

GMA preparing for House seat?

By DING CERVANTES

PORAC, Pampanga - President Arroyo will make her 16th visit to her home province this year amid talks of her becoming prime minister in a shift to a parliamentary form of government.

The Philippine Information Agency (PIA) in Central Luzon sent yesterday advisories to local media on the presidential visit to this town within the second district where she is a

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registered voter.

Speculations are flying thick that the constitutional assembly (con-ass) being pushed by the House of Representatives would lead to a parliamentary system wherein Mrs. Arroyo could be elected prime minister.

Pampanga 1st district Rep. Carmelo Lazatin said some of the President's supporters in the House are pushing for constitutional amendments that will shift the government system to parliamentary.

He said a proposed new Charter on this could be submitted in a plebiscite to be incor-

porated in next year's elections.

Lazatin said that once approved in the plebiscite, the new parliamentary system would be enforced immediately and absorb members of Congress into parliament where Mrs. Arroyo could be voted prime minister.

Some of the President's political supporters here have also been outspoken about their belief that her unusually frequent visits to Pampanga, particularly in the second district, could indicate she might run for congresswoman in next year's polls.

There are reports circulating

in this province that the President's son Rep. Milkey Arroyo will run for governor next year to give way to the plans of his mother.

But a Palace official has branded as "hearsay" that Mrs. Arroyo will run as prime minister once the government shifts from presidential to parliamentary system.

A radio report quoted Press Secretary Cerge Remonde saying these are concocted by critics to discredit the Arroyo administration.

Remonde also assured the people that the May 2010 national elections will push through despite the move of

congressmen to convene as a constituent assembly to amend the 1987 Constitution.

The President and some Cabinet members arrived yesterday in Manila after an official visit to Russia.

Nueva Ecija Rep. Rodolfo Antonino of the new administration party Lakas-KampikMD also said yesterday that a "pre-condition" attached to House Resolution 1109 should end once and for all fears any Charter amendment that could extend the term of Mrs. Arroyo under a parliamentary system.

In a telephone interview with **The STAR**, Antonino said that all congressmen who signed

HR 1109 also committed themselves to the "pre-condition" to respect up to 2013 the term of some senators.

"That pre-condition was there from day one of HR 1109. This is an affirmation that no change in the form of government should be done until 2013. We cannot have senators under a parliamentary system," he said.

Meanwhile, senators do not have to pressure the President on the issue of constituent assembly as a way to amend the 1987 Constitution, Sen. Edgardo Angara said yesterday.

Angara, who has been advocating for Charter amendments, said there is no need for the Sen-

ate to act as a pressure group to prod Mrs. Arroyo to give a categorical statement that she is not supporting move of the House of Representative.

"It's not binding anyway," Angara said in a radio interview when asked if he would support a Senate resolution asking the President to deny any support for Charter change at the moment.

Meantime, the PLA said five activities are lined up for the President starting at 10 a.m. today in Porac with a visit to Barangay Hacienda for the groundbreaking of the rehabilitated water well and water distribution pipelines.