



Who needs popularity when I have my *cabalens*? President Arroyo said this in Pampanga in yet another visit. See Page 2.

GMA: I don't have to be popular as long as I have Pampanga

By RIC SAPNU

SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga – President Arroyo declared yesterday that “as long as I have the people of Pampanga I don’t need to be popular.”

Mrs. Arroyo was apparently referring to a survey conducted recently by the Social Weather Stations (SWS) where her popularity rate reportedly dived to -31 percent.

The President was the special guest at the closing program of the Pampanga Barangay Summit held at the Bren Z. Guiao Convention Center here.

Mrs. Arroyo thanked local barangay officials for their support.

“I didn’t become president to be popular but to protect the well-being of the people, specially now there is global economic recession,” said Arroyo.

She said that before she became president the government had a big budget deficit but now the country has a budget surplus of P40 billion.

She said that the barangay summit is important to coordinate the efforts of local and national officials to serve the people better.

At least 4,500 barangay chairmen and village councilors from 505 barangays in Pampanga attended the event.

The barangay summit was organized by the Department of the Interior and

Local Government (DILG) to enable barangay officials to meet officials of various government agencies and thresh out issues and concerns affecting their functions and duties.

Mrs. Arroyo also led the groundbreaking of a potable water supply system in Barangay Carmencita in Floridablanca, with a total cost of P4.38 million that would benefit 2,772 residents.

Arroyo arrived in Floridablanca at about 1 p.m. and also inaugurated the Water District Pumping Station No. 14 in Barangay Sto. Rosario.

She was assisted by Local Water Utility Administration chairman Prospero Pichay and Ed Pamintuan in the groundbreaking and time capsule laying ceremony in Barangay Sto. Rosario.

The potable water system consists of the drilling of a well, construction of pumping station facilities and an elevated steel tank and installation of pipelines and valves, said Pichay. The project, worth P7.42 million, will benefit 1,800 residents.

Arroyo later unveiled the bust of her father, former President Diosdado Macapagal, in front of the municipal hall in Barangay Poblacion.

The President then proceeded to the police station office and issued assignment orders for 10 new policemen.