

HAWAII-PHILIPPINE NEWS EDITION

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HAWAII FILIPINO CHRONICLE

HAWAII'S ONLY WEEKLY FILIPINO-AMERICAN NEWSPAPER

CHAMPIONING THE ENVIRONMENT: VISITING PHILIPPINE SCHOLARS READY TO TAKE LEAD

By Caroline JULIAN

Sustainability. Global Environment. Preserving natural resources. Those issues are top of mind for five bright and scholarly college students who are studying at various universities in the Philippines. They've just completed a program in the U.S. in which they studied global environmental issues. The scholars hope to take what they learn back home to begin creating an awareness and improving their environment.

"I am deeply excited to bring back all the lessons back home, especially to 'One Earth,' the organization I co-founded in the University of the Philippines Manila," says Ramon Guinto, who is a graduate of the University of the Philippines Manila-Philippine General Hospital in basic medical sciences.

"I am also thrilled at the fact that this is a great opportunity to learn from the United States' best in environmental stewardship," he adds.

The students were hand-picked for a program

called Study of the U.S. Institute for Student Leaders on Global Environmental Issues (SUSI). It was organized by the East-West Center in collaboration with 50 other organizations. The Filipino students are among 20 undergraduate scholars from Burma, Malaysia and Thailand who are participating in SUSI, which is funded by the Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

As participants, students develop the ability to build and maintain resilient communities in relation to

(continued on page 4)



Renzo Guinto, Romcy Madronio, Robbie Yasi, Ronald Ringor, and John Dale Dianala enjoying the rope course at the Kualoa Ranch

Binay Won't Join Noy Government

By Aurea CALICA

MANILA, Philippines - Vice president-elect Jejomar Binay will no longer be part of the government of incoming president Benigno "Noy" Aquino III, since he turned down all the positions offered to him.

Binay met with Aquino at his home on Times Street in Quezon City at around 1 p.m. yesterday despite having relayed his decision to Aquino Monday night.

"I offered him several posts that he declined. I asked him to think about it," Aquino said in a text message.

He refused to disclose what positions he offered to Binay. The vice president-elect also refused to discuss details of the two-hour meeting, saying only that it was "cordial."

"We are friends and it was a social and cordial meeting, not much formality," Binay said.



Binay, who ran under the Pwersa ng Masang Pilipino and the United Opposition, defeated Aquino's running mate Sen. Manuel Roxas II.

Aquino said he did not offer Binay the interior and local government portfolio, which Binay had sought because of his 20-

(continued on page 5)

'No Honeymoon on Justice for Maguindanao Massacre Victims'

By Dino BALABO

MALQOS CITY, Philippines - Journalists have reiterated their call for justice for their slain colleagues in the Maguindanao massacre.

Nony Espina, director of the National Union Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP), said President Arroyo should be held accountable for the massacre, adding that President-elect Benigno "Noy" Aquino III should ensure that justice will be served to the victims.

(continued on page 6)



No let up for the protesters in showing their disgusts and sentiments.

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EDITORIAL

Stop Big Money from Undermining the Election Process

Legalized corruption!" Perhaps that could be the best way to describe the U.S. election process.

With billions of dollars pouring into elections, no one can deny the iron-clad grip special interest groups have on politicians.

The recent mid-term elections cost a whopping \$3.7 billion, up 35 percent from the last one in 2006. The upcoming general election is also expected to lift the ink off record books. The steep rise goes well beyond inflation, said David Levinthal of the Center of Responsive Politics, an independent Washington think-tank group. In fact that \$3.7 billion is a conservative estimate, not taking into account the new spending allowed from the January 2010 U.S. Supreme Court decision that reverses the ban on independent expenditures by corporations.

NEW LAW

In the most egregious judgment in decades, the SC in Citizens United v Federal Election Commission ruled that corporations may spend as freely as they would like to support or oppose candidates in federal elections. Since 1947, corporations had been banned from directly endorsing political candidates to minimize businesses efforts on federal campaigns. Big corporations (and unions) had to work through political action committees (PACS) and stay within the framework of campaign finance laws that placed caps on their PAC contributions. As of this year, they can now spend unlimited sums directly from their own treasuries. The new system throws out all the safeguards, leaving no comprehensive way to track accurately how much money corporations is actually spending, at least for this first election cycle.

The single fact remains that its ramification could be limitless and clearly a game-changer in who wins and who stays in office - with the most important impact obviously being immense pressure on how our elected officials vote on key legislation.

At this pivotal time in American history when the majority of people finally had enough of Wall Street abuses and their influence on public policy, the SC sides with special interest groups in damage-control flair to further dishevel the elections process in

their favor. As educated voters tune to grassroots democracy, what can we do? We have three responsibilities: 1) stay focused on where we stand on the issues, 2) second guess the barrage of misinformation fronted by so-called independent sources by way of TV and print media, and lastly 3) vote for candidates who most closely represent our values, no matter what their perceived chances of winning may be as forecasted by the same special interest groups that pay for the propaganda we see and hear.

EASIER SAID THAN DONE

Sounds simple? Unless we are passionate about our political inclination, these three tasks can easily be lost in confusion, knowing all too well the potent power the media can have on our decision-making process.

The better, concrete fight to bar overreaching influence, would be to support congressional legislation to undo the SC's politically motivated interpretation of the First Amendment which extends "individual" protections to corporations. Given the financial inequity between "individuals" and corporations, not to mention corporations' advantage of being organized bodies, it's easy to see how the playing field becomes increasingly lop-sided.

Let's call our congressional representatives and tell them of our disapproval with the SC ruling. Encourage them to come up with a broad system where campaigns can be financed fairly. The SC decision cannot be allowed to completely upend the years of upgrading to campaign financing. Giving more power to the well-heeled corporations (and unions) who already control a disproportionate share of it, contradicts all sensibilities of fairness that we pride ourselves of having during elections.

Let the obscene dollars already spent in this year's mid-term election be a wakeup call to every citizen that our election system is being dangerously undermined. The presumption of fairness begins with each election. To allow it to be tainted would upset the entire political process. ■



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HEADLINES (CONT.)

(cont. from page 4; Championing ...)

"These just show the growing importance of public health practitioners to be involved in environmental work. More research must be done regarding the impact of climate change on human health, while education and strict public health measures must be implemented in order to solve the problem of waste disposal," Guinto says.

For Ringor, landfiling the Philippines' waste is not the preferred solution.

"Generally the Philippines puts its waste in landfills which I think is not the solution at all. It may be a solution but it's a short term one," he says. "In Baguio City, where I go to school at, our dumpsite closed and now the government spends a lot (of money) shipping our waste to Tarlac. As far as technology and solid waste, the Philippines should consider converting solid refuse to power like that of Japan. Recycling is a big way to reduce waste to landfills."

Dianala says that development in the Philippines is not catered to keeping a clean and safe environment. He says that the government should rethink its policies in light of the inevitable changing climate and address the core issues.

In all fairness, some cities in the Philippines have launched solid waste management efforts in recycling and cleaning up some streets. There are a few urban models like



Renzo Guinto and Christina Monroe, SUSI coordinator and education project analyst at the East-West Center with Kirk Matthews after being interviewed in the "Be Green" morning news

Barangay Holy Spirit in Quezon City that already has a recycling center and even organic farming.

But the core of the issue, Dianala says, is the peoples' attitude. Most rural and outlying areas are doing a better job in keeping the environment clean due perhaps to less technology used in those areas.

"The Philippines already has a law called Ecological Solid Waste Management Act that requires every local government unit to practice segregation, composting and recycling. Unfortunately, there is a huge gap between legislation and implementation, and so we need to educate our local government officials about this law and even provide them with technical assistance," Guinto says. "We're still stuck in the middle in terms of implementation. Change is a slow process."

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

The students believe creating awareness on how the environmental issues are plaguing their country is the first step in finding solutions. Sadly, some Filipinos are unaware of the need to care for the environment.

"One of the most important (things) would be to make other people aware of the problems we face now and that we need to do something about it, or it would be too late," Dianala says.

They also believe sustainability and a movement towards a green lifestyle should become a top priority. And it begins with leadership.

"Government officials must be more transparent and vigilant towards being green because if they pursue for development, then environmental conservation should go along with it," Madronio says. "De-

velopment and environmental conservation should be balanced enough to still save the purpose of nature to our ecosystem."

He also believes more partnerships between developers and environmentalists need to be formed. For instance, some companies conduct tree planting projects just to compensate for their damage done to Mother Earth.

Guinto says that more Filipinos must realize that it is from the environment that they get our daily food and water, and that polluted natural resources cause ill health.

"Sometimes, we just need to stop talking about the big things like climate change and carbon emissions and return to the basics—how the environment is connected to our own survival. To spread this kind of thinking, aggressive education at the grassroots level is an essential strategy," Guinto says.

ENVIRONMENTAL FUTURE

When the students return to the Philippines, they hope to apply what they've learned to their respective fields.

For Madronio, whose future goal is to become a teacher, he wants to convey the importance of sustainability to the youth in his community.

"It's not just about celebrating Earth Day and Earth Hour and teaching these concepts, but about making sustainability a part of our lifestyle. Our school system plays a very big role. Once we educate the

young, the future will lead us to green living and a green Philippines," he says.

For Ringor, the knowledge he has gained from the SUSI program has been invaluable.

"As a Chemical Engineering student, I know that it can increase my knowledge on the issues that the world is currently facing, thus making guiding me as a Chemical Engineer in my future decisions in my practice," he says.

Guinto's goal is to conduct more research on native Filipino environmental practices—which he was encouraged to do when visiting Hawaii.

"On the Big Island I went to Amy Greenwell Ethnobotanical Garden which followed the ahupua'a land management system of native Hawaiians. We also visited some organic farms that avoid monocropping, synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, and other modern-day methods of agriculture. Indeed, the past can teach us a lot about the future," he says.

The SUSI program has also been of tremendous value to Dianala.

"I hope that I can learn and gain ideas that can be reformulated in the Philippine context, specifically to the University and College community. Also, I am hoping that this can lead the way to future opportunities, especially in the pursuit for a cleaner and greener world," he says. ■

(cont. from page 1; Binay...)

year experience as mayor of Makati City. There are speculations that Aquino is considering outgoing Naga City Mayor Jesse Robredo for the position.

Aquino also denied rumors that he offered Binay the transportation and communications portfolio. Binay said he did not want to head any department that he does not have expertise in. In a statement issued after the meeting, Binay's spokesman Joey Salgado said Binay assured Aquino of his support.

"The vice president-elect assured president-elect Noyrnoy of his friendship and support and readiness to extend any assistance, whatever is needed," Salgado said. Binay was the first to be ap-

pointed by Aquino's mother, the late former President Corason Aquino, as officer-in-charge of the then municipality of Makati after the first people power revolt in 1986.

DE LIMA WOULD BE AN ASSET TO GOVERNMENT

Election lawyers yesterday praised the appointment of Commission on Human Rights (CHR) chair Leila de Lima as Justice secretary. "She is the right person for the job. She has the quality of a good secretary of justice," said election lawyer Romulo Macalintal. Macalintal said De Lima could initiate reforms in the prosecution of election-related cases.

De Lima accepted Aquino's offer to join his Cabinet last Tuesday. Macalintal said De Lima pos-

sesses the "track record, integrity, competence and probity" needed for the position. Aquino's lawyer, Sixto Brillantes, said De Lima's appointment is "one of the best appointments" Aquino could make. "Attorney De Lima is incorruptible. She cannot be influenced so she is the best person for the job," he said.

Brillantes said former Chief Justice Reynato Puno, himself in the shortlist for the position, could have recommended De Lima to Aquino. Before being appointed by President Arroyo as CHR chair in 2008, De Lima was an election lawyer for Senators Aquilino Pimentel III and Alan Cayetano during the 2007 midterm polls.

Malacañang, meanwhile, is optimistic that De Lima would be fair should she pursue cases against

Mrs. Arroyo.

Aquino has promised to go after the outgoing President and members of the First Family on allegations of corruption and human rights violations. "If that's true, I don't want to speculate, if it's really the DOJ (Department of Justice) that will undertake any investigation, I think that's good because at least there would be no politics," said Ex-

ecutive Secretary Leandro Mendoza.

"The DOJ would be a very professional institution and it's going to be ruled by events. I don't want to speculate."

De Lima has a fixed term of seven years as CHR chair but said she would resign from the commission, after having accepted the appointment. (www.philstar.com) ■

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OPINION

The Idiocy P-Noy Should Address

AS I WRECK THIS CHAIR by William ESPOSO

Nothing best illustrates an incident of Filipino idiocy — failure to know the truth — than when US State Secretary Hillary Clinton visited our country late last year. Here was the Foreign Minister of a superpower country with a hidden agenda which almost resulted in the Balkanization of Mindanao — had the MoA-BJE (Memorandum of Agreement — Bangsamoro Juridical Entity) been signed — and yet we welcomed her like a conquering hero.

If Sec. Clinton had a similar agenda to Balkanize a region of France, she'd be lucky to land her plane in a French airport. A patriotic French pilot would likely have shot her plane down and the French people would have cheered and toasted that pilot. If protocol compels the French government to allow her plane to land — expect her to be pelted with overripe foul smelling produce, if not feces, by protesting irate French citizens.

But here, Sec. Clinton was welcomed as if the event was a visit of the Pope. The ANC (ABS-CBN News Channel) practically covered every move and statement of the US State Secretary but

these were more in the context of state ceremonies and human interest stories about an international celebrity — rather than a determination of the US hidden agenda in Mindanao. It was a pathetic moment for Philippine journalism.

The US agenda in Mindanao could place our country as the frontline in a projected US-China conflict. With the lethal arsenal both sides have, it does not take a genius to appreciate the extent of the damage we will suffer in the event that such a US-China conflict occurs.

This warm reception of a US State Secretary with a dangerous hidden agenda happened in our country because most Filipinos are ignorant of the historical truth. Not knowing what the US really did to us Filipinos, we still look up to them as if they are there to save us, instead of exploit us.

Never mind the US atrocities on Filipino civilians which were committed during the Philippine-American War. Go to Google and type General Jakob Smith if you want to know about some of these atrocities. But just how many Filipinos are aware that Ferdinand



Marcos could not have imposed martial law here in 1972 if that was not in the US global plan?

The height of this idiocy was reached when the US appeared to most Filipinos as the promoter of the change from dictatorship to democracy in 1986. Why should we credit them for helping remove what they promoted in the first place?

This idiocy cannot be simply dismissed as the result of lack of education. Many from the upper class of our society do not also know the historical truth. To this day, many Filipinos still think that to be suspicious and wary of US manipulation, to try to protect Philippine national interest against US geopolitical, military and eco-

nomic objectives — is to be considered a Communist or an anachronistic militant.

Ours is one of the few countries where a nationalist is looked down upon. That is how we've earned the tag of DAMAGED CULTURE. In other countries where people do not carry this baggage, nationalists are hailed, admired, extolled and emulated. Here they are looked down upon, even ostracized.

How come? It is because most Filipinos do not know the historical truth. Here it is perfectly legal to allow foreigners to exploit exhaustible Filipino natural resources and it is illegal when nationalists — not Communists — are trying to protect Philippine interests. Pretenders — the folks who present themselves as the fountain of knowledge of Philippine history when for the most part they only specialize in sharing trivia — help maintain this idiocy.

In Scotland, my MacGregor clansmen talk about the 1603 Battle of Glenriven from our clan and the Clan Colquhoun as if that was a 21st century event. In a recent History Channel documentary about the Boxer Rebellion in China, it mentioned that every Chinese boy, to this day, is taught the lessons of that oppression in the

hands of the Western Powers.

Here, historical events of the late 19th century are hardly discussed by Filipinos. It is as if the sacrifices of Rizal, Mabini, and Bonifacio et al are just footnotes of history when the truth is we desperately need more Filipinos of their mold to win the unsettled issues.

Early on during the campaign, P-Noy expressed to your Chair Wrecker his most fervent wish, should he be elected president, to be able to leave behind meaningful reforms which will continue far beyond his term. It is a noble aspiration when a leader wants to ensure that his people are well taken care of long after his term of office had ended.

For P-Noy to ensure his most fervent wish, he must address the idiocy — Filipinos not knowing the historical truth — that is pervasive in the land. Like other great national leaders, P-Noy should reform not only the governance but also the mindset and culture of the governed.

Reforming the mindset and culture of the governed is actually the harder task. But it will be this victory that will establish that P-Noy is not only a good president but also a great national leader.

(www.philstar.com)

HEADLINES (CONT.)

(cont. from page 1; "No Honeymoon...")

"There cannot be a honeymoon on justice. Too many lives have been lost, so many more remain in danger," Espina said yesterday, which marked the seventh month after the gruesome killings.

In a two-page statement he read before members of the Philippine Press Institute (PPI) at the Diamond Hotel in Manila for the annual National Press Forum, Espina said securing justice for slain journalists, activists and lawyers should be a top priority of the incoming Aquino administration.

"The lives lost over the past nine years — not only of media (members), but of activists, lawyers, judges — all of which continue to cry for justice, make a compelling case for state accountability," he said.

"It is the challenge the new president will



have to rise up to from day one of his term," Espina added.

He stressed that good governance promised by Aquino during the election campaign may not be possible without justice.

Based on records of the NUJP, a total of 140 journalists were killed in the country since 1986, the years when democracy was revived in the country after Martial Law.

Of the 140 slain journalists, 103 lost their lives after Mrs. Arroyo took office in 2001. This is highlighted by the 32 journalists killed on November 23 in Ampatuan town, Maguindanao, in what turned out to be the worst election-related massacre in Philippine history.

(www.philstar.com)

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PICTORIAL NEWS

Amber at the 138th Annual King Kamehameha Celebration and 94th Annual Floral Parade

Amber Adoja, National American Miss Jr. Pre-Teen Queen 2009-2010, was among the participants at the 138th Annual King Kamehameha Celebration and 94th Annual Floral Parade from Fort DeRussy to Iolani Palace. Amber's floral decorated vehicle consisted of 275 ti leaves and numerous tropical flowers including rostrata (hanging heliconias), yellow heliconias, red gingers and red torch banana. Helping Amber to create the "skirt" was mom Melodie, mom's friend Stacy and Amber's friends Destiny and Taimane.



OPINION

Sexing Cop Using Government Phone Caught



by Atty. Emmanuel Samonte TIPON

SONOLULU. - It appears that an endorsement by President Obama is a "kiss of death" for a candidate in the United States, like an endorsement by President Arroyo is a "kiss of death" in the Philippines. This was true in Massachusetts, in Pennsylvania, and now, the unkindest cut of all, in Hawaii, Obama's home state.

"Sext" in ecclesiastical terms refers to "sexta hora" or the sixth hour of the day (noon) which is a time for prayer. "Sexting" has nothing to do with praying, although it could result in a missionary position. "Sexting is the act of sending sexually explicit messages or photographs, primarily between mobile phones." Wikipedia

A California cop was given a government pager to send and receive text messages, with a limited number of characters to send or receive each month, and any excess resulting in an additional fee.

Within the first billing cycle, the cop exceeded his text character allotment. His boss told the cop about his overage. The cop paid the overage. The cop continued to exceed his character allotment, but reimbursed the city for the overage. His boss told the cop that he would determine whether the existing character limit was too low or if the overages were for personal messages. The wireless provider was asked to provide transcripts of text

messages sent by the cop and others who had exceeded the text character allowance. The boss reviewed the cop's transcripts and found that many of the messages were not work related and some were sexually explicit. In one month, the cop sent 456 messages during work hours of which no more than 57 were work related. Some of the messages were sent to his wife and his girlfriend. The cop was disciplined.

COMPUTER LITERACY

The city's Computer Policy specified that the city "reserves the right to monitor and log all network activity including e-mail and Internet use," and "Users should have no expectation of privacy or confidentiality when using these resources." The cop acknowledged he read the policy. Although the policy did not explicitly cover text messages the city made clear that it would treat text messages like e-mails.

COMPLAINT FOR UNREASONABLE SEARCH

The cop, his wife, girlfriend, and others with whom he exchanged non-work related text messages sued the city and the wireless provider. They claimed violation of the Stored Communications Act, California law, and the Fourth Amendment, which provides that "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effect, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated."

The Supreme Court held that even assuming that the cop had a reasonable expectation of privacy



in his text messages, the city and the cop's bosses did not violate the Fourth Amendment by obtaining and reviewing the transcripts. Although as a general rule warrantless searches are per se unreasonable, there are exceptions, such as the "special needs" of the workplace. When conducted for a noninvestigatory, work-related purpose or for investigation of work-related misconduct, a government employer's warrantless search is reasonable if justified at its inception and if the measures adopted are reasonably related to the objectives of the search and not excessively intrusive in light of the circumstances giving rise to the search. The scope of the cop's transcripts was justified. The scope of the search which involved reviewing the transcripts was reasonable as an efficient and expeditious way to determine whether the cop's overages were the result of work-related messaging or personal use. Since the search was reasonable as to the cop, it follows that the complaint of his wife and girlfriend

that the search of their text messages to the cop was not reasonable cannot prevail. City of Ontario v. Quon, No. 08-1332, slip op. (S. Ct. June 17, 2010). ■

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HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

Fil-Com Center to Host Mayoral Forum

THE FIVE LEADING CANDIDATES FOR HONOLULU MAYOR will square off in a live forum scheduled for July 9, 2010 from 10:15 am to 2 pm at the Fil-Com Center in Waipahu.

The forum is sponsored by the West Oahu Economic Development Association (WOEDA) and the Kapolei Chamber of Commerce.

Mayoral candidates Kirk Caldwell, Peter Carlisle, Donovan Dela Cruz, Panos Prevedouras and Rod Tam will be present. Issues to be addressed will focus on the West Oahu region and will include the rail transit project, economic development, social services and real es-

tate development.

"West Oahu continues to be one of the fastest growing regions in the state, with an active population that is interested in hearing what our candidates for mayor have to say about critical issues of the day," said WOEDA Board President Jon McKenna, development project manager for Haseko. "We're pleased to be able to provide this opportunity jointly with the Kapolei Chamber of Commerce."

Established in 2001, WOEDA is comprised of business, community and government leaders dedicated to supporting the economic growth of West Oahu. The Kapolei

Chamber of Commerce works on behalf of members and the entire business community to improve the regional and State economic climate and to help Kapolei businesses thrive.

The forum will include opening remarks and a question-and-answer session moderated by former TV news anchor Howard Dashefsky.

The fee to attend the mayoral forum, which includes lunch, is \$35 for WOEDA and Kapolei Chamber of Commerce members, and \$45 for non-members. To register or for more details, please call Barbie Rosario at 842-1600 or contact her via email at: bkcorp2@hawaiiantel.net.

Philippine Consulate to Implement New ePassport System

THE PHILIPPINE CONSULATE GENERAL IN HONOLULU will begin implementing the new ePassport system effective July 1, 2010, which will replace the Machine Readable Passport system which was first used in 2008.

The ePassport contains an integrated chip which stores the bearer's personal information in accordance with specifications of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). This new technology increases the integrity and security of the Philippine passport.

All Filipino citizens applying for passports in Honolulu will no longer need to submit photographs since their pictures, fingerprints and signatures will be taken on-site.

The new ePassport costs \$60 and is valid for 5 years from the date of issuance. Processing time is between 4-6 weeks. Replacing a lost ePassport will cost \$150.

ADVANTAGES of ePASSPORT

Highly secure, the ePassport

avoids reproduction and tampering. Its database is enhanced with an automated fingerprint verification system that guards against multiple passport issuances to the same person, enhances impostor detection and facilitates clearance of travelers at immigration checks.

According to Philippine Consulate officials, the new ePassport is the world standard in travel documents.

"As a member of the ICAO, the Philippines has an international obligation to enhance the security of its travel documents," says the Consulate in a press release. "The issuance of ePassports will allow the Philippines to offer world-class consular services to its nationals."

Consulate officials say that the older, maroon- and green-colored Philippine passports are valid until their expiration dates. To avoid inconveniences, they advise travelers to make sure that that passports are valid at least six months before the intended date of travel. ■

PHILIPPINE NEWS

Marines Kill 2 Abu Sayyaf Militants in Sulu

by Paolo ROMERO / Thursday, June 24, 2010

MANILA, Philippines (Xinhua) -- **TWO ABU SAYYAF BANDITS WERE KILLED** AND A **TERRORIST CAMP** was overrun in two skirmishes with Marine forces in southern Philippine island province of Sulu, a military spokesman said today.

Quoting belated reports from the military's Joint Task Force Comet, Navy spokesman Lt. Col. Edward Arevalo said four Marine soldiers were also wounded in Tuesday's fighting in Talipao town, Sulu province.

The fighting was triggered by the recent harassments of development projects in the province by the Abu Sayyaf and rogue Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) elements, prompting the civilians to report their movement to the military, Arevalo said.

"Helpless civilians, tired of the



atrocities of the lawless groups, reported to the Marines that Malik and his cohorts have been impairing humanitarian missions in Talipao and Maimbang," said Arevalo. He was referring to the MNLF leader Habier Malik, who is said to be in alliance with Abu Sayyaf leader Yasser Iqan, in the waging the atrocities.

The first clash occurred on Tuesday morning when forces from the Marine Battalion Landing Team 3 intercepted the evading Abu Sayyaf and MNLF rebels, Arevalo said. The second clash occurred in

the afternoon, he added.

The troops were able to seize a command and control facility and a satellite camp of the two groups, and recovered were the two bodies of Abu Sayyaf bandits and two rifles and assorted ammunition, Arevalo said.

"As long as the group of Malik and Iqan roams in Southern Talipao, progress in the area will never set in," said Col. Romeo Tanalgo, commander of the 2nd Marine Brigade.

"The quest for development for

the people of Sulu has necessitated the conduct of these surgical, intelligence-driven military operations against these lawless elements," added Tanalgo.

Abu Sayyaf was founded in the 1990s and had perpetrated a num-

ber of high-profile attacks, including kidnapping and bombing. The Philippine military estimates the Abu Sayyaf, which has links with external terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda, has about 400 members currently. (www.philstar.com) ■



Tourists Increase in First 5 Months - DOT

by Paolo ROMERO / Thursday, June 24, 2010

MANILA, Philippines (Xinhua) -- **TOURIST VOLUME IN THE PHILIPPINES' 13 MAJOR DESTINATIONS** from January to May totaled 3.65 million, up by 5.37 percent over last year's figure, the Department of Tourism (DOT) said today.

Of the total number, foreign tourists to key destinations increased by 12.81 percent, while the number of domestic tourists posted only 2.12 percent, the DOT said in a statement.

Metro Manila is the leading destination with a share of 23.2 percent, or 848,518 tourists staying in accommodation facilities.

The East Asia market, com-

posed of the Chinese mainland, Japan and South Korea as well as the regions of Hong Kong and Taiwan, is the major source market, accounting for 41.78 percent of its total visitors.

Tourists to Cebu, the country's second largest city, grew by 4.34 percent, or 734,531 visitors in the first five months of 2010, providing impetus for greater public and private sector investments in infrastructure and tourism related facilities.

Visitors in Cebu accounted for a 20 percent share of the total tourist volume in major destinations during the period under review. South Korea and Japan are the leading source markets for Cebu with the share of 30 percent and 21

percent, respectively.

Tourists visiting Boracay Island from January to May increased by 12.15 percent with foreign visitors staying in hotels and resorts climbing 26 percent.

The country will boost construction of tourist facilities to cope with growing tourists. By the end of 2010, 80 new accommodation facilities are expected to have opened, increasing the available rooms in select destinations by 3,743.

By 2011 and 2012, additional 3,539 and 1,142 rooms will be available as 57 new accommodation facilities will commence operations. These new investments are anticipated to generate additional 17,782 jobs in the accommodation sector, the DOT said.

(www.philstar.com) ■

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RAIL TRANSIT UPDATE



**Mayor Hannemann
Announces Historic
Milestone in Honolulu Rail
Transit Project: Release of
Final Environmental Impact
Statement**

Mayor Mufi Hannemann on June 14 announced that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has approved the release of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS) for the Honolulu Rail Transit Project.

"I am so very proud to be part of this historic day in Honolulu," said Mayor Hannemann earlier this month. "With the release of the rail transit Final EIS, we are poised to move forward with rail transit, create jobs and deliver long-term traffic relief to commuters and businesses between West Oahu and town."

"The document is the result of five years of public input, in-depth consultations with stakeholders and meticulous technical research. With such a thorough planning process, we are confident the document accurately identifies environmental, community and economic benefits and impacts of the rail system and proposed solutions," Hannemann said.

Mayor Hannemann said, "We delivered a copy of the Final EIS to the state Office of Environmental Quality Control for review. After its review, that office will make a recommendation to the Governor on acceptance of the Final EIS."

The Honolulu Rail Transit Project is a 20-mile elevated rail system connecting East Kapolei with Ala Moana Center. There are 21 stations in communities such as Waipahu, Pearl City, Aiea, Kalihi, Chinatown, downtown and Kakaako. There are stations at activity centers such as UH West Oahu, Leeward Community College, Pearl Highlands, Pearlridge, Aloha Stadium, Honolulu International Airport and Honolulu Community College.

Highlights of key benefits and impacts identified in the Final EIS include:

Ridership and Future Traffic Reduction

- The Final EIS anticipates weekday rail ridership will be 116,300 passengers in 2030.
- Rail transit will reduce traffic delay by approximately 18 percent in 2030 compared to conditions if the rail system is not built.

- Using figures in the Final EIS, the project team estimates the rail system will take approximately 40,000 cars off our roads every day in 2030.

Economic Impacts

- Rail construction will employ about 10,000 workers in direct, indirect and induced jobs every year.

Environmental Impacts

- Energy consumption will be reduced in the future, as will air and water pollution, because of rail. The rail project will reduce regional pollutant emissions between 4 and 5 percent, and decrease greenhouse gas emissions.

The entire document is now posted on the rail transit website: www.honoluluantransit.org. It will be available at the City municipal library and the office of the City's Department of Transportation Services. Copies will also be available at all Hawaii state public libraries.

The City also plans to release a free DVD with the document and a video guide to the Final EIS. The DVD can be obtained by contacting the rail project at 566-2299 or info@honoluluantransit.org.

"We've been able to enjoy this success because it has been a community-wide collaboration. So many people got on board with this effort: the members of the Legislature who granted us the local funding mechanism and have continually supported rail; our Congressional delegation, who delivered consistent support and appropriated federal funding; a City Council that provided input and leadership every step of the way; the news media; labor and business organizations; the Obama administration, Federal Transit Administration, and other federal partners that have helped us and pledged funding; and others who joined hands to make this a reality for all of us."

"Now, with the support and cooperation of the state, the final piece can be put in place and we can break ground to bring to pass what the people of Oahu voted for in 2008 – a rail transit system that we need and want." ■

PHILIPPINE NEWS

ADB Mulls \$1-Billion Loan Package for RP

by **Donnabelle GATDUA** / Thursday, June 24, 2010

MANILA, Philippines - THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (ADB), one of the Philippines' largest multilateral creditors, plans to put up about \$1 billion in financing to support the country's energy efficiency and renewable energy development initiatives in the medium-term, a bank official said yesterday.

In an interview with reporters on the sidelines of the Asia Clean Energy Forum (ACEF), Sohail Hasnie, senior energy specialist in ADB's Southeast Asia Department, said they are now working closely with various government agencies to firm up the loan package.

"We have worked with our government and agencies and we are looking at financing up to a billion dollars with our co-financing partners for the Philippines on its energy efficiency and renewable energy programs in the next three to four years. So we are waiting for the new government for us to engage and align our priorities with their pri-

orities," Hasnie said.

Hasnie said the Philippine government has already secured a \$125-million Clean Technology Fund (CTF) for various renewable energy projects such as solar, wind and hydroelectric.

"On the renewable energy side, as I was explaining, we will be looking at solar. You got already \$125 million support from us from the Clean Technology Fund. We are looking at some hydropower and wind in that portfolio, maybe we'll work with the private sector. On energy efficiency, we are looking at maybe large scale air-conditioning use in public offices and others, by reducing air-conditioning consumption. We are looking at how to promote energy efficiency in refrigerators. We'll be looking at domestic fan (how to use it efficiently and make people aware of those things)," he said.

Hasnie said there are growth areas in the renewable energy sector that need to be fully tapped.

"Renewable energy is an area that will grow. And I think in the

Philippines, you have all the necessary parameters for promoting renewable energy: a very high electricity tariff; a lot of available renewable energy; a very good regulatory framework. If the country wants to reduce its reliance on imported fossil fuel, obviously it has to save energy by way of energy efficiency, access to energy for the poor and climate change. The forum is now on its fifth year.

Building on our substantial response to climate change, we are committed to sharpening our focus on technology to meet the new needs of our developing member countries," ADB president Haruhiko Kuroda said.

In his speech, Kuroda pointed out that ADB had increased its own targets for clean energy investment.

"From an initial target of \$1 billion a year between 2008 and 2012, we are now targeting \$2 billion a year by 2013. Compared to the public and private investments needed by countries in the region, this is a very small drop in a big bucket. Thus, it is particularly necessary to attract a vast amount of private investment to our region," the ADB chief said.

"It is a long-standing ADB policy to bridge funding gaps through public private partnerships. In this case, the role of governments is clear to craft the necessary policies and regulation to facilitate the transition to low carbon development."

The five-day forum is organized by ADB and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), with assistance from the World Resources Institute (WRI), and sponsorship by the governments of Australia, Japan, Norway, Spain and Sweden.

"The Asia-Pacific region has tremendous potential for deployment of clean energy as well as a critical need to transition to cleaner

sources of power," said Olivier Carander, mission director for USAID's regional development for Asia.

ADB has announced a range of initiatives to bring down barriers such as price and policy issues that prevent the wide-scale adoption of low-carbon and clean-energy technologies in the Asia and Pacific region.

These include ADB's Asia Solar Energy Initiative (ASEI) that aims to identify and develop large-capacity solar projects that will generate 3,000 megawatts (MW) of solar power by 2012.

ADB, based in Manila, is dedicated to reducing poverty in Asia and the Pacific through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration.

In 2009, it approved a total of \$1.6 billion in financing operations through loans, grants, guarantees, a trade finance facilitation program, equity investments, and technical assistance projects. ADB also mobilized co-financing amounting to \$3.2 billion. (www.phlistar.com) ■

Gov't. Unveils Medium-Term Investment Promotion Plan

by **Mayen JAYMAUN** / Thursday, May 27, 2010

MANILA, Philippines (Xinhua) - THE PHILIPPINES UNVEILED A MEDIUM-TERM national investment promotion plan at a press launch held here today to accelerate capital inflows into the country.

The plan, called "The Philippine Investments Promotion Plan

(PIPP)," was compiled by the country's network of Investments Promotion agencies (IPAs), covering the period from 2010 to 2014. It designs to lay down the groundwork for sustainable investments and ensuring favorable business climate in the Philippines.

"With the PIPP, we see an enhancement of the country's competitiveness and the increased

inflow of investments while creating a synergy among IPAs for its focused promotional approaches

in the next five years," said Philippine Trade Secretary and Board of Investment Chairman Jesli Lapus.

The PIPP's foremost objective

is to put the country as one of the major investments destinations in Asia. It is envisioned to increase the investments level returning to more jobs and higher restraints, he added.

The PIPP outlined eight key sectors primed for an immediate

and sustained upsurge in investments in the years to come, Lapus said. They are namely agro-industry, BPO/IT services, electronics/semiconductors, energy/renewable energy, logistics hub, mining, shipbuilding and tourism. (www.phlistar.com) ■

RP Needs \$100 Billion for Climate Change Adaptation

Bangu Windmills Ilocos Norte



by **Poolo ROMERO** / Thursday, June 24, 2010

MANILA, Philippines (Xinhua) - THE PHILIPPINES NEEDS TO SPEND around \$10 billion annually over the next decade for climate change adaptation, the country's Climate Change Commission said yesterday.

"For climate change adaptation, you only know figures for the coming five to 10 years. The estimate is \$100 billion. This is for the period from 2010 to 2020. (We can raise these funds through a) partnership with (Asian Development Bank) but we hope there will be other independent sources," Climate Change

Secretary Heherson T. Alvarez told reporters. The Manila-based lender has doubled the allotment for climate change initiatives to \$2 billion a year for its developing member countries from 2008 to 2012.

Of the \$2 billion allotted, ADB said it has already approved funding of around \$250 million for the Philippines for next year.

The loans can be tapped by private sector companies that are looking for financing for green technology or simply green projects that focus on renewable energy sources like wind, ocean, and solar power. (www.phlistar.com) ■

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PHILIPPINE NEWS

GMA Allies Start Defecting to LP

by Paolo ROMERO /
Thursday, May 27, 2010

MANILA, Philippines — **ALLIES OF OUTGOING PRESIDENT ARROYO** have started to leave the once formidable ruling party Lakas-Kampi-CMD and have defected to the Liberal Party (LP) of incoming president Benigno Aquino III, which will soon be the majority party in the House of Representatives.

Re-elected Quezon Rep. Lorenzo Tañada III, who is also LP spokesman, confirmed that 30 to 40 Lakas-Kampi congressmen would take their oath as LP members on Friday at the LP headquarters in Cubao, Quezon City.

Tañada said both Aquino and Quezon City representative-elect Feliciano Belmonte Jr., who will most likely be the next Speaker, welcomed this development.

Sources say Belmonte's bid for speaker is supported by 165 congressmen from LP and other

parties like the Nationalist People's Coalition and Nacionalista Party that have agreed to form a coalition with Aquino's party.

It was earlier reported that Lakas originals, led by Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman, would comprise the minority in the House, which includes Mrs. Arroyo, incoming congresswoman of the second district of Pampanga.

Candidates for speaker need the vote of a majority of the 270-member House. Lakas-Kampi-CMD used to be the biggest power bloc in the House.

Tañada clarified, however, that there is no commitment or promises to lawmakers who have joined the alliance with LP.

He said the new members should respect the decision of the LP and the new speaker in designating committee chairmanships, which will also be consulted with president-elect Aquino.

Original LP members, of course, will have priority in vital and juicy committees, among them the committees on appropriations, accounts, justice, defense and even members of the Commission on Appointments.

PACQUIAO MIGHT JOIN LP

Filipino world boxing champion Manny Pacquiao, who was elected congressman of Sarangani, may be one of the 40 or so lawmakers who have defected from their party and will soon be joining the LP.

An LP leader who refused to be quoted hinted that Pacquiao might be among the LP's newest members. "Pacquiao is among those expected to show up on Friday (for the LP oath taking)"

Pacquiao ran under the banner of the Nacionalista Party of defeated presidential bet Sen. Manny Villar.

(www.philstar.com) ■

Bayan Welcomes CHR Head's Appointment to DOJ

by Dennis CARCAMO /
Thursday, June 24, 2010

MANILA, Philippines — Militant group Bayan welcomed the impending appointment of Commission on Human Rights (CHR) chairperson Leila de Lima to the Department of Justice (DOJ) in the incoming Aquino administration.

"De Lima's appointment can be an opportunity to review the cases of many political prisoners who faced persecution during the Arroyo regime's all-out war against activists. This should include the case of the Morong 43 who were arrested without a valid warrant and who were arraigned by a prosecutor from the DOJ despite the many legal defects of the arrest," Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes Jr. said in a

statement.

Reyes said the DOJ has been previously used by the Arroyo government to persecute the so-called enemies of the state and its critics, citing the case of rebellion filed against 50 people, including representatives of party-list groups and activists in 2006.

"If de Lima brings the same grit and determination to defend human rights to the DOJ, then that would be a truly positive development, a far cry from the DOJ we have seen for the last nine years," Reyes said.

During her stint in the CHR, De Lima spearheaded the investigation of the abduction and torture of Filipino-American Melissa Roxas, the arrest and torture of the 43 health workers in Morong, Rizal, the Atupatan massacre, and the military's use of the "orders of battle" against militants. (www.philstar.com) ■

New Witness to Further Pin Down Ampatuans

by Aurea CALICA /
Wednesday, May 26, 2010

DAVAO CITY, Philippines — **MAGUINDANAO GOVERNOR-ELECT** Esmael Mangudadatu will present a new witness to four members of the family of former Maguindanao governor Andal Ampatuan Sr. in the murder of 57 people, among them 30 journalists, in Maguindanao on Nov. 23 last year.

"The testimony of our new witness is so explosive," he said.

"It would be like a howitzer

bomb or even a nuclear bomb that would wipe out whatever defense the Ampatuans have."

Mangudadatu, whose wife and two sisters were among those killed in the massacre, said the 27-year-old witness is highly credible, especially since he has been with the Ampatuans since he was 11 years old.

"This new witness will tell the truth about what has been happening within the Ampatuan family on the very day of the massacre," he

said. "He has been a trusted aide in the Ampatuan household."

He was puzzled how the witness, who is in charge of preparing and serving food for the Ampatuan patriarch, was able to get his number, he added.

Mangudadatu said the witness reportedly escaped from the Ampatuan household after he overheard some family members talking about the plans of a certain "Amira," one of the children of Ampatuan, to have him killed.

"Based on his statement, he claimed the Ampatuans wanted to kill him because he was the only one left who knew too much about the family's affairs, including the massacre," he said.

STATE OF EMERGENCY TO CONTINUE IN MAGUINDANAO

President Arroyo has decided to continue the state of emergency in Cotabato City, Maguindanao and Sultan Kudarat a week before she steps down from office, Malacañang said yesterday.

Executive Secretary Leandro Mendoza said the Cabinet cluster on security recommended the extension of the state of emergency in the three provinces during a meeting in Malacañang on Tuesday.

"There is still violence, threats to lives and property (in the three provinces) so we saw the need to employ the forces of government for security," Mendoza told a news briefing when asked why the declaration was extended.

"There is still a situation that government forces need to address."

It would be up to president-elect Benigno Aquino III to lift the state of emergency, Mendoza said. "I think it's now really up to the courts to finish the case," he said.

AGRA REPRIMANDS PROSECUTOR

Justice Secretary Alberto Agra



Prime suspect Andal Ampatuan Jr.

has suspended a state prosecutor in Davao who administered the recantation of two witnesses in the Maguindanao massacre.

In a memorandum, Agra gave State Prosecutor Jose Tadeo Sayson 72 hours to explain why he should not be administratively penalized for his failure to report about the affidavits of recantation of Police Officer 1 Anwar Masukat and Moghira Hadja Anggual.

Agra said the two affidavits caught prosecutors off guard when they were presented by defense lawyers during trial.

"No coordination or notification to the panel members and/or this Department appears to have been made on your part," he said.

"Your reported attitude, if true, undermines the prosecution of this national interest case.

"It casts serious doubt on the integrity of the prosecution service and erode the people's trust in government.

"Evidently, the same could constitute serious misconduct which is prejudicial to the best interest of the service."

Records show that Sayson administered the affidavits of Masukat last Jan. 3 and of Anggual last Feb. 22. (www.philstar.com) ■

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LEGAL NOTES

Family Preference Cut-off Dates Rapidly Move Up



by Reuben S. SEGURITAN

are in the U.S. may be able to file their adjustment of status and employment authorization applications while those who are processing their immigrant visa applications abroad may be scheduled for visa interview.

The advance in the cut-off dates for Philippine applicants are as follows: 1st preference – 5 ½ months (September 1, 1995); 2A preference – 6 months (July 1, 2008); 2B preference – 12 months (March 1, 2000); 3rd preference – 12 months (May 1, 1993); and 4th preference – 12 months (April 1, 1989).

Benefiting the most under this latest development are the applicants under the 2B, 3rd and 4th preferences.

The 2B preference refers to the unmarried sons and daughters (21 years or older) of lawful permanent residents. The 3rd preference refers to the married sons and daughters of U.S. citizens. The 4th preference refers to brothers and sisters of U.S. citizens.

Philippine 2B applicants whose lawful permanent resident petitioners have become U.S. citizens are automatically reclassified under the 1st preference resulting in a much longer wait. They can avoid this by opting out to remain under the 2B preference.

Since April 2010, the Philippine family-based preferences have jumped considerably as follows: 1st preference – 18 months; 2A preference – 25 months; 2B preference – 17 ½ months; 3rd preference – 12 months; and 4th preference – 19 months.

The big jump in the family-based preferences is attributed to the very low level of demand for visas numbers in the last 1 ½ years. The U.S. Department of State has increased the pace in an attempt to generate demand so that the annual numerical limit of 226,000 may be utilized.

Applicants whose priority dates are earlier than the cut-off dates

should complete their documentary requirements for their immigrant visa or adjustment of status applications. The Department of State has said that if the demand for visa numbers increases, the movement of the cut-off date would slow or stop.

The trend in the employment-based 3rd preference category is different. The demand for visa numbers continues to be heavy and therefore the cut-off dates have barely advanced.

The July 2010 worldwide (except for India and Mexico) cut-off date for 3rd preference skilled workers and professionals advances by 7 weeks (August 15, 2003) while that of the 3rd preference other workers category remains unchanged (June 1, 2001) as it has been since October 2009.

Mexican 3rd preference visa numbers continues to be unavailable while India's 3rd preference skilled workers advances only by 1 month.

Based on current demands, the Department of State projects that by September 2010 which is the end of the current fiscal year, the worldwide cut-off dates (including Philippines) for the employment-based 3rd preference will be June through September 2004. The cut-off date for China will be October through December 2003 while India's will be February 2002. ■

REUBEN S. SEGURITAN has been practicing law for over 30 years. For further information, you may call him at (212) 695-5281 or log on to his website at www.seguritan.com

The July 2010 Visa Bulletin shows significant advances in the family-based preference categories. The worldwide cut-off dates move up by several months from those indicated in June 2010 as follows: 1st preference – 7 months (April 1, 2005); 2A preference – 6 months (July 1, 2008); 2B preference – 5 ½ months (May 1, 2003); 3rd preference – 2 ½ months (September 1, 2001); and 4th preference – 4 months (January 1, 2001).

Applicants who have a priority date earlier than the abovementioned dates may be allotted visa numbers starting July 1. Those who

— PHILIPPINE NEWS FEATURE —

Lola Filomena, High School Sophomore

by Eva VISPERAS / Thursday, June 24, 2010

URDANETA CITY, Pangasinan, Philippines – **FILOMENA ZAMORA IS A DILIGENT SOPHOMORE** student at the Anonas National High School in this city, sometimes going to school with goats, puppies and chicks in tow because no one would take care of them at home. She raises these animals for her schooling and everyday expenses.

She puts the animals in a big basket, each with a diaper so the droppings would not foul up the school.

Her classmates call her Lola Filomena, and she is 72 years old. She was featured in The STAR when she graduated from elementary last year.

Perseverance is just one of the things that her classmates admire in Lola Filomena.

Her teacher Barbara Milo said her age doesn't prevent her from relating to the subjects being taught in school.

"She is very familiar with the use of maps and was much applauded when she recited in class on this," Milo said.

FAVORITE CLASSMATE

Lola Filomena's favorite classmate, Wendell John Antolin, helps her with their lessons, copying notes from the blackboard into her notebook when her fingers become stiff from writing too much.

Her seatmate Len Napalit said

their classmates enjoy listening to Lola Filomena's life stories during their free time.

"Her stories inspire us," Napalit said.

Princess Calidro, another seatmate, said Lola Filomena is very kind, sharing her baon and even money with her classmates during lunchtime.



Filomena Zamora takes down notes in class at the Anonas National High School in Urdaneta.

REAL CLASSROOM

Milo said Lola Filomena prefers to be in a real classroom than enroll under the Alternative Learning System (ALS) of the Department of Education.

Under ALS, over-age students or dropouts who decide to go back to school undergo tests to determine their grade or year level.

Lola Filomena said elementary was quite easy but high school is an entirely different thing.

"It's difficult but I'm coping," she said.

"I feel more relaxed in school but my brain is being tortured," she added, laughing.

She had joined two camping activities of the Girl Scouts, of which she is a member, and her classmates and fellow girl scouts enjoyed the food she prepared for them.

Lola Filomena also gamely joins other school activities like cook fests and earthquake drills.

DARLING OF THE PRESS

Even the media have become fans of Lola Filomena.

Apart from The STAR, Lola Filomena has also been featured in

local and national television.

Mayor Amadeo Perez Jr. said, "The old lady's story is inspiring - that age is not a hindrance to acquire an education. I hope this will be inculcated into the minds of our young people, for them to follow her good example."

Lola Filomena did not plant on going to high school after her elementary graduation but her teachers, principal and supervisor encouraged her to continue studying.

Although she is encountering some difficulties, Lola Filomena said she looks forward to the day when she would finish high school.

"Maybe by that time, all my relatives would again attend my graduation the way they did when I finished elementary two years ago. They came in two vans and one bus," she said.

Lola Filomena used to take her granddaughter Joana, then in grade 1, to a school near their home. Then one day, she decided to enroll, too. Grandmother and granddaughter later became schoolmates. (www.phlistar.com) ■

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MAINLAND NEWS

PNB Teams With Western Union in Money Transfer Agreement

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL

BANK, the Philippines' largest offshore bank network, and Western Union, a leader in global payment services, recently announced an agreement to offer Western Union Money Transfer services at 311 PNB branches in the Philippines by July 2010 and at 87 offices in 12 countries worldwide.

PNB will offer Western Union Money Transfer services across three continents in 13 countries. With an extensive network in the Philippines, PNB's global footprint

mirrors countries popular with Filipinos working and living abroad permanently, including Austria, Canada, France, Germany, Guam, Hong Kong, Japan, Italy, Spain, Singapore, United Kingdom and the U.S.

Bringing together PNB and Western Union gives consumers, especially Filipinos, the added comfort of familiarity of a home-grown bank to go with Western Union's values of convenience, reliability and speed when sending money to family and loved ones.

"Our agreement with Western Union strengthens PNB as the bank of choice for both our local

and global customers as we continually enhance the portfolio of financial services offered to our customers," says Eugene Acevedo, President and CEO of PNB.

Adding an iconic Filipino bank to Western Union's global network of 420,000 agent locations in over 200 countries and territories is of strategic significance, particularly with the Philippines being the fourth largest remittance-receiving country in the world. Drina Yue, managing director and senior vice president, Western Union Asia Pacific.

"Offering Western Union Money Transfer services through PNB locations reinforces our consumer value propositions of convenient, reliable and fast money transfer services across an unbeatable global network," Yue says. "It also expands our network in the



In the photo (from left to right): Western Union managing director and senior vice president for Asia Pacific Drina Yue, Western Union senior vice president for Pacific & Indochina Patricia Riingen, PNB director Dr. Lucio Tan, and PNB president & CEO Eugene Acevedo officiated the signing ceremony in Manila, the Philippines, on May 25, 2010.

Philippines as well as strengthens our rural presence mirroring PNB's equally weighted urban and rural footprint."

PNB is the Philippines' fifth biggest private commercial bank in terms of assets and deposits as of December 31, 2009. It has 324 do-

mestic branches, 402 ATMs and 108 overseas branches and offices.

Western Union has over 6,800 agent locations in the Philippines which enable consumers to avail money transfer services from as far north as Basco, Batanes, to as far south as Bongao in Tawi-Tawi. ■

Ethnic Media in Arizona Unite Against Immigration Law

ARIZONA ETHNIC MEDIA OUTLETS FOR THE FIRST TIME published a joint editorial concerning SB 1070, the new immigration law, and called on President Barack Obama to take action to protect the rights and civil liberties of Arizona's diverse communities.

The editorial, published in three languages by 17 ethnic media outlets across the state and produced in association with New America Media (NAM), calls the new law "discriminatory" and "an affront to human dignity."

Expected to go into effect at the end of July, SB 1070 will make it a state crime to be undocumented. Editors and producers from Arizona's ethnic newspapers, radio and TV stations say that the law is a threat to all of their communities by institutionalizing racial profiling and creating a climate of fear.

In a meeting with New America Media last month, 50 representa-

tives from ethnic media and community advocacy organizations stressed the need to work together to oppose the bill and to cover its effects on all of their communities.

U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder says the Obama administration is looking into the constitutionality of the law and a possible federal lawsuit against it. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said in an interview with a TV station in Ecuador that the Obama administration would be filing a lawsuit against Arizona for its immigration law.

New America Media, a national association of ethnic media, has partnered with media across the country to help ethnic media cover immigration issues in America's diverse communities, and to advocate for the rights of those communities. Last year, NAM partnered with 300 ethnic media across the country to publish a joint editorial calling for comprehensive immigration reform. ■

US MCC Wants Assurance New Administration Will Fight Corruption

by Jose **KATIGBAK** /
Wednesday, June 29, 2010

WASHINGTON — THE US MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP. has said it wants an assurance the incoming administration of president-elect Benigno Aquino III will abide by the MCC's ideals and principles, including fighting corruption, before it forks over a development grant of about \$500 million to the Philippines.

The grant will be spread over five years to finance major projects in the country to reduce poverty through economic growth.

The MCC Board chaired by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton at a meeting here on Wednesday said in a statement it expected to consider a compact or grant agreement with the Philippines this year. "The Board reiterated its desire for a commitment by the new administration to the ideals and principles of MCC, including fighting corruption, and to the compact's objectives and implementation," the statement said.



It said the board received an update on discussions with Aquino's people on the proposed compact program.

Informed sources said Troy Wray, country director-Philippines, was in Manila last week for the talks.

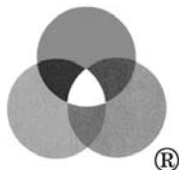
Outgoing President Arroyo had hoped to sign the compact agreement with MCC before leaving office and her senior aides were optimistic it would be done in April during her visit to Washington for a nuclear security summit.

But the MCC dashed her hopes, deferring final consideration of the agreement until a new government was installed in

Manila.

"MCC is committed to leveraging its assistance dollars to reduce poverty through sustained economic growth. We will continue to effectively use our resources in this time of financial constraint to fulfill MCC's mission and produce tangible results," said chief executive officer Daniel Yohannes in the statement.

The Philippine compact proposal focuses on a Secondary National Development Roads (SNDR) project, Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services, and an Integrated Revenue Information system. (www.philstar.com) ■



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GLOBAL NEWS

Italy-RP Trade Doubles in 10 years

by Iris GONZALES /
Wednesday, June 23, 2010

MANILA, Philippines - **PHILIPPINE TRADE WITH ITALY** practically doubled in the past 10 years former Ambassador to Italy Philippe J. Lhuillier noted that when he arrived in Italy in 1999, Philippine - Italian trade was around \$330 million in favor of Italy. The Philippines exported \$129 million and imported \$201 million that year.

By the time he left in January 2010, he said that Philippine-Italian trade was robust at \$416 million, in favor of the Philippines, with the country exporting \$229 million worth of goods and importing \$188 million worth of products in 2009.

By categories, he noted that industrial manufactures remain the country's biggest export, followed by resource-based products, and then consumer

manufactures. Food and food preparations remain small, if not an insignificant export.

On the other hand, the Philippines also imports quite a big amount of industrial manufactures from Italy, which are basically machines, followed by resource-based products, and then consumer manufactures. In spite of the Filipino's love of pasta, Philippine consumption of Italian food products remain insignificant.

Lhuillier explained that such a ratio seems to be the trend considering the distance between the two countries.

The main export produce of the Philippines to Italy are electronic products while the main imported product by the country are machineries. He said such an export mix might remain the same for the short- to medium-term due

to the foreign exchange situation of the both countries.

Electronics, particular components for office equipment, will remain the country's major export earner in Italy. Garments, especially men's and boy's wear, come in a close second.

On the other hand, machine and transport equipment and parts, will remain the country's biggest import from Italy.

Prospects for food and processed food exports to Italy do not look good, he said. This is due to the distance between the two countries and the high final price food products are retailed.

Lhuillier explained that the Italian consumers are generally conservative and would prefer to eat food familiar to their palate. Philippine food products are generally only bought by the Filipino overseas workers. (www.philstar.com) ■

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