

16-year-old Fil-Am student to enter Ph.D. physics program

AT a time when many teens are looking forward to a summer break from high school, 16-year-old Ethan Villarama will graduate from California State University, Los Angeles and prepare to enter a rigorous Ph.D. program in the fall.

Villarama is the youngest member of the University's Class of 2017.

On May 20, he will receive a bachelor of science in physics with magna cum laude honors. He is planning to attend the University of California, San Diego in the fall to earn a doctoral degree in physics.

"I am excited to begin my doctoral education at UC San Diego, so I can become a full-fledge scientist doing work in the top of my field," said Villarama. "I'm grateful for the many opportunities for independent, self-learning, as well as the supportive faculty in the Physics department and at Cal State LA."

Villarama enrolled at Cal State LA when he was 11-years-old through the Early Entrance Program. The program, which accepts highly gifted students as young as 11-years-old, is administered by the University's Honors College.

Villarama is part of Cal State LA's Minority Opportunities in Research (MORE) programs, which prepare talented students of color for careers in science, mathematics and engineering. The programs are funded by the



Ethan Villarama

National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of General Medical Sciences and the American Chemical Society.

A Pasadena, California resident, Villarama conducted research in the laboratories of Cal State LA Professor William Taylor and Professor Susan Terbey.

In summer 2016, Villarama participated in a highly competitive internship at the prestigious European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Geneva, Switzerland.

For nine intensive weeks, he joined scientists and researchers on the ATLAS experiment. ATLAS is a particle physics experiment at CERN that is searching for new discoveries in the head-on collisions of protons of

extraordinarily high energy. Researchers are using the world's largest, most powerful particle accelerator known as the Large Hadron Collider. The project is coordinated by the CSU-wide Nuclear and Particle Physics Consortium with support from the National Science Foundation.

CERN is one of the world's largest and most respected laboratories for scientific research.

Villarama says the opportunity allowed him to meet leading scientists in the field and visit Europe for the first time.

"This was the best opportunity to learn about the latest research in high energy physics," he says. "This experience definitely prepared me for graduate school and a future career as a research professor." ■



ATE COMMENDS 2016 BAR TOPNOTCHER. Senate President Koko Pimentel III presents a copy of a resolution commending Karen Mae Calam (5th from right), a certified public accountant and law graduate from the University of San Carlos in Cebu City, for topping the 2016 Philippine Bar Examinations. The Senate resolution, introduced by Senator Juan Miguel Zubiri Tuesday, May 9, 2017, congratulates Calam for "obtaining the highest mark in what is considered as one of the toughest licensure exams in the country." Also in the photo are (from left) Senate Majority Leader Tito Sotto with Senators Manny Pacquiao, Zubiri, Calam's family, and Senator Sonny Angara. Senate photo by Romy Bugante

DOJ to reinvestigate PDAF...

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also referred to as "pork barrel" scam, in her serious illegal detention case filed by whistleblower Benhur Luy.

Napoles, however, is still facing graft and plunder charges in connection with the anomaly of the pork barrel program.

Napoles to reveal more

Also on Thursday, Napoles's lawyer said he has met with Aguirre to discuss the possibility of turning her into a state witness.

"We're just exploring the possibility that my client will be admitted to the Witness Protection Program (WPP), basically 'yun lang naman (That's basically it)," Napoles's lawyer Stephen David told reporters after their meeting.

David said they are requesting the DOJ to give Napoles "proper security" if the proposition passes, adding that Napoles is ready to name "higher" officials involved in the multi-billion peso scam.

According to him, there had been talks with the Aquino administration about the possibility of Napoles becoming a state witness but the proposal apparently failed to protect political allies allegedly involved in the scam.

Aguirre, for his part, assured that the DOJ would conduct a fair and impartial investigation into the cases.

Napoles might be used not against the opposition but against those guilty or responsible," Aguirre remarked.

He went on to say, "Whether you are in the opposition or in the administration if the evidence will show you are responsible then you should clear your name, answer the accusations against you. Otherwise, prepare for your trial."

While clarifying that he was not implying guilt, Aguirre said that "high-ranking people" are likely involved in the scam, citing that Napoles was reportedly accompanied by then-President

Aquino and then-Interior Secretary Mar Roxas to the Philippine National Police (PNP) headquarters after surrendering to Malacañang in August 2013.

Aguirre also recalled that then-Justice Secretary de Lima said, "more than three times that they are going to come out with additional respondents, but it did not happen."

'Duterte after truth'

In light of Napoles's acquittal, President Rodrigo Duterte is looking to uncover the whole truth about the pork barrel scam and hold those involved accountable, according to Malacañang.

While Duterte has publicly expressed his support on the reopening of inquiry into the fund scam, Presidential Spokesperson Ernesto Abella assured that the probe would not be used for personal or political motives.

"The president wants the truth to finally come out and hold those involved, regardless of political color or party line, accountable," Abella said in a statement.

Abella also underscored that the Filipino people "deserves to know the truth in this case, not the slanted truth nor the doctored truth."

'No probable cause'

Former President Aquino has insisted that there is no probable cause to indict him with technical malversation charges in connection with the controversial use of the DAP.

Last March, Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales cleared Aquino from liabilities over the DAP and only indicted former Budget Secretary Florencio Abad for violating Article 239 of the Revised Penal Code, or the usurpation of legislative powers, by "unlawfully" issuing the National Budget Circular (NBC) No. 541, which paved the way for the release of P72 billion-worth of DAP.

But complainants, led by Rep. Carlos Zarate of Bayan Muna party-list, appealed to the Om-

budsman to reconsider its decision of clearing Aquino, arguing that the roles of Aquino and Abad "could not be discounted as mere 'policy makers' of the DAP scheme."

"Rather, the policy direction chosen by respondents are the raison d'être of the DAP," the motion for reconsideration read.

In October 2011, then-President Aquino approved the DAP proposed by Abad, which aimed to "fast-track public spending and push economic growth by

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PROVISIONAL WAIVER

ENCORE EPISODE

Cindy was a crewman who jumped ship in 2003 to find better opportunities in the US, only to live the life of a TNT. A consultation with leading US immigration attorney MICHAEL J. GURFINKEL set her in the right direction. Atty. Gurfinkel obtained a provisional waiver, enabling her to obtain an immigrant visa in Manila. This encore episode provides hope to those who wanted to see success stories on PROVISIONAL WAIVER, before making a decision to go back to Manila for visa processing.

TELECAST SCHEDULE

TFC	Sunday	•	6:15 PM PST	original
	Sunday	•	3:25 AM PST	reply
ANC US	Saturday	•	10:30 AM PST	original
ANC Phil	Sunday	•	1:30 AM Phil	original

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PH tightens security...

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security measures if and when these information are validated already," the police spokesman said.

President Rodrigo Duterte himself allayed fears of kidnapping in Palawan.

"We have spruced up the place both physically and with the strength of the security forces," Duterte told reporters before leaving for Cambodia.

"My order to the security forces is stalk, shoot them on site. Patayin ninyo [Kill them]. Do not waste your bullet [then we take care of them in the hospital. Expend your bullet to finish the problem because it is really a problem. It is a problem of security, law and order," he added.

Telcos suspend services in Quiapo, surrounding areas

Amid the terror warnings,

telecommunication companies Globe Telecom and Smart Communications shut down services at 3 p.m. on Wednesday to comply with a directive from the National Telecommunications Commission.

In separate public advisories, Globe and Smart pleaded for patience and understanding, saying the situation was a matter of national security.

Last week, twin blasts rocked Quiapo, Manila, which claimed two lives and left six people injured.

Police are still conducting post-blast investigations to find the persons involved in the blast, said to have targeted an Islamic leader (see related story).

Malacañang earlier urged the public to be vigilant and not spread "fake news" about the incident. ■

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