

ACROSS THE ISLANDS

Happy Christmas for Mindanao child refugees

TWO-thirds of the 611,753 people caught in the armed conflict in Mindanao are children. Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) secretary Esperanza Cabral led officials to launch a gift-giving activity for the children who are suffering from the struggle in Mindanao. The project *Tulong Para sa Batang MindaNOW (Help for the Child of MindaNOW)*, is joined by Metro Manila Mayors Spouses Foundation and Ricky Reyes Foundation Inc. The project is aimed to collect books, clothes, schools supplies, and toys not promoting violence for the children in Mindanao.



Tulong Para sa Batang MindaNOW already started last Monday, November 3, 2008 and will end on November 30, 2008. The dropboxes were placed on public elementary schools all over Metro Manila and will then be collected to be distributed for the Mindanao children, all in time for the Christmas season.



Canadian filmmaker features Philippines' 'Aswang'

ROXAS CITY—Jordan Clark, a filmmaker from High Banks Entertainment Ltd. in Canada took interest in a Philippine folklore character, the *Aswang*. He is on his fifth trip to Capiz and is already conducting interviews and researches for the straight feature-length documentary about the *aswang* myth, which is centered on the central islands of the Philippines.

Clark also created the documovie *Aswang: A Journey Into Myth* which he described as an origin and artistic exploration of Philippine folklore. The film starred Janice Valdez, a newcomer, with the special appearance of the Diamond Star Maricel Soriano. The documovie will be a supplementary on the DVD that will be on Clark's feature documentary.



Subic continues to rise

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—Last October 29, Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) administrator Armand Arreza addressed that, "Subic has come a long way," in the last ten years. In his address, Arreza also mentioned that Subic now houses 1,100 investor-firms that created more than 85,000 job opportunities.



Arreza discussed in his address the existence of nine other piers and cargo terminals in Subic, key infrastructures, and the rapid expansion of tourism facilities balanced by the eco-tourism.

By the start of the decade, Subic has had a rising number of domestic and international guests growing every year. SBMA stated in their website that Subic now can be compared to Honolulu, Hawaii, "Subic caters to all sorts of activities, it is a combination of a city and a tourist haven." ■

'RP can learn from US polls'

by PAOLO ROMERO
Philstar.com

MALACAÑANG said last November 4 that the Philippines can learn from the US presidential elections for its conduct of successful national polls in 2010.

Presidential Adviser for Political Affairs Gabriel Claudio also said that just like the Americans, Filipinos are hopeful the elections could help stop the decline of the US economy that is being felt around the world.

"On a non-partisan note, we take special interest in the US elections in terms of the lessons we can derive from it to ensure the successful holding of our own national elections in 2010," Claudio said in a statement.

"The last US electoral campaign should inspire us to better discern the worthiness of our own candidates on the basis of their espousal of issues of true consequence to the stability of our country as well as the well-being of our people," he said.

He said the US presidential polls should also serve as a vital guide for the country in effectively automating the 2010 electoral process to ensure clean, honest and credible elections.

He noted that Philippine-US relations are very much intertwined and will remain strong whether it be Democrat Barack Obama or Republican John McCain who wins.

He said no election for head of state in history "has probably generated as much interest and excitement worldwide as today's presidential polls in the US."

"Because the health of America's economy and the soundness of its foreign policy inexorably affect the rest of the world, the Philippines, like many other countries, shares

the American people's sense of anticipation and hope in finding the solutions to their economic problems through this elections," Claudio said.

"Regardless of the election result, I believe the strategic importance of the Philippines in America's geopolitics as well as the historical significance of our two countries' friendship will remain constant and will not be lost to the next US administration," he said. ■



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