

## French CGT, Sud Rail unions eye three more days of rail strikes over pension reforms

PARIS — French trade unions CGT and Sud Rail called on railway workers to take part in a nationwide strike on Jan. 31 over pension reform, and opt for further strike action on Feb. 7 and Feb. 8.

“Our federations are asking railway workers to strike en masse on Jan. 31 and to hold a meeting on Jan. 31 to decide whether to intensify their action through two consecutive days of strikes

on Feb. 7 and Feb. 8,” the two unions said in a joint statement.

More than a million people marched through French cities on Jan. 19 to denounce President Emmanuel Macron’s plans to

raise the retirement age, with a wave of nationwide strikes halting trains, blocking refineries and curbing power generation.

Buoyed by their success, the leading trade unions called for a second day of

strikes on Jan. 31 in a bid to force Mr. Macron and his government to back down on the pension reform plan that would see most people work an extra two years to age 64. — Reuters

# DoLE: Filipino POGO workers to get benefits if industry shuts down

THE Department of Labor and Employment (DoLE) said on Thursday that it will ensure Filipinos working in offshore gaming companies get the appropriate separation benefits in case the industry is ordered to shut down.

The department will ensure that such workers will get “separation pay and other benefits that are in line with the framework set by the labor code,” Labor Undersecretary Benjo Santos M. Benavidez said at a televised briefing.

The Labor Code of the Philippines requires that establishments that shut down provide separation pay equivalent to a month’s salary.

Mr. Benavidez noted that DoLE will also ensure that such workers receive unemployment insurance, equivalent to half their monthly pay.

The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority will also provide upskilling and livelihood

programs for workers affected by the potential ban on offshore gaming firms, Mr. Benavidez added.

He said that the department will help workers find jobs in similar industries through public employment offices.

DoLE estimates that about 25,000 employees may be affected by a potential ban on Philippine Offshore Gaming Operations (POGOs).

National Economic and Development Authority Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan said on Thursday that the government should consider the long-term issues offshore gaming companies may pose to the economy.

“It is creating a bad impression on the economy too where other countries are banning offshore gambling firms because they are associated with things like crime,” he said in chance remarks to reporters.

Legislators on Tuesday reiterated calls for the government to ban

offshore gaming in the Philippines, warning that other crimes could stem from their presence here.

Senator Sherwin T. Gatchalian accused the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (PAGCOR) of failing to regulate POGO’s.

PAGCOR has said those who want to gamble should do so legally on licensed electronic gaming platforms, citing the threat of cybercrime.

The Pasig City government recently banned all offshore gaming operators, giving them until the end of the year to close shop.

A total of 156 foreigners linked to illegal offshore gaming companies have been deported as of Dec. 31, the Bureau of Immigration said on Jan. 4.

“The government, especially the Labor department, has a plan for these workers that may be affected by a possible halt in these POGO’s operations,” Mr. Benavidez said. — **John Victor D. Ordoñez**

### OPINION

## The lost art of writing commendation letters

**I’ve read two of your articles on low-cost employee motivational strategies. However, I think you missed one important aspect of motivation — the writing of commendation letters. Aren’t such letters a type of low-cost motivation? — Sun Flower.**

I agree. As I’ve said in that article, praising people is akin to sunlight, available and free to all. So why can’t we do the same thing to our workers? All we need to do is discover what’s readily available, easy and practical. This includes writing commendation letters to those who deserve it.

In my Oct. 23, 2020 column, I wrote the following: “(F)ocus on giving non-monetary rewards that motivate. There’s no shotgun approach for this. You must tailor-fit your zero-cash reward to employees who value them the most.

“This includes the right to choose and manage a project, a letter of praise signed by the CEO, a testimonial plaque from peers signifying their high regard for the employee, and the opportunity to help develop an important new product for the company.”

As you can imagine “a letter of praise signed by the CEO” is something out of the ordinary, say when the concerned worker has done something monumental that’s favorable to the image of the organization. It could be that an employee who loves bowling may have excelled in a national competition.

At one bank, an employee was given more than a CEO’s commendation letter when she got a bronze medal in the last Southeast Asian Games. I’ve used this example many times to explain the principle of “self-actualization” — the apex in Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.

### SINCERE PRAISE

Ordinarily, commendation letters are signed by the department head and co-signed by the worker’s immediate boss. The higher the position of the signatories, the better as it lends credibility and significance. That must happen when the achievement is pertinent to one’s particular job and the worker has exceeded many times over the prescribed job requirements.

But tell me, when was the last time you wrote a commendation letter to a deserving employee? I imagine almost never, other than to verbalize or write bland marginal notes like “thank you,” “well done” and “keep it up,” which to me are purely mechanical in nature.

Commendation letters must not be taken for granted by line management. You don’t need much time, money and effort to write it. However, we’ve lost the fine art of writing such commendation letters, mainly due to the allure and convenience of social media.

When you received such praise through the social media, how did you feel? Elated, perhaps, but not for long. That’s because praise on social media has become

routine, especially when they are informal and accompanied by emoticons. Such pro-forma expressions are akin to polite applause for ordinary achievement. Nothing more, nothing less.

That means you did something acceptable to management but not enough to merit a well-crafted commendation letter. So what’s missing here? The ideal commendation letter must, first of all, show an incredible amount of sincerity on the part of the signatories. When you receive something like this, it should make you feel elevated.

Therefore, to manifest sincerity in your commendation letter, you must consider the following:

**One, be specific about the employee’s accomplishment.** In general, it must address what makes this accomplishment stand out compared to the achievements of other employees who are similarly-situated, and how the accomplishments stack up against the actual job expectations, as verified by independent sources, like the accounting department.

**Two, emphasize the impact of the achievement.** Be clear how it benefited the organization. Say something along the lines of: “Your discovery of a low-cost solution that eliminated oil waste in our operations saved us \$3,000 every month or \$36,000 a year is very much appreciated by management.

“What was remarkable was the fact that you used the lessons of our recent kaizen problem-solving workshop in making it happen.”

**Three, issue the commendation letter as soon as possible.** Don’t delay. Delay signifies that such a letter is not important to management. Apply the “hot stove” rule in employee discipline to writing commendation letters — the moment you touch a hot stove, the penalty will be immediate. And every time you touch the stove, the pain will be repeated.

The same should apply to praising people.

**Four, write the commendation letter the old-fashioned way.** That means issuing a printed, original copy of the letter to the employee, in the presence of other employees in a casual set-up, like in an afternoon pizza party. This signals the importance of the occasion to the receiver and provides a pretext for picture-taking or an item in the company newsletter.

A copy of the letter must be forwarded to the human resource (HR) department for the employee’s file.

**Last, don’t encourage false hopes.** If you’re elated by an employee’s above-average work performance, don’t be tempted to promise a promotion or a merit increase even if that employee deserves it. Better to keep silent about things that are beyond your authority to grant. Or even if it’s within your authority, unless you intend to act on the promise immediately.

If you’re limited only to giving commendations, it’s best to keep mum as anything coming out of your mouth could be taken the wrong way.

### IN THE WORKPLACE REY ELBO

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SANGGUNIANG PANLUNGSOD OF MAKATI

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### N.B.

Councilor HON. VIRGILIO V. HILARIO, JR. – Official Business

### ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Secretary to the Sanggunian ATTY. DINDO R. CERVANTES

Upon motion of Hon. J.M. Ariones, duly seconded, the Sangguniang Panlungsod of Makati, by a unanimous vote, approved City Resolution No. 2023-004 on second and final reading.

### CITY RESOLUTION NO. 2023-004

Authors: Hon. A.P. Padilla, Hon. R.A.Q. Saguisag, Jr., Hon. D.B. Almario, Hon. B.B. Baniqued, Hon. V.V. Hilario, Jr., Hon. J.M. Ariones, Hon. M.J.P.Q. Arenas and Hon. J.C. Villena, IV

Co-Authors: Hon. M.D.M. Arayon, Hon. A.J. Cruz, Hon. L.S. Javier, Jr., Hon. E.M. Marquez, Hon. C.C. Ortega, Hon. K.T. Sarosa, Hon. A.A.M. Yabut, Hon. M.F. Vitales and Hon. R.C. San Pedro, Jr.

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE HONORABLE MAYOR MAR-LEN ABIGAIL S. BINAY AND/OR HER DULY AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE TO SUBSCRIBE TO ANY AUTHORIZED GOVERNMENT DEPOSITORY BANK (AGDB) INTERNET BANKING FACILITY FOR THE TRANSACTIONS MENTIONED HEREIN AND TO SIGN ALL NECESSARY DOCUMENTS RELATIVE TO THE SAID TRANSACTIONS, SUBJECT TO EXISTING LAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS.**

**WHEREAS**, it is the policy of the City Government of Makati to promote the interest of the community within the framework of sustainable and integrated development;

**WHEREAS**, in furtherance of such policy, the City Government of Makati undertakes to modernize, among others, its payroll and facilities by providing fast and efficient online payment of salaries, allowances, incentives, benefits, financial assistance, and the like, to its rightful recipients;

**WHEREAS**, 16 January 2023, the City Treasurer’s Office requested the Sangguniang Panlungsod to approve a Resolution authorizing the subscription of the City Government of Makati to any Authorized Government Depository Bank (AGDB) internet banking facility for the online fund transfer from the City’s account to G-Exchange Incorporated for several transactions;

**WHEREAS**, in consideration of the necessity of granting such request, the Sangguniang Panlungsod of Makati hereby approves this Resolution.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE SANGGUNIANG PANLUNGSOD OF MAKATI, METRO MANILA, BY VIRTUE OF THE POWERS VESTED IN IT BY LAW, IN SESSION ASSEMBLED:**

**Section 1.** The City Mayor or his/her duly authorized representative is hereby authorized to subscribe to any Authorized Government Depository Bank (AGDB) internet banking facility for the online fund transfer from the City’s account to G-Exchange Incorporated for the following transactions:

- Payment and/or crediting of city employees’ salaries, allowances and other remunerations thru Gcash; and
- Payment and/or crediting of national government employees’ allowances and incentives, senior citizen incentives, and other forms of financial assistance.

**Section 2.** The City Mayor, City Treasurer and City Administrator are hereby authorized to enter into, execute and sign all documents necessary to subscribe to the internet banking facility of any AGDB.

**Section 3.** The following officers/employees of the City Government of Makati are hereby designated to act either as “Maker” (a person given access to a particular enrolled deposit account and initiates the banking transactions) or “Authorizer” (a person given access to a particular enrolled deposit account and has the authority to implement the banking transaction initiated by the Maker) for the City’s access to all the aforementioned modules in the internet banking facility of any AGDB:

No.	Designation	Level of Authority
1.	City Mayor	Authorizer
2.	City Vice Mayor	Authorizer
3.	City Administrator	Authorizer
4.	City Legal Officer	Authorizer
5.	City Treasurer	Authorizer
6.	City Accountant	Maker

**Section 5.** Let copies of this Resolution be furnished to the Office of the Mayor, Office of the City Administrator, Law Department, Finance Department, Accounting Department, Budget Department, Department of the Interior and Local Government – Makati City (DILG Makati), Information and Community Relations Department (ICRD), and other departments, offices, and agencies concerned for their information, guidance and reference.

**Section 6.** This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon its approval.

**APPROVED BY THE SANGGUNIANG PANLUNGSOD OF MAKATI, METRO MANILA, in its Regular Session held on 25 January 2023.**

Attested by:

**ATTY. DINDO R. CERVANTES**  
Secretary to the Sangguniang Panlungsod

Certified true and correct by:

**HON. MONIQUE YAZMIN MARIA Q. LAGDAMEO**  
Vice Mayor & Presiding Officer