

OLC appointed to head National Food Authority

THE National Food Authority (NFA) Council has appointed a Department of Agriculture (DA) director as the agency's officer in charge (OIC).

In a Facebook post, the NFA said that Larry del Rosario Lacson was granted the rank of deputy administrator on March 11 through Special Order No. 371 signed by DA Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr.

Mr. Lacson is a DA director IV and is a former director of the Bureau of Plant and Industry and a senior

vice-president of the Texicon Group of Companies.

"A graduate of BS Agriculture with masters and doctorate degrees in agronomy and crop science, Mr. Lacson is a sanitary and phytosanitary expert and a United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization-trained Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation facilitator," the NFA said.

Dozens of NFA staff were suspended by the Office of the Ombudsman due to irregularities in the disposition of rice held as reserves by the NFA.

The Ombudsman has so far lifted the suspension of at least 24 NFA employees out of the 141 suspended.

In a separate statement, Mr. Laurel said: "the NFA Council unanimously appointed Director Larry Lacson as OIC-administrator to make sure the agency runs smoothly, especially during this harvest season."

"The NFA is an integral part of our effort to ensure food security," he added. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

ERC pitches expanded regulatory powers to House committee

PROPOSED amendments to a law that privatized the power generation and distribution industries should also include an expansion of the industry regulator's oversight functions, the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) told a House committee on Monday.

"The ERC needs changes to its structure and the authority given to it by Congress almost 25 years ago," ERC Chairperson Monalisa C. Dimalanta told the committee, which is reviewing proposed amendments to EPIRA (the Electric Power Industry Reform Act).

The House Energy Committee was told that expanded ERC powers will help "protect consumers from the adverse effects of the changes to the industry today."

"(This would) enable the agency to act more effectively... in promoting greater competition as the way of achieving energy affordability," Ms. Dimalanta said. Ms. Dimalanta proposed that the ERC be given the direct authority to fine and penalize private energy corporations failing to adhere to the mandate of "lowering (power) rates." The ERC should also be allowed to issue permits to power generation and distribution companies.

Her proposal also included giving the ERC the ability to "undertake periodic restructuring and reorganization" to stay flexible, allowing it "to adjust accordingly when the need arises."

The ERC also seeks to retain some portion of its income for agency improvements. "Limited fiscal autonomy (should be considered) to allow the commission to retain a portion of its income for activities such as capital outlay, training, and innovation initiatives," Ms. Dimalanta added.

In response, a power consumer group welcomed the pro-



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posed amendments, saying that expanding ERC's functions would empower consumers.

"The current limitations faced by regulatory bodies, such as the Energy Regulatory Commission make them inefficient," Nic Satur, Jr., chief advocate officer of Partners for Affordable and Reliable Energy, told *BusinessWorld* in Facebook Messenger. "The ERC's lack of sufficient quasi-judicial authority to effectively safeguard consumer interests (is undermined) because they are overpowered by courts."

Mr. Satur said that courts often overturn the ERC's rulings denying price increases by power companies.

"This leaves consumers powerless and at a loss," he said. "Strengthening the ERC in these ways would ensure that it has the necessary tools to act decisively and protect consumers from unjust practices in the energy sector," he added.

"Such authority would not only allow the ERC to make binding decisions in disputes between utilities and consumers but also enforce compliance with these decisions to prevent expensive electricity prices for consumers," Mr. Satur said. — **Kenneth Christiane L. Basilio**

Infra council measure wins approval from Senate panel

A SENATE BILL seeking to create a council that will put together a long-term infrastructure masterplan has been approved by the committees on economic affairs, public works, and finance.

In the committee report dated March 13 for Senate Bill No. 2605, or the proposed Masterplan for Infrastructure National Development Act, the Comprehensive Infrastructure Development Masterplan was to contain plans for digitalization, energy, agriculture-fisheries modernization, water resources, transportation and logistics with a 30-year time horizon.

"The state recognizes the vital role of an efficient and integrated infrastructure system in promoting job creation to drive inclusive economic growth and sustainable development," according to a copy of the bill, which was sponsored by Senator Joseph Victor G. Ejercito.

The Masterplan for Infrastructure for National Development Council will be established to draft and execute the plan.

It is also tasked with maximizing public and private investment to boost economic activity.

The President will chair the council while the National Economic and Development Authority Secretary will serve as vice-chair.

Industry representatives from the energy, water, information and technology, agriculture-fisheries, transportation and logistics industries will also sit on the council.

The masterplan will be updated every 10 years or earlier to anticipate emerging technologies, emergencies, and other social trends.

"The state hereby adopts a policy to develop reforms in infrastructure planning to achieve higher economic growth trajectory and improve the quality of life of the Filipinos," according to the measure. — **John Victor D. Ordoñez**



LANDBANK, Customs bureau in payments system partnership

LAND BANK of the Philippines (LANDBANK) has entered into a partnership with the Bureau of Customs (BoC) to simplify the bureau's payments system.

Under the partnership, the BoC will use LANDBANK's Link.BizPortal to facilitate online payments for both government and private entities, the bank said in a statement on Monday.

"We at LANDBANK hope that our digital solutions and our Link.Biz platform will be able to accelerate collections. So we are doing our part as well for the efficient collection of government dues, and we are very much looking forward to this partnership," LANDBANK President and

Chief Executive Officer Lynette V. Ortiz said.

The partnership will allow clients to pay their dues to the BoC online instead of having to visit LANDBANK branches.

The bank added that the partnership will enhance the operational efficiency of the BoC, reduce red tape, and improve overall service delivery.

"Through LANDBANK's Link.BizPortal, we are not only facilitating smoother transactions, but also fostering greater transparency and accountability. As we embark on this new chapter, let us continue to strive for greater efficiency in our opera-

tions," Customs Commissioner Bienvenido Y. Rubio said.

Ms. Ortiz and Mr. Rubio signed the Memorandum of Agreement for the partnership on March 4.

The LANDBANK Link.BizPortal will add to the BoC's existing payment systems, PAS6 and E2M, promising a more user-friendly online payment experience.

LANDBANK added that the partnership supports the Adoption of Digital Payments for Government Disbursement and Collections, in line with Executive Order No. 170, and Republic Act No. 11032, or the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Delivery of Government Services Act. — **Aaron Michael C. Sy**



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LUNGSOD NG MAKATI
SANGGUNIANG PANLUNGSOD OF MAKATI

PRESENT:

Vice Mayor	HON. MONIQUE YAZMIN MARIA Q. LAGDAMEO – Presiding Officer
Councilor	HON. DENNIS B. ALMARIO
Councilor	HON. MARIA DOLORES M. ARAYON
Councilor	HON. MARTIN JOHN PIO Q. ARENAS
Councilor	HON. JOEL M. ARIONES
Councilor	HON. SHIRLEY C. ASPILLAGA
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Councilor	HON. ANNA ALCINA M. YABUT
LNB President	HON. ROLANDO D. ALVAREZ, JR.
SK President	HON. JEROME TRISTAN G. PANGILINAN

N.B.:

Councilor	HON. ARMANDO P. PADILLA – Vacation Leave
Councilor	HON. RENE ANDREI Q. SAGUISAG, JR. – On Leave

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Secretary to the Sanggunian	ATTY. DINDO R. CERVANTES
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Upon motion of Hon. M.D.M. Arayon, duly seconded, the Sangguniang Panlungsod of Makati, by a unanimous vote, approved City Resolution No. 2024-024 on second and final reading.

CITY RESOLUTION NO. 2024-024

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. M.D.M. Arayon, Hon. E.M. Marquez, Hon. C.C. Ortega and Hon. J.T.G. Pangilinan

Co-Authors: Hon. M.J.P.Q. Arenas, Hon. J.M. Ariones, Hon. L.S. Javier, Jr., Hon. K.T. Sarosa, Hon. J.C. Villena, IV, Hon. A.A.M. Yabut and Hon. R.D. Alvarez, Jr.

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE HONORABLE MAYOR MAR-LEN ABIGAIL S. BINAY OR HER DULY AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE TO NEGOTIATE, ENTER INTO AND SIGN A MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT (MOA) AND ALL OTHER PERTINENT DOCUMENTS RELATIVE THERETO, FOR AND ON BEHALF OF THE CITY GOVERNMENT OF MAKATI, WITH COLINAS VERDES HOSPITAL MANAGERS CORPORATION (CVHMC), REGARDING THE FORGING OF PARTNERSHIP OF THE AFORESAID ENTITIES IN RELATION TO THE MANAGEMENT AND CARE OF REFERRED AND/OR TRANSFERRED OSPITAL NG MAKATI (OSMAK) PATIENTS IN CVHMC, SUBJECT TO EXISTING LAWS, RULES, AND REGULATIONS.

WHEREAS, Section 15, Article II of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides that "(T)he State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.;"

WHEREAS, it is the policy of the City Government of Makati to provide the best possible health care to its constituents by strengthening the delivery of its health care programs and services;

WHEREAS, Colinas Verdes Hospital Managers Corporation (CVHMC) is a private medical institution duly approved by the Department of Health (DOH) to operate a Tertiary Care Level Hospital;

WHEREAS, the City Government of Makati, through the Ospital ng Makati (OSMAK), desires to obtain the services of CVHMC, for the rendition of medical and health care services which are beyond the therapeutic capabilities of OSMAK;

WHEREAS, CVHMC manifests its willingness to accommodate and facilitate the management and care of referred and/or transferred OSMAK patients and to ensure the continuity of care and treatment appropriate to the needs of the patients;

WHEREAS, the execution of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), among other documents, between the City Government of Makati and CVHMC is necessary in order to guide the parties in carrying out the abovementioned purpose;

WHEREAS, Section 8 (a) (6) of R.A. No. 7854, otherwise known as the Charter of the City of Makati, provides that the City Mayor, as the chief executive of the city government, shall among others, represent the City in all its business transactions and sign on its behalf all bonds, contracts, and obligation, and such other documents upon authority of the sangguniang panlungsod or pursuant to law or ordinance;

WHEREAS, considering the reasonableness and absence of any legal impediment to the proposed partnership, the Sangguniang Panlungsod of Makati, pursuant to the abovementioned provision of law, 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, to authorize the Honorable Mayor Mar-len Abigail S. Binay or her duly authorized representative to negotiate, enter into and sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) and all other pertinent documents relative thereto, for and on behalf of the City Government of Makati, with Colinas Verdes Hospital Managers Corporation (CVHMC), regarding the forging of partnership of the aforesaid entities in relation to the management and care of referred and/or transferred Ospital ng Makati (OSMAK) patients in CVHMC, subject to existing laws, rules, and regulations.

RESOLVED FURTHER, that copies of this Resolution be furnished the Office of the Mayor, Office of the City Administrator, Law Department, Makati Health Department (MHD), Ospital ng Makati (OSMAK), Budget Department, Accounting Department, Information and Community Relations Department (ICRD), Department of the Interior and Local Government – Makati City Field Office (DILG-Makati City), Colinas Verdes Hospital Managers Corporation (CVHMC), and all other departments, offices, and agencies concerned for their information, guidance, and reference.

This Resolution shall be posted and published in accordance with the provisions of R.A. No. 7854.

APPROVED BY THE SANGGUNIANG PANLUNGSOD OF MAKATI, METRO MANILA, in its Regular Session held on 13 March 2024.

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