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Richard Gomez: Not portrayed as a 'troublemaker'



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# Lacson declares bid for presidency in 2010

## Vows to go after crooks in government

by MICHAEL LIM UBAC  
Inquirer.net

**M**ANILA—It's a go for Sen. Panfilo Lacson. Without fanfare, Lacson unequivocally declared his intention to seek the presidency in 2010 last May 12. It will be his second try after 2004.

"It's 101 percent," he said in an ambush interview before the Senate session started. "As of now, I'm really determined, decided to run."

Lacson, a former chief of the Philippine National Police who turns 61 on June 1, said he would run on an anticorruption platform.

He promised to rid the government of crooks

and grafters, and to provide "a level playing field" for all Filipinos.

"My vision is very clear," Lacson said. "The No. 1 problem of this country is government. And the solution is likewise government. So we have to correct government if we want to solve the problems of this country."



Sen. Panfilo Lacson

Photo from www.pinglacson.net

With a 1.5-million bureaucracy, "correcting the system" will benefit the 88.7 million Filipinos, he said.

Manuel Villar, Loren Legarda, Francis Escudero, Manuel "Mar" Roxas II and Richard Gordon—known to be eyeing the presidency in 2010.

Lacson is among a number of senators—including

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## US Filipino citizens urged to participate in choosing next RP president

THE Philippine government is urging Filipino citizens living in the United States to participate in choosing the next Philippine president in the national elections in May 2010.

Consular offices in the US will make voter registration even easier for Filipinos by holding several consular outreach programs throughout the country this year. "The right to vote is a constitutionally-guaranteed right that should be exercised by any Filipino during elections," Philippine Consulate General Los Angeles (PCG LA) Vice Consul General John Reyes told *Asian Journal*.

"Therefore, it is every Filipino's bounden duty to register and vote and be part in this very important process of selecting our nation's leaders," he added.



The Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs said earlier that it is targeting one million Filipinos to participate in overseas absentee voting (OAV) in preparation for the 2010 presidential elections in the country.

"That's why we are urging all Filipinos to register now. This is an opportunity to choose our leaders. This is also our duty," Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Rafael Seguis said in a recent interview

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## Government moves closer to national ID system

**M**ANILA—A national identification system is in the offing.

The Social Security System (SSS) is leading other government agencies in drawing up guidelines for a unified ID and is starting the bidding for its manufacture.

Romulo Neri, SSS president and chief executive officer, has signed a memorandum of understanding with Rey Aquino, Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (Philhealth) president and chief executive officer; Jaime Fabiana, Home Development Mutual Fund (HDMF) officer-in-charge; and Winston Garcia, Government Ser-

vice Insurance System (GSIS) president and general manager, for this purpose.

The four agencies have agreed to pool funds to start bidding out the contract for the production of a unified ID, with the SSS as the lead agency in conducting the bid.

Launched last year, the Unified Multi-Purpose ID System (UMID) requires all government agencies and government-owned and controlled corporations to streamline and harmonize their identification systems.

The program is being implemented by the National Economic and Development

The UMID also aims to enhance the integrity of state-issued ID cards, facilitate the public's transactions with the government, and cut costs from producing different IDs.

Under the project, the four agencies will adopt a common ID card with a common reference number to be issued by the National Statistics Office.

The social security identification system is the core of the UMID system.

The card would also make use of the automated fingerprint ID system.

The GSIS is a pioneer in the issuance of multi-purpose cards through its eCard Plus. (*Philstar.com*)

DATELINE PHILIPPINES

## New system in driver license issuance results in more arrests for ID theft

LAS Vegas—Due to a change in the system of driver license issuance, the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) said cases of identity fraud investigations in this city increased to 549 as of March, almost twice the number reported in the same period last year.

At the same time, suspects taken into custody for identity fraud more than doubled to 29 from January to March this year from only 13 during the same quarter last year.

"The key reason is the DMV new central issuance system and its facial recognition software which became fully operational in the Las Vegas area during the week of January 5th," DMV said in a statement released last month.

Under the new system, new photographs taken for ID or driver license applications are compared to all existing Nevada DMV photos using a new facial recognition computer program.

People who appear in more than one record and records with different people are flagged for further investigation. Only after it has been cleared through facial recognition will the actual license or ID card be mailed.

With this new system, DMV hopes to reduce incidences of identity fraud, a crime that has become rampant in Las Vegas recently.

The Federal Trade Commission reported that Nevada is the state with the fifth-worst identity theft problem in the country last year. Records showed that complaints during that period reached 3,275 last year. Of this, a hefty 2,519 were lodged in Las Vegas alone.

Identity theft, also known as identity fraud or ID theft happens when a person assumes another's identity in order to sign up for goods and services. ID theft is considered a federal crime and is one of

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## GMA signs Tourism Act

by MARVIN SY  
Philstar.com



President Arroyo signs into law Republic Act 9593, or the Tourism Policy Act of 2009, during the One Visayas Summit on Climate Change at the Imperial Palace Waterpark Resort Hotel in Lapu-Lapu City last May 12. With her are Tourism Secretary Ace Durano (far right) and the authors and sponsors of the law led by Sen. Richard Gordon (left front).

**M**ACTAN, Cebu—President Arroyo has signed into law the National Tourism Policy Act of 2009, which aims to solidify the status of the tourism industry

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## RP is ok thus far, says New York Times

**T**HE Philippines, which lagged behind its more economically progressive neighbors in Asia in previous years, is now outperforming most of its East and Southeast Asian neighbors, and will continue to make headway at least for a couple more years.

This assessment appeared in the *New York Times* which cited the Philippines for its improved economic management amid the global crisis.

The article, written by Philip Bowring, said the Philippines' expects a gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 2 to 3 percent this year—a rate superior to its East Asian peers except China and Vietnam, and a sharp contrast to the negative growths elsewhere.

The Philippines registered an average growth rate of 4.5 percent in the past seven years.

The *New York Times* said the relatively strong performance this year of the Philippines will be due to its biggest long-term weakness—reliance on overseas workers' remittances which account for 10 percent of GDP and the bulk of its foreign exchange earnings.

Though remittances of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) are expected to weaken from \$16 billion in 2008, the remittances have held up well thus far.

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