

## Ayala offers to house new PSE building

Bourse to decide within 6 months

THE Ayala Group has offered the Philippine Stock Exchange a new and bigger piece of property in Fort Bonifacio Global City to house its future headquarters and unified trading floor.

The proposal was presented during the annual stockholders' meeting of the demutualized Philippine Stock Exchange last May 9 and was put for further study by the PSE board.

"They're proposing a new site just across the street in Fifth Avenue," said PSE director Ismael Cruz, who also chairs the building committee. "We have the option to build it ourselves."

The new property offered by Ayala is about 5,700 square meters, bigger than the old lot which was about 2,000 square meters. "This can be done sooner," Cruz said, noting that the building could be finished in three and a half years after ground-breaking.

But he said everything was still under discussion. The proposed building is linked to another building owned by Ayala Land Inc. "It's a new option that's under study," he said.

The PSE will likely finalize a decision on the property in six months, Cruz said.

It remains to be seen whether the local bourse would insist on owning the land or accept a condominium certificate for its office building.

Ayala Land, which took over the Fort Bonifacio project from the Metro Pacific group in 2002, earlier requested to defer again the construction of the future PSE headquarters given the slump in the high-end property market.

The PSE was originally promised to have a new building in the Global City by 2004 but the local bourse agreed to waive this after much haggling seven years ago. (Philstar.com)

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diseases," Legarda said. **Self-quarantine for Palace team**

Meanwhile, Presidential Adviser on External Affairs Edgardo Pamintuan last May 10 expressed willingness to undergo self-quarantine after his visit to the United States.

Pamintuan, along with External Affairs Undersecretary Danilo Consumido, led a team to New York, Texas and California and met with the Filipino communities there and discussed positive developments taking place in the Philippines.

The three states, including the city of San Diego, which is a few miles from the US border with Mexico, were among those reportedly affected by the A(H1N1) virus.

Pamintuan's team left San Francisco aboard Philippine Airlines flight 105 and was expected to arrive at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport last May 9.

Pamintuan said he and the members of his team would go on self-quarantine to ensure

that they had not contracted the virus during their speaking tour in the US.

As soon as health warnings were issued, Pamintuan said he and his team members restricted their movements and stayed in their hotel rooms most of the time, venturing out only to meet with members of the Filipino community.

Pamintuan's team also met with Filipinos in New Jersey, Maryland and Illinois to discuss the efforts of the Philippine government to cushion the impact of the global economic crisis and present the various mega-infrastructure projects that are not only changing the Philippine landscape but are also expected to bring more development to the countryside.

He presented some P188 billion worth of infrastructure projects that are now being implemented in the Luzon Urban Beltway (LUB) special region made up of Metro Manila and provinces in Central and Southern Luzon.

"These projects have not only helped mitigate the impact of the global economic crisis but have also opened up new opportunities for development and investments," said Pamintuan, who also chairs that North Rail Corp. (Philstar.com)

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Metro is backing state legislation to disperse \$315 million of stimulus funding for transportation improvements among all the cities in LA County under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Under the proposal, each city would get a minimum of \$500,000 to preserve and create jobs for transportation-related projects.

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Go Metro Rail to see all the action at the 24th Annual LA Marathon on Sunday, May 24. The course starts in Universal City and winds through the heart of LA to finish downtown. Be sure to check [metro.net](http://metro.net) for information on extensive bus detours prompted by the race.

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## Comelec: 2010 poll automation still on

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in its pursuit of automation of the 2010 general polls.

"This is the time for the Comelec to ask the Supreme Court to set aside all legal technicalities and yield to what is practical and economically viable under the present crisis where the much awaited poll automation is in peril. This is the best remedy to answer the call to start even a partial poll automation in our country," he said in a statement sent to *The STAR*.

The Supreme Court (SC) stopped the use of the 1,991 ACMs bought from the MPC in 2004 only on the ground that they were "illegally procured and improvidently paid by the Comelec," he said.

**Reliability never questioned**  
Macalintal said the reliability and accuracy of the machines were never questioned.

In fact, the Department of Science and Technology even certified that the ACMs of MPC were

"100 percent accurate and can be used to automate the counting and canvassing of votes in the 2007 elections," he said.

On July 24, 2006, Science and Technology Secretary Estrella Alabastro submitted to the Office of the Ombudsman a report stating, among others, that these ACMs "exhibited 100 percent accuracy rating in continuously counting a total of 440,000 votes for a period of 14 hours."

Alabastro said she was willing to stake her reputation in attesting to the reliability and accuracy of the counting machines.

Macalintal said he then asked the SC to allow the use of the ACMs for the 2007 mid-term polls, but the High Court denied his petition due to the pending criminal cases then against some officials of the Comelec and MPC before the Ombudsman and the civil case filed by the Office of the Solicitor General against MPC

before the Makati City regional trial court to recover the P1.2 billion from the consortium.

Macalintal said this is no longer the case today.

Macalintal said waiting for the resolution of the cases involving supposed anomalies in the purchase of the ACMs from MPC would only make the machines futile.

Macalintal appealed to the government to take a "practical and equitable" move by making use of the 1,991 ACMs.

He said it is too late for the Comelec to purchase new automated machines at this point.

He said that even if qualified bidders come up, the poll body does not have ample time to set up necessary programs and training to use the newly acquired automated machines next year.

But Melo said the poll is prohibited from using the P1.2 billion ACMs. ■

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