

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

# Comelec: Only 11 days to file certificates...

**PAGE A1** ◀

will start April 10, 2010 (host country time) and will run until 3pm of May 10, 2010 (Philippine time).

Voters have from 7am until 6pm to cast their votes on election day.

Meanwhile, six presidential hopefuls, including former President Joseph Estrada, will face off in a people's forum organized by the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) and National Movement for Free Elections (Nanmrel) at the historic Plaza Miranda in Quiapo, Manila on July 16.

PPCRV and Nanmrel chair Henrietta de Villa said aside from Estrada, Senators Mar Roxas, Francis Escudero, Richard Gordon, Loren Legarda and Pampanga Gov. Ed Panlilio have committed to attend the forum.

"This will not be a debate. We invited people from all sectors and they will be the ones to ask them about anything. A candidate cannot question or engage in a debate with any of the other candidates because we don't want this to turn into a cockfight," De Villa said.

Dubbed "Talakayan sa Plaza Miranda: Mamamayang Pilipino-Alisto," the forum intends to be a dialogue between the people and those in the government or those who want to run in the 2010 elections.

"We want these candidates to know what the people are expecting of them," she added.

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**Lessons of the past**

In a related development, the Concerned Citizens' Movement (CCM) led by University of the Philippines professor and lawyer Harry Roque expressed fear that the Comelec's P7.2-billion contract with Smartmatic Corp.-Total Information Management Corp. (TIM) will be a repeat of the botched P1.2-billion Mega Pacific 2004 automation deal.

The CCM aired their concern after the Supreme Court (SC) did not immediately issue a temporary restraining order on the contract as they had sought in a petition last July 9.

"We call on the Comelec and Smartmatic-TIM to respect the rule of law and the Supreme Court as an institution by desisting from any and all acts that may moot the issues that we have raised. Specifically, we ask the Comelec to desist from paying any taxpayers' money to Smartmatic-TIM out of respect to the Court that has already taken cognizance of the matter," Roque said.

## Arroyo's US sojourn renews optimism...

**PAGE A1** ◀

effect in 2005.

Remonde said the President will also discuss the Arroyo administration's anti-poverty programs that are being implemented through the additional funds generated from earlier fiscal and financial reforms.

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## 2010 CENSUS

**PAGE A1** ◀

of the population in the United States.

Everyone living in the United States—including citizens, noncitizens and all immigrants, regardless of legal status—are required to participate in the census. 2010 Census forms will be sent out to homes by mail beginning in March 2010. The information provided will ensure that their communities receive a fair share of political representation, as well as determine how much federal funding is allocated each year.

"The Census Bureau is ready to conduct the 2010 Census and we have been preparing for many years to undertake the largest domestic operation by the US government," said US Census Bureau Director Robert Groves. "Census data will determine the apportionment of seats in the US House of Representatives among the states and guide decisions on the distribution of more than \$435 billion in federal dollars for roads, hospitals and other community services."

The Census Bureau has strict confidentiality provisions that protect the responses of those who participate. By law, Census Bureau employees cannot share answers that respondents provide with any person or government agency. In addition, every employee has taken a lifetime oath to protect the information and is subject to extreme fines or jail time if any information is disclosed.

"The 2010 Census is important, easy and safe," Groves said. "The Census Bureau looks forward to working with the Asian-American community and indeed every community across the country, to make the upcoming national count a success."

Census operations are already underway, and earlier this year, more than 140,000 census workers updated and verified addresses across the country. This was a critical first step to ensure that more than 120 million forms being mailed out next year arrive at the proper locations. Forms will begin to arrive in March 2010.

One more probable topic is the P330-billion Economic Resiliency Plan including accelerated spending for human and physical infrastructure that was set in place to ensure sustainable growth, create and save jobs, mitigate hunger, and protect the most vulnerable sectors against the harsh effects of the present global crisis.

While in Washington, the President will also meet with members of Congress and other key US officials, private sector partners and business groups. As she never fails to do when she goes on overseas visits, President Arroyo is expected to look for a moment that she could be with the overseas Filipinos. (PIA)

## GMA cites OFW contribution...

**PAGE A1** ◀

strong is her vigorous engagements and bilateral cooperation with other countries, thereby encouraging foreign investors.

As a result, she said net foreign direct investments had multiplied from \$195 million in 2001 to almost \$3 billion in 2007.

Her foreign trips, she pointed out, also benefited OFWs by helping former death convicts Sarah Dematera, Marilou Ranario and May Vecina, among others get reprieves. During President Arroyo's state visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 2005, King Abdullah pardoned and gave amnesty to some 700 detained OFWs. Half of the 700 OFWs were part of the President's entourage when she returned home.

Another benefit of international bilateral cooperation is the passage of the Stimulus Package Bill or the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act sponsored by Senator Daniel Inouye for the Filipino veterans living in the Philippines and in the US.

Started in 2004, this year's ACGTDT is a joint project of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Tourism and the Department of Trade and Industry. The tour will run up to July 17.

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- Anatomy & Physiology (Daly City Campus) - July 21, 2009
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