

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

Binay considers running...

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Makati cinemas and free tours in and out of the city. Makati's street corners are monitored by CCD video cameras, and all yellow card-carrying residents get free medical benefits in the city's modern hospitals, among many other social services. Public education is 100 per cent free and includes school uniforms, supplies and some books.

"I've had the experience of handling our money properly to the point that when I came in 1986, our money was only PhP 270 million, with an indebtedness of PhP 200 million," Binay revealed. "Every year (since 1986), we were able to increase our revenues; and last year we had a revenue of PhP 10.6 billion," he explained. "So in terms of governance, I would say I was able to perform competently, and had provided the leadership needed in my city." He promised that he could do the same for the entire country.

When asked about the issue of rampant graft and corruption in government, Binay responded that they were, in fact, big issues. He said that when he was young the amount involved in graft and corruption cases was measured only in the thousands of pesos. "Now, under the present administration, we are talking in the billions of pesos," Binay said.

The mayor said that every time an anomaly involving billions of pesos is uncovered, more and more Filipinos get deprived of basic services, like medicine, (and the construction of) roads and bridges. "What is unfortunate is that we have all the laws," Binay said. "We have mountains of laws. The problem is enforcement." He said that

in the Philippines, where gain is higher than risks, the result would be more graft and corruption. "The only thing (needed) here is enforcement of the laws. We will have to be sure that that nobody is above the laws; and we would like to show that there is no such thing as selective justice when we are given the opportunity of leading the country," Binay emphasized.

Binay believes that the constituent assembly (con-ass) that is being pushed by the House of Representatives could be the tipping point for the administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. "It could be the cause for her early downfall from office. Hopefully, it does not happen. We cannot afford to have a breakdown of peace and order again," Binay said.

When a reporter asked Binay to comment on Sen. Panfilo Lacson's decision to back out of the presidential race because it would entail a lot of campaign money, Binay said that he respected Sen. Lacson's decision, but he added that it would be better to join the fight for change. "It would be better for you to change that bad system if you are involved rather than fight it from the outside," Binay reasoned. "In other words, Sen. Lacson should have continued aspiring for the position and advocate and cause a change in our system," Binay commented.

"I sincerely believe (that) even if you don't have that big amount of money for purposes of winning the election, we would be (better of) because we will be able to talk about the issues and bring back honor and integrity to the Philippine government," Binay said. ■



LA Lakers guard Kobe Bryant and Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa during the victory parade in downtown LA.

AJPress Photo by Jose Cobilla

Pinoys Celebrate Lakers Victory

by JOSEPH PIMENTEL

AJPress

LOS ANGELES – Filipinos came from every part of Southern California. One Pinoy even came as far as New York City to celebrate the Los Angeles Lakers 15th NBA Championship.

"We got to celebrate the Lakers championship and do some representing from New York City," said Ted Martinez, wearing a black and yellow shirt with the Lakers logo emblazoned in the middle.

Martinez was one of hundreds of Pinoys, who took the day off Wednesday and celebrated the Lakers victory.

"I want to say something to the Lakers," said Mila Baluan of Woodland Hills. "We have been praying for them and that's why they won. We are Filipino and we love the Lakers."

There was a lot of talk before the parade that Los Angeles might not have a championship parade because of the city's budget deficit. The estimated cost of the parade was \$2 million dollars.

However, LA City Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa said that private donor and the LA Lakers contributed to the cost of the parade.

"Look from the beginning we said we

were going to have a parade that's where we had to start and we weren't going to be responding to all the naysayers," he said. "There are more than a hundred thousand people here today that means more than a hundred thousand people at a minimum wanted a parade today and we made it happen."

LAPD Police Chief Bill Bratton said two thousand of LA's finest officers were on patrol to control the hundreds of thousands of people celebrating.

Despite the large officer presence, fans were basking in the championship moment. ■

State spares ADHC, for...

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state later on.

"People with Alzheimer's and mental issues will end up in Psychiatric wards and require more hospitalization," said Pinto. "The ADHC's are small businesses or non profits and if these people are out, the employees would also lose their jobs and they will basically be eligible for unemployment and that would in-

crease the economic crisis."

She added that if the ADHC closes, many seniors would be forced to stay in nursing homes for care and cost the state four times more money than an adult day center.

Silver Lake ADHC Program Director Mila Koger said that this center is more than just a place for seniors to receive care. She said, to many Filipino seniors, it

has become a second home.

"This is the only program where they can come here be with friends, be able to have good times and have their health monitored," she said. "It is the best program I've seen in America. To have it cut means, how are we going to take care of our elderly?"

"This is their second home," she added. "When they are out-

side, they are prone to loneliness, sadness and depression. When they are at home, they are all alone because their children go to work so they are alone most of the time watching TV. What kind of life is that? But when they come here, they are filled with energy. They see their friends, they can dance, they sing so this is home to them."

Flor Garcia has only been going to the Silver Lake ADHC for only two months. The 63-year-old FilAm was in a serious car

accident six years ago that left her disabled.

Unable to work, she was homebound and spent her days lonely and depressed.

Her family registered her to Silver Lake ADHC and has seen a tremendous change in her health.

"It's been amazing. It's been a great two months," said Nina Garcia, Flor's 23-year-old daughter. "We really saw her improve and it's really sad to learn that something like this might be

taken away."

Flor said that she noticed the change immediately once she enrolled.

"I got strong. I got healthy. I'm not stressed anymore and I go everywhere. I can walk and go shopping alone. Before, I couldn't do that," she said.

"If the center will close where will I go? At home again, to be sad again, to be lonely to be stressed. That's why I beg the governor to not close this center. This is important to us, especially the senior citizens." ■



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