

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

Lacson declares bid for presidency in 2010

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He said there were "other factors to be considered when the proper time comes." "But for now—that's why I'm going around—I'm really determined [to run]," he said.

Merger talks
Lacson said merger talks were ongoing, but "it's not clear yet who will slide down [to vice president]."

He said his camp was trying to form a coalition with certain parties.

"Right now, talks are still in the preliminary stage, so I cannot tell you anything concrete," said Lacson, who became independent when he bolted the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino political party to run for president in 2004.

Lacson said the party formed by boxing champion Manny Pacquiao was a local political party—"and by all indications, he

will be coalescing with the administration party."

"I am out-and-out opposition. Since the time I entered politics, I have always been with the opposition," he declared.

Lessons of history
Lacson said he would go all-out against President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and her family.

He pointed out, however, that institutions vested with the laws of the land, and not those in power, should go after the Arroyos.

"If a complaint is lodged against her or any member of her family, the law should take its course. But for the next administration to be very much occupied with running after a predecessor, it will have a hard time charting its [own] direction," Lacson said.

In his reckoning, this happened during the term of President Corazon Aquino regarding

the family and cronies of the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos, and even during the present dispensation regarding former President Joseph Estrada.

"So I think we should learn from the lessons of history," he said.

Vilification drive
In a speech before the Philippine Association of Local Treasurers and Assessors in March, Lacson said he was the constant target of the administration's vilification campaign.

"But none of these lies or black propaganda will stop me. I will fight corruption without end as I did when I was chief of the Philippine National Police about 10 years ago, whether in the smallest forms of *kotong* (mulcting), which victimize lowly drivers and vegetable dealers, or in crime syndicates [involved in] illegal drugs and illegal gambling," he said.

US Filipino citizens urged to participate in choosing next RP president

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in Manila, Philippines.

OAV was made into law in 2003 through Republic Act 9225 or the Citizenship Retention and Reacquisition Act. Under this law, Filipinos who have re-acquired their Filipino citizenship can participate in Philippine elections via OAV.

Similarly, the law allows Filipino citizens living abroad to participate in elections in the Philippines even without going back to the country.

With OAV, ballots are sent to voters by mail. Voters need to mail the ballots back to the Consulate where he or she registered.

This is the third OAV registration for overseas Filipinos after the law was passed in 2003 in time for the 2004 Philippine presidential elections. Registration period this year, for the 2010 elections, started last February and will end in August.

"All OAV registrants during this period can vote for the president and vice president, 12 senators, and party list representatives during the May 2010 general elections," PCG LA Vice Consul Reyes also said in the interview.

Consular outreach programs will be initiated by PCG LA on May 16th in Panorama City, CA; in Las Vegas, NV on May 23rd and 24th; in Walnut CA on May 30th; and in Chandler, AZ on July 18th.

This consular office has jurisdiction over the areas of Southern Nevada, Southern California, Texas and Arizona.

For its part, the Philippine Consulate General New York (PCG NY) will hold outreach programs in Rochester, NY on May 16th; in Philadelphia, PA on July 11th and in Massachusetts on July 18th.

PCG NY covers Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

Both NY and LA consular offices have been trying to reach out to more Filipino voters via outreach programs in their respective jurisdictions. This is to make registration faster and more convenient for Filipinos.

These two consular posts have the highest turnout of OAV registrants in the US since registration started in February.

While voter registration during outreach programs is free, registrants may be asked to make appointments via fax or e-mail.

PCG LA, in particular, has asked Filipinos to download forms from their website and have these ready during registration at the outreach sites. They need to make appointments online and view the appointment schedule on the website.

US-based Filipinos need to register in the consular office that has jurisdiction in the area where they reside.

Those residing in the areas of Northern California, Northern Nevada, Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming need to register at the Philippine Consulate San Francisco.

Filipinos in Midwest states namely Arkansas, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Illinois, and Wisconsin are covered by Philippine Consulate Chicago.

Those living in Hawaii, American Samoa, Kiribati, Tonga, French Polynesia, meanwhile are under the jurisdiction of Philippine Consulate Honolulu.

The Philippine Embassy in Washington, DC, meanwhile, has jurisdiction over Alabama, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Complete schedule of voter registration hours and outreach programs in these consular offices can be viewed in their respective websites. (Dymphna Calica-La Putt)

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

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the fastest growing felonies in the nation.

Thieves usually steal identity via the internet, when people enter personal information or make financial transactions online. ID theft can also happen outside cyber-space as well.

The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (LVMPD) sees the trend continuing given the sagging local and national economy, as well as the city's status as the top gambling destination in the country.

Stealing a person's identity is a natural occurrence in hard economic times given that it allows the thief to access the victim's existing bank and credit card accounts, Lt. Robert Sebby of the LVMPD Financial Crimes section told *Asian Journal* in earlier interview.

He said Las Vegas' status as a top gambling destination also aggravates the problem of ID fraud in the city. Gaming destinations are always a lure because of the amount of cash casinos keep on hand, he noted.

Using forged documents, thieves can get cash advances from casino cages trade them for chips and play at being high rollers with the stolen money, until they cash-out.

The LVMPD recommended a few simple ways for citizens to safeguard their identities. These include cross-shredding materials that have personal information; leaving health cards at home; and checking credit report at least three times in one year.

He also emphasized taking caution when using debit cards. "Never let your debit card out of your sight," Sebby said, noting that restaurants and gasoline pumps are the most common places where identity is stolen.

Mr. Sebby said debit cards are specifically vulnerable because it is tied to one's checking account. "Debit is your money, credit is not your money, so you have to be careful not to let a debit card out of your sight," he said. (Dymphna Calica-La Putt)

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GMA signs Tourism Act

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as an engine of growth and development.

The President chose to sign Republic Act 9593 at the new Imperial Palace Waterpark Resort and Spa here to emphasize the emergence of Cebu as the country's premier tourist destination.

Under the new law, the Department of Tourism (DOT) and its attached agencies will be strengthened in order to effectively and efficiently implement the national policy of tourism.

The Philippine Convention and Visitors Corporation (PCVC) will be reorganized as the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB), a corporate body responsible for the marketing and promotion of the Philippines as a global tourism destination, highlighting its tourism products and services.

The Philippine Tourism Authority (PTA) would now be known as the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA), a corporate body mandated to designate, regulate and supervise tourism enterprise zones (TEZs) as well as develop and supervise tourism projects in the country.

R.A. 9593 provides that the TPB and TIEZA will each have capitalization of P250 million subscribed by the national government. Funding for TPB will be sourced from investment earnings from the Tourism Promotions Trust; appropriation from the national government of not less than P500 million annually for at least five years from the time of its constitution; 70 percent of the 50 percent net income of the DFPC accruing to the Department; at least 25 percent of the national government share remitted by international airports and seaports to the National Treasury.

The capitalization for DFPC was set at P500 million and funding for its operations will be sourced from internally generated income and other receipts.

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Duty Free Philippines will also be reorganized and renamed the Duty Free Philippines Corporation (DFPC), a corporate body mandated to operate the duty- and tax-free merchandising system in the country.

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RP is ok thus far, says New York Times

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A second bright spot—in contrast with the woes of the Asian electronics manufacturing sectors—is in call centers and business process outsourcing (BPO) which should keep growing, albeit more slowly, it said.

Business outsourcing absorbs some educated labor but does little for the unskilled, the NYT article said.

Another boost will come from government spending in badly needed infrastructure, health and education which have been made possible by stabilizing fiscal position over several years that brought interest rates and the cost of debt servicing down, it added.

Even agriculture, long a drag on the economy, has been achieving steady growth of 3 percent a year with increased investment and higher prices, the NYT reported.

In his article, Bowring said the bottomline in the Philippines'

good economic performance is that it did not depend on export manufacturing, which, however, was also a weakness in that the country failed to use its abundant labor force.

Industry accounted for only 33 percent of output and has been declining for three decades. Philippine infrastructure is poor because of low budget revenues and the dominance of a few big groups in its commercial life has become a disincentive, the NYT report said.

It said that Philippine labor will continue to be sought overseas—particularly in East Asia, which is aging fast. The country may be able to build on gains in fiscal stability and balance of payments equilibrium.

Remittances will remain less vulnerable than manufactured exports to global developments, it said.

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