



## Philippine Embassy, New Delhi Newsletter (April to June 2009 issue)

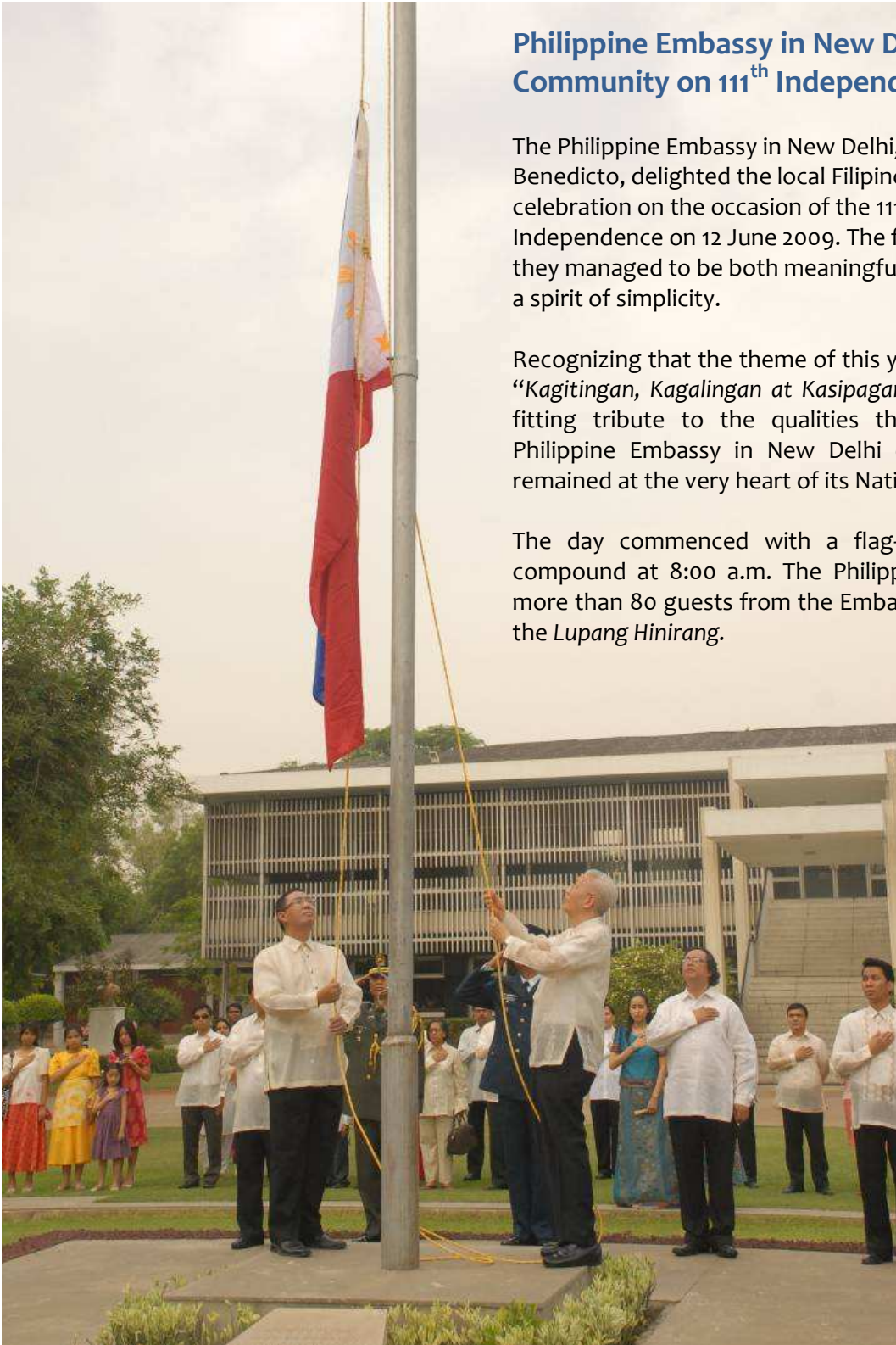
### Philippine Embassy in New Delhi fetes the Filipino Community on 111<sup>th</sup> Independence Day

The Philippine Embassy in New Delhi, led by H.E. Ambassador Francisco L. Benedicto, delighted the local Filipino community with a double celebration on the occasion of the 111<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Philippine Independence on 12 June 2009. The festivities were remarkable in that they managed to be both meaningful and memorable while still retaining a spirit of simplicity.

Recognizing that the theme of this year's Independence Day celebration, "*Kagitingan, Kagalingan at Kasipagan Tungo sa Tunay na Kalayaan,*" is a fitting tribute to the qualities that define the global Filipino, the Philippine Embassy in New Delhi ensured that the Filipinos in India remained at the very heart of its National Day commemoration.

The day commenced with a flag-raising ceremony at the Embassy compound at 8:00 a.m. The Philippine tricolor was hoisted up as the more than 80 guests from the Embassy and the Filipino community sang the *Lupang Hinirang*.

This was followed by a simple program at the Residence, wherein Ambassador Benedicto and Second Secretary and Consul Iric C. Arribas read the Independence Day messages of H.E. President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and the Honorable Secretary Dr. Alberto G. Romulo, respectively.





The Ambassador took the opportunity presented by the Independence Day celebration to award a plaque of appreciation to Honorary Consul Retnasamy Swaminathan in recognition of his important contribution to the wellbeing of Filipino nationals in India during his 33 years of association with the Philippine Honorary Consulate General in Mumbai.

After a thanksgiving prayer led by Monsignor Arnaldo Catalan,



(right photo) a Filipino who recently began his tour of duty as First Secretary at the Apostolic Nunciature in New Delhi, the community was treated to a hearty breakfast of *tapsilog*, *arroz caldo*, Pinoy-style spaghetti, *leche flan*, *maja blanca*, and other native delicacies.

The celebrations continued in the evening with a dinner reception hosted by Ambassador Benedicto at Mashrabiya, The Ashok Hotel, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. The reception was graced by Mr. K.V. Thomas, Minister of State for Agriculture, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution of the Government of India, and attended by approximately 280 guests, including Ambassadors, High Commissioners and other members of the diplomatic corps, Indian Government officials, business executives, friends of the Embassy, and the Filipino community.



The national anthems of the two countries were played, then the Ambassador proposed a toast to the enduring friendship between the Philippines and India. Afterwards, the guests were treated to a delectable spread of Mediterranean cuisine.

From 9:00 p.m. onwards, following the formal reception, the Filipino community stayed behind for a more intimate gathering, enlivened by a musical performance and dancing, which lasted until 11:30 in the evening.

The event was captured in photos found on pages 5, 6 and 7.



PRESIDENT GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO'S 2009 PHILIPPINE  
INDEPENDENCE DAY MESSAGE FOR FILIPINOS ABROAD

Malacanang, Manilla

June 10, 2009

Maligayang pagdiriwang ng 111<sup>th</sup> Anniversary ng ating bansa!

I understand that this year's Independence Day Theme is : "Kagitingan, Kagalingan at Kasipagan Tungo sa Tunay na Kalayaan."

Where before our heroes fought to gain political freedom, today, we must use our sense of community and solidarity to gain freedom from economic deprivation.

Today, we are faced with a global economic crisis.

In the Philippines we were fortunate to have taken tough measures several years ago which have helped stave off the worst of the global economic crisis. We raised revenues, cut down on smugglers, increased collection and took the new revenue and invested heavily in long overdue physical and human infrastructure.

Even with that, we had to invest new money and delay balancing our budget by a year or two in order to pump more money into the economy and to provide relief for the poor who are hardest hit.

Next, we developed a track of expanding our domestic demand. This decreased our reliance on exports. Our exports to GDP ratio now is 28.5 percent against 49.0 percent in year 2000.

As a result of our dramatic reforms, our GNP grew 8.0 percent in 2007.

In 2008, when two-thirds of the world went into recession, we sustained GNP growth of 6.1 percent. In the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2009, our GNP still grew by 4.4 percent. Our unemployment only increased from 7.4 percent in 2008 to 7.8 percent.

Ganumpaman, the pain and disruption of the current global contagion hurts. And the poorest among us are those who hurt the most. But we can take heart in the fact that there are tentative signs of recovery in the biggest international market—the U.S. There are early signs of improvement in consumer spending and consumer confidence with greater stability in the financial sector and an up-tick manufacturing.

Nobel laureate Paul Krugman, a widely followed economist due to his New York Times column, and others are see recession bottoming out this year. Hopefully this represents the beginning of a rebound in the U.S. and in the global economy.

Your services and constant remembrance of your motherland and the Philippines form an important part of our country's social and economic growth.

Sa lahat ng Pilipinas sa lahat ng dako ng mundo, Mabuhay!



2009 PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE DAY MESSAGE OF THE  
SECRETARY OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS ALBERTO G.ROMULO  
Pasay City  
12 June 2009

In the afternoon of 12 June 1898 in the town of Cavite-Viejo, Filipinos gathered at the residence of the General Emilio Aguinaldo to witness the first Philippine national flag unfurl as the San Francisco de Malabon Band played the Lupang Hinirang.

Reciting the Declaration of Philippine Independence, our people promised to support freedom “with our lives, our fortunes, and with our sacred possession-our honor.”

Indeed, the birth of our nation was marked by the great sacrifice of Filipinos. Those who fought for our independence risked and placed everything they had-their fortunes, their families, and their very lives-on the altar of freedom. Fueled by their ardent vision of a free and independent nation, propelled by their love for country, and driven by faith in the Filipino people, our forebears proclaimed to the world the Philippines, a nation born.

With freedom in their hearts and strength of spirit, a diverse people united

Yet, as our country successfully won the struggle for national independence more than a century ago, let us not forget that it is only one of the many freedoms that we continue to aspire for as a people in these modern times.

Today, our country and our people would like to attain an independence that would allow us to live in prosperity and in harmony, free from fear and wanting.

“Kagitingan, Kagalingan at Kasipagan tungo sa tunay na kalayaan”, this year’s Independence day theme reminds us that, indeed, freedom is not bestowed. It is something that we must together achieve.

As a nation, we have shown our resilience and remained unwavering in our efforts to advance the welfare our people-uplifting the lives of our poor and nurturing our children for a brighter dawn in our country, in our region and in the family of nations.

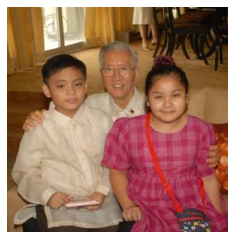
As the Philippines marches forward, the men and women of the department of Foreign Affairs, guided by the three pillars of Philippine Foreign policy-national security, economic diplomacy and assistance to nationals-remain steadfast in advancing the interests of the Philippines and the Filipino people in the world community.

With our people’s courage, valor, and hard work, I am confident that our country is on its way towards realizing our collective aspirations for peace, prosperity and progress.

Today, after we have raised our flag and sung our national anthem, and as we renew our pledge to support freedom with our lives, fortunes and honor, let us remember the sacrifices of Filipinos overseas and those they left behind, whether a century ago or a century hence.

Mabuhay ang lahing Pilipino! Mabuhay ang Pilipinas!

*The celebration of Philippine Independence Day in New Delhi  
June 12, 2009, 8:00am - The day commenced with a flag-raising ceremony at the Embassy  
compound. After that, the community was treated to a hearty Filipino breakfast.*



The celebrations continued in the evening with a dinner reception hosted by Ambassador Benedicto at Mashrabiya, The Ashok Hotel, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. The reception was graced by Mr. K.V. Thomas, Minister of State for Agriculture, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution of the Government of India, and attended by members of the diplomatic corps, Indian Government officials, and the Filipino community.



*After the formal reception, the Filipino community stayed behind for a more intimate gathering, enlivened by a musical performance and dancing, which lasted until 11:30 in the evening.*



## The 111th Philippine Independence Anniversary was also celebrated in Mumbai...



Consul General Birla, represented by Honorary Consul Retnasamy Swaminathan, hosted a dinner reception on June 23, 2009 for the Filipino Community in Mumbai to celebrate the 111th Anniversary of Philippine Independence. It was attended by Embassy officials and more than 40 members of the community, mostly Filipino women married to Indian nationals, and their families. President Ramos and Mr. De Ocampo were the Guests of Honor at the celebration.

## ... and in Kolkata.

On June 21, 2009, Honorary Philippine Consul General in Kolkata, Mr. K.K. Khemka (shown in photo at right) hosted a dinner reception for the Filipino community in Kolkata to celebrate the 111th Anniversary of Philippine Independence. It was attended by about 35 members of the community whose profile ranges from professionals, airline pilots, volunteers in socio-civic organizations to spouses of Indian nationals. Senator Jamby Madrigal, who is in India to attend a series of dialogues with environmental governance experts in her capacity as Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Environmental and Natural resources, accepted the invitation to be the Guest of Honor.



Senator Jamby Madrigal celebrates the Philippine Independence Day in Kolkata shown here together with the Kolkata-based Filipino pilots flying for various Indian airline companies and Consul Iric Arribas.



## Former President Ramos co-chairs Emerging Markets Forum in Mumbai

Former President Fidel V. Ramos visited Mumbai on 22-26 June 2009 to co-chair the 2009 *Global Meeting of the Emerging Markets Forum*, which he co-founded. President Ramos joined an illustrious list of participants, including the former President of Mexico, former and incumbent Ministers of various countries, World Bank and ADB officials, diplomats, as well as the movers and shakers of the Indian and South Asian economy.

Former Finance Secretary Roberto De Ocampo, who is presently the Chairman of the Board of Advisors of the RFO Center for Public Finance and Regional Economic Cooperation, was the other Filipino attendee in the Forum.

The Philippines Embassy organized various activities on the margins of the forum as described on this page and the next.

### MOA signed with Indian Merchant Chamber



A meeting between the business delegation that accompanied the former President and the Indian Merchant Chamber on 23 June was highlighted by the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement between the Indian Merchant Chamber and the Federation on Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the Philippines headed by Mr. Ram Sitaldas, encouraging closer business ties between the two business organizations.



### President Ramos welcomed by former AIM students

The Asian Institute of Management Alumni Association India President Mr. M.S. Singh hosted a dinner reception for President Ramos, Mr. De Ocampo and the business delegation from the Philippines at the Taj Lands End in Mumbai. Incidentally, Mr. De Ocampo was formerly the President of the Asian Institute of Management.

Mr. Singh noted that the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of Philippines-India diplomatic ties is being commemorated this year, and expressed interest in having a collaborative project with the Philippine Embassy in New Delhi to further enhance the relations of the two countries.

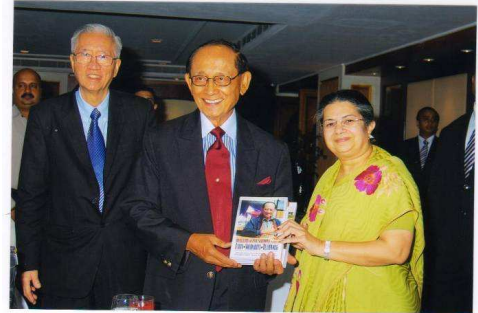
## Aditya Birla Group expansion plans in RP unveiled

Philippine Honorary Consul General in Mumbai Mrs. Rajashree Birla hosted a lunch reception for President Ramos and his delegation. Mrs. Birla underscored the strong links of the Aditya Birla Group with the Philippines, dating back to the 1970s, during the establishment of the Indophil Group of Companies, which is into textile production, in Bulacan.

Mrs. Birla informed the assembly of the ongoing expansion of the Aditya Birla Group's operations in the Philippines, which now includes information technology enabled services and oleochemicals with the establishment of the Aditya Birla Minacs and the purchase of Pan Century Surfactants.

Mrs. Birla also announced that their company, which has now invested about US\$75 million in the Philippines, will further invest US\$100 million in their oleochemical business over the next five years and to employ an additional 1,000 people for their BPO operations.

Furthermore, Mrs. Birla informed the guests of her company's philanthropic work in the Philippines in collaboration with the Mahaveer Philippines Foundation which provides artificial legs to 7,000 physically challenged Filipinos. She will now be exploring another charitable activity of providing shelter for the underprivileged in the Philippines under the Habitat for Humanity Program. The photo above shows Former President Fidel V. Ramos presenting a complimentary copy of his book to Consul General Birla as Ambassador Francisco L. Benedicto looks on.



## Environment, child welfare top agenda of Senator Madrigal's visit to India



**Philippine Senator Maria Anna Consuelo 'Jamby' Madrigal in an interaction with the children of CINI ASHA**

Senator M.A. "Jamby" Madrigal visited India in June 2009 to attend a series of dialogues with environmental experts in her capacity as Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. Kolkata, Raipur and Guwahati were among the places covered by her itinerary. She was welcomed on her arrival in Kolkata by Second Secretary & Consul Iric C. Arribas and Honorary Philippine Consul General in Kolkata, Mr. K.K. Khemka.

In Kolkata, she graced the dinner reception hosted by Mr. Khemka for the Filipino Community on 21 June 2009, in commemoration of the 111<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Philippine Independence. About 25 members of the Filipino Community attended the gathering, ranging from professionals, pilots, volunteers in socio-civic organizations to spouses of Indian nationals.

Senator Madrigal also took the opportunity provided by her visit to go to the Child In Need Institute (CINI) based in Kolkata. CINI is a leading non-governmental organization that aims to achieve sustainable development in nutrition, health, education and protection among poor communities, especially among the women and children. Senator Madrigal deals women and child development issues at the Senate and in her various socio-civic projects.

## Embassy bids farewell to Deputy Chief of Mission and Administrative Officer



Ambassador Benedicto hosted a dinner on 6 May 2009 at Nanking Restaurant in Vasant Kunj for the Hon. Maria Aileen H. Bugarin and Mr. Angel D. Espiritu to bid them farewell upon the completion of their respective tours of duty in India. Ms. Bugarin spent six years with the Philippine Embassy, New Delhi, initially as Minister and Consul General then as Deputy Chief of Mission. She has now been appointed as Philippine Ambassador to Timor-Leste. Mr. Espiritu, who served as Administrative Officer, Consular Assistant in-charge of Assistance to Nationals, and Attaché of the Embassy, returned to the Philippines for his retirement after 4 decades of dedicated work in the Philippine Foreign Service.



The Ambassador, and the more than 70 Filipino Community members who attended the dinner, also bid goodbye to Mr. Doroteo "DJ" Jose of Leighton India, who completed his assignment in India. Mr. Jose was an active member of the Filipino community in New Delhi.



## Other Embassy Activities



Ambassador Benedicto discusses with the Ambassador of Indonesia, H.E. Mr. Andi Muhammad Ghalib, about issues of mutual interest, including ASEAN matters.



Ambassador and Mrs. Francisco L. Benedicto with the Ambassador of Azerbaijan and spouse during the latter's National Day reception.



Ambassador and Mrs. Benedicto with the Ambassador of Russia and spouse at their National Day celebration.



The Ambassador of Portugal and spouse welcome Ambassador and Mrs. Benedicto during the National Day reception of Portugal.



Ambassador & Mrs. Benedicto at the reception hosted by the Ambassador of Belarus, shown with his family, on the occasion of their National Day.



Mrs. Benedicto attends a Bollywood-theme luncheon of the ASEAN Ladies Circle, together with (left to right) the spouses of the Malaysian and Brunei Ambassadors, the Ambassador of Cambodia, and the spouse of the Vietnamese Ambassador.



ASEAN National Secretariat, Philippines Director General Eduardo Maglaya and DFA Executive Director for Asia- Pacific Affairs Meynard Montealegre are received by the Ambassador and Ms. Bugarin when they visited New Delhi for the ASEAN- India Senior Officials Meeting on 29 April 2009.



Philippine Consul General, a.h. in Chennai, Mr. Ashwin Muthiah, and his principal secretary, Mr. B. Narendran, pay a courtesy call on the Ambassador.



Officials from the Philippine Commission on Elections led by Commissioner Elias R. Yusoph call on Ambassador Francisco L. Benedicto during his visit to Delhi as part of their observation tour of India's National Elections last May 2009.



The Ambassador meets with Ms. Radhika Doraiswamy, Director General of Posts and Chair of the Postal Corporation of India, and Ms. Manju Kumar, Director of Philately of India Post (third and fourth from right, respectively), to discuss the proposed joint issuance of a commemorative stamp in honor of the 60th anniversary of Philippines-India diplomatic relations this year.

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