

PRRD assures Japanese of corrupt-free business in PH

MANILA -- Japanese investors can expect a competitive and corruption-free business climate in the Philippines, President Rodrigo Duterte said on Wednesday vowing to “kill” all forms of corruption in government.

“I just assure you that during my time I said there will be no corruption,” said Duterte in his speech during the Business Forum at the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo, Japan.

Duterte urged Japanese investors to report to him any complaint regarding hindrances, obstruction or outright corruption and he would ask his Cabinet members to respond to it immediately.

“I will give you at any hour of the day or night you can contact any of the Cabinet members or your Filipino lawyers or Filipino workers, and you can ask an audience with me in 24 hours and I will talk to you and just let me know what your problem is and we will kill

that problem,” he added.

Duterte also spelled out the Philippines’ economic priorities which include addressing the issue of economic market access for Philippine agricultural products and service suppliers in the construction of projects.

He took pride in the Philippines being a “natural choice” for Japanese companies looking for the manufacturing base in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and high-value Knowledge Process Outsourcing or KPO ventures.

The President also invited Japanese investors to take part in the “Build-Build-Build” infrastructure program which is expected to generate jobs for Filipinos.

He also boasted of the upgraded Philippines’ credit rating to BBB+ by Standard and Poor, the highest rating in our history.

“Given all these, your investments are assured of protection and gains I guarantee that. And as a matter of fact, I place my honor in what we promised to our partners especially the Japanese and the Japanese people,” Duterte said.

Duterte, meanwhile, reiterated the Philippines’ commitment to maintain a “stable and predictable environment” for business partnerships between the Philippines and Japan.

“More than Build-Build-Build, let us work together to Grow-Grow-Grow our economies,” Duterte said.

Duterte is currently in Tokyo, Japan to attend the 25th Nikkei Conference on the Future of Asia.

The President’s trip has yielded a total of 26 business agreements and letters of intent worth PHP288.894 billion signed between Philippine and Japanese companies. (PNA)

5 firms face P71-M tax raps

MANILA -- The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) on Thursday filed criminal tax complaints before the Department of Justice (DOJ) against five delinquent corporate taxpayers for failure to pay taxes amounting to PHP71 million.

The five corporations were Lucky Builders Center Corporation and its corporate officer and president Diosdado M. Dimacali; Global Trendtech Trading Corp. and its president Gemma Cheng and treasurer Emelyn Gonzales; Rar Builders Inc. and its president Efren C. Ramon; Concreteworks Inc. and its president Patrick T. Ong and treasurer Jilsen Jan Ong; and Amaautotechnic Corporation and its president John Anthony

Ambata and treasurer Alexander Ambata.

Speaking to newsmen, BIR Deputy Commissioner Marissa O. Cabreros urged taxpayers with delinquent tax liabilities to settle their outstanding accounts and avail of the amnesty signed early this year by President Rodrigo Duterte.

“Once the case is already filed before prosecutors it becomes more burdensome,” she said.

Pasig City-based Lucky Builders is being sued for a total deficiency tax liability for 2013 amounting to P29.07 million inclusive of increments. Global Trendtech, which is engaged in the trading and repair of cell phones and other electronic gadgets, is being sued for

PHP20.07 million in tax deficiencies.

Rar Builders, a general contractor and wholesaler of firefighting equipment based in Quezon City is being sued for tax liabilities worth PHP10.06 million. Concreteworks, a manufacturer of concrete, cement and plaster is being sued for PHP6.58 million in tax liabilities while auto repair shop Amaautotechnic is being sued for unpaid taxes dating back to 2009 amounting to PHPP5.32 million.

Earlier this year, the BIR issued the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) for a tax amnesty program, for a clean slate for taxpayers with delinquencies.

The agency issued Revenue Regulation 4-2019 providing the

Solon wants socmed platforms probed over ‘Bikoy’ videos

MANILA -- A party-list lawmaker at the House of Representatives on Wednesday filed a resolution seeking an investigation into the possible liabilities of social media platforms in the light of “Ang Totoong Narco List” video series that he said has “recklessly” dragged prominent individuals in the controversy.

Ako Bicol Partylist Representative Alfredo Garbin Jr. filed House Resolution 2585 which directs the House Committee on Information and Communications Technology to immediately conduct an investigation, in aid of legislation, on the possible liabilities of social media platforms like Facebook and YouTube, among others, for content posted by their users.

In a press briefing after filing the said resolution, Garbin noted that on May 6, Peter Joemel Advincola surfaced and introduced himself as “Bikoy,” the man behind the controversial video series that

were uploaded in different social media platforms starting April 2.

Bikoy has uploaded a total of five episodes where he implicated the family of President Rodrigo Duterte, some local politicians, and some private individuals who have been allegedly involved in a drug syndicate operating in the country.

However, on May 23, he revealed before the media that his previous allegations were “all lies”, claiming the charges he earlier made were all fabricated by the opposition to unseat the Duterte government.

Speaking at a press conference at Camp Crame, Bikoy said his claims were “scripted” and were “orchestrated” by the Liberal Party.

“Nevertheless, regardless of the motive of Bikoy, the video series has been publicly viewed, shared and uploaded multiple times in social media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube,” Garbin said.

As a result, the party-list lawmaker said the video series not only discredited and maligned the good name, honor and reputation of the individuals named in the series, but also imputed to them active membership, or worse, even leadership in a drug syndicate - a heinous crime.

Garbin cited the case of their partymate, Elizaldy Co, who was tagged by Bikoy in “Ang Totoong Narcolist - Episode 5” as the leader of the drug syndicate.

Bikoy alleged that Co’s five-star luxury hotel and resort in Albay, Misibis Bay Resort, serves as the central house facility where a shabu laboratory is located.

As a result of the circulation of the libelous video implicating Co, Garbin said the Misibis Bay Resort encountered a series of booking cancellations, even on its peak season.

“Mr. Co’s good name and reputation as a businessman were greatly tarnished. Some banking and fi-

nancial institutions with which he has significant financial dealings have raised questions over his creditworthiness,” the lawmaker noted.

To prevent similar cases from happening, Garbin believed that there is an imperative need to determine the possible liabilities of the social media platforms that failed to develop security features to regulate videos, postings and other materials with highly libelous and grievously defamatory contents.

“Social media platforms owe it to the public to vet and confirm the veracity or falsity of the statement and materials being published in their websites,” he said.

“There is thus sufficient cause and justification for the taking of concrete actions, one of which is through appropriate legislation, to ensure that social media platforms do not aid or abet the commission of any crime, felony or offense by their users,” Garbin said. (PNA)

Saudi envoy sends help to search for missing aircraft

MANILA -- Saudi Arabia Ambassador Abdullah Al Bussairy sent personnel to help in the search and retrieval operations involving the missing Beechcraft Baron 55 trainer aircraft, the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) said on Wednesday.

The aircraft went

missing after taking off from the San Jose Airport on May 17. Capt. Jose Nelson Yappacon and student pilot, Abdullah Alsharif, a Saudi Arabian, are both missing.

In an interview with the Philippine News Agency (PNA), CAAP spokesperson Eric Apolonio said they wanted the Saudi

government to see what is happening on the ground.

“They (embassy) sent some personnel to check the ongoing investigation, and to provide support in the search and retrieval operations,” he said.

Last May 20, CAAP reported that the wreckage of the missing aircraft was found some 43.52 km. south of the Mindoro Strait. About six pieces of debris were found.

However, Apolonio, on Wednesday, said CAAP could not assume that the debris found were actually from the Beechcraft Baron 55 trainer aircraft.

“The team found the pilot’s bag last May 20. It contained the pilot’s identification card. However, we had no proof that the debris found were from the missing aircraft,” he remarked.

Operator can’t be suspended

Meanwhile, when asked if operator Orient Aviation Corp. was suspended, Apolonio said CAAP could not suspend it since there is no evidence that it had violated anything.

“We don’t have an evidence. Our accident investigators have not seen the wreckage, or any debris that belongs to that specific aircraft,” he pointed out.