

DOLE CAUTIONS OFWS ANEW AS HONG KONG PROTESTS WORSEN

MANILA — The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) on Wednesday reiterated its warning to overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in Hong Kong to be vigilant amid the escalating protests and public disruptions on the island.

Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III issued the reminder after receiving reports on the series of protest actions that resulted in the disruption of public transport and business activities in various parts of the Chinese autonomous region.

"We are again urg-

ing all our OFWs in Hong Kong to exercise caution by staying indoors and keeping away from the locations where protest activities are taking place," he said in a statement.

He added that he issued the appeal to Filipino workers for their safety and security and assured that the Philippine Overseas Labor Office continues to monitor developments in the area.

He noted that based on latest advisory issued by the Philippine Consulate General in Hong Kong, among the reported areas where protests are

to be held in Tsim Sha Tsui Police Station on October 10; New Town Plaza Shatin, October 12; Victoria Park and Edinburgh Place, October 13; Edinburgh Place and Chater Garden, October 14; and Resumption of Legislative Council, October 16.

Mass actions are also scheduled in Riverpark Tai Wai to Shatin, October 20; Yuen Long MTR Station, October 21; Tamar Park Admiralty, October 26; and Prince Edward MTR Station, October 31.

Bello also urged Filipinos working in Hong

Kong to refrain from wearing black or white-colored upper garments while on the streets to avoid being mistaken for protesters.

The protests stemmed from the plan to allow extraditions of criminal suspects to the mainland, which have been scrapped.

Tension in the region escalated as Hong Kong's government implemented a ban on wearing face masks, which took effect on Saturday, aimed at preventing violence in anti-government rallies.

(PNA)

Laguna hosts 5th Regional MSME Development Council Conference



STA. CRUZ, Laguna – The Provincial Government of Laguna under the leadership of Governor Ramil L. Hernandez recently hosted the 5th CALABARZON Regional MSME Development Council Conference, organized by the Department of Trade and Industry Region 4-A (DTI 4-A) at the Laguna Cultural Center.

The event featured the launching of the Youth Entrepreneurship Program (YEP) with the theme: "Harnessing our own Resources for the Advancement of Youth" (HOORAY) for the entire CALABARZON region. It is a nationwide program to help young Filipinos develop their entrepreneurial skills by offering them a comprehensive package of interventions.

Another highlight of the occasion was the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) 2019-2023 between the DTI 4-A and the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) South Luzon for the Shifting from Government-Led to Private Sector-Led Advocacy on Ethical Business Practices.

Governor Hernandez led the signing of the Pledge of Commitment to implement the Youth Entrepreneurship Act, with DTI Secretary Ramon M. Lopez, Micro- Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Director Jerry T. Clavesillas, *DTI 4-A Director Marilou Q. Toledo, and representatives from other key government agencies.*

A trade fair was also held at the provincial capitol Time Plaza that showcased unique locally made food products, RTW, footwear, and handicrafts, participated in by around 41 companies from the province, in collaboration with the DTI-Laguna headed by Provincial Director Ms. Susan R. Palo.

(Article by Ruby S. Ambrosio, photo by Jun Sapungan/PIO Laguna)

DOJ orders probe on Bilibid blast

MANILA -- Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra on Friday ordered a formal investigation into reports of an explosion that occurred inside the New Bilibid Prisons maximum security compound that houses violent inmates.

"The DOJ oversight team has directed the Bucor chief to submit a written report and to commence an investigation in coordination with the PNP contingent stationed at the NBP," Guevarra confirmed to newsmen.

"Its an indication of

how serious the security problem is inside the NBP," the secretary added.

Based on initial reports, the blast occurred at Quadrant 4 of the NBP maximum security compound while demolition is ongoing around 10 a.m. Friday.

Immediately thereafter, the EOD/K9 team of NCRPO responded to check the area. During the process, it was disclosed that the cause of the explosion was an improvised explosive device (IED) prompting the EOD team to conduct a

thorough search within the area.

NCRPO chief, Gen. Guillermo Eleazar, said explosives were recovered inside the shanties near Quadrant 4.

"After clearing the area, they were able to recover two hand grenades," Eleazar said.

Investigation showed that the explosion site was occupied by violent extremist offenders from the Abu Sayyaf Group, Maute Group, the Rajah So-laiman Group, Jemaah Islamiya, and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. (with reports from Christopher Lloyd Caliwang/PNA)

Tree growing and caring activity idinaos sa Tayak Hills, Laguna

Pinangunahan ni Gobernador Ramil L. Hernandez ang Tree Growing and Caring Activity na idinaos kamakailan sa Tayak Hills sa bayan ng Rizal, lalawigan ng Laguna.

Kasabay nito ay ang pagpapasinaya ng Tanaw de Rizal Park sa naturang lugar, isang parke na may 930 hakbang at kilala bilang biker's haven ng lalawigan.

Dahil dito ay inaasahang ang parke ay magiging daan upang dumami pa ang bilang ng turista na magtutungo dito dahil sa magandang tanawin.

Kaya patuloy na tinataniman ng puno ang Tayak Hills upang mapreserba ang likas na yaman at ganda ng kalikasan ng naturang lugar.

Kabilang sa mga



nakiisa sa gawaing ito ay sina Bise Gobernador Karen Agapay, Rizal Mayor Vener P. Muñoz, Vice Mayor Tony A. Aurelio at lahat ng kawani ng pamahalaang pan-

lalawigan.

Ang aktibidad na ito ay bahagi pa rin ng pagdiriwang ng ika-119 anibersaryo ng Serbisyo Sibil sa bansa kung saan naging katu-

wang din ang Laguna PNP, Philippine Army at iba pa.

(Sa panulat ni Jonna Coroza at mga larawang kuha ni Jun Sapungan/PIO Laguna)

OWWA disburses P26-M in rebates for members

MANILA -- The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) has disbursed over PHP26 million to members under its ongoing rebate program.

In a Twitter post on Friday, OWWA Administrator Hans Cacdac said a total of Php26,071,683 have benefitted 10,512 members.

The program was launched last month in compliance with Republic Act 10801, or the OWWA Act, which states a rebate should be given to overseas Filipino workers (OFW).

The beneficiaries must be a member of OWWA for at least 10 years and have not availed them-

selves of any benefit from the agency.

The amount of the rebate range from PHP941.25 up to PHP13,177.50 depending on the Filipino worker's number of contributions.

OWWA records show a total of 556,000 of its members, who have made at least five or more contributions as of December 31, 2017, will qualify in the initial implementation of the program.

The agency has allocated PHP1 billion for the rebates.

A total of USD5 is being collected by the OWWA for every contract for both land-based and sea-based Filipino migrant workers.