

Emergency again if need be, says Arroyo

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Philippine President Gloria Arroyo speaking before members of Filipino women's groups at Malacanang presidential palace in Manila on Tuesday, on the eve of International Women's Day. — AFP

Philippine Daily Inquirer/ANPH

MANILA, March 7. — President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo warned today that she would not hesitate to use emergency powers again to fight groups seeking her ouster, after imposing a week-long emergency to quash an alleged coup attempt.

Ms Arroyo said the conspiracy by Left-wing and Right-wing groups that the government quelled last week would have destroyed democracy in the Philippines if it had triumphed. "The laws are there and, as I said when I lifted the state of emergency, I am monitoring events and I will not hesitate to do what needs to be done to uphold the law," Ms Arroyo said in an interview with GMA radio, which was broadcast nationwide.

Ms Arroyo imposed the emergency on 24 February and withdrew it on Friday,

expressing confidence that order had been restored. She said she needed the emergency decree to thwart an alleged coup plot involving communist rebels, "misguided" soldiers, Opposition politicians, and businessmen. "I am a strong believer in democratic principles," Ms Arroyo said. "But I also believe that we should stop people who abuse their freedoms and install groups that will one day destroy those very freedoms — the communists who conspire with the extreme right."

"We showed how strong and stable our government was," she said. "We moved swiftly and we averted violence." Leftist groups have vowed to continue protests and call for Ms Arroyo's ouster over corruption and vote-rigging allegations. In the wake of the emergency decree, a Left-wing lawmaker has been arrested and charged with rebellion. Five other Left-wing legislators are under virtual house arrest.

08 MAR 2006

THE STATESMAN

Arroyo lifts emergency

Philippine Daily
Inquirer/ANN

MANILA, March 3. — After being assured by her adviser that the coup threat has eased, President Ms Gloria Macapagal Arroyo lifted the state of emergency exactly a week after she issued the controversial declaration to quell an attempt to overthrow her government. "Today, a week later, I am happy to report that the cabal is broken and it is time to get back to the real business of governing," Ms Arroyo said in a speech aired on radio and television nationwide.

"I am confident that order has been restored. Therefore, with the power vested in me by our Constitution, I declare that, effective immediately, the state of emergency is no longer in effect," Ms Arroyo said.

Ms Arroyo declared the

state of emergency last Friday to counter what she said was an alliance of communist rebels and "military adventurists" aimed at toppling her. But Ms Arroyo also warned that she would not hesitate to resort to another tough action if these adventurists and opportunists who would put the economy and security in peril would force her hand.

"It is essential now that our political opponents and opportunists stop undermining our economy at home and embarrassing the nation abroad with their cheap political antics," she said. "For the love of nation, it is time to make things work and get things done. Let us please all work for the common good," she said. Ms Arroyo defended anew her decision to issue Proclamation 1017, saying, "Our nation is stronger for dealing quickly and decisively with this issue."



Armed forces chief of staff General Genoroso Senga surrounded by reporters at the Malacanang presidential palace in Manila on Friday. — AFP

"I will not stand for this kind of adventurism at any time. And I will act with the same force of will and determination again and again if our opponents insist on inflicting instability on the

nation and hurting our economy," she said. And she said she was proven correct after many subversives and several soldiers and police were arrested and were now being investigated.

THE STATESMAN

04 MAR 2006

Philippines relaxes alert level, emergency remains

REUTERS

MANILA, MARCH 2

PHILIPPINES authorities lowered the security alert level from maximum on Thursday, but the country remained under emergency rule amid warnings President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo was still at risk from coup plotters.

"We felt the situation is normalising," said Army Major Bartolome Bacarro, adding that the military's alert level had dropped to blue, where 50 per cent of soldiers are on standby, from red, under which all troops are girded for action.

Arroyo invoked emergency rule last week to confront what she said

was an alliance of opposition members, communist groups and "military adventurists" conspiring to bring down her government.

She has promised to review the order within the next two days but has so far resisted calls from her Vice-President and economic team to lift it amid warnings from security officials that many plotters are still at large.

Arroyo is waiting for the National Police Chief, the Secretary of Defense and the Justice Secretary to report back on the security situation before she makes her decision.

The Justice Secretary said yesterday that he could not yet recommend withdrawing the order, which gives the state broad powers of detention.

03 MAR 2006

INDIAN EXPRESS

Anti-Arroyo group storms House



AFP
House of Representatives member Crispin Beltran raises a clenched fist in defiance as policemen lead him away in Manila on Monday.

Philippines govt links 16 critics to coup plot

THE Guardian and Agencies
Manila, February 27

A HUNDRED leftwing protesters barged into the Philippine congress on Monday to protest at the charging of five members of the house of representatives for plotting to overthrow the presidency of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

The five were among 16 implicated in a plot. Arroyo declared a state of emergency on Friday after the military said it had foiled the alleged conspiracy.

The protesters, pushed back by police, claimed the arrests could be the start of a crackdown on political opposition.

Shouting "No to martial law" and displaying anti-Arroyo placards, the protesters ran past guards and entered the lobby, but other guards quickly shut the main door to the hall.

Virgilio Pablico, head of the police legal department, said elements in the military and both left and right wing groups were involved in a plot to overthrow Arroyo's administration. He said police had gathered testimony and "pieces of electronic paraphernalia containing the tactical alliance of the two movements".

Two of the 16 — House of representatives member Crispin Beltran and former senator Gregorio Honasan, a veteran of past coup attempts — are detained, while the rest remain at large.

The turmoil began last June after Arroyo was accused of rigging the 2004 presidential election. Following the state of emergency declaration last week, police banned public protests, raided the office of a newspaper critical of Arroyo and started arresting her known critics.

The measures were widely condemned, with former President Fidel Ramos calling them "Marcosian", a reference to former dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

Arroyo's grip on the presidency was further shaken last night when marines rallied around commanders wanting to withdraw from the chain of command. The troops ended the mini-rebellion after five hours.

Late last night, hundreds of students opposed to Arroyo began to gather at the University of the Philippines and the civilian leaders who had supported the marines, including former President Corazon Aquino, were considering whether to join them.

All attempts to impeach Arroyo have failed because she controls congress through a network of patronage rather than party loyalty.

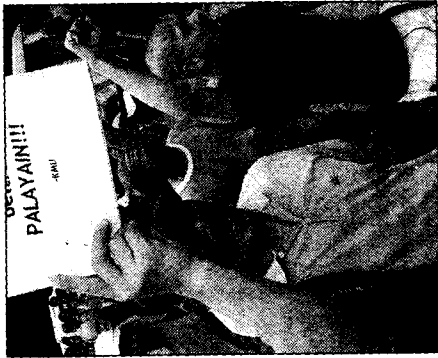
Arroyo steps up purge of 'coup plotters'

Filipino Police File Cases Against 16 Officials As Lawyers Challenge Emergency Rule

Manila: A purge of leftists and soldiers suspected of plotting to topple Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo went into high gear on Monday as police filed cases against 16 people, including a former hero of the 1986 "people power" uprising.

Arroyo appeared on state television, a day after dozens of marines had briefly defied the state of emergency she ordered last Friday on the discovery of plans for a coup.

But she gave no indication of when the emergency rule would be lifted, and instead revived an old pledge to improve the lot of the country's demoralised military forces. State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco said the 16 accused included four leftist members of Congress and both active and retired soldiers. "We have



Filipinos protest against the emergency rule in Manila

strong evidence against them. We don't just file cases that will not stand in court," he told a news con-

ference. Police said three of the group had already been arrested.

One of those on the run was Gregorio Honasan, who led a small group of soldiers that broke away from dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1986, sparking the revolt that restored democracy in the poor southeast Asian country after 14 years of martial law.

Tensions receded after Sunday's five-hour standoff at a Manila marines base. Schools were closed for the day, but it was otherwise business as usual in the capital and the financial markets were calmer after being spooked on Friday by the crisis. The peso was up 0.35% at 52.02 to the dollar by 0830 GMT and the main stock index was 0.95% higher. Both had tumbled 1% on Friday.

"Thank God the stock market went up by 19 points and the peso

strengthened by 40 centavos, maybe because of the right handling of the standoff in the marines yesterday," Arroyo said.

However, problems loomed on a new front for the president as a group of lawyers challenged her emergency rule in the high court, arguing that it was unconstitutional.

"We hope that the supreme court will act immediately on the matter to avert any escalation of the political crisis that we have now resulting from the proclamation," said Marlon Manuel, spokesman of the Alternative Law Group.

Arroyo, who survived an im-



peachment attempt last year over allegations of election cheating and corruption, invoked the emergency to confront what she said was a conspiracy by political enemies, communists and "military adventurists."

Critics say her move, which allows for arrests without warrant and an extension of detention without charge, smacks of Marcos-era martial law.

The drama at the marines base came on Sunday after the elite force's commander was removed for links with the coup plot. About 100 marines—in full battle gear and with armoured personnel carriers—staged a show of support, calling for public support. But the standoff between senior commanders was resolved, and a crowd that had gathered outside dispersed.

Agencies

Critics lash out at Arroyo

Communist Guerrillas Offer Coalition With Opposition Parties

Manila: Philippines President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo kept a tight net around suspected coup plotters and opposition newspaper editors on Sunday amid criticism that the state of emergency declared last week smacks of Marcos-era martial law.

"We want to assure our people that this declaration of state of national emergency is temporary," police spokesman Samuel Pagdilao said in a radio interview. "The only goal is to remove troublemakers in our midst and hold them responsible."

He said there would be a fresh round of arrests, continuing a purge since Friday of alleged masterminds behind what Arroyo described as a conspiracy by members of the opposition, communists and "military adventurists" to topple her.

The army has detained the commander of an elite regiment as the leader of troops who were allegedly planning to incite crowds at anti-Arroyo rallies, and on Saturday a former police chief and leftist congressman were questioned.

ABS-CBN news said police had a list of 100 people to be arrested over the plot, including former Senator Gregorio Honasan, a hero of the "people power" overthrow of dictator Ferdinand Marcos 20



Protesters shout slogans against emergency

years ago.

Arroyo went to church on Sunday and Manila's streets were calm, reassuring analysts that financial markets would recover their footing after a 1 percent slide in both the peso and the main stock index on Friday's emergency declaration.

"The risk to the administration seems to be dissipating," said Jonathan Ravelas at Banco de Oro Universal Bank in Manila. "Since we have not seen any adverse movement during the weekend, we will probably see a more stable market next week."

Arroyo, an economist who has

pushed reform to lift government revenues, moved on Saturday to rally confidence in her handling of the debt-ridden and impoverished southeast Asian nation.

"Our economy is improving so we won't allow the destabilisers and coup plotters to destroy our momentum," she said.

But the president, who survived a crisis last year over allegations of vote-rigging and corruption, came under fire for introducing a rule of law that allows for arrests without warrant and an extension of detention without charge.

Former President Fidel Ramos, her most vital but unpredictable

ally, said he was appalled and dismayed by her move. "It is an overkill ... people are more likely to pull the trigger if you have a state of emergency," he said.

There was also biting criticism in newspapers, which Arroyo had singled out for bias in her declaration of emergency rule.

Meanwhile, Communist guerrillas waging a 37-year rebellion in the Philippines have offered a tactical alliance with opposition forces and soldiers seeking to overthrow President Gloria Arroyo, the founder of the Maoist insurgency said on Sunday.

Netherlands-based Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) founder Jose Maria Sison said Arroyo's assumption of emergency powers on Friday, which she said was necessary to quell an alleged coup attempt, provided all anti-Arroyo factions an opportunity to work together.

"To oust the Arroyo regime, it suffices for the legal patriotic, progressive and other anti-Arroyo forces and their allies among the active and retired military and police forces to do their best in musing their own respective following," he said in a statement.

Sison said the CPP-NFA "are determined of a revolutionary transition council to replace the Arroyo regime". Agencies

27 FEB 2006

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Philippines police detain govt critics

Associated Press

MANILA, Feb. 25. — Police today raided the offices of a newspaper and detained several prominent critics of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, a day after she declared a state of emergency to quash a coup plot.

Several hundred government opponents gathered at a Roman Catholic Mass, where they questioned the legitimacy of the Emergency and vowed more protests to force Mrs Arroyo from office.

But with rallies banned, the streets were otherwise quiet on a day when Filipinos normally would have been marking the 20th anniversary of the "people power" uprising that forced dictator Ferdinand Marcos into exile on 25 February, 1986.

Early today, police barged into the offices of *The Daily Tribune* and confiscated editorial material and a bundle of newspapers headlining Mrs Arroyo's declaration. After the raid, they posted police at the door but it was not clear if they intended to close the office, the paper's publisher, Mr Ninez Cacho Olivarez, said.

The newspaper, owned by Mr Olivarez's family, has been among the most critical of Mrs Arroyo, and has recently reported alleged military plots to



Policemen inside a police camp as security remains tight after President Gloria Arroyo declared Emergency. In Manila on Saturday. — AFP

oust her.

Also today, Crispin Beltran, a member of the Leftist Anakpawis Party, was taken into custody for questioning. Local media said he was being questioned about an old rebellion case.

Two former police generals, Mr Ramon Montano and Mr Rex Piad, were detained at a golf course south of Manila. Montano had previously urged Mrs Arroyo to resign, and Mr Piad supported the campaign of Mr Fernando Poe Jr, who lost to Mrs Arroyo in the 2004 presidential election.

26 FEB 2005

THE STATESMAN

Philippines coup leaders arrested

P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE: Uneasy calm prevailed in Manila on Saturday, even as the military and police firmed up measures under the emergency declared on Friday by Philippines President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. There was no indication of any major confrontation between the authorities and the Opposition activists in Manila until night-fall.

The rallies and functions planned by both the authorities and the Opposition activists, in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the triumph of "people power" strategy, remained banned under the new crisis-regulations. Presidential spokesman Ignacio Bunye said on Saturday that the political buzz about an impending imposition of martial law had "no basis" at all.

At least three top-ranking officers - the independent heads of two elite military units and the chief of a special police action force - were identified as the suspected ring leaders of a coup "plot" against Ms. Arroyo. They were relieved from service and arrested on Friday be-

fore she proclaimed emergency and claimed that their coup-bid had been "crushed." The chiefs of all three military wings and the police force pledged their loyalty to the President after her televised proclamation of emergency.

While these arrests were officially confirmed, independent observers said an Opposition Congressman belonging to a left-of-centre coalition, was nabbed on Saturday. The offices of an anti-Arroyo newspaper were also reported to have been sealed. The authorities cast their net wide, with some retired military officers too coming under the scanner. Some other ring-leaders were said to be flying under the radar and evading detection, but details remained unconfirmed.

For several months now, Ms. Arroyo has been fighting a battle for political survival over the allegations of electoral fraud by her in 2004 and of corrupt practices by her family members. She first became the unelected President in 2001, on the basis of mass rallies against an elected leader, Joseph Estrada, now under house arrest on corruption charges.

Philippines under emergency rule

Manila: Filipino President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo declared a state of emergency on Friday, saying she had quashed a coup plot but that the Philippines still faced a "clear threat" from treasonous forces.

Clashes erupted as riot police used water cannons to disperse about 5,000 protesters defying a ban on rallying at a shrine to the 'people power' uprising that toppled dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1986 20 years ago this month. 'People power'

also ousted Joseph Estrada as president in 2001. Police used truncheons and shields to roust a stone-throwing group trying to gather for a second protest. Several people were arrested; others were bloodied.

Amid a massive security clampdown, the military barricaded its camps to keep troops from joining the demonstrations and detained Brigadier General Danny Lim, who was allegedly involved in the takeover plot. The military has played major roles in two "people power" revolts and has a recent history of restiveness.

While she vowed she was in control, Arroyo clearly was worried about losing her grip on events as her opponents tried to hijack the anniversary activities.

Presidential spokesman Ignacio Bunye told reporters



Police and protestors clash in Manila

- **Commemorations of 'People Power' movement turn into anti-Arroyo protests**
- **Government claims to have quashed coup attempt**
- **One general among several people detained**

that commemorations have been cancelled and that the military was ordered "to prevent and suppress lawless violence". Arroyo, who survived two earlier coup attempts, said the political opposition, along with extreme elements of the political left and right, were determined to bring down the elected

government. "I am declaring a state of emergency because of the clear threat to the nation," a defiant Arroyo said in a taped, nationally televised statement. "This is my warning against those who threaten the government: the whole weight of the law will fall on your treason."

Appealing for calm, she claimed the military had quashed a coup plot by some military officers and their men. "There were a few who tried to break from the armed forces chain

of command, to fight the civilian government and establish a regime outside the constitution," said Arroyo, who held a pre-dawn emergency meeting of her national security council. "We crushed this attempt." She stopped short of declaring martial law, a sensitive issue because Marcos used it to rule by decree. Her chief of staff, Mike Defensor, said no curfew will be imposed but the declaration bans rallies, allows arrest without warrant, permits the President to call in the military to intervene and lets her take over facilities—including media outlets—that may affect national security.

Former Filipino President Corazon Aquino, a one-time Arroyo ally, criticised the emergency declaration and reiterated a call for Arroyo to "make the supreme sacrifice" and resign. Agencies

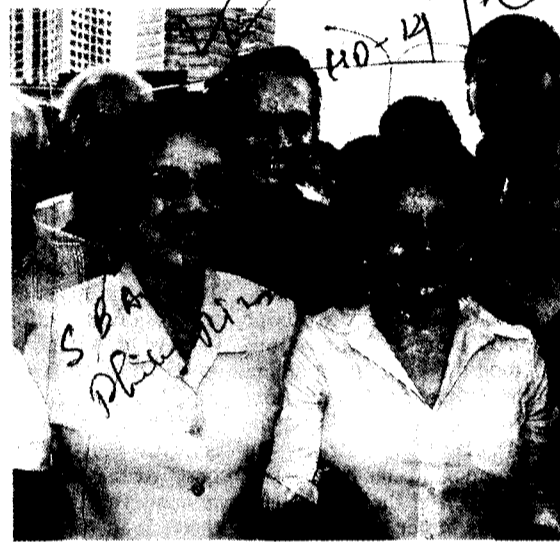
Coup crushed; emergency declared in Philippines

P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE: President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo of the Philippines, politically embattled for several months now, proclaimed a state of emergency on Friday and asserted that a coup attempt by a section of the armed forces had been "crushed" earlier in the day.

Ms. Arroyo's action, which was later backed by the top leaders of military and police establishments, came amid protest rallies and political buzz about plots against her from within the armed forces.

In a televised address, she cited the persistence of a "clear threat to the nation" even after the detection of the suspected coup-bid by the heads of Scout Rangers and Marines, two elite military units, and the chief of Special Action Force, a commando unit within the national police. These "plotters" and their associates, whose number re-



The former Philippines President, Corazon Aquino (left), with Senator Loi Ejercito, wife of former President Joseph Estrada as they march in Manila on Friday. — PHOTO: AFP

mained unspecified, were arrested. Ms. Arroyo claimed that right-wing politicians and the left forces had now formed "a tactical alliance" to overturn the victory in the 2004

presidential poll.

Warning the protesters, the President said "treason" would be the target of law-enforcement under the emergency powers which fell short of martial law.

Mudslide buries 200 in Philippines village

■ More than 1,500 still missing ■ 30 feet of mud hinders rescue

ASSOCIATED Press
Manila, February 17

A RAIN-SOAKED mountainside disintegrated into a torrent of mud in the eastern Philippines on Friday, swallowing hundreds of houses and an elementary school in sludge three stories high. The International Red Cross put the number of deaths at nearly 200, but only 23 bodies could be recovered. But 1,500 people were still missing.

The farming village of Guinsaungon on Leyte island, 420 miles southeast of Manila, was virtually wiped out, with only a few jumbles of corrugated steel sheeting left to show that the community of some 2,500 people ever existed.

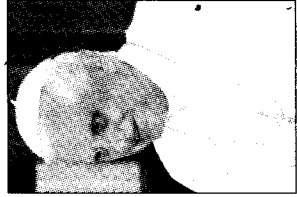
"It sounded like the mountain exploded, and the whole thing crumbled," survivor Dario Libatan told Manila radio DZMM. Southern Leyte province Gov. Rosette Lerias said: "There are no signs of life, no rooftops, no nothing."

Two other villages were inundated, and about 3,000 evacuees were at a municipal hall. "We did not find injured people," said Ricky Estela, a crewman on a helicopter that flew a politician to the scene. "Most of them are dead and beneath the mud."

The mud was so deep — up to 30 feet in some places — and unstable that rescue workers had difficulty approaching the school, which was in session when the landslide occurred.

Lerias told the British Broadcasting Corp. the school had 246 students and seven teachers. Only one child and one

Pope appeals for aid



Pope Benedict XVI has urged "speedy and generous" help for the survivors of the landslide. He sent a telegram to the bishop of Maasin, saying he was "deeply pained" by the tragedy.

AP, Vatican City

adult had been recovered.

About 100 people also were visiting the village for a women's group meeting.

The Philippine army and air force, and the Red Cross, were on the scene, but search-and-rescue efforts were called off at nightfall, Lerias said. She asked for people to dig by hand, saying the mud was too soft for heavy equipment. "All those who could have come today have come," she told BBC. "We hope to be able to rescue some more people."

The US military dispatched at least two warships and other forces to the area to provide medical assistance and other relief, officials said.

"Help is on the way," President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo said in televised remarks. "It will come from land, sea and air." Aerial TV footage showed a wide swath of mud amid stretches of rice pad-

dies at the foothills of the now-scarred mountain, where survivors blamed illegal logging for contributing to the disaster.

A small earthquake also shook the area, but scientists said it occurred after the landslide and likely was unrelated. Flash floods also were inundating the area, and the rumble of a secondary landslide sent rescuers scurrying for safety.

Rescue workers dug with shovels for signs of survivors, and put a child on a stretcher, with little more than the girl's eyes showing through a covering of mud. Other survivors were piled onto heavy construction equipment and driven to safety.

Volunteers from nearby provinces were quickly being joined by groups of troops being ferried in by helicopter, with more en route by sea.

Army Capt. Edmund Abella said he and about 30 soldiers from his unit were soaking wet from wading through waist-deep mud.

"The people said the ground suddenly shook, then a part of the mountain collapsed onto the village," Abella told AP by cell phone. "Some houses were carried by the mudflow, some were destroyed and other were buried."

"It's very difficult, we're digging by hand, the place is so vast and the mud is so thick. When we try to walk, we get stuck in the mud." He said troops had just rescued a 43-year-old woman. "She was crying and looking for her three nephews, but they were nowhere to be found," Abella said.

DISASTER DOCKET

Tragedies that hit Philippines in the last 10 years:

December 2005: Landslides and floods killed 5.

February 2005: Flash floods killed 13.

December 2004: Rainstorm triggered landslides and flash floods that killed nearly 1,500.

December 2003: Landslides kill at least 160.

September 2003: Monsoon mudslide killed 22 miners and a 5-year-old boy.

November 2001: Tropical storm killed 171.

July 2001: Typhoon Utor killed 121.

July 1996: Typhoon Gloria killed 20.

November 1995: Killer typhoon left 500 dead, displaced half a million.

September 1995: Flash floods killed 15.

January 1995: Mudslides and flash floods killed 20.

November 1991: About 6,000 killed in floods and landslides.

June 1991: The Mount Pinatubo volcano eruption killed 800 people.



Rescuers tend to a woman pulled out of the debris in Leyte on Friday.

REUTERS

India, Philippines to sign four accords

Press Trust of India

MANILA, Feb. 3. — India and the Philippines are set to give bilateral ties a big boost by signing four accords, including one on defence cooperation envisaging among other things exchange of Air Force planes, Navy ships and military instructors during President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam's three-day official visit here.

The President arrived here today. The two countries will tomorrow ink separate MoUs on cooperation in agriculture, tourism and in pharmaceuticals. The Philippines foreign secretary Mr Alberto G Romulo said

the defence agreement would deepen naval and maritime cooperation and give substance to the annual security dialogue between the two countries.

The MoU on pharmaceuticals is aimed at giving the Philippines greater access to Indian drugs.

Under the MoU on agriculture, the Philippines will be able to tap Indian expertise in buffalo breeding, dairy development. Buffalo meat is a key export item from India to the Philippines.

The accord on tourism envisages joint marketing and promotion of each others' tourism spots besides seeking to increase flow of tourists from the Philippines to India.

THE STATESMAN

- 4 FEB 2006

India, Philippines to sign defence cooperation accord

Cabinet also approves a proposal for a tourism cooperation pact

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: India and the Philippines will sign a defence cooperation agreement during President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam's current visit there.

Briefing reporters, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Priyaranjan Dasmunsi said Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee informed the Cabinet here on Wednesday of the agreement. He, however, did not give details.

The Cabinet also approved a proposal for a tourism cooperation pact with the South-east Asian country. It would encourage private sector investments, facilitate exchange of expertise and pave the way for the two countries setting up tourism offices in

each other's territory.

The Cabinet approved the suggestions made by a Parliamentary Standing Committee to effect changes in the Bill to amend the Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act. Official amendments would be moved during the budget session of Parliament to incorporate the suggestions.

The Bill seeks to modernise the organisational structure and operational procedures of the KVIC, and rename it the National Khadi and Village Industries Commission to distinguish it from similar State Government agencies.

The Government of India textbook presses in Mysore, Chandigarh and Bhubanes-

• **KVIC Act will be amended**

• **Textbook presses to be privatised**

• **350 more Kasturba Vidyalayas**

war would be privatised on condition the employees there continue till the completion of their service period. The press in Gangtok would be transferred to the Sikkim Government, while retaining the press in Shimla and the Government of India Forms Store and Office of Assistant Director (Outside Printing) in Kolkata.

It was decided to re-orient the submission for water

quality under the Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme to provide for a more focussed funding to tackle severe cases of contamination.

The Cabinet gave the nod for setting up 350 additional Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas at the upper primary level for girls belonging to the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, the Other Backward Classes and the minorities.

Replying to a query, Mr. Dasmunsi said the Cabinet deferred a decision on allowing ONGC Videsh Limited to re-enter the race for two exploration blocks in Nigeria, which it earlier lost to a Korean firm.

"The issue did not come up for discussion."

THE HINDU

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