drug problem. #/Office of Senator Alan Peter Cayetano

Maligcong Rice Terraces as national cultural heritage

BONTOC, Mountain Province—The Sangguniang Panlalawigan (SP) here has endorsed the resolution of the barangay officials of barangay Maligcong of this municipality requesting for the declaration of the Maligcong Rice Terraces as a national cultural heritage.

The SP noted that despite the remoteness of barangay Maligcong, it is still a favorite destination of both local and foreign tourists due to its stone-walled rice terraces which make it unique and distinct from other terraces in other places.

It is also mentioned that Maligcong Rice terraces which accordingly have been built several centuries ago, are among the structures in Mountain Province that embody and exemplify the richness and abundance of the culture and history of the province and its people.

These terraces are proofs of the ingenuity, indigenous engineering skills, workmanship and industriousness of the villagers, the Sanggunian added.

Copy of this resolution was forwarded to the National Commission for Culture and Arts through its chairman, Mr. Felipe M. De Leon, Jr. (JDP/JBS-PIA CAR, Mt. Province)

European cruise ship get a taste of Leyte’s Kalanggaman Island

TACLOBAN CITY – The MS Europa 1, an international cruise ship of the Hapag-Lloyd Cruise Company in Europe, made a stopover on Tuesday in Kalanggaman Island, Palompon, Leyte.

This is the second visit of the cruise ship. The first was on April 26, 2013.

The ship made a historic first stop, where a crew member planted a marker at the welcome sign of the island.

Its port call ushers the arrival of tourists in the famed island with powdery white sand and sand bars. It also opened doors for Kalanggaman as cruise destination according to Raoul Bacalla of the office of Mayor Ramon Oñate.

There were close to 400 guests, mostly Europeans that were met by Palompon’s officials led by Vice Mayor Georgina Arevalo, Tourism Officer Cleofe Rivera and Bacalla. The officials noted that the tourists came mostly as family.

The town’s employees feted and welcomed with songs and dances.

Arevalo said that MS Europa’s visit means so much for the locality’s tourism industry. She is grateful that among other destinations in the Philippines, the company chose Kalanggaman.

The island was destroyed by super typhoon Yolanda’s fierce winds that hit the Central Philippines on Nov. 8, 2013.

The beautiful island, with an area of 8—hectares is 45 minutes from the mainland of Palompon.

MS Europa I was the first international cruise ship that brought cruise tourists to the island.

This was followed by MS Bremen, MS Europa II among others bringing close to 2,000 tourists to the island in the last two years.

The tourists had the time of their life to eat sumptuous food, kayaking, swimming, frolic in the sand, scuba diving, snorkeling and stand-up paddle boarding.

They also went shopping as the local government of Palompon brought native bags, wallets and other locally produced items.

For their entrance fees and use of kayaks, boats, paddle boards, the group paid nearly P200,000. Not bad for a one-day income, according to Bacalla.

The cruise ship arrived at 6 a.m. on December 29, and left at 7 p.m. on the same day.

After Kalanggaman, MS Europa made a port call at the world-renowned Boracay island also in Visayas.

Kalanggaman, the jewel of the northeast tourism corridor has welcomed 44,000 local and foreign tourists from January to November 2015. (PNA) RMA/SQM/VICKY C. ARNAIZ

Global economic growth in 2016 down to 2.9%

WASHINGTON, DC - The World Bank has lowered its forecast for the global economic growth in 2016 from previously expected 3.3 percent to 2.9 percent, the organization said in a statement on Wednesday.

The bank anticipates that the world economy will accelerate its pace of growth compared to 2015, when it grew by 2.4 percent.

The developing countries’ economies will grow by 4.8 percent, while the US and Eurozone economies will grow by 2.7 and 1.7 percent accordingly, the statement said.

China’s economic growth will contract compared to 2015 and will amount to 6.7 percent in 2016, according to the World Bank. (PNA/Sputnik)

Ifugao PPOC moves to protect CLIP beneficiaries, workers

LAGAWE, Ifugao - The Provincial Peace and Order Council recently passed a resolution to ensure the protection of beneficiaries and workers of the Comprehensive Local Integration Program (CLIP).

PPOC Resolution No. 2015-03 requests the Philippine National Police - Cordillera Regional Office (PRO-COR) not to release information that would compromise the welfare and safety of CLIP clients, partners and workers.

This stemmed from a post in the social media which disclosed information such as name and age of the former rebels and the person who accompanied the FR to surrender.

The resolution stated that the posting in social media of the identity of FRs is a violation of security protocol as embodied in Section 10. B of the Implementing Guidelines of the Comprehensive Local Integration Program (CLIP) for former New People’s Army (NPA) members.

“The release of names of the former rebels is detrimental and has a negative effect on them, their families and the person who accompanied them to surrender and the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office (PSWDO) personnel handling the program,” the PPOC resolution stated.

It further mentioned that PPOC deems it important that names of the former rebels should be withheld from the press and social media in order to maintain social relationship, trust and confidence in the government, public services and the community.

The PNP and the Provincial Government will handle CLIP information with confidentiality and follow information dissemination protocol in order to protect the safety of all people concerned. (JDP/MBL- PIA CAR, Ifugao)

NOTICE OF EXTRAJUDICIAL SETTLEMENT OF THE INTESTATE ESTATE OF GASPAR DOMINGO

Notice is hereby given that the intestate estate of Gaspar Domingo, who died on September 25, 1976 in Baguio City, Philippines, has been extrajudicially settled by his heirs through that deed of Extrajudicial Settlement of the Intestate Estate of Gaspar Domingo, acknowledged on October 29, 2015 before Philippine Consul Voltaire O.C. Mauricio, Embassy of the Philippines, London, United Kingdom, and entered in his notarial register as Doc. No. 9679; Service No. 26968; O.R. No. 0120.

Publication Dates: December 26, 2015, January 2, and 9, 2016

Chiz to LTO: Stop Collecting P50 car sticker fee, start refunding motorists

Sen. Francis “Chiz” Escudero said the Land Transportation Office (LTO) should stop collecting P50 from motorists for non-existent car registration stickers until problems surrounding the long-delayed issuance have been resolved.

Escudero, who is the frontrunner in the vice-presidential race, issued this call as the LTO, an agency under the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC), begins accepting renewal application for motor vehicle registration for 2016.

“The LTO should refrain from charging our motorists for unavailable car stickers. 2015 is almost over but most motorists have yet to receive their registration stickers that they have paid for,” the senator said.

“Motorists got nothing from paying the amount so it is just right for the agency to refund the cost of the stickers,” he added.

The veteran lawmaker said he has received complaints that some motorists have been paying for registration stickers for the past five years but they did not receive any sticker at all

since the agency encountered supply problems in 2011.

“It is tantamount to robbing motorists of their money for non-existent registration stickers,” Escudero said.

“Matindi pa ito sa budol-budol gang dahil harap-harapan kang kinukuhanan ng pera kada taon para sa produktong walang katiyakan kung kailan mo mahah-awakan,” he pointed out.

Reports said the LTO late this year started releasing stickers for two-wheeled vehicles but has failed to do the same for four-wheeled vehicles especially those seeking registration renewal.

The independent vice-presidential bet thus called on the Commission on Audit (COA) to look into the money collected by the LTO for undelivered registration stickers over the past five years.

“The COA should look into this because it involves a huge amount of money considering the number of motor vehicles registered in the country,” Escudero said.

Based on 2013 data from the LTO, there are close to 7,690,038 registered motor vehicles in the country consisting of 868,148 cars; 1,794,572

utility vehicles; 346,396 sport utility vehicles; 358,445 trucks; 31,665 buses; 4,250,667 motorcycles/tricycles; and 40,145 trailers.

On top of the delay in releasing registration stickers, the LTO is also suffering from a backlog on license plates issuance.

This after the COA barred the LTO from continuing its P3.85-billion motor vehicle plate standardization program as it deemed the project illegal.

The LTO in January this year started collecting P450 and P120 respectively from motor vehicle and motorcycle owners, respectively, renewing registration for the “standardized” license plates.

During his time as chairman of the Senate Committee on Finance, Escudero questioned the DOTC’s move to bid out the contract even if it was not provided for in the 2013 national budget.

OFFICIAL WEBSITE: <http://chizescudero.com/> OFFICIAL FACEBOOK PAGE: <https://www.facebook.com/senchizescudero/OFFICIAL> TWITTER ACCOUNT: @saychiz @chiznewsalert

Tree disease...

from page 2

could be done in the larval stage; mechanical control includes wrapping of tree in clear plastic, debarking, and tree surgery. There is no assurance of survival due to the sensitive nature of the pine tree, early detection is still the best control, it was known.

The resource speakers emphasized that pine trees are valued as building materials, mine props, pulp and paper, source of turpentine and fuel, as vegetative cover and decorative purposes. Practical uses are for organic matter/soil holder, for landscape, screens view and modify space, reduce glare and

screens out noise, reduce strain on urban drainage system, and act as water sediment filter.

A mature tree also absorbs carbon dioxide (CO2) and releases 5.9 kilos of Oxygen for man’s respiration; helps retain wildlife and has cooling and aesthetic effect on the over-all surroundings, the tree authorities clarified.

CEPMO head Cordelia Lacsamana pointed out that the proper planting and care for the pine trees is advocated by the office. Adoption of planted portions of the parks is done, as with a tree inventory; for adoptors to care for. Some socio-civic and academic groups

have come forward with advocacies, she said.

Barangay officials, CEPMO personnel and environmentalist individuals vowed to be involved in tree-disease control. A forum with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and other agencies is underway, it was known.

The training was done in view of the city’s green governance’ priority to “save its forest covers and re-green the watersheds and forests.”/Julie G. Fianza

SP endorses declaration of Maligcong Rice Terraces as national cultural heritage

BONTOC, Mountain Province, Dec. 29 (PIA)—The Sangguniang Panlalawigan (SP) here has endorsed the resolution of the barangay officials of barangay Maligcong of this municipality requesting for the declaration of the Maligcong Rice Terraces as a national cultural heritage.

The SP noted that despite the remoteness of barangay Maligcong, it is still a favorite desti-

nation of both local and foreign tourists due to its stone-walled rice terraces which make it unique and distinct from other terraces in other places.

It is also mentioned that Maligcong Rice terraces which accordingly have been built several centuries ago, are among the structures in Mountain Province that embody and exemplify the richness and abundance of the culture and history of the

province and its people.

These terraces are proofs of the ingenuity, indigenous engineering skills, workmanship and industriousness of the villagers, the Sanggunian added.

Copy of this resolution was forwarded to the National Commission for Culture and Arts through its chairman, Mr. Felipe M. De Leon, Jr./JDP/JBS-PIA CAR, Mt. Province

Troopers engage communities in pre-Christmas activities

LAGANGILANG, Abra, Dec. 29 (PIA) -- The 24th Infantry (Wildcat) Battalion of the 7th Infantry Division concluded its first pre-Christmas activities for a Cause on December 14 and 15 at its headquarters in Sitio Barbarit, Brgy. Tagodtod this town with support and participation of stakeholders.

On the first day was the Basketball Friendship Games joined by Lagangilang Municipal Police Station, Tagodtod Youth

and 77th Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU).

Aside from engaging community dynamics, the troopers also led the Road Run and tree planting to intensify their role in mitigating and combating the adverse effects of climate change.

Another featured activity was pinning of rank insignias to battalion personnel in recognition of their meritorious service for the country. Tineg Mayor Corinthia

Crisologo accompanied Lt. Col. Monib Mamao, 24th IB Commander, in the pinning ceremony.

The new Officer’s Mess Hall donated by the local government of Tineg was also inaugurated.

Since the 24th IB has just assumed command post after the 50th IB here last October, the Wildcat Troopers started to establish good tidings and develop rapport with the community. /MTBB – PIA CAR, Abra

Rizal day celebrated

BAGUIO CITY- The city government led by Congressman Nicasio Aliping, Jr; Mayor Mauricio Domogan and Rizal Monument barangay officials, line agencies and employees, and private entities were together last Wednesday morning, Dec. 30 for Jose Rizal’s 119th year of heroism.

The simple ceremonies done at the portion of Burnham Park named in Rizal’s honor; was graced by the Knights of Rizal, Kababaihang Rizalista, representatives from the Rizal Commercial and Banking Corporation (RCBC), veterans, and members of the Baguio Filipino-Chinese community.

The mayor led in the wreath-laying, as the Philippine Military Academy

(PMA) conducted the gun salute with members of the Regional Police Office and Baguio City Police Office headed by City Director Rolando Miranda present.

In his message, Mayor Domogan urged passive individuals to be “confident catalysts and act courageously for positive change; looking up to Rizal as a model.” Though not as wholly as Rizal is considered a genius with many skills and talents; a physician, teacher, poet, historian, musician, linguist, sculptor, theologian, novelist, and others; we should aspire for the better, he clarified. To change the world positively, individuals should submit to change negative attitudes and beliefs, unhealthy habits and

mindset; to be confident positive advocacies, he added. Complaining, whining, bickering and divisiveness should cease specially in environmental, leadership, peace and order, criminality and other difficult issues being faced in the community. Light a candle instead of cursing the darkness, he further said.

Congressman Aliping, Jr., who spoke in Filipino asked that the values represented by Rizal be inculcated; yet acted out; as a legacy of Rizal’s martyrdom and patriotism.

The theme for this year’s celebration is, “Rizal 2015: Dangal ng Pilipino, Gabay sa Pagbabago.”/Julie G. Fianza

We need managers, not saviors

We are paying the price for over-personalizing what should have been systems building, professional management and meritocratic hiring and promotion

Last November, I was honored to speak at an integrity forum organized by Xavier University, the Brotherhood of Christian Businessmen and Professionals and the AIM alumni of Cagayan de Oro City, commemorating the life of Vice President Emmanuel Pelaez.

For those too young to remember him, “Maning” Pelaez was an Atenean and a bar topnotcher hailing from Mindanao (Misamis Oriental). He started as a clerk in the Senate and worked his way up the ranks to eventually become a professor of law in University of Manila, and later an aide to President Ramon Magsaysay, Sr.

Once his skill and integrity was noticed by Magsaysay, his ascent in politics was nothing short of astronomical – first serving as congressman of Misamis Oriental, then senator on Magsaysay’s 1953 ticket, then as vice president on Diosdado Macapagal’s 1961 ticket.

From there, he opposed Marcos as the presidential nominee of the Nacionalista Party. On the night of July 21, 1982, he was ambushed and narrowly escaped an assassination attempt.

He believed it was Marcos and his cronies who plotted this, and he decried Macros’ effort to cover up the crime by blaming

it on Muslim separatists.

On the night he was ambushed, Pelaez famously asked General Karingal: “What’s happening to our country?” – referring to the deterioration of the rule of law, the unfairness and cronyism in the economy, and the growing poverty and inequality. Now many years later, and despite marked progress in growing the Philippine economy, it seems that the country has nevertheless stagnated on a number of fronts having to do with the quality of its leadership and public sector managers.

There are 3 governance patterns that bring us farther away from the ideals of professional leadership and management that Maning Pelaez stood for. And while the focus of this article is on the Philippines, it would be relatively easy to see that the question posed – Where are our leaders and managers? – applies more broadly and is quite relevant in many countries today.

Politicians instead of technocrats?

In most modern democracies, key government functions are led and managed by area experts – technocrats – who know how to run and regulate an increasingly sophisticated bureaucracy. Politicians like Pelaez appear to be an exception, since he started out as a technocrat and later ventured successfully into politics.

Pure politicians, on the other hand, may not necessarily bring the requisite expertise to certain positions in the government bureaucracy—and this could be detrimental to public services.

Politicians may also shy from tackling the more difficult but often necessary reforms that could eventually make them unpopular in the polls. Witness, for example, the many violations of local government regulations that remain unchecked, largely because politicians don’t want to anger potential voters.

This is no different from politicians in other countries avoiding especially difficult reforms – like debt reduction, climate change and healthcare and pensions reforms – because they know the difficult solutions to these issues will likely reduce their political support, even as decisive action may benefit future generations who have no vote yet.

In recent years, the balance between technocrats and politicians in top government office seems to have tilted in favor of the latter.

For comparison, the Ramos and Aquino cabinets provide much food for thought. One can see an increase in the percentage of officials who at some point in their career were elected into public office. A mere 3% of top officials under the 1998 Ramos administration possessed a political background.

Compare this with over 40% of top officials in the 2015 Aquino administration who occupied elected office in the past.

To be sure, politicians might possess special leadership skills that could – when applied properly – forge consensus and get countries to move forward.

In the case of the Philippines, one wonders whether the disadvantages (i.e. avoidance of any deep reforms for fear of political backlash) outweigh the advantages (i.e. ability to build political consensus).

Perhaps highlighting this point, in a recent article about the traffic management problem in the metropolis written by former NEDA Secretary General Cielito Habito, he reiterated

Cont. on page 5



KAKAMPI MO ANG BATAS

Separation does not annul a marriage

BY: ATTY. BATAS MAURICIO



LIFE’S INSPIRATIONS: “... Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God...” (Philippians 4:6, the Holy Bible).

-000-

“KAKAMPI MO ANG BATAS” THE COLUMN IS NOW 15 YEARS OLD: Wow. I can’t believe this column is now being written in 2016, with the kind permission and grace of God. This means that “Kakampi Mo Ang Batas”, the column is now around fifteen years old, more or less. Certainly, that is a blessing coming from God, although there have been many times that writing the column meant legal as well as personal troubles for me.

Initially, this column was meant only for answering legal queries, largely as an offshoot of the radio program “Double B Batas ng Bayan” aired at GMA DZBB, 594 kHz, which started as a public service segment of broadcaster Rey Pacheco’s “Senior Balita”. But then, it went on to become an independent radio and TV program as well.

Lately, it has likewise become a vehicle for spiritual expositions, particularly on expounding on the doctrines of the Anak ng Diyos Kadugo Ni Kristo (Children of God Blood Kin of the Christ) Church, a Philippine-established Christian Church which, since 2007, espouses the truth that Jesus Christ is God and Savior, and is God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. May God be glorified!

-000-

SEPARATION OF SPOUSES DOES NOT ANNUL THEIR MARRIAGE: There is an avalanche of queries coming from our countrymen who are abroad either as overseas Filipino workers or as immigrants, on our item about Filipinos who are in other countries having the capacity to file cases to annul their marriages with their Filipino spouses, most of which center on whether or not separation in fact for at least seven years could automatically mean that the marriage is already dissolved.

The answer is no, which means that, the mere separation of the spouses even for a period longer than seven years does not give rise to an automatic annulment. The interested spouse, whether living abroad or still in the Philippines, must file with the Regional Trial Courts here a petition for annulment of marriage, which must be favorable granted by the courts.

Right now, there are several grounds to annul a marriage in the Philippines, but the most popular and most oft-resorted to among many couples is Art. 36 of the Family Code, which says that when a spouse could no longer discharge his or her marital obligations, he or she can be sued for annulment by the other spouse. In our succeeding columns, we will deal with this ground more lengthily, God willing.

-000-

ASKING GOD FOR WHATEVER WE NEED: As we go through 2016

Cont. on page 5

Editorial

the conclusion of a colleague: “The problem with MMDA is it’s run by politicians ... I’m hoping (they’d) appoint a technical person who understands the dynamics of traffic planning and management so that issues and concerns like yours will be solved.”

Nepotism instead of meritocracy?

Professor Julianne Labonne of National University of Singapore and Professor Marcel Fafchamps of Stanford University recently conducted a study on appointment and employment patterns at the local government level in the Philippines.

In an examination of the occupations of individuals related to losing and winning candidates for mayor, vice-mayor, and councilor in 709 municipalities during the 2007 and 2010 elections, the two professors found that relatives of winning candidates are able to secure better paying jobs after elections. Furthermore, the return to political connections was higher for relatives of the mayor vis-à-vis the relatives of the vice-mayor or councilor.

Conversely, the family members of losing politicians were negatively affected by the defeat of their relative; their probability of getting a high-paying occupation after the elections was lower.

Kakampi Mo Ang Batas from page 4

knowing there are terrible uncertainties ahead of us, here is an effective antidote against worrying, or having fears in our hearts and minds, and it is amazingly simple. Instead of worrying, we should focus on asking God for whatever we need. How do we do focus on God and how do we ask Him what we need?

We have been told that we should endeavor to engage ourselves in prayers, all the time. And as we pray, we should force ourselves to trust that God is listening to us, that He is a loving and forgiving God, a God who came to us in human form, a God whose powerful Name is Jesus, and that He came not only because He wanted to accept in Himself the penalties for our sins, but to give us abundant and prosperous lives.

As we trust God, we should lift to Him everything that we need. Yes, everything that we need we should lift it to Him in prayers. The fact is that, even among us human and sinful fathers or parents, we endeavor to give our children the best that we can. God is infinitely much better as our Father, and so He can give us much better things, if we only ask Him.

-000-

PLEASE WATCH OR LISTEN: “Tambalang Batas at Somintac”, a news-commentary radio program, aired at DZEC 1062 kHz and other Radyo Agila provincial stations, at <http://www.eaglebroadcasting.net/radyoagila> and at www.youtube.com (type DZEC Radyo Agila Tambalang Batas at Somintac 1062 Live), 6 to 7 in the morning, Philippine time. Phone: 0922 833 43 96, 0918 574 0193, 0977 805 9058. Email: batasmauricio@yahoo.com.

This pointed to a perverse incentive for incumbents who demonstrated nepotistic behavior to prolong their stay in power and secure the influence of their family. Meritocracy is indeed at risk when, as the famous saying goes, “It’s not what you know; it’s who you know.”

Dynasties instead of competitive elections?

Finally, it is by now well known that political dynasties dominate our government landscape. Perhaps only a few will care to defend the concentration of political power represented by political dynasties.

This pattern – even when comprised of decent individuals (which is less of the case, given decent leaders like VP Pelaez actually discouraged family members from running out of delicadeza) – represents anti-competitive and personality-based politics while also weakening the checks and balances in our political system (notably at the local government).

Constitutionalists like lawyer Christian Monsod and former Ambassador Wilfrido Villacorta; top policymakers like former and current NEDA secretaries-general Cielito Habito, Winnie Monsod, and Arsenio Balisacan; and various civil society groups and academics have reiterated how dynastic politics is anathema to our democracy.

Even young leaders from well-known political clans – including Joy Belmonte of Quezon City, JV Ejercito of San Juan City, and Mel Sarmiento of Eastern Samar – are on record acknowledging the necessity for reforms because the political playing field is not level, and our present political system perpetuates policy variability, turncoatism, and patronage.

Yet today, about 85% of our governors, 75% of our congressmen and almost 70% of our mayors all hail from political clans (Figure 1). In areas with particularly “fat” dynasties (i.e. sabay-sabay nanunungkulan or in office at the same time), many are running unopposed in 2016, mirroring their dominance already demonstrated in 2013. So when a famous dynastic politician recently quipped – “Why not let the people decide?” – the question in my mind is “Do the people really still have a choice?”

Is there hope in 2016?

If the past years convey any lessons, the challenge of our time is not so much bad policy; it’s bad execution. We are paying the price for over-personalizing what should have been systems building, professional management, and meritocratic hiring and promotion.

Even our solutions reflect the same flaw – when we face governance challenges, people demand that heads roll, while failing to change the same chaotic system that remains largely in place.

We call for a new President to magically fix everything while replacing very few other government officials, some of whom have been in power over generations despite their failure and impunity. We in turn fail to see what each President has contributed (some more than others) to building a stronger nation.

Impatient, we opine for a return to a strongman who will take short cuts. We Filipinos run other countries’ systems well, but we can’t seem to build a fair one of our own. Ultimately, we need capable managers and effective and fair systems, not saviors./Ronald U. Mendoza – Rappler.com

The author is Associate Professor of Economics and Executive Director of the AIM Rizalino Navarro Center for Economic Competitiveness (formerly AIM Policy Center). The author is grateful to Fred Cruz and Cara Latizano for their help in producing this article. Much of the data and evidence mentioned in this article is part of a recently published volume, Building Inclusive Democracies in ASEAN (<http://buildinganinclusivedemocracy.org>)

Tissue culture in coffee

MANILA - Do you appreciate the richness in taste and aroma of coffee? Do you know that the Philippines is also exporting coffee?

However, Filipino coffee growers/farmers deal with challenges. Among these include diseases in coffee (such as leaf rust, stem borer, nematodes, coffee berry disease), pests, unproductive trees, poor technology utilization, and low market prices.

According to the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD), an attached agency of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), tissue culture could help address these challenges as this could bring rapid production of quality planting materials.

With this, PCAARRD has funded the “Enhancement of Micropropagation techniques to meet the demand for quality planting materials” project.

Recognizing that tissue culture could fast track the mass propagation of coffee, especially when planting materials are limited in conventional vegetative propagation, the Cavite State University (CvSU) has adopted the somatic embryogenesis technique, which is part of PCAARRD’s project.

According to Wikipedia, somatic embryogenesis is a process where a plant or embryo is derived from a single somatic cell or group of somatic cells. It added that somatic embryos are formed from plant cells that are not normally involved in the development of embryos (e.g. ordinary plant tissue).

PCAARRD explained that somatic embryogenesis plant propagation technique is efficient, rapid, and thus, can improve Coffee Arabica and Liberica varieties’ productivity.

These two coffee varieties were chosen due to their superior bean yield, and bean quality. PCAARRD also cited that Liberica variety is resistant to common insects, pests, and diseases.

CvSU, Benguet State University (BSU), Central Philippines State University (CPSU), and Central Mindanao University were identified as cooperating agencies. Moreover, these universities will also represent Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

The agency said the methods of propagating coffee in the country were stem cuttings and the use of seeds. It noted that buds, grafts, and cuttings must be sourced from vertically growing shoots such as the primary fruiting plagiotropic branches or branches growing at an almost horizontal angle to maintain the uniformity in the population of coffee plants.

In its project, PCAARRD has involved the development and optimization of the different stages of somatic embryogenesis: callus induction phase, differentiation phase and embryo development, plantlet regeneration phase, rooting and acclimatization phase.

CvSU targets production of 600,000 coffee seedlings in three years, and hopes to sustain these to support the livelihood of coffee farmers. The university also aims to stabilize coffee prices.

According to PCAARRD, beneficiaries of this project include coffee farmers, coffee producers, cooperatives, associations, coffee researchers and extension workers, coffee consumers, entrepreneurs, and industries or processing companies.

Promoting somatic embryogenesis in coffee is one of the agency’s initiatives to provide science-based know-how and tools to enable the agricultural sector raise productivity to world-class standards./(PNA) LGI/MCCA/EDS