



IN MOURNING. Iglesia ni Cristo faithful gather near the floodlit INC Central Temple on Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City waiting for their turn to pay their respects to their spiritual leader Eraño Manalo who died on August 31 at the age of 84.  
Inquirer.net photo by Edwin Bacasmas

# RP to pay P746B for debt in 2010

by JESS DIAZ  
Philstar.com

MANILA – Taxpayers will shell out a whopping P746.2 billion in 2010 for the nation's foreign and local indebtedness, former Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno said on September 3.

He told the Serye Café' news forum in Quezon City that of that amount, P405.4 billion would be for payments for loan principal, while P340.8 billion would be for interest.

He said interest payments would increase by "a staggering 34.9 percent – from P252.6 billion this year to P340.8 billion in 2010."

"This is the fastest growing item in the annual budget," he said. "The fiscal profligacy during the first half of the decade has finally

caught up with us. Budget gaps convert to public debts, which in turn translate into higher debt service," Diokno, who now teaches economics at the University of the Philippines, stressed.

During his budget presentation on Wednesday before congressmen, Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr. said the P88-billion increase in interest payments is "due to the (economic) pump-priming in 2009."

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## 216,176 enlist for overseas voting

A TOTAL of 216,176 new overseas absentee voters (OAV) registered in various posts abroad for the May 2010 presidential election in the six-month registration period that ended August 31, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said Wednesday, Sept. 2.

The new registrants represented about 22 percent of the DFA's target of one million new absentee voters for next year's election.

The DFA, however, said it was still awaiting the final tally from the various registration posts abroad.

According to the DFA, the following foreign service posts recorded the highest number of registrants: Hong Kong (21,905), Los Angeles (13,205),

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## Illegal workers' screening by Feds start Sept 8

STARTING this coming Tuesday, September 8, those who are doing or want to do business with the federal government will be required to use a federal system that is intended to weed out employees without authorization to work in the country. After Labor Day weekend, those federal contractors and subcontractors will have to use E-Verify, which allow employers to check the validity of a new hire's Social Security number and other Form I-9 information.

A few months ago, a Federal court upheld the E-Verify federal contrac-

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## 5,000 US war veterans got lump sum benefit

by KATHERINE EVANGELISTA  
Inquirer.net

MANILA – Some 5,500 Filipino World War II veterans have received their lump sum benefit from the US Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) just six months after the implementation of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 or the Stimulus Bill, an official from the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO) said Thursday.

In an interview during the Filipino World War II Veteran's Assembly held at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City, PVAO Undersecretary

Ernesto Carolina said that a total of 34,000 living World War II veterans applied for the \$198 million lump-sum benefit for Filipino veterans who fought alongside US troops during the war.

"The total is about 5,500, including those in the US because some of them have already become US citizens and are living in the US. But they (US citizens) are very few, about 20 percent while 80 percent are here in the Philippines," Carolina said.

Application for the lump sum benefit began February 18 this year and is set to end February

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## Mikey may face criminal charges for alleged ill-gotten wealth - lawyer

MANILA – Pampanga Rep. Mikey Arroyo could face criminal charges in the US and the Philippines for alleged ill-gotten wealth when he admitted that he received gifts and owned property in the US during a television interview, a lawyer said on September 3.

Speaking at the Daungan ng Balita at the Danarra Hotel in Quezon City, Harry Roque said Arroyo has practically plunged himself into legal quicksand when he admitted assets and liabilities amounting to more than P100

million when he is earning P2.5 million as a lawmaker.

"For accepting expensive gifts Representative Arroyo has violated anti-graft and internal revenue code laws which carry stiff prison terms," he said.

Roque said public officials accepting gifts in cash or in kind violates the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act.

On the other hand, under the law, expen-

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## MANCAO TELLS COURT

# Estrada, Lacson among plotters to kill Dacer

by TINA SANTOS AND MAILA AGER  
Inquirer.net

MANILA – Former Senior Superintendent Cezar Mancao on Thursday identified eight people, including former president Joseph Estrada and Senator Panfilo Lacson, as being behind an alleged plot to kill publicist Salvador "Bobby" Dacer.

Mancao made the disclosure during his direct testimony at the Manila Regional Trial Court Thursday afternoon, his lawyer, Ferdinand Topacio, told reporters.

Topacio said Mancao testified that the slay plot was contained in "Operation Delta," a covert operation supposedly designed to 'neutralize' Dacer.

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Former police Senior Superintendent Cezar Mancao II leaves his quarters at the National Bureau of Investigation to testify in the Dacer-Corbido murder trial in Manila on September 3.  
Philstar.com photo by Edd Gumban

## Gov. Schwarzenegger visits fire-ravaged community

by GREG RISLING AND RAQUEL MARIAL DILLON  
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES – Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger toured a fire-ravaged community Thursday where a wildfire left dozens of homes in ruins, encountering piles of twisted metal and rubble as firefighters began to bring the blaze under greater control.

As of Friday, the blaze is 42% contained, up from 38% on Sept. 3. The fire currently measures 232 square miles or 148,258 acres and is one of the largest wildfires in Southern California history.

Schwarzenegger talked to residents about their losses and later thanked

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SERVICE. California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger serves breakfast to firefighters Wednesday, Sept. 2 at the Station Fire Incident Command Post in the Lake View Terrace area of Los Angeles. Firefighters made more progress Wednesday against a giant wildfire that has ravaged a national forest north of Los Angeles, with another day of cooperative weather providing a big assist to beleaguered fire crews.  
AP Photo by Nick Ut



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