

SAYS PIMENTEL

# Villar's wealth attracts senatorial bets

by MAILA AGER  
Inquirer.net

MANILA – Senator Manny Villar's vast resources have attracted a handful of senatorial aspirants who want to be included in his party's ticket, Senator Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said on Thursday.

"My understanding is that there are so many senatorial applicants pumupunta doon sa kampo ni (are going to the camp of) Manny Villar. I do not know the exact names. Madami na raw, masyado na, over na daw sa 12 (There are reportedly over 12)," Pimentel said.

"If you say 17 or mga ganun, meron na (about that number)," he said.

Pimentel and Villar both belong with the new minority bloc in the Senate.

Pimentel said some of those who want to be part of Villar's ticket belong to the administration group.

"Manny Villar is attracting also those coming from the administration and I even suspect that Recto might be one of those winding up under the senatorial slate of Many Villar because in the first place, kasama sila dati doon sa tinatawag na (they are together in the so-called) Wednesday's group," he said, referring to Ralph Recto, who just resigned as socio-economic planning secretary and director of the National Economic Development Authority.

Along with Senators Joker Arroyo and Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan, and Vice President Noli De Castro, Recto and Villar were members of the Wednesday group in the Senate.

Asked why these senatorial aspirants would like to be in Villar's ticket, Pimentel said, "I supposed among other things they know that Manny is prepared to back them up with their financial requirements."

Pimentel said Villar's resources could even match that of the administration party, which he expects to split come the 2010 elections.

"There's Noli, who is to my mind is the strongest candidate that the administration can put up in terms of drawing popular support. But he is being challenged by Gibo Teodoro who seems to be a favorite of some segments, powerful segments in the admin side. Then there's Dick Gordon on the side," he pointed out.

Teodoro is Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro and Gordon is Senator Richard Gordon.

Of the three – de Castro, Teodoro, and Gordon, only Teodoro has publicly declared his presidential bid.

In a statement, NP denied seeking the support of the ruling Lakas-Kampi Christian Muslim Democrats though admitted that it "accepted" and were inviting "willing individuals from the

Lakas and other parties." "But we are focused on strengthening the NP and not on building coalitions or on merging with other parties," it said.

The statement even thanked all members of Lakas-Kampi-CMD who have signified and officially manifested support for Villar's candidacy.

"There exists a long and deep relationship between Senator Villar and members of Lakas-

Kampi-CMD and other parties. The bond was firmly established when he became speaker of the House and later on Senate President," it said.

The NP will continue to build its machinery for the 2010 presidential elections. Showbiz-like intrigue from rival political groups will not in any way detract us from the big fight which the NP chooses to participate in," it further said. ■

# Judge's order in Dacer case is right – lawyer

by TETCH TORRES  
Inquirer.net

MANILA – The counsel for three of the accused in the Dacer-Corbito double murder case said Friday he would no longer ask a Manila Regional Trial Court to inhibit herself from the case.

Lawyer Dante David said he realized Manila RTC Judge Myra Garcia-Fernandez was right in

allowing former police Senior Superintendent Cesar Mancao to take the witness stand on July 27 to determine if he could become a state witness.

David said he reviewed the transcript of stenographic notes and "I realized that she was right when she allowed Mancao (to testify) for purposes of determining whether he deserves to

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