

MANILA MAIL: New Pacquiao crown: AFP pole-vault champ

Written by FEDERICO D. PASCUAL
Thursday, 20 October 2011 22:07



FIVE-STEP JUMP: A professional who holds the rank of sergeant in the reserved force but has not donned boxing gloves is raising questions about ring hero Manny Pacquiao's pole-vaulting five steps from chief master sergeant to lieutenant colonel in the army.

He notes:

* Pacquiao is not even 40 years old. Philippine Military Academy graduates usually become Lt. Cols. by age 40.

That is why the minimum age for admission to the National Defense College is 40.

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(An exception was Lt. Col. Loren Legarda, who was admitted at a younger age, but then she was with ABS-CBN and the NDCP top brass wanted to do a little PR).

* One must at least be a college graduate, which Pacquiao is not, to be a commissioned officer in the armed forces.

The same is true in the Coast Guard and the Philippine National Police although their officers are not “commissioned.”

If ever, Pacquiao could be a Lt. Col. (*honoris causa*).

* Only the President is authorized to sign the appointments of commissioned officers.

It was Executive Secretary Paquito Ochoa who signed Pacquiao’s papers.

The Commander-in-Chief can waive requirements, including those on education, age and height, but there was no report that he did waive anything.

Btw, without meaning to *makialam*, Pacquiao should strive to be a model family man.

We do not want to see the champion straying like a Tiger in the woods, then losing his deadly punch and his crown.

ECONOMIC PRESSURE: To many struggling students, the most severe test is not academics,

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but economics.

To those who have not experienced it, no words or graphics can describe the pain and humiliation that many poor students must endure in their quest for liberation through education.

As Ramon Magsaysay would have said it, a student who has less in life must have more in law.

It is not difficult and will not require spending public funds, but passing a law prohibiting schools from barring students with unpaid fees from taking examinations would be a big help to them and their parents.

NO EXAMS: The House of Representatives passed on third reading last August its version of a bill prohibiting colleges and university from enforcing a “No permit, No exam” policy.

Kabataan party-list Rep. Raymond Palatino, author of the bill, said “Students should be able to focus on studying for their examinations and not worry if they cannot pay school fees on time.”

Sen. Manny Villar, sponsor of the counterpart bill in the Senate, said that the “No permit, No exam” policy denying students with unpaid fees the right to take examinations “weighs greatly on their final grades.”

Parents and students, Villar lamented, “have endured in silent agony for so long under this seemingly unfair practice.”

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VILLAR BILL: The Commission on Higher Education has banned the practice through a memorandum in January, but many schools ignore the directive.

Under the Villar bill, schools that insist on requiring full payment before examinations will be fined P20,000 to P50,000.

Schools will also be penalized for requiring down payments of more than 30 percent of tuition and other school fees per semester.

But schools will be allowed to withhold grades and clearances of students with unpaid dues, and can deny their next enrollment until their accounts are settled.

The bill has been referred to the Senate committee on education chaired by Sen. Edgardo Angara.

THAI WAY: Monday, my jaw dropped upon reading that some 68,000 jobs have been created in Thailand for more than 350,000 people whose jobs were washed away by floods that ravaged the country.

The measure sounded so simple, so commonsensical, one wonders why something similar to it was not immediately done here.

President Noynoy Aquino had \$1 million to give to Japanese disaster victims but no 68,000 jobs to offer able-bodied flood victims?

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(Or maybe that many jobs, or more, had been created here but the good news had not been widely communicated by the Palace Hydra.)

PINOYS SAFE: There are around 5,000 Filipinos in Thailand, but the Philippine embassy in Bangkok — where the swelled Chao Phraya river cuts through amid the criss-crossing klongs or canals — finds no need for evacuation.

Some 352,000 Thai workers in 15 flood-stricken provinces lost their jobs when at least 6,533 businesses shut down.

An alert Thai labor department made arrangements with the more than 10,000 unaffected businesses to absorb the displaced workers.

But Monday, the Navanakorn industrial estate in Pathum Thani, one of Thailand's oldest and largest industrial estates 45km from Bangkok was evacuated after flood waters breached its defenses.

Navanakorn has some 250 factories employing up to 200,000 workers.

Most of Bangkok, meanwhile, appears to have escaped the flooding, although some parts of the capital are still under threat.

DIGNIFIED WORK: In our column of Oct. 4, we suggested during the massive flooding in Central Luzon that the government release immediately a big portion of the P22 billion that it

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has reserved for strategic doling out to the statistical poor at some future time.

The billions could be used NOW to rebuild, provide relief, and create jobs.

Have pity on the thousands who until now wade in stinking waters not knowing where to sleep, get their next meal, and provide for their children.

Nature has set the stage for the Aquino Administration to make a big show of caring for calamity victims, but for some reason it has been so slooow in reacting to emergencies.

It cannot be that there is no money, not after Malacañang boasted that it has some P20 billion in savings.

Providing temporary jobs during this emergency, instead doling out cash, will allow the poor and the displaced adults to work with dignity and not wallow in state-sponsored mendicancy.

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