

# GMA visits Dubai

President Arroyo is set to hold talks with United Arab Emirates (UAE) President Sheik Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nayan in Abu Dhabi to push for more foreign investments and pursue more areas of cooperation between the two countries.

Mrs. Arroyo arrived yesterday in Dubai for a two-day mission to meet with top government officials, business leaders, and employers of the UAE to request for more job opportunities for Filipinos and discuss investment potentials in the Philippines, a Palace statement said.

She landed at the Dubai International Airport at 10:20 p.m. (2:20 a.m. Saturday, Manila time) following her shortened visit to Pattaya, Thailand, site of the 14th Leaders' Summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

The summit was cut short after protesters stormed the venue, forcing Thai authorities to airlift attending heads of state and declare a state of emergency in that province.

Press Secretary Cerge Remonde, Trade Secretary Peter Favila, and Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes accompanied the President, among other Cabinet members and congressmen.

Mrs. Arroyo, who last visited the UAE in January 2008, "is once again visiting the UAE to continue her efforts to promote and advance the protection and interest of the country's expatriate workers," the Palace statement said.

Her visit will start with a meeting with selected Gulf employers at the Renaissance Hotel to seek jobs for the country's expatriate workers.

The Chief Executive will also attend the employment and business opportunities summit dubbed "The Middle East Forum," being participated in by some 250 private service providers involved in the recruitment and hiring of skilled workers and professionals and officials from both sending and receiving countries.

She will also deliver a message after the presentation to her of the output of the two-day Middle East Forum that includes the summation of job orders.

The Middle East Forum aims to bring together key players - employers, manpower providers, officials of the Philippines and Gulf Cooperating Countries - to discuss how the Philippines can fill up large-scale job orders in the region within the year.

Mrs. Arroyo will also meet with leaders of the Filipino community to discuss concerns of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs).

- Paolo Romero