

DATELINE PHILIPPINES

Guinness Book slot eyed for Cory honor guard

by TARRA QUISMUNDO
Philstar.com

THE Philippine National Police is pushing the hype over the "motionless" cop one step further.

After rewarding him with cash and a promotion, the PNP will try to get worldwide recognition for Police Officer 2 Danilo Malab Jr. for his service as an honor guard during last week's funeral march for former President Corazon Aquino.

The PNP has asked the Guinness Book of World Records to cite Malab's feat of standing still for almost nine hours without food or rest on the adorned truck that brought Aquino's casket to the cemetery on Aug. 5.

PNP spokesperson Senior Supt. Leonardo Espina yesterday said an online application had been sent on behalf of the rookie cop to the Guinness office in England.

"This is for standing at attention for the longest time in a funeral procession under the heat of the sun, and alternately under the rain, while in full dress gala uniform for the late President," Espina said.

The PNP did some research online to check whether records similar to Malab's feat had been set before.

It came across one Guinness entry on Joaquim Suresh, a Sri Lankan who currently holds the record for the longest time spent standing motionless at 21 hours and 30 minutes.

But the PNP remained confident Malab would earn his own spot in the Guinness book.

A different category

Espina noted that Suresh performed his stunt under a controlled environment, while Malab remained on his feet on a moving truck, at times under the rain, and occasionally hit by coins mourners crowding the streets then tossed in the direction of Aquino's coffin as a farewell ritual.

"(Malab may be cited) under a different category ... apart from records like that held by Suresh. Malab stood motionless under different circumstances," Espina said.

He said the PNP was ready to submit photos and video footage of Malab's hours on the truck if required by Guinness.

"They will deliberate (on our application) for three to four weeks. We have to wait for the results. They will communicate with us and let's see from there how the process will go," he said.

Filipina elected VP of UN rights council

by CYNTHIA BALANA
Inquirer.net

DR. Purificacion Valera-Quisumbing, presidential envoy for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, was unanimously elected as Vice President of the Advisory Committee for the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva last August 6, the Department of Foreign Affairs said.

Dr. Quisumbing's election "adds to her long list of accomplishments in the field of human rights among others, as chairperson of the Philippine Commission on Human Rights, former president of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, and

assistant secretary for human rights under the administration of the late President Corazon C. Aquino," the DFA said in a statement.

The Human Rights Council Advisory Committee is the expert think-tank body of the Human Rights Council, of which the Philippines is a founding member.

The Advisory Committee, composed of 17 independent human rights experts from all geographic regions, conducts studies and accomplishes tasks given to it by the member-states of the Human Rights Council.

The DFA said that Philippine Permanent Representative to

the United Nations in Geneva Erlinda F. Basilio served as Vice President of the Human Rights Council representing the Asian Group of states from June 2008 to June 2009.

Quisumbing said she was deeply honored to accept this important position. "I feel it is fitting for the Philippines to be acknowledged as an advocate for human rights in the global arena. *Tita Cory* was a symbol of our national quest for justice and freedom, and we must remain true to her spirit and reverence for human rights," she said.

One of the most significant tasks given to the Advisory Committee is the elaboration of a

draft United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education.

The DFA said the Philippines played a leading role in this task, with Quisumbing's inclusion as a member of the drafting group which was preparing the initial text for consideration of the Human Rights Council.

The Philippines is also a member of the cross-regional Platform for Human Rights Education and Training composed of delegations from Costa Rica, Italy, Morocco, Slovenia, and Switzerland that supports the efforts of the Advisory Committee in preparing as draft UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training.

SWS: Government performance still bad but improving

by HELEN FLORES
Philstar.com

THE Arroyo administration's net satisfaction rating improved by eight points to a still "poor" -11 percent, a Social Weather Stations survey for the second quarter of 2009 said.

The Palace welcomed the latest survey result and attributed it to hard work put in by President Arroyo.

The survey, conducted from June 19 to 22, found 32 percent of adults satisfied and 42 percent dissatisfied with the overall performance of the national administration, for a "poor" net sat-

isfaction rating of -11.

SWS said the net satisfaction ratings of the national administration used to be a poor -19 in February 2009.

Press Secretary Cerge Remonde said the latest ratings were the "fruit of hard work, dedication and efficient leadership."

SWS said it asked the public to rate the performance of the national administration on specific issues.

"Compared to the previous quarter, the net satisfaction ratings of the national administration were better on 7 out of 13 issues," the SWS said.

Of the 13 issues tested, SWS

said the June 2009 survey found the national administration scoring a "good" net satisfaction rating of +40 on the issue of protecting the public from the outbreak of diseases.

The national administration received "moderate" ratings on the issues of Foreign relations (+23), Promoting the welfare of overseas Filipinos workers (OFWs) (+23), Fighting terrorism (+15), Ensuring that medicines are affordable (+14), Campaigning against illegal drugs (+10), and Helping the poor (+10).

It obtained "neutral" ratings on Reconciliation with Muslim rebels (+9), Protecting the Philip-

pinos from the economic crisis in the US and other advanced countries (+4), and Fighting crime (+1).

It switched from "neutral to moderate" for Fighting terrorism, up by 11 points from +4 to +15, and for Ensuring that medicines are affordable, up by eight points from +6 to +14.

It became more positive for promoting the welfare of OFWs, up by seven points from moderate +16 to moderate +23, and for Reconciliation with Muslim rebels, by five points from neutral +4 to neutral +9.

Palace economic spokesman

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DFA launches ePassport

by PIA LEE-BRAGO
Philstar.com

THE Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) launched the Philippine "ePassport" with enhanced security features that will also facilitate and hasten the entry formalities of Filipino travelers to other countries.

President Arroyo was the first recipient of the ePassport presented by Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo during the launching ceremonies coinciding with the DFA's 111th founding anniversary.

The President's ePassport bears the serial number EA0000001. To illustrate its features, Mrs. Arroyo scanned her ePassport on the passport reader that revealed her biometric information, digital signature and photograph.

A joint project of the DFA and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), the ePassport makes the Philippines compliant with international standards set by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), officials said.

Filipino travelers and migrant workers would benefit from the glob-

ally compliant ePassport currently being used in over 60 countries.

The ePassport's security features have been enhanced with a hidden encoded image, an ultra-thin, holographic laminate; and a tamper-proof electronic microchip.

Its integrated circuit chip stores the passport holder's photograph and other personal data for easy verification of identity and is fully inter-operable.

This means border control officials in other countries using a passport chip reader could read the chip.

The ePassport would facilitate and hasten the entry formalities of migrant workers and Filipinos residing in other countries and travelers, aside from denying opportunities for passport fraud and tampering.

Despite its advanced security features, the ePassport would be available for P950 only, making it one of the cheapest in the world.

Filipino passport applicants may still choose between the ePassport and the machine-readable passport (MRP) currently priced at P500.

The ePassport project is part of the DFA's passport modernization program that started in 2007 with the launch of the machine-readable passport.



President Arroyo gets her photo taken and fingerprints scanned to become the first recipient of the ePassport during the launching ceremonies coinciding with the 111th founding anniversary of the DFA. Philstar photo by Willy Perez

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