As we commemorate the past, we are reminded of the valour and heroism of our forebears.

“The paramount goal we had in mind when we declared our freedom with their sacrifices, we are reminded of the valour and heroism of our forebears. As Filipino communities in all parts of the world, including in Qatar, celebrate the historic event, the official underscored the resilience of the Filipino spirit that made the nation stronger enduring all adversities while remaining efficient and productive partners in nation building.”

Bello also reiterated the theme of this year’s celebration as reflective of the Filipino nation’s journey for an inclusive society. “Our celebratory theme, ‘Kalayaan 2018: Pagbabagong Isyungin, Ala ng Masaganang Kinabuhatan,’ reflects our continuous national journey leading to a just and inclusive society. A society that gives premium to the welfare of each Filipino worker everywhere in the world. Together, let us continue with our struggle for global excellence and national pride with burning national spirit leading to a just and inclusive society. A society that gives premium to the welfare of each Filipino worker everywhere in the world.”

This special occasion serves as well to bring to the fore our unrelenting desire to further contribute immensely to our country’s growth and march to national greatness,” he added.

While we have seen stories of hardships; while we have experienced sufferings; and while we have heard of stories of abuse, our compatriots and modern-day heroes are not daunted. The Filipinos no doubt remain among the most efficient, productive and sought-after partners in moving other nations’ economies.

Today, our independence is characterized by a higher level of pride – pride in our globally-competitive people in most parts of the globe. While we have stories of hardships; while we have experienced sufferings; and while we have heard of stories of abuse, our compatriots and modern-day heroes are not daunted. The Filipinos no doubt remain among the most efficient, productive and sought-after partners in moving other nations’ economies. This special occasion serves as well to bring to the fore our unrelenting desire to further contribute immensely to our country’s growth and march to national greatness,” he added.
Wendy’s

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B. Square Mall Management and tenants wish the Filipino Community in Doha a Happy Independence Day and a year filled with development and a year of great achievements.

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The Philippines’ economic growth is projected to accelerate in 2018 and 2019 as the government’s infrastructure program rolls out, says a new Asian Development Bank (ADB) report.

In its new Asian Development Outlook (ADO) 2018, ADB projects Philippine gross domestic product (GDP) growth at 6.8 percent this year and 6.9 percent in 2019, up from 6.7 percent in 2017. ADB's flagship annual economic publication further states that rising domestic demand, remittances, and employment, in addition to infrastructure spending, will drive growth.

“Along with domestic demand, the government’s infrastructure investments will fuel the country’s growth in the near term, supported by a sound economic policy setting. We expect this growth to further lift wage employment numbers, add to household incomes, and benefit many poor families across the archipelago,” said Kelly Bird, ADB’s Country Director for the Philippines.

According to the report, the Philippines, one of the strongest growing economies in Southeast Asia in 2017 with domestic investment recording 9 percent growth last year, moderating from a brisk 23.7 percent in 2016, although growth in fixed investment in industrial machinery, transport equipment, and public construction remained robust.

Infrastructure drive, strong domestic demand to sustain Philippine growth

The Philippines remained one of the strongest growing economies in Southeast Asia in 2017 with domestic investment recording 9 percent growth last year, moderating from a brisk 23.7 percent in 2016, although growth in fixed investment in industrial machinery, transport equipment, and public construction remained robust.

A major policy challenge to the country’s growth outlook, according to the report, is managing the rollout of the government’s “Build, Build, Build” infrastructure program, which is expected to raise public infrastructure spending to 5 percent of GDP by 2022 from 4.5 percent in 2016.

The report urges governments on ways to enhance government capacity, including improving coordination between government agencies and increasing technical capacity of staff within these agencies, and fostering stronger partnerships between government agencies, the private sector, and development partners.

ADB, based in Manila, is dedicated to reducing poverty in Asia and the Pacific through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration. Established in 1966, it is owned by 67 members—48 countries, the European Union, and 17 multilateral institutions.

The report notes there are external risks to the Philippines’ growth outlook from heightened volatility in international financial markets and uncertainty about global trade openness, although the country’s strong external payments position would cushion these effects.

In 2018 and 2019, the government’s infrastructure program is expected to sustain its quick pace in part due to the strong performance in 2016 due to strong economic growth, lower international fuel prices, and higher remittances.

With economic growth gaining momentum, inflation is projected to reach 4 percent in 2018, in line with the government’s price target.

The policy reforms are expected to marginally decline to 3.9 percent in 2019.

The report notes there are external risks to the Philippines’ growth outlook from heightened volatility in international financial markets and uncertainty about global trade openness, although the country’s strong external payments position would cushion these effects.

Embassy events kick-start Philippine Independence Day celebration

Philippine Embassy Doha and the Westin Doha Hotel & Spa launched a week-long celebration of the rich flavors and diversi ty of Filipino food through the hotel’s festival ‘A Culinary Journey Around the Philippines’ which opened at the hotel’s Social Tables Restaurant on June 8. It hosted the dishes of Manila-based chef Michelle Additions.

Renowned Filipino concert pianist and former president of the Cultural Centre of the Philippines Dr. Rod Sarmiento led the classical music event organised by the Philippine Embassy Doha in collaboration with Katara Cultural Village in the Katara Opera House on May 4. Stars were joined by Stefanie Quintin (soprano) and Jesper Mercado (pianist).

The report notes there are external risks to the Philippines’ growth outlook from heightened volatility in international financial markets and uncertainty about global trade openness, although the country’s strong external payments position would cushion these effects.

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Happy 120th Philippine Independence Day!

"Kalayaan 2018 Pagbabagong Ipinaglaban, Alay sa Masaganang Kinabukasan."

- Al Mirqab, Al Jadeed St., Al Nasser, Doha, Qatar
  Contact No.: 44438323 / 66735178

- Lulu Hypermarkert, Barwa City, Mesaimmer, Doha, Qatar
  Contact No.: 40385849 / 30984047
GERRY’S Grill Restaurant takes pride in its unique dishes inspired by foods known in every region across the Philippines.

To many Filipino diners, Gerry’s signature dishes bring back memories of their own hometown or family gatherings spent in one of Gerry’s stores back home. For foreign guests, an experience at Gerry’s offers a proper introduction to the diverse and rich Filipino cuisine known for its mixed influences (Chinese, Spanish, Malaysian, Indonesian and American) that has evolved over many centuries.

The first Gerry’s Grill store opened in the Philippines in 1997. Since then, the eatery became a favorite with Filipinos opting for more ‘home-cooked’ meals rather than settling for fast food options. The restaurant business rapidly expanded. As of May 24, 2018, Gerry’s has a total of 110 stores in the Philippines and nine branches abroad – two in Singapore, four in the US, one in Dubai and two in Qatar.

Gerry’s Grill in Qatar opened with its first branch in Al Nasser in the last quarter of 2013. Then in January 2015, another branch in Barwa City opened to better cater to Gerry’s growing market in the country. “We decided to open in Qatar to offer to our kababayans their favorite Filipino dishes through Filipino-style of service. Our kababayans had been responsive to Gerry’s presence in Qatar. Similarly, we are able to promote Filipino cuisine to the international market here,” said Gerry’s Grill Regional Manager Marlo Valledor. He said their signature dishes that become most popular in Qatar include Inihaw na Pusit (grilled squid), Beef Sisig (beef dish served in sizzling plate), Inihaw na Manok (Filipino chicken barbecue), Chicken Inasal (a variant of roast chicken common in the Visayas) and Crispy Mutton Leg which is a variant of Filipino dish using ingredients suitable to the Middle Eastern market.

Valledor said plans for more Gerry’s stores in the Middle East are on the cards for the Filipino brand, in particular, targeting to have around 20 to 25 branches across the GCC by 2025. “Filipino cuisine, in general, offers unique flavors compared to other Asian dishes. In terms of reaching out to non-Filipino market in Qatar, Gerry’s intends to compete with the grill house restaurants in the local market since we offer a lot of grill dishes that we know can satisfy the cravings of Qatar diners.”
Experience Philippine Airlines from Doha to Manila

As the only Philippine carrier linking Qatar to the Philip- pines, Philippine Airlines operates four weekly nonstop flights between Doha and Manila offering a wide variety of services in economy class 33 Economy Plus seats with extra legroom, as well as 32 regular economy seats that have a pitch of 36 to 31 inches. Overnight, the PAL flies, passengers may enjoy wireless in-flight entertainment by downloading the in-PAL Pro app for free, prior to boarding, in order to watch a wide selection of movies, TV shows and music from their personal laptop, tablet or smartphone. mPAL WiFi allows one to surf, browse and keep in touch with loved ones and friends while on board the flight.

PAL President and Chief Operating Officer Jaime J. Balanta said, “We are pleased that PAL’s new fleet has the largest network of routes between the Philippines and the Middle East as it offers nonstop flights not only from Doha but also from Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Jeddah, Riyadh and Damascus. We are now offering our passengers a premium product offering free for all our Doha-Manila flights, and we’re happy to serve our premiere clients, the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) our kababayan.

Aside from the convenience of a direct nonstop service, our highly trained cabin crew teams will make you feel right at home with PAL’s trademark, strong cultural vigor or tagubig Filipino service.”

Balanta further said, “We are taking concrete steps to fur- ther enhance service to our valued clients, both for on-ground and inflight innovation. We believe all of our crew are to fly and experience the Philippines’ only certified 4-Star Carrier, Philippine Airlines.”

PAL’s inflight service and offerings include a selection of Asian, Continental and Halal cuisine, and a wide variety of beverages. Passengers with special dietary needs may order special meals at least 24 hours before departure. Each passenger is pro- mised to receive an experience they will never forget.

PAL’s special inflight offering includes a selection of Asian, Continental and Halal cuisine, and a wide variety of beverages.

Pakwan

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Hair Keratin (GCC)
Hair Colour (Full/Roots)
High Light (Lebanese Style)
Hair Cellographd Non Ammonia
Hair Hot Oil/ Spa / Protein Treatment

FACIAL TREATMENT

Facial Normal
Diamond (Whitening Treatment)
Easy Peeling (Special Treatment)
not Available for Summer Season
Gold Facial (Anti Aging)

BODY TREATMENT

Full Body Massage
Body Massage with Cellulite Treatment

NAIL SERVICES

Shellac
Manicure And Pedicure with Foot Spa

ACTIVITIES

Sentosa Picnic
Diving
Snorkeling
Fullbody Massage
Fullbody Massage with Cellulite Treatment

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Fullbody Massage with Cellulite Treatment

CONTACT

For appointment please call: 44316286, 55299944, 77232956
MEZZA Restaurant specialises in authentic home cooking style of Filipino and international cuisines. For several years now, it has been part of many memorable gatherings and get-togethers where a feast of good food is served as crowd-pleaser and conversation piece.

In the Middle Eastern cuisine, “Meze” (pronounced as mezza) refers to dishes served in small portions. When pronounced, it also refers to a Filipino word ‘mesa’ which translates to ‘table’ in English. More so, MEZZA is a family-approved dining place as its very acronym represents the members of Al Lenjawi family. Thus, the restaurant’s menu has food for everyone! From its tender and soft Spare Ribs ala Mezza, sizzling seafoods, Calamares ala Mezza and all-time-favourites Filipino dishes Special Bulalo (Filipino stew made from beef shanks) and Ginataang Langka (unripe jackfruit cooked in coconut milk), food by MEZZA is all about satisfying the cravings of each and every guest.

“The difference of MEZZA with other restaurants is the way the food is cooked. We are the only Filipino restaurant in Qatar with a ‘show kitchen’. Thus, our diners can see for themselves that our food is prepared fresh in a home cooking style. Additionally, our chefs are inspired by the restaurant’s concept of cooking with a smile!” said Layla Bernal, MEZZA’s owner.

The show kitchen highlights MEZZA’s new posh restaurant which recently opened in B-Square Mall. Aside from entertaining diners, MEZZA also offers catering services for corporate events and functions, and for special occasions such as weddings, birthday parties, private events and outdoor activities.

Among the events where MEZZA has exhibited its food include at the Fan Zone during the 2017 Emir Cup, 8th Qatar International Food Festival, Be Fit event for Qatar National Sports Day 2017 in City Center Rotana Doha, and Filipino Community and Family Day held in Westin Doha Hotel and Spa.

With a different concept of entertainment and shopping, B Square Mall is the leading family destination in Qatar. OVER a wide area, B Square Mall has focused on the promotion of entertainment and family destinations to occupy the largest part of the area, which is up to 60% of the area of the rental mall and is divided between entertainment games for different age groups and a cinema, a ski lounge and bowling hall. B Square Mall distinguishes itself from the rest of the commercial complexes, as well as cafes and restaurants that are diverse and selected to satisfy all tastes through its diversity. The mall has a range of service stores including a pharmacy, a car rental shop, a rose shop, a beauty salon and more. And between the privileged partners “Spar supermarket”, which resides in the Qatari market for the first time, the most important characteristic of its products is freshness and quality, in addition to 63 Outlet, which will provide an opportunity for families shopping from the world’s most important brand favorites along with discount prices. Its location gives it an added advantage as it is located in an area that needs shopping and entertainment services and is therefore an outlet for many residents and the public. As the tenants have been carefully selected and in tune with the B Square Mall, it has been a unique experience for shopping and entertainment in the Qatar market. About 75% of the mall has been leased and the door is still open to more select distinguished partners. B Square Mall management is always keen to communicate with the public to learn about their suggestions and ideas through social networking sites. Some suggestions have already been taken and implemented on the ground, such as the children’s arts area, which is held on weekends and children participate in drawing and coloring with a clown. There are also a number of recreational activities for them free of charge and has already received a good turnout.
FAQs on doing business in the Philippines

What is the general policy of the government for foreign investments? The government recognises the pivotal role of private sector investments and, thereby, commits to continuously enhance the business climate. Foreign investments are encouraged to fill in capital gaps, help provide employment, increase production, and provide a base for the overall development of the economy. Investment rules and regulations have thus been liberalised to facilitate the entry of foreign investments.

Who can invest? Anyone, regardless of nationality, is welcome to invest in the Philippines. With the liberalisation of the foreign investment law, 100 percent foreign equity may be allowed in all areas of investment except those reserved for Filipinos by mandate of the Philippine Constitution and existing laws.

What requirements must be complied with before a foreign corporation can do business in the Philippines? A foreign corporation must first secure the necessary licences or registrations from the appropriate government bodies. In the case of corporations or partnerships, the necessary incorporation papers from the Securities and Exchange Commission must first be obtained. In the case of a single proprietorship, registration from the Bureau of Trade Regulation & Consumer Protection of the Department of Trade and Industry must be secured.

Are foreigners allowed to lease land? Foreign investors investing in the Philippines can now lease private lands up to 75 years. Based on R.A. No. 7652, entitled “Investor’s Lease Act”, lease agreements may be entered into with Filipino landowners. The lease period is 50 years, renewable once for another 25 years. For tourism projects, the lease shall be limited to projects with an investment of not less than US$5M, 70% of which shall be infused in said project within 3 years from the signing of the lease contract.

For more information, download our Primer on Tourism Investment in the Philippines. (source: www.tourism.gov.ph)

OWWA partners with Facebook to empower OFWs

FACEBOOK, the world’s leading social media platform, has partnered with the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), to empower overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) and their families to fully harness the positive component of online networking and communication technology. The partnership, announced on the official website of the Philippine Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), will be implemented through digital literacy seminars to help the OFWs and their families learn the right use of the social media and enable them to participate in building a positive and respectful community online.

The digital literacy seminars will also provide small business training for OFWs with an entrepreneurial skill to prepare them for their eventual return to the country. OWWA’s launching of the tie-up with the social media giant was one of the highlights of the 2018 Migrant Workers’ Day celebration held at the Philippine International Convention Center. The event was attended by 2,000 OFWs and their families. OWWA also signed a Memorandum of Agreement between OWWA and Coca-Cola Far East Limited to further strengthen the reintegration programme of OWWA through entrepreneur- ship pathway specifically for returning female OFWs.

“Livelihood has always been an integral component of the reintegration programme of OWWA. Given the onset of technology and the power of social media, we must take advantage of these platforms to more economic uses,” said OWWA Administrator Hans Leo J. Cacdac. Labour Secretary Silvestre H. Bello III recognised the Filipino migrant workers’ hard work, skill, and talent as they face challenges in the global economy. (source: www.dole.gov.ph)
Philippines among Asia’s fastest-growing economies

The Philippines is on its way to achieving its targets for high growth and financial inclusion for the rest of President Rodrigo Duterte’s presidency as the government enjoys enough fiscal space to further accelerate spending on its core programmes, according to Philippine Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III.

Dominguez said an even more aggressive spending from hereon on the ‘Build, Build, Build’ programme and other poverty-reduction initiatives would help the Duterte Administration achieve its target of a GDP (Gross Domestic Product) growth of 7 percent or better and a reduced poverty-incidence rate of 14 percent over the medium term.

“President Duterte’s commitment to attaining an investment-led and inclusive economy via a massive public spending strategy would usher in what the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has forecast to be the ‘golden age’ of the Philippines’ economic growth,” said Dominguez, following the announcement by the Philippine Statistical Authority (PSA) of a GDP growth of 6.8 percent in the year’s first quarter.

The PSA said in its report that the industry sector recorded the fastest growth at 7.9 percent, while the services sector expanded 7.0 percent and agriculture 1.5 percent.

According to the PSA, the services sector had the highest contribution to GDP growth at 4.0 percentage points, followed by industry with 2.7 percentage points and agriculture with 0.1 percentage points.

Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Ernesto Pernia said this quarter’s GDP growth was the 10th straight quarter of economic expansion at above 6.5 percent.

“With President Duterte’s foreign policy recalibration, which has enabled the government to secure ODA (official development assistance) from our friends in the region plus grants and concessional loans from multilateral institutions; above-target performance by our revenue agencies as a result of the TRAIN (Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion) Law; and investment-grade credit ratings responsible for successful bond floats here and abroad, the government now enjoys a large headroom for high and inclusive growth,” Dominguez said.

He said the government’s unprecedented investments in physical and human infrastructure would supercharge the economy; attract more investments and create a lot more jobs, especially for our young workforce; and liberate millions of Filipinos from poverty, which are in keeping with President Duterte’s electoral mandate.

The “Build, Build, Build” programme is now in full swing, he noted, with 75 big-ticket infrastructure projects worth $170 billion designed to reverse regional underdevelopment and income inequality by creating growth corridors all over the country.

“Of these projects, 35 have already passed the approval process while the rest are expected to get the go-ahead before year-end,” he said.

“Our people will feel the economic benefits of these projects soon enough and our country would move up to upper middle-income status by the time the President leaves office in 2022,” he said.

(Source: www.dof.gov.ph)
The Philippines embrace true essence of unity, tolerance

In the celebration of the 120th Philippine Independence Day, we, as Filipinos are being challenged by diversity — in colors, beliefs, affiliations, relationships and perspectives, which led to emotional and intellectual indifference among many. I urge everyone to remember the resilience that we once had in the past — surviving from the most challenging times of our existence as a country by being able to embrace the true essence of unity, fair judgment and tolerance in many aspects of our lives. Thus, may we become instruments and partners to this advocacy of change for the sake of our future generations.

Mabuhay tayong lahat!!!

—Dr. Alvin Abainza
Vice-Chairman
Beautiful Philippines Qatar (BPQ)

Making doing business in the Philippines easier

President Rodrigo Duterte signed into law Republic Act (RA) 11032 or the “Ease of Doing Business Act”, at the Malacanang Palace last month. The signing was witnessed by Philippine Secretary of Trade and Industry Ramon M. Lopez together with other members of the cabinet, members of the House Senate and House of Representatives, DTI officials and members of the private sector and business organizations.

The objective of the law is to shorten the number of days in processing permits and licenses for all business-related transactions. This also includes stricter rules like the two-strike policy for government officials who fail to issue permits in the given period. The “Ease of Doing Business Act” amends the Republic Act 9485, otherwise known as the “Anti-Red Tape Act”.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) expressed optimism that the newly-enacted Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018 will make doing business in the Philippines easier as it promotes efficient government.

“Under the EOBB/Efficient Gov-ernment Act, businesses can expect streamlined processes, reduced processing times from all government agencies, including government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs). Government agencies shall be made to comply with the prescribed processing time for working days for simple transactions, seven working days for complex transactions, and 20 working days for highly technical transactions,” DTI Secretary Lopez said.

The EOBB/ARTA Act, which amended the Anti-Red Tape Act of 2010, requires all local government units to streamline procedures for the issuance of business permits, clearances and other type of authorizations by implementing unified business application forms. LGUs are mandated to set up Business One Stop Shop (BOSS) to facilitate business permits application. The law also provides that barangay clearances and permits must be issued at the city or municipal level to speed up transactions.

Apart from streamlining, the law also provides for the creation of a Central Business Portal that will receive and capture application data on business-related transactions, while Philippine Business Database shall provide LGUs and national government agencies access to information to verify validity and existence of businesses. With this, businesses are not required to submit the same documentary requirements previously submitted. The DTI Secretary, who now chairs the Ease of Doing Business and Anti Red Tape Advisory Council (EOBB/ARTAC), called RA 11032 a landmark legislation that will have a direct impact on all citizens and business sector.

“We realised that for the EOBB reforms to be fully implemented and integrated, a whole-of-government approach was necessary. Thus, as a full support of the President’s vision, Congress enacted a law that will make doing business in the Philippines easier and more importantly, create a more efficient government,” Lopez added.

The EOBB/ARTA Act will be implemented by the Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA), an agency under the Office of the President that will monitor compliance of agencies, and implement and oversee national policy on anti-red tape and ease of doing business.

The seven-member Ease of Doing Business and Anti-Red Tape Advisory Council will be composed of the Secretary of DILG, DOST, and DOF, and two members from the private sector. The EOBB/ARTAC will serve as the policy and advisory body of ARTA, to be chaired by DTI Secretary, and the Director General of the Anti Red Tape Authority (ARTA) as Vice Chair.

(Source: www.dti.gov.ph)

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(Source: www.dti.gov.ph)
Bayanihan spirit rules the heart

In Qatar, Bayanihan refers to the alliance of around 20 organisations mostly in grassroots sector advocating the concept through their activities and projects that benefit the most vulnerable members of the community.

The spirit of bayanihan for us is helping one another without expecting anything in return. It is one of the most ideal virtues of being a Filipino. The bayanihan spirit lives among us and has been demonstrated in many instances especially during natural calamities or when disasters strike. We always find a way to help others in need. In Qatar, our group tries to live by this virtue by showing our concern to the environment which is also our way of showing our love to Qatar as our second home,” said TFC President Pascual Castro.

Bayanihan group became a household name in the community because of their many projects that directly benefit dispossessed overseas Filipino workers (OFWs). They also launch projects aimed at giving and to be active members of the community and residents of Qatar. Bayanihan group is known as ‘bayanihan’. The Bayanihan group is also among the biggest contributions of various programmes of the Philippine Embassy in Qatar (PhilEmbassy). It is a unique virtue ingrained upon us that mirrors Filipinos’ genuine care to others and unique virtue ingrained upon us that mirrors Filipinos’ genuine care to others and unselfishly contribute for a beautiful things in being a Filipino. It is a beautiful things in being a Filipino. It is a...
The true essence lies in serving the community

The celebration of the Philippine Independence Day is a much-anticipated occasion for many Filipino groups in Qatar. It is the time when we all gather together under one roof and celebrate not just the event but the contributions of each and every organization to the dynamism of our growing community. I hope our community leaders continue to uplift the true essence of serving the community. Let us honour the memories of our heroes who fought for our freedom by being advocates of peace and harmony among us. Let us give back to our beloved second home Qatar by being dedicated professionals and giving our best to contribute to its exciting developments in the country.

—Henry Dimapico
Chairman, United Filipino Organizations in Qatar

Genuine concern and love for our Motherland

Genuine concern and love are what our Motherland needs—long live the Republic of the Philippines!

—Engr. Rene Cario
Presidential Filipino Society of Mechanical Engineers- Qatar

Bayanihan spirit rules the hearts of Pinoys in Qatar

Assistance drive for victims of fire in labor camp.

"The concept of bayanihan inspires camaraderie, unity and cooperation among us. This is one of the many Filipino values that we are really proud of and we will continue to nourish as part of our culture," said Lharz Arintoc, President of OFW Barkadahan sa Qatar. "In our group with more than 100 members, we demonstrate the spirit of bayanihan through our programmes and activities that raise the awareness of our members on important issues and promote good relations in the community."

I believe that being a Filipino is important that we do not forget the concept of bayanihan. It should be demonstrated in our daily lives in order to help our community grow. This should also be passed on to the next generation," said Arlene Monsalud, President of Real Community Buddies (RCB).

Munting Tambayawen Group President Mary Ann Benjamin Leya underscored the practice of bayanihan is simply a trademark of being Filipino. Other support groups of Bayanihan include Bayanihan sa Manggagawa sa Konstrakyon sa Qatar (BMMK), Buklod ng Bayanihang Filipinos sa Qatar (BBFQ), Karamay Tara Tambay Damay Tayo (KATAMDAMAY), Karamay Buklod ng Bayanihang Filipinos sa Qatar (KBB), Kita Kabayan (KKK), OFQ Barkadahan sa Qatar and DDGC.
Celebrating volunteerism in the community

Alyna Agonida

GLUTIENTS are invaluable resources to organisations because of the years and years of service that they dedicate to organisations and various roles they are able to perform.

The dynamic Filipino community in Qatar strives with the contributions of volunteers bringing in their varied experiences and expertise to drive various initiatives to a success. The strong motivation for volunteerism among Filipinos is also one of the biggest factors behind the successful implementation of the Information Technology Program (ITP) of Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) in Qatar. OWWA, an attached agency of the Department of Labor and Employment in the Philippines (DOLE), is the lead government agency tasked to protect and promote the welfare and well-being of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). OWWA’s ITP is aimed at bridging the communication gap through the use of internet between the OFW and his/her family.

Through this programme, OFWs are able to improve their skills and knowledge necessary to be competitive in their respective vocations.

From 160 graduates from the first batch of ITP in 2018, the total number of graduates is now at 3,370 following the graduation of the 18th batch of the programme last year. And behind these figures are the ITP team of volunteers which to date comprised of 27 passionate individuals.

There are more than 6,000 OFWs who have already benefited from DOLE-OWWA ITP. Currently, we are conducting, in line and Advanced Level Courses bi-annually (every 6 months). In terms of recruiting volunteers, the programme is open for all Filipinos resident in Qatar who are passionate about sharing their technical skills and knowledge and offering their support, assistance, and individual attention to OFWs, said Robin Oza, former Head of ITP volunteers.

DOLE-OWWA ITP has a big impact to the Filipino community since its inception. It has affected the lives of thousands of Filipino workers who successfully acquired technical knowledge in computer. Some of our graduates had the opportunity to change and get better jobs as well as earn promotions in their current work. Other graduates have already yet put their new businesses upon their return to their homeland. The programme is also reaching out to distressed OFWs for their technical training while they are under the care of DOLE-OWWA.

The courses available to OFWs through the programme are Basic Computer Course (Windows Operating System–MS Office), Advanced computer courses, Database Fundamentals (Microsoft Access), Visual Graphics Design (Adobe Photoshop), Web Design Fundamentals (Web Page Design), Computer System Servicing (PC Assembly and Networking) and AutoCAD.

The ITP volunteers, currently headed by Romeo Lazaro, provide much-needed support, assistance, and individual attention that is crucial for learners’ technical education and development. The volunteers offer these services for free to DOLE-OWWA in Qatar without any expectation of receiving pay, compensation or other benefits in order to support the activities and mission of DOLE-OWWA and/or gain experience in specific endeavours.

The ITP team of volunteers also includes Anthony Montenegro who leads the pool of volunteer instructors while Lambert Gandawa heads the technical volunteer, Joel Tiamate serves as the assistant lead volunteer instructor while Irene Fortes serves as the assistant lead volunteer instructor, conducting the computer laboratory. We are also in the process of gathering applicants for the Technical Education and Skill Development (Tesda) certification course, which is open to all volunteer instructors, and will be piloted this year, said Irene Fortes, one of the pioneer volunteers.

Aside from assisting in the training courses, Irene added that last year ITP has launched the Annual DOLE-OWWA ITP, a project in order to promote physical relaxation and physical wellness to program volunteers, participants and stakeholders.
Forbes hailed for ranking the Philippines among top global tourism spots

The Department of Tourism (DOT) warmly received Forbes.com’s citation of the Philippines as one of the hottest tourism destinations in Asia this year.

The article entitled “The 5 Spots In Asia That Are Booming With Tourists In 2018”, underscored the country’s improved connectivity and infrastructure as factors behind the increased tourism interest, according to an agency release.

Forbes.com aligned the Philippines with the continent’s must-visit destinations Japan, Malaysia, Indonesia, and South Korea. The article stated, “With recent improvements in local infrastructure, top tourist destinations are now being served by domestic airports with frequent flights to and from the country’s major cities.”

Several international gateways across the Philippines have experienced expansions last year with plans to develop more regional airports like the Kalibo International Airport, Basco-Siargao Airport, Legazpi International Airport in Albay Oriental, and New Robot International Airport in Pangasinan.

Improved air connectivity and opening of new flights are expected with the Philippines’ hosting of Routes Asia 2019, the only route development event dedicated to the Asia Pacific region, in Cebu next year.

Not to be outdone, the country’s sea connectivity will receive a significant boost in the coming years with new major cruise lines including the Norwegian Cruise Line, Windstar Cruises arriving in the Philippines shores for the first time.

Several cruise ships will also be returning and some like MSC Cruises, Royal Caribbean Cruise Line, Ovation of the Seas, Norwegian Cruise’s Silver Whisper and Silver Shadow, and Crystal Cruises increasing the number of port visits.

Philippine tourism even bested the average tourism growth of Asia and the Pacific which is at six percent and Southeast Asia at eight percent, according to the latest United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) World Tourism Barometer.

Forbes.com is part of Forbes Digital, a division of the American business magazine Forbes reputed for its lists and rankings. The website attracts 59 million unique visitors each month with 30 million social media followers.

(Source: www.tourism.gov.ph)
Philippines welcomed more than 2 million foreign tourists at the start of 2018

The Philippines received 2,049,094 foreign visitors from January to March 2018 compared to 1,784,882 international arrivals recorded in the same period last year.

According to the industry performance report for travel and tourism of the Philippines Department of Tourism, Korea tops the country’s visitor markets at 22.36 percent for the month of March. This, however, is 9.99 percent lower compared to the same period last year. On the other hand, visitors from China increased by 10.42 percent at 114,549.

Other top visitor markets for the Philippines are USA, Japan, Austria, United Kingdom, Canada, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Germany, India, France and Indonesia.

The statistics posted on the official website of the agency further show that the total visitor arrivals by air is at 595,933 of which 64.45 percent arrived via Manila. The total visitor arrivals by sea is at 291,182. Majority of those who traveled the Southeast Asian country were for pleasure or vacation at 52 percent whereas 38 percent belongs to the age bracket of 25 to 34 years old. It was followed by visits to friends or relatives at 18.4 percent and visits for health reasons are only at 0.5 percent.

World Heritage Sites

Since a large percentage of those visiting the Philippines are for the purpose of exploring various destinations in the country, the tourism agency has also provided a list of must-see places including Philippine properties included in the World Heritage List.

Puerto Princesa Subterranean River – National Park, Palawan

Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park lies in the Saint Paul Mountain Range. 8 kilometers from the center of Puerto Princesa City, but is still within the city boundaries. The Park is a natural wonder. Its geological features are unique and the Subterranean River is said to be among the longest in the world measuring up to 8.2 kilometers.

Puerto Princesa Subterranean River is one of the few in the world that flow out into the sea from an inland source. It has been the focus of much curiosity and scientific investigation. The topography of the property varies from flat plains to rolling hills and to mountain slopes. The main course of the Park is the habitat of diverse endemic and endangered species of flora and fauna. The diverse flora, including rice, bamboo, orchids, with palms, vines, ferns, and grasses, is supported by the river flow. The route through the park, cave-inhabiting forms of reptiles, birds, and mammals dominate the animals. All of these to endemism to Palawan: they exist now.

Banaue Rice Terraces – Benguet Province, Cordillera

The Rice Terraces of the Philippines Cordilleras have such a powerful presence that they are not the most outstanding places of the country. Living high in the Cordillera mountain range, they setting contrasts with the lush tropical landscape of the Philippines – or even anywhere in the world, for that matter.

The Banaue Rice Terraces in Benguet Province, Cordilleras mountain range, scholars believe, have been terraced and planted with rice as far back as 2,000 years. Mountains formed into paddies that still survive in varying states of conservation are spread over most of the 20,000 square-kilometer land area (7 percent of the total land mass of the Philippine Archipelago) that is in the Northern Luzon provinces of Kalinga, Apayao, Abra, Benguet and Ifugao.

The impressive site is found at altitudes varying from 790 to 1,000 meters above sea level, where terraces are sliced into mountain slopes with contours that meander steeply.

City of Vigan– Ilocos Sur

During the height of the Spanish colonial era in the 18th and 19th centuries, Vigan or Ciudad Fernandina de Vigan was the third most important city after Manila and Cebu. It was the centre of Spanish colonial architecture and is perhaps the only place in the Philippines where the primary concern was to design the church for earthquake protection.

It is the architectural ensemble of Vigan that makes it a unique and outstanding place that Vigan was the political, economic, religious, and artistic centre of the region. The town is a living testament to the Spanish colonial era, places that evokes a strong cultural influence to the modern Philippine nation.

It is also the place where the church during earthquakes. This is one of the most outstanding “earthquake baroque” structure in the Philippines where the primary concern was to design the church for earthquake protection. As an extension from the church for earthquake protection, was finished in the second half of the 18th century.

There are many outdoor activities the Philippine islands have in store for the foreign and local tourists. Aside from cultural and heritage sites, one can also make the most of their visit within the Philippine tourist tour, diving and beach tours. The Philippine tourism agency suggests the following activities:

Top Outdoor Activities

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Aerial Sports

If you’ve ever dreamed of flying, the Philippines is a great place to realize your dream. Skydiving, ultralight aircraft, and hot-air balloons are readily available for five hours outside Manila. The quality of the ride is high, and the safety records are good. From the air, the green land and blue seas of the islands make a spectacular sight. A step-dreaming, head for the Philippines, and take to the sky!
Caving
Some of the most spectacular caverns in the Philippines lie deep underground. Almost every island has cave systems, some accessible to the casual tourist, others challenging the skilled spelunker. Beneath the earth lies rivers and waterfalls, narrow passages, and vaulted chambers filled with a surreal array of limestone and crystal formations. Many caves are totally unexplored, presenting the ultimate thrill in adventure travel: the chance to walk where no human has ever been.

Mountain Biking
From the mountains of Baguio to the beaches of Boracay, the Philippines is a perfect place for two-wheeled travel. The fat-tyred bike is a great way to explore remote areas where few vehicles go. There are endless routes available, on roads and on trails, from easy day rides to grueling week-long mountain adventures. Biking is a rapidly growing sport here; clubs of dedicated mountain bikers are springing up in many popular areas, and competitions are common. The local bikers are friendly and accommodating, and always willing to share information and ride along their favorite routes.

Sea Kayaking
Sea kayaking is a new sport in the Philippines, but with 7,107 islands offering every conceivable variety of tropical seascape, it is one that is sure to expand quickly. The islands offer thousands of kilometres of superb paddling on crystal-clear water, taking in exotic villages, pristine beaches, coral reefs, and mangrove swamps along the way. The kayak, silent and unobtrusive, is the perfect way to explore these delicate ecosystems without disturbing wildlife or the peace of nature. For those seeking more extreme hills, the rugged east coast provides monster waves and fine rough-water kayaking.

Surfing
The Philippines offers surf for all levels. La Union on the northwest coast of Luzon, four hours north of Manila, is easy to get to, has good accommodation and food, and offers gentle beach breaks perfect for beginners. Baler and Infanta in Quezon, and Daet in Camarines Norte offer a more adventurous experience, with longer travel and bigger waves. For those seeking the extreme edge, the wild east coast provides monster waves and fine rough-water kayaking.

Trekking
The best treasures in the Philippines are reserved for those who go beyond the end of the road. It is only by trekking that you can reach places where crystal rivers plunge over daring falls and tattooed tribesmen live as they have for centuries. You will also see skills that warns above crashing surf, virgin forests, clear rivers, mossy jungles, and cool mountain ridges. Only trekkers experience the exhilaration of conquering the heights of Mt. Apo or passing through the eerie moonscape of Mt. Pinatubo. These experiences, and many others, await those who leave the road behind, heft their packs, and trek the Philippines.

White Water Action
White water rafting and kayaking are the newest action spots in the Philippines. For decades, while adventure-hungry travelers flocked to the rivers of Nepal and Borneo, the rapids rapids of the Philippines lay undiscovered. But that’s changing fast: white water action is now available on half a dozen rivers in the Visayas and Mindanao, and more are being explored.

Rock Climbing
Rock climbing is a relatively new sport to the Philippines, but it’s spreading fast. There are already active climbing areas in Manila and other major cities. Quality equipment are available in many outdoor shops, and there are excellent climbing sites only hours from the city of Manila itself. Manila has three gyms with indoor artificial climbing walls: Power Up Gym in Quezon City, Planet Rock in Mandaluyong, and Gravity Gym in Parañaque. All are excellent places to meet the friendly and helpful local climbers, who are your best guides to the outdoor climbing sites. Because the sport is so new, only a few major climbing areas have been developed, and most of these are close to the cities. This leaves enormous potential for exploration, and there are hundreds of sites and thousands of routes waiting for the brave and intrepid climber.
The exotic jeepney is a post-war creation inspired by the GI jeeps that the American soldiers brought to the country in the 1940s. Enterprising Filipinos salvaged the surplus engines and came out unique vehicles of art.


The world’s longest religious holiday. The Christmas season begins on September 1st, as chiller winds and Christmas carols start filling the air, and ends on the first week of January, during the Feast of the Three Kings.

The Philippines celebrate the world’s longest religious holiday. The Christmas season begins on September 1st, as chiller winds and Christmas carols start filling the air, and ends on the first week of January, during the Feast of the Three Kings.

The great Christmas lanterns of San Fernando, Pampanga can reach as big as 40 feet in diameter, using as many as 16,000 glowing bulbs.

Filipino bowler Rafael "Paeng" Nepomuceno was the first bowler to be elevated to the International Bowling Hall of Fame based in St. Louis, Missouri, USA. The Philippine Congress has named him "Greatest Filipino Athlete of All Time."

The largest city in the Philippines is Davao City. With an area of 2,211 sq. km., it is about three times the size of the national capital, Metro Manila.

The word ‘boondocks,’ which is now a part of the English language, dictionary, and vocabulary, comes from the Tagalog word “bundok,” meaning “mountain.”

Paskuhan Village in the province of Pampanga is Asia’s only Christmas theme park and the third of its kind in the world.

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The popular toy, the yoyo, was invented by 16th century hunters in the Philippines.
MANILA’S NEWEST ATTRACTION: The National Museum of Natural History

3,757 registered visitors visited on the opening day of the National Museum of Natural History, recently. (PHOTO COURTESY: www.facebook.com/philippinesnationalmuseum)

The highly-anticipated, much-anticipated event was held on May 18, 2018, coinciding with the worldwide celebration of International Museum Day.

The country’s newest museum, occupying the former Department of Tourism building in Intramuros, was designed by Filipino architect Antonio Tedeschi in the late 1930s. The facility was Agriculture and Commerce building was left in ruins during World War II and later reconstructed and housed the Department of Tourism.

The new home of NSMN completes the facilities of the National Museum of the Philippines, which is a government agency museum that includes research and conservation programmes within the museum and throughout the archipelago. The other museums housed in separate buildings of the facility are the National Museum of Fine Arts, the National Museum of Anthropology and the National Planetarium.

This fourth building where NSMN is located features the Philippines’ mega biodiversity and unique geological formation. It showcases various artifacts and displays including dioramas and records of the country’s iconic animals.

Among the highlights of a tour around NSMN in the floor-to-ceiling “Tree of Life” located at the museum’s atrium is the floor-to-ceiling “Tree of Life” located at the centre of the building and the skeleton or “Cutting,” once the largest Philippine crocodile in captivity.

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“Please visit our ‘Beautiful Philippines’

In celebration of the 120th Philippine Independence Day, I extend my profound greetings to my fellow kababayans and to the whole Filipino community. Let us continue to serve our country to the best of our abilities and to continue to spread the true essence and beauty of Filipino traditions, history and our rich heritage. Furthermore, I am appealing to all my kababayans to encourage our network of friends and associates to visit our ‘Beautiful Philippines’ as well as invest in all the opportunities back home.

Mahalay ang kababayang atong combahoyon Pilipino!”

—LAYLA O. BERNAL
United Filipino Entrepreneurs in Qatar (UFEQ)
Beautiful Philippines Qatar (BPQ)

Honoured to be part of the celebrations

In the celebration of 120th Independence Day, the Samahang Zambalenyo Qatar wishes the best for Filipino communities across the globe. It is an honour for us to be part of the celebrations and a member of United Filipino Organizations in Qatar.

Mahalay ang Pilipinas! Mahalay ang UFGQ!

—REY LIMON ARQUILOGO
President, Samahang Zambalenyo Qatar
**Resort-themed Mactan Cebu International Airport T2 gears up for grand opening**

Mactan Cebu International Airport (MCIA), the gateway to the Visayas and southern Philippines, is the second largest airport facility in the country with a rapid growth in passenger traffic each year. In 2017, it recorded 10 million passengers both local and international.

Arlene A. Buenaflor, president of the Philippine Institute of Civil Engineers, is the second largest airport facility in the Philippines today, during the inauguration of the facility on June 7. The facility is slated to open in July 2018. Spanning 65,000 square metres, it is expected to reduce airport congestion and increase passenger capacity to 12 million.

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**MDA**

Director of the Department of Transportation, the Mactan-Cebu International Airport Authority and GMR Megaworld Cebu Airport Corp. commended the project. At the same time, he praised the best homegrown designers who contributed to building the new terminal that house priceless designs and artworks.

**Dynamic and elegant**

The new terminal has 48 check-in counters that can handle millions of passengers annually. The new terminal was designed by a local design team. The Design Team, consisting of a group of local and international designers who contributed to building the new terminal, will showcase the best of what the Philippines has to offer,” the President said.

**New terminal opens**

President Rodrigo Duterte and other government officials take a tour inside the inauguration of the Mactan-Cebu International Airport Terminal 2, recently. (SIMERENCE/PPD)
From traditional blackboards to digital boards: Philippines moves to provide internet connectivity in schools

The initiative to put up ‘e-classrooms’ in schools would convert traditional blackboards into digital boards where teachers and learners can play educational videos, presentations, and the like.

“These efforts will be fulfilled in conjunction with the DepED Computerization Program (DCP) which aims to raise the information and communications technology (ICT) literacy of learners, teachers, and school leaders by integrating ICT in the school system and providing information technology (IT) equipment to schools nationwide,” Pascua added.

Pascua added that all DCP units have office packs and learning materials which the learners and teachers may access in the absence of internet connectivity.

The Philippine Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) have agreed to provide schools with security personnel that will assist the school communities fully supports the programme. Both the DILG and PNP officials lauded the new mechanism developed by the Department which makes the DCP unit’sDev program an enabling package which are government property and the possession of such packages are government.

“We are encouraging the local government units (LGUs) and the bureaus to support DepED in its drive to ensure all these different ICT equipment which are to be delivered to schools. We will be issuing a memorandum circular to all local government officials to provide schools with security personnel that will assist the school in securing these ICT equipment,” said Malaya.

Garado ensured that the police community fully supports the programme. Both the DILG and PNP officials lauded the new mechanism developed by the Department which makes the DCP unit’sDev program an enabling package which are government property and the possession of such packages are government.

The Education chief further expressed her gratitude to all DepED partners, civil society groups, and private sector and individuals who are donating computer and helping out in facilitating not only the learners but also the teachers and staff who are taking care of the learners and the learning processes.

Their initiatives are part of the government’s continuing efforts in improving the teaching and learning processes for the benefit of Filipino learners.

“We are eyeing the implementation of the DepED Internet Connectivity Program which will be first implemented in the pilot regions,”

The official said the initiative to put up ‘e-classrooms’ in schools would convert traditional blackboards into digital boards where teachers and learners can play educational videos, presentations, and the like.

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Philippine Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Assistant Secretary Jennifer Malaya underscored the vital role of security personnel in ensuring the successful implementation of the programme, which Philippine National Police (PNP) Director Eduardo Jesus Garado welcomed.

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Philippine rice sector soars high

The Philippine rice sector has long been exposed to unsteady factors that have constantly battered pre, post-, and seed production seasons. These include changing and evolving weather patterns, the steady increase in the cost of farm inputs and unavailability of efficient and durable farm machinery.

Last year, despite various circumstances that have inevitably affected productivity, rice production grew by 9.4 percent translating to 1.65 million metric tons (MRT) yield in 2017.

Experts correlate the positive growth with sufficient irrigation, favorable weather conditions and use of high yielding seed varieties. More importantly, the national government’s research support and interventions including the assistance in technology, credit and mechanization resulted in the surge in rice production.

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PHP 18.50-

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Qatar Tribune

wishes the Filipino community in Qatar

Happy 120th Philippine Independence Day

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Subramaniam said the ADB's Improving Growth Corridors for Mindanao in reducing poverty and income inequality in the country, saying this was no cause for concern, given the country's strong macroeconomic fundamentals under the Duterte presidency. He cited, for instance, the country's comfortable level of international reserves, which stood at over $80 billion, representing about seven-and-a-half months of imports; the good performance of the financial sector; and low level of non-performing loans.

The ADB Board of Governors this year, in his capacity as chairman of the ADB Board of Governors, has underscored the importance of reinforcing the country's infrastructure as the government's primary tool in reducing inequality in its capacity as chairman of the ADB Board of Governors this year, as well as in other forums. Subramaniam also allayed fears on inflation of the economy, saying this was no cause for concern, given the country's strong macroeconomic fundamentals under the Duterte presidency. He cited, for instance, the country's comfortable level of international reserves, which stood at over $80 billion, representing about seven-and-a-half months of imports; the good performance of the financial sector; and low level of non-performing loans.

ADB sees Philippines meeting target of poverty rate cut by 2022

The ADB sees the Philippines meeting its target of poverty rate cut by 2022, under the Duterte presidency, due to the improvement in the government's infrastructure and human capital development. The ADB Director General Ramesh Subramaniam said that besides being involved in the Philippines' infrastructure projects, the ADB has also supported its Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme, which, the ADB believes, has made a very concrete contribution in reducing poverty and inequality in the country. On infrastructure, Subramaniam said the ADB's Improving Growth Corridors for Mindanao Road Project "will certainly be helping reduce inequality in that region by providing more growth opportunities, improving connectivity, developing small and medium enterprises in that part of the Philippines."

Subramaniam said that besides reducing poverty incidence to only 14 percent by 2022, and transforming the country into a high-middle-income economy by that time through aggressive spending on infrastructure and human capital development, Subramaniam also pointed out that the Philippines has made significant gains in other fronts in the Philippines, particularly in the Philippines. We are pretty confident, we are not concerned," Subramaniam said.

As for the recent inflation uptick, Subramaniam said this should not be a concern, because the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) has been closely monitoring this, and the recent rate remains within range. We don't think that will be a concern because the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) has been closely monitoring this, and the recent rate remains within range. We don't think that will be a concern because the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) has been closely monitoring this, and the recent rate remains within range. We don't think that will be a concern because the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) has been closely monitoring this, and the recent rate remains within range. We don't think that will be a concern because the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) has been closely monitoring this, and the recent rate remains within range. We don't think that will be a concern because the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) has been closely monitoring this, and the recent rate remains within range.
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