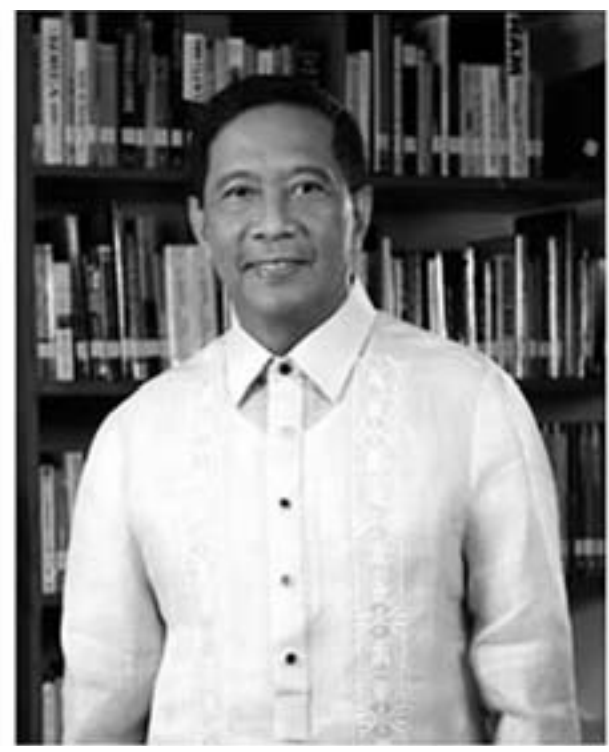


Binay ready to explain infomercial

by ALLISON LOPEZ
Inquirer.net



Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay

MAKATI Mayor Jejomar Binay on Wednesday, May 20 welcomed the petition asking the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to look into the "infomercials" of perceived presidential aspirants.

Binay, who has expressed his aspirations for the presidency in 2010, was among those cited by a partylist group as having come up with an infomercial way ahead of the campaign period to boost their stock in popularity surveys.

But the Makati City mayor defended his ad, saying "These infomercials celebrate Makati and the benefits received by its residents. These are benefits that they deserve as residents of the country's financial center and premier city."

"We have always been communicating the benefits of being a Makati resident since we began celebrating our founding anniversary with the private sector seven years ago," Binay said.

Two groups have asked the Comelec to stop the airing of "infomercials" of Binay, Senator Mar Roxas and Senator Manny Villar Jr.

But Comelec spokesperson James Jimenez said the poll body maintained that a person could not be charged with premature campaigning until the filing of a certificate of candidacy. ■

Comelec upholds disqualification of automation bidder

by SHEILA CRISOSTOMO
Philstar.com

THE Commission on Elections-Special Bids and Awards Committee (Comelec-SBAC) upheld last May 19 the disqualification of the conglomerate of AMA Group Holdings and Election System and Software (ESS).

According to SBAC head Ferdinand Rafanan, the committee had deliberated on the motion for reconsideration filed by AMA and ESS, but found that the consortium had failed to give them enough reason to reverse the disqualification.

Earlier, tension was high during the bidding process when Ramos said Comelec director for Education and Information Division James Jimenez had created an impression that the consortium of Smartmatic of Netherlands and Total Information Management Corp. (TIM) of the Philippines had won the bidding. Ramos accused Jimenez of being partial to a consortium that is now ahead of the race to win the automation contract.

"The perception that they are creating is that Smartmatic had already won. That's not it. That's not good for us bidders here. We have been sitting here all day long waiting for SBAC to rule on our motion for reconsideration. We are very offended by that statement," he noted.

Smartmatic and TIM, on the other hand, have already hurdled the eligibility, technical and financial requirements of SBAC.

The conglomerate presented their precinct count optical scan (PCOS) machines before the SBAC yesterday just in case the committee rules in their favor.

Ramos' outburst came about when Jimenez and Smartmatic spokesman Luis Villa briefed the media about the possible demonstration that will be done by the Smartmatic group. ■

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