

Fewer Pinoy nurses seeking work in US

by SHEILA CRISOSTOMO
Philstar.com

MANILA—For the last three years, the number of registered Filipino nurses taking the US National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) has been declining, indicating that fewer Filipino nurses are seeking work in the United States, a labor organization said.

Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) secretary-general Ernesto Herrera said only 15,382 took the US licensure exam for nurses in 2009, compared to 20,764 in 2008. In 2007, 21,299 Filipino nurses took the NCLEX.

The former senator said there is a need to “build up

the competitiveness of Filipino nurses in foreign labor markets.” One way is to shut down the 152 nursing schools previously classified by the Commission on Higher Education as “substandard.”

Herrera also proposed that nursing schools publish their passing rates in the annual licensure exam “so that buyers of nursing education may be guided accordingly.”

He said the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) should also provide free second-language training to nurses seeking employment in non-English-speaking countries.

Herrera also said that many nursing students do not get proper clinical training in hospitals because there are too many of them.

“Hospitals can no longer accommodate all our nursing students in emergency rooms, operating rooms and delivery rooms. There are just too many of them waiting in line to observe procedures,” he said.

“The capabilities of all state-owned hospitals, whether run by the Department of Health or by local governments, to provide superior clinical training to junior and senior nursing students (must be strengthened),” he added. ■



BIRDS OF THE SAME FEATHER It's well worth reprinting the brown boobies of Tubtataha as photographed by Melvyn Calderon during a bird-watching trip in that bird sanctuary islet in Palawan. Inquirer photo

GMA says travel in RP now cheaper, faster, and safer

BATANGAS City—President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo said that her administration has effectively made travel around Luzon and other parts of the country much cheaper, faster, and safer.

“The government has worked hard to make the future brighter for the next generation of Filipinos,” the President told students of the University of Batangas in this city.

“We created a transportation system not only in the ULB but nationwide, which binds the nation together as never before, so that people and goods can be delivered faster, cheaper and safer from one end of the nation to another,” President Arroyo told the students.

In her speech, the Chief Executive gave a rundown of the progress in the government’s implementation of its flagship, Urban Luzon Beltway (ULB) erstwhile called Luzon Urban Beltway, which is designed to provide seamless travel from South Luzon to North Luzon.

The ULB is one of five target growth areas called Super Regions, each given a specific development theme by the Arroyo administration.

The four others are Cyber Corridor for information communication technology and business process outsourcing, North Luzon Agribusiness Quadrangle for agribusiness, Central Visayas for tourism, and Mindanao Agribusiness for agribusiness.

The ULB is envisioned to transform Luzon into a globally competitive logistics and services hub in Asia-Pacific, which is seen to capture about 30 percent of the global logistics market with an estimated value of \$3.5 trillion. In Asia alone, the logistics market was valued at \$1 trillion.

To realize this vision, the government has embarked on an ambitious program, with the private sector as partner, to develop airport and seaport infrastructure.

An interconnection of four major tollroads running across the CALABARZON (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon), Metro Manila, and the Central Luzon form a key part of the ULB.

President Arroyo pointed out that her administration pursued the vision to turn a worsening economy around when she took over the reins of government in 2001.

“As an economist, I knew then that we badly needed to exercise fiscal discipline, expand the economy, and invest in human resources and physical infrastructure,” the President said.

Implementation of the ULB has so far given rise to the transformation of the Batangas port into an international seaport. The facility, completed in 2007, catered to the local maritime industry, notably the roll on-roll off vessels plying the sea-lanes to Mindoro and other islands in the south.

The Southern Luzon Arterial Road (STAR) toll way, completed in 2008, has drastically cut down travel time from Sto. Tomas town in Batangas to Batangas City by about 50 percent.

President Arroyo said civil works are underway to link STAR to the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX), which runs from Calamba, Laguna, to Metro Manila.

“The widened SLEX has improved traffic from Metro Manila to Calamba and back,” the President said. “It thus encourages people working in Metro Manila to take up residence in suburban Laguna.”

Meanwhile, work on the artery connecting C5 to North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) is going on.

Again, C5 is meant to reduce travel time between northern and southern Metro Manila by at least 30 minutes. On the other hand, NLEX cuts travel time between Metro Manila and Clark, Pampanga by about 50 percent.

“All these made housing projects viable outside Metro Manila, where land is cheaper and the lifestyle more conducive to raising a family,” the President pointed out.

The President said the government built about 500,000 low-cost houses under her watch, some 300,000 of them within ULB. (PND)

Sending of cards on Valentine’s Day urged

by EVELYN MACAIRAN
Philstar.com

MANILA—Despite Twitter, text messaging and email, there’s still nothing like an old-fashioned, handwritten love letter to send the heart a-flutter.

Even with the advent of modern technology such as e-mail and text messaging, Filipinos still like to express sweet nothings in ink and heart-shaped cards on Valentine’s Day, the Philippine Postal Corp. (PhilPost) said.

That is why the PhilPost-Na-

tional Capital Region is continuing its traditional “Hatid Pagmamahal” service to deliver not just love letters but also chocolates and flowers for Valentine’s Day.

“Filipinos are still romantic and old-fashioned. They not only want the words ‘I love you’ to be sent in text messages, they want the messages handwritten. They want Valentine cards because these cards serve as a remembrance of their love story,” said PhilPost-NCR marketing chief Ronald Obrique.

He said that with Valentine’s cards, they could read the message over and over again.

He said most of their clientele are office workers who drop by one of the more than 60 post offices all over Metro Manila to select an item, either chocolates or flowers, to be delivered along with the card.

The special service will run for three days, from Feb. 12 to 14. Philpost will also sell Valentine-designed stamps for philatelic or stamp collectors. ■

There’s more to Benguet than Baguio, says tourism group

by IZAH MORALES
Inquirer.net

MANILA—Local tourism officials are making effort to sell Benguet province as a destination for adventure seekers, hoping to attract vacationers into expanding their itinerary and visiting places outside of Baguio City.

A survey conducted by the Baguio Convention and Visitors Bureau sought to find out how people perceive Baguio today.

“Today’s generation wants more adventure-related activities,” said BCBV executive director Amboy Guevara Jr. in a press briefing during the recent week-long Lakbay Norte (Travel North)



Adventure seekers can try kayaking in Agno River near the Ambuklao Dam in Bokod, two hours away from Baguio City. Inquirer.net photo by Izah Morales

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