

# No COC filing in latest GMA visit to Pampanga

By DING CERVANTES

SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga - In her nth visit to the province's third district yesterday, President Arroyo again kept her province mates and observers guessing as to her plans for 2010.

Mrs. Arroyo was guest at the opening of a new chapel in Guagua yesterday. Today, she is slated to lead the opening of an interchange of the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway in Porac, and possibly file her certificate of candidacy (COC).

But Provincial Commission on Elections (Comelec) supervisor Temmie Lambino said there were no indications that the President was coming to his office here to file her COC.

He said not even Rep. Mikey Arroyo showed up or manifested intention to file his COC.

"The law says that anyone running for the position of congressman, governor, vice governor, or member of the provincial board should file COC before the office of the provincial Comelec supervisor or my office in the case of Pampanga," he said.

Mediamen have been staking out Lambino's office since the start of the filing of COCs last Friday in the hope of catching Mrs. Arroyo if and when she files her COC.

But Lambino said the President doesn't have to show up at the local Comelec office to file her COC.

"Anyone can be (asked) by any candidate to file COCs for as long as he has an authorization which is notarized or issued by any official who can administer th oath, such as a mayor," he explained.

Lambino said that as of yesterday, presidential son Rep. Arroyo, who is entitled to a third term in the third district, had not filed his COC.

Earlier, Liberal Party standard-bearer Sen. Benigno "Noy" Aquino III said during a visit to Angeles City that his party is ready to field a candidate capable of winning against either the President or Mikey in the third district. In past elections, Mikey ran unopposed in the district.

The President was in Guagua yesterday for the inauguration of the newly built Mother of Perpetual Help chapel at the Guagua National Colleges in Barangay Sta. Filomena.

The regional office of the Philippine Information Agency (PIA) said that aside from inaugurating an SCTEX interchange, the President will also lead the unveiling today of the Hacienda Dolores access road.

"The Porac interchange is a trumpet type interchange located at kilometer 44'080 from the Tipo junction of the SCTEX. The major components of the interchange are the construction of a toll plaza, two-lane intermediate ramps, four ramps, one truck weighing station and a manual toll collection system," the PIA said.

PIA also said that the Porac interchange "will serve as the entry-exit point from the SCTEX to the municipalities of Porac, Bacolor, and Guagua." These towns are all in the third district.

The interchange is also near the mansion of Sen. Lito Lapid who has been listed as a senatorial candidate of the ruling Lakas-Kampi-CMD. The veteran actor had declared that he would run for Pampanga governor in next year's elections.

## Prosecute them all

Meanwhile, former President Joseph Estrada said the next administration should prosecute not only President Arroyo but also all her officials and relatives involved in corruption.

"Let us not only single out President Arroyo. All those involved should be punished. Not only the president, but all the people surrounding her," Estrada said at the Kapihan sa Manila Hotel when asked if he would prosecute Mrs. Arroyo for massive corruption if he gets elected.

"We have to punish from the top. Once the leader is corrupt, it follows through," Estrada said.

Estrada said he was proud of the members of his Cabinet because none of them had ever been involved in corruption.

"There was no contract found to be anomalous under my administration. Eradicating corruption in government needs certainty of punishment. There must be certainty of punishment. It boils down to leadership," Estrada said.

Estrada said that if he gets elected again as president, his administration will prioritize food security, peace and order and anti-corruption campaign.

He said he will retire from politics if he fails to bag the presidency next year.

"Of course, I will retire if I don't win. But among all the presidential candidates, I'm the most experienced. I served as San Juan Mayor for 17 years, six years as senator, six years as vice president. I also served my sentence for six years and a half years. But I have no regrets. I learned everything," Estrada said.

- With Jose Rodel Clapano