

Headline: #InquirerSeven Most Vital Signs of Stronger Prospects for 2016

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Every end of December, INQUIRER.net compiles 49 of the most compelling stories and issues and groups them into seven key lists that encapsulate the year that's been. The year 2015 in particular saw the Philippines thrust further into the global stage, whether for reasons good—"Heneral Luna," COP21 and Miss Universe—or bad—Mamasapano, #APECtado and lumad killings.

The last of the yearend series looks forward to the year ahead, listing the seven most vital signs of stronger prospects for 2016. Entries on this list include the Philippines' current case on the South China Sea dispute at the United Nations Arbitral Tribunal and the continued declaration of numerous Philippine islands being some of the best in the world.

The Inquirer #BestofSeven for 2015 runs from December 24 to 30. Check out the rest of the lists here or by clicking the image at the end of this article.

The Philippines scored a major win against powerhouse China as the United Nations Arbitral Tribunal ruled in October that it has jurisdiction over the sea row between the two countries. The UN court will release its decision on the case challenging Beijing's claims to all of South China Sea (West Philippine Sea) in 2016 as the second round of oral arguments concluded.

Refresh your memory:

Philippines scores against China in UN arbitration

PH vs China: Round 2 in court

UN tribunal to issue ruling on PH vs China case by 2016

While the Philippines' hosting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit have inconvenienced thousands of commuters due to road closures, the country also reaped economic gains at the sidelines of the international conference through various bilateral agreements, among them the United States' donation of two warships for the Philippine Navy amid territorial disputes with China.

Refresh your memory:

Apec fruit: More jobs for Filipinos

PH in for change after Apec hosting

Obama leaves Manila with reaffirmed support for PH in sea row

Eyeing economic integration, Southeast Asian leaders formally announced a unified Asean Economic Community (AEC) in the populous and diverse region. The establishment of the AEC was declared at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) summit held in Malaysia and hailed as a landmark feat especially because it has been thirteen years since the idea was first proposed.

Refresh your memory:

Asean creates unified economic community

Asean to declare economic union

Ready or not, Asean economic integration coming, warns banker

The Philippines' Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew at its fastest pace so far in 2015 by six percent at the third quarter of 2015. This was third-fastest growing economy in the region after China and Vietnam. Growth was attributed by the government to "improved" spending which exceeded the dismal 5.3-percent GDP growth posted by the country in the same period last year.

Refresh your memory:

PH economy grew 6% in Q3

Economy up 6% in Q3, still 1 of Asia's fastest

Higher GDP growth expected as year ends—Abad

To combat climate change, 195 countries signed in Paris a legally binding agreement to cap the global temperature rise to "to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels," with ambitious plans to pursue a lower target of 1.5 degrees. The Philippines, as current chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum, was at the forefront in pushing for the lower limit.

Refresh your memory:

Nations adopt Paris agreement on climate change

PH welcomes Paris accord on behalf of climate victims

LOOK: Envi activists paint Paris red for climate justice

The Philippines received the highest credit-rating from major global debt watchers as the Japan Credit Rating Agency Ltd. (JCR) upgraded the country's credit score from BBB to BBB+, just a notch below the minimum in "A" category sovereign rating. Credit ratings agency Fitch Ratings said that the Philippines can get an upgrade next year if the economy continues to improve.

Refresh your memory:

PH credit rating raised to BBB+

Fitch upgrades PSALM credit rating

For ratings upgrade, PH needs to sustain reforms, says Fitch

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For the second straight year, Palawan was hailed as the world's best island destination by award-winning US travel magazine Conde Nast Traveler, besting other world-famous islands such as Bora Bora, Bali, Santorini, and Maldives. Boracay and Cebu also made it to the annual list. Palawan was also the top island in 2014 while Boracay was at number 12.

Refresh your memory:

Palawan is world's best island anew

Boracay: New way to enjoy the island

3 PH Islands Declared the Best in the World by Condé Nast

Did we miss any other stories on why the Philippines should look forward to 2016? Share with us your thoughts!