

## Ayala Land's Amaia Steps Pasig tops off fourth mid-rise condo building

AMAIA Land Corp., a subsidiary of Ayala Land, Inc., recently topped off its Clara Building, the fourth mid-rise condominium building in its residential project Amaia Steps Pasig.

The nine-story Clara Building is the final structure in the 4.5-hectare residential development, joining the three other nine-story buildings named Aria, Blanca, and

Esperanza. Amaia Land said in an e-mailed statement on June 7.

Situated on Eusebio Avenue in Barangay San Miguel, Pasig City, the project offers residents close proximity to Pasig General Hospital, Sacred Heart Academy, and Robinsons Supermarket.

The 464-unit Amaia Steps Pasig is less than six kilometers away from the Ortigas Central

Business District and just four kilometers from C5 Road.

"Offering both accessibility and a serene retreat, Amaia Steps Pasig features retail spaces right at homeowners' doorsteps, placing everyday essentials within reach. One can grab a quick bite or run important errands just steps away from their homes," the company said.

The Clara building offers unit options such as studio, deluxe, and premier units, with sizes ranging from 23 to 42 square meters.

According to Amaia Land's website, the project's unit prices range from approximately P3.7 million to P5.8 million.

Among the amenities available for residents are a basketball

court, swimming pool, multi-purpose hall, play area, and landscaped gardens.

The company said the project is aimed at newlyweds and young families starting out.

The Amaia Steps condominiums are also available in various locations including Alabang, Bualacan, Bicutan, Cebu, Laguna, Parañaque, Quezon City, and Bacolod.

In April, Amaia expanded its community in San Fernando, Pampanga, with the 5.4-hectare Amaia Scapes San Fernando Sector 2 located in Barangay Baliti. This project comprises 315 finished residential units and features the Single-Home 60 model.

Amaia Land is the affordable housing property arm of Ayala Land. — **Aubrey Rose A. Inosante**

## Bamboo adoption in construction pushed

STAKEHOLDERS in the bamboo industry are pushing for the mainstream integration of bamboo in construction, recognizing its potential to produce sustainable housing and public facilities.

To advance this agenda, Bukidnon Rep. Jose Manuel F. Alba filed House Bill 9144, or An Act Integrating Bamboo as a Sustainable Material for the Built Environment. The bill encompasses the development of the Bamboo Architectural Code and Bamboo Structural Code.

During the "Beyond Bamboo: Bridging Green Construction in Codes and Standards" forum on June 7, Mr. Alba emphasized the necessity of these codes, which will provide standards to ensure the architectural and structural integrity and safety of bamboo in construction.

The bill also mandates the inclusion of bamboo in government infrastructure projects, with the expectation that private developers will follow suit.

Mr. Alba highlighted the establishment of a certification process, aiming to guarantee the quality of materials and foster consumer confidence in bamboo as a reliable and sustainable building material.

These initiatives are envisioned to open up new export markets, attract foreign investments, and stimulate economic growth, all while promoting sustainable practices.

Mr. Alba noted that Bukidnon boasts approximately 18,000 hectares of planted bamboo, as reported by a study from Central Mindanao University.

He also mentioned initiatives in his district where local farmers harvest bamboo poles, process them into slats, and store them in water for later conversion into bamboo films.

Lessandro Estelito O. Garciano, a professor at De La Salle University, expressed hopes of publishing the National Structural Code of the Philippines, which will include a structural code for bamboo, within the year. This effort aims to position the Philippines among countries with established structural bamboo codes, he said.

Base Bahay's Head of Technology Director Luis Felipe Lopez cited the UN-Habitat Philippines Country Report 2023, projecting a 22 million housing backlog by 2040. Base Bahay, a non-profit organization initiated by the Hilti Foundation, advocates for alternative building technologies to address this gap.

Base Bahay said it uses cement-bamboo frame technology, reducing carbon emissions by 60% to 80% compared to conventional construction methods. The organization added that it has built over 1,600 homes using this technology across various locations in the Philippines.

Base Bahay also undertakes non-residential projects such as community centers, school buildings, and offices.

Base Bahay's Mr. Lopez also highlighted the resilience of bamboo-made houses, citing successful tests during severe weather conditions like Typhoon Glenda. — **Aubrey Rose A. Inosante**



## Mitsukoshi targets increased Japanese brand presence in PHL

By Arjay L. Balinbin  
Corporate Editor

JAPAN-BASED department store chain Mitsukoshi is gearing up to introduce more Japanese brands and local partnerships at its Philippine branch Mitsukoshi BGC, a company official said.

"What we are trying to do in Mitsukoshi BGC is to become a place where you can find and experience a bit of Japan, and where also new value is created through a combination of Filipino culture and Japanese culture," Momoko Umemura, manager at Isetan Mitsukoshi Holdings Ltd.'s corporate real estate department, said in a media briefing in Tokyo on May 29.

"Mitsukoshi BGC is becoming one of the starting points for Japanese companies to start their business in the Philippines," she added.

Set to delight Filipinos is the Japanese treat anmitsu, a classic chilled dessert featuring white, semi-translucent jelly. This delicacy will be available for P450.

Mitsukoshi BGC is also expanding its selection of Japanese rice wines. Among the new offerings are the Kakurei Junmai Ginjo, priced at P1,980, and the Gangi Junmai Dai Ginjo Yunagi, which will be available for P2,980.

"It's not only about Japanese companies. We're trying to co-create new value and synergy. One good example is the collaboration between Mitsukoshi Fresh and Auro Chocolate," Ms. Umemura said. Auro Chocolate is a premium bean-to-bar chocolate brand in the Philippines.

She added that the company is also looking to partner with more local suppliers.

Mitsukoshi BGC, the first Japanese mall in the Philippines established in Bonifacio Global City (BGC), Taguig, in 2022, recently introduced 15 new brands, bringing the total number of purely Japanese brands to 38.

Japanese furniture retailer Nitori also recently opened its store in Mitsukoshi BGC.

The origins of Mitsukoshi trace back to 1673, during Japan's Edo period, when Takatoshi

Mitsui, a visionary businessman, established the Kimono Fabric store "Echigoya" in Edo, now known as Tokyo.

In 1904, the department store declaration was issued, saying: "We aim to pursue the improvement of customer satisfaction and convenience by providing the latest business presentations and assortment of cutting-edge department products." Consequently, Mitsukoshi established itself as Japan's pioneering department store. Its flagship store is situated in Nihonbashi, a vibrant commercial district renowned for its iconic 17th-century canal bridge.

Mitsukoshi BGC, a commercial facility located in the basement of a residential building, is a partnership between local company Federal Land, Inc., the property arm of the Ty-led conglomerate GT Capital Holdings, Inc., and Japan's Nomura Real Estate (NRE) Development and Isetan Mitsukoshi Holdings.

Their mixed-use residential and commercial development project "was designed based on a Japanese concept and received

the highest award in the Residential High-rise Development category at the International Property Awards, recognizing outstanding real estate projects worldwide," said Masato Yamachi, director and head of NRE's overseas business division, during a briefing.

"Through managing this property, we aim to continually enhance the lifestyle offerings in Manila, providing a uniquely Japanese experience to the Filipino community," he added. The residential tower, named "The Seasons Residences," features units named "Haru" (spring), "Natsu" (summer), "Aki" (autumn), and "Fuyu" (winter), representing Japan's four seasons.

"As seen, there are a lot of things to look forward to, a lot of products that will come soon to the shores of Mitsukoshi BGC," said Charmaine N. Bauzon, commercial business group head at Federal Land NRE Global, Inc.

"We will not stop at just these products. I think we will continue to surprise our Filipino customers," she added.

## NPC will require firms handling data to prove registration exemption

THE National Privacy Commission (NPC) said businesses processing data that do not meet the registration threshold must still submit a declaration of exemption or risk penalty.

NPC Data Security and Compliance Office Director Aubin Arn R. Nieva said in a statement on Monday that, in general, business owners processing the data of clients, customers, and employees must register with the NPC.

"If your business has 250 or more employees, 1,000 or more customers, or collects personal data that poses a risk to the rights and freedoms of data subjects, you are required to register with the NPC," Mr. Nieva said.

"Even if your business does not meet these thresholds, you must submit a declaration of exemption. Non-compliance will result in corresponding sanctions and penalties," he added.

According to Mr. Nieva, businesses that will not comply with NPC Circular No. 2022-04 could face fines of up to P5 million for violating the Data Privacy Act (DPA) of 2012.

Previously, the NPC said that personal information controllers (PICs) and personal information processors (PIPs) that remain unregistered will be issued show cause orders for non-compliance with the DPA and relevant NPC issuances.

"The public is strongly encouraged to report any business collecting personal data without the NPC Seal of Registration," Mr. Nieva said. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

## National ID backlog at 32 million physical cards

THE National ID backlog is currently at 32 million physical cards, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said on Monday.

PSA Undersecretary and National Statistician Claire Dennis S. Mapa said at a briefing that for the time being, the public "can download their digital national ID."

The constraint on printing the physical ID cards is the limited capacity of government printing facilities, Mr. Mapa said.

"The maximum number of cards that can be printed on a given day is 80,000; depending on conditions, sometimes it's lower," he said.

A total of 51.6 million PhilIDs have been printed and distributed as of the end of May, Mr. Mapa said.

The PSA did not provide a timeline for clearing the backlog.

The digital PhilIDs may be used in transacting with government offices, banks, remittance centers, and electronic merchant platforms.

National ID registrants may access their digital ID through their mobile devices, which will be generated from the national ID official website.

The National ID is expected to improve efficiency in delivering government services, reduce corruption, and dedicate government funds to crucial development programs, National Economic and Development Authority Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan said during its launch.

"We want to lessen leakages and ensure that public money is spent where it must be spent," he said. "This reduces opportunities for corruption and enables the government to bypass logistical costs for delivery."

The PSA also launched the National ID Check platform, where the physical national IDs may also be verified by scanning the QR code found on the card. Organizations may also use the platform to verify the identity of an individual presenting the ID.

As of the end of May, 87.6 million Filipinos have registered for the national ID. The government's goal is to register the entire population with the Philippine Identification System, Mr. Mapa said. — **Beatriz Marie D. Cruz**

## DoTr still seeking funding for Mindanao Rail project

THE Department of Transportation (DoTr) said it has not yet obtained funding for the Mindanao Railway project.

"There is none yet, but we are working on the (new) plan," Transportation Secretary Jaime J. Bautista told reporters on the sidelines of an event.

Mr. Bautista said the DoTr is currently conducting a feasibility

study which will require an overhaul of the original plan.

"The original study called for the use of diesel-powered trains. So, maybe our train system should be modern and environment-friendly," he said, adding that the new study is still being prepared.

Mr. Bautista said the DoTr has tapped consultants to conduct the new study to evaluate viable

options for the Mindanao railway project.

Last year, the DoTr said it is considering official development assistance from Japan, South Korea, and India to fund three major railway projects after it dropped China as funding source.

Phase 1 of the Mindanao railway project, estimated to cost P83 billion, would run from Tagum in

Davao del Norte to Digos City in Davao del Sur. It is expected to accommodate 122,000 passengers per day and cut travel time between Tagum and Digos from three hours to one.

Earlier this year, the DoTr said it will continue to work on the first phase of the Mindanao Railway project despite uncertainty in funding. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**

## BCDA rejects talk of Central Luzon garbage crisis as landfill deal ends

THE Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) rejected speculation of a garbage crisis in Central Luzon with the imminent expiry of the contract to provide waste disposal services to local governments in the Clark area.

BCDA Chairman Delfin N. Lorenzana said three operational facilities can step in as alternatives to Capas, Tarlac's Kalangitan sanitary landfill.

"To those local governments who use Kalangitan, please do not worry, as there are (three) facilities where you can dispose of your garbage," Mr. Lorenzana said.

"We have three and a half months to arrange the transition from Kalangitan to these three facilities," he added.

The BCDA said the three sites are run by Eco Protect Management Corp., whose landfill has a

capacity of 2,500 metric tons (MT) per day; Florida Blanca Enviro Park Project Corp. with a 3,500 MT per day landfill; and Prime Integrated Waste Solutions, Inc., which operates a 5,000-MT materials recovery facility.

"In total, the capacity is at 11,000 MT for these three facilities in Central Luzon, which are mostly located in Pampanga. The current Metro Clark landfill has

an average capacity of 2,500 MT. So these three facilities are enough to service the LGUs surrounding Clark," Mr. Lorenzana said.

The 25-year contract between Metro Clark Waste Management Corp. (MCWMC), the current operator of Kalangitan, and BCDA's subsidiary Clark Development Corp. (CDC), will end on Oct. 5.

According to Mr. Lorenzana, there is no provision in the con-

tract between the MCWMC and CDC for a renewal or extension.

Citing a legal opinion rendered by the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel, the BCDA said that the contract cannot be extended even on an ad interim basis as it would violate the Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) Law.

The BOT Law was the framework used in the bidding and

awarding of the contract for the Kalangitan landfill.

"In the meantime, the BCDA will study and benchmark successful projects in other countries to learn how to rezone and rehabilitate landfill sites," it said.

"The BCDA is also in talks with LGUs to assist them in exploring alternative solutions to avoid disruption of waste management services," it added. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**