

Canadian-Filipino wants 2<sup>nd</sup> Olympic stint  
Tale of a Comeback Win on Hostile Turf  
Pinoy's Olympic Buzz this 2012, says 'Rio 201216'

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# The Filipino Connection

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A PHILIPPINE NEWSPAPER IN BATANGAS

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## POLITICAL WILL AGAINST PLASTIC

### Will LGUs be 'plastic' against plastic?

Industry scampers for ways to mitigate wave of LGU bans

by **Irenne Villanueva,**  
**Leana Maan Gabi, Carissa Caraig**  
*Reporters*  
and **Marlon Alexander Luistro**  
*Editor*

LIPA CITY—Buy a wi-fi router at a leading mall's computer shop here. The cashier at the shop's counter then does the unusual if one's a habitu  in buying at computer shops in classier malls.

"Here's your router," the lady says, placing the boxed router in a brown paper bag —yes, that bag where KFC one-piece chicken meals or school supplies bought at National Bookstore are also stored from now on here. "We have to follow the new ordinance here," she adds.

If you're irritated over this new ruling over the regulated use of —or the ban on—plastics in some Philippine cities and municipalities, don't go to Batangas City, some 30-45 minutes south of Lipa City. It's a total plastic ban there, and there's no mercy to violators there.

Banning or regulating the use of plastics is the new trend of Philippine local governance after years of making disaster risk reduction response programs. If San Jose, Batangas is following suit soon, so is the world's largest city Davao: this May 28, local pastries firm Bread Factory will have to say sayonara to the plastics that have put a brand to its sweet bread products. There's a ban on plastics, too.

So are in 21 other Philippine local government units, as of this writing: Ten of these LGUs are municipalities: Burgos (Pangasinan), Sta. Barbara (Iloilo), Los Ba os, Luisi-

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WALTER LINGON

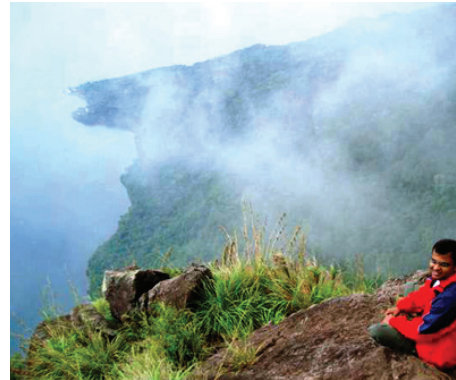
In Lipa wet market, the use of plastic bag is still allowed, but doubling is banned.

## SOME OF BATANGAS' TOP TOURIST DESTINATIONS



PHOTO BY STORM-CRYPT

Taal Volcano



WWW.PINOYMOUNTAINEER.COM

Mt. Maculot in Cuenca



PHOTO BY CLAIRE RABORAR

Mt. Pico de Loro in Nasugbu

## PHILIPPINE TOURISM

# ALL HERE, SO NEAR, BUT MORE FUN?



JESSIE DELOS REYES

CAPTIVATING. This artificial reef, located approximately 60 ft. deep in Calatagan, Batangas was done in honor of slain Calatagan Bantay Dagat chairman Sixto Atienza (Atienza was chosen as the Oceans Hero of Batangas province in 2003 by virtue of a provincial ordinance). One of the many reasons this Calabarzon province is a must-see for tourists.

## PHL government's tourism program, as is Batangas', seeks droves of visitor inflows

by **The Filipino Connection**  
*Reportorial team*

LIPA CITY, BATANGAS—All here. So near.

That's why a family contingent of nine members, led by 35-year-old Mary Anne Bangon (of Taytay, Rizal), found going to Batangas' second largest city —coming from the other side of Calabarzon, Taytay in Rizal province— a breeze.

They headed to La Leona Resort (which the Bangon family found on the Internet) in Lipa City's Brgy. Sampaguita. The recent visit there by the Bangon

clan on mid-May —with all of them escaping Metro Manila's sweltering heat and stressful life— was "worth it".

The kids liked the big kiddie pool. And the adults? Casa Leona, the sleeping cottage, looks like a home inside a green subdivision. The brown, wooden fixtures —from seats to vases— are classy.

And the eastern side of Batangas, where La Leona is located, ain't even among the priority areas of the province's tourism program. No wonder, Bangon said, Batangas is known for its beautiful places, areas far enough from the noisy and stressful urban life.

While some moneyed Filipinos are trying out Boracay's shoreline, Vigan's heritage

houses, or Mt. Mayon's majestic sight in Albay, provincial officials say Batangas has its own showcases: the beaches in San Juan, Calatagan and Nasugbu municipalities; the heritage houses in Taal municipality; and the world's smallest volcano, Taal Volcano. The province is also banking on nature's wonders to pull tourists into it.

The country just revved up both its global tourism slogan and its national tourism program (the latter carrying the strategic vision of making the Philippines the "must experience destination

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# PHILIPPINE TOURISM

Continued from Page 1

in Asia"). The Philippines, a tourism laggard in the Asean region, hopes that by telling "It's more fun in the Philippines" to a global audience, there will be some 6.618 million foreign tourists coming by 2016.

## SLICES

Batangas, for its part, wants a slice of the huge domestic and foreign tourist market even as Gov. Vilma Santos-Recto has made tourism the fifth letter of her administration's HEARTS program since becoming governor in 2007. Emilie Katigbak, the province's tourism officer, has a loftier dream that's to be hopefully bolstered by domestic tourists: "Batangas is targeting 12.1 million tourists to come here by 2016."

But this Calabarzon province has to contend with what a National Statistics Office (NSO) survey, the Survey of Household Domestic Visitors, is revealing: the number of domestic visitors to Batangas is dwindling—1.832 million in the survey's 2005 round, 1.321 million in 2009, and 1.427 million in 2010. Previously, Batangas is the second most-preferred provincial destination behind Cavite (2005 round). Come the 2009 round, the province had the seventh-highest number of domestic travellers. In the 2010 round of the survey, Batangas improved a notch to become sixth highest.

While Vilma's turf is all near geographically, destinations that require plane or boat rides had outranked Batangas: Cebu (fourth in rank) and Lanao del Sur (fifth) in the 2009 survey round, and Negros Occidental (second) in 2010.

For those tourists going to Batangas, the major attraction is the resort, the dive spot or the beach, says an international journal article by Angelie Vizconde and Sevilla Felicen of Lyceum of the Philippines (see related story). But these hospitality academics, citing DOT data, had also noticed less substantial spikes in tourist arrivals to Batangas. That is even if the Southern Luzon Expressway (SLEX), the Southern Tagalog Arterial Road (STAR) Tollway, and the Alabang-Calamba-Sto. Tomas Expressway (ACTEX) have made the Batangas road trips of tourists like the Bangon clan a breeze.

For resort owner Villafranca, even if there are nearer destinations like Laguna and Cavite, the quality of tourist spots of Batangas "is better" than the nearer tourist getaways. So he wonders why lesser numbers of tourists ply to Batangas, to the point that two prominent ABS-CBN news anchors have remarked recently that resorts in Batangas aren't good and beautiful.

## CLUSTERS

While many rural areas in the Philippines have their own tourist showcases, the new national tourism development plan will implement what it calls the "inclusive destination" concept. Here, 21 tourist clusters—seven per major Philippine island grouping—have been identified (to cover 77 tourism development areas or TDAs) and then the DOT will implement a three-pronged approach to bolster tourism: improving market access and con-

nectivity especially through improving ports and roads leading to the destinations; developing and marketing competitive destinations and local products; and improving local governance efforts related to tourism. Then all stakeholders are "included" in the tourism development efforts.

The Metro Manila-Calabarzon is one of those seven tourism clusters for Luzon, and two TDAs to affect Batangas are the "Metro Manila and Environs" TDA and the Nasugbu-Looc-Ternate-Cavite Coast TDA (in the latter, Nasugbu and Looc are in western Batangas). In these TDAs, the priority municipalities will be Taal and Balayan (as heritage towns), San Nicolas (for its sunken ruins), Cuenca (for the development of Mt. Makulot), and Nasugbu (for its first-class resorts, including Hamilo Coast owned by tycoon Henry Sy).

Western and central Batangas municipalities also stand to get some funds for constructing roads that are found near tourist destinations—Mabini, San Juan, Lobo, and San Nicolas. Lipa City is the only eastern Batangas area, if the DOT's national plan document is to be believed, with infrastructure funds to improve roads—from gravel to asphalt concrete—leading to that area's tourism showcase, The Farm at San Benito (a medical wellness resort).

As for the province's tourism development plan that Katigbak is in charge of, the clustering of the destinations is by type of destination: nature, historical, sports, festivals, religious, culinary, arts and crafts, medical and wellness, industrial and outdoor categories. The said plan will also feature the municipality of Lobo and Taal Lake and Volcano as the province's premier eco-tourism sites.

Operationally, Katigbak's office will also implement four thrusts for Batangas tourism: domestic tourism tour package promotion, tourism information services, arts and culture, and human resource development for tourism industry.

So if national and provincial tourism officials have decided to prioritize certain destinations, what about those tourist spots at the Batangas Local Growth Corridor—a three-city, five-municipality economic trail of industries, local enterprises and tourist destinations? Municipal governments within the corridor promote their own tourism showcases, such as Rosario's Barcelona Garden Resort (owned by a family whose members are mostly based in Canada), Ibaan's Villafranca Resort 2 (owned by a former overseas Filipino), or San Jose's environmental restaurant Casa Rap (run by former nun Emma Alday).

These private sector-run tourist destinations in the corridor all have in common, though: the provincial government has yet to help them in attracting tourists. So to attract these visitors, word-of-mouth and Internet presence strategies still work. Luckily, it's peak season for "small resorts: Barcelona Garden Resort and Villafranca 2 Resort this summer break.

It might be best, says Villafranca, for "local businessmen to receive support from the government so that people are encouraged to invest in Batangas" in areas such as tour-

ist destinations. Especially because the province's major trump card for tourism is God's handiwork: nature (see related story).

## SCOPE

Yet DOT, the Batangas Provincial Tourism office, and probably the tourism offices in the 31 cities and municipalities of Batangas have one thing in common: resources. DOT in Manila also admits that promoting "It's More Fun in the Philippines" has budgetary constraints, and ordinary Filipinos using social media had been asked to make the promotion effort, including those who "promote" tourist areas jokingly.

Katigbak says the budget this year to do the provincial plan's projects such as setting up tourism information and pasalubong centers, public awareness campaigns, institutionalizing tourism-related festivals, and even training of security personnel is P10 million. "That is why we (provincial government) will tap the private sector in implementing our tourism plan," Katigbak told The Filipino Connection.

Especially since tourism is more than just the destination and the services given to tourists. Paved roads and nature's wonders matter, says the national plan. Well, says Villanfranca, "the crime rates in the province" will affect the level of tourist arrivals here"—and Katigbak said identified tourist destinations will be beefed up with visible numbers of police personnel.

The DOT's National Tourism Development Plan is also about security efforts, the training of the tourism and hospitality workforce, the forming of a tourism crisis management unit, and about implementing the Aquino government's public-private partnerships approach to entice the business sector's involvement.

So whether a Philippine—or a Batangano—area is to be supported more or less in terms of tourism development, that place must make tourists feel relaxed. That is why Batangas "has a lot to offer to tourists—things that tourists want to experience," recent visitor Mary Anne Bangon thinks.

The Bangon clan of nine then boarded their van that Friday morning to head back home to the other side of Calabarzon. In thanking La Leona's resort manager Michelle Caraig for the services and the beautiful place, Bangon said: "We'll come back here. We had a good stay."

*Irenne Villanueva and Marlon Alexander Luistro contributed reporting from Lipa City, Angellizza Ramirez from Ibaan, Leana Maan Gabi from San Jose, Guada Lynne Mae Cosio from Rosario, and Jeremiaah Opiniano from Manila.*



BATANGAS CAPITOL

Bridge of Promise in Batangas City destroyed by typhoon Santi on October, 2010 which claimed 2 lives.

## Money needed in disaster response

by KRISABEL D. CASCALLA  
Reporter

BATANGAS CITY—While the city government had just created a new disaster risk reduction office, money is a problem.

Social Welfare Officer II Rod dela Roca, the newly-appointed chief of the city's Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (LDRRMO), said that resources are "sorely needed" to, for example, set up dikes in Batangas City's coastal areas and fix the city's drainage.

"We are hoping that we can improve the drainage to avoid the city from flooding and build dikes especially in our coastal area," dela Roca told The Filipino Connection.

The LDRRMO, created out of city executive order 7 issued last March 26, is Batangas City's primary office to ensure the city's preparedness for natural disasters.

While the office is a response to Republic Act 10121 (the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction Management Act of 2010) that mandated local government units to form LDRRMOs, EO no. 7 did not stipulate any budgetary allocation.

It will be recalled that when typhoon Santi hit the country in November 2009, city resident Romulo Soriano and his son died when the Bridge of Promise, found in Brgy. Kumintang Ibaan, collapsed.

Last June 2011, typhoon Dodong caused flooding in 12 barangays here and the evacuation of hundreds of families.

Residents like 20-year-old Maricar Calaluan, a Batangas State University student, are hopeful the city government's disaster response office will make a difference: "We brave knee-deep flooding here because we don't have any choice."

LDRRMO will train local emergency response teams and accredited volunteers to respond to community disasters in every barangay.

Dela Roca said that by July, his office hopes to have a fully-functional disaster response team and a disaster response hotline. At the moment, dela Roca's office is looking for some workers to help LDRRMO duties related to training, research and planning, and disaster response operations.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources did a geohazard map recently and identified Batangas City as among the areas in the province where flooding "can possibly" happen.

Last February, DENR-Calabarzon director Reynulfo Juan said that two areas in the Batangas Local Growth Corridor—Lipa City and Rosario municipality—are "highly susceptible" to flooding (the corridor spans the cities of Bangas, Tanauan and Lipa, and the municipalities of Rosario, San Jose, Ibaan, Sto. Tomas and Malvar).

Other Batangano municipalities such as Laurel, Mataas na Kahoy, Tuy, Calaca, Mabini and San Juan were also tagged as "highly susceptible" to flooding.

with reports from Jeremiaah Opiniano

Batangas' geohazard map can be found in this URL: [http://www.mgb.gov.ph/Maps/Geological/Batangas\\_3261-III.jpg](http://www.mgb.gov.ph/Maps/Geological/Batangas_3261-III.jpg)



PHOTOS BY IRENNE VILLANUEVA

The pristine and crystal clear waters of this pool has attracted thousands of tourists visiting La Leona Resort.

EXCLUSIVE FROM SAN JOSE

# Driver in bus mishap surrenders



A passenger bus that figured in a Star Tollway accident last May 16

MARLON ALEXANDER S. LUISTRO

by LEANA MAAN GABI, Reporter and MARLON ALEXANDER LUISTRO, Editor

SAN JOSE, BATANGAS – The bus driver who figured in an accident that killed a mother and child at kilometer 87 of the Star Tollway has surrendered to the police.

The suspect, Jonar Tolentino, had voluntarily surrendered to the Cataingan Police Station on May 19 and was later turned over to their custody on May 20 afternoon, Police Chief Insp. Salvador Laurel, chief of the PNP Highway Patrol Team in Batangas, told The Filipino Connection.

Tolentino, 43, is a resident of Valenzuela City, Metro Manila and a native of Masbate province.

“He was afraid that people might maul him that’s why he ran away from the accident site and went to their province but he later decided to surrender to the police,” Laurel said.

Earlier, the suspect sent surrender feelers to the police through a RORO bus staff, whom he called a day after he got involved at the freak accident.

The suspect is currently detained at the Batangas Police Provincial Office in Batangas City, facing charges of reckless imprudence resulting in multiple homicide, multiple serious physical injuries,

and damage to property.

Laurel said they are still investigating whether the bus company is also liable for the said accident. Tolentino refused interview requests by The Filipino Connection.

Police investigation said that at about 8 a.m. on May 16, a RORO passenger bus driven by the suspect was traveling along the South-bound lane of the Star Tollway, when the driver allegedly fell asleep and lost control of the steering wheel, causing the bus to hit a tree and plunge into a deep canal near the highway.

“Nakatulog ang driver at nung naalimpungatan ay hinawakan niya ang manibela at na out of control na sya (The driver was sleeping and when he woke up, he lost control of the steering wheel),” Laurel said.

Two bus passengers identified as Rita Mapacpac and her two-year-old son Elijah Mapacpac of Roxas, Oriental Mindoro, died on the spot after they were thrown out and pinned by the right portion of the bus.

Twenty-six injured passengers were brought to the Mary Mediatrix Medical Center in Lipa City and San Jose District Hospital for medical treatment. Ten passengers only had minor injuries such as bruises and wounds and were immediately discharged from the hospital.

Others had serious injuries such as passenger Lucy Castillo, who went under observation at the hospital after doctors found signs of slight bleeding on her brain.

Passenger Majo Corazon, 50, even lost her right arm after it got pinned by the bus. Adding insult to the injury, she even lost some of her personal belongings such as Blackberry phone, laptop and cash after she got robbed by a fellow passenger.

Rita’s 18-year-old maid Floridel Ocampo miraculously survived the incident. Ocampo said they just came from a five-day vacation in Manila and were on their way to Mindoro via the Batangas Port when the accident happened.

“Natakot po ako at nagulat sa nangyari sa amin pero nagpapasalamat po ako at nabuhay pa ako (Thank God I am still alive: I was surprised and scared at what happened with us),” Ocampo said.

Nearby residents told The Filipino Connection that they heard just a loud bang after the bus plunged into the canal.

Brgy. Aya resident Sherwin Quizon admitted that he rescued the escaping bus driver and even drove him all the way to the bus stop.

“I never knew he was the driver. I thought he was just a bus conductor because that is what he told me. I even asked what happened, and he said that the driver just lost control. He had deep wounds in his head and was bloodied. He asked me to drive him to the bus stop as he wants to go to their office in Manila,” Quizon said.

# In Rosario, alarm given rape of minors

by GUADA LYNNE MAE P. COSIO  
Reporter

ROSARIO—Girls are advised: Do not dress seductively, as well as drink with guys whom you don’t know.

This piece of advice from local police is a response to two rape incidents involving minors in the past two months.

SPO1 Jean Reyes, head of the women and children protection desk of Rosario police, said that these rape incidents can be prevented if girls will be more responsible of themselves.

“Do not wear provocative clothes, don’t go out at night, don’t drink alcohol with boys whom you didn’t know well and always let your parents know exact location.”

Last March 30, a 17-year-old girl was found dead and half-naked at a forested area in Purok 1, Brgy. Lumbangan.

Three weeks after, on April 19, two waitresses (including a 15-year-old resident of Brgy. San Ignacio) got raped by four suspects, said to be their friends.

In the March 30 incident, investigation showed that the girl was on her way home at around 4:30 pm and her father found the girl’s remains six hours after. The suspect, allegedly an ex-convict, is still at large.

On the two waitresses raped on the evening of April 19, it was found out that the suspects invited the victims to go out with them since they have been drinking with them previously.

The four suspects were detained at the Rosario municipal police station but they were later released because the case had been withdrawn, and the victims preferred to back to their home provinces Laguna and Zambales.

Reyes said that rape cases are hard to resolve because victims were usually afraid of telling the truth, given death threats alleged rapists hurl unto them.

Reyes told The Filipino Connection victims don’t know who and where to file the case against the suspects.

These rape incidents of minors are covered by Republic Act 9262 (Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004) and Republic Act 9344 (Juvenile Justice Act of 2006).

Minors who were raped are usually given assistance by the municipal social welfare and development office, says social worker Rowena Kausapin, through rescue, counseling and referral to after-care institutions.

But prevention is better than cure, says 20-year-old housewife Maricris Garzon Mendoza, saying that Batanguenas “should be very careful in choosing their dress”.

Mendoza also called on her municipality’s local police to be more alert because incidents like rape “should be taken seriously”.

# ‘Dancing eggs’ in a town fiesta

by LEANA MAAN H. GABI  
Reporter

SAN JOSE—Dancing eggs. It’s more fun in the Philippines, particularly the country’s egg capital.

Street dancers clad in colourful costumes with eggs in it gave color to this place’s annual fiesta called the Sinuam Festival.

As early as five in the morning, students from the municipality’s public elementary and high schools crowded loud to begin the three-hour parade. As they danced while some residents were readying their meals and eggs for breakfast, cheers from schoolmates roared at sunrise.

The sight to behold was the dancers’ costumes, some in batik linen and with the colors black, gold, pink, and red in them. Dancers wearing that costume swayed while holding on to egg baskets.

Some wore brown feathery costumes, matching their early-morning make up. Some wore all black tights, with their hands swaying like they’re flying while these ladies were balancing three dark brown pots on top of their heads.

These annual early-morning street dances to celebrate this first-class municipality’s foundation day are a serious matter to these students and even to their choreographers.

Joining the festival is a pleasure for

18-year-old high school senior Aljohn Bautista of the Dr. Bonifacio A. Masilungan National High School. “Tiring, yet very enjoyable and all efforts are paid off after our performance.”

“You have to put yourself, your passion, unto them,” says 22-year-old Chris Medrano, Bautista’s choreographer and now on his 11th year choreographing dance routines.

And at 10, Jayve Escamilla of Lapu-Lapu Elementary School enjoyed this year’s experience even if he contributed P1,000 for his school’s performance during the Sinuam Festival.

So with the effort these young residents showed at the Sinuam, everybody wins, says a certain Ka Dado who is one of the prime movers of this year’s festival. He said all participants won prizes, and no grand prize winners were announced.

But there’s more than just dancing eggs. There’s the sinuam itself, a local egg soup variety, with its various preparations showed and shared unto residents and tourists.

San Jose was established on April 26, 1765 as the old San Jose de Malaquing Tubig. Though the town is good for planting coffee, lanzones and black pepper, San Jose’s economy thrives with a robust poultry and piggery industry and the municipality supplies eggs to nearby provinces and to Metro Manila.

This year’s the 247th foundation day of this municipality (found southwest of Lipa City).

Apart from the street dancing, Sinuam 2012 also had other activities: a three-kilometer Earth Day Fun Run, a boxing tournament, the “Mutya ng San Jose” beauty pageant followed by a motorcade and a float parade by that pageant’s winners, and the Padyak Tanim (which is led by Vice President Jejomar Binay), and a bike-for-a-cause.

What greeted the municipality also was an award from the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG): a seal of good housekeeping, a good local governance award given to local government units.

As well, San Jose Mayor Entiquio Briones inaugurated the Eduard LL. Umali Bldg. which was inaugurated during the festival.

A new barangay hall and a day care center were also inaugurated during the April 21-26 festival.

But none of these parallel activities outdid the dancers and the “dancing eggs” which were tourists’ and local residents’ pleasures that April 21 morning.

What a rewarding experience here, says 31-year-old sales executive Efren Andal, a first-time attendee of the sinuam festival. It’s “really fun” here too, says companion entrepreneur Jerwin Matibag. “It seems nice to ride a bike around here.”

If you do, especially during the sinuam festival, watch out for those flying hard-boiled eggs. They were flying all over the place.



PADRE IMO LUNA MEMORIAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Elementary and secondary students marked this year’s Sinuam Festival in San Jose with all sorts of costumes depicting the municipality’s poultry economy.

## EDITORIALS OF THE CONNECTION

## PHL economy's Achilles heel: jobs at home

Riding on the crest of a surprising set of positive reviews on the Philippine economy, analysts have been giving various inputs on what aspect or aspects of the economy should be addressed. Some suggested the entry of more foreign investments and making the means and costs of doing business here in the Philippines easier and more conducive. Others go for the pummeling of the corrupt and their harrowing practices that suck people's public resources and their trust to government. For multilateral organizations like the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, it is buoying the Philippines' hallow industrial sector that hasn't grown substantively for some two decades now.

But as the Philippine government prepares to report its first-quarter gross domestic product performance by this month's end, some economists think that the crux of the matter is something the country has long struggled and that has led many Filipinos to go overseas: jobs at home.

The country's unemployment rate is one of Asia's highest for quite some time (at around seven percent), even before the current global economic crisis gave developed nations higher unemployment rates. But a 2010 paper by two Ateneo de Manila University economists for the National Competitiveness Council gave a stark challenge: for the Philippines to achieve "sustainable employment creation" in the next five years, about 13.6 to 15.2 million (yes, million) quality jobs should be created to lower the unemployment rates of this nation of nearly 95 million to six percent. There have been calculations by



DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

A job fair in Batangas City.

some employment analysts that not even the combined number of new homeland jobs created and the new overseas jobs acquired by Filipino workers will reach some 1.5 to two million a year.

That is a very tall order, with no exaggeration needed. Don't be surprised why job fairs across the nation to mark Labor Day had piles of people in queue. However, in the country's continued reliance on an economic phenomenon called overseas migration (the most renowned safety valve to homeland joblessness), there's discontent.

Of some 360,777 job vacancies that 1,706 employers across the country offered during the May job fairs, says a report from the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), only 74,352 vacancies (from 1,085 employers) are local jobs, es-

pecially from the booming business process outsourcing industry. The rest, 386,425 jobs (from only 621 employers) are overseas. In Rosario, Batangas, for example, Japanese computer hardware giant Epson has been searching for production workers given the opening of a new printer manufacturing plant at the Lima Technology Center. But with reports, as asserted by militant groups, of unsecure work tenures that previous Epson employees experienced, the young Batangueno workers shrug off their inexperience and want higher pay outside of the motherland (see story in the "Overseas Filipinos" section).

There have been years of litanies surrounding the issue of jobs: underemployment (or unsecure jobs), labor's skills mismatch, an outdated Philippine labor code (enacted

in 1974), rising contractualization of workers, the struggles facing the agricultural and industrial sectors that have plummeted the number of jobs generated by these economic sectors, and many more.

But that 2010 paper by Fernando Aldaba and Reuel Hermoso brings to us some broad challenges on how to create "sustainable employment creation:"

- Attracting both foreign and local investors in the economy, especially by solving key investment constraints, in particular the high cost of doing business;
- Crafting a "sound industrial policy" (which the Philippines does not currently have) so that what Aldaba and Hermoso refer to as the "moribund manufacturing sector" may be revived;
- Helping small and medium-sized enterprises flourish;
- Directing the remittances of overseas Filipinos and their families to investments and enterprises that generate local jobs; and
- Improving the capability of the Filipino work force.

Generating employment for this emerging Southeast Asian economy is "the key for poverty alleviation and political stability," the two economists wrote. While the Labor department, for years, has been making some steps (as especially contained in a five-year national labor and employment plan), this economic indicator will be what ordinary Filipinos and onlookers will watch out for in the coming years. As President Benigno Aquino III has pushed for jobs at home as a major national priority, this too is a local development agenda item—an electoral one at that.

## You are your greatest resource

Life in the 21st century has gone faster than what we can learn. We have assumed that everything can be learned through schools, trainings and even self-help books. But we know better.

Our emotions as human beings essentially have remained the same, so is our decision-making process. Even as the world of finance has become sophisticated, our emotions remain attached to people and things close to us. Only a few have understood the need to sophisticate our way of thinking.

These people seldom complain. They face their challenges knowing that they are waves that can be rode above, not faced head on. In this all-time high for the Philippine stock market, they are the ones whistling and enjoying brewed coffee somewhere in Hong Kong. This is while we, the Filipino majority, take 3-in-1

coffee sachets on our office tables and in our pantries.

We can be like the financially successful. The first thing we need to know is that these people are human—and therefore, are emotional. They too fear challenges like you and me and many also fall into the tempting trap of facing them head on.

The key to their seeming financial success is that they have understood that their greatest resource is not money, not time, but themselves. They have gone through the process of understanding who they are, what do they want to do and what they can actually do. We cannot pattern our lives after heroes a hundred percent, but

alvinang  
Winning 001

the most we can get is a part of someone we admire and connect it with the stuff we are made of. This means we cannot be pushing ourselves to working on something we do not want to do; they defeat the essence of work. You get paid but you are never made.

Friend, before trying to solve the big challenge of financial success, know who you are. Get a small pocket size notebook. Go to someplace quiet and start writing the things you want to do. An initial list of 20 things will do. Next, rank them.

Now on another page write the things you are doing now; also a list of 20 will do. Rank them too. Now, match your two lists one-by-one. There you will see who you are. The items

that match reveal your greatest resource. If you are a student, this is your strength in the future develop them. If you are an employee, this is your compass for better work opportunity. If you are a homemaker, this is the signal on how to make your home a place of unity and peace.

If you are an entrepreneur, these are your areas of expansion.

Believe this: You are your greatest resource. God bless.

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## The Filipino Connection

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## LIMA firms shoot up Alsons' revenues

MANILA—Two subsidiary firms of Alsons Consolidated Resources that are found in the Lima Technology Center in Malvar and Lipa City, Batangas shot up the holding company's profits during the first three months.

Those firms are power distributor LiMa Utilities Corp. and water distributor LiMa Water Corp., as ACR's disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange showed that both firms reported a 25-percent jump in sales.

LiMa Utilities Corp. operates a 50 MVA substation at LiMa Technology Center, which is directly connected to a 69-KV transmission line of the National Power Corp. and that provides stable power to locators at the Center.

LiMa Water, on the hand, provides industrial and potable water to the Center, having a daily capacity of 6,000 cubic meters and a full capacity of 40,000 cubic meters.

Though Alsons' disclosure did not contain the amount of profits Lima Utilities and Lima Water earned, the holding company reported a seven percent increase in first quarter revenue.

From P672.8 million during the first three months of 2011, Alsons' earned P727.5 million from January to March this year.

Alsons is owned by the Alcantara group, as this holding company is into energy, real estate development and

While the Lima-based companies provided the biggest revenue increases among Alsons' subsidiaries, ACR's biggest revenue year-on-year —some P15.8 million—came from the company's power generation subsidiaries in Alabel, Sarangani province and in Zamboanga City (from P505.4 million last January-March 2011 to P521.2 million over the same three-month period this year).

However, ACR's net income during the first quarter dropped to P91.5 million, from P165.5 million a year ago.

ACR has four subsidiaries at the LiMa Technology Center: LiMa Land Inc. (which ACR holds 59.93 percent of shares), LiMa Logistics Corp. (35 percent held by ACR's subsidiaries), LiMa Utilities (100 percent owned by subsidiaries), and LiMa Water Corp. (60 percent owned by subsidiaries).

ACR subsidiary LiMa Land and Marubeni Corp. co-run the 440-ha. LiMa Technology Center as a joint venture, with this techno-park registered as a special economic zone at the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA).

Some 34 companies employing about 9,700 workers are housed at the property located at an area covering the municipality of Malvar and the city of Lipa.

# Palindan's healthy, wealthy best —in malunggay

by ANGELLIZZA R. RAMIREZ  
Reporter



IBAAN, BATANGAS—When Barangay Captain Cesar Marasigan began his malunggay project in Brgy. Palindan four years ago, he just wanted to help provide livelihood to his constituents.

Marasigan's now-four-year-old venture called ARCEM Enterprises resonates people's pursuits of a healthy lifestyle—especially if people want to try out this miracle vegetable whose scientific name is *moringa oelifera*.

ARCEM's venture all began with trying out malunggay as the main ingredient with noodles when he started out his business with an initial capital of Php100,000 in 2008. People then, however, were not receptive with the idea as malunggay products are difficult to preserve and get easily spoiled.

So Marasigan decided to innovate by creating malunggay noodles by adding mongo beans and kalabasa pumpkin as ingredients. Since he has a background on making noodles, he used dried noodles without cooking oil to maintain the food healthy.

Success then followed, leading to the brand MMK Noodles (MMK for malunggay, mongo and kalabasa).

Before starting the business, he did some background research on malunggay at the University of the Philippines in Los Baños (Laguna), the Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Plant Industry, and the Department of Science and Technology.

Backyards are where malunggay trees can be planted. But for the family eating on the table, the small, oval, dark-green leaves of this nutritious fruit are common soup, fish and chicken dishes (among them tinola).

Thanks to Marasigan's research work plus actual planting, Marasigan said malunggay is the easiest vegetable to



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CESAR MARASIGAN

(Top left) DA Secretary Proceso Alcala gets a free taste of ARCEM's malunggay chicharon.

(Top right) Malunggay-made products.

(Left) The manufacturing process of malunggay-made products.



plant. It only takes six months to one year to harvest malunggay. "Pwedeng buto o kaya 'yung tangkay ang itanim. Kahit saan pwede ka magtanim at maraming magandang dulot ang malunggay sa katawan," Marasigan told The Filipino Connection.

### EXPANSION

With Marasigan's MMK Noodles becoming a hit especially in areas outside but near Ibaan, ARCEM ventured into cooking other meals with malunggay in it: fish fillet, lumpiang shanghai, special pansit, and pork served with malunggay rice.

ARCEM has also developed more and more products are developed such malunggay tea (a best seller), malunggay juice, 8-in-1 coffee, 5-in-1 coffee, malunggay powder, malunggay chicharon, malunggay bread, and guyabano with malunggay shake.

In just the fourth year of this former mayoralty candidate's venture, business's expanding (Just recently, the Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD) gave ARCEM a two-year license to operate). This is even if townmates, including political rivals, seem disinterested in Marasigan's products.

Anyway, Marasigan said, the market's wide outside—and they're coming here. ARCEM, for example,

has 14 outlets covering cities and municipalities in Batangas, Quezon and Laguna provinces, as well as the cities of San Juan, Manila, and Taguig in Metro Manila.

"Many customers from outside Ibaan come here to taste our products, including (Batangas) Governor Vilma Santos-Recto who has recognized my work." Returning overseas Filipinos, popularly called balikbayans, buy ARCEM's products and bring those with them abroad, Marasigan added.

Ibaan's Public Employment Service Office (PESO) manager May Bagui, Marasigan didn't ask any help from the municipal government. But while Marasigan notices that the municipal government "does not recognize Brgy. Palindan's contributions to local development," he said he knows "which government agencies to approach for help".

### VALUE

A local value chain for malunggay production was even created here in Palindan. Palindan residents who plant malunggay in their backyard bring their harvests to ARCEM, and Marasigan buys these plants from neighbors who earn through selling malunggay at P12 per kilo.

Such is why Marasigan is en-

couraging residents to plant malunggay, as well as plant other herbal plants such as lemongrass (tanglad), sambong, guyabano and turmeric (luyang dilaw).

This is where the entrepreneur's philosophy of supplying local markets with healthy foods comes in.

Malunggay is a treatment for gastric ulcers, diarrhea, malnutrition eye muscles, and asthma. While turmeric prevents cancer, liver detoxifier, slows the progression of Alzheimer, and a natural pain killer. Lemongrass, for its part, prevents osteoporosis, pre-menstrual syndrome (PMS), and cardiovascular diseases and arthritis. Sambong cures kidney stones, rheumatism, and hypertension.

Today, Marasigan's ARCEM, a private manufacturing firm based in Ibaan, has established itself among the main manufacturers and distributors of malunggay products in the country.

He will also never stop thinking of other herbal plants that can be used as food and drinks. "I want to contribute to making the next generation healthier," Marasigan said.

Given the opening of a new printer manufacturing plant in Lipa City, Japanese computer printing giant Epson is searching for workers. Photo here shows President Aquino III gracing the existing Epson plant at the LiMa Technology Center.

PHOTO FROM MALACANANG



## Wanted: Workers for Epson's manufacturing plant

by GUADA LYNNE MAE P. COSIO  
Reporter

ROSARIO—Japanese computer printing giant Epson is looking for production operators, with its company headhunters saying Epson needs 1,000 of them—monthly.

Marife Dalangin, senior staff at Epson Precision Philippines' Human Resources Department, told The Filipino Connection their firm is particularly looking for production opera-

tors and engineers.

These workers that Epson needs, Dalangin adds, will be given contractual arrangements and will be for the forthcoming expansion of the Japanese firm's printer manufacturing plant.

The search for these kinds of workers given the company's expansion was why Epson partnered with Rosario municipality's public

See **WORKERS FOR EPSON** on Page 8

## CASA RAP



NATURE'S WONDER IS INSIDE CASA RAP

## Greenhouse tourism

by LEANA MAAN H. GABI  
Reporter

SAN JOSE—Ever heard of a greenhouse cafe and restaurant? Go to the national highway here, at km. 90, and check out Casa Rap and its concept of greenhouse tourism, or a kind of tourism that celebrates the greenhouse effect (where the infra-red rays of the sun cannot pass through a transparent medium that absorbs and traps the radiation from the sun).

At the entrance of this enterprise that's being run by a former nun, 68-year-old Emma Alday, your eyes will be greeted with greens that surround the Casa Rap signage. Enter its walkway then walk through Casa Rap's residential garden designed like a greenhouse. Hey, colourful wonders of nature—blooming flowers and ripe cherries—will also greet you.

Then take a seat in the two-to-three-seat tables inside the greenhouse. The floor's rocky—literally, with pebble rocks—but sip your favourite juice or coffee there beside figurines of angels, vines, some bonsai plants, and even frames of paintings. There's another portion of Casa Rap that's full of wooden tables and chairs, if visitors want to drink together with many others.

And as you look around the features of this greenhouse cafe, quotable quotes carved in wood will then greet onlookers like you. Says one sign: "Be the still pool. Let your face reflect the glory, the wonder."

All these natural and man-made fixtures—living ornaments, figurines of angels, framed broadsheet cutouts of favorable reviews of the restaurant, to the calming messages carved on wood—will make one feel that the drink or meal they ordered wasn't that long. Casa Rap is an art gallery, a greenhouse, and a garden restaurant all rolled in one.

Heck, even their restroom looked inviting!

These are all the ideas of environmental advocate Emma Alday, even if this former nun had no formal training in hotel and restaurant management. Emma started her cafe when she and her friends organized a small meeting. During that time, she only offered breakfasts and snacks at the office.

But soon, Emma started planting fruits and vegetables from which she gets more of her ingredients for her fresh salads. She is also raising poultry for eggs and has a piggery, these being the heart of San Jose's local economy.

While the restaurant serves mostly organic food, visitors should try out Casa Rap's "Halo halo," the best talked-about recipe. Casa Rap also serves some Filipino dishes and hot coffee. And since national television programs have featured Casa Rap, the returning overseas Filipinos (or balikbayans) have tried this place out, to their delight.

Alday admitted Casa Rap also struggled: she had to close this restaurant for three months, given the noise pollution created by a warehouse beside the place. Until now, her complaint against the warehouse remains pending at the municipal government.

The other concern Alday faces is the antithesis of what Casa Rap is: being an environmental haven. Outside, there's pollution brought by her neighbouring poultry owners, with improper waste disposal providing a wide foul smell. Similar to the noise pollution, the local government has yet to address Alday's complaint.

"The nearby poultry farm affects (Casa Rap) a lot," says 48-year-old mechanical engineer Sicily Tan, a recent visitor. Tan has fallen in love with Casa Rap, this being her hangout to relax, listen to soothing music, and eat pancit or lomi.

Yet Tan frequents Casa Rap, and notices that San Jose's local tourist spots like resorts, as well as the staging of weddings and meetings in the municipality, spills over tourists—and even movie celebrities like Mr. And Mrs. Aga and Charlene Muhlach and Amy Austria—to visit Casa Rap. This is even if Casa Rap does not pro-actively advertise through the tri-media.

And if taking care of nature has magnetized people to visit Casa Rap, Alday believes the same formula can work for the entire municipality. This "beauty" that San Jose has "will be its showcase. San Jose will be a tourist destination if taking care of nature will be prioritized," Alday told The Filipino Connection.

Like that place at km. 90 at Brgy. Banay-Banay where a breath of fresh air and a light feel will bless tourists and travellers to the country's egg capital, and where a greenhouse inside this restaurant traps infrared wavelengths and gives people inside Casa Rap that relaxing feel of nature. "That's why we (in San Jose) still feel blessed," Alday said.

## VILLA FRANCA RESORT



## Fun, elegance for a stress relief

by ANGELLIZZA RAMIREZ  
Reporter

IBAAN, BATANGAS—As soon as you enter this paradise, you'll then forget about your worries. The best place to get away from the city life. I can't remember the last time my heart was captured by the beauty of such place. But setting foot in Villa Franca resort, my whole being was captured.

Even a fellow tourist, 38-year-old Pasay City resident Cherry dela Rosa, agrees with my enchantment of this resort. "Our family loves the serenity of (Villa Franca Resort) and its clean surroundings. There is also privacy here unlike in other places which were occupied by many people. Here, we feel comfortable, far from the stress and worries, and you will feel the province-like atmosphere."

That provincial feel is through Villa Franca's 25 mango trees, the plant and floral decorations. That feel is then complemented with fun: there are three colorful giant slides in the Olympic-sized main pool. The slides have a penchant for those youthful or kiddie colors.

See also the red and yellow banderitas: it seems to be a fiesta here. Then there's elegance: the garden is fit for weddings even as the couple can reveal themselves after passing an arc-like walkway covered with plants. The resort's grounds are landscaped with many flowers and some bonsai plants. The main reception can be held at the pavilion—up to 600 people can fit in there. The place has parquet floors that are fit for ballroom dancers, as guests can also take brief respites at a beautiful house beside the pavilion.

Eric Villa Franca, 65, Manager of Villa Franca 1 and 2 Resort, opened a resort here because he noticed that there was only one resort in Ibaan, Villa Marines, and "it will be better if there's a competition."

But before Villa Franca 2, he already opened Villa Franca 1 in Laguna. He also had other businesses such as a money remittance business in Los Angeles, apartment rental in Pasay City, and leasing of a condominium unit in Rockwell.

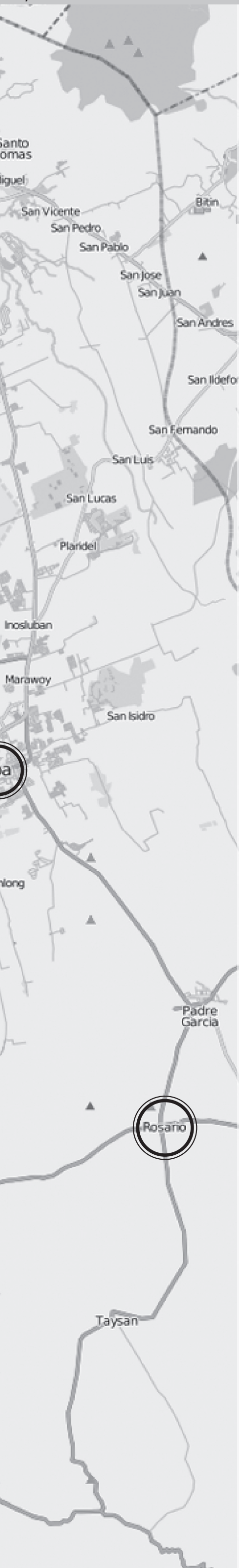
The resort is the fulfillment of this once-poor boy's dreams of achieving success right in his hometown: "I carry vegetables and fruits in the wet market when I was still in elementary and high school," says Eric who belongs to a brood of 14 children. Poverty wasn't a hindrance for him to finish accountancy at Far Eastern University in 1972, then proceeding to the United States to work.

Villa Franca 2 has affordable rates; the entrance fee ranges from P100-175 per person, while rooms cost from P1,500 to 6,000 a night. They have four rooms for 10-15 persons and nine rooms for 2-4 persons. There were also beach chairs, market umbrellas, and lounges.

Villa Franca 2 is also known for wedding reception and other occasions. Its pavilion can hold 600 guests and they have a wide parking space for the guests' vehicles. A BMW Z3 sports car is also available for rent as a bridal car.

No wonder Villa Franca 2 Resort was acknowledged by the municipal government as a tourist destination. Eric said, in Filipino: "People return here because the resort is clean and our plant and floral decorations are beautiful. The swimming pool's another attraction. Our Laguna resort's come on is the hot spring."

Villa Franca 2 resort ([www.villafrancaresort.com](http://www.villafrancaresort.com)) is among the things why tourists, mostly from Metro Manila, should try out Batangas: "It is more relaxing here, far from stressors," says Eric.



**BARCELONA GARDEN RESORT**



**Rosario resort raves on nice landscaping**

by **GUADA LYNNE MAE COSIO**  
*Reporter*

ROSARIO, Batangas—When we think of Batangas, the beach comes first in mind. A beautiful sunset that is irresistibly amazing, the strokes of the wave that invite you to swim, the fine sand that summons you to lie down and enjoy the stars at night, and more views that encourage you to make your digicam busy.

But when I think of Rosario, Batangas, I can only imagine a garden resort. You can find many garden resorts here but the Barcelona Garden Resort stands out.

As I came to the resort, what surrounded me were different kinds of plants that gave me a relaxed garden feeling, an invigorating break from city life.

Barcelona Garden Resort (BGR) is a corporation owned by the Barcelona siblings Leonisa B. Clarkson (married to a Canadian), Marcelino Barcelona, Sta. Maria B. Sianquita, Melvin Barcelona and Eugenia B. Elicay. This was originally Barcelona's rest house since all of them live in Canada. Siblings of the Barcelona family, a native of Brgy. Maalas-as, were given a piece of land by their parents and they decided to put up a rest house.

It was year 2007, when people started coming and visiting BGR that made the owners realize to open it to the public.

BGR is known for its beautifully-landscaped grasses and colorful flowers in the garden. That is why their resort is home of different garden weddings not just couples from Batangas but also from other cities and countries.

Go to the resort's picnic cottages-cum-nipa huts: the grass is nicely paved. In between these nipa huts are plants. The same can be seen in each of the air-conditioned cottages: plants fronting all over the cottage, products of professional gardening.

Credit that to co-owners Leonisa Barcelona and Canadian husband Bob Clarkson. They were married in Vancouver, Canada in 1988 and discovered that they both have a passion for plants. So they bought a home in Vancouver with a big backyard to enjoy their mutual love of gardening.

Even Mr. and Mrs. Clarkson, in their dealings with clients as realtors, will ask for cuttings from their clients' gardens of plants that caught their eyes. So the couple's passion for gardening "blossomed" in 2006, a visit to the Philippines to originally kick-start their future plans of building a retirement home —on an acre of family heritage land— turned into what is now BGR ([www.barcelonagardenresorts.com](http://www.barcelonagardenresorts.com)).

Aside from the garden, another attraction of the resort is their six-foot swimming pool (for both kids and adults) that one really can't resist. Kids will also enjoy BGR's Peacock Garden (with a colorful blue peacock statue), while adults can also get to hammer the videoke machine at BGR's pavilion.

Even the chapel, found beside the peacock garden, stands on nicely-paved grass. No wonder this resort is also a preferred venue for serene weddings.

"People came here just by the word of mouth. Their friends from Batangas will refer BGR to their friends in Manila. Also, the owners invite their friends from Canada to visit BGR whenever they're in the Philippines," said Marlon Barcelona, resort manager.

**LA LEONA RESORT**



**Tourist's haven in a former poultry farm**

by **IRENNE R. VILLANUEVA**  
*Reporter*

LIPA CITY—One would never think that the lot where a leading resort at Brgy. Sampaguita now stands was once a poultry farm.

But La Leona Resort is among the city's top tourist destinations, with its owners originally thinking of just a private pool after the poultry farm was converted into a private lot.

Given that owners Natanael and Leona Mercado will have to maintain the private pool, as well as a small cabana, regularly, the couple decided to open the area to the public.

La Leona's major come-on is its budget-friendly rates, as well as giving tourists a relaxing atmosphere —based on the concept that tourists will feel the breeze of fresh air coming from trees, while they're seated in furniture made of old wood (that's designed in a classy way).

Trees surround the resort, and these make visitors "feel they are close to nature," resort manager Michelle Caraig told *The Filipino Connection*.

La Leona has affordable swimming entrance fees ranging from P80 (daytime) to P180 (nighttime), while offering cabana discounts for group tourists.

La Leona also offers a selection of cabanas and nipa huts for varying number of guests. For short stayers, La Leona offers mushroom-like huts for people to eat their meals; 13 cabanas for tourists with more time in swimming and other outdoor activities; and four small and medium-sized nipa huts. La Leona's cabana and duplex rooms range from P250 to P1,500.

For a longer stay at the resort, rooms like Casa Leona (good for two), Casa Leona Deluxe (for four), La Leona Loft (for six), and La Leona Attic (for 10) are available from P1,550 to P5,150 a night.

When you get tired of swimming, La Leona has videoke machines for you to sing and have fun with friends. Tourists can also play billiards at the Olde Ship Bar and Resto, while kids can have fun at a spacious playground there. La Leona also has function halls, a pavilion, nearby convenient stores, a mini-aviary and a mini-zoo, and a volleyball court. Soon La Leona will open a bar and a basketball court, as well as extend its front desk area.

La Leona is also a popular venue for wedding receptions, Christmas parties, reunions, and seminars. This is not to mention that tourists trying out the place for swimming and relaxation mostly come here from April to June and from November to December. La Leona can also be a camping destination for team-building activities of families and friends.

Before, La Leona primarily targets Batangas clients; now, the tourists come from nearby and even faraway regions (as far as from Tuguegarao City, Cagayan province [northern Philippines]). La Leona is also blessed to see some city residents make their resort a weekend destination. Prospective visitors find out about La Leona through the resort's website, as well as through referrals.

La Leona Resort's owners are not from Batangas (Natanael's from Bulacan and Leona's from Laguna). But since opening the resort, the Mercado couple has been running a spices business here.

Now, the spice of La Leona Resort, a place where hundreds of chickens once thrived, is the elegance that this relaxation hub brings. Feel the wooden furniture's laid-back feel, so are the cabana cottages and the other venues that make La Leona Lipa City's showcase for leisure.

# HITS, MISSES FOR LIPA CITY POLICE

by IRENNE R. VILLANUEVA  
Reporter

LIPA CITY—THIS Calabarzon city's police force has its own hits and misses.

The city police force got recently tagged as Batangas province's best city-wide police force in 2011. Yet murder cases are rising and police are working overtime to address crimes related to what residents think is rising drug pushing.

March year-on-year crime statistics of the city police showed that there were ten more murder incidents this year (16 versus six in the first quarter of 2011). This rise in murder cases, explains city police chief Supt. Christopher Birung, may be attributed to the increasing number of gun owners—both registered and unregistered.

But drug incidence may also be contributory, with some local residents thinking that rising killings here are linked to the work of drug users.

Just last May 14, a drug pusher, 54-year-old Orlando Aquino (alias Orly) of Brgy. Loddol, was arrested during a drug buy-bust operation at Brgy. Mataas na Lupa.

Drug operatives led by SPO1 Arnold Quinio seized three pieces of heat-sealed plastic sachets, said to be containing shabu, from Aquino who was subsequently charge by the city prosecutor's office.

"There's a lot of murder crime in Lipa because there's also lot of drug users here," city resident Ronna Laguerta said. "They should stop drug addiction first."

It is thus not surprising, Birung said, that Lipenos have "fearless" and "vengeful" attitudes toward their enemies, possibly leading to these rising murder cases.

But amid rising numbers of citizens owning guns, city police's comparative crime statistics showed that the volume of crime in the city decreased to 105 from January to March 2012 from 193 the previous year.

Late last April, the Batangas Police Provincial Office tagged Lipa City as the province's best city police force given two criteria: administrative and operational functions.

The administrative function of a police force focuses on maintenance, financial resources, personnel, seminars and training activities, as well as a police force's on-time

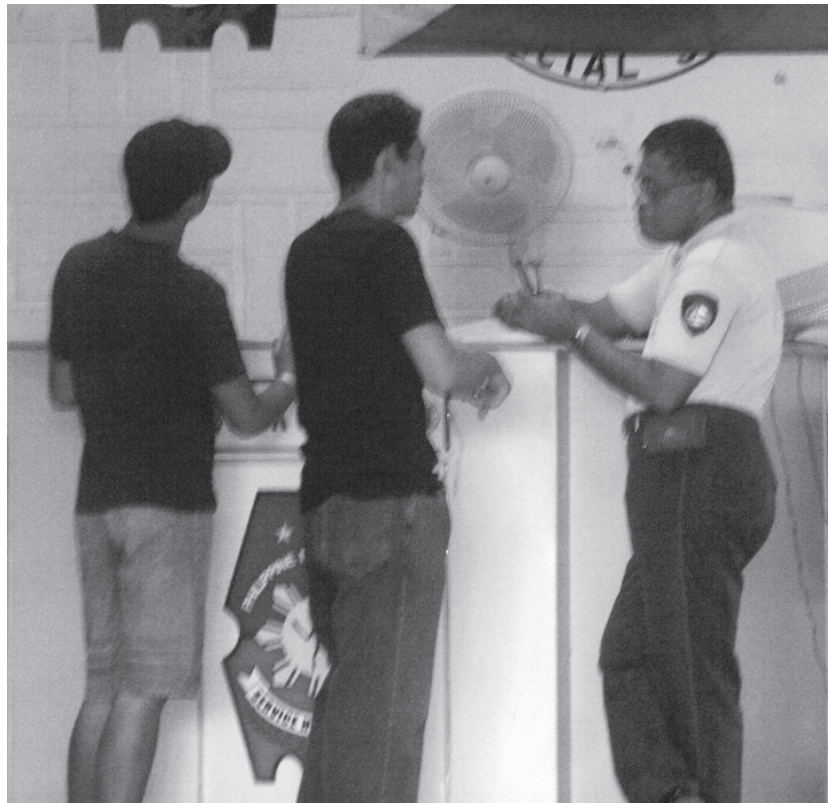
submission of reports. Operational functions, on the other hand, covers police community relations, intelligence, and operations.

There were also some big-time cases that the city police force successfully handled. The most recent big-time case was the arrest of an operator of a bukas-kotse group in Bacoor, Cavite. Lipa City police have traced the suspect Ernesto Oblefias through a CCTV report, Land Transportation Office (LTO) and continuous follow ups to the given leads.

That arrest, Birung told The Filipino Connection, was "an achievement" because it ended the incidents of bukas-kotse in other regions in the island of Luzon. "Same operations (versus bukas-kotse operators) in Manila, Northern Luzon and Southern Luzon lessened given this recent arrest."

Another accomplishment by city police was the arrest of Mario Robaton, at large for 13 years for the alleged killing of Mamerto Cator of Brgy. Latag. This is even if the police force found Robaton too slippery.

As a means to address the spatter of killings here, police units are conducting checkpoints, as well as getting help from tipsters.



MARLON ALEXANDER S. LUISTRO

Lipa has been awarded the Best City Police Station in Batangas in 2011.

## TOURISM IN BATANGAS

# Resorts, budget rates are come-ons

by IRENNE VILLANUEVA and JEREMIAH OPINIANO  
Publisher

LIPA CITY—Taytay, Rizal to here is one long ride for 35-year-old Mary Anne Bangon and her gang of nine who's out for a vacation at La Leona Resort.

But she doesn't mind, especially if the resort's fares are budget friendly, and the facilities and services are good. Some P3,000 for an overnight stay ain't bad, she said.

"Anything tourists want to experience is here in Batangas, in La Leona," Bangon said.

Resorts or dive spots are on top of tourists' minds when it comes to Batangas, as affordable fees and rates of the province's tourist destinations (especially resorts) are the added come-on, says a study that got published in an international journal.

The paper "Tourism Industry of Batangas Province: Basis for an Improved Tourism Program" by professors Angelie Marie Vizconde and Sevilla Felicen of Lyceum of the Philippines-Batangas showed that beach or dive resorts are the "most frequently visited" tourist attraction in Batangas.

Churches and religious and historic Batangueno sites are the next most visited tourist destinations, adds the study that got published earlier this year in the peer-reviewed International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research.

The paper authors did random sampling in their survey of 110 tourists (90 of whom are local tourists, and the rest are foreigners). Most respondents were male.

When survey respondents were asked what facilities or services will

affect the influx of tourists to the province, "affordability of fees, prices or rates" offered by the tourist areas came ranked first. "Amenities and services offered" came in the second most important, and "celebration of festivals" was third.

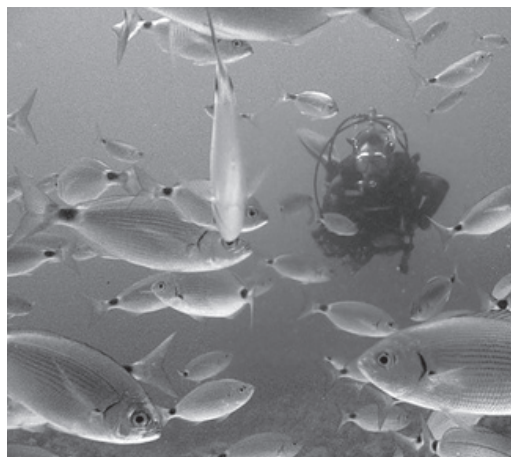
"Both local and foreign tourists were satisfied and enjoyed visiting the beaches due to the warm accommodation of the Filipino staff and personnel," Vizconde and Felicen wrote.

Both authors also asked respondents their views on the tourism-related activities implemented by the provincial tourism office. Activities such as "Transportation facilities and equipment" (ranked first) and "infrastructure development" (second) were "very much implemented," interpretation of survey data showed.

The authors attribute that set of results on transportation and infrastructure to the ports in nearby Southern Tagalog provinces that have routes for Batangas (via the seaport in Batangas City), as well as the expressways such as the Southern Tagalog Arterial Road (STAR) and the Alabang-Calamba-Sto. Tomas Expressway (ACTEX).

But while these roads are providing the free-flowing ride to tourists like Bangon (who was introduced to La Leona after attending a wedding there previously), it is the traffic within the areas of the tourist destinations that concerns her.

If Batangas wants to improve as a tourist destination, she told The Filipino Connection, the province should improve its means of transportation more. "Sometimes, tourists do not like to experience traffic during vacation time. Accessibility (of the tourist desintations) affects tourists' choice of destination."



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According to Professor Angelie Marie Vizconde and Sevilla Felicen of Lyceum of the Philippines-Batangas beach and resort are the most frequently visited by tourist like Anilao, Batangas (left). Churches and religious Batangueno sites are te next most visited, like the San Sebastian Cathedral in Lipa City(below).

## Drug user nabbed in San Jose

By LEANA MAAN H. GABI  
thefilipino.connection@gmail.com

SAN JOSE, BATANGAS—A 23-year-old man was arrested in Barangay Balagtasin 2nd after a group of patrolling policemen found him possessing sachets of shabu and other drug equipment.

SPO1 Nelson Flores, San Jose police chief investigator, identified the suspect as Jake Husmillo Moog, a jobless resident of Brgy. Balagtasin 2nd.

One heat-sealed plastic sachet containing white crystalline substance (suspected to be shabu), two rolled aluminium foil, pieces of drinking straw cut into pieces, and plastic sachets were found in Moog's left pocket.

Police reports said that at about 7:30 am, patrolling policemen spotted a Yamaha Motorcycle without a plate number that was driven by the suspect.

The police honked the siren of their patrol car signalling the suspect to park by the roadside for a police check but Moog sped off, prompting a road chase.

After being cornered, the suspect was asked by the police to show his driver's license and the registration of his driven motorcycle but he failed to produce any. He was then frisked by the policemen.

Moog, arrested last April 28, was charged with violating Sec. 11 (Possession of Dangerous Drugs) and Section 12 (Possession of Equipment, Instrument, Apparatus and other Paraphernalia for Dangerous Drugs) of Republic Act 9165 or the 2002 Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act.

Moog is currently detained at the San Jose Police Station.

# WORKERS FOR EPSON

Continued from Page 5

employment services office (PESO) in a recent job fair.

Among those who rushed to the venue were, unsurprisingly, the unemployed like 24-year-old Gerly Dimaculangan.

"Hard to find jobs these days," said the high school graduate who had been trying her luck with Batan-

gas province's manufacturing companies.

In the race for Epson's job vacancies, workers' qualifications count—and Dimaculangan's feeling it. "This job fair is great opportunity for us to get a job few steps away from our houses. I hope I get hired given my qualifications."

Just last December, Epson announced that it will put up a new printing and projector manufacturing plant at the Lima Technology Center, a special economic zone, in Lipa City.

With total investments worth PhP4.5 billion (or US\$10 million) for the said facility, Epson projects

that the company's employees in the Philippines will almost double to 6,000 workers, from the current number of 3,700.

Rosario PESO's job fair this year was the third time the local government had Epson as the activity's main partner. Previously, JG Summit, Sophie Khojje, Optis and Ad-

vance Credit Corporation were the local government's job fair partners.

Rosario's PESO Manager Edith Pascua said currently Rosario has a 3.9 percent (some 1,112 residents) of the working-age population (some 28,090) are unemployed.

with reports from Jeremiaah Opiniano

MAY 15 - 31, 2012

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# WILL LGUS BE 'PLASTIC' AGAINST PLASTIC?

*Continued from Page 1*

ana, Calauan, Paete, Kalayaan, Sta. Cruz (Laguna), Infanta and Lucban (Quezon). The others are cities: Muntinlupa, Las Piñas, Makati, Pasig (Metro Manila), Calamba (Laguna), Lingayen (Pangasinan), Imus (Cavite), Baguio City (Benguet), Sorsogon (Sorsogon), Masbate (Masbate), and Batangas City found in the Batangas Local Growth Corridor. Other LGUs — Bacolod City (Negros Occidental), Carmona City (Cavite), Antipolo City and Binangonan (Rizal), Calapan (Oriental Mindoro), and now Lipa City in Batangas— regulate the use of plastic to certain items.

These ordinances by LGUs have made the pesky environmental non-government group EcoWaste Coalition ever happier. "They (LGUs regulating or banning plastic use) are properly implementing their ordinances," says EcoWaste's Sonia Mendoza.

But the Philippine Plastics Industry Association isn't: if the Metro Manila Development Authority is true to its word that all 17 cities and municipalities will ban plastics come 2013, PPIA President Crispian Lao's premonition may come true: those local ordinances will affect the manufacturing industry and 650,000 people directly or indirectly employed by the industry.

**DEBATE**

Banning or regulating the use of plastics has now led to a debate between plastics manufacturers, environment advocates, local government officials, and even ordinary Filipinos. The debate has also become scientific (not just about what's best in terms of managing piled-up solid waste), as well as about people's convenience, of what they've been accustomed to.

But this plastics-or-no-plastics debate now has a new question: do mayors and their law enforcers and environment officers mean business?

Batangas City is, with a local environmental code to back up. Just in the month of March, some 40 establishments were handed out citation tickets for using plastics and Styrofoam —with all of them paying a total of P17,200 to the city treasurer's office.

Go to SM City Lipa or to its competitor that's about nearly two kilometers away, Robinson's Lipa. There are no placards or tarpaulins hung over Robinson's walls announcing the ban. But on a Saturday afternoon, days after Lipa City mayor Meynard Sabili announced the new ordinance at SM City Lipa, the queue's long at Robinsons Supermarket just because the bagger

isn't used to putting the items in paper bags quickly.

On the streets, there's grumbling already from some micro-entrepreneurs. Tell me, says fruit vendor Zeny Mendoza while wrapping a kilo of bananas with pieces of old newspapers, "How can I put these bananas inside a supot (paper bag)?" If my mangoes get wet, says mango vendor Jeanne Biaco, "do you think the paper bags wrapping them won't tear up?"

Paper containers are also more expensive, says a 44-year-old entrepreneur who sells baked macaroni and spaghetti at Lipa City's night market. Some 100 pieces of Styrofoam is P100, but just a few pieces of carton containers is already P380.

That's why the Solid Waste Management Association of the Philippines is battling for the regulation of using plastic bags, "but not (their) total elimination". SWAPP, which released a recent study, also called for developing a more effective and efficient system of re-use or recycling of these plastic bags, as well as proper collection and disposal.

Yet others are battling for different types of containers. Should San Jose's ordinance becomes enforceable, the local government will promote the use of bayong (bags woven with leaves), katsa (bags coming from cloth that stores flour), and other containers like banana and gabi (taro) leaves.

So if the ordinance gets going in San Jose, says Laurile Talag of the town's barangay health workers, "it will be good for people's health."

But who says paper is any better to protect public's health, asks Lao and Alfred Chan, the former's colleague at PPIA. "If wet products mix with paper (like newspaper materials that have led-based ink), there goes your problem. Paper can be easily dissolved in water, thus permanently polluting it."

PPIA's Lao also gave a policy reminder in justifying that LGUs' ordinances are "non-scientific." "LGUs' ordinances do not follow any scientific study on the effect of plastic and styrofoam or polystyrene on the environment."

At least it's less risky when plastic's burned or floats on river systems, others say.

**MOVING ON**

What has moved on, in this wave of anti-plastic and Styrofoam ordinances, is enforcement.

In Lipa City, individuals must be ready to elude these: a P1,000 penalty for the first offense, or up to P3,000 and/or imprisonment for further offenses —with payments to be paid at the City Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) within three days.

Business establishments will be meted P3,000 fine for the first offense and up to P5,000 fine and, worse, cancellation of their licenses to operate for one year.

Lipa City's General Ordinance no. 1 also created a city-wide Plastic Regulatory Board, headed by the city mayor and co-chaired by the city council's committee on health and environmental protection, in order to oversee the ordinance's implementation.

Another municipality that's northwest of the eight-area Batangas Local Growth Corridor, manufacturing hub Sto. Tomas, is currently within a one-year grace period to prepare people for the full-blown plastic ban later this year. Ibaan's municipal officials led by Mayor Juan Toreja, for its part, had to travel for two-to-three hours in May 2011 to learn from Paete, Laguna's anti-plastics efforts.

As these LGUs' legislative and executive measures are underway, PPIA's Lao thinks that if the industry collaborates with these LGUs to institute a materials recovery program that will minimize plastic waste, this "could be the real solution to solid waste".

National-level legislative advocacy is also moving forward: PPIA is proposing to lawmakers to support the use of biodegradable plastics, while EcoWaste Coalition is urging reported anti-plastics senators Loren Legarda and Miriam Defensor-Santiago to move forward a bill to totally banning plastics in the country.

And the malls? SM City Lipa mall manager Liza Dimaculangan said there has been a no-plastics policy since April 1 (or three weeks before Mayor Sabili's Earth Day pronouncement of General Ordinance no. 1), while SM is providing shoppers an option to buy cloth-woven "eco-bags" and, in return, they get additional points in shoppers' SM Advantage cards.

Given SWAPP's study that covered four LGUs with plastic bans, the group recommended that people "should be given a choice between plastic and paper...and pay for it," like what some European countries are doing.

But for now, in the view of Ric Libon of Lipa City's CENRO, the city's ordinance is not meant to be punitive. "The only time," he tells The Filipino Connection, "we can say we are successful is when we can no longer catch people violating (the ordinance) or we no longer issue citation tickets."

—Villanueva and Luistro reported from Lipa City, Gabi from San Jose, and Caraig from Manila

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WALTER LINGON

Customers are now bringing their own net bags to carry wet goods also around the public market

# Young Pinoy workers vote with their feet

by IRENNE C. VILLANUEVA  
Reporter

LIPA CITY—Never mind if undergraduates or fresh graduates are young and inexperienced: In the sea of some 3,500 Filipino workers who flooded a leading mall's branch here, they're taking chances for work overseas.

The young workers at recent job fairs here (and in many other job fairs across the country) queuing for overseas work even disregarded militant protests that mark usual Labor Day affairs. Though the resumes that these workers, in their early 20s, submitted to overseas recruiters may be signs of protest that work tenure, work conditions and higher incomes in the Philippines are hard to come by.

Benson Ariate, 21, wants to work for an electronics company in Qatar. This out-of-school youth dreams of owning an electronic shop someday, and Ariate thinks landing a high-paying job overseas would be the key.

Qatari companies offer high salaries, Ariate says. "I'm no longer afraid to go out of the country because I'm already a grown-up man. I want to have my own money because it's difficult to depend on parents."

Family is also the reason why 20-year-old fresh graduate Beverly Maldonado applied for a data encoder job in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Maldonado is "willing to risk working overseas."

"I am not scared going abroad even if I'm young, I want to help my family financially and that's why I want to go overseas."

These responses shouldn't surprise Batangueños, with the province being one of the leading sources of overseas workers and permanent settlers abroad, says national data.

But this should surprise national labor officials, especially since data from three types of surveys—the Census of the Population, the annual Survey on Overseas Filipinos, and the quarterly Labor Force Survey—show that most overseas workers are aged 25-to-29 years old, and the median age is 32 years old.

It is not that local job opportunities aren't available for these young Filipino workers, like the vacancies Japanese printing company Epson Precision Philippines is offering given their investment of a new printer manufacturing plant at the Lima Technology Center. Even the hosts of the Labor Day job fair, SM Lipa, are offering job opportunities: SM Lipa's department store and supermarket are scouting for workers. Call centers are also looking for workers especially since Lipa City is being groomed as among ten Philippine cities where call centers seek expansion outside of Metro Manila.

But overseas work is "a rare opportunity" that young workers like Deith Samonte, 20, won't pass up.

"I want to challenge myself in everything I do. I want to be independent and I want to help my family in their basic needs," said Samonte, who's applying for a restaurant manager's job in the UAE.

At least 3,500 jobseekers have flooded the halls of the SM City Lipa Event Center. The mall doors opened at about 10 a.m., to allow applicants to access 90 hiring companies for local and overseas jobs. The second floor's hallway was filled by applicants waiting in line for their interviews.

Not surprisingly, Labor Day job fairs were greeted with street protests by militant groups, which clamored for a P125 across-the-board wage hike. The Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board gave the Calabarzon region a P2 to P90 increase for workers there.

With their placards and streamers in tow, 35 activists from BLAST and the left-leaning group Anak Pawis, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan and Halagi ng Batangenyong Anakdagat marched in the middle of the heat, across the streets of De La Salle Lipa to the public market, to show disgust over "unfair labor practices" such as labor contractualization.

BLAST spokesperson Pepito Castillo said some workers "are now suffering to poverty because of low salaries they receive," and that a P310 daily minimum wage in the Philippine's second richest region "has little value" given the "rising prices of commodities".

BLAST said that while DOLE-attached agency National Wages Productivity Commission (NWPC) said that at least P770 daily wage is needed to raise a family of six, minimum wage earners in Batangas only earn P310. This excludes the lower wage earned by workers in the garments industry, agricultural and contractual workers in the province.

"It seems that the workers have looked over-

aged to the eyes of the employers because they are being offered contractual jobs," Castillo said.

While there are foreign investments here in the Batangas Local Growth Corridor (an economic trail of industries, local enterprises and tourist destinations that span three cities and five municipalities in eastern Batangas), militant groups claimed jobs here are insecure.

BLAST claimed that Epson Precision Philippines, Inc. terminated thousands of regular workers through early retirement and voluntary separation pay packages, and were replaced with contractual workers and agency-hired employees. Even Japanese firms Mitsuba and Ibsiden Philippines hired fewer numbers of regular workers (only 700 regular workers, BLAST claims) but has 3,500 other workers as contractual and agency-hired workers.

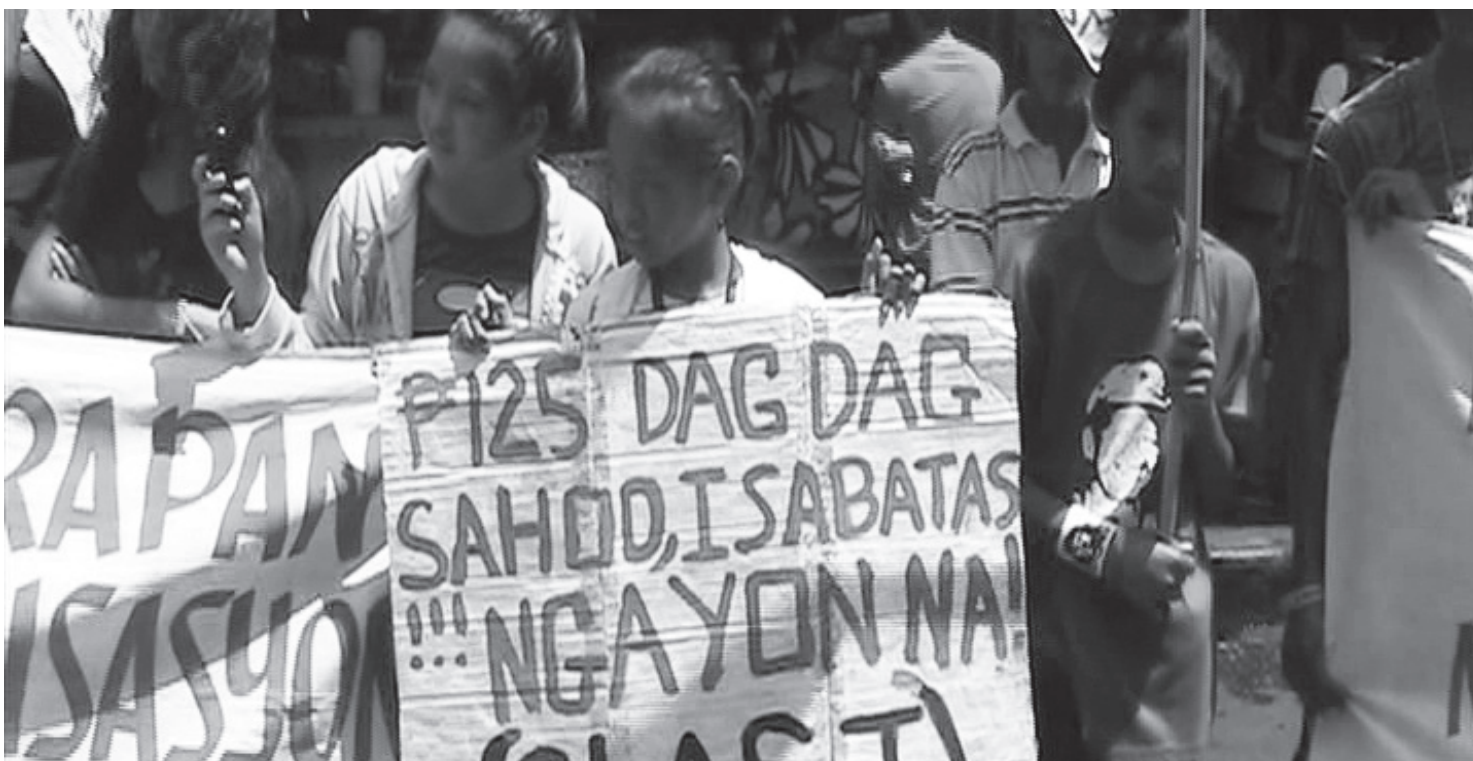
"It doesn't necessarily mean that when the prices of commodities continue to increase the wage of the workers will also increase right away. There are still many other factors to consider before increasing wages," DOLE Batangas Provincial Director Emma Tan said, adding that contractual and the regular workers also shared almost same benefits in their works including overtime pay.

But for some fresh graduates, the ticket for an overseas job is a passport for higher incomes, leading to future savings. "I'm already a grown-up man," Ariate said. "I want to have my own money because it's difficult to depend on parents."

This story is a product of a media collaboration by The Filipino Connection and the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) Journalism Consortium ([www.ofwjournalism.net](http://www.ofwjournalism.net)), a ten-year-old nonprofit media service writing stories on overseas Filipinos for a global Filipino audience.



PHOTO FROM SM CITY BATANGAS ' FACEBOOK ACCOUNT



MARLON ALEXANDER S. LUISTRO

(Top) Militant groups have staged protests on Labor Day asking for a P125 across the board wage hike. Above, thousands of job aspirants have flocked to SM City Batangas in a Labor Day Job Fair, hoping to get hired.

## TIP TO FILIPINO GROUPS ABROAD

### Get more organized for more impact

MAKING a Filipino organization abroad grow for a certain number of years ain't easy, especially since Filipinos working or residing abroad are not full-time into helping compatriots abroad and in the Philippines.

For this reason, Filipina Leila Rispens-Noel of the WIMLER Partnerships for Social Partnerships in Hong Kong thinks that the only way for Filipino groups abroad is to not only see active involvement by migrant members, but to have some basic things that are common on all types of organizations.



My wish, says this global figure on migration-and-development, is that migrant organizations, like the Kapampangan or Batangueños in Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia or wherever, will identify their mission, vision, goals and objectives as organizations.

These items of any type of organization—public, private or volunteer—are actually basic, adds Rispens-Noel. But since Filipinos are primarily working abroad and have their participation in these clubs as days-off only endeavors, making the group grow is tough.

And so are the activities to be organized. This July, WIMLER and another Filipino organization, Pilipinas OFSPES (headquartered in Rome, Italy), will organize a modular course for Filipino migrants on organizational leadership, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship. Last May 6, a leadership seminar was staged for the Filipino community in Hong Kong.

Prior to the first year anniversary, WIMLER was informally organized and has been working with migrant groups from Latin America and Africa.

WIMLER just celebrated its first anniversary with a benefit dinner last April 6—an activity that Rispens-Noel, Dutch husband Wim, and the group's volunteer members like former actor Victor Neri collectively pulled off amid limited volunteer time.

While guests and volunteers savored the food and wines that night, funds raised go to WIMLER's scholarship program in two provinces in Mindanao. Groups such as WIMLER, and thousands of other overseas Filipino organizations—formally and informally organized—have been donating cash and goods to development projects in the Philippines on top of the family remittances that Filipinos abroad send back home to loved ones.

This archipelago has some 9.4 million documented and irregular Filipinos working and residing abroad in over-220 countries and territories, and their remittances to families and kin over the past 37 years have been a major economic lifeline.

But as some philanthropy analysts think, since volunteer work by Filipinos abroad is part-time, these migrant donor organizations have limited means to ensure that donations to the Philippines are used well, and that these make an impact. Many times, donations from Filipinos abroad get wasted and don't get monitored carefully.

As for those based abroad, migrant organizations think of how their services can directly solve the monetary and family-related issues that Filipinos abroad face.

Yet as Rispens-Noel herself thinks, there's a limit to one's volunteering. Not surprisingly, in over two decades of forming Filipino organizations abroad since she was based in The Netherlands, the groups close shop.

"Volunteers and the right spirit of volunteerism are the lifelines of every migrant organization. These groups fall because members do not know where they are going and what they want to achieve," Rispens-Noel said.

And once these migrant organizations become well-organized, the groups abroad have lots of potentials "in making a difference for their members' sake, for their community, and for our country as a whole."

Jeremiaiah M. Opiniano

MAY 15 - 31, 2012

BEIJING OLYMPICS VETERAN ARCHER

# Canadian-Filipino wants 2<sup>nd</sup> Olympic stint

World no. 27 recurve archer Crispin Duenas is already acknowledged as one of Canada's top archers in history

by JEREMIAH M. OPINIANO  
Publisher

ONE slot is left at the 2012 Canadian Olympic men's archery team, to be contested at a national trials meet late this month in Montreal.

"The Black Duck," a 26-year-old son of Filipino parents who immigrated to North York, Ontario, Canada some 34 years ago, wants a second crack at the greatest show on earth.

He's Crispin Duenas, currently world no. 27 in the men's individual recurve who proudly wore the Canadian maple leaf uniform at an Archery World Cup tournament last April.

Still, even if Duenas earned his best international finish recently—fifth at the 2012 World Archery Indoor Championships last February in Las Vegas—this fresh honors graduate of BS Physics at the University of Toronto is still to secure an Olympic slot.

Duenas earned the Canadian spotlight in 2008 during the Games of the 29<sup>th</sup> Olympiad in Beijing where he ranked 16<sup>th</sup> after the eliminations. The 5'6" Canadian-Filipino then lost to Swede Magnus Petersson in the round-of-64 by just a point in the extra round (after being tied at 108 in their round-of-64 duel).

(At that same Olympiad, another Filipino, Mark Javier [current world no. 152], ranked 36<sup>th</sup> after the eliminations then, like Duenas, lost in the round-of-64).

But Duenas towed Team Canada (with teammates Jay Lyon and John-David Burns) to 11<sup>th</sup> in the men's team recurve after the eliminations. Canada then lost to eventual silver medalists Italy, 217-219, in the first round.

## GOOD VIBES

Over the years, Duenas' track record is slowly gaining ground, even as his latest world ranking was three notches down from his previous no. 24 standing (American Brady Ellison is the world's top male recurve archer, the guy who narrowly won over Duenas, 6-4, at the 2011 Pan-American Games in Guadalajara, Mexico).

Prior to the Beijing Olympics, Duenas placed 54<sup>th</sup> at the 2005 World Archery Championships. Even at that time, according to a 2008 article at insidetoronto.ca, former Olympi-



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Crispin Duenas of Canada hopes to make it to this year's London Olympics. He has two chances to do so: at a national qualifying tournament and a world meet weeks before the Games.

an Robert Rusnov once declared that Duenas is "the best archer this country (Canada) has ever produced".

Duenas then leapfrogged to 17<sup>th</sup> at the 2007 worlds and, building up from his Olympic performance in Beijing, ranked 10<sup>th</sup> at the 2009 worlds.

The first four months of this year also gave positive vibes for Duenas: after placing fifth in the individual event at the World Indoors Championships last February, Duenas joined Philippe Arsenault and Hugh MacDonald in leading Canada to a record sixth place finish in the team event.

Then at a world-ranking tournament held in Phoenix, Arizona last March 22<sup>nd</sup>, the two-time silver medalist at the Pan American Games wound up third.

The International Archery Federation also has a sanctioned tournament called the Archery World Cup, which is being held in various stages. At stage 1 of this year's World Cup, Duenas scored 677 to rank sixth after the eliminations and join 47 other archers in the knockout stage. After getting a bye in rounds of 48 and 24, Duenas lost 2-6 to Malaysia's Chu Sian Cheng.



## CHASE

Duenas, the 2010 Frank Jones Male Athlete of the Year for Archery Canada (that country's national archery association), didn't compete at the Americas Olympic qualifier some two weeks ago in Medellin, Colombia. Montreal's qualifying meet late

May is one of Duenas' two chances to make it to London. If that individual bid goes awry, Duenas will try to qualify as part of the men's recurve team at Stage 3 of the World Cup—the final Olympic qualifying tournament, says the World Archery Federation (FITA)—this June 18-24

in Ogden, Utah, USA.

As part of a well-funded Archery Canada, Duenas will again compete with Ellison as well as Filipino Javier (who will tow six other members of Team Philippines) at Ogden.

Duenas was a product of the Archers of Caledon club, and was mentored by coach Joan MacDonald, herself a former multiple-time Canadian champion from 1962 to 1992. The Canadian-Filipino got a calling card from MacDonald: it bared the words "Olympic coach."

"Oh okay," Duenas told MacDonald, his coach since 1999, when the latter asked him to compete in national tournaments.

Books LLC, a Canadian publishing outfit, released a 38-page booklet titled Canadian Archers (ISBN 978115744436, worth CAN\$14 at Amazon, though temporarily out of stock). Duenas, together with his Beijing teammates Lyon and Burns, as well as Canadian legend Rusnov, is featured.

"It's (archery) a sport where you have to know yourself to take on everyone else," Duenas was quoted as saying in an April 21 article at the Toronto Star.

In between competitions, this aspiring high school physics teacher is volunteering for the class of his former Grade 9 science teacher at Birchmount Park Collegiate at Scarborough. Duenas told Toronto Star his academic background helps his archery "especially when it comes to angles, biomechanics, and kinetics".

"When you win a match, everything is nice and good," Duenas told Toronto Star. "But after you lose, you have to analyze why you lost, what you did, what you can do better, what you can do next time to change the result. And sometimes you don't like what you find. That's the most difficult thing," adds this frequent habitué at the Ontario Science Centre's outdoor archery range.

And in a sport where the enemy is oneself and not the one to whom an archer shoots arrows with especially during the knock-out stages of a world-level tournament, Duenas' experience as an only child to Filipino parents.

"You always have to be on your game, do everything for yourself. I'm fine with being on my own and not relying on anybody else."

## OLYMPIC BUZZ SAYS 'RIO 2016' | Continued from Page 12

the International Shooting Sport Federation. In his event where the maximum score is 125, the magic number is 120—which Rosario has reached only once in the 2011 World Championships in Belgrade, Serbia (he had been competing internationally since 2001).

"Anything is possible as long as you shoot in the 120s which I have already accomplished, said world no. 76 Rosario during an April media event, the place where Philippine National Shooting Federation president Mikee Romero has tagged Rosario as "a strong candidate for gold in the London Summer Olympic Games".

Romasanta said it will be difficult for Barriga (the world's no. 30 light-flyweight) to win a medal, "but we're hoping against hope".

But is there anybody who stands a chance to give the Philippines even a decent finish—or a far-fetched medal—in London?

Still, there's boxing to bank on, and so is weightlifting.

Bank on weightlifter and Beijing

Olympics veteran Hidilyn Diaz, who just placed fourth (58 kg. category) last April 27 at the Asian Weightlifting Championships in Pyeongtaek, Korea. During the 2011 World Championships in Paris, Diaz placed a strong seventh with her 214 kg. lift.

Diaz hoisted a total of 217 kgs. in Pyeongtaek, (three better than her Paris lift), The 21-year-old Computer Science student of the University of Zamboanga ended 2011 as 11<sup>th</sup> best in the 58 kg. category (There's no official word yet of Diaz's London participation, though).

And amid sports writers' frustration over our male boxers, Barriga is the best medal bet boxing. To many people's surprise, the 18-year-old Barriga upset 2011 world championships bronze medalist David Ayrapetyan last May 12 at the recent Sydney Jackson Memorial Tournament in Uzbekistan. As of May 1 this year, Ayrapetyan is the world's no. 4 light-flyweight.

Riding in the crest of light-flyweight boxer Mansueto Velasco's silver finish at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, local sports officials and sports

journalists always hope for a Philippine miracle. Sydney (2000), Athens (2004) and Beijing (2008) were regrettable for the Filipino medal campaign. Sports officials then call for changes in Philippine sports afterwards.

That post-Olympic storyline sounds all-too familiar.

As an entire country is hoping for a super-phenomenal lift from world no. 7 Diaz and a strong box from Barriga, a Filipino sporting trajectory is heading to South America—that is, the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics.

Picson himself is hoping that reigning World Junior champion, now 17-year-old Eumir Marcial, will progress into a medal-worthy contender come 2016. For its part, the Philippine Badminton Federation hired Olympic gold medalist Rexy Mainaky to "hopefully... build a team for the Olympics in 2016"—if he can produce those talents in the next two years, as Mainaky vowed.

But even in London, thanks to a summer school scholarship by the British Council, ten young Filipino

athletes will watch the Games inside a summer sports school. These youngsters are all winners of the 2011 Batang Pinoy national championships, and will look forward to their own 35-plus hours plane ride from Manila to Rio de Janeiro in four years time.

Anyway, as Trinidad's commentary wrote, ABAP's extensive grassroots program that began in 2010 is geared for Rio.

Should Zamboanguena weightlifter Hidilyn Diaz qualify for the 2012 London Olympics, she might give the Philippine Olympic contingent its most decent finish.

HIDILYN DIAZ'S FACEBOOK PAGE



World champ Josie Gabuco's conquest

TALE OF A COMEBACK  
WIN ON HOSTILE TURF

INTERNATIONAL AMATEUR BOXING ASSOCIATION

**PHILIPPINE SPORTS' NEWEST PRIDE.** Josie Gabuco (left) eludes a left straight from Xu Shiqi of China in their gold medal match at the recent Women's World Boxing Championships in Qinhuangdao, China. The two-time Southeast Asian Games champion narrowly beat Xu, 10-9, to give the Philippines its first world amateur boxing championships gold medal, be it male or female.

by **ADRIAN STEWART CO**  
Reporter

Coming back from deficits at a major final such as the world championships leaves no guarantee of success for an athlete, especially if one is in hostile territory.

But that's what light-flyweight Josie Gabuco did during her gold medal conquest at the recent 2012 Women's World Amateur Boxing Championships in Qinhuangdao, China.

Not only was the 25-year-old veteran internationalist a huge underdog over Xu Shiqi the ongoing stand-off over a shoal in the South China Sea—or is it West Philippine Sea?—was at the backdrop of the gold medal match that May 19 afternoon.

Xu started the first round with a couple of jab straights to the side of Gabuco's body, before the favored Chinese followed up with three right combinations to the head. Gabuco was not that much of a factor at the start as she was like measuring the power of her opponent by throwing some soft punches. But she was able to land a right cross to the side of Xu's body.

After round one, it's 2-1 for Xu.

But Gabuco dictated the tempo in round two with multiple combinations, two of which nearly sent Xu to the canvas anew. Xu, however, retaliated with her own right jab connections, most of which hit the head of Gabuco.

It was then 5-3 for Xu.

Undaunted, Gabuco was able to wobble Xu's knees at the start of third round with a barrage of shots to the Chinese's body. After few more shots from Gabuco, Xu dropped to the canvas several times, some of which was ruled as a slip by Hungarian referee Veronica Szucs despite it being a clear knockdown.

Yet a hurt Xu was able to land more right jabs. Neither of those jabs hurt Gabuco, who felt the momentum slowly going to her side. By this time, Xu's lead is now 8-7.

In the fourth and final round, Gabuco poured it all by delivering a straight jab to Xu's head followed by a couple of uppercuts to the Chinese's body. She also trapped the backpedalling Chinese in a corner and connected with several hits through which the latter cannot find an antidote.

That last round flurry provide enough to convince four of the five judges to give the nod to Gabuco. Judges of the contest were Denmark's Lars Brovil, Russia's Vladislav Malyshev, Sloviakia's Rene Just, Bulgaria's Ivelin Ivanov, and Norway's Geir Dahlen.

Final score was 10-9, the Philippines. When Szucs raised Gabuco's hand, the

Puerto Princesa City native couldn't hide her tears. After embracing Xu, Josie then raised both hands, and waived to the boisterous pro-Chinese crowd. The delegation from the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines shouted in glee, but so are some non-Chinese audiences who watched.

None from the Chinese crowd booted the decision, though some of them were visibly surprised with the result.

"It was like fighting thousands of opponents," Gabuco was quoted in media reports as saying. "The crowd definitely got to me at first, so I was very cautious and tried to come up with an antidote to my shifty opponent."

Gabuco's gold was first for the Philippines in the Women's World Amateur Championships, surpassing the silver won by Annie Albania in the 2008 edition.

Prior to the gold medal match, Gabuco also came from behind in her 12-7 semifinal win over Russia's Svetlana Gnevanova, the world's number two in the 48-kg. class.

En route to the finals, Gabuco pummeled Yairineth Gonzalez of Venezuela, 24-13, then won over Bolortuul Tumurkhuyag of Mongolia by disqualification at the 1:53 mark of round three. In the quarterfinals, Gabuco thumped Kim Klavel of Canada, 21-15.

Prior to Qinhuangdao, Gabuco's ranked only number 28 in the 45-48 kg. class.

Gabuco's gold is actually her second world championships medal. At the 2008 worlds in Ningbo City, China, Gabuco won a bronze in the old 46 kg. (pinweight) class.

That same tournament in Ningbo City, Annie Albania won a silver in the 52 kg. (light bantamweight class) and Analisa Cruz won a bronze in the 50 kg. (flyweight) division.

At the 2006 championships in New Delhi, India, Aparri won bronze in the 48 kg. class

while the now-retired Mitchel Martinez won the same medal as Aparri in the 60 kg. division. Aparri and Martinez are the first Filipina medalists in the world women's championships.

But while this second world championships medal by Gabuco is the Philippine amateur boxing's greatest feat (male or female), Gabuco will not compete in the coming London Olympics.

The official Olympic bet of the Philippines, Nesthy Petecio, crashed in her first match at the 49-51 kg. class with a sorry 10-11 loss to Italy's Valeria Calabrese.

Meanwhile, Alice Kate Aparri almost barged into the semifinals of the 54 kg. class. After a 10-all tie with Terry Gordini of Italy, Aparri just lost on a countback that's based on the tournament's computer scoring system.

But for purposes of the 2012 London Olympic Games, only the eight best boxers in the 51, 60 and 75 kg. classes will compete (women's boxing will be introduced as a medal sport for the first time in the quadrennial Olympiad).

In a local box-off three weeks before Qinhuangdao, Petecio (a natural 54 kg. competitor) went down in weight to beat Aparri to become the country's official bet for an Olympic berth in the 51 kg. class.

With reports from Jeremaiah Opiniano

*The reporter provided this blow-by-blow account of Gabuco's golden feat after watching the telecast of AIBATv.com, the television arm of the International Amateur Boxing Association (AIBA).*



INTERNATIONAL AMATEUR BOXING ASSOCIATION

**PROUD CHAMP.** Gabuco (second from left, top row) proudly beams the Philippine flag in the medal podium with the other medalists in the light-flyweight division (46-48 kg.).

## ANALYSIS

Pinoys' Olympic  
buzz this 2012  
says 'Rio 2016'

by **JEREMIAH M. OPINIANO**  
Publisher

In the sea of recent articles drumming up Filipino hype for the 2012 London Olympic Games, Metro Manila's sports writers had some stories bearing sentences filled with feelings of Filipino Olympic frustration.

The exasperation started when light-weight boxer Charlie Suarez lost to a Chinese at last month's Asian Olympic qualifier in Astana, Kazakhstan. So Mark Anthony Barriga, a light-flyweight, is the lone male boxer to see action at the Games of the 30th Olympiad.

"Barriga will be the only guy everyone will be looking at to carry the torch for the country," writes Nick Giongco of Manila Bulletin, adding that "his participation is tinged with skepticism"—being a "lucky loser" (At the 2011 World Boxing Championships, Barriga lost to eventual gold medalist Zou Shiming of China—with the reigning Olympic champion's gold-medal victory enough to pull Barriga to London).

There's a recent heartache: the best bet for an Olympic medal in boxing, Nesthy Petecio, lost her first-round encounter, 10-11, to an Italian at the just-concluded Women's World Boxing Championships in Qinhuangdao, China.

Boxing is the source of the Philippines' five of nine Olympic medals in the country's 80-year participation at the quadrennial Games. But just like Beijing 2008, the former Southeast Asian boxing superpower will only field one boxer.

After Suarez's loss in Astana, Recah Trinidad's April 16 commentary of the Philippine Daily Inquirer had a subtle spat: "Charly indeed had the power, the skills and the build, but he lacked the required inches to succeed in the division (lightweight) he was dumped into."

Even as Trinidad said "it is unfair to blame the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines for not ensuring that the country would be solidly represented in this year's Olympics," ABAP executive director Ed Picson retorted: "What we (ABAP) try to do is inject a workable system... giving the youth in the countryside an opportunity to get into the national pool. It would be tragic if we didn't try."

Then comes the observation from a spokesperson of the Philippine Olympic Committee (POC), Joey Romasanta: he's not upbeat about the Philippines' medal chances in London, Giongco's story on Suarez's loss wrote.

There are some Filipino athletes still vying for Olympic slots given qualifying tournaments in their sports. Some Filipino athletes have failed just last month in Olympic qualifying tournaments, such as our wrestlers at a world qualifying tournament in China, and one of our weightlifters at the Asian championships in Korea.

But with two months left before the Games, the Philippines is scampering for more Olympic slots—not unlike before when a medal, of whatever color, hyped national headlines.

There are "mandatory" slots for two swimmers and two more track and field athletes, and the slots were given to multiple-time Southeast Asian Games long jump queen Maristela Torres, steeplechaser Rene Herrera, and freestyle swimmers Jasmine Alkaldi (100m) and Jessie Khing Lacuna (200m). But even these Filipino swimmers and tracksters aren't expected to qualify at least the semifinals in their events.

Though, there are recent Filipino qualifiers to the Olympics, Filipino-Japanese heavyweight judoka Tomohiko Hoshina. Philippine Judo Federation Dave Carter bared this good news to the media since Hoshina is ranked 16th in Asia "and automatically made it" to the Olympics.

"Hopefully, Hoshina would give (Philippine) judo its first Olympic medal," said Carter. Although, at last month's Asian Judo Championships in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, world no. 99 Hoshina lost his first bout against Takeshi Ojitani of Japan.

The other is skeet shooter and Brian Rosario, a former Southeast Asian Games gold medalist who was given a wildcard entry by

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