

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

# Elections to take place...

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The President's political plans after she steps down next year have been the subject of wide speculation because of her refusal to disclose her intentions.

The efforts of her allies in the House of Representatives to amend the Constitution have not helped her, as it only fueled speculations that elections might not take place next year.

In her statement, the President made it very clear that her administration supports the holding of elections next May.

The President said the Filipinos believe that "political leadership is not something that is won by wealth, bequeathed by inheritance or conferred by regal or religious authority."

"In an electoral democracy, political leadership must be won in a free and open contest that enables the people at large to select the few among them

deemed worthy to lead the rest," the President said.

"The contest can neither be frustrated nor circumscribed and protection of the ballot is among the most sacred duties of those who govern us," she added.

Presidential adviser on political affairs Gabriel Claudio said the Arroyo government appreciates the support given by the United States for the Philippines' democratic institutions and traditions and would uphold these at all cost.

"The US, other foreign allies, and especially the Filipino people can be assured that elections will be held as scheduled in May next year," Claudio said.

"A no-el scenario is not only extremely remote but also unacceptable as a situation that will demean our democratic traditions, deprive the electorate of their basic right and shame our country before the international

community," he added.

Knowing full well that the entire country is looking forward to the holding of elections next year, Claudio said the government "will do everything within its power to ensure not only that the elections push through, but that they are held in an efficient, honest and credible manner."

Press Secretary Cerge Remonde said the President remains confident in the ability of the Comelec to come up with a satisfactory resolution of the issues surrounding the electoral process.

"The Palace will continue to support and respect the actions and decisions of the Comelec. With or without full automation, the elections will push through and no matter what form it may take, the elections must always be safeguarded by our people as their birthright in a democracy," Remonde said. ■



VERTIGO. Anna Kane, 5, left, of Alton, Ill., and Sophie Alloway, 4, of Glen Ellen, Ill., look down from 'The Ledge,' the new glass balconies suspended 1,353 feet (412 meters) in the air and jut out 4 feet (1.22 meters) from the Sears Tower's 103rd floor Skydeck Wednesday, July 1 in Chicago. AP Photo by Kiichiro Sato

# 'Roll up your sleeves...

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what we started —determined to breathe life into our City."

With mounting foreclosures and rising unemployment rates, Mayor Villaraigosa promised that his second administration would maximize the number of job opportunities for local residents. In addition to the existing business team, the Mayor announced that he would create a jobs team dedicated solely to business attraction, retention and connecting entrepreneurs to the resources they need by cutting through red tape.

The Mayor also pledged to go outside of City Hall to find business leaders and entrepreneurs that will help create a bridge between public servants and the private sector.

The Mayor vowed to continue investing in innovation and supporting the development of a clean technology infrastructure that bridges economic development and environmental strategy. The Clean Tech Corridor — a model for a 21st century community that creates synergies between good paying jobs, affordable housing and an accessible mass transit system — will support the entire supply chain of the green economy, including

research and development, technology design, full-scale manufacturing and assembly of environmentally friendly technologies that will create as many as 1,000 jobs.

With research and development for clean technology as a catalyst, the Mayor committed to strengthening Los Angeles' environmental goals, including ending Los Angeles' historical dependence on coal. In the past four years, Los Angeles has diversified its energy portfolio to include more wind, geothermal and solar power. The Mayor projected that with smart, aggressive actions — using local resources and leveraging relationships — Los Angeles will receive 20 percent of its energy from renewable resources by 2010, creating green jobs along the way.

"Today, we stand at the forefront of the green revolution," Mayor Villaraigosa said. "We need to build a future founded on innovation and defined by our commitment to building a more sustainable and livable Los Angeles."

In pursuit of a sustainable future, the Mayor vowed to use Measure R transportation funds to lead the largest-mass transit program anywhere in the US,

connecting the Eastside to the airport and Downtown to the Westside. Mayor Villaraigosa also promised to accelerate the process to make transit improvements a reality before the end of his second term resulting in a construction boom that would immediately create more than 210,000 jobs.

With crime at its lowest level since 1954, the Mayor reaffirmed his commitment to having 10,000 police officers on the job. Complementing police efforts, the Mayor committed his Gang Reduction and Youth Development Department to attacking the roots of gang violence through the successful Summer Night Lights program. Summer Night Lights hires youth leaders and gives thousands of young people a refuge from violence in the summertime when crime is at its peak. The Mayor announced that the program, which began last year with eight sites, will expand to 16 sites this summer and 50 in the next four years to reclaim dozens of parks from gang violence.

"We are developing a system to target gang prevention services to the kids most-at-risk," Mayor Villaraigosa said. "We're holding ourselves accountable and measuring our success not by some abstract statistic but by the number of young people we serve."

On education, the Mayor declared that he would hold schools, teachers, parents and himself accountable in accelerating the pace of change in the educational system. He also vowed to lead the effort to shut down failing schools and restructure them as charter schools, partnership campuses, or district schools that use quantitative testing to mark their progress.

During the Inaugural ceremonies, the Mayor was joined onstage with the eight winners of the "True Angels" contest. The "True Angels" were selected among volunteers from across Los Angeles to accompany the Mayor as he took the oath of office for their countless hours of active committed engagement in their own communities and to represent the Mayor's unwavering commitment to service in his second term.

To foster a dialogue with Angelenos, the Mayor re-launched his website. The new site includes interactive features, detailed charts and new methods for constituents to ask him questions, share their ideas about his policy and track the progress of his ambitious agenda. Each week, the Mayor will respond to posted questions, criticisms and ideas in a video message. To find more information go to mayor.lacity.org ■

## Staples to offer free MJ memorial service tickets

LOS ANGELES — Staples Center will host the Michael Jackson Public Memorial Service on Tuesday, July 7 at 10am in Downtown Los Angeles.

A simulcast of the service will also be made available inside the Nokia Theatre LA LIVE across the street, according to organizers.

Organizers said that people would have a chance to win tickets to Jackson's memorial service by registering their names at Staplescenter.com

Only a limited number of

free tickets to both venues will be made available for Michael Jackson's fans to attend.

The opportunity to register for tickets begins at 10am on Friday, July 3 and ends at 6pm on Saturday, July 4.

Only one entry per individual will be accepted. Organizers will draw 8,750 and those people will receive two tickets each and wristbands on Monday.

Applicants will be notified by email on Sunday if they were chosen. (Joseph Pimentel, A/Press)

## US embassy probes Fil-Am's...

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of the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army.

Reports said that in 2005, Roxas took part in an international fact-finding mission investigating human rights violations throughout the Philippines under the Arroyo administration.

Lieutenant Colonel Romeo Brawner Jr., Armed Forces of the Philippines spokesman, denied the AFP involvement, saying an internal inquiry conducted showed that the 7th Infantry Division in Tarlac where the torture allegedly happened had nothing to do with it.

On May 26, Roxas resurfaced to tell her story and sought court

protection by filing a petition for the issuance of the writ of amparo at the Supreme Court.

The petition for a writ of amparo is a remedy available to any person whose right to life, liberty, and security is violated or threatened with violation by an unlawful act or omission of a public official or employee, or of a private individual or entity. It covers extralegal killings and enforced disappearances or threats thereof.

The high tribunal granted Roxas's plea and ordered the Court of Appeals to conduct the proceedings on the case. Roxas returned to the US in the first week of June. (Inquirer.net)



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