

# Tight Metro watch

by MARLON RAMOS  
Inquirer.net

MANILA—More than 3,000 policemen will keep a close watch on the metropolis during Holy Week, the outgoing chief of the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) said.

According to Director Leopoldo Bataoil, the policemen will be deployed in three eight-hour shifts to ensure round-the-clock security in Metro Manila.

In a statement, Bataoil, who was replaced by Manila Police District head, Chief Supt. Roberto Rosales, said he has ordered the five police district directors to step up their measures against criminality in anticipation of the huge number of Metro residents going home to their provinces next week.

"I have ordered my district directors and the operational support units of the NCRPO to review and update the security and traffic plans based on our experience and undertake the necessary preparations and co-

ordination," he said.

Bataoil added that he directed all Metro police chiefs to put up assistance desks in churches known to be frequented by devotees.

At the same time, he reminded them to intensify their intelligence operations against Muslim extremists and communist rebels who, he said, might launch attacks during Holy Week.

"While we concentrate on public protection and assistance, we [should be] mindful that terrorist groups and communist insurgents may take advantage of the occasion," Bataoil said.

Aside from the 3,000 policemen, the NCRPO chief

said members of Special Weapons and Tactics teams, village watchmen and other special police units will also be deployed to crowded areas like seaports, airports and bus terminals.

He also directed police stations to activate their special operations task forces and emergency response teams and to assign police motorcycle personnel to major thoroughfares to assist motorists. ■



# Panlilio critics pounce on 2010 plans

by JULIE M. AURELIO  
Inquirer.net

MANILA — A former supporter and campaign contributor of Pampanga Gov. Eddie Panlilio said the priest-on-leave should forget his plans for the presidency.

In a press conference on Tuesday, March 31, Lolita Hizon, a major contributor to Panlilio's campaign kitty in 2007, claimed the priest—who significantly increased the collection of fees from quarrying in Pampanga and stopped the corruption attending the process—had done nothing for Pampanga.

"What has he done? He keeps on going around the country, campaigning. He doesn't do his job as governor," said Hizon.

She claimed that the governor was often out of his office, instead of staying put and issuing administrative orders.

"There would be more accomplishments if he would just sit down," Hizon said.

She also called Panlilio a "hard-headed fellow" and described him as "ignorant of governance."

Hizon said she had a falling out with the governor after discovering that Panlilio allegedly did not



Pampanga Gov. Ed Panlilio

report a P1-million campaign contribution to the Commission on Elections, and that the governor only reported P5 million.

"People should learn a lesson and think 10 times before supporting him for the presidency," Hizon said, adding that Panlilio should step down from office.

Meanwhile, Candaba Mayor Jerry Pelayo doubted if Panlilio could win votes for his presidential bid in his home province of Pampanga.

"In the coming elections, if almost all his supporters withdraw their financial support, then how can he win as President?" Pelayo asked.

He also slammed the governor for severely putting down his town mayors and other provincial officials.

"*Nakakahiya na taga-Pampanga siya, pero palagi niyang dinudurog ang dangal ng mga taga-Pampanga* (It's embarrassing that he's from Pampanga and yet, he's always destroying the honor of the people from Pampanga)," Pelayo added.

Earlier, Panlilio warned that *jueteng* has been going on unabated in Pampanga because the police were tolerating it. ■

# Bayani still intent on running for president

MANILA—As far as Bayani Fernando is concerned, he is still in the running to become the country's next president.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) chair urged Sen. Miguel Zubiri to stop making statements that he has been removed from the short list of Lakas-CMD presidential bets.

"Sa tingin ko, dapat huwag na muna sabihin yung mga ganun. Wala pa akong alam na desi-

syon ng Lakas na ganun (I don't think those things should be announced just yet. I have not heard that Lakas has made a decision to that effect)," he said.

Zubiri earlier said that Fernando was out of the running due to his poor ranking in surveys.

The senator added that the top contenders for Lakas standard bearer in the 2010 elections were Vice President Noli de Castro and Defense Secretary

Gilbert Teodoro.

Fernando, however, claimed that the administration party has not yet decided who to field in the presidential elections, and that all its members—not just Zubiri—must vote on the matter.

Fernando added that despite earlier reports, he has no plans of forming his own political party as he allegedly threatened to do if the party refused to endorse his bid for the presidency. (Inquirer.net)

# SC asked to rule on baselines law

by TETCH TORRES  
Inquirer.net

MANILA—Lawyers, partylist groups, and law students have asked the Supreme Court to declare as unconstitutional Republic Act 9522 or the Baselines law for allegedly "radically changing the Philippine territory in contrary not only to the Constitution but to several international treaties as well."

In its petition for certiorari and prohibition with prayer for the issuance of a writ of preliminary prohibitory injunction and/or temporary restraining order, petitioners, led by the Center for International Law (CenterLaw), told the high court that it was necessary to stop the executive department from depositing the new law to the United Nations Secretary General.

When this happens, the Philippines will be bound to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), they said.

"The subsequent invalidation by the Honorable Court of the same law for being unconstitutional cannot undo the legal effect of its having been already registered and deposited with the UN—the dismemberment of the Philippine national territory," the petitioners said.

The new baselines law was passed supposedly to meet the deadline set by the UNCLOS III regime for member-States to draw its baselines on or before May 13.

But petitioners argued that the

new law could not amend the 1987 Constitution which defined the Philippine archipelago.

The 1987 Constitution also used as basis for defining the Philippine archipelago the Treaty of Paris, Treaty of Washington and the Convention between the US and Great Britain in 1930.

Under the Treaty of Paris, Philippine territory takes the form of a rectangle measuring 600 miles in width and 1200 miles in length but the large areas have been chopped by RA 9522.

The new law, the petitioners added, did not include 1,500 square nautical miles of territorial waters.

"By surrendering the above-mentioned territorial waters through passage of RA 9522, excluding the Kalayaan Island Group (KIG) and Scarborough Shoal from the baseline, the State has reneged on its constitutional duty to protect our exclusive marine wealth and offshore fishing grounds of our subsistence fishermen," petitioners said.

They added that the final version of the law contradicted the 1987 Constitution when it made the "waters around, between and connecting the islands of the archipelago" subject to the use of foreign vessels as well as the airspace for foreign planes.

Petitioners added that we would no longer have any control in the entry of foreign vessels to what would be formerly part of

our territorial waters if the law would be implemented. These vessels would include nuclear warships, whose entry into our waters has been prohibited under our Constitution.

They added that we also no longer have any control in preserving natural resources in the area because RA 9522 technically made the natural resources available for all since it no longer belonged to the Philippines.

Petitioners said provisions of the law clearly showed that grave abuse of discretion was committed by the legislators.

Petitioners included UP professor and lawyer Merlin Magalona, Akbayan partylist Representative Risa Hontiveros-Baraquel, lawyer Harry Roque of Center Law and students from UP College of Law.

Respondents include Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo, Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya, Diony Ventura, administration of the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority and retired Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. as permanent representative of the permanent mission of the Republic of the Philippines to the UN.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo signed the bill on March 12.

The controversial measure sparked a protest from China, which like the Philippines also has claims on the Kalayaan Group of Island. ■



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# BPO industry to survive crisis, says RP firms

by ERIKA TAPALLA  
Inquirer.net

MANILA—The Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry gleams with hope during times of crisis, according to Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI).

"While the IT (information and technology) sector has been hit,

the BPO sector is surviving," said Edgardo Lacson, PCCI president, during a forum Wednesday, April 1.

Lacson cited that at least 70,000 employees were laid off in the Calabar region (Calamba, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal) due to the closing of Philippine operations of companies like Intel, Panasonic, and soon, Fujitsu.

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# Over 500 nurses to be deployed to towns beginning April 1

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Financial Crisis held in Malacañang to cushion effects of the crisis in the country through local job generation.

The program seeks to address the growing number of registered nurses in the country who remained unemployed since passing the nursing board examination and lacked the work experience to work abroad.

"It will be implemented in two batches with the first batch start-

ing on April 1 while the second batch will be dispatched in October this year," added Bihis.

An average of five newly hired nurses would be deployed in every town in the identified 3rd and 6th class municipalities for a 6-month duty.

Under the program, a total of 555 nurses were hired for Bicol to cover six provinces with Camarines Sur having the biggest number of nurses at 170 covering 34 municipalities;

Masbate with 105 nurses for all its 20 municipalities and one city; Sorsogon province with 80 nurses for its 14 towns and one city; Catanduanes with 45 nurses for nine municipalities; and Albay with five nurses to serve the most depressed barangay (villages) in Legazpi City.

Bihis said DOLE would seek support from local government executives in the additional incentives to be given to the nurses assigned in their area. ■