

GMA set to sign tourism bill

President Arroyo will sign this week a bill that will boost the tourism industry in the country.

Press Secretary Cerge Remonde yesterday said the measure has finally reached Mrs. Arroyo's desk and she is expected to sign it soon.

He said he was informed by Presidential Legislative Liai-

son Office chief and Senior Deputy Executive Secretary Joaquin Lagonera that the measure was transmitted to the Palace only last Friday.

"I can assure the industry and all its stakeholders that the bill will be signed very soon," Remonde told government-owned radio *dzRB*.

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"This is good news for all stakeholders in the tourism industry."

The Philippines, famed for its world-class beaches, heritage sites, diving sites, eco-parks and friendly people, has been voted as the number one Asian tourism destination recently during a festival on tourism in Shanghai, China.

Remonde thanked the various stakeholders in the tourism sector, particularly taxi drivers, hotel chambermaids, tourist guides and others for their role in making the Philippines among the preferred tourist destinations in Asia.

He described them as the "heart and soul" of the country's tourism industry.

He likewise hailed the efforts of Mrs. Arroyo and Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano in marketing the Philippines as a haven for both local and foreign tourists.

- Paolo Romero