

Arroyo swears in 100 execs sans Gonzalez

by TJ BURGONIO
Inquirer.net

MANILA – President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo on Wednesday administered formal oaths to over 100 government officials, led by a Supreme Court justice, but without Secretary Raul Gonzalez.

Arroyo swore in Supreme Court Justice Lucas Bersamin in the presence of Chief Justice Reynato Puno and other justices at Malacañang's Rizal Hall.

She also administered oaths to officials of the Armed Forces, led by AFP Chief General Victor Ibrado; the Philippine National Police, led by Director General Jesus Verzosa; Philippine Coast Guard, Bureau of Fire Protection, and the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology.

Retired Brigadier General Celedonio Boquiren Jr., former Presidential Security Group chief, also took his oath as a member of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Commis-

sion, and so did Deputy Executive Secretary Alberto Bernardo and Deputy Executive Secretary Natividad Dizon.

Officials of the Energy Regulatory Commission, National Labor Relations Commission, and Office of the Solicitor General and Maritime Industry Authority, among others, also took their oaths.

Gonzalez, the new presidential chief legal counsel, was conspicuously absent from the oath-taking ceremonies.

"While he has his appointment, he can always ask when his oath will be. It doesn't have to be now. This is a group oath-taking. He may do that when he feels he is already prepared for it, especially when he reports already on duty," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita told reporters.

Arroyo also conferred the Order of National Scientist on Dr. Teodulo Topacio Jr., the first to receive such rank and title, for his achievements and contributions to the field of veterinary medicine. ■

'Ignoring Charter change moves will kill it'

by LIRA DALANGIN-FERNANDEZ
Inquirer.net

MANILA – Ignoring the controversial resolution seeking to convene a constituent assembly to amend the Constitution will kill it, a senior member of the House of Representatives said.

"The less we talk about con-ass, the better. Only unfounded fears and propaganda-propelled apprehensions make con-ass alive. Let it die in silence and solitude," Albay Representative Edcel Lagman said at the Serje-

forum in Quezon City Thursday.

Lagman expressed confidence that House Resolution 1109 "will never fly," stressing that there was no more time for it and because it was "too unpopular and too unconstitutional."

The Bicol congressman said that even the proponents of the resolution are in a quandary about what to do next after what its hasty approval two days before session was adjourned last June 3.

"It was born with a fatal congenital affliction—an attempt at

solo parenthood by the House which defies the Constitution," he added.

Some congressmen believe that House members can convene an assembly even without the participation of the Senate, while a number said the senators could not be ignored in moves to amend the Charter.

Speaker Prospero Nograles had said he would consult with the leadership of the House and with several senators to decide what to do next with the resolution. ■

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