

# DATELINE PHILIPPINES

## VP to show up at Lakas-Kampi formal union

by CYNTHIA BALANA  
Inquirer.net

VICE President Noli De Castro accepted last May 26 the invitation of the newly formed administration coalition Lakas-Kabaliang Malayang Pilipino (Kampi) to attend the formal announcement of its union at the Manila Hotel on May 28.

De Castro, who has been topping surveys on presidential aspirants but who is still without a party, said he was "honored and privileged" to be the special guest and witness to a significant event in Philippine politics.

Also attending as guest will be Defense Secretary Gilbert

Teodoro, who has declared his intention to seek the presidency under the coalition party in the 2010 elections.

The Vice President lauded the efforts of those behind the merger of these two political parties.

"Many thought that this union will not materialize but through the self sacrifice and loyalty to the national interest of the respective members of the uniting parties, the merger was achieved," De Castro told the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*.

"The merger of the country's largest political parties—Lakas



Vice President Noli de Castro

Photo from www.kabayannoli.com

CMD and Kampi—no less democracy. The partnership of Lakas and Kampi forebodes well for our

nation, wherein political leaders unite toward national growth and reconciliation," he said.

De Castro said his attendance in the meeting would be a manifestation of his "sincerest gratitude" to the leaders and members of both Lakas and Kampi

who were supportive of his 2004 election as the second highest official of the land.

"I wish the synergy of the Lakas-Kampi merger will address the urgent needs of our people and lead to a resounding election victory next year," he added.

## Senate sets full-blown inquiry of Villar

by MICHAEL LIM UBAC, CHRISTINE AVENDAÑO  
Inquirer.net

UNLESS the Supreme Court orders otherwise, the Senate committee of the whole will conduct a full-blown inquiry into the ethics complaint lodged against Sen. Manuel Villar Jr. on June 1 and 4 before it adjourns on June 5.

Last May 26, 14 senators, all belonging to the majority bloc, agreed to study the evidence submitted by Sen. Ana Consuelo "Jamby" Madrigal to back her claim that Villar was behind the double funding of the C-5 extension road and the road's diversion to benefit his real estate interests in Las Piñas City.

Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile also agreed to stay on as presiding officer of the committee. He had offered to quit following his heated exchange with Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr.

As expected, Villar and the minority senators allied with him continued to boycott the proceedings.

Asked to comment on Villar's coming trial, Pimentel said: "We will just wait for the Supreme



Sen. Manny Villar

part in the inquiry.

"I would suggest very earnestly to the respondent to send...a battery of lawyers to represent him, to cross-examine the complainant, to scrutinize the documents being

presented by the complainant and all witnesses that will appear to testify in the case," Enrile said.

"I am begging them, I am pleading with them to present

► PAGE A6

Court [decision]."

Pimentel and the minority bloc last week filed a petition before the high court questioning the rules adopted by the committee of the whole in the investigation of Villar, which, they said, were meant to convict him.

They also sought a stop to the proceedings.

**Enrile's plea**

Speaking with reporters after the hearing last Tuesday, May 27 Enrile pleaded for Villar to take

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