

RP, Spain sign 3 cooperation pacts

by CYNTHIA BALANA
Inquirer.net

THE Philippines and Spain have signed three agreements that would further boost cooperation between the two countries.

Foreign Secretary Alberto G. Romulo and Spain's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Miguel Angel Moratinos last March 24 exchanged signed bilateral agreements after an hour-long meeting in Manila.

The three documents were a memorandum of agreement among the Department of Health, Department of Budget and Management and the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation providing a 5-million euro grant for the improvement of health services in the Bicol and Caraga regions; another providing authorization for dependents of diplomatic and consular personnel to seek remunerated employment; and a third allowing foreign service schools in the Philippines and Spain to coordinate in the training of future diplomats.

Romulo and Moratinos exchanged views on a host of other issues, including new opportunities for cooperation and development in their respective countries and regions.

The Spanish official also said King Juan Carlos had accepted an invitation from President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to visit the Philippines.

Ways to increase cooperation in multilateral forums such as the United Nations and the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) were also discussed by the two ministers.

Spain will play a prominent role in the European Union next year as it assumes the presidency in January for a six-month term.

Moratinos and senior officials from his ministry were in Manila for a three-day official visit which ended last March 26. ■

Declining Filipino TV, print consumption

SURVEY SAYS

Internet consumption gaining ground

by ALEXANDER VILLAFANIA
Inquirer.net

MAKATI CITY—There is now an evident decline in traditional television viewing and print readership among Filipinos, a survey done by Yahoo! Philippines and research firm Nielsen showed.

The survey also revealed that more Filipinos, especially the younger population, are favoring the Internet more than television and print.

The Yahoo!-Nielsen Net Index survey was conducted from October to November 2008.

It showed a slight decline in TV viewership from 98 percent in 2007 to 92 percent in 2008, out of 1,200 people sampled.

Readership of newspapers also showed a decline from 19 to 15 percent between 2007 and 2008.

Magazine readership also went down from 16 percent in 2007 to just seven percent in 2008.

Meanwhile, Internet usage in-

creased from 23 percent in 2007 to 28 percent in 2008.

Overall, 28 percent of the 1,200 people surveyed have used the Internet for various purposes, mostly for email, instant messaging and search.

Another 51 percent of those surveyed used social networking sites. One out of three users also has blogs.

Nielsen Executive Director Jay Bautista said the decline in TV viewing is largely due to the changing viewing habits of Filipinos who are now watching their favorite shows on home video.

"It's not that they're not watching TV anymore but they're watching TV in a different way,"

he said. Meanwhile, there is "little to no new markets" that are being tapped by print publications, whether newspapers or magazines, which is causing the decline in print readership, Bautista said.

He said the availability and accessibility of information from the Internet is also drawing markets away from print publications.

"The current reading market is aging and youths are not picking up the habit," Bautista said.

Bautista said the changing consumer landscape is challenging media organizations to adapt.

With relevant content still found in traditional forms of media, these can be migrated online for new online consumers, he added.

On the other hand, Bautista said majority of Filipinos are not yet online, thus giving media organizations enough market to provide their core offerings.

"But as early as now the me-

dia landscape is fast changing and some are broadening their horizons, adapting to the Internet," Bautista said.

Yahoo!, on the other hand, sees the results of the survey as a way to convince advertisers to widen their marketing strategies to an online platform.

The company has already moved towards direct marketing of its online advertising services from a reseller model.

Yahoo! Philippines General Manager Jojo Anonuevo said the survey addresses the "marketing confidence gap," where advertisers are still trying to catch up with consumer behavior.

Anonuevo said advertisers would have to know more about the behavior of users to come up with better marketing strategies for new media, which continues to grow exponentially.

"As the increase in consumer demand from the Internet increases, it will bode well for online advertisers," Anonuevo said. ■

Month-long job fair set for Labor Day

by MAYEN JAYMALIN
Philstar.com

LOTS of jobs await jobseekers on Labor Day.

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and trade unions are now gearing for the country's biggest and longest job fair to commemorate Labor Day.

DOLE Undersecretary Rosalinda Baldoz said over 100,000 local and overseas jobs will be up for grabs during the nationwide month-long job fair.

"An initial 80,000 jobs have already been committed for the May 1 celebration and the figure does not include those from private companies and recruiters and from other regions," Baldoz said.

Baldoz noted that trade unions, led by the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), opted to hold a month-long job fair to facilitate the employment of more jobseekers, particularly those who were displaced by the financial crisis.

DOLE Assistant Secretary Reydeluz Conferido

said that for the first time, DOLE and trade unions will be conducting a month-long job fair so there would be more "hatch" or on the spot hiring.

Conferido noted that in past job fairs, only few applicants got hired on the spot because of the difficulty in completing the assessment of their qualifications, and securing all the necessary requirements.

"It usually takes a day to assess the qualification, so this time we are giving the applicants more time to submit their resume so that employers can assess them," Conferido said.

Conferido added that DOLE will also be undertaking skills training during the month-long event to address the problem of skills mismatch.

This early, Conferido said, jobseekers can already apply or register online through DOLE's phil-job.net website. Those who do not have Internet access may apply personally at DOLE's kiosks located in local government units and malls. ■

Internet seen as new medium for political campaigns

by EVELYN MACAIRAN
Philstar.com

GENERAL manager Jojo Añonuevo of Yahoo! Philippines expects the Internet to be the new medium for local politicians to present their platforms and programs in the 2010 elections.

Añonuevo said many candidates have begun tapping into the different Internet portals to get more media mileage and present their political platforms.

He said politicians are hoping that they would be able to establish the same rapport with Internet audiences as the campaign of United States President Barack Obama did.

"Obama's leverage in the Internet was better than any other candidate. I think there would be extreme interest (in the Internet) for the 2010 elections. I believe that some of them are thinking of it now," Añonuevo said.

He, however, declined to say if politicians have already approached him to discuss posting advertisements on the Internet.

"I think (the platforms of candidates) are already in the planning stages. We have been asked about the target demographics of those who go on the Internet," he added.

In the Philippines, the youth vote is regarded as critical for any candidate. Commission on Elections (Comelec) records showed nine million first-time registrants

that are 18 years old.

Jay Bautista, Nielsen Media Research executive director, recalled that Yehey conducted an online polling system in the last elections and got 11 out of the 12 winning senators right.

Another factor in favor of Yahoo! is that compared to other forms of media it is less expensive. A 30-second ad on television would cost about P300,000, while a display ad in Yahoo! will only cost \$5,000 (P245,000).

Another reason why the Internet is a viable medium is that it is recession proof. At a time when one has to think twice before investing money, Bautista said that these computer-based network portals would be able to withstand the global economic crisis. Staying at home or spending P15 to P20 per hour in an Internet café is a cheap alternative to expensive nights out.

Yahoo! Philippines and Nielsen released the first ever Internet Habits Study for the Philippines. The "Net Index" gives marketers insights into online media habits of consumers and provides guidelines to advertisers.

They estimated that there are now 20 million Internet users in the country.

The survey was conducted from October to November last year in 22 major cities including Metro Manila and involved 1,200 respondents.

It appeared that 28 percent of

Filipinos in national urban areas have accessed the Internet in the past month.

Bautista said that this was already an improvement considering that five years ago only five percent of Filipinos have access to the Internet.

Internet use is more popular with younger people, with 50 percent of those below 20 having access to the Internet in the past month.

Bautista said that last year television networks, radio stations and print media earned a total of P160 billion in advertisements. About 70 percent went to television, 17 percent to radio and 13 percent to print. He believes television and radio are also recession proof since the public could turn to these mediums for cheaper entertainment.

University of the Philippines professor Benjamin Diokno said the economic crisis would prevent candidates in the 2010 elections from spending as much as they did in better times.

Diokno told the Serye Café news forum in Quezon City that the financial crisis has hurt the rich more than the poor, and since the rich includes politicians, people should not expect them to maintain the same level of spending they did in the past.

"They will try to hold on to their money. As for contributions, candidates should expect to receive smaller amounts than before," he said. ■

House mulls more benefits for senior citizens

by LIRA DALANGIN-FERNANDEZ
Inquirer.net

THE House of Representatives is eyeing to pass several measures that will give the country's elderly more privileges, including health benefits and tax exemptions.

Foremost in the lineup is House Bill 5210, which has passed third reading and has been endorsed to the Senate for action. The bill

seeks to exempt the sale of medicines and goods and services to senior citizens from the value added tax.

Speaker Prospero Nograles said that aside from this, several House committees were deliberating on various proposals that deal with the grant of pension, hospitalization benefits, discount

privileges, various tax exemptions, long-term care program, representation in local health boards, and the creation of a Magna Carta of senior citizens.

"While we focus on the education and future of our youth, we will not overlook the welfare of our senior citizens," Nograles said in a statement. ■

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