

One of the world's leading manufacturers-exporters of electronic parts and gadgets spends roughly P65 million a month on electricity. So, it was no surprise that Samsung Electro-Mechanics Philippines Corporation (SEMPHIL) was happy when its electric bill went down by P9 million a month following President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's directive on the lowering of electricity rates.

SEMPHIL officials and employees led by its president Young Duck Kim, met with President Arroyo this morning at the company's sprawling 11-hectare manufacturing plant at the Calamba Premiere International Park (CPIP) here to thank her for her efforts to cut energy costs.

In a five-minute power point presentation, SEMPHIL documented how the President's directive to lower power rates in all economic zones has greatly helped ease the burden that large electric consumers are experiencing in operations due to the high cost of power.

SEMPHIL, one of 42 foreign and local companies operating in the CPIP, consumes 85 percent or 17 megawatts of the 20-megawatt total monthly electricity consumption of the CPIP.

It pays the local electrical cooperative roughly P65 million a month, or 76 percent of the total P86-million electricity bill of the CPIP.

But following the President's directive, power rates in the CPIP and other economic zones have considerably gone down.

SEMPHIL officials said that in 2007, the company was charged P5.50 per kilowatt hour (KwH) of electricity, but shortly after President Arroyo's electric power-cutting directive in March 2008, their electric bill was down to P4.1 per KwH, or a savings of P1.03 per KwH.

When computed against SEMPHIL's total electricity consumption, the company's savings translated to a whopping P9-million per month.

Kim, who gave a brief statement upon the arrival here of the President, thanked the Chief Executive for her directive, saying he and his company were grateful for her support.

He also expressed hope that a further reduction in electricity rates was in the offing.

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PGMA brushes aside alleged new destabilization attempt; Palace leaves matter to PNP

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo went on with her scheduled activities unmindful of an alleged new attempt by a group of active and retired military officers to destabilize her administration.

Security alert level at the Malacanang Palace has not been raised and that the President would go on with her scheduled visit tomorrow to Subic, Zambales, LIngayen in Pangasinan and Sarrat, Ilocos Norte.

"She's not worried about any destabilization attempts," Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro said in an interview after attending the Regional Disaster Coordinating Council meeting of CALABARZON presided over by the President at the Camp Vicente Lim in Canlubang, Laguna.

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Presidential Security Group chief Celedonio Boquiren said the security alert level at the Malacanang Palace complex has remained normal and that no alert level was raised.

The President started her day leading in the foundation laying ceremony of the Shangri-La at the Fort Hotel and witnessing the sealing of an agreement on food security between San Miguel Corporation and Shangri-La.

She then motored to Samsung Electro-Mechanics Philippines in Calamba City before presiding over the RDCC 4A meeting at Camp Vicente Lim in Canlubang, Laguna.

At the same time, Teodoro believed the military is intact that he does not see the need for a loyalty check as he belittled the ability of the alleged coup plotters.

"I'm confident of the loyalty of the AFP [Armed Forces of the Philippines]" he said.

"They are a spent force but it's a crime and it has to be dealt with," he added.

In a related development, Press Secretary Jesus Dureza said Malacañang is "constantly monitoring the developments of the case" saying it "obviously involves national security issues."

Dureza also said the Philippine National Police (PNP) is handling the case and that the Palace "would rather leave this matter to proper agencies to handle."

"The trajectory of the legal action will be determined by the quantum of evidence available," he said as he urged "sobriety and respect for due process" for the peaceful, just and expeditious

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resolution of the case.

Reports have it that the PNP took into custody the other night lawyer Homobono Adaza and five former police and military officers for allegedly planning to stage another coup against the Arroyo administration.

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Statement of Press Secretary Jesus G. Dureza on the arrest of former Assemblyman Adaza, et al

The case obviously involves national security issues hence, we are constantly monitoring the developments of the case. Since this is in the hands of the PNP, we would rather leave this matter to the proper agencies to handle.

The trajectory of the legal action will be determined by the quantum of evidence available. Meanwhile, we urge sobriety and respect for due process, so that this matter will be resolved justly, peacefully and expeditiously.

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PGMA creates ASEAN Charter Task Force

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has created an inter-agency Task Force that will work for the Senate concurrence on the ratification of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Charter.

The President signed Administrative Order No. 229 last June 18, 2009 to expedite the ratification by the Senate in concurrence with Executive Order No. 459, series of 1997, “providing for the guidelines in the negotiation of international agreements and its ratification.”

“There is a need to create a Task Force composed of different government agencies, which will be tasked to put forward to the Senate the benefits, advantages and opportunities to the Philippines of an ASEAN Charter,” the AO read.

The ASEAN Charter gives a legal personality to the Association composed of 10 nations: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, as a single inter-governmental organization.

The Task Force will be composed or representatives from the following government agencies:

- Department of Foreign Affairs (Chair)
- Department of Trade and Industry

- Department of Justice

- Department of National Defense

- Department of Labor and Employment

- Office of the Solicitor General

- National Economic and Development Authority

- National Security Council

- National-Anti-Poverty Commission

The Task Force will, among others, coordinate with other agencies of government in securing information required for Senate concurrence in the ratification of the ASEAN Charter; organize the resource documents pertinent to the Senate hearings on the ASEAN Charter; attend the hearings on the ASEAN Charter in the Philippine Senate; and, perform such other functions as may be directed by the President. # # #

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