



POLL PLEDGE A Baguio resident passes by an integrity covenant signed by candidates in the city after a unity walk for peaceful and honest elections on Wednesday, two days before the official campaign period for local posts starts. —EV ESPIRITU

For several local bets, it’s all over but the counting

Ex-President Arroyo, Speaker Velasco, Senator Recto among Luzon politicians running unopposed, assured of local posts



By the Inquirer Bureaus
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(First of two parts)

The campaign period for local posts starts today but for more than 800 unopposed candidates all over the country, they can take it easy in reaching out voters as they will only need to wait for a single vote on May 9 to make their victory official.

Securing a landslide victory in past elections or having satisfied constituents could have played a major role for some local candidates in running unchallenged in the coming elections, according to some voters. Others observed that candidates belonging to political dynasties would usually win the elections in their areas due to “name recall,” scar-ing off would-be opponents.

Leading the pack of big political names assured of securing their posts in provincial races in Luzon are former President and Speaker Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, Senate President Pro Tem-pore Ralph Recto and current Speaker Lord Allan Velasco.

Arroyo is running unopposed for the second time since she was elected representative of Pampan-ga’s second district in 2010 while Recto is returning to local poli-tics as representative of the sixth district of Batangas. Velasco, son of retired Supreme Court Associ-ate Justice and Marinduque Gov. Presbitero Velasco Jr., is assured of serving another term as repre-sentative of the lone district of the island province of Marinduque.

Central Luzon

In Pampanga province, apart from Arroyo, two other congressional candidates are unopposed. They are reelectionists Carmelo Jon Lazatin II (first district) and Aurelio Gon-

zales Jr. (third district).

Also without opponents are Vice Gov. Lilia Pineda, Apalit Mayor Jun Tetangco and Vice Mayor Peter Nucom. Ron Dung-ca is the only candidate for Ba-color vice mayor.

In Lubao town, reelection-ists Mayor Esmie Pineda and Vice Mayor Jay Montemayor are unopposed.

In San Luis town, Dr. Jay Sa-gum and his uncle, Mon Sagum, are unopposed for mayor and vice mayor, respectively.

In Aurora province, Rep. Rommel Rico Angara and his older brother, Baler Mayor Rhett Angara, are assured of victory. The Angaras are cousins of Sen. Juan Edgardo “Son-ny” Angara.

Securing an early win in Zambales province are reelectionist San Marcelino Mayor El-vis Soria and his running mate, Jimbo Gongora. They are the only unopposed candidates in the province.

In Bataan province, Rep. Jose Enrique Garcia III, who is running for provincial gover-nor, and his brother, reelection-ist Balanga City Mayor Francis Anthony Garcia, are without rivals.

Rep. Geraldine Roman of Bataan’s first district is assured of serving her third and last term.

In Tarlac province, Gov. Su-san Yap is unopposed for her third term.

Mayor Maria Cristina Ange-les of Tarlac City and San Cle-mente Mayor Elma Macadamia, who both held their positions since 2016, are also unopposed.

In Bulacan province, only former Board Member Cho-lo Violago, who is running for mayor of San Rafael town, and his running mate, Lyn Venera-cion, have no challengers.

Northern Luzon

At least 35 candidates in Ilo-cos Norte and Ilocos Sur prov-inces are also running without opponents.



READY FOR THE HUSTINGS Local candidates in Bulacan province gather at the provincial capitol gymnasium on Thursday and promise to keep this year’s elections orderly. —CARMELA REYES-ESTROPE

Of the 23 towns and cities in Ilocos Norte, five candidates for mayor are unopposed. They are Mary Chrislyn Abadilla (Banna town), Crescente Garcia (Burgos), Francisco Espiritu Jr. (Dumalneg), Antonio Mariano (Marcos) and Aldrin Garvida (Nueva Era). All of them, except for Espiritu, are incumbent mayors.

For the vice mayoral race, five are running uncontested. They are Denton Lawrence Gar-vida (Bangui), Erdio Valenzuela (Dingras), Fraincess Kwyn Es-piritu (Dumalneg) and Caroline Garvida (Nueva Era).

Incumbent Mayor Carli-to Abadilla II of Banna, who is seeking the vice mayoral post, is also running without an op-ponent.

In Ilocos Sur, 11 mayors from the towns of Bantay, Bur-gos, Cervantes, Gregorio del Pilar, Quirino, Salcedo, San Il-defonso, San Juan, Santa, Sug-pon and Suyo are unopposed. For vice mayor, 14 are gunning for the position unopposed in the towns of Suyo, Sugpon, Sta. Maria, Santa, San Juan, Salcedo, Quirino, Nagbukel, Cervantes, Caoayan, Candon City, Burgos, Bantay and Alilem.

The members of the long-standing political family in the province, the Singsons, are keeping their grip on local

power as nobody dared to chal-lenge them for the top elective seats in the capitol.

Southern Luzon

The Tolentinos of Tagaytay City are among the big-name po-liticians in southern Tagalog who are assured of seats on May 9.

Cavite Rep. Abraham “Bam-bol” Tolentino will return to his former post as Tagaytay City mayor under National Unity Party with his wife, Agnes, the incumbent mayor, as his running mate. Agnes is also unopposed.

Tolentino is a brother of Sen. Francis Tolentino.

Also unopposed in the con-gressional races in Cavite are reelectionist Rep. Jesus Crispin “Boying” Remulla (seventh dis-trict), Imus Councilor Adrian Jay Advincula (third district) and General Trias City Mayor Antonio Ferrer (sixth district).

Also assured of victory as General Trias City mayor is sixth district Rep. Luis Ferrer IV. He is running with Council-or Jonas Labuguen, who is also unopposed for vice mayor.

Other unopposed candi-dates for mayor are reelection-ists Yuri Pacumio of Tanza and Jasmin Angelli Maligaya-Bau-tista of Magallanes.

In Batangas province, the husband-and-wife tandem of Mayor Norberto Segunial Jr. and Vice Mayor Ma. Aurea Se-gunial of Sta. Teresita town will seek reelection unopposed.

In Rizal province, the unop-posed candidates in the congres-sional races are reelectionist Mi-chael John Duavit (first district), former Antipolo City Mayor Danilo Leyble (second district) and Roberto Andres Puno Jr. (Antipolo City, first district).

Binangonan Mayor Cesar Ynares and his brother Vice Mayor Cecilio Ynares are seek-ing reelection unopposed.

In Angono town, Mayor Jeri Mae Calderon and her father, Vice Mayor Gerardo Calderon, have no challengers to their re-election bids.

In Albay province, Rep. Fer-nando Cabredo (third district) is running for his second term unopposed.

Jovellar Vice Mayor Jorem Arcangel is unopposed for may-or after he filled in the candidacy left by his father, Jose, who died on Oct. 29 last year.

Camalig Mayor Carlos Irwin Baldo Jr. and Daraga Vice May-or Gerry Raphael Jaucian are as-sured of reelection.

In Masbate province, Socrates Tuason is returning to his former position as mayor of Masbate City, replacing his wife, incum-bent Mayor Rowena Tuason, who is running for vice mayor.

Other tandems assured of reelection are Mayor Edgar Con-dor and Vice Mayor Ester Binsol of Cawayan, Masbate; Mayor Froilan Andueza and Vice May-or Vicente Sabaulan of Claveria, Masbate; and Mayor Johny Rod-ulfo and Vice Mayor Roy Regala-do of Bato, Catanduanes.

In Quezon province, three mayoral candidates are unop-posed. They are Marcelo Gayeta of Sariaya and Alfred Rigor Mitra of Panukulan, both reelectionists, and Clara Larita of Patnanungan.

In Oriental Mindoro, Pinamalayan Mayor Aristeo Baldos Jr. is assured of serving his second term.

In Romblon province, re-electionist Banton Mayor Mely Faderanga and her running mate Loi Fegalan are unopposed.

Mayor Gerard Montojo of the capital town Romblon is seeking reelection uncontested.

In Palawan province, Batara-za mayoral candidate Abraham Ibba and his running mate John-main Jaafar are unopposed.

In the tourist town of Coron, reelectionist Vice Mayor Asian Palanca is also unopposed.

—REPORTS FROM TONETTE OREJAS, GREG REFRACCION, JOANNA ROSE AGLIBOT, JUN MALIG, CARMELA REYES-ESTROPE, JOHN MICHAEL MUGAS, VILLAMOR VISAYA JR., MICHAEL JAUCIAN, ROMAR MIRANDA, MAR ARGUELLES, MADONNA VIROLA AND DELFIN MALLARI JR. INQ

ARRIVALS IN BAGUIO TOP 500,000

PMA OPENS DOORS TO VISITORS AFTER 2-YEAR LOCKDOWN

 BAGUIO CITY— Tourists are wel-come once more inside the Philippine Military Academy (PMA), which formally lifted its two-year lockdown on Thursday.

But they must pass a screen-ing process and will not be al-lowed to interact with cadets, including to take “selfies” with them, to which many genera-tions of visitors to Fort del Pilar have become accustomed, ac-

cording to PMA entry rules.

The military school restrict-ed access to the public in Febru-ary 2020 to protect its students, shortly before COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic in March that year. That includ-ed families of more than 1,000 cadets, who have not been able to attend important events, like graduation ceremonies.

PMA’s decision to take in visitors was made just as the city received 578,000 tourists from



TOURIST STOP Tourists, like these shown in a 2014 photo, have made the Philippine Military Academy part of their Baguio City tour. —EV ESPIRITU

December last year to March 20.

The Baguio Flower Festival is also being restaged after a two-year break while the number of active COVID-19 cases has gone down to eight as of Wednesday.

Requirements

PMA visitors will be re-quired to register via the screen-ing platform, bisita.pma.edu.ph, to help enforce a daily cap of 300 guests, First Lt. Christine Mae Calima, PMA spokesperson, told

reporters on Thursday.

Fully inoculated tourists must present their vaccination cards, she said, adding that those who are unvaccinated will be required to show nega-tive rapid antigen results taken within a 72-hour period before they enter Fort del Pilar.

The academy will also require both vaccinated and nonvaccinat-ed visitors of cadets to present negative rapid antigen test results.

—VINCENT CABREZA INQ