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H.E. Mr Li Peng, NPC Chairman, visits the Philippines



H.E. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Chairman Li Peng of the National People's Congress toasting to Philippines-China Friendship in Malacanang.

H.E. Li Peng, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China, paid an official visit to the Philippines on 12 - 15 September 2002 at the invitation of Philippine Congress Speaker Jose de Venecia, Jr. During the visit, he met with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Speaker de Venecia and Acting Senate President Juan Flavio.

President Arroyo and Chairman Li Peng witnessed the signing of three agreements on economic cooperation in agriculture, fisheries, and infrastructure. One of these agreements provides for a \$24.9-million loan from the Chinese government for the General Santos City Fish Port Expansion Project. An agreement was also signed between the North Railways Corp. and China National Machinery and Equipment Corp. for a feasibility study on the construction of a railway

that will connect Metro Manila to La Union.

During the meeting between President Arroyo and Chairman Li, the President invited more Chinese investors to do business in the country. She also urged more Chinese tourists to visit the Philippines while thanking the Chinese government for withdrawing its travel advisory on the Philippines.

Speaker de Venecia and Chairman Li agreed to promote the exchange of visits between leaders of the Philippine Congress and the National People's Congress and to enhance bilateral parliamentary ties within the framework of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Association of Asian Parliaments for Peace (AAP). A number of agreements were signed, including a "Memorandum of Agreement between the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China and the House of Representatives of the Republic of the Philippines" to enhance ties between the two parliaments.

Speaker de Venecia expressed his appreciation of the achievements of the Third AAP General Assembly held in Beijing and Chongqing in April 2002, and praised The Chongqing Declaration as a significant document guiding the AAP's future development.

Chairman Li Peng expressed his support for the Philippines' hosting of the Fourth AAP General Assembly in 2003. He welcomed the vision of a "hundred years of peace" in Asia proposed by Speaker de Venecia, and expressed the view that the initiative will not only help defeat poverty, ignorance, prejudice and injustice, which breed regional terrorism, but also promote peace and prosperity in Asia.

Defense Minister Chi Haotian in Manila



H.E. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo welcomes Chinese Defense Minister Chi Haotian during his visit to the Philippines.

Chinese Defense Minister Chi Haotian made a five-day goodwill visit to the Philippines on 25-29 September. During his visit, he met with his counterpart, Philippine Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes and senior Philippine generals. He also called on President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, during which he conveyed the warm greetings

from President Jiang Zemin and Premier Zhu Rongji.

The two defense officials emphasized increased cooperation in counter-terrorism. General Chi reiterated that China was supporting the Philippines in the war against terrorism and was ready to hold exchanges and cooperation in this area. They also vowed to "address the South China Sea dispute through peaceful consultations and negotiations" with the aim of making the area into "waters of peace and cooperation."

At the meeting between President Arroyo and General Chi, President Arroyo said the Philippines considers China, along with United States and Japan, as important factors in the security and development of the region. She expressed the hope that the two countries could have a defense cooperation aimed at combating terrorism and transnational crimes in the future.

Tourism Secretary Gordon in China



Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon and Vice Chairman Sun Gang of the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) signed an MOU on Tourism Cooperation. Behind them are Congressman Harry Angping, Ambassador Josue Villa and other representatives from CNTA.

Department of Tourism Secretary Richard H. Gordon led a Philippine delegation on a roadshow mission in China on 8-17 September 2002. He visited Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou and Hong Kong to promote the Philippines as a travel destination.

In all four cities, Secretary Gordon made travel presentations before an audience of Chinese travel agents, tour operators, and media organizations. The centerpiece of his mission was to raise awareness and promote "Visit Philippines Year 2003" as declared by the World Tourism Organization.

In Beijing, he met with Mr. Sun Gang, Vice Chairman of the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA). The two signed a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding concerning Tourism Cooperation. He also met with Acting Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing. Both sides affirmed that tourism is a good way to enhance mutual understanding between the Philippines and China.

Various media organizations such as CCTV-9 (in its program "Dialogue"), Travel Satellite Television, and Shanghai TV interviewed Secretary Gordon. On these occasions, Secretary Gordon introduced the unique natural, historical and cultural attractions of the Philippines' 7,107 islands.

Chinese travel agencies have been authorized to organize the travel of Chinese citizens to the Philippines since 1993. Effective 1 September, the number of travel agencies licensed by the CNTA to handle outbound tours have been expanded to 528.

DIPLOMATIC NOTES

CULTURAL EXCHANGE**Dulaang Sipat Lawin performs in China**

The Dulaang Sipat Lawin of the Philippine High School for the Arts participated in the 5th Asian Arts Festival and the Hangzhou Arts Festival at the invitation of the Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China and the Municipal People's Government of Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province.

The high school students from the Philippines performed in a play entitled "Hatong Guhit na Bilog" in Beijing on 27 October 2002. The same production was also staged in Hangzhou and Xiamen, on 31 October and 3 November 2002, respectively.

Dulaang Sipat Lawin's visit to China reciprocates the visit to the Philippines of the Chongqing Acrobatic Troupe in September of 2001.

Chinese Acrobatic Troupe visits the Philippines

The Hunan Acrobatic Troupe of China visited the Philippines on 25 October 2002 in return for the visit to China of the Halili-Cruz

School of Dance in 2001. The exchange of visits was undertaken within the framework of the 2000-2001 Executive Program of the Philippines-China Cultural Agreement.

For the gala night, the group performed at the Tanghalang Nicanor Abelardo of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) on 26 October. Its invitational performance was held at the CCP Tanghalang Francisco Balagtas on 30 October.

The cooperating agencies that made their performances in Manila a successful one were the Cultural Center of the Philippines, Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Inc., Embassy of the People's Republic of China, Department of Foreign Affairs and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts.

The Hunan Acrobatic Troupe had won 16 prizes in domestic and international acrobatics competitions and arts festivals including gold prizes for "Spinning Blanket" and "Balancing Tricks with Nose on the Swaying Ball" in the Spring of April International Arts Festival in Korea in 2000 and 1998, respectively.

DENR Secretary Alvarez attends GEF Assembly

Secretary Heherson T. Alvarez of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources attended the Second Global Environment Facility (GEF) Assembly held on 16 - 18 October 2002 in Beijing. At the sidelines of the meeting, the Secretary met with Mr. Mohamed El-Ashry, GEF Chief Executive Officer and Chairman. Secretary Alvarez expressed appreciation for Mr. El-Ashry's support to the various environmental projects in the Philippines particularly the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS), which was authored by Secretary Alvarez when he was still Senator.

Bayanihan participates in 2002 Beijing Tourfest

Bayanihan dance group performed at the Philippine Embassy during the ASEAN Ladies Circle tea gathering in September.

Former Vice President Laurel visits China

Former Vice President Salvador Laurel, accompanied by his wife, were in China from 28 October to 4 November as guests of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC). In Beijing, the former Vice President and Secretary of Foreign Affairs met with the Vice Chair of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, Mr. Wang Wenyuan. The former Vice President and his party also visited Hangzhou, Suzhou and Shanghai. In Hangzhou, Mr. Laurel met with Mr. Shen Zulun, President of the Friendship Association of Zhejiang Province. In Shanghai, he met with the head of the Municipal Political Consultative Conference of Shanghai.

DCM Buensuceso completes tour of duty in China

Deputy Chief of Mission Elizabeth P. Buensuceso returned to Manila at the end of September upon completion of her tour of duty and is now serving as Special Assistant of the Senior

Undersecretary (Vice Minister) of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines. Recently promoted, she took her oath of office as Chief of Mission in the Philippine Foreign Service, before Ambassador Josue L. Villa. On the day she departed Beijing, she said, "My posting in the Philippine Embassy in Beijing is one of the most exhilarating and educational periods of my professional life."

"Realizing Rama" in China

The ASEAN production "Realizing Rama" was performed in Beijing, Hangzhou, and Shanghai from 18 to 28 October 2002.

"Realizing Rama" is a full-length contemporary dance production based on the Asian epic *Ramayana*. Since 1998, the production has been successfully performed in all the countries of ASEAN as well as Europe. Its performers come from ASEAN member countries.

Member countries of ASEAN take turns coordinating the annual cultural missions. This year, the Cultural Center of the Philippines is the designated coordinating institution. Besides performances in China, they will travel to South Korea and India. Among the 30 artists from ASEAN, nine are Filipinos with Dr. Nicanor G. Tiongson as Tour Director and Ms. Denisa Reyes as Artistic Director and Choreographer. Their visit to China is made at the invitation of the Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China and the Municipal People's Government of Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province.

Philippine Legislators attend AFPPD

An eleven-member Philippine delegation, led by Senator Rodolfo G. Biazon and Aurora Representative Bellaflor Angara-Castillo, Co-Chairpersons of the Philippine Legislators Committee on Population and Development, attended the Seventh General Assembly and 20th Anniversary of the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) held on 16-18 October 2002 in Beijing. During the conference, Senator Juan Flavio Velasco made a presentation on the Philippine experience in confronting the AIDS epidemic.

The Bayanihan Philippine National Folk Dance Company represented the Philippines at the Beijing International Cultural Tourism Festival 2002 (BICTF 2002) from 20 to 25 September 2002. Performing groups from more than forty other foreign countries participated in the festival. The 15-member Philippine delegation was led by Mr. Melito Vale Cruz, Deputy Music Director of Bayanihan. The group performed at the opening ceremony marching parade, the Countryside Performance for Chinese living in suburban Beijing, "Gathering at the World Park" in Beijing, and the festival's closing ceremony celebration.

The Bayanihan dance group also visited the Philippine Embassy on 23 September. They performed five Filipino Muslim dances to approximately 100 guests on the occasion of the ASEAN Ladies Circle Tea Gathering hosted by Madame Caroline Villa and the ladies of the Philippine Embassy.

The Beijing International Cultural Tourism Festival has been organized for the fifth time by the Beijing Tourism Administration and the Beijing People's Municipal Government, and is now considered part of the annual Chinese National Day celebrations. The Philippines was represented in previous years by Kalinga Budong Dance Troupe (2001), Philippine Barangay Folk Dance Troupe (2000) and Philippine Cultural High School Dance Troupe (1999).

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Registration of civil status

The Embassy wishes to notify all *kababayans* bringing civil documents (e.g., reports of birth, marriage, divorce and death) to the Embassy, for onward registration with the National Statistics Office (NSO) in Manila, to have them first authenticated by the local Notary Public Office and then by the Chinese Foreign Ministry. The authentication procedure is meant to ensure the genuineness of the documents before they are officially recorded in the civil registrar's book in Manila. The documents are important in supporting claims of Filipino citizenship, change of marital status or amendment of public and private documents including passports and bank records, among others.

Download Embassy forms from the website

Kababayans are requested to download visa, passport and registration forms directly from the Embassy website at <http://www.philembassy-china.org> in order to facilitate request for consular services. If your computer software does not support the opening and printing of Embassy forms from the website, you may request forms to be faxed or mailed to you by the Embassy. Please direct your request to Doris, Adora or Ronel at (010) 6532-4678.

Consular access to detained nationals

The Embassy would appreciate the assistance of our *kababayans* in informing your consular officials of the detention of fellow *kababayans* by police authorities in order to allow the Embassy to obtain consular access to them at the earliest possible time. Rest assured that the Embassy will exert its best efforts in ensuring that detained Filipinos will have access to legal and other possible assistance while undergoing investigation and trial.

Philhealth reimbursement of hospital expenses

Filipino employees working in China who are members of Philhealth (formerly Medicare) through registration with OWVA can request for reimbursement of expenses incurred while seeking medical services abroad. The claim for reimbursement should be filed within 60 days after confinement. Otherwise, a written explanation for the delay should accompany the claim for reimbursement. The following documents must accompany the request for reimbursement: (1) original official receipts of hospital charges and professionals fees; (2) copy of the Medicare

PROFILE**Atty. Francisco Noel R. Fernandez III
Second Secretary and Consul
Philippine Embassy, Beijing**

(This is the 9th of a series of features on Philippine diplomats in China.)

Atty. Francisco Noel Fernandez was born in Butuan City and traces his roots to the Fernandez clan of Numancia, Aklan and the Yorac-Rio family of Negros Occidental.

Noel started his career in government service in 1994 when he was appointed as a legal researcher in the Court of Appeals. After hurdling the 1994 Foreign Service Officers' Examination, garnering second place in a group of 26 successful examinees, he was designated Principal Assistant, later Acting Director, in the Office of Legal Affairs of the Department of Foreign Affairs where he was involved in bilateral negotiations covering air services, investments, taxation and maritime issues. He was concurrently Special Assistant and Legal Officer to the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers' Affairs. In 1997, he was assigned as Third Secretary and Vice Consul, later Second Secretary and Consul, at the Philippine Embassy in Beijing where he handled political, maritime, aviation, agriculture, and science and technology issues. He is now responsible for the Embassy's Consular Section.

An alumnus of Silliman University where he completed his secondary education, Noel earned his degrees in B.A. Political Science (College Scholar) and Bachelor of Laws from the University of the Philippines. He completed 24 academic units of the Master's in International Studies program in the same university. He placed first in the 1994 Bar Examinations.

Noel is married to Bernadette Therese C. Chiu and they are blessed with two children — Francisco Roberto V and Alessandra Theresia.

Eligibility Certificate; (3) statement of account/breakdown of medicines/ laboratory and other fees; (4) waiver from hospital/doctors that no Medicare deductions were made upon discharge; and (5) complete clinical abstracts/operative record.

The request for reimbursement should be sent directly to Mr. Delmer R. Cruz, Deputy Administrator, Medicare Program Management Office, OWVA Center, F.B. Harrison corner Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Pasay City, Philippines. Additional information may be obtained by accessing <http://www.owva.gov.ph> or calling (00632) 551-9059 or (00632) 891-7601 loc. 5306.

LEGAL CORNER

Clarita was recruited in Manila by Domestic Services Company (DSC) to work as a domestic helper in Beijing. Ayi Services Ltd. acted as the agent in Beijing of DSC and found an employer for her in Beijing. Clarita was promised a monthly salary of US\$300 and two rest days per month. On the first month of her employment, Clarita was forced to work without enjoying any rest day. Moreover, she did not receive her full-month salary of US\$300 and was instead given only US\$100. Her employer reasoned that the average salary for a local domestic helper was only RMB400 (barely US\$50). Clarita failed to persuade her employer to comply with the terms and conditions of her employment contract. Ayi Services Ltd. refused to assist her. She left her employer and returned to Manila. She sued DSC for breach of contract. DSC alleged that the violation was committed by the Ayi Services Ltd., and her employer in Beijing.

Q. Is it correct for Clarita to sue DSC for the violations committed abroad by the Beijing agent and her employer?

A. Yes. Philippine recruitment regulations stipulate that Filipino recruiters are held responsible for contract violations committed by foreign agents. It was correct for Clarita to file the case in the Philippines where she enjoys the protection of government agencies like POEA and OWVA and could have access to free legal aid if she cannot afford to hire a private lawyer. If she filed the case in China, Clarita would have to worry about the fees for her lawyer and in obtaining the necessary visa to permit her to stay on and pursue her case before a Chinese court.

POEA Administrator meets Chinese counterparts

Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) head Mme. Rizalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz visited Beijing from 24 to 27 October 2002 and exchanged views with Chinese officials on matters concerning labor conditions, employment and management.

Administrator Baldoz held meetings with Acting Director-General Liu Xu of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Deputy Director-General Zhang Yindi of the Bureau of Exit-Entry Administration, and Director Zhang Jianguo of the State Administration for Foreign Experts Affairs. In the course of these meetings, Chinese government officials informed Administrator Baldoz that there is a market for foreign personnel who are highly-technical or those who will occupy senior managerial positions.

Administrator Baldoz was likewise given a briefing on the procedures followed by Chinese-based companies hiring foreign employees.

From Beijing, Administrator Baldoz proceeded to Shanghai to attend an international conference on seafarers, accompanied by Mr. Bernardino Julve, Labor Representative assigned to the Philippine Consulate General in Hong Kong.

President Arroyo and Former President Ramos address CEO Forum

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was a keynote speaker at the *BusinessWeek* CEO Forum held in Beijing on 22-24 September 2002. In her address delivered via teleconference, she invited the more than 600 business executives to do business in the Philippines. She expressed the Philippine Government's resolution to fight terrorism, stressing its linkage to poverty.

In the same forum, former President Fidel V. Ramos likewise delivered a keynote address in which he discussed "*Pax Americana*" and the changing world order. He suggested that in the future, developments might lead to the establishment of a "*Pax Pacifica*," with China equally playing an important role in geopolitics.

Other principal speakers included Chinese Vice Premier Wu Bangguo who delivered the opening address, Mr. Chen Jinhua, Vice Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, former British Prime Minister John Major and former Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke.

New Philippine Consul General in Hong Kong



Consul General Victoria S. Bataclan has assumed her position as head of the Philippine Consulate General in Hong Kong. She was formerly the Assistant Secretary for Personnel and Administrative Services in the Department of Foreign Affairs.

She also served successively as Second Secretary, First Secretary and then Minister at the Philippine Mission to the UN Office and Other International Organizations in Geneva, Switzerland, between 1982 and 1990. At present, she holds a Chief of Mission (ambassadorial) rank in the Foreign Service of the Philippines.

Consul General Bataclan graduated from the University of the Philippines with a Certificate in Development Economics, degrees in Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Bachelor of Laws.

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Contributions and comments are welcome.

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Former President Ramos visits China

Former President Ramos and Mrs. Amelita Ramos, together with a party of four, visited China on 21-29 October 2002 as guests of the China Association for International Friendly Contact (CAIFC). The former President met with the Filipino community at the Philippine Embassy upon his arrival in Beijing.

Photo shows him and Mrs. Amelita Ramos with the Embassy officers and staff led by Ambassador and Mrs. Josue Villa and community representatives CNN Beijing bureau chief and Mrs.



Jaime FlorCruz (seated first and second from the right), and Mrs. Grace Monteiro, wife of the Brazilian Embassy Chargé d' Affaires (seated beside the former President).

During his visit, the former President delivered a keynote speech at the *BusinessWeek*-sponsored CEO forum. He also presided over the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Bo'ao Forum for Asia on 25 October. He was elected as Chairman of the Board of Directors in April 2002.

The former President held a press conference at the Philippine Embassy before departing Beijing.

New Filipino Diplomat in China



Mrs. Ruth Morales-Prado has taken up her post at the Philippine Embassy in Beijing as Minister and Consul General.

Before coming to China, Minister Prado served as Deputy Consul General at the Philippine Consulate General in Los Angeles, California. She had been posted in different capacities at the Philippine Embassies in Germany and Thailand; Philippine Mission to the United Nations in New York; Philippine Consulates General in Seattle (USA) and Toronto, Canada.

In 1998, she opened the Philippine Embassy in the Republic of Palau where she served as Chargé d' Affaires and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps. In the Home Office, Minister Prado has served as division director at the Office of Protocol and executive director at the Office of Fiscal Management.

Minister Prado graduated from the University of the Philippines with degrees in Bachelor of Science in Foreign Service and Master's in Public Administration. She also attended the Foreign Service Programme at the German Foundation for International Development in Berlin, Germany.

She is married to Mr. Angel Magno Prado, Jr.

Former President Aquino at Metrobank-Shanghai Anniversary



Former President Corazon Aquino is greeted by Ambassador Josue Villa in Shanghai at the first year anniversary of Metrobank Shanghai Branch. Others in the photo (from left to right) are Mrs. Mary Uy Ty, Assistant to the Chairman of Metrobank Group, Dr. George S. K. Ty, Chairman of Metrobank Group and Mr. Jiang Yi Ren, Vice Mayor of Shanghai.

Former President Corazon C. Aquino visited Shanghai from 17 to 20 October 2002. The former President was the Guest of Honor of the Metropolitan Bank and Trust Company (Metrobank) on the occasion of the first year anniversary of its Shanghai Branch.

During the visit, former President Aquino met with Shanghai Vice Mayor Jiang Yi Ren and addressed some 200 guests representing the Shanghai City government, private industrialists, bankers and entrepreneurs who attended the banquet hosted by Metrobank chairman George Ty.

Mme. Zheng Shouyi: Returned Overseas Chinese

Madame Zheng Shouyi, marine protozoologist and senior scientist at the Institute of Oceanology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Shandong Province's Qingdao, traces her beginnings to Baguio in the Philippines.

She was born and educated in the Philippines from elementary to college. In 1955, while taking up her Master's degree at the University of the Philippines, Mme. Zheng narrated that it was in the laboratory of Joseph Graham of Stanford University and Ms. Priscilla Militante of the Geology Department in UP where she had a first look at the *foraminifera* (marine fauna) under the microscope and it was "love at first sight."

Answering the call of her motherland China to take part in its construction, she quit her studies, returned to China and landed in the Institute of Oceanology where she completed her dream of studying the *foraminifera*.

While on her 46th year of research at the Institute, Mme. Zheng never forgot her second home, the Philippines. People in Qingdao all know that she is a returned overseas Chinese who have warm sentiments for Filipinos. In the early 1980s, in her capacity as deputy mayor of Qingdao, she extended personal assistance to a number of Filipino seafarers who fell ill on different occasions. Each time, she tried to make the Filipinos feel less homesick in the hope that they would recover from their illnesses soon.

Mme. Zheng would never forget all her excellent Filipino mentors who ushered her into the biological sciences which prepared her for her journey back to the land of her forebears.