## The Alamila Times The Moro Times FRIDAY December 29, 2006 Muslim Filipinos journey on hajj

## **BY NASSER SHARIEF**

THIS holiday season, the international airport in Manila has not just been busy with inbound flights of balikbayans and vacationing overseas contract workers. 3,545 Filipino Muslims flew to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on a total of 13 hajj flights.

The hajj is one of the five pillars of Islam. Healthy and financially capable Muslim adults all over the world must perform the hajj at least once in their lifetime. During the pre-Spanish era in the Philippines, Muslims travelled for a year, island-hopping and changing vessels as often as needed to get to the Middle East. The ancient sea route starts in Zamboanga then to Sulu, Kota Kinabalu, Banjar Massen, Singapore through the Straits of Malacca, then Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and across the Indian Ocean to Madagascar off the West coast of Africa. Pilgrims then travel to Yemen at the mouth of the Red Sea to reach the seaport of Jeddah. At this point, pilgrims travel by land to Makkah (Mecca).

Today, the Holy City is no more than an eight-hour or so non-stop flight from the Ninoy Aquino International Airport to Jeddah or Medina. The Office on Muslim Affairs is the government agency that officially handles the hajj in the country.

Unfortunately, the modernday hajj has been plagued by fraud and fly-by-night operators. Hundreds of unsuspecting pilgrims have been swindled by operators who take the money and leave the pilgrims stranded in Manila or, worse, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This year's hajj has been more efficiently administered, according to Dr. Monib Maniri, Director of the Bureau of Pilgrimage, the office that directly handles all matters relating to hajj. The Bureau has handled all activities-from ticket booking to applying for evisa with the Saudi Minsitry of hajj, to arranging the food and lodging while the pilgrim is in the holy town of Mecca, to the arrangement of tent accommodations in the Mina and Arafat, and the putting up of a mobile medical team comprising Filipino doctors. All the flights landed in Medina, instead of the traditional landing in Jeddah, to enable the pilgrims to visit Prophet Muhammad's mosque. "Although the visit to the Prophet's mosque is optional per se, we view the arrangement as an add-on service to our pilgrims," says Undersecretary Sultan Yahya "Jerry" Tomawis, chief of the Office on Muslim Affairs. "More than half of the pilgrims go to Medina after completing the hajj anyway, so why not save them time, money and physical strain having to do a V-route, that is traveling some 480 kilometers from





Pilgrims trek to Arafat.

amenities in the last few

strenous, and make the

more on their spiritual

PHOTO COURTESY OF

journey.

The Saudi government

had made a splendid

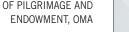
Mecca to Medina and then another 420 kilometer from Medina to Jeddah for the final flight home."

Dr. Maniri was especially pleased with the performance of his Bureau. "Notwithstanding the jitters that accompany the hajj especially late-registrations, our staff went out of their way to make the processing as smooth as possible employing novel ways borne out of years of experience in handling the hajj.

Late registration, however, is a perennial problem with the hajj in the Philippines. At the eleventh-hour, prospective pilgrims suddenly appear out-ofthe-blue demanding to be accommodated. Registration for the hajj opened early in the year. But between that date and the last filing, barely a week away from the deadline set by the airline carrier, only a few had deposited the required fifty-percent down payment for the plane fare. The Office had been at pains making campaigns in Muslim-dominated areas around the country for intending pilgrims to register as "early birds" and avoid the crunch.

The Office on Muslim Affairs, for the first time, had raffled seven free-round trip tickets for its Muslim employees as an incentive. "This is something I am keen on since I was appointed head of the Office two years ago," says Undersecretary Sultan Jerry Tomawis. "My pet project is to give opportunity to employees, especially old-timers, who never had a chance to go on hajj because of financial limitations." Sarah Datu Imam, one of the lucky draws, was on the verge of tears, when her name was announced because it was her first time to go on hajj. The basic cost of hajj is about Php 120,000. In addition to the cost of the plane fare, OMA will bear the lodging and the mutawif fee of the seven employees.

Last year, 2,130, 594 adults from around the world completed the hajj. This year, 2.5 million are expected. Meanwhile, President Gloria-Macapagal Arroyo has appointed Maguindanao Gov.





Mindanao summits call for referendum

## BY SAMIRA GUTOC, GANDHI KINJIYO

STEP aside chacha. Mindanao peace movements are focusing efforts to resolve the legal impasse in the peace talks.

Without any report yet on the resolution of the ancestral domain coverage of a proposed Bangsamoro Juridical Entity (BJE) in the GRP-MILF talks, multi-sectoral movements convened in separate conferences in Mindanao to propose mechanisms to address the longstanding Bangsamoro conflict.

A peace caravan and summit organized by the Mindanao People's Peace Movement convened in Lamitan, Basilan on Dec. 12-17 reviving a call in 2002 to supervise a UN-sponsored referendum on "Political Options in the Bangsamoro (Muslim) Areas of Mindanao and Palawan and the island provinces of Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-tawi."

The referendum will ask the Bangsamoro people whether they wish to remain with the Philippines as a genuinely autonomous government or a federal state or be an entirely separate and independent state.

Summit participants, numbering 500, support the immediate resumption of the stalled peace talks and laud the forthcoming review of the 1996 Final Peace Agreement between the GRP and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) by a tripartite body made up of the GRP and MNLF and the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) on Feb. 6-7, 2007 in Jeddah.

The summit also requested for the immediate release of jailed MNLF Chairman Nur Misuari so he can lead a 20-man delegation to the talks.

The request was echoed by participants of the series of consultative "Bangsamoro Peoples Congress" held in the Lanao provinces, Pikit in North Cotabato, Parang in Shariff Kabunsuan, Ampatuan in Maguindanao, Koronadal City , Palimbang in Sultan Kudarat, and in Sarangani Province from

November to December.

During the Pikit consultative congress last Dec. 9, Misuari thanked his supporters through a mobile phone call. He said he will seek a special meeting with the OIC secretary-general and the King of Saudi Arabia.

Youth leaders also convened at Mindanao Young Moro Leaders Conference" at Isla Parilla resort, Saranggani province on December 20 to 22 passing a one-page resolution to assert that "Bangsamoro" is their identity and nationality that the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF) should replace the Armed Forces of the Philippines in securing the proposed Bangsamoro homeland, also known as the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity (BJE), once an agreement is reached. Integration of the BIAF to the AFP mainstream is also rejected.

Organized by the United Youth for Peace and Development, (UNYPAD), the summit also demanded for a moratorium of the exploration and ex-

ploitation of natural resources within the BJE jurisdiction while the peace negotiation is going on and that the jurisdiction of the Bangsamoro ancestral domain must include full utilization, exploitation, conservation and disposition of natural resources. "A 'Reparation Law' must be enacted in congress to ensure allotment of budget which shall be utilized in the reparation and the payment of the human rights violation committed by the Philippine government to the Moro people," the resolution states.

The resolution also says that the Bangsamoro Development Authority (BDA) must assert its mandate to determine, lead and manage humanitarian rehabilitation and development within the conflict-affected areas of the BJE. For the BJE to be able to enter into treaty diplomatic and trade relations with other countries, the resolution says that there must be consular offices in foreign countries especially in the Middle East.

Moro youth calls for MNLF-MILF unity

## **BY GANDHI C. KINJIYO**

SARANGANI: More than 50 Young Moro Leaders from across the islands of Mindanao, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi called for a unity among the ranks and files of the Moro National Liberation Front and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in their quest to achieve self-determination of the Bangsamoro people.

The call through a resolution was the output from a 3-day gathering dubbed as "Mindanao Young Moro Leaders Conference" held at Isla Parilla resort, this town, on December 20 to 22. The event was aimed to get the unified position of the Moro youth to the GRP-MILF peace negotiation in their stance that they have a significant role to play in shaping the destiny of the Moro people and their homeland.

William Banzali, a young Kagan leader said, "There must be a leveling off among the leaders of the MNLF and MILF in the process of coordination and consultation."

"Islam calls for unity among Muslims, regardless of color, groups or nationality," he stressed. "Our goals for selfdetermination could not be realized, unless, we, Moro people are united," Naffesur-Rahman E. Suhod, from Tawitawi pointed out, adding, "our leaders should prove that they were once united and continuously united, as Islam mandates, for the sake of their Bangsamoro," said Norodin Piang, President of the Muslims Students Association in

Mindanao State University in General Santos City

Jocelyn Lambac, vice-president of the Young Moro Professionals Council -SOCSKSAR-GEN, asked, "How can we prove to the world that we can stand on our own feet if there is disunity among the Moro people?"

In a related conference, the MILF was warned to be cautious of "language engineering in the peace talks. MNLF spokesman, Rev. Absalon Cervesa, during the 11<sup>th</sup> Bangsamoro Peoples Congress at Camp Nurbalam , Pikit, North Cotabato, on December 9, 2006, attended by more than 1,000 people.

Cervesa said the "provisional government" for the Bangsamoro, which the government should have implemented already as stipulated in the 1996 government-MNLF, was not realized, "instead it (government) gave the Bangsamoro people the Southern Philippine Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD), which had no power at all and was already dissolved."

The MNLF was organized in 1972 under the leadership of Prof. Nur Misuari in the height of the Martial Law during the stint of the late president Ferdinand Marcos. In 1983, Sheikh Salamat Hashim, vicechairman of the MNLF then, separated from the mother organization and established the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. In 1996, the MNLF signed a peace agreement with the Philippine government. The MILF at present is negotiating with the government.

## The significance of Eid el-Adh'ha

**E** ID EL-ADH'HA or the Feast of Sacrifice is one of the two feasts in Islam which Muslims worldwide are required to celebrate. The other one is Eid el-Fitr or the feast in celebration of the end of the fasting month of Ramadhan.

As we celebrate and commemorate this great day of sacrifice, each of us needs to look inwards, in self- retrospection, specially, at this moment of trial and tribulation. Islam and the Muslim world have been unjustly maligned and subjected to varied disinformation campaigns. Much as we wish to straighten these discriminations and misinformation, we cannot do so without looking inwards at our own misgivings, inadequacies, errors and misrepresentations of the pristine truth and purity of Islam. Indeed, there is a dire need for Muslims to look back into the glorious past of Islam. Muslims need to re-study Islam. If ever we are now put on trial, it is because a wide chasm has been created between what Islam is and how

## The Jihadist

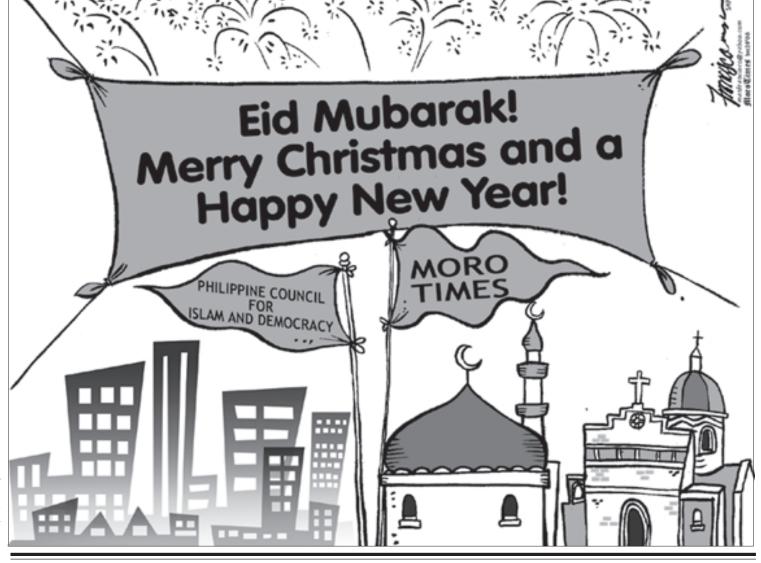
Hamid Aminoddin Barra

the Muslims nterpret and practice Islam.

On this great day of sacrifice, we, Muslims, need to relearn our faith, to re-assess how we put to practice its injunction, and to do an honest and disciplined actualization of its teachings. We are the mirrors of Islam, and if ever Islam is maligned, misunderstood, misinterpreted or misjudged, we are to blame, first and foremost. Yes, before we blame others, let us examine ourselves!

A blessed Day of Sacrifice to you and the Muslim Community. *Eid Mubaarak wa kullu aamin wa antum bikhayr!* \*\*\*

Dr. Barra's is a Professor with the Mindanao State University graduate program for Muslim Law. A practicing lawyer, he was the former Dean of the King Faizal Center for Arabic and Islamic Studies, MSU.



## The Feast of the Sacrifice: The Hajj and Eid'l Adh'ha

## **BY HAMID AMINODDIN BARRA**

THE Feast of Sacrifice falls on the tenth day of Dhu 'l-Hijjah, the month of the performance of hajj or pilgrimage to the Holy City of Makkah. (The Islamic calendar is lunar. According to the Gregorian calendar, Eid'l Adh'ha will be on January 10, 2007). It is in commemoration of the sacrifice undergone by the Prophet Ibrahim (pbuh) when he was commanded by Allah Almighty to build a house dedicated only to Him. Ibrahim dreamt that God asked him to sacrifice his only son, Ismail (pbuh), to test his sincerity. We read in the Glorious Qur'an: "And when his son (Ismail) was old enough to walk, he (Ibrahim) said: "O my son! I have seen in a dream that I am offering you as a sacrifice to Allah. So look what you think?" He said: "O my father! Do that which you are commanded, If Allah wills, you shall find me among the patient." Al-Saffat *37:10*2

Ibrahim, his wife, Hajar, and his son, Ismail, were all tempted

by the Devil not to heed to the Divine will. However, they remained steadfast in their submission to the Divine command for Ismail's sacrifice. Bringing Ismail to Mina, in the outskirts of Makkah, Ibrahim was about to cut his son's neck when the angels came and cried for God's mercy and clemency. The angels cried: *ALLAHU AKBAR*, *ALLAHU AKBAR*, *ALLAHU AKBAR!* (Allah is Greatest, Allah is Greatest, Allah is Greatest!).

Ismail, obedient to God's will, recited: *LA ILAHA ILLA* '*LLAHU ALLAHU AKBAR*! (There is no deity worthy of worship except Allah and Allah is the Greatest!).

Then God Almighty caused a lamb to be placed in lieu of Ismail. Upon seeing that it was not his son but a lamb that was sacrificed, Ibrahim prayed in thankfulness and gratitude to God: *ALLAHU AKBAR WA LILLAHI 'L-HAMD!* (Allah is Greatest and to Allah belong all praises!).

In thankfulness, the angels

praised God: *ALLAHU AKBAR KABIRAH WA 'L-HAMDU LILLAHI KATHIRAH WA S U B H A A N A L L A H I BUKRATAN WA ASILAH!* (Allah is greatest in His greatness, much praises are due to Him, and His is the glory, morning and evening!)

*Eid el-Adh'ha* is the culmination of the hajj or pilgrimage, one of the pillars of Islam. A Muslim is required to perform this form of worship at least once in a lifetime. Going on hajj is not only an exercise of devotion and submission to Allah Most High but also a participation in a universal gathering of Muslims coming from and representing all nations, tribes and races of the world. The international congregation in Makkah demonstrates the universality of Islam and the unity, brotherhood and solidarity of the Muslim Community. All dressed in immaculate white, the pilgrims confirm and renew their commitment to serve and worship only God and accept only His sovereign will and power over them.

During the entirety of the hajj, men wear only two sheets of white cloth, worn like a sarong and shawl, while women wear a simple white dress and white veil. The white apparel signify the oneness and equality of the Muslims and the purity of their intention in the performance of this religious obligation. Indeed, the differences in the color of clothes of men manifest the inequality and distinctions of their material worth and political stature in life.

The pilgrims gather in the Holy Precincts or sites, performing the rituals of the *hajj*. they offer their sacrifice, commemorate and re-enact the historical and religious experiences of Ibrahim, Hajar and Ismail, and immerse themselves with the historical and spiritual environment of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). In the meantime, Muslims in all corners of the world share the holiness, glory and grandeur of the day by equally commemorating *Eid el-Adh'ha* with prayers, remembrance of Allah, festivities and sacrifice. Muslims are encouraged to offer their sacrifice by slaughtering oblations *(qurban)*, a goat for a household or a cow for seven households, to be distributed among the needy and the poor in the community.

One significant aspect of celebrating and remembering Eid el-Adh'ha is the commemoration of the last pilgrimage (Hujjatu '*l-Wida'*) performed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad during his lifetime, nine year after his migration to Madinah. By then, his authority as religious and political leader of the Arabian peninsula was unchallenged and the Islamic community of Madinah was established on firm grounds. On this last pilgrimage, some eighty-two days before his death, He delivered his farewell sermon to the more than one hundred twenty thousand pilgrims. He spoke to them of the finality of the Islamic message and the completeness of the Law he was commissioned to deliver. He then recited the last verse revealed of the Glorious Qur'an: *"This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and have chosen for you ISLAM as a way of life." Al-Ma'idah 5:3* 

That final statement at the plains of Arafat was a sermon that reviewed the State of the Ummah or the Islamic Community. Hence, this is one aspect of the celebration and commemoration of this day that Muslims must strive for, when a leader acceptable to the Muslim world can stand before the millions of pilgrims in the plains of Arafat and assess the current situation of the Ummah and set action plans to make the Muslims live according to the Qur'anic injunction: "And We have made you a nation of the middle path that you may be witnesses unto mankind (of the truth of Islam) in the same manner that the Prophet was a witness unto you." Al-Bagarah 2:143

## Jesus and the Virgin Mary in the Qur'an

## BY ALEEM AMRULLAH DIAMBANGAN

THE beautiful story of Maryam (Mary) and her son Isa (Jesus) is one of a kind, its uniqueness and extraordinariness related to us by Allah Almighty Himself in the Holy Qur'an. Their lives exemplified one of passion and devotion to God.

The holy Qur'an—the last scripture revealed by Allah is a confirmation of all the books that He had sent before such as the Psalms (Zabur) sent to prophet David (Daud), the Torah (old testament) sent to prophet Moses

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\* \* \*

Arnold B. Moss Chief Copyeditor Brian M. Afuang Art Director

Telephone 524-5665 to 67 Telefax 521-6897 • 521-6872 Subscription 528-1319

URL <u>http://www.manilatimes.net</u> E-mail <u>newsboy@manilatimes.net</u>

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T1-20, Governors Place Condominium, Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City

Telefax 532-6058 E-mail <u>mkfi@pldtdsl.net</u> (Musa), and the Injil which was sent to prophet Jesus (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon them all).

The Qur'an relates how the mother of Mary offered the child in her belly in service to God, foreboding what was to become of the child: "O my Lord! I do Dedicate unto Thee what is in my womb for Thy special service." (Al-Imran, 35)

Mary's mother was hoping at best for a boy because only boys could serve in the sanctuary, but when she gave birth to the child, it turned out a girl. She was a bit disappointed, but a pious a woman she was, she turned her trust to Allah: "Right graciously did her Lord accept her: He made her grow in purity and beauty: to the care of Zacaria was she assigned. Every time that he entered (her) chamber to see her, He found her supplied with sustenance. He said: 'O Mary! Whence (comes) this to you?' She said: 'From God: for God Provides sustenance to whom He pleases, without measure." (Al Imran: 37)

And Allah, the best of planners has further designs for the Virgin Mary. "Behold! The angels said: "O Mary! Giveth thee glad tidings of a Word from Him: his name will be Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honour in this world and the Hereafter and of (the company of) those nearest to God." (Al Imran:45)

Mary was petrified: "'O my Lord! How shall I have a son when no mortal hath touched me?' He said: Even so: God createth what He willeth: When He hath decreed a Plan, He but saith to it, 'Be,' and it is!" (Al-Imran:47)

Allah said about Jesus in the Surah Al-Maryam verse 16 to 26, Allah will make him a sign for mankind and a mercy from him, "Mary conceived him, and she withdrew with him to a far place. When the pangs of child drove her to a trunk of a palm tree, she said "Oh, would that I have died before this and had become a thing of naught forgotten! Then (one) cried to her below her saying, "Grieve not! Your lord has placed a rivulet beneath you. Shake the trunk of the palm tree toward you it will cause ripe dates to fall on you. So eat and drink and be consoled. If you meet any mortal, say: look! I have wooed a fast from Allah, and may not speak this day to any mortal."

After about forty days, Mary went back to her people with her child in her lap. Allah Almighty said: They (folks) said, "Oh Mary! You have come with an amazing thing! O sister of Harun! (Aaron) "Your father was not a wicked man nor was your mother a harlot." She (Maryam) pointed him. They said, "How can we talk to one who is in a cradle, a young boy? "Jesus spoke out, "Look! I am the slave of Allah. He has given me the scripture and has appointed me prophet. He has made me blessed where so ever I may be, and has enjoined upon me prayers and alms giving so long as I remain alive. Allah has made me dutiful towards her who bore me, and has not made me arrogant, unblessed." (Al-Maryam: 27 - 32)

Prophet Isa (Jesus) and his mother Mary were both humans, blessed by God and both obedient to their Lord. Both prayed together, fasted, and gave alms. Both ordained what was right and forbade what was wrong. Jesus in his second coming will join Muslims in their congregation and perform prayers after ablution, stand, bow and prostrate before Allah.

### \* \* \*

The author, a graduate of Islamic and Arabic Studies at the prestigious Madinah University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a faculty of the King Faisal Center for Islamic, Arabic and Asian Studies, Mindanao State University-Main Campus, Marawi City. He is a member of the Young Moro Professionals and was the first Moro ulama to be a grantee of the US International Visiting Program.





Moro school children do their share in peace building by marching and singing. This activity helps counteract the recruitment of young people as child soldiers. PHOTO COURTESY OF HADER GLANG

## Happy Eid el-Adh'ha

From the staff of MoroTimes and Philippine Council for Islam and Democracy

#### BY SAMIRA GUITOC

BUREAU of Public Information (BPI) -ARMM Director Samson **Gogo** was elected vice-president Mindanao Communicators Network, Inc. (MINDACOMNET) after almost two hundred information and press relation officers both from government and private institutions in Mindanao attended the 7 th Mindanao Communicators' Congress and Workshop on November 29-December 1, 2006 at Butuan City . With the theme, "Communicating the Peace and Development in Mindanao ", the activity was spearheaded by the Philippine Information Agency (PIA), Mindanao Economic Development Council (MEDCO) and Mindanao Communicators Network, Inc. (MINDACOMNET).

ADMINISTRATIVE Order No. 27 requires government agencies, offices and local government units to participate in the activity.

The Moroweave, a network of women legal advocates, with support from The Asia Foundation (TAF), launched its Community Orientation on Violence Against Women (VAW) in Tawi-Tawi on Dec. 17, 2006. The fora aims to increase access to justice for Muslim women in the ARMM. Moroweave consists of Sentro ng Alternatibong , Bangsamoro Women Solidarity Foundation, Al-Mujadillah Development Foundation.

Muslim judges and lawyers were consulted in a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) on Regional Legislative Assembly Bill Number 24 on the Expansion of Shariah Courts held on Nov. 29, 2006 at Marawi Resort Hotel. Currently the Shariah Courts under Presidential Decree 1083 cover only family and personal relations.

The Cotabato City-based NGO electoral watch, Citizens Care for

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the ARMM Elections attended the International Conference on Election Monitoring last December 5-7 in Mexico . Citizens CARE is now in the middle of conducting voters education in targeted municipalities and barangays in the ARMM with technical assistance from International Federation for Electoral Systems (IFES) through funding from the USAID.

MORO women academicians from the Mindanao State University (MSU) - Marawi attended varied conferences on peace in Manila such as the Women Waging Peace last Dec. 5-6 at Ateneo de Manila University and War and Peace: Experiences and Reflections Forum at the UP Asian Center on November 29. With the theme of the Ateneo Forum was 20 Years of Philippine Peace Processes, Learning Lessons for Policy and Practice, the forum gathered government, academic and NGO peace practicioners such as Usec. Nabil Tan of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, former Senator Wigberto Tanada, Rep. Risa Hontiveros Baraquel, Rep. Satur Ocampo. Aboud Syed Lingga, Fatmawati Salapuddin of the Mindanao PEaceweavers, Prof. Rudy Rodil of the GRP Panel for the GRP-MILF talks, Paulyn Sicam of the GRP Panel for the NDF negotiations, Archbishop Tony Ledesma of the Bishop Ulama Conference and Ed Garcia of UK-based International Alert.

THE National Statistics Office (NSO)-ARMM launched the Muslim Stakeholders Conference on Muslim Civil Registration on Dec. 22, Marawi Resort Hotel. The activity aims to promote awareness on the rights of Muslims to register their names and details of birth, marriage and death in the civil registry.

## [ MUSLIMS ACROSS THE NATION ]=

The Bishops Ulama Forum attended a Workshop on Peace Entrepreneurship organized by the Philippine Business for Social Progress, International Alert, Bishops Businessmen's Conference and Gaston Ortigas Peace Insitutite last December 7 at New World Renaissance Hotel, Makati City. The activity launched the book on Local Business, Local Peace : The Peacebuilding Potential of the Domestic Private Sector by International Alert's Phil Champain.

The ARMM and alumni of the US International Visitors Program (IVP) recently concluded a forumactivity on Minority-Majority Relations in the Philippines on the aspects of education, culture, religion and political processes held on Dec. 15 at Princesa City, Palawan . The activity was a follow-up of the study tour to the Northern Illinois University last June 2006. The output included submitting a proposal to establish peace centers in the cities of Zamboanga and Cotabato. IVP scholars in attendance were Deputy Vice Governor Fatima Kanakan, Assemblyman Rajam Akbar - Basilan, Chancellor Macalandong, Vice Mayor Abdullah Salic, Fr. Romy Villanueva, Bainon Karon, Atty. Zainuddin Malang, Atty. Suharto Ambolodto, Fatmawati Salapuddin, Jurma Tikmasan, Tawi Tawi Provincial Mufti Abdulwahid Inju

THE United Youth for Peace and Development convened the Mindanao Young Moro Leaders Consultation at Isla Parilla Resort, Alabel, Sarangani Province last December 20-22, 2006. With the Theme: "Determining our future in Mindanao, the activity aims to provide the young Moro leaders of Mindanao a conducive and participative space to discuss their personal views and bring out their com-

ments on this Mindanao political problem and solidify the collective support efforts among youth leaders, up with collective and comprehensive youth resolution on the issue of peace-building in Mindanao

WALKS for peace were conducted in major cities City in Mindanao – Iligan, General Santos, Marawi to conclude the Mindanao "Week of Peace" and urge the government and Moro Islamic Liberation Front peace panels to continue with the peace talks. Local peace groups with their local government units cooperated in the annual celebration which was declared pursuant to Proclamation No. 127 signed on November 26, 2001 by PGMA declaring the last week of November up to the first Wednesday of December of every year to raise consciousness for the culture of peace among the peoples of Mindanao, the need to provide a venue for expression of peace aspirations in various forms and for convergence of peace initiatives.

THE Sultanates of Iligan and the **Iligan City** government will host a grand Eid'l Adha celebration on January 3 at Moneerah Islamic Integrated School to unify the Muslims and Christians in this multireligious city.

THE Local Government Support Program in ARMM (LGSPA) supported the drafting of an Environmental Code for Tawi Tawi islands launched on Dec. 16-17. The province has been declared a Marine Protected Area, aptly dubbed as MPA is one of the options under the fisheries management and habitat management programs under the Coastal Resource Management. Because of the rich marine biodiversity in the coastal and marine areas in Tawi-Tawi, establish-

ment of MPAs is a relevant conservation measure. Republic Act 8550 otherwise known as the Fisheries Code of the Philippines defines MPA as any specific marine area which has been reserved by law or other effective means and is governed by specific rules or guidelines to manage activities and protect part or the entire enclosed coastal and marine environment. THE General Santos City local

government awarded a Muslim among its Youth Achievers. Engr. Abdulgafur S. Kudarat of theYoung Moro Professionals Council (YMPC) during awarding rites on Dec. 15, 2006 at the Gensan City Hall, for his exemplary achievement in their profession, academics, and community services which serve as inspiration to the young generation. The awardees urged fellow youth to share their time, talents and efforts in the nation-building.

**GANDHI C. KINJIYO** 

28 interns graduated from the **Congressional Internship Program** for Young Muslim Leaders at Hotel Dusit, Makati City . US Ambassador Kristie Kenney, represented by USAID Mission Director Jon Lindborg and Mindanao State University President Ricardo de leon gave out the certificates to the interns who underwent a 4-month learning exposure at the House of Representatives.

LANAO clans united during a peace caravan launched in Marawi City last Dec. 14. The program is part of a series of activities organized by the Reconciliatory Initiatives for Development Opportunities (RIDO), Inc. (RIDO) with the theme, Harnessing Maranao Traditions in Promoting Peace and Development. The output is the organizing of the 3 major clans and its Council of elders under the 1<sup>st</sup> Sultan of Marawi (MORIATAO SULUTAN SA MARAWI ). The project also aims to address clan wars. Prof. Moctar Matuan, in his study entitled Inventory of Existing Rido in Lanao del Sur, for a period of 10 years, 1994-2004, reported 377 cases of rido or vendetta that resulted to 798 casualties. The project by RIDO is supported by the UN Multi-Donor Act for Peace Program, Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) and the Ecosystems Work for Essential Benefits, Inc. (ECOWEB).

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Enterpreneur Ibrahim Toto Paglas III spoke at the Philippine Consulate in New York recently to promote the Datu Paglas banana plantation success story in a former rebel zone. The Datu Paglas story has been featured and cited by the Wall Street Journal and International Herald Tribune. a shining example of the potential for jobs and a little economic prosperity to change the dynamics of conflict. The ran a front page feature of Datu Paglas wherein they referred to it as the only Muslim town where Jews and Muslim rebels are working together for bananas.

THE Bangsamoro Lawyers Network as part of its legal literacy program conducted paralegal training on human rights and the Code on Muslim Personal Laws for peace and development communities (PDCs) on Dec. 11-14, with 41 participants from from 8 PDCs in Zamboanga City, Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Zamboanga Sibugay.

The second training was conducted on Dec. 19-22 at Cotabato City with 35 participants from 7 PDCs of Lanao del Sur, Cotabato City, Sultan Kudarat and Maguindanao. The project is funded by The Asia Foundation . and UNDP Act for Peace Program.

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## Of War and Peace: Muslims in 2006 Year in Review

DATE **EVENTS** January 2006 MILF throws support behind ASEAN tourism forum in Mindanao on January 13-21. Jailed MNLF chieftain Nur 05 10 Misuari and fellow accused 68-year-old spiritual leader Ustadz Abuharis were given six hours of liberty to take part in the celebration of the Muslim holiday, Eid'l Adha, at the Maharlika Village in

BY ARIEL BACOL AND

AND SAMIRA GUTOC

- Tagiug. Nur Misuari issued an order 20 from his prison cell for his followers to allow a US military humanitarian mission to visit
- Sulu unharmed. 22 Misuari followers pledged not to attack US soldiers partici-pating in the month-long humanitarian mission in the prov

24

ince, which started on Feb. 6. Makati court allowed Nur March 2006 Misuari to undergo medical

talks due to RP political cri-

Cotabato City Mayor Muslimin Sema, MNLF secretary gen-eral, said the Council of 15 Representatives Salapuddin of Basilan, Hussi Amin of Sulu and Hermilando Mandanas of Batangas, pro-poses to create a separate authat ousted and succeeded Misuari had decided to dis-solve itself and restore the tonomous region out of Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Basilan in West-MNLF's organizational struc ture to the pre-peace agree ment structure. The decision ern Mindanao. A new effort toward the reuni 17 has, in effect, reinstalled fication of the MILF and

Misuari to the MNLF chair-MNLF started in Maguindanao province, with 80 leaders from both fronts starting dis-cussions at the MILF office in The Makati RTC ordered a reinvestigation of the rebellior charges against Muslim rebel leader Nur Misuari. Judge Sultan Kudarat town. Leading the 40-member MNLF panel were Jain Zali, chair of the Sixto Marella Jr. suspended MNLF Bangsamoro People's Congress, Abdurahman Jamasali, a nephew of Misuari, and Dr. Bashir Ali, court proceedings for 60 days to allow the DOJ to review the MILE Central Committee's

Mohagher Iqbal said Army sol-diers attacked MILF positions secretary general of the Bangsamoro People's Congress. The group met behind closed-doors with MILF politi-cal affairs chief Ghazali in Tuburan. The military said that the Tuburan raid was against the ASG. Jaafar. MILF chief negotiator Malaysia defers MILF peace

Mohaqher Iqbal and some members of the MILF Central Committee. homes after about 50 armed

men attacked Barangay Tugal

Midsayap, Cotabato. The armed men believed to be led by one Commander Samal

Masgal attacked the village

around 6 a.m. The attack came three days after ren-

egade MILF rebels shot dead MILF field commander-turned-

village chairman Tubog

Measures aimed at helping

Muslims in the conflict-wracked southern Philippines

to overcome poverty, extrem-

ism and violence topped the

agenda in talks between Ma

laysian and Philippine govern-

At least 50 MILF rebels were

GRP and MILF Negotiators re-sumed peace talks in Kuala

GRP and MILF signed a Joint

Statement declaring substan-tial gains in the Ancestral Do-

main agenda while acknowl

edging that more work had to be done on the strand of terri-

tory, particularly in the deter-mination and delimitation of

areas to be placed under a pro-

spective Bangsamoro Juridical Entity (BJE). However, an

agreement was not reached on

The MILF urged mining com-

panies to leave its claimed ter

ritory, saying it brings in more

disaster rather than good to

the Bangsamoro people. Japanese diplomats met with

MILF leaders to assess Tokyo

's possible role in ongoing

ment and signifying their

government's intention to join the International Monitoring

Makati court granted Misuari's

(OIC) Committee of Eight

headed by former Ambassador Sayed Al-Masry arrived in the

Philippines to assess the

OIC calls for release of Misuari

to help the progress of peace

The Abu Sayyaf staged sepa-

rate attacks in Sulu killing four

Marine soldiers A ranking official of the OIC

said they are working on the reconciliation between the MILF and MNLF.

GRP and the OIC Expanded

Mission signed a Joint Press Communique expressing their agreement that there is

a need to review the imple

mentation of the FPA, calling

for a high level tripartite

meeting in Jeddah, and that

Government-MNLF

Peace Agreement (FPA)

peace talks with the gover

Team (IMT).

medical treatment.

the areas for the BJE.

ent officials

del Sur.

Lumpur

May 2006

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talks.

Pulalon

the gains of the 1996 FPA the GRP-MILF cooperation now taking place be made to converge to maximize and bring comprehensive peace and development for the Bangsamoro people+. The communique also said that the OIC expanded mission hoped that Misuari would be able to participate in the tri-partite meeting in Jeddah. 24 Sarangani province trains madrasah teachers in its bid to enhance their teaching skills and leadership potentials.

Gerry

Tausug artist Dr. Abdulmari Asia Imao, sculptor, painter 25 and ceramicist, was named as one of seven national artists for 2006, the first Moro to be honored the award. The MILF rejected the provi-sions in the six-point agree-ment forged recently by the 27

Philippine government and the OIC regarding the agreement to converge elements of the peace agreement between the

government militias in fierce clashes in Maguindanao, An MILF fighter was also killed and 10 others were wounded Maguindanao Governor Andal Ampatuan ordered militiamen 07 involved in clashes with MILF guerrillas to fall back and re-turn to their original positions, ending more than a week of fighting that left at least 10 people dead. Suspected Abu Sayyaf bandits

18 killed a town police chief and three of his men, and wounded three others in an ambush in Barangay Bualo in Maimbung,

A two-day Indigenous People's Summit in Bukidnon.the with 26 tribes in Mindanao in attendance, issued a "unified position" declaring their "strong opposition for the in-clusion of our Ancestral Do-mains/Ancestral Lands into the Bangsamoro homeland.

August 2006 02 The Lumad representative to the MILF negotiating panel

People's Summit in Bukidnon

last July 23 to 24 did not rep

resent the entire Lumads of

Mindanao He believed "the

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part of the proposed Bangsamoro Juridical Entity (BJE) in addition to the core territory of the ARMM, sub-ject to constitutional processesThe MILF objected to the plebiscite

- ARMM Governor Ampatuan signed Regional Legislative As-sembly Bill No. 445, seeking 07
- the creation of the new prov-ince, on September 7. Two soldiers were killed and 07 three others wounded as clashes with Abu Sayyaf fighters resumed in Sulu. Vowing to avenge the deaths 08 of his men at the hands of the Abu Sayyaf, Marine commandant Major General Nelson Allaga said the Al-Qaeda linked militants days are num bered. 30

Norodin Sendatuk, staff of the Kadtuntaya Foundation, Inc., (KFI), a non-government organization working for the ad-vancement of the Moro people in Mindanao, was shot dead in Cotabato City

Maguindanao voters. The new province will cover all the 10 towns in the first congressional district of Maguindanao. The new province is named af-ter Shariff Kabunsuan, an Arab-Malay preacher who introduced Islam to Central Mindanao in the 14th century.

#### November 2006

Fighting erupted, the third in a week, between government soldiers and the MILF in Shariff Aguak, Maguindanad even as negotiators from both sides have been trying to break an impasse in the peace talks over the issue of territory. Government troops and civilian volunteers had clashed with the MILF in the same area on Oct. 29 and Nov. 2. No casualties were reported on either side. The 2-day Kusog Mindanaw 04 conference held in Davao City resolved that more time and wider consultations were

later urged the ceasefire committees of both the gov-ernment and the MILF to ernment and the Mile to reprimand and impose the necessary sanctions on those alleged MILF members. Human Rights Commission-Philippines, Magbassa Kita Fundation and the Dhilio foundation and the Philippine Council for Islam and Democracy conduct a three day conference workshop for Muslim women peace advocates of Mindanao in Zamboanga City. Former Senator Santanina Rasul CHR Commissioner Wilhelm Soriano and CHR Region 9 Director Mamaoag lead the onference. Maiden flight of a new Indonesian airline company which is now serving the Davao-Manado (Indonesia) route, further boosting trade

Zaldy Ampatuan of ARMM

relations with the neighboring country, which is also un-der the East Asean Growth Area (EAGA)

arrest of the founding mem

ber of the Rajah Solaiman

Movement (RSM), which al-

legedly collaborated with the

MILF urged their fellow Mus-lims in Mindanao to practice

the government's birth-space

ing program. Eid Kabalu said

there was nothing wrong with

the program because it was supported by the Dar'ul Ifta Moro detainees and advo

cates from the Muslim and

Christian sectors commemo

rated the International Hu-

man Rights Week through an

interfaith solidarity jail visit

at the Special Intensive Care

Area at Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig City , where some 134 Moro detainees are de-tained for Abu Sayyaf

ofthe

Jemaah Islamiyah

- President Gloria Macapagal-26 Arroyo and Datuk Othman Adb Razak, newly-appointed adviser to the Prime Minister of Malaysia, agreed that the neace talks with the MILE should be put on a faster track. Police and MILF rebels clash 26
- Mamasapano town, in Maguindanao, Two rebels were killed according to Senior Su perintendent Akmad Mamalinta, chief of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) police
- Clashes between government security forces and members of the MILF erupted again at 27 Datu Unsay, Maguindanao.\
- 30 Islamic New Year or Amor Jaded celebrations with thanksgiving, food offerings and compulsory giving of zakat (alms) to poor people. Firefight broke out after about 30
- 100 MILF rebels ambushed soldiers on routine patrol out-side Maguindanao province'ss Shariff Aguak town killing at least four rebels as each side accused the other of violating a 2003 truce.
- Nur Misuari called on his fol-31 lowers to keep the peace in Jolo, Sulu, where US troops are to hold joint exercises in February. A unit of Filipino Marines
- 31 stormed an Abu Sayyaf hideout in the mountains near Patikul, Sulu, killing one.

#### February 2006

- Misuari, through his lawyer Arthur Lim, filed for a reinvestigation by the Department of Justice (DOJ) because the pre-liminary investigation ordered by then Justice Secretary eon Datumanong did not
- push through. The DOJ asked the Makati 03 City Regional Trial Court (RTC) to dismiss Nur Misuari's petition asking the court to
- remand his case to the DOJ Philippine government and MILF negotiators met in Kuala 06 Lumpur, Malaysia for a new round of talks centering on the controversial issue of ancestral domain.
- Some 5,000 angry Muslims in Cotabato City burned a Dan-ish flag to protest the publica-07 tion in Denmark of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad.
- The Philippine government (GRP) and MILF negotiators 80 said they had reached a pre nary deal on the controve sial issue of ancestral lands.
- Judge Sixto Marella of the 09 Makati RTC extended Misuari's stay until Feb. 14 at the St Lukes Hospital in Quezon City where he was undergoing treat ment.
- Hundreds of angry Muslims burned a mock Danish flag outside a Manila mosque, de-10 manding an apology from Denmark's prime minist published caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed.
- 15 Some 600 Muslim men women and teenagers from various Islamic communities in Metro Manila demon strated in front of the PBCom Tower on Ayala Avenue, which houses the Royal Danish consulate

- A move to unseat MILF chair man Ibrahim Murad has been foiled Musanin Abdullah also known as commander Adan, said that factions opposed to the peace talks spearheaded the move. He later said the move to unseat Murad was a
- false alarm. The Senate approved an 8.3 billion-peso budget for the Autonomous Region in Mus-lim Mindanao (ARMM), 20 27
- percent lower than the pro posed budget of 9.9 billion At least 60 members of the MILE surrendered to the mili tary ahead of the resumption of peace talks in Kuala npur . MILF spokesperso Eid Kabalu said they were not regular members of the front
- but armed followers of Mohammad Anduy, a village chair in Montawal town. 17 Muslim leaders in Mindanao reiterated an appeal to govern ment for the immediate re-
- lease of Misuari, saying his freedom wiĺ boost government's move for peace Magbassa Kita Foundation and 18 the Philippine Council for Islam and Democracy organized a conference on human rights, Islam and democracy in Zamboanga City attended by over 100 lawyers, peace advocates, defense and military of ficials and muftis. Partici pants overwhelmingly support a resolution for Congress to

#### unk the anti-terror bill. 25 MILF said Mindanao 's other indigenous peoples should be brought into the peace process

- to ensure that any final peace agreement between the gov-ernment and Moro rebels would be acceptable to every April 2006
- Muhammad Ameen, head of secretariat of the MILF central 02 committee, welcomed international donors' pledges of sup-port for war-torn Mindanao through aid packages to conflict-affected areas: but said it opposes any effort by the gov-ernment, donor countries or non-government organizations to use these to undermine sup-port for the MILF. THE United States pledged 03 that more aid to Mindanao would be forthcoming once a final peace deal with the MILF is signed. USAID mission di
- rector to the Philippines Jon Lindborg said the US has allotted 40 million dollars in de elopment projects for Mindanao. The MILF said it wanted to 10 have a role in the United Na-tions' \$27-million food aid program for areas of conflict
- in Mindanao . The MILF's participation in the program would be through the Bangsamoro Development ncy (BDA). The BDA, put up by the MILF and the government, implements reha bilitation and development programs in Mindanao 13
  - Opposition is growing to a pro-posed law that would create one more self-governing region out of the ARMM. House Bill 5369, filed on March 15 by

- with the peace negotiations being conducted with the MILF.
- Two members of the MILF were 29 killed and a militiaman was wounded during a clash in Dinas town, Zamboanga del
- Thousands of followers of the 29 Tableegh movement gathered in Marawi for an annual religious gathering called Johor a weeklong gathering of men undergoing spiritual aware-
- 30 A Maranao and a Maguin danaon won in the 1st ARMM Regional Qur'an Reading Competition held at the Mu nicipality of Shariff Aguak Maguindanao.

#### reported to have surrendered June 2006 to the military in Wao, Lanao

- The military presented 62 Moro surrenderees from North 05 Cotabato, 28 alleged former MILF members and 34 from the MNLF, with 35 high-powered firearms. MILF vice-chair for political affairs Ghazali Jaafar denied that the men
- were MILF members GRP-MILF Adhoc Joint Action 08 Group Chairman Brigadier General Benjamin Dolorfino said that the government and the MNLF have formed work-ing groups to discuss the details of a possible agreement wherein the MNLF rebels would not to harbor Abu Sayyat
- militants . Some 40 Moro Islamic Libera-10 tion Front (MILF) guerillas at tacked a government militia camp under the Armv's 57th Infantry Battalion in South otabato
- Delegates to a two-day MNLF 12 leadership and peace consul-tation+ unanimously approved a resolution not to send a del egation to the tripartite meet ing of the MNLF, Philippine government and the OIC in Jeddah. Saudi Arabia next month, if jailed Nur Misuari does not head the delegation.
- petition to be placed under house arrest while undergoing 13 Lanao Sur judges and prosecu A high-level mission of 16 members from the Organiza-tion of Islamic Conference tors stage a week-long strike to protest the harassments against them and to express their concern over the safety of the members of the lega profession in the province. 23 Five persons were killed and at least eight others were wounded
- mplementation of the 1996 when a bomb apparently meant Final for Maguindanao Gov. Datu The government declared a six-day suspension of military Andal Ampatuan exploded nea the public market of Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao's provinoperations to pave the way for the visit of the (OIC) ambas cial capital sadors to different parts of Mindanao.
  - Basilan hosted the 5th ARMM 26 Business Conference
  - 29 MILF denied that it sanctioned the June 23 bombing in Maguindanao.
  - Malacanang sends Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga to Maguindanao to stop the 30 clashes there from escalating into a full-blown war. The skir-mishes there started with the reported assault by over 100 militias on an area of the MILF, allegedly in retaliation to the June 23 bombing in Shariff Aguak

## July 2006

01 MILF forces killed at least 20

- claimed that those who at-October 2006 tended the two-day Indigenous
  - Reactivated SPDA proposed a 02 P988-M budget to revive stalled projects and push through with projects already in the pipeline when it was eactivated
  - Atty. Arnel Datukon, program manager of ARMM Social 04 Fund and legal adviser of ARMM Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan was killed in an ambush in Cotabato City
  - Sarangani- Bitung, Indonesia sea link begins. Six Army Scout Rangers were 08
  - 08 wounded and an unknown number of ASG were killed or wounded in Patikul, Sulu, par of the military operation against the ASG and JI. GRP and MILF issue a seven-
  - question primer on the peace process during the All Mindanao Leaders Consulta tion convened by the Bishops-Ulama Conference at the Royal Mandaya Hotel, Davao City
  - 10 Four persons were injured in Tacurong while six persons were killed and 32 others injured in Makilala. Cotabato The bomb attacks appear to be an offshoot of the recent ar rest of the wife of alleged Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) bomb expert Dulmatin.

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- 11 Another bomb exploded in a street in Cotabato City but no casualties were reported. PNP Director General Oscar 12
- Calderon admitted they have no evidence that would link the MILF to the three bomb at tacks in Tacurong City and Makilala, Cotabato and in Cotabato City . A bomb exploded in front of 15 23
- an inn owned by a police co-operative inside Camp Asturias in Jolo, wounding
- two persons The complaint on multiple murder and multiple frus-17 trated murder filed against MILF chair Al Haj Murad (Ebrahim) and 19 others, including two suspected top operatives of the Indonesia based militant Jemaa Islamiya was submitted by Insp. Reynaldo Donor, chief of the Makilala Police in Cotabato. The complaint was filed in connection with the October 10 bombing Makilala, North Cotabato that killed six and injured 29 others
- The Davao City Chamber of 19 Commerce and Industry, Inc (DCCCII) disaffiliated from the Philippine Chamber of Com-merce and Industry (PCCI), claiming the national chamber 25 unilaterally reduced the num ber of regional chambers in Mindanao from eight to five Malacanang declared October 24 a regular holiday nation-24 wide to celebrate Eid'l Fitr, the 25 RTC Judge Sahara Silongan was killed by motorcycle end of the Islamic month of
- fasting. Plebiscite on the creation of 28 Sharif Kabungsuan Province conducted in Maguindanao Province Kasan Usi, Comelec official,
- 31 said the plebiscite on the cre-ation of the new province of Shariff Kabunsuan was approved by 60% 0

needed to tackle ancestral in the peace talks between the government and the MILF.

- 06 Prosecutor Al Calica, head of the DOJ Anti-Terrorism Task Force, issued an order removing the name of the MILF chair Murad from the December 2006 02 two complaint sheets for multiple murder. The GRP submitted a new 09
  - proposal to break the ancestral domain deadlock, having failed to beat the September 30 and later October 31 deadlines.
- 10 The GRP-MILE Coordinating Committees on the Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH) issued a statement reiterating the government and the MILF's commitment to sustain the ceasefire between the two parties despite "isolated cases of hostilities in Maguindanao. 20

(IB) Bravo Company was re-placed with the 6th IB Bravo

Company at Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao. The MILF hailed the replacement as

the possible reason why

there had been no skir

mishes for more than a week, and believed that this may

signal the return to normalcy

in the affected Maguindanao

The government is appropri-

ating only P200 million for the reactivated SPDA, a fifth

of its proposed budget for

The military arrested sus-pected Abu Sayyaf member

Annik Abbas alias Abu Anek

in Colonia village in Lamitan, Basilan. He alleg-

edly decapitated American

hostage Guillermo Sobero in June 2001.

Young Tausug performers

from Jolo, Sulu staged mu-sical theater presentations at the Matina Town Square

Park. Davao City as part of

the annual Mindanao Week

of Peace celebrations. The

Initiatives for International

dialogue (IID), also staged a

peace concert and mounted

a photo exhibit in memory of

riding gunmen in Cotabato City. His wife, Bail Lala, was

An unidentified number of

the MILF in Datu Saudi town

reportedly attacked the de-tachment of the CAFGU in

Maguindanao. Gov. Datu

injured.

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town.

2007

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charges. The m Lanao Del Sur Rep. Faysah Dumarpa slapped and alleg-The military's Western Mindanao Command (Wesmincom) released the 08 edly threatened a waitress with a bread knife. Assured mount of P153.000 to 23 that the dishes were pork MILF rebels in Zamboanga del Norte, who surrendered free, Dumarpa found out that and availed she had unknowingly eaten pork at a dinner in the House of Representatives government's Balik Baril program. The 64th Infantry Battalion

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- At the 11th Bangsamoro 09 Peoples Congress at Camp Nurbalam , Pikit, Cotabato, MNLF spokesperson Absalom Cerveza issued a warning to the MILF negoti-ating panel to be cautious in negotiating with the govern-ment and not to be deceived by its "language engineering." He said the "provi-sional government" for the Bangsamoro, which the government should have imple mented already as stipulated the 1996 government MNLF, was not realized, "instead it (government) gave the Bangsamoro people the Southern Philippine Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD), which had no power at all and was already dissolved."
- 09 Mindanao peace caravan's first stop at the Southern Christian College (SCC) in Midsayap North Cotabato where a forum was held on the right to self-determination. A Concert for Peace was held at the Iligan Capitol College (ICC).
- 10 Mindanao peace caravan second stop at Pagadian City , dubbed as â Journey for Peace+ with a rally for hu-
- man rights and peace. Mindanao peace caravan third stop at the Western MindaNews photo editor Gene Boyd Lumawag, who was shot in Jolo. 11 The MILF has described the Mindanao State University in GRP's new proposal on the issue of territory with cita-Zamboanga City for a forum on the human rights situations on "right to self deter-mination" was "good for the eye to see". Iqbal did not say if it would approve the
  - tion in the Philippines Mindanao peace caravan last stop at Lamitan, Basilan for the 4th Mindanao Peoples 12 Peace Summit, held on De-cember 12-17. Nur Misuari returns to Sulu
  - 14 to register as voter. Misuari's Jolo trip is the sixth leave granted by the court for Misuari to leave his deten-
  - tion facility. Newly added province to the ARMM, Shariff Kabunsuan, 19 celebrates its founding.

There were no reported casu-alties in the incident. Five suspected Abu Sayya nembers were captured in Three Marines were injured in 10 the ongoing military offensive Six ASG were killed and four Marines were wounded during an early morning clash in Patikul, Sulu. The budget for the unpaid

25 salaries of some 20,000 teachers was released by the DEPED national office.

27 President Arrovo signed Executive Order 560 ordering the re-activation of the Southern Philippines Development Authority (SPDA). Three residents of Matanog 27 Maguindanao accused of

Superferry 16 boat were ar-rested in Cotabato City President Arroyo signed Execu-tive Order no. 1035, splitting the Armed Forces Southern Command (Southern) into 28

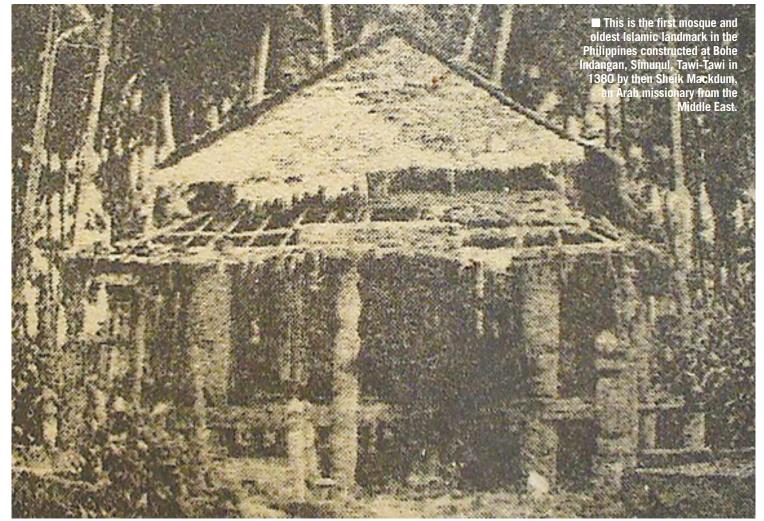
Command (Southcom) into two, the Eastern Mindanao Command and the Western Mindanao Command.

The three Moros from Matanog, Maguindanao sus-pected of being bombers were 31 released.

### September 2006

- Former President Fidel V. 01 Ramos calls on Mindanaoans to work together with government and the international community to support peace during the 1996 FPA Memo rial Lecture in Davao City Ramos was the keynote speaker. Commemoration of the 10<sup>th</sup> year of the GRP-MNLF FPA 02
  - igned in 1996. Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita announced the reactivation of the SPDA at the 10th anniversar celebration in Davao City. SPDA's reactivation was in-
- tended to serve as a catch-up plan+ for the unimplemented socio-economic benefit from the peace pact
- O2 In Davao City Nur Misuari de-scribed the final accord as an ill-fated pact that needs to be 'exhumed" before it could be
- resuscitated. Six Marines dead and 19 04 wounded in a firefight with the Abu Sayyaf in Sulu. The government and MILF 07
  - peace panels failed to resolve the issue of territory in their September 6 to 7 exploratory talks in Kuala Lumpur leading to an impasse in the peace talks. The government panel offered 613 predominantly Moro towns and villages to be

government was behind the said gathering." Seven were killed in the fourth day of a major Philippine mili-tary offensive against the ASG and suspected JI bombers Dulmatin and Patek Fresh fighting erupted be-tween government militias and the MILF in Maguindanao.



## Oldest mosque in Tawi Tawi declared a national shrine

## **BY HADER GLANG**

**7** AMBOANGA CITY: Muslim leaders in Mindanao Lailed the Senate's declaration of the Sheikh Karimul Makhdum Mosque in Tawi-Tawi as a national shrine, saying it is a milestone in the Philippine history.

House deputy speaker for Mindanao Abdulgani "Gerry" Salapuddin said the move is a great honor and recognition to the Filipino Muslims, particularly to the people of Tawi-Tawi.

This symbolizes a great honor to the Islam faith," said Sultan of Sulu and North Borneo, Sharif Ibrahim Ajibul Mohammad Pulalun. "We are overjoyed by the recognition being given to the contribution nition to the contribution of Islam in the development of culture and civilization in the country.

Arabian missionary, scholar and judge, Sheikh Karimul Makhdum constructed the edifice in Tubig Indangan, Simunul, considered as the oldest structure and first mosque in the Philippines in AD 1380.

The Sheikh set foot in the island of Tubig Indangan 615

great esteem and emulation by the Muslims and even nonmuslims and is considered sacred. Domestic and foreign tourists frequently visit the mosque to pay respect and homage to the shrine.

The Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) through its Legislative Assembly has already passed a law declaring the inclusion of the Sheikh Makhdum centennial celebration as one of the Islamic events entitled to a special non-working holiday within the five provinces under the ARMM.

Sultan Pulalun appealed to Senator Angara that the mosque in Likup village in Indanan

He said at the height of Muslim rebellion against American colonial government, Muslim leaders met with General Leonard Wood at the mosque wherein historical talks and agreements were forged.

Pulalun, a descendant of Sultan Mohammad Pulalun, heads the Sultanate of Sulu and North Borneo, now Sabah . Sultanate of Sulu obtained Sabah from Brunei as a gift for helping put down a rebellion on the Borneo Island

The Sultanate of Sulu was a Muslim state that ruled over much of the islands off the Sulu Sea . It stretches from a part of the island of Mindanao in the east, to North Borneo, now known as Sabah, in the west and south, and to Palawan, in the north. It was founded in 1457 and is believed to exist as a sovereign nation for at least 442 years.

# Making Projects Responsive to the Needs of ARMM

## **BY: PAT TULAWIE**

THE management of ARMM Social Fund (ASFP), under the ARMM Regional Government since March 28, 2006 through Executive Order 518, was given a performance rating of satisfactory by the World Bank (WB). Snags hounded ASFP management, firstly when a WB funded infrastructure pro-ject that has already gone through the preimplementation phase and originally meant for Datu Odin Sinsuat but was relocated to Shariff Aguak causing delay and additional costs, and secondly when its project manager, Atty. Arnel Datukon, was assassinated. But these appear to have minimal effect and have only slightly impeded its over-all implementation. ASFP has continually carried on realizing its goals and objectives.

The ASFP, funded by WB or International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and JBIC has continued to implement the different components of the project customized to the needs of the ARMM constituents. Loans amounting to \$33.6 million from IBRD and ¥2.47 billion from JBIC are the fund source for the Community Development and Assistance (CDA), Strategic Regional Infrastructure (SRI) and Institutional Strengthening and Governance (ISG) projects. These started in 2003 and set to be completed in 2007 for IBRD funded projects and 2010 for JBIC funded.

The ASFP aims for a sustainable development in the ARMM conflicted areas by bringing down poverty. Its methods are entrenched on a transparent, participatory and criteria-based selection process. Communities have the direct opportunity to participate in all phases of the project which brings forth projects that are refrom Line Agencies, Local Government Units, NGOs and the media.

The CDA, one of the major projects of ASFP, has touched so many lives in the ARMM conflict areas. It has given back the lives of the people by promoting community empowerment. It has bridged peace and has elevated the lives in the target areas through its capacity building, infrastructure and livelihood activities. It also made its mark on Internally Displaced Persons through its "Quick Response Program". The CDA projects cover all ARMM municipalities and Marawi City. About 500 to 600 barangays are funded by IBRD and another 200 barangays are funded by JBIC.

ASFP has also identified key areas wherein to implement its infrastructure projects designed to connect the geographically divided ARMM thereby providing a solid base for socio-economic development, build and/or improve the health care facilities, and provide training ground for the stakeholders of ARMM. Ten of the thirteen SRI projects funded by IBRD are completed, two are on-going and the last one is under review. Moreover, another seven of the thirty three SRI projects funded by JBIC are about to be implemented.

ASFP has covered all significant grounds for development. Another one of its projects is the development of the educational system and governance of ARMM. The ISG projects include information, education and communication, Commu-Education nity-Based (CBE) and project management. The collaboration with BEAM and Dep-ED brought forward the implementation of several projects in Basilan, Marawi, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi. Additionally, ASFP has supported 17 private madaris for Dep-Ed accreditation. It

of the Islamic faith to the country's history."

The Senate approved on third and final reading a bill authored by Senator Edgardo Angara declaring the Philippines ' oldest mosque in recog-

years ago, 140 years before the arrival of Magellan (the Spaniard who discovered the Philippines ) in the Philippines . He introduced the first Islamic civilization in the country. The mosque is held with

town in Jolo, Sulu be declared also as a national shrine being the country's second oldest mosque and because events of historical importance took place at the mosque.

needs of the communities. Modarriseen (Teachers') ASFP gives these communities the technical know-how oped instructional materito successfully implement als for language learning/ the projects with supports teaching in the Madrasah.

sponsive to the real and felt helped in the conduct of Training Series 2 and devel-

## Giving Peace an elbow room: PCID launches Iribani's book

### **BY NASSER SHARIEF**

PEOPLE keep asking whatever happened to the Final Peace Agreement signed ten years ago between the government and the Moro National Liberation Front. Two men walked away each with a Peace award, but one of the two languishes in jail for no conclusive reason-or house arrest if that makes you feel better. The PCID's publishing this December of Abraham Iribani's book Give Peace a Chance could not have come at a better time then. Before the manuscript for which the book had been based could be relegated into the oblivion of the archives which has little chance of reaching the public, PCID, the Magbassa Kita Foundation and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung had joined forces to publish the book because they realized that it is a very important addition in chronicling the events leading to the signing of the peace pact.

In a simple cocktail at the Asian Institute of Management, the book was unveiled before the public. In attendance were journalists, foreign diplomats and members of civil society groups.

The late Abet Iribani was the spokesperson of the MNLF during the Peace Process leading to the 1996 Peace Agreement and was also the co-founder of PCID. His book, according to Ms. Amina Rasul-Bernardo, the PCID lead convenor; "with its honest analyses and faithful documentation of the pur-



Amina Rasul, Lead Convenor of the Philippine Council for Islam and Democracy hands over a copy of Abraham Iribani's book "Give Peace a Chance" to Atty. Jose Lorena who receives it on behalf of the Iribani family in a simple ceremony at the Asian Institute of Management in Makati City. Loking on are Ismael Abubakar, Samira Gutoc, Atty. Nasser Marohomsalic, Klaus Preschle, Haroum Al-Rachid and Dr. Mashur Bin-Ghalib Jundam. PHOTO COURTESY PCID

poses and intentions behind the 1996 FPA, shall serve as a reminder of how difficult and rewarding peace building is." Dr. Klaus Preschle of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation expressed the group's objectives in publishing the book: "we want to honor a friend" and for everyone interested in the peace process, there are so much to gain from the book

Paying their tributes to the

author were Atty. Nasser Marohomsalic, chair the Muslim Legal Assistance Foundation; Hon. Ismael Abubakar, Jr.; and Dr. Mashur Bin-Ghalib Jundam, dean of the U.P. Institute of Islamic Studies. Speak-

ing in behalf of the Iribani family was Atty. Jose Lorena, executive director of the Muslim Mayors' League and a cousin of the author. Mr. Bart Guingona of the Pagbabago Movement was the Master of Ceremony.

Atty. Marohomsalic declared in his tribute that "the book is a cut by itself beyond the usual pasticci in research work. The narrative is vastly drawn from Abet's personal experiences. And the truth of his personal knowledge is confirmed in documents extant in the records of the peace talks and by the events that unfolded after the signing of the Peace Agreement in September 1996.

