

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

Senate ready for showdown with House on Charter change

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them, Malacañang included, wants an extended term of office.

"The hullabaloo about President Arroyo's term extension has no basis in fact," he said.

Baguio City Rep. Mauricio Domogan explained that the way the question was formed—"Are you for or against Charter change that will allow GMA to stay beyond 2010?"—would only mean that the Filipino masses are open to amending the 1987 Constitution.

"This means the people are not against Charter change per se," said Domogan, vice chairman of the House committee on justice.

Quezon City Rep. Matias Defensor said the questionnaire is unfair in that the people seem to have been conditioned that "when you talk of Cha-cha, term extension is already included."

Iloilo Rep. Raul Gonzalez Jr. likewise expressed belief that the public would agree to Cha-cha if the survey question would not discuss or touch on term extension.

"If we change the question we can have a different answer. If you don't include term extension, the results of the survey will change," the son and namesake of the justice secretary said.

But the administration lawmakers' effort to change the Charter is facing stiff opposition from several quarters.

More than 200 farmers of the militant group

Anakpawis from Southern Luzon have set up camp at the gates of the Batasan to dramatize their protest against Cha-cha and to press for genuine land reform.

Rep. Rafael Mariano said the farmers' camp-out would last until June 6, when lawmakers end their second regular session.

The group will resume their protest in July, when the 14th Congress opens its third and last regular session, and would pursue it "until the House leadership scraps this Cha-cha foolishness with finality."

Mariano, his militant House colleagues and members of their organizations are against Resolution 737, authored by Speaker Prospero Nograles, and the still-to-be-filed proposal of Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte for Cha-cha via a constituent assembly (con-ass).

The Nograles resolution seeks to amend certain economic provisions of the Constitution to allow foreign ownership of land to entice more foreigners to invest here.

Mariano said landless farmers, instead of foreigners, should be given preference in the acquisition and distribution of land.

Anti-Cha-cha protesters have been taking advantage of every forum available to them.

Last April 14, during the hearing of the House committee on constitutional amendments, some 10

new college graduates created a minor commotion when they rose from their seats, put on their togas and graduation caps on which were written anti-Cha-cha slogans.

Palace's unseen hand

Meanwhile, Pangasinan Rep. Jose de Venecia Jr. reiterated last April 15 that Mrs. Arroyo's two congressmen-sons, Mikey and Dato, and her closest allies, notably Nograles, Villafuerte and Martin Romualdez of Leyte, are pushing hard for Cha-cha.

"They are the ones leading the gathering of signatures for the Cha-cha-via-constituent assembly (con-ass) resolution," he told reporters.

He said the "deep" involvement of the President's sons and her closest supporters in the Cha-cha campaign makes it clear that Malacañang is behind the effort to rewrite the Constitution.

It was during Romualdez's birthday party in the latter part of last year that he and Mikey reportedly asked their colleagues to sign the con-ass resolution in front of the President and her husband, who did not dissuade them from what they were doing.

Reacting to De Venecia's statement, Nograles said, "Joe de V has absolutely no right at all to talk like that because he almost burned the entire House pushing for Cha-cha to shift the nation to the parliamentary system as he had his own agenda.

"As Speaker, I've made a commitment and I will

not turn my back on this commitment that there will be no term extension for the President or any elective official whose term will expire in 2010," he said.

In his talk with reporters, De Venecia said if the Cha-cha campaign of administration allies succeeds, the nation would elect members of parliament in May 2010, instead of Mrs. Arroyo's successor and other officials.

"She will run in the election for parliament and then aspire for the position of prime minister," he said.

The former House speaker claimed that the President's allies would try to railroad Cha-cha by replacing Nograles' Resolution 737 with Villafuerte's Cha-cha-via-con-ass resolution.

"They will do that during the debates on the Nograles resolution," he said.

Resolution 737 seeks to amend certain economic provisions of the Constitution to relax foreign ownership of land. The committee on constitutional amendments has endorsed the Speaker's proposed economic amendments.

Before Congress went on its five-week Lenten break last month, the House included the Nograles measure in the "Business for the Day" portion of its Order of Business, the document that lists what measures the chamber would tackle.

This means that congressmen can take up Resolution 737 any time it wants to. ■

Charice brings down Dodger Stadium

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the stands.

And the fans loved Charice's performance.

Many fans in the dugout club (the seats right behind homeplate where she performed) walked towards the aisle to congratulate Charice on a well-done performance.

"Unbelievable," said an elderly woman who stopped Charice and gave her a hug. "What a performance. It brought tears to my eyes."

Despite having such a stellar performance, Charice remained humble.

She said she had butterflies in her stomach before heading out to the field. This is the first time she ever sang the *Star Spangled Banner*, she said.

"I think the people enjoyed it," said Charice in Tagalog to the *Asian Journal*.

Charice arrived in Los Angeles late Sunday night (April 12), and through the help of Atty. Michael Gurfinkel and his wife, Millie, the *Asian Journal* was given the chance to get an exclusive interview.

Still a bit jet lagged, she said she tried to stay awake by playing the Sony PSP and listening to the

Star Spangled Banner lyrics over and over.

"I am still a bit sleepy because of the time [difference]," she said. "I was just trying to focus on staying awake and not to forget the lyrics."

She said singing in front of thousands of people at the home of the Dodgers, Chavez Ravine, was a great opportunity.

"You know as I was walking down [to the field] I saw all these pictures of the Dodgers and I was just thinking of all the people, all the celebrities who sang the American National Anthem here," she said. "And here I am.

They chose me. I'm not even an American citizen but they chose me to sing the National Anthem. This is really a big opportunity for me."

What's next?

For the past year, Charice seems to have been everywhere. She sang in the *David Foster and Friends* concert in Las Vegas, was invited by Andrea Bocelli to sing in his birthday party in Italy, sang in front of 50,000 football fans in the Netherlands and performed with diva Celine Dion.

She also made the jump to Hollywood.

The last time Charice was in Los Angeles, she was in Hollywood shooting a scene in the upcoming movie *Alvin and*

the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel. She plays herself in the movie. She said that she'd be competing against the chipmunks in a school talent competition.

She's also recording another album.

Charice said that she feels very blessed with the number of opportunities she's receiving in her career.

"Everything is happening so fast," she said. "I was on *Ellen* (hosted by Ellen DeGeneres) in 2007, and then in 2008, a lot of things happened. And then now in 2009, I feel like there's more opportunities coming my way—the movie I didn't expect, album I didn't really expect, and that I was considered to sing the [RP] National Anthem for [Manny] Pacquiao. I congratulate Martin Nievera [for being selected] but I didn't expect to be considered. And now, I just sang the [US] National Anthem for the Dodgers."

She said she owes many of her accomplishments to her fans.

"Many have been following me since *Little Big Star* and up to now," said Charice. "I really thank them and also to the new fans who are supporting me. Keep supporting me. Thank you very much. I love you all." ■

Pinoy lawyer wins award in US

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stop environmental damage," an announcement from CIEL said.

An activist working on local, national, and international levels, he has worked tirelessly to protect the country's natural resources. His work includes a decade-long fight with the government to clean up and rehabilitate Manila Bay, curb over-fishing in the Visayan Sea, fight the misappropriation of the country's forest resources, and establish the School of the Seas, a learning center for sustainable living.

Oposa said the award "belongs to us all—the Filipino... It is my dream that one day, our collective efforts and passions will 'infect' the rest of our people and that one day, we—all the Filipinos, with our native genius for Nature and the natural sciences and arts—will be the beacons of light for the rest of the world."

The CIEL award recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the effort to achieve solutions to environmental problems through international law and institutions.

CIEL is a nonprofit organization working to use international law and institutions to protect the environment, promote human health, and ensure a just and sustainable society. It was founded in 1989 and is based in Washington. ■

Teodoro won't slide to vice presidential post

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Eduardo Cojuangco, said he is not expecting support from his relatives when he runs in the coming elections, because according to him, family matters are separate from political affairs.

"What I've been repeating—and sometimes I'm misquoted in newspapers—is that we have learned how to separate the political from the personal in the family, and I think that's very important to all of us that we leave politics out of the door and I would not really ask support if it's such that it would affect our family relationship. If they want to help, then thank you very much but nobody will be forced to help," he said.

Aside from Teodoro, Vice President De Castro, Sen. Richard Gordon and Metro Manila Development Authority chairman Bayani Fernando are among the presidential aspirants of the administration. De Castro has consistently led surveys on presidential candidates.

Teodoro said his supporters have already put up a website where volunteers could sign up and pledge support for his presidential bid.

The website, www.gilbertteodoro.com, contains his policy statements, his vision for the country and a gallery of his photos as the DND's top man.

Teodoro's wife, Tarlac Rep. Monica Prieto-Teodoro, said that her husband's presidential bid is "warmly welcomed and supported by a number of her colleagues in Congress."

He said that if elected president, he would not hamper the filing of charges against President Arroyo over scandals that hounded her administration, provided that there is enough evidence to substantiate the allegations.

Teodoro also said his political plans would not hamper his job as head of the Department of National Defense (DND).

Teodoro issued this clarification yesterday to dispel talks that he is using his office to gain popularity for his presidential bid in 2010.

"I will not sacrifice what I need to do as DND and NDCC (National Disaster Coordinating Council) head to gain popularity points," Teodoro said.

Teodoro reiterated that he would still wait for the results of the administration party's selection process for its presidential standard-bearer for the May 2010 polls.

Former President Joseph Estrada named Teodoro as one of strongest presidential aspirants of the administration.

Humbled by Estrada's admission that he was the best bet in the administration camp, Teodoro said he would still observe the selection process.

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago is titillated by the move of former President Estrada to include her in the list of opposition senatorial candidates. ■

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The Housing Authority of the County of Clark (HACC) is requesting sealed bids from qualified and experienced companies and/ or individuals to provide janitorial/cleaning services at HACC Development Offices and Apartment Units. Respondents to this request must have documented experience of comparable work similar to the property listed above. HACC for this purpose is seeking to contract with one (1) or two (2) companies that will provide janitorial/cleaning services identified as 1) Lot A Janitorial / Cleaning Service for Development Offices 2) Lot B Janitorial / Cleaning Service for Development Units.

A pre-bid conference meeting will be held on April 22, 2009 at 10:00 AM in the HACC Board Room, at which time the IFB documents, scope of work (SOW), and specifications will be distributed.

Sealed responses to this solicitation will be received by HACC until 2:30 PM local time on APRIL 27, 2009. No late bids will be accepted. Minority- and women-owned businesses are encouraged to respond.

All IFB documents are available on the HACC website at www.haccnv.org click on "Procurement" in Portable Document Format (PDF). To pick up a copy respondents must call 702-451-8041 x1424 to schedule a pick-up date and time.

Special Accommodations:
HACC Administrative Building is fully accessible. Interpreters and/or materials in alternate format are available upon at least 48 hours advance notice. Please contact the ADA-504 Coordinator at (702) 451-8041x1514 to request the material in alternate format or interpreters for the deaf.