

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

# GMA: There will be elections in 2010

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Lakas and Kampi be tangible proof of the administration's readiness and determination to help ensure that the election do push through.  
"The emergence of the Lakas-Kampi-CMD as one party is our finest weapon and perhaps our best guarantee for success in the 2010 elections.

I look upon Lakas-Kampi moving as one, fighting as one, as the instrument and beacon for electing the best, most qualified, and the worthiest leaders of our country," she said.  
Arroyo, founder of Kampi and chairman of Lakas, acknowledged that "rarely we have been unanimous in our

thinking and opinions, but I hope that all of us will be disciplined enough to support the party stand."  
Two of the potential presidential candidates—Vice President Noli de Castro and Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr.—attended the merger.  
Arroyo said the fusion of Lakas and Kampi was "appropriate and timely" with a year to go before the May 2010 election.

Amid doubts about the merger, Arroyo lauded her party mates for making "a great leap of faith and statesmanship... for rising above political vagaries to do what is right not only for the administration's political cause but also for the nation."  
The President also pressed anew for the automation of the elections, saying this was the best guarantee that the 2010 exercise would be credible. ■

## Erap eyes own merger of opposition parties

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that Filipino voters of today are intelligent.  
"The people will no longer allow themselves to be fooled. You may fool them once, but not twice," Estrada said.  
Estrada said the vice presidential candidate of the opposition will be known either in August or September.  
"Whoever will be chosen, the opposition candidate will surely win. All our presidential candidates are winnable and highly qualified. There are Senators Loren Legarda, Manny Villar, Manuel Roxas, Panfilo Lacson and Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay. All of them are capable. We will see the realignment of candidates and who will slide down either by August or September," Estrada said, adding that the opposition will also have a stronger vice presidential candidate because he or she will come from the list of presidential contenders who will not be chosen as the opposition standard-bearer. ■

# Banyan Tree Project honors supporters at its 5th HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

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said. "Because we know negative attitudes towards those affected by HIV/AIDS often impact their risk, and inhibit people from accessing health services."  
Simon announced that the city of Los Angeles continues in the struggle to raise awareness about HIV risk for women. Simon posed this question to the guests: "What do you think the biggest risk factor is for Asian and Pacific Islander women?"  
"Marriage," Simon said. "So many women are infected by their primary male partner, while being restricted from talking freely about sex and their sexual safety." Simon said the city of LA continues in the fight against homophobia and transphobia within families and communities "because nothing can undermine our self worth than the loss of the love and protection of family."  
Simon announced the city continues in the effort to ensure that the youth have access to comprehensive education about sex and sexuality "because we cannot afford to leave another generation ignorant to a wholly preventable disease."  
When Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa launched the City of Los Angeles HIV Testing Initiative for World AIDS Day 2007, the Asian Pacific AIDS Intervention Team (APAIT) joined the city as one of its inaugural partners. "The Banyan Tree Project's call to action by getting tested; to take action by talking to their family, friends and community about HIV is a vital model; one which will help us reach our goal to expand both the supply of and demand for available and accessible HIV testing, for one million Angelenos," Simon stated.  
"This is vital today because API communities have the lowest rate of HIV testing of any ethnicity, and are believed to have the highest percentage of people who are positive and do not know their status," Simon emphasized. A Banyan Tree Project study shows that as of 2005, an estimated 4,276

Asians and Pacific Islanders in the US are living with HIV/AIDS. Among these individuals, 77.1 per cent were men and 21.7 per cent women. It said that a total of 71 per cent of all AIDS cases involving men have reported gay or bisexual activity. Also glaring is the fact that a number of female Asian and Pacific Islanders who are HIV-positive or who have AIDS report not understanding their at-risk status, or have an unwillingness to divulge information about their sexual history. The study also pointed out that many government agencies and health care providers don't perceive Asians and Pacific Islanders, especially women, as being at risk for HIV, and most A&PIs don't learn of their HIV status until they are already very sick, or through mandatory screening.  
APAIT executive director Jury Candelario said the goal of the Banyan Tree Project is to reduce HIV-related stigma and discrimination in A&PI communities that delays or prevents access to critical HIV prevention and care services. "HIV/AIDS continues to spread in communities of color, including Asians and Pacific Islanders," Candelario said. "Among the A&PIs as a population, AIDS diagnoses increased by 34 per cent from 1999 to 2003 in the United States; the only statistically significant increases in HIV/AIDS diagnoses among all racial groups in the US, with the A&PI women having the largest increase of all."  
The Banyan Tree Project is a national social marketing campaign to stop HIV/AIDS-related stigma in API communities. Throughout the year, organizations and individuals all over the country get the word out about HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS-related stigma affect APIs, through speakers' panels, conferences, television ads, news articles, and many other methods. It is made possible with generous support from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (Rene Villaroman)

## OC/PRSA celebrates 5 years of diversity

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was moderated by Judy Iannaccone—Director of Communications and Internal Affairs/Public Affairs & Governmental Relations from Rancho Santiago Community College District.  
Southern California is comprised of an expansive community of businesses, schools, people and cultures. Through its diversity initiative, OC/PRSA is helping make the public relations profession more inclusive by emphasizing the impact of communicating diversity through the media.  
OC/PRSA's award-winning Diversity Committee has been recognized as the model program across the nation for three times. They have earned the "Chapter Diversity Award of Honor" from PRSA National multiple times, most recently in 2008 and 2007. Honored for their outstanding efforts in advancing PRSA's National Diversity Initiative and commitment to diversity in public relations, OC/PRSA was first recognized with the organization's highest honor in diversity in 2005.  
Membership in OC/PRSA's Diversity Committee is open to members, non-members and students. If you would like to be a part of this award-winning dynamic committee, please contact Diversity Co-Chair Laarni Rosca Dacanay at laarni.dacanay@nbcuni.com or (818) 777-9195 or Co-Chair Marcie Perez at Marcie@ideahall.com or (213) 364-0143. The OC/PRSA Diversity Committee is always looking for engaging new members, committee volunteers and all interested parties. ■

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