

# The Manila Times

★ ★  
Php15.00

**WEDNESDAY**  
SEPTEMBER 23, 2009

3 SECTIONS 16 PAGES  
VOL. 110 NO. 342

# Ping links Erap to Bentain

## Missing's kin disappointed with Lacson

BY LLANESCA T. PANTI REPORTER

**SEN. Panfilo Lacson** has linked former President Joseph "Erap" Estrada to abduction and murder of Edgar Bentain, a video operator of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) who was responsible for leaking out a video of Estrada gambling in a casino.

►BentainA2

## JPE gives soft, glowing profile of ex-president

BY LLANESCA T. PANTI REPORTER

THE embattled Joseph "Erap" Estrada got a boost on Tuesday from his party mate, Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, who said that it was not

►ProfileA2



Sen. Jinggoy Estrada (inset) appears to be mulling his next move as Sen. Panfilo Lacson pokes his father, former President Joseph Estrada, with more charges at the Senate on Tuesday. PHOTOS BY RENE DILAN

## Dacers stress: Lacson can't turn witness

BY WILLIAM B. DEPASUPIL AND FRANCIS EARL A. CUETO REPORTERS

THE daughters of slain publicist Salvador "Bubby" Dacer again rejected the possibility of Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson turning state witness, according to Demetrio Custodio, the counsel of the Dacer family.

Lacson has been insisting he had nothing to do with the killing of Dacer and his

►WitnessA2



## PALACE ADVISER FLOATS TEODORO-VILMA TANDEM

A PALACE official on Tuesday floated a possible tandem with Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro and the so-called Star for All Seasons, Gov. Vilma Santos-Recto of Batangas, saying it

would be a powerhouse in 2010. "A 'Gibo' Teodoro-Vilma Santos tandem is a very interesting tandem for the 2010 presidential elections," Gabriel Claudio, presidential adviser for politi-

cal affairs, said in radio interview. But Claudio clarified that the ruling party, Lakas-Kampi Christian Muslim Democrats (Lakas-Kampi CMD), has not even started negotiating with

the governor for a possible partnership with Teodoro, the administration's presidential candidate in the upcoming polls.

►TandemA2

## Hunt on for JI, Abu Sayyaf in Mindanao

ZAMBOANGA CITY: Philippine troops backed by US military intelligence on Tuesday continue to hunt for Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) militants in the southern island province of Sulu, where dozens of rebels and soldiers were killed in fierce clashes since last week, officials told *The Manila Times*.

Regional military chief Major Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino said troops were tracking down at least four of the most senior Abu Sayyaf leaders—Dr. Abu, Albader Parad, Isnilon Hapilon and Yasser Igasan—including two foreign Jemaah Islamiyah terrorists Mauiya and Quayem and some 200 gunmen.

Mauiya, believed to be from India, was among those previously tagged by the Philippine authorities as behind the kidnappings earlier this

►MindanaoA6

This handout photo taken on Monday shows soldiers victoriously raising the Philippine flag at an al-Qaeda-linked Abu-Sayyaf camp in Indanan town of Jolo, Mindanao. AFP PHOTO



## Japanese, Germans on ICG endorsed

BY JULMUNIR I. JANNARAL CORRESPONDENT

COTABATO CITY: Mindanao peace advocates have endorsed two organizations to the international contact group

that was established to facilitate the 11-year-old peace negotiations between government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

The groups are the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and

the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) of Germany. Both have funded a number of socioeconomic projects in Muslim areas of Mindanao, mainly peace initiatives in the communities wrecked

►EndorsedA6

## ADB downgrades RP growth forecast

BY DARWIN G. AMOJELAR SENIOR REPORTER

THE Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Tuesday downgraded its economic forecast for the Philippines this year, adding that it expected modest growth next year on the assumption of peaceful elections and a smooth transition in government.

►ForecastA6

## Financial systems need time to heal

BY MARICEL E. BURGONIO SENIOR REPORTER

THE International Monetary Fund (IMF) reported Tuesday that the financial systems remain impaired, despite recent reports that the world was slowly recovering from the global economic turmoil.

►HealA6

## Hatoyama suggests East Asian grouping



Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama AFP PHOTO

NEW YORK CITY: Japan's new Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama made his global debut Monday (Tuesday in Manila) with a message of reconciliation to China, asking President Hu Jintao to work together for an EU-style East Asian community.

►GroupingA6

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