

Gonzalez offers to serve as Mancao's counsel

by TETCH TORRES
Inquirer.net

JUSTICE Secretary Raul Gonzalez said he is willing to resign from office to become counsel for former police officers Cezar Mancao and Glenn Dumlao.

"I am willing to resign and offer myself as counsel for Mancao and Dumlao," Gonzalez said.

The outgoing Justice chief calls the reopening of the Dacer-Corbato case as his baby and is worried that his transfer to the Office of the Chief Legal Counsel might affect the case.

Gonzalez said he already discussed the case with incoming Justice Secretary Agnes Devanadera.

"She said she is not very sure of the parameters. I told her what I wanted," Gonzalez said.

"I am the architect of this case. I would assume

that Mancao and Dumlao are doing this because of confidence to my commitment."

Mancao is already in the country after giving up fighting the extradition request of the Philippine government. He issued an affidavit last February identifying the mastermind in the killing of publicist Salvador "Bubby" Dacer and driver Emmanuel Corbito.

Dumlao is scheduled to arrive before the end of this month and has also expressed intent to testify in favor of the government.

Gonzalez met with Mancao last Thursday who said he assured Mancao that the government will fulfill its promise of protecting him and utilize him as state witness in the double murder case. ■

Church tells pols: No campaigning, please

by CHRISTINE AVENDAÑO & DONA PAZZIBUGAN
Inquirer.net

THE Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) appealed to presidential aspirants and other politicians who join protest actions against Charter change not to use rallies for their campaign.

CBCP president and Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo said he preferred that these politicians would not speak on stage during the rally in Makati City, since their mere presence was enough to show their protest against the House of Representatives' plan to convene Congress into a constituent assembly (Con-ass) to amend the Constitution.

"If they really want to join the rally, that's OK. That's their right. But I challenge them not to use the rally for their own interest or

for their own campaign in view of the coming elections," Lagdameo said over Church-run Radio Veritas last June 9.

"Their presence will speak loud enough," he added.

Called "Boy Bawang" by Malacañang for his antics, Sen. Manuel "Mar" Roxas II, a presidential hopeful, said he would distribute garlic at the rally in Makati.

"We will buy garlic for all," Roxas said over RMN radio.

Roxas wore a garland of garlic when he delivered a privilege speech last week to show his opposition to the Con-ass resolution, which he called "Con-asswang."

He said the garlic was meant to ward off Con-asswang, his play

on the words Con-ass and "aswang" (a vampire-like creature).

"This Con-ass is an issue that won't die like the aswang. But it's a dead issue, it has no body anymore but it is being revived for the interest of the allies of GMA (President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo)," said the Capiz-born senator.

Roxas thanked former Ilocos Norte Gov. Rodolfo Farinas for donating a jeep-load of garlic that came from the latter's province.

Aside from Roxas, Senators Rodolfo Biazon and Pia Cayetano were scheduled to attend the rally last June 10.

Sen. Francis Escudero, who is in Davao City as of press time, also planned to attend the rally against Charter change there. ■

Disruptions to affect economic policies...

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The Arroyo administration has to deal also with the inexorable decline in government revenues due to the failure of the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) to generate the taxes it was supposed to collect.

This year, the decline in revenues was expected to widen the government's budget gap to at least 2.5 percent of the gross do-

mestic product—a level that was widely viewed by creditors and investors as acceptable but only if it was the result of an increase in public spending on critical infrastructure.

As of April, the Department of Finance (DOF) reported that the fiscal gap was expanding, but spending has not been able to catch up with the programmed expenditures for

the period even as tax revenues failed to meet projections.

The DOF has said it may increase its latest fiscal shortfall goal of P199.2 billion, or 2.5 percent of GDP.

"We would possibly downscale our growth targets, but it's still positive," Socio-Economic Planning Secretary Ralph Recto said. ■

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