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RP economy grows 7.3%

MANILA - This time, it is a welcome "midnight" performance.

The Philippine economy bounced back from an anemic performance in 2009, posting 7.3-percent growth in the first quarter of this year from 0.5 percent a year ago to beat most expectations.

"This is a glorious ending for the Arroyo administration and a good beginning for the incoming Aquino administration," Romulo Virola, secretary general of the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB), told

reporters Thursday.

Dennis Arroyo, director for policy and planning at the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), said that given the robust growth of the Philippine economy in the first quarter, the government would revise its growth target for the year, which was set at a conservative range of only between 2.6 and 3.6 percent.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is required by constitutional term limits to step down on June 30 after more than nine years in office. She is

expected to be replaced by presumptive president-elect Benigno Aquino III.

Officials credited election spending, a sustained rise in remittances and improved business and consumer confidence—which resulted in increased spending for goods and services—for the robust year-on-year growth of the gross domestic product (GDP).

GDP is the total value of the goods produced and services rendered within

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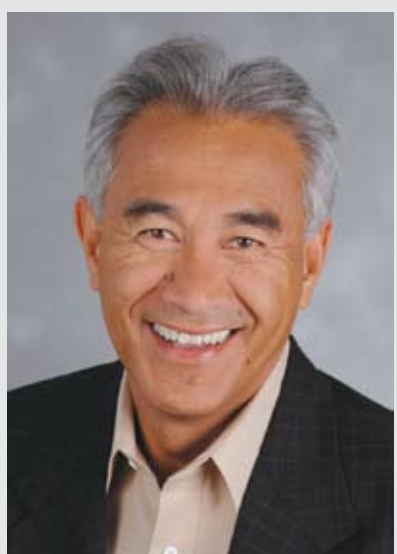
Justice not for sale

By NICHOLAS VON WETTBERG

Attorney Rod McLeod would like to make the choice as easy as possible for San Francisco voters in the upcoming judicial election on Tuesday, June 8.

McLeod is vying for the position of San Francisco Superior Court Judge, Seat 6, and believes that in order to best serve the citizens of the city a candidate for judge should show absolute fairness and impartiality, beholden to no outside influences.

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Atty. Rod McLeod

Sale of Marcos jewels called off

MANILA - Philippine President Gloria Arroyo on Thursday called off her administration's efforts to sell the seized jewels of former first lady Imelda Marcos, saying this decision should be left to her successor.

Aides of the president said that there was not enough time to sell off any of the jewels because Arroyo is due to step down on June 30 to make way for a successor, Benigno Aquino, son of two famous anti-Marcos leaders.

"Time has run out on the process and it is best left to the incoming administration," said Arroyo's chief aide, Leandro Mendoza.

A government official charged with recovering the Marcos's stolen wealth had in recent weeks been preparing for their auction, inviting major auction houses to appraise the value of the jewels.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said Thursday a sale would help the cash-strapped government but conceded that any auction should be deferred to avoid suspicions of being a

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How Not To. 'Expresphil' Fidel V. Ramos, a former top law enforcer in the Philippines, jokingly shows a Lucky Chances Casino staff member how not to frisk a woman. The former president was on a recent visit to the San Francisco Bay Area (See photos on page B7)

CA ASSEMBLYMAN TED LIEU Tough lawmaker eyes top law enforcer's job

By JUN ILAGAN

COLMA (Calif.) – Looks can really deceive.

Just past 40 and with a boyishly smiling face that could be a poster child for youthful nonchalance, Assemblyman Ted Lieu (D-Torrance), who is running for Attorney General of California, is anything but a laidback fixture in Sacramento.

As a top lawmaker in the State Legislature, Ted is credited with authoring landmark bills that have come to the defense of many Californians – homeowners falling prey to the predatory practices of Wall Street, workers suffering exploitation, women running away from domestic violence, minors in need of total insulation from sex offenders, and an entire citizenry all longing for a better and cleaner environment.

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Ted Lieu, R, wins endorsement of the Daly City/Colma-based Filipino American Coalition, headed by its president, Mario Panoringan. Lieu is running for California Attorney General, and seeks to promote civil rights and equality for all before the law



U.S. Department of Justice

Justice Dep't to challenge Arizona immigration law

By JUN MEDINA

WASHINGTON -- The Justice Department is drafting a legal challenge questioning the constitutionality of Arizona's controversial immigration law because it impinges on the federal government's authority to police the nation's borders, sources said Wednesday.

The department's civil rights section is also mulling possible legal action against the law on grounds that it could lead to racial profiling of Latinos who are legally in Arizona but could be asked by authorities to provide documents on "reasonable suspicion" that they could be in the country illegally.

Nine top police chiefs earlier met with U.S. Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. here to express their strong opposition to the Arizona law because it would seriously hamper local police work if they had to serve like border patrol officers.

The new Arizona law, which goes into effect in July, makes it a crime to be in the state without proper immigration papers and requires police to check on people who they think might be in the country illegally.

President Barack Obama called the Arizona legislation "misguided" and urged Congress to come up with legislation that would fix the country's broken immigration system.

The police chiefs urged who met with Holder urged the Obama administration to stop the law which they said would drive a wedge between officers and the communities they are trying to protect and thus cripple their work.

Los Angeles Police Chief Charlie Beck, one of the nine top police officials, said in a conference call after meeting with the Attorney General that "legislation like [the Arizona law] inhibits us from doing our jobs."

Beck also said the law would discourage undocumented immigrants from coming forward as victims and witnesses.

"The fear of the police already inhibits immigrants from coming forward to a certain extent, and if you add a law like this you intimidate them even more," Beck said.

"Clearly, this is not a law that increases public safety but makes it much harder for us to do our jobs. Crime will go up if this becomes law in Arizona or in any other state."

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, at least four states have introduced their own versions of the Arizona law, which defines illegal immigration as criminal trespassing and requires police to request documents of anyone they stop if they suspect they are in the country illegally.

Already, the American Civil Liberties Union and Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund have filed lawsuits to stop the Arizona law,

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R.P. Political Scene

Normal transition

By DANIEL E. LLANTO



What everyone expected as a messy inaugural ceremony for President-apparent Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III and an unceremonious transition of power on June 30 may turn out to be as normal and peaceable as can be. Aquino earlier threatened to break Inaugurals tradition because of his position that the appointment of Supreme Court Chief Justice Renato Corona sometime during the election period by outgoing President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo was unconstitutional. So he said he would rather take his oath before a barangay chairman from his hometown Tarlac, and at the same time indicated that he wouldn't

like the much-maligned Mrs. Arroyo anywhere near the inaugural venue.

But Aquino seemed to have softened up and last week welcomed the transition team put together by Malacanang, which is headed by Executive Secretary Leandro Mendoza no less, to help ensure a smooth and amicable transfer of power. The insouciance towards the Arroyo-appointed Chief Justice remains but Aquino had abandoned his wish to be sworn in by the chairman of Barangay Central in the family-owned Hacienda Luisita. Instead, the incoming President said

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