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HAWAII PHILIPPINO CHRONICLE

HAWAII'S ONLY WEEKLY FILIPINO-AMERICAN NEWSPAPER

PMAH SPONSORS 2ND FILIPINO FILM FESTIVAL IN HONOLULU

By Bertie SANTOS-OCAMPO, M.D. and J.P. ORIAS

About this time last year, the First Filipino Film Festival in Honolulu kicked off with the film "100" and five other award-winning films by a cooperative of independent filmmakers. These films addressed issues from environmental politics to coming of age as a gay youth. They were all well-received by the movie-going community of Honolulu. It was inevitable not to have a second Filipino Film Festival.

This year, the 2nd Filipino Film Festival in Honolulu will reel off for 10 days from April 20-30, 2010 at the Doris Duke Theater, Honolulu Academy of Arts. Six of the best Filipino indie films from 2009 including Cinemalaya Best Picture "Last Supper No. 3" and Special Jury Prize Winner "Colorum."

Honolulu Academy of Arts film curator Gina Caruso has

scouted the best in new Filipino film to put together an engaging lineup that includes three Hawaii premieres. The films run the gamut from comedies ("Last Supper No. 3" and "Grandpa is Dead"), to thrillers ("Big Time"), to romance ("Dinig Sana Kita"), to a thought-provoking story about Filipino society ("Colorum"), to a sensitive portrayal of the Japanese occupation of the Philippines during World

War II ("Concerto"). All movies are in Tagalog with English subtitles.

"These six films represent the best of new Filipino cinema," Caruso says. "Many of them won the top awards at the Cinemalaya Film Festival, which is the Philippines' equivalent of the Sundance Film Festival. I personally viewed more than 30 films over three months and selected the cream of

(continued on page 4)



Independent films "Last Supper No. 3" (top) and the star-studded cast of "Grandpa is Dead"

Noynoy Graces Time Magazine's Cover

By Helen FLORES

MANILA, Philippines - Liberal Party standard-bearer Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III is on the cover of Time Magazine's April 25 issue that hit the newsstands last night.

The magazine's cover will be carried in a limited Asian edition, with more Aquino photos inside.

The article on him tackles his journey to the presidency months after his mother former President Corazon Aquino died of colon cancer, his family life, his bachelorhood, and struggle to win the May 10 elections.

Time had also thrice featured on its cover Mrs. Aquino. The first was in 1986 when she was named Woman of the Year,



COVER BOY: Sen. Benigno Aquino III graces the cover of Time Magazine's April 25, 2010 issue

the second in 2006 when she was named among 60 Asian Heroes, and the last after she died in August 2009 when she was declared "The Saint of Democracy." (www.philstar.com)

IMF Hikes RP Growth Forecast to 3.6%

By Lawrence AGCAOILI

MANILA, Philippines - The International Monetary Fund (IMF) upgraded anew the Philippines' economic outlook but the country is still expected to be the laggard in terms of economic growth among Southeast Asian countries this year.

In its latest World Economic Outlook, the IMF said the country's gross domestic product (GDP) would expand by 3.6 percent this year instead of the previous growth forecast of 3.2 percent on the back of an improving environment for private investment that would further boost private consumption.

The GDP growth forecast for the Philippines is slower than Taiwan's six percent, Indonesia's six per-

(continued on page 4)



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EDITORIAL

Due Process Must Prevail

There is no doubt that the Maguindanao massacre last year was one of the most heinous crimes ever committed in the history of the Philippines. It has shocked not only Filipinos but the rest of the world as well.

But despicable though the crime may be, it is still not enough reason for people to take the law into their own hands. No matter how we want to lynch those responsible, the rule of law must still prevail. Those involved still deserve due process.

It is understandable for people to be gravely aggrieved when Justice Secretary Alberto Agra cleared two members of the Ampatuan clan. The Ampatuans are widely believed to have ordered the massacre that killed 57 political rivals and journalists last November.

But just as the Ampatuans have to be given their day in court, so must Agra be given the benefit of the doubt. If people do not like his decision, they can appeal it. And if they believe he com-



mitted serious transgressions, they can always file a case against him.

As least those who have anything to say against Agra and his decision can present their side and support it with evidence in the proper forum. At the same time, Agra can be given the chance to defend himself.

It is both wrong and unfair to hurl allegations against Agra in public, especially in the media, where the tendency is to believe anything said against him even without the slightest shred of evidence.

Let us try to put ourselves in the shoes of Agra. Certainly we do not want ourselves to be accused of anything under the sun, without any evidence, without the chance to properly defend ourselves, and without being extended the benefit of the doubt.

This is not a defense of Agra. This is a defense of due process, of what is right and wrong. Just because we think we are right does not necessarily make the other person wrong. The validity of either can only be fairly tested in a forum authorized to determine the truth. (www.philstar.com) ■

Getting Away With Everything

The news from New York over the weekend was that a 39.5-carat Brazilian diamond ring once owned by former first lady Imelda Marcos was set to be auctioned by Christie's. The ring was first bought in 1860 by Archduke Maximilian before he was named emperor of Mexico. Imelda could afford to buy such expensive jewelry in 1983, and managed to sell it in the mid-1990s when the government was supposed to be running after ill-gotten wealth.

The widow of the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos has openly lamented the confiscation of the piles of jewelry that she had taken with her on the US military plane that flew her and her husband to exile in Hawaii in February 1986. The government has also confiscated her family's real estate properties in New York and Swiss bank accounts. But Imelda Marcos is far from impoverished, and the sale of that ring only added to the wealth that she once said she would distribute to Filipinos to eradicate poverty in the country.

The self-styled purveyor of "the true, the good and the beautiful" continues to flaunt her enormous jewelry collection. She has never been convicted of even a traffic violation, even in New York, where a jury cleared her of charges in connection with ill-gotten wealth.

Imelda was rebuffed by voters when she ran for president, but she does well in local politics. Today she is running for a congressional seat in her late husband's bailiwick, and she is expected to win. It will be a come-back for her after serving as congresswoman representing a district in her home province of Leyte. The Marcoses continue to enjoy a solid following in the Ilocos Region, and several presidential aspirants are courting their support.

Their full rehabilitation, without ever being convicted of any of the numerous criminal complaints lodged against them, is a constant reminder of the country's failure to hold public officials accountable for amassing wealth through questionable means. That failure has guaranteed the perpetuation of a culture that has given us the ZTE and NAI-A-3 scandals, corrupted election officials and a judiciary co-opted by the executive. Imelda Marcos is a living icon of getting away with everything. (www.philstar.com) ■

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OPINION

Earth Day: More Than Just Awareness

ROSES AND THORNS

by Alejandro ROCES

Today, we join the rest of the world in celebrating Earth Day, 40 years since the event was first recognized, the world as we know it finds itself in greater peril. We can no longer remain ignorant to the reality of our environmental problems. We can no longer remain deaf to Mother Nature's plead for help. We have heard about calamities abroad, and have felt nature's wrath, firsthand, here at home. Typhoons Ondoy and Pepeng have brought an immense amount of devastation that is still affecting most of our fellow Filipinos to this very day. Global Warming is continuously causing polar ice caps to melt, causing sea-levels to rise and threatening to submerge our coastal communities. It brings the disastrous typhoons to our land during the rainy season, and enhances the El Niño phenomenon in the summer. Earth's problems are real, and there is a serious need to address them.

We are glad to know that steps have been initiated towards defending and caring for Mother Earth. The Climate Change Com-

mission, chaired by no less than the President, has been formed and tasked to search for ways to produce clean and renewable energy; allowing industries to function with minimal impact to the environment. We also remain hopeful for the government agencies working on programs to protect the environment and prevent its further degradation.

Two decades ago, Sec. Heherson Alvarez (who was a senator during the time) started the nationwide celebration of Earth Day in the Philippines. The event not only promotes the need to protect our environment, but also gives due recognition to individuals who stand to be nature's heroes.



This year the Fr. Neri Satur Awards For Environmental Heroism was composed of seven categories, honoring nine recipients.

They are: Category I - Leadership in Climate Change Initiatives, Gagayan de Oro Archbishop Antonio J.

Ledesma; Category II - Eco-Urban Planning, Architect Felino Palafox, Jr.;

Category III - Heroism amidst a Climate Change Disaster, Muelmar Magallanes (posthumous); Category IV - Eco-Cultural Communications

through Art and Cultural Leadership Lugardo Abad and Ilac Diaz; Category V - Eco-Cultural Communications through Broadcast, "Born to be Wild" (GMA 7) and Miss

Earth Philippines, Carousel Production (ABS-CBN 2); Category

VI - Eco-Friendly Business

(Philippine Daily Inquirer; Category VII - Academic Center for marine and Coastal Conservation, Silman University (Dr. Ben S. Malayang III).

We applaud the awardees, as well as the organizers led by the Climate Change Commission, Earth Savers Movement, Philippine International Theater Institute Center, and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts for sustaining the awards - named after a patriot priest who died protecting the forests of Bukidnon from illegal loggers.

Earth Day is about awareness. And it saddens us that after 40 years of being "aware", the Earth is still in a state of continuous deterioration. However, we must not view this as failure. Instead, we must take it as an opportunity; a motivation to do better and a chance to finally heed Mother Earth's call. It is not too late, but we must act now. A wise man once said that "We do not inherit the earth from our parents, we borrow it from our children". So let us all do our share. Let us protect our world and save our Earth. If not for ourselves, then perhaps for the sake of our children. (www.philstar.com)

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HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

'Hilo Massacre' to Run at Kumu Kahua Theatre

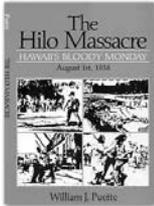
TREMAINE TAMAYOSE'S "THE HILLO MASSACRE" will be playing on stage for the first time ever at Kumu Kahua Theatre from May 20 to June 20, 2010.

The story is part of the University of Hawaii's Center for Labor Education & Research's "Rice & Roses" series about the local labor movement, which airs on Hawaii Public Television.

On August 1, 1938 over 200 men and women belonging to several different labor unions attempted to peacefully demonstrate against the arrival of the SS Waleale in Hilo. They were met by a

force of over 70 police officers who tear gassed, hosed and finally fired their riot guns into the crowd, hospitalizing 50 of the demonstrators. The story of that bloody confrontation and the events that led up to what has come to be known in the annals of Hawaiian labor history as the Hilo Massacre.

Based in part on research from labor historian William J.



William J. Puette

Puette's book "The Hilo Massacre: Hawaii's Bloody Monday" is a historical event with personal stories of the workers, police and politicians.

The cast of "Hilo Massacre" is comprised of Kumu Kahua veterans Britton Adams, Wil Kahele, Lisa-Ann Katagiri, James Keawe Bright, Dennis Chun, Lauren Asinsen, Ron Encarnacion,

Miko Franconi, Ryan Sutherland, Tyler Tanabe and Danielle Zapolany. Appearing in a Kumu Kahua show for the first time are Timothy Sobitz 3, Wayne Takabayashi, Rick Crump, and Tracy Hanayo Y.L. Okubo.

Kumu Kahua artistic director Harry Wu III and Denny Hironaga will direct the production, with set design by Patrick Fujioka, hair and make-up design by Mish Umipego and costumes by Marya Takamori-Prickett.

Performances begin at 8 pm Thursdays through Saturdays and at 2 pm on Sunday afternoons.

Tickets range from \$5 to \$16 and can be purchased by calling 536-4441, going online at: www.KumuKahua.org or visiting the theatre's box office at 46 Merchant Street in Downtown between 11 am and 3 pm Monday through Friday.

Kumu Kahua Theatre's productions are supported by the State Foundation on Culture & the Arts, celebrating over 30 years of culture and the arts in Hawaii (with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts); the Annenberg Foundation; and the Mayor's Office of Culture and the Arts. ■

Blood Bank to Offer "Pint for Pint" Ice Cream Promotion

AS SUMMER NEARS AND THE TEMPERATURE SOARS, Hawaii Blood Bank officials want to help their donors beat the heat by offering a cool treat.

On Memorial Day—May 31, 2010—Oahu donors who give a pint of blood at any of the Blood Bank's three blood drive sites will receive a special "Pint for Pint" Baskin-Robbins coupon, redeemable for a pint of ice cream at participating stores. The donation sites are at:

- Blood Bank at 2043 Dillingham Blvd., 6:30 am – 2 pm

- Manoa Marketplace, 8 am – 1 pm
 - Town Center of Mililani, 7 am – 1 pm
- "With this promotion, we hope to heighten awareness of the need for blood and to inspire people to give during a holiday, which is traditionally a day of low donor turnout," says Wendy Abe, the Blood Bank's chief operating officer.

According to Abe, keeping the blood supply at a safe level as Oahu heads into summer is a challenge because schools are out

and many people go on vacation. The Blood Bank has a second fixed location in Honolulu at 126 Queen Street, which is open Mondays through Fridays from 6:30 am to 2 pm.

Blood Bank officials say that each day, hundreds of patients in Hawaii rely on volunteer blood donors to survive. Typical uses for donated blood include surgical procedures, treatment of accident victims, ulcers, anemia, mothers and newborns during delivery and cancer therapy. Because each donation is separated into three dif-

ferent components—red blood cells, platelets and plasma—a single donation can help save the lives of up to three people.

Unfortunately, only 2 percent of the eligible population in Hawaii donates blood, so more donors are always needed. To be a donor, one must:

- Be in good health
- Be 18 years of age or older

(17 with signed Blood Bank of Hawaii parent/legal guardian consent form)

- Weigh 110 pounds or more
- Bring a valid photo ID with date of birth

To make an appointment or get more information, please visit www.bbh.org or call the Blood Bank at 845-9966. ■

Aduja Siblings Donate to Haiti Relief Fund

AMBER ADUJA AND WILLIAM ADUJA MADE a recent appearance on KHON2 and donated nearly \$1,000 the money they collected during fishnet drives for their Lokahi Caring Project to the American Red Cross' Haiti Relief Fund.

Amber is the daughter of former state senator Melodie Aduja and is the current National American Miss Jr. Preteen Queen.

Accepting the gift from the Aduja siblings was Coralie Matayoshi, chief executive officer of the American Red Cross in Hawaii. She was impressed with the chil-

dren's willingness to help those in need.

"They're so young, yet so compassionate about other people," she says.

Amber and William also received certificates of appreciation from KHON weather anchor Trini Kaopuiki.

The next Lokahi Fishnet Donation Drive will be held on April 24, 2010 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. near the Windward City Shopping Center in Kaneohe. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Amber Aduja at 258-8889. ■

PHILIPPINE NEWS

Government Reaches Agreement with MILF on Evacuees' Return

by Paolo ROMERO / Thursday, April 22, 2010

MANILA, Philippines (Xinhua) — THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT AND THE SEPARATIST MORO ISLAMIC LIBERATION FRONT (MILF) have agreed to work swiftly for the return of hundreds of civilians displaced by the fighting between government troops and rebels in conflict-affected areas in the southern province of Mindanao, according to a Foreign Ministry statement issued here today.

At the conclusion of its 18th exploratory talks in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Thursday, both parties urged the Coordinating Committees on the Cessation of Hostilities (CCHC) to ensure the safety and security of returning evacuees by accompanying them to their respective areas of origin.

In a joint statement, the government and the MILF said the CCHC would work closely with local government units concerned, the International Monitoring Team (IMT), and other concerned agencies. They also called on other civil society groups and non-governmental organizations to assist.

More than 100,000 people remain homeless as a result of armed conflict since 2008. Most of them live in dire conditions in government evacuation centers, at relocation sites or with host families.

The Malaysian-brokered peace talks collapsed in August 2008 after the Philippine government and the MILF failed to sign the controversial Memorandum of Understanding on Ancestral Domain (MOU-AD), prompting two MILF commanders and their men to launch deadly attacks on mostly Christian communities in Mindanao. The MOU-AD's signing would have established a Bansomoro Juridical Entity as the governing body in Bansomoro homeland, empowered to set up its own courts, security, trade, education, elections as well as the right to explore and develop natural resources in such territory.

Despite the setback, the government and MILF negotiating panels continued their back-channeling efforts to revive the talks.



GRP-MILF International Monitoring Team

Formal negotiations resumed in December 2009.

The MILF, which the Philippine military says has 11,000 fighters, is the largest group battling for self-rule in Mindanao.

A final peace agreement is expected to end the protracted war in Mindanao that has claimed at least 120,000 lives, brought massive destruction to property, and crippled the region's economy.

Since the resumption of talks, the government and the MILF have steadily strengthened the peace process through effectively suspending hostilities, helping return over 500,000 displaced persons, and introducing additional international and local bodies to bolster the talks. (www.philstar.com) ■



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PHILIPPINE NEWS

Gordon Files Case Versus SWS, Pulse Asia

by Reinir PADUA /
Thursday, April 22, 2010

MANILA, Philippines – **BAGUMBAYAN PARTY STANDARD-BEARER SEN. RICHARD GORDON** filed a civil suit against pollsters Social Weather Stations (SWS) and Pulse Asia for allegedly conducting misleading surveys on the presidential elections through "obsolete" methodologies.

Lawyer Chito Diaz, Gordon's legal counsel, said his client is seeking P650,000 in damages from SWS and Pulse Asia for conditioning the minds of voters to go for candidates based on what surveys say instead on their actual platforms.



Sen. Dick Gordon

Lawyer Carlo Tagalida said the lawsuit is not just for Gordon but also for other presidential candidates "being marginalized because of mental conditioning (by the survey firms)."

He added that if they win the case, the amount of damages will be donated by Gordon to the Philippine National Red Cross, which he currently chairs. (www.philstar.com) ■

Erap Questions Villar's Sincerity in Helping OFWs

by Dennis CARCAMO /
Thursday, April 22, 2010

MANILA, Philippines – **FORMER PRESIDENT JOSEPH ESTRADA** today claimed that Nacionalista Party presidential bet Sen. Manny Villar has been using the OFW mark to make money.

In a press conference at the Pwersa ng Masang Pilipino's (PMP) headquarters in Mandaluyong City, Estrada alleged that Villar's companies involved in housing projects, particularly Vista Land, are being used as "marketing schemes."

He also questioned Villar's sincerity in helping the OFWs.



Joseph Estrada

Portion of billions of pesos from the earnings of the housing projects are now being used in the seemingly inexhaustible campaign kitty of the Villar camp, he added.

For his part, PMP reelectionist senator Juan Ponce Enrile said Villar, who was then a senate president, used his position to pressure Philippine Stocks Exchange (PSE) officials to jack up the value of his companies' shares of stocks.

Villar has reportedly violated some PSE policies in the public offerings and listings of his companies' shares, Enrile said. (www.philstar.com) ■

Melo Says Postponement of Polls 'Unconstitutional'

by Helen FLORES /
Thursday, April 22, 2010

MANILA, Philippines – **THERE'S NO STOPPING THE NATIONAL** and local elections on May 10 despite a petition for their postponement by a presidential candidate, according to Commission on Elections (Comelec) Chairman Jose Melo.

"That's unconstitutional... because the Constitution itself provides for the specific date on which an election will be held," Melo said in reaction to a petition to postpone the polls filed by independent presidential candidate Nicanor Perlas.

The Comelec has yet to deliberate on Perlas' petition.

In his petition, Perlas cited the agency's lack of preparedness in carrying out its duties in the first nationwide automated polls.

In a 34-page petition, Perlas said the Comelec should first en-

sure that the automated elections system (AES) is fool proof before it proceeds with the elections in May.

"Failing to do so, the commission should give due course to the petition and postpone the May 10 national elections and expeditionally resolve all the technical, logistical, legal, and other problems connected with the AES within or less than three months," Perlas said.

Among the issues Perlas raised in his petition were the lack of source code review, possible transmission failure, absence of voter verifiable paper trail, lack of ballot security features, presence of thousands of multiple registrants, lack of sufficient voter education and possible non-delivery of voting machines due to logistical failure.

"The honorable commission should demonstrate in writing that they have fully addressed all the factual allegations of this petition

and that there is no basis for concern that the fully automated election system will fail on May 10," Perlas said.

Perlas said the Comelec has the power to postpone the elections as provided for in the Omnibus Election Code.

He said that Section 5 of the Omnibus Election Code states that the elections may be postponed in cases of "violence, terrorism, loss or destruction of election paraphernalia or records, force majeure, and other analogous causes."

The law also provides that a new election schedule "should be reasonably close to the date of the election" but not later than 30 days.

Perlas, who trails most candidates in surveys, also clarified that his petition is not meant to benefit President Arroyo, whose term may be extended in the event of a postponement of polls.

"I'm not in favor of Arroyo but I do not want mass violence and civil war in case of a failure of elections," Perlas said. (www.philstar.com) ■

UN Member States Urged to Sustain Nuclear Disarmament Efforts

by Pio LEE-BRAGO /
Thursday, April 22, 2010

MANILA, Philippines – **THE PHILIPPINES YESTERDAY CALLED ON** member states of the United Nations to sustain the political momentum brought about by recent developments to push the nuclear disarmament agenda forward and redouble efforts to rid

the world of nuclear weapons.

In his address before the opening session of the thematic debate of the General Assembly on "Disarmament and World Security": Challenges for the International Community and the Role of the United Nations," Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo urged the international community to sustain the momentum in the elimination of nuclear weapons.

He issued the call two weeks

before the Philippines presides over the 2010 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Recalling the nuclear disarmament advocacy of his uncle General Carlos P. Romulo, the DFA chief told the UN General Assembly that the Philippines was among the first to call for a world free from nuclear weapons. (www.philstar.com) ■

Pope to Name New RP Bishops – Holy See Envoy

by Helen FLORES /
Tuesday, April 13, 2010

MANILA, Philippines – **PHILIPPINE AMBASSADOR TO THE HOLY SEE** Mercedes Reinares-Arassitia Tuzon has said Pope Benedict XVI is expected to name new bishops in the country soon.

The BCPNews, the official news provider of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, reported that Tuzon was informed by the Papal Nuncio to the Philippines Archbishop Edward Joseph Adams that the Pope is interested in naming more Filipino bishops soon.

A number of Filipino archbishops and bishops have already

reached retirement age, while a number of dioceses have no resident bishops.

To date, Masbate has yet to have a bishop with the appointment of Bishop Joel Baylon to Legazpi last year.

The Archdiocese of Caceres still has to have an auxiliary after Bishop Jose Rojas Jr. was appointed Bishop of Limbanan.

The Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Lipa, Salvador Quizon retired on April 2, 2002.

The BCPNews said that two of the country's two cardinals – Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal and Manila Archbishop Gau-

dencio Cardinal Rosales are set to retire anytime.

In the Philippines, a majority or about 81 percent of the 90 million people are Catholic or approximately 72.9 million.

The ambassador also confirmed reports that the Philippine Church has sent an invitation to the Holy Father to visit the Philippines next year.

Earlier reports said the Pope was invited to grace the quadricentennial celebration of the Pontifical University of Santo Tomas which was established in 1611 by Dominican missionaries.

Tuzon said she anticipates the Holy Father's visit to the Philippines. (www.philstar.com) ■

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PHILIPPINE TRAVEL

Baguio City, John Hay and The Manor on

My Mind

by Joy Angelica SUBIDO

MANILA, Philippines - It was in the old playground near the 19th Tee outlet of Baguio City's Camp John Hay where we first received the gift of color blindness. Growing up at a time when white skin was favored, imported goods were considered premium, and colonial mentality was rife, it was in John Hay where we first learned that prejudice meant lost opportunities and a waste of time. Black skin, white skin, brown skin. It was all the same. Our African-American friend Monique Baker taught us the lesson that skin color didn't matter, and age difference didn't count for much. There was no need to be shy or timid around older folk because all people, even the big kids in school, could be really nice.

We were all little tykes but seventh grader Monique's favorite was my own chubby, nursery-school-aged sister. The partiality was so apparent since the latter got presents of striped bubble gum, canned pudding or giant pencils. "She's mah i'll sistah, too," Monique drawled in school. The rest of us watched with envy while my darker sister wore her black-colored skin like a royal robe. Black, then, was especially beautiful to all of us.

It was a time when Baguio residents were issued long-term privilege passes by the base commander, and we were in John Hay almost every weekend to play with our friends who lived within the facility. The John Hay of my childhood was a special place where one could toboggan downhill rid-

ing cardboard boxes on one of the numerous slopes made slick by fallen pine needles. We took turns whizzing down the hillside and screeching excitedly until members of the base patrol noticed what we were up to and made us stop. "You could seriously hurt yourselves," the kindly policemen said when they got down from their patrol cars. We listened and followed. The policemen were always the good guys then.

As we grew older, John Hay became a refuge where we could retreat and savor the Baguio of our childhood. The grassy hillsides and fields of sunflowers may have started to dwindle as more subdivisions were built in the city, but we were assured that the sweet, clean scent of pine resin remained unsullied within John Hay. A particular memory remains distinct in my mind: when the black and yellow butterflies flew so thickly during one summer's end, so that the creatures landed in our arms, on our shoulders and heads. They lay so thickly in the garden paths and we walked slowly and carefully to avoid trampling on them.

Perhaps you will understand my generation's sense of loss when a consortium took over John Hay. Not only was the old main gate to the facility closed and relocated, but old buildings were torn down and new structures started to sprout where once there were only pine trees. The heartache was particularly rending when the old Main Club building was demolished. This, after all, was the place where our parents took us for steak dinners on Saturday evenings, where we kids once tried to down a whole bottle of burgundy when the adults got up to help themselves to the salad buffet. And as we got older and



played grown-up, the Main Club was where we went for dinner on those awkward first dates.

A 177-room luxury facility called The Manor was built on the old site, and during the first few years of its operation, there was a struggle against going there and making the place our own. Soon enough, however, fun-filled nights of musical bonding beside the fireplace of The Manor's Piano Bar, tasty meals at Le Chef, and freshly baked breads at the Delicatessen wore our resistance down. The warm and welcoming wood paneled interiors of The Manor had, in fact, made us recollect that the old Main Club in its latter years had turned positively shabby. How could we have forgotten our annoyance at seeing the Illocano curse words (particularly the one that starts with "u" and ends with "m") carved by vandals on the paneling of the old building? Really, sentimentality has a way of clouding unpleasant memories.

The Manor has found a new



The Manor at John Hay: Your own *sejdom* away from home

role in the Baguio City as a place for culture and friendship, so that on a recent visit there, not only did we bump into old friends, but realized that the eye-catching photographs and paintings, were signed by familiar "old-Baguio" names, too. Moreover, we know of many who hold The Manor close to their hearts because its flower-filled garden overlooking the mountains was the site of their picturesque debutante parties, wedding receptions or wedding anniversaries. Golfing aficionados love the nearby greens, fashionistas enjoy

the cold weather as a means of showing off their high-fashion coats, sweaters and jackets and nature lovers commune with the trees.

However, the purest delight in The Manor was expressed by several little children as a thick fog slowly crept in. The children ran around excitedly in the garden, arms outstretched, pretending to be birds flying through the clouds. While my age-group loved John Hay's Main Club, this generation will surely remember The Manor fondly. (www.phistar.com) ■

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■ PHILIPPINE NEWS

Spanish Group to Invest 20 Million Euros in RP Plant

by Paolo ROMERO /
Tuesday, April 19, 2010

MANILA, Philippines - A SPANISH FOOD AND BEVERAGE CONGLOMERATE will pour in some 20 million euros into the country to set up a plant and make the country its Asian regional hub, Malacañang said yesterday.

A Palace statement issued shortly after President Arroyo's arrival from her two-day official visit to Madrid, Spain said Grupo Leche Pascual Alimentacion plans to make the Philippines its dairy export hub for Asia.

The plan was relayed to Mrs. Arroyo during a courtesy call of Tomas Pascual Gomez Cuetera, chairman of the Grupo Leche Pascual, at the Ritz Hotel.

Pascual's company will build a plant for the production of long life yogurts (non-refrigerated) and soy products.

Trade Secretary Jesli Lapus said executives of San Miguel Corp., Magnolia and Purefoods, who earlier met with Pascual, were impressed with the project.

Lapus said Grupo Leche Pascual is determined to achieve with a local partner the double goal of meeting domestic and regional market demand.

"This is a good investment...part of their marketing educational campaign is to do yogurt feeding in Philippine schools as part of its corporate social responsibility project," Lapus said.

Considering the nutritive value of yogurt, the feeding program will greatly improve the Filipinos' eating habits, he said.

Lapus said Grupo Leche Pascual chose the Philippines for its first Asian venture due to its strategic location.

The trade chief also met with Spanish firms presently on various stages of doing business in the Philippines such as Isolux-Corsan, Globaltec and Centurion. The companies are engaged in investment priority projects in renewable energy, like wind farms in Ilocos Norte, bio-ethanol plants in Negros Occidental and pre-fabricated steel bridges in rural areas. (www.philstar.com) ■

Nursing Course Losing Appeal

by Mayen JAYMAUN /
Tuesday, April 19, 2010

MANILA, Philippines - FEWER STUDENTS ARE OPTING to take up nursing apparently due to the continuing slump in the hiring of health workers in the United States, the country's largest labor group reported yesterday.

The Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) said the desire among young Filipinos to obtain a nursing degree and work in the United States appears to have waned.

TUCP secretary-general and former senator Ernesto Herrera cited as example nursing schools in Cebu, which have recorded a drop in the number of enrollees for the past years.

"Nursing schools have aggressively expanded their capacity in the last 12 months, but realized that fewer first-year students are actually entering nursing programs compared to figures for the past two years," Herrera said.

Herrera also reported a 28-percent decline in the number of Filipinos who sought employment in the United States in the first quarter of the year.

*Only 3,024 Filipino nurses took the NCLEX

for the first time from January to March, down 1,170 from 4,194 in the same quarter of 2009," Herrera said, referring to the licensure examination administered by the US National Council of State Boards of Nursing Inc.

Herrera explained that many recession-hit American employers remained reluctant to hire additional skilled foreign workers, including nurses.

"Instead of recruiting new practitioners, many American hospitals are simply asking their existing nursing staff to render extra working hours," Herrera said.

He said community hospitals and nursing homes run by state and city governments there are definitely reeling from funding constraints.

Due to the weak labor market in America, Herrera said a growing number of Filipino nurses are seeking foreign employment opportunities elsewhere.

The Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) previously reported a decline in the number of nursing graduates taking the yearly licensure examination for the past few years. (www.philstar.com) ■

Albay Holding Magayon Festival

by Mayen JAYMAUN /
Tuesday, April 19, 2010

MANILA, Philippines - IT IS ANOTHER COLORFUL CELEBRATION OF CULTURE, craft and cuisine as the province of Albay marks the 14th Magayon Festival until April 30 in Legazpi City.

Albay Gov. Joey Salceda said the month-long festival focuses on the rediscovery of the province's history and cultural heritage, promotion of tourism assets and products, and showcase of people's skills.

With the slogan "Albay Rising," Salceda said the provincial government is investing P12 million in tourism-oriented events and another P3 million in promotion to transform the province into a world-class destination.

Festivities kicked off last April 5 with an opening Mass, trade fair and exhibits, photo contest and exhibit, float parade, drum and

bugle competition, and brass band performances, and capped by an evening concert featuring K. Brosas and Rico Blanco.

Trade fairs and exhibits showcase the best of the best products of local craftsmen and souvenir items of the province's 15 towns and the cities of Legazpi, Ligao and Tabaco.

The province is also launching the book "Albay: Winding Down the Historic Abaca Trade" authored by historian Dr. Danilo Gerona which chronicles the progress of Albay through the centuries.

The province is noted for its export-quality abaca crafts, pili sweets, and spicy delicacies.

The festival's highlight is on April 29 with the Legend Showdown street-dancing tilt, the Namit Bikol cooking competition, and a musical play on the legend of Daragang Magayon.

The festival closes with a concert featuring Erik Santos and a fireworks display on April 30. (www.philstar.com) ■

Chinese Warships in Manila to Mark RP-China Ties

by **Pia LEE-BRAGO** /
Wednesday, April 14, 2010

MANILA, Philippines - THREE CHINESE WARSHIPS DOCKED at South Harbor in Manila yesterday for a five-day port call as part of the celebration of the 35th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and China.

The missile frigates – flagship Ma'anshan and Wenzhou – and comprehensive supply ship Qian-daohu had just completed a 128-day anti-piracy mission off Somalia escorting more than 650 Chinese and foreign merchant vessels, in-

cluding six from the Philippines and other vessels of international organizations like the World Food Program for transporting humanitarian materials.

Senior Captain Qiu Yanpeng, deputy chief of the East Sea Fleet of the Chinese Navy, commands the task force.

Ambassador Liu Jianchao led the welcome ceremony for People's Liberation Army Navy Task Force 525 at the South Harbor.

During their visit, Qiu and the 700-strong crew of the three ships will meet with Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim and Philippine Navy

officials.

The Chinese naval servicemen will also be playing football and basketball with Philippine Navy seamen in Fort Bonifacio.

"We are here not only to welcome these dazzling warships rendering a good-will visit to this beautiful archipelago, but also to share the friendship and sincerity from the Chinese people to the Philippine people," Liu said.

Speaking through an interpreter, Qiu said the Chinese Navy is proud of their contribution to peace and stability in the Gulf of Aden. (www.philstar.com)



Members of the Chinese navy special forces stand at attention onboard the missile frigate Ma'anshan upon its arrival at the Manila South Harbor's Pier 13

Korea Funds Study on RP Fruits

by **Marianne V. GO** /
Wednesday, April 14, 2010

MANILA, Philippines - THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (DA) received yesterday a grant of \$65,000 from the Korean government to fund a study on extending the shelf life of Philippine fruits.

A check worth \$65,000 (roughly P3 million) from the Rural Development Administration of Korea was turned over to the DA's High Value Commercial Crops Program at the start of the two-day 1st General Assembly of the Asian Food and Agriculture Cooperation Initiative (AFACI) at the Summit

Ridge Hotel in Tagaytay City.

Representatives from 12 member-countries are participating in the conference being hosted by the Philippines. The conference participants will discuss projects aimed at promoting sustainable agriculture growth in the Asian region.

The Korea-funded initiative aims to address the Philippines' problem of exporting fresh mangoes to other countries. Exports of Philippine fruits such as mangoes, bananas and pineapples have met strong phyto-sanitary resistance from more developed countries allegedly due to possible fruit pest



contamination.

The Korean grant is a result of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on Agricultural Scientific and Technical Cooperation signed

by former Secretary Arthur C. Yap during the visit of President Arroyo to Korea last May 2009.

The Philippines is the number two exporter of mangoes to Korea with a 32.5 percent market share second only to Taiwan which has a higher market share of 43.8 percent.

Philippine mango exports to Korea is valued at \$15.71 million.

The projects to be discussed during the two-day AFACI conference also aim to eradicate poverty and contribute to economic development through technological cooperation in the agriculture and food sector.

Besides the Philippines, the other AFACI member-countries are Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia,

Korea, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Uzbekistan and Vietnam.

An implementing agreement covering several pan-Asian projects, workshops and training programs will be signed during the conference.

The AFACI was established through an MOU signed among the member-countries on Nov. 3 last year.

It involves international collaboration for the development of sustainable agriculture and food technology to help economies deal with the changes in the agricultural environment triggered by, among others, global warming and technology transfer and development. (www.philstar.com) ■

AFP, PNP Begin Implementing Poll Security Plans

by **Paolo ROMERO** /
Thursday, April 22, 2010

MANILA, Philippines - THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) have begun implementing security plans for the May 10 elections even as the number of private armed groups has reportedly increased during the campaign period.

Army Col. Ricardo Nepomuceno, action officer of the Task Force HOPE (Honest, Peaceful and Orderly Elections), and Lt. Col. Edgar Arevalo told a news briefing at the Palace that troops have been deployed in voting areas ahead of the polls.

Nepomuceno said special attention would be given to areas identified by security agencies as election hotspots.

"We have also placed troops and special units on standby that can readily be deployed to any possible flashpoint, but we hope that would not be necessary," he said.

He added that the National Capital Region Command has also activated its civil disturbance management units or anti-riot personnel to address possible unrest before, during or after the elections.

He, however, said civil unrest was highly improbable given the security preparations and the peaceful nature of Filipinos.

Nepomuceno said AFP and PNP personnel would be placed on full alert days before the elections.

"The government is going all out to ensure that the country's first automated polls next month would be peaceful and safe," Ex-

ecutive Secretary Leandro Mendoza said.

He said President Arroyo wants a smooth transfer of governance as a punctuation mark to her legacy of accomplishments.

"I believe we could achieve this by guaranteeing peaceful and safe elections," Mendoza said.

PNP chief of operations Deputy Director Edgardo Acuña said police are looking at 10 provinces for heavy deployment, with Mindanao being the priority area.

He said the PNP had already deployed a company of the PNP Special Action Force in Basilan, Maguindano and Sulu.

Mendoza said the government has made contingency plans in the event of any unrest after the elections. He gave assurance that "peace and order will remain manageable."

Arevalo said the situation in Basilan, site of recent blasts, was stable.

The Zenarosa Commission, an independent body tasked to dismantle private armed groups, admitted yesterday the number of such groups has actually increased.

Commissioner Herman Basbaño said from an initial 112, government troops had dismantled 24 private armed groups.

However, the list was updated with fresh intelligence reports, showing an increase to 107. (www.philstar.com) ■



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PHILIPPINE NEWS

Noynoy, Mar Target Universal Health Care for All Pinoys

by Delon **PORCALLA** /
Wednesday, April 21, 2010

MANILA, Philippines - **LIBERAL PARTY (LP) PRESIDENTIAL BET** Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III and his running mate Sen. Manuel "Mar" Roxas II promised to expand the coverage of health insurance to all Filipinos by 2013 if they win in the May 10 elections.

Roxas said this would be among the "priority projects" of an

Aquino-Roxas administration to give ordinary citizens easy access to quality healthcare, along with better education, economic growth and job creation.

"We have a program called universal healthcare, which means that all of our countrymen will have better and easier access, and work as well for increased benefits of state health insurer Philippine Health Insurance Corp.," he said.

Aquino assured the poor and elderly that they would have access to professional healthcare.

Quality health care for the public has been severely affected because it is the politicians who decide who should be the beneficiaries of PhilHealth, which runs counter to the original intent of Republic Act 8785, or the National Health Insurance Act of 1995. (www.philstar.com) ■

Teodoro to Maintain Principled Fight

by Paolo **ROMERO** /
Wednesday, April 21, 2010

MANILA, Philippines - **WITH ELECTIONS JUST TWO WEEKS AWAY**, administration presidential candidate Gilberto "Gibo" Teodoro vowed to focus on positive issues.

Teodoro said he would not yield to pressures to engage in dirty campaigning just to boost his ratings.

Teodoro said he would stay the course to campaign positively instead of engaging in a word war like that between frontrunners Liberal Party (LP) presidential bet Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III and Nacionalista Party (NP) standard-bearer Sen. Manuel Villar.

Teodoro though admitted he had issues of his own to contend with, particularly the defections of key leaders of the ruling Lakas-

Kampi-CMD to the NP and LP.

Spokesman Mike Toledo pointed out that since the campaign started in February, Teodoro has never resorted to "dirty campaigning or black propaganda" and maintained his positive campaign that presented his platform of government.

"We are waging a principled fight and we hope to elevate the level of campaigning and political discourse in the country," Toledo said.

"It's better to campaign by educating the public, the voters, instead of telling them how bad another candidate is. Filipinos are intelligent enough anyway to know who could be a good and a bad president."

President Arroyo on Monday called on her party mates to "stick together" in the homestretch of the campaign. Surveys have consistently shown Aquino in the lead, fol-

lowed by Villar and former President Joseph Estrada. Teodoro has been placing fourth in the surveys.

Administration senatorial candidate Raul Lambino said the move of President Arroyo to consolidate the ruling party has further increased the chances of Teodoro in the last few weeks of the campaign.

"We still have enough number of local candidates to back up Gibo. And these are no ordinary candidates, these are the people who could deliver votes for Gibo and the rest of the administration national candidates," Lambino said.

This developed as political clans in Northern Luzon expressed their full support for Teodoro.

The Northern Alliance in the House of Representatives comprised of lawmakers in the regions of Ilocos provinces, Cagayan Valley and the Cordillera denied reports of shifting alliances from the ruling party. (www.philstar.com) ■

Palace, Security Officials Tackle Power Crisis

by Paolo **ROMERO** /
Wednesday, April 21, 2010

MANILA, Philippines - **PRESIDENT ARROYO MET YESTERDAY** with police and military officials and energy executives in her first national security meeting in recent weeks at the Palace.

Officials said the meeting did not focus on security preparations for the May 10 elections but more on the assurance of power in Mindanao, which continues to be hit by rotating power outages.

Defense Secretary Norberto Gonzales said members of the Cabinet cluster on security briefed Mrs. Arroyo on the situation in Mindanao, particularly on the activities of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the extremist Abu Sayyaf Group, and the communist New People's Army (NPA).

"There were concerns on the possibility of pockets of lawlessness happening in the South because of the recent incidents there," Gonzales told THE STAR, referring to the recent blasts in Basilan attributed to the Abu Sayyaf, and the kidnapping of a Filipino-Swiss businessman in Zamboanga City by a kidnap-for-ransom group.

The meeting also tackled ongoing talks between government peace officials, MNLF leaders and representatives of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) in Tripoli, Libya.

The President also got a live update from Presidential Adviser for the Peace Process Annabelle Abaya from Tripoli.

Gonzales said there was not

much discussion on the issue of election-related violence due to lack of time. The national security meeting was preceded by a meeting of the Cabinet economic cluster and followed by another set of discussions by members of the National Economic and Development Authority Board in the afternoon.

Gonzales said Mrs. Arroyo was concerned about the peace and order situation during the election period and reminded the Armed Forces and Philippine National Police (PNP) officials of their responsibilities to ensure orderly polls.

According to private election watchdogs, 39 election-related violent incidents that resulted in deaths or injuries were recorded from Jan. 10 to March 25.

The PNP has already identified 558 cities and municipalities considered as "election watchlist areas."

Energy Secretary Jose Ibaeza said there are still five-hour rotating blackouts in some parts of Mindanao but assured the Cabinet of stable power supply from May 9 to 11.

Mrs. Arroyo asked if there was a way to immediately end the blackouts but Ibaeza said it would still take some months and reserves are being built to ensure there would be power during the elections.

The energy chief earlier warned that some malls and industries in Mindanao may have to temporarily shut down or slow down while dam operators release more water to boost power supply for three days in May to ensure there would be no blackouts during the country's first nationwide automated polls. (www.philstar.com)



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Metro Sizzles at 36.8°C

by Paolo **ROMERO** /
Wednesday, April 21, 2010

MANILA, Philippines - **THE TEMPERATURE YESTERDAY ROSE** to 36.8 degrees Celsius in Metro Manila, the hottest recorded so far this year, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said.

Pagasa weather forecaster Chris Perez said the maximum temperature was recorded at 3 p.m. at the agency's facility in Diliman, Quezon City.

"This is the hottest temperature in Metro Manila since January," Perez said in a phone interview.

Meanwhile, Perez said Tuesday's maximum temperatures in

Baguio City and Tuguegarao, Cagayan were 26.2 degrees Celsius and 38.5 degrees Celsius, respectively.

The hottest temperature in Baguio City was recorded on April 7 at 29.1 degrees while in Tuguegarao, the warmest was registered on April 12 at 39.7 degrees Celsius.

Perez said the country will continue to experience good but warm weather in the next three days.

He said isolated rainshowers are also possible due to warm weather during the day.

Perez said afternoon thunderstorms are expected to prevail during the latter part of April.

(www.philstar.com) ■



by Reuben S. SEGURITAN

LEGAL NOTES

Changing F-1 Student's Status to H-1B

that starts on October 1, 2010, the applicant must have a valid status until that date. If the applicant is out of status, he/she is required to leave the U.S. and apply for H-1B visa at a U.S. consulate abroad.

The cap refers to the 65,000 annual numerical limitation imposed on initial H-1B visas. In the last several years, the number of H-1B petitions filed exceeded the cap. The latest United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) report shows that so far, 13,500 petitions were received since the start of the filing period on April 1. It is expected that the cap will again be reached before the end of 2011 fiscal year.

There is a new immigration regulation that automatically allows certain students with a pending or

approved H-1B petition to remain in the U.S. during the time when the F-1 status and work authorization would otherwise expire. This regulation provides a way to fill what is referred to as the cap gap so that the students do not have to go abroad to obtain their H-1B visas.

An example of a cap gap occurs when a student's optional practical training (OPT) ends in the spring and his/her status expires 60 days after that, leaving a gap of several months before the H-1B status begins on October 1.

To qualify for the cap gap extension, the H-1B petition must be filed while the student's authorized duration of status (DS) is still in effect (including any OPT period and the 60 day preparation time known as the grace period.)

Once the petition is timely filed, the cap gap extension begins and will continue until the adjudication of the petition is completed. To prove continuing status, the student should obtain an updated Form I-20 from his/her designated school official.

If the H-1B petition is subsequently rejected, denied or revoked, the student will be entitled to the standard 60-day grace period to prepare to depart unless the denial or revocation is based on fraud, misrepresentation or status violation. The grace period begins on the date that the letter of rejection, denial or revocation is postmarked.

If the H-1B petition is denied or withdrawn, the student may apply for a STEM OPT extension provided that his/her degree is in-

cluded on the STEM designated degree program list and the application is made within ten (10) days of the denial or withdrawal. STEM refers to degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Students who obtained such degrees are eligible for a 17-month extension in addition to the twelve (12) months initially granted.

The student who is granted an automatic extension cannot travel outside the U.S. during the cap gap period. If the student wants to travel, he/she will have to apply for an H-1B visa at a U.S. consulate abroad. ■

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

To change a nonimmigrant status to another, an applicant must be in lawful status not only up to the time that the application is filed but also up to the time when the new status becomes effective.

In the case of a change to cap subject H-1B for fiscal year 2011

MAINLAND NEWS

US Bill Seen to Save RP Garments Sector

by Ma. Elisa P. OSORIO / Thursday, April 22, 2010

MANILA, Philippines - **THE PHILIPPINE-PROPOSED BILL "SAVE OUR INDUSTRIES ACT OF 2010"** which is expected to save the ailing local garments industry has been filed in both Houses of the US Congress.

The measure was introduced by Congressman Jim McDermott and Congressman Brian P. Bilbray in June 2009 which had a total of 10 sponsors. A companion bill S. 3170 was introduced by Senators Kit Bond and Daniel Inouye.

President Arroyo met with the proponents of the bill when she visited Washington last week.

Under the 809 component of the program, US made fabrics and yarns cut and wholly assembled in the Philippines would qualify to reenter the United States free of

taxes. In addition, garments made of US spun yarn or extruded yarn formed in the Philippines, may reenter the United States at 50 percent of the most favored nation (MFN) duty.

The Philippine garments export industry, during its peak, employed around 600,000 workers but was whittled down to 150,000 as cheaper garments are now being manufactured from neighboring countries.

The Philippine delegation was able to convince US legislators on the positive impact of the bill. In 2008, US exports to the Philippines amounted to \$20 million.

The bill will significantly increase US exports to the Philippines and sustain thousands of US jobs for over a 10-year period.

The bill drew positive response from members of Congress and we now count around 150 of them voting for its passage, the contingent observed.

To ensure strict customs enforcement and prevent transshipment of apparel, the Philippine government assures the US that it continues to enforce the Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Cooperation in Trade in Textile and Apparel Goods it signed with the United States in August 2006. The Philippines will also establish procedures to allow the US government access to information for shipments before they reach US Customs, similar to the Electronic Visa Information System (ELVIS), which had previously been in force in the Philippines.

In Washington, President Arroyo met with US Senators Kit Bond and Daniel Inouye to thank them for sponsoring the bill in the Senate.

The Save Our Industries Act is a win-win trade program that will revitalize the US textile industry and the Philippine apparel industry. It will help workers in both countries through increased trade activity and expanding job opportunities. www.philstar.com ■

Senators Ask Obama Administration to Protect Immigrant Youth

IN A HISTORIC MOVE, U.S. SENATORS DICK DURBIN (D-IL) and Richard Lugar (R-IN) have asked the Obama Administration to halt the deportations of immigrant youth who would be eligible for the DREAM Act, which would permit certain undocumented students to become permanent legal residents if they came here as children, are long-term U.S. residents, attend college or have enlisted in the military for at least two years.

Immigration reform supporters praised both senators for their bipartisan efforts, calling it a significant new development in the on-going immigration reform debate.

Despite calls for change and repeated assurances by the presi-

dent, some critics say that the Obama administration is on track to exceed the deportation levels of its predecessor. The administration has also been mired in controversies surrounding reported "deportation quotas," the detention of Haitians rescued from the earthquake and sent to the U.S., the extension of controversial agreements with local enforcement authorities that spawn terror among Latinos in local communities and despicable treatment of detainees in its sprawling, privatized and often inhumane detention system.

In fact, enforcement actions by the Department of Human Services against DREAM Act kids have led to multiple protests and campaigns in defense of those

facing deportation. Immigration reform supporters say that if Congress fails to act this year, an entire class of law-abiding high school students will graduate without being able to plan for the future and some will be removed from their homes to countries they barely know. Furthermore, America stands to lose a vital asset—an educated class of promising immigrant students who have demonstrated a commitment to hard work and a desire to be contributing members of society.

"We applaud the efforts of Senators Durbin and Lugar in recognizing the urgency for passage of the DREAM Act," said Mohammad Abdollahi co-founder of DREAMActivist.org. "Our nation cannot afford to have another decade of dreams deferred." ■

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PHILIPPINE NEWS

Comelec May Not Be Able to Declare Dominant Majority and Minority Parties

by Paolo ROMERO /
Thursday, April 22, 2010

MANILA, Philippines - **THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS (COMELEC)** may not be able to declare the dominant majority and minority parties in the coming May 10 elections in view of the status quo order by the Supreme Court (SC) over the merger of the Nationalista Party (NP) and the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC).

Comelec Chairman Jose Melo said they could not proclaim which political parties should become the dominant minority and dominant

majority since the issue concerns the computation of their respective membership.

"It might be a bit difficult for the SC, at this point, to decide (regarding the coalition) so we might not have dominant majority and minority (parties)," he said.

Melo noted the SC would go on recess, so it has only one week to deliberate on the issue.

Melo explained that under Republic Act 9369 or the Poll Automation Law, the fifth and sixth copies of the election returns (ERs) would be given to the domi-

nant majority and minority party, respectively.

If there are no dominant parties named, the political parties might have to rely on the Comelec reports on election results posted on its website, he said.

Dominant parties are also entitled to their own data servers on election day while watchers would be given priority access in crowded polling precincts.

The Comelec had approved the application of NP and NPC to become a coalition to boost its chances of becoming a dominant

minority party.

Apart from the NP-NPC, the Liberal Party (LP) and the Pwersang Magasang (PMP) are also bidding to get this title.

On the other hand, the administration Lakas-Kampi-CMD is the lone political party that applied to become the dominant majority party.

In determining the dominant parties, the Comelec takes into consideration the number of members, those who are incumbent and those who are running for any elective post in the coming elections.

The LP, for its part, hailed the SC for its decision preventing the

Comelec from implementing the NP-NPC alliance.

LP standard-bearers Senators Benigno "Noyoy" Aquino III and Manuel "Mar" Roxas II said the high court's decision levels the playing field among legitimate political parties vying to get the dominant minority party status in the May 10 elections.

Roxas, LP president, said Comelec "bent backwards" in accommodating the NP-NPC merger despite its patent illegality.

He said the NP-NPC alliance was unilaterally declared by a handful of officials and members without concurrence of the NPC's national convention. (www.philstar.com) ■

Health Workers to Receive Anti-H1N1 Vaccine - DOH

by Sheila CRISOSTOMO /
Thursday, April 22, 2010

MANILA, Philippines - **ALL FRONT-LINE HEALTH WORKERS** across the country will soon be vaccinated against the A(H1N1) virus as the Philippines has already received the 1.9 million doses of vaccines donated by the World Health Organization (WHO), the Department of Health (DOH) said yesterday.

Front-line health workers include private and public doctors, nurses and nursing aides and barangay health workers, estimated at 420,000.

"They are at higher risk for getting the disease than ordinary people due to their larger probability of exposure," said Health Secretary Esperanza Cabral.

She claimed the health workers might also transmit the infection

to their patients "so it is appropriate that they be given priority now that the vaccines are ready for deployment."

The donation is in line with the WHO's commitment to protect poor and vulnerable nations from the disease.

Health workers from the regional health offices and local government units have been oriented prior to the distribution of the vaccines.

Cabral added that after vaccinating the health workers, about 1.5 million vaccines would still be left and would be used to vaccinate some 2.5 million pregnant women.

"Subsequent shipments will be given to other priority groups such as children six months to five years old, those 60 years old and above, and those with chronic medical conditions," she said.

(www.philstar.com) ■

MAINLAND NEWS

Pinoy Teachers Win Case vs US Recruiter

by James MANANGHAYA /
Wednesday, April 21, 2010

NEW ORLEANS - A BUSINESS THAT BROUGHT HUNDREDS of Filipino teachers to Louisiana to work in public schools has been fined and ordered to refund placement fees that a teacher union estimates will total \$1.5 million.

An administrative law judge with the Louisiana Workforce Commission said California-based Universal Placement Inc. (UPI) operated without the proper Louisiana license.

Les Landon, spokesman for the Louisiana Federation of Teachers, said Friday that the union estimates about 360 teachers are affected and the placement fees averaged about \$5,000 per person.

Judge Shelly Dick, who is

based in Baton Rouge, also fined the company \$500 and ordered the payment of legal fees totaling \$7,500.

Dick turned down the teachers' request that she nullify their contracts with Universal Placement, saying she lacked that authority.

Also, she did not order the return of all fees collected from the teachers, such as those for helping them obtain visas and other documents needed to work in the United States.

"Scrutiny of these fees is not within the regulatory authority of this commission," Dick wrote.

In complaints to state and federal authorities, teachers have complained of fees totaling in excess of \$10,000 in some cases.

Dick noted in the ruling that Universal Placement claimed it didn't need a Louisiana license because it operated in California,

placing teachers in various states.

"UPI is splitting hairs," she wrote, going on to recount evidence of the company's extensive work in Louisiana.

A telephone call to a spokeswoman for Universal Placement was not immediately returned Friday afternoon.

The Louisiana Federation of Teachers and the American Federation of Teachers also have filed complaints with the state attorney general's office and the US Department of Labor about Universal Placement and its sister operation in the Philippines, PARS.

In the federal complaint, the union says Universal Placement and its president, Lourdes "Lulu" Navarro, arranged for one-year visas, instead of more commonly used three-year visas, and charged visa renewal fees to the teachers, not the school systems. (www.philstar.com) ■

Seattle University to Host Nationwide Conference

A REUNION HOMECOMING with a retrospective look at Filipino-American history will highlight the upcoming Filipino American National Historical Society's (FANHSS) 13th National Conference in Seattle from July 22-24, 2010.

Up to 400 participants from around the nation are expected to attend the three-day conference at Seattle University.

The conference theme of "A Quest for Emergence: A Retrospective" dominates two historic Filipino-American events, both held previously at Seattle University—FANHSS' first national conference in 1987 and the first Young Filipino Peoples' Far West Convention in 1971. The 1971 convention with its own theme, "A Quest for Emergence," drew some 300 young and old and was hailed as the birth of the Filipino American Movement in the U.S.

According to FANHSS executive director Dorothy Laigo, many presenters will focus on the 70s and 80s. Scholars and community researchers will also share earlier Filipino American history and experiences.

Besides scholarly presentations, conference offerings will include panels, round-table discussion groups, "how-to" workshops, films, authors' reception, exhibits, tours, marketplace, evening entertainment, auction and closing dinner.

FANHSS conferences traditionally have attracted students of all levels, ages and commitment, and academics, educators, scholars, oral historians, genealogists, photographers, archivists, authors, writers, poets, playwrights, filmmakers, American and Philippine-born, young and old, professional and community researchers but, most of

all, those who are interested, want to learn or to share in Filipino American History. Even young ones and toddlers will be able to participate in a new offering of special programs for children of conference attendees.

The conference's co-sponsors are the Seattle University Filipino Alumni Chapter, Seattle Central Community College's Continuing and Professional Education and FANHSS' Yakama Valley and Seattle Chapters.

Founded in 1982, FANHSS is a community-based organization whose mission is to preserve, document and present Filipino-American history and to support scholarly research and artistic works which reflect that rich past. The national office and archives are housed in Seattle and operates year-round to lend expertise and support to 27 chapters across the U.S. ■

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May 23, 2010 • Hawaii Prince Hotel Maunakea Ballroom • To enter please call Eddie Agas, Sr. at 783-2237, Carola Ader at 688-3215, Jema Geronimo at 295-5571

GLOBAL NEWS

Somali Pirates Seize 21 Filipino Sailors

MANILA, Philippines (Xinhua) - ANOTHER BATCH OF 21 FILIPINO SAILORS on board a Liberian vessel were snatched by heavily armed Somali pirates Wednesday morning.

The Philippine Embassy in Nairobi, in a report to the Home Office in Manila Wednesday, said the Panamanian-flagged, Liberian-owned bulk carrier Voc Daisy was seized by Somali pirates in the Gulf of Aden, 190 miles southeast of Salalah, Oman.

Philippine Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Esteban Conejos said the Philippine government coordinating with the vessel's local manning agency to determine the

condition of the Filipino seafarers. The European Union Naval Force said at the time of the attack, the ship was heading west from Ruwais, United Arab Emirates making its way to the eastern rendezvous point of the International Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC), for onward transit through the Suez Canal. "MV Voc Daisy was able to raise the alarm before the four armed pirates, carrying three AK47s and one RPG, stormed onboard and cut their lines of communication," an EUNAVFOR statement said. The EU NAVFOR, which is helping Philippine authorities in monitoring the situation, confirmed that all the Filipinos

sailors are safe. The Philippines is the world's leading supplier of ship crew with over 350,000 sailors, or about a fifth of the world's seafarers, manning oil tankers, luxury liners, and passenger vessels worldwide, exposing them to piracy attacks. Since late 2008, more than 200 Filipino seamen have been abducted by pirates off Somali waters. As a policy, the Philippine government does not negotiate nor pay ransom to kidnappers, but gives ship owners the free hand in negotiating for the release of abducted Filipino sailors. (www.philstar.com) ■

Oman Extends Amnesty Deadline for Illegal Foreign Workers

By **Pia LEE-BRAGO** / Tuesday, April 20, 2010

MANILA, Philippines - OMAN HAS EXTENDED UNTIL MAY 31 its deadline for illegal foreign workers, including Filipinos, to avail of its amnesty program.

Under the Omani Ministry of Manpower's Program, illegal expatriate workers may now leave the Sultanate

without paying penalties for overstaying or having expired or no labor identification cards. But it said they would still have to pay for the cost of the one-way ticket to their countries of origin. Charge d'Affaires Lamberto Monsanto of the Philippine embassy in Muscat said the names of those applying for amnesty would be published in the newspapers before clearance for exit is

given. The publication is meant to enable employers or other parties to raise their complaints, if they have any, against illegal workers to prevent them from leaving the country. Deportees will not be allowed to return to Oman for at least two years, Monsanto said. The embassy has received 170 applications and issued 61 travel documents to those who have no passports. (www.philstar.com) ■

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