

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

# Sen. Villar Ready for 2010...

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2010 elections. **Top presidential candidate**  
Brimming with confidence, Sen. Villar's bid for the Philippine presidency was further buoyed by the recent Social Weather Stations (SWS) survey showing him as the top choice to succeed President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo in 2010.

The SWS survey, according to the Senator, had 7,000 respondents and a 1.2 percent error margin as compared to the Pulse Asia survey which only has 1,200 respondents.

"Even if I am No. 2 in the other survey, when you average all the surveys, I am still on top," said Villar.

The former House Speaker and former Senate President, who has authored countless bills in both Houses that has benefited small scale enterprises, the environment, health care, responsive social care and high quality education, among many others, said he feels he is the most ready among all the candidates to deal with the problems facing the country today. He will be relying on his experiences and wherewithal to run the government which he says has been mismanaged in the past.

"It's about time that we managed the economy well," he said. "The new President must be able to manage from Day 1. We cannot afford a President who will do on-the-job training. We cannot just focus on one aspect and move on to the next. Everything has to be done simultaneously in order to guarantee improvements in all areas of government."

According to Villar, as President, one must be able to work with the different branches of government and society, including the Senate, the House, the Catholic Church and other institutions and have them work towards the same objective and move in one direction. If one has no experience in making the different institutions work seamlessly, then it

will become chaotic, Sen. Villar added.

While delegation of duties will be one of the keys to a successful implementation of programs, Villar hinted that concrete results and a full accounting will be demanded.

"It is not enough that you promise me that you will do this or that," he explained. "If say you tell me that your department has presided over the planting of a million trees to help the environment, I will want proof. Where are those trees planted? How many are actually there? It is not enough that you give your word to me."

Sen. Villar further stated that efficient tax collection to about 18 percent of the gross domestic product and introducing the concept of competition may help improve the economy of the Philippines.

**Elections in 2010?**

As Sen. Villar prepares for the upcoming elections next year, he is wary of moves by Congress in promoting the forming of a Constituent Assembly (or Con-Ass) as evidenced most recently by the passage of House Resolution 1109 through Congress.

"I have been warning colleagues that the Charter Change issue is not dead as the administration and its allies would like us to believe," the Senator said. "Kaya nilang gawin 'yan in one day (They can do it in one day). I expected this to happen. I am not happy with it."

Villar says that further movement of the Charter Change (or Cha-Cha), or its approval, will depend on how the people will react to it.

"There are protests now," he said. "But the administration and its allies are adopting a wait-and-see attitude. If they feel that the situation will turn bad, then they will not push through with it. But if they can get away with it... On the one hand, *galit ang tao* (the people are angry), but whether that anger translates to widespread protests and a

movement by the people, we'll just have to see."

Sen. Villar also lamented the fact that the Congress is asking Senators individually to support HR 1109, and not as an institution.

"My worry is when they say that, I have a feeling that they already have some senators with them. Otherwise, they would not be saying that," Villar explained. "When I was Senate President, I had to ask the Senators to act as one, as an institution. I had to rally all the senators when they attempted to do this before. We had to cross party lines then, and we did. That's why we were able to block this. Now, I don't think this Senate will do that."

**C-5 issue**

Sen. Villar also answered questions on the C-5 issue which has led to a Senate investigation on whether the Senator had benefited illegally or was involved in any impropriety related to the project.

"Pinapahaba lang nila 'yan para manganak (They are prolonging the issue and hoping it will bear fruit)," he declared. "Look at the composition of the ethics committee... all of the other presidential candidates are bunched there. The Committee on Finance has already absolved me of any wrongdoing. Even the Department of Public Works and Highways has cleared me of any impropriety."

"This is more of an irritation," he added. "I know that this is being used for political purposes for 2010. Even after one year of accusations, they have not proven anything. They have changed the rules in order to accommodate this case. In the original definition of the ethics committee, what they are

accusing me of is not part of the rules. They changed the rules. That's why Sen. (Aquilino) Pimentel and Jovy Salonga said, 'Saan ka nakakita na iniba 'yung rules and then they applied it retroactively? (Where else can you see a change of rules and then they applied it retroactively?)"

Villar revealed that their decision to not attend the Senate hearings were based on a few developments.

"Talo ka na nga, kasi ang mga accusers mo are the judges (You've already lost because your accusers are the judges), but do you know that we learned that even before the first meeting of the Senate ethics committee on Wednesday, a decision was already being passed around on Tuesday? Could you imagine, Wednesday ang meeting but there was already a decision by Tuesday. *Ano ito eleksyon?* (What are these, the elections?) That's why we did not attend the meeting," Sen. Villar explained.

**Ready to face anything**

Sen. Villar's readiness for the rigors of the campaign for the 2010 elections can be gleaned from his response to the Senate investigation.

His family, he said, is also ready to deal with what's coming.

"My family is ready," he declared. "*Simple lang ang family ko, walang gulo* (We have a simple life with no drama)."

And himself? "They cannot do anything more to me," said the Senator. "They've already started. I have nothing to hide." ■

# Group wants NV Rep Titus...

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month celebration. The AADC is a Las Vegas group whose main objective is to identify issues affecting Asian Americans and Pacific

Islanders (AAPID) in Southern Nevada. Issues identified are brought to the local, state and federal governments for action and possible resolution.

The group also focuses on developing potential AAPID leaders and will help build up these leaders to run for office.

The group endorses candidates who they deem will best represent the interests of the AAPID community. It had recently supported the candidacy of Rep Dina Titus to the US House of Representatives.

Last November, Titus defeated Republican Jon Porter to represent the Nevada 3rd Congressional District. The district is composed of the cities of Las Vegas, North Las Vegas and Henderson.

Titus, who was in the Nevada Senate as minority leader since 1993, is expected to be an advocate of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders on issues such as immigration, housing, education and healthcare, AADC noted.

During the May 30 event, the AADC honored three Las Vegas residents for their outstanding Asian culture contributions to the city. At the same time, three high school student were given college scholarships to pave the way "for future Asian leadership" in Las Vegas.

"We highlight the contribution of three outstanding Asians for their contribution to the field of culture in Las Vegas," AADC chair Sanje Sedera said.

Filipino-American Rozita Lee, Thailand-born Supatra Chemprachum, and India-native Neeru Piplani received the

Lee is national vice chair of the National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA) a national affiliation of more than five hundred

Filipino-American institutions and umbrella organizations, whose core mission is to empower Filipinos in the United States.

Both Lee and NaFFAA were given recognition at Las Vegas City Hall during the opening of the Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month in this city last month.

Aside from her role in NaFFAA, Lee is also a member of the National Asian Pacific American Media Coalition that grades media networks on diversity issues.

Through the television programs that she produced in Las Vegas, Lee created awareness of the cultures of Asian and Pacific American in the mainstream media.

Chemprachum, meanwhile, is the founding chair of the Watpa Buddha Nandharam Buddhist Thai Temple. She organized events displaying Thai culture through the Clark County school district, Lied Discovery Museum, and the Nevada State Council of Arts. She is the author of *Seven Years of Thai Culture* published in 2000 and *Fifteen Years of Thai Culture*, which was printed in 2008.

India-native Piplani organized Las Vegas events like Rangoli, Dushhahra, Diwali and Lohri at the Hindu and Jain Temple of Las Vegas. These events are now held annually at the said temple. Piplani is the incoming cultural secretary of the Friends of India cultural organization.

Meanwhile, Angello Vealentino Flores, Kristel Alviola Javier, and Nicole Schwartz all received college scholarships from AADC. The scholarships were "launched for the future Asian leadership in the community," AADC's Sedera said. ■

# The Nacionalista Party...

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The party's colorful history is made more historic by its past Party Presidents—Sergio Osmeña, Manuel L. Quezon, Jose Yulo, Eulogio 'Amang' Rodriguez, Sr., Gil J. Puyat, Jose B. Laurel, Jr., Salvador 'Doy' Laurel, who navigated through the colonial, neo-colonial, and independent stages of the country producing, in the process, six Philippine Presidents and a stellar cast of senators and congressmen.

Sen. Manny Villar, the party's current president, continues with the party's mission to unify Filipinos, now still against the oppressive clutches of poverty and inequality. For the past five years, Sen. Villar has been at the helm of NP, infusing new blood to the party, strengthening the involvement of the youth and encouraging party-mates to a more pro-active role. ■

# Filipina receives award from the World Cocoa Foundation...

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opportunities for the smallholder Filipino cocoa farmer, during WCF's 15th Partnership Meeting reception in Washington, DC.

CocoaPhil (www.cocoaphil.org), a member of the WCF, is the umbrella organization for the Philippine cocoa industry actively promoting integrated and sustainable development practices by providing assistance on cocoa production, post-harvest processing, pest and disease management and marketing. CocoaPhil's SUCCESS Alliance program, aimed at assisting at least 15,000 smallholder cocoa farmers, received funding from USAID (2002-2005) and the US Department of Agriculture (2006-present) and is also being supported by the WCF and Mars, Inc., along with the Department of Agriculture (DA), the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), and the LGUs in Basilan, Palawan, Northern Luzon, Davao, Sorsogon, Camarines Sur, Iloilo and Antique. ■

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