



Lipa opens new city hall at Ayala estate Areza

THE CITY GOVERNMENT of Lipa inaugurated its new city hall on April 8 within Areza, a masterplanned estate developed by Ayala Land Estates, Inc., a subsidiary of Ayala Land, Inc.

Areza, a 92-hectare masterplanned estate by Ayala Land, is envisioned as Lipa's new city center, integrating walkable urban spaces, green corridors, and commercial districts within an infrastructure-supported environment.

The facility, located in Lipa's emerging urban core, is intended to centralize key government services and improve accessibility for residents, according to a statement on Monday.

Mayor Eric B. Africa said the new city hall is expected to serve as a landmark that will strengthen the city's identity and support its economic growth.

"Ang New Lipa City Hall ay maging isa sa new landmark sa Lipa. Na magbibigay ng pagkakakilanlan sa ating lungsod. Gusali na magiging bahagi ng turismo at sasalaman sa progresibong lungsod at higit na maghihikayat ng mga imbestors na maghahatid ng oportunidad na trabaho sa mga Lipeño (The New Lipa City Hall is expected to become a new landmark in Lipa, helping define the city's identity. It will form part of the local tourism landscape and reflect a progressive city, while attracting investors that can generate job opportunities for Lipeños)," he said during the inauguration.

The development is expected to help position Areza as Lipa's next central business and civic district, integrating government, commercial, and community spaces, Ayala Land Estates said.

Gilbert Ramos, Areza project development head, said the partnership between the local government and Ayala Land aims to support long-term urban growth.

"Over the long term, we see Areza evolving alongside the city, supporting its growth by providing a strategic, integrated location for key institutions and economic activity," he said.

The new city hall has a floor area of about 23,000 square meters and will house key administrative offices to streamline public service delivery. It will also feature a performance hall, an annex building, and a 2,160-square-meter plaza.

Shares in Ayala Land slipped by 0.11% or two centavos to close at P18.06 on Monday. — **Juliana Chloe A. Gonzales**

Metro Manila condo demand up 19% in Q1, seen as seasonal rebound — LPC

DEMAND for Metro Manila condominiums increased 19% year on year in the first quarter (Q1), driven by end-user purchases and developer incentives, though Leechiu Property Consultants (LPC) said the uptick reflects a seasonal rebound rather than a full market recovery.

Total condominium take-up reached 7,732 units in the January-to-March period, recovering from a "sharp slowdown" in the previous quarter, LPC said in its first-quarter residential market report released last week.

Despite the improvement, LPC said the market remains vulnerable to external shocks and structural constraints.

"A more decisive recovery is unlikely until external risks moderate and rental yields begin to normalize relative to capital values," it said.

Investor activity remained subdued, with rental yields at 3.8% for primary units and 4.6% for secondary units, levels the firm said are insufficient to offset high acquisition costs.

"Speculative investor interest remained muted due to subdued rental



PHILIPPINE STAR/MICHAEL VARGAS

yields as rental rates normalize and capital values of primary units remain elevated," it said.

The market also faces elevated inventory, with unsold condominium stock

equivalent to about 31 months, though this was partly eased by slower project launches and improved absorption.

"Tempered project launches and incremental gains in absorption provided

temporary relief to inventory pressure," LPC said.

Demand was more resilient in the mid-market segment, while higher-end buyers continued to adopt a wait-and-see approach.

LPC said global risks, including geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, could drive inflation and interest rates higher and dampen remittance flows from overseas Filipino workers.

"Given heightened global and geopolitical risks, market participants should maintain a cautious stance — closely assessing supply-chain impacts, preserving liquidity, and deferring aggressive expansion until conditions stabilize," said Roy Golez, LPC director for research, consultancy, and valuation.

Residential activity is also gradually shifting to provincial areas supported by infrastructure development, where flexible payment terms and improved accessibility are helping sustain demand and price growth, the firm said. — **Alexandria Grace C. Magno**

Malls save P202.18M from energy efficiency measures — DoE

MAJOR MALL OPERATORS saved about P202.18 million after adopting energy efficiency measures in response to a government call amid a national energy emergency, the Department of Energy (DoE) said.

A total of 158 malls generated savings equivalent to 23 megawatts (MW) of electricity over 19 days, the DoE said in a social media post on Monday.

The agency attributed the savings to adjustments in mall operations aimed at easing pressure on the power system.

Participating operators included Araneta Malls, Megaworld Lifestyle Malls, SM Supermalls, Power Plant Mall (Rockwell), Robinsons Malls, and Ayala Malls, among others.

Some malls have also begun adopting rooftop solar systems and participating in the government's Green Energy Option Program, which allows eligible consumers to select their preferred electricity supplier.

Last month, several mall operators in Metro Manila shortened operating hours following the government's declaration of a national energy emergency.

Government agencies also reported a 14% reduction in fuel and electricity use, equivalent to about 0.70 MW in energy savings, the DoE said.

The agency attributed these savings to operational efficiency measures, including optimized energy use in offices and facilities, as well as efforts to promote fuel efficiency while maintaining public services.

"By leading by example, the government advances a more sustainable, responsible, and energy-efficient way of operating, helping ease pressure on the power system and ensuring that resources are used wisely for the benefit of all Filipinos," the DoE said.

The government also implemented a temporary four-day workweek in some agencies to conserve energy amid rising fuel prices.

"Energy efficiency is a national priority. Every step we take to reduce unnecessary consumption and strengthen efficiency helps fortify our country against volatility that may begin beyond our shores but is felt by every Filipino household, commuter, worker, and enterprise," Energy Secretary Sharon S. Garin previously said in a statement. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**



Robinsons Malls expands EV charging network

ROBINSONS LAND CORP. (RLC), through its Robinsons Malls unit, is expanding its electric vehicle (EV) charging network through partnerships with providers such as Shell Recharge, Tesla, and ACMobility across its properties.

The Gokongwei-led mall operator increased its charging stations to 42 from 14 over the past two years, it said in a statement on Monday.

"Through these partnerships, Robinsons Malls has grown its EV charging network from 14 to 42 points across its properties in a

span of just two years," the company said.

These stations are located at sites such as Opus, Robinsons Galleria, Robinsons Manila, Robinsons Magnolia, Robinsons Tagaytay, Robinsons Iloilo, Robinsons Pagadian, Robinsons Dumaguete, Robinsons Roxas, and Robinsons Ilocos Norte.

Additional charging facilities are planned for Robinsons La Union, Robinsons Tuguegarao, Robinsons Santiago, Robinsons Antique, Robinsons Iligan, Robinsons Valencia, and Robinsons Butuan.

"By providing strategic locations for partners such as Meralco, Shell Recharge, ACMobility, and Tesla, Robinsons Malls helps bring charging solutions closer to more communities, expanding access to cleaner transportation and supporting broader green mobility adoption," the company said.

The expansion forms part of the company's broader sustainability efforts.

Shares in RLC declined by 3.80% or 68 centavos to close at P17.20. — **Juliana Chloe A. Gonzales**

Century Properties board OKs internal mergers, awaits approvals

CENTURY Properties Group, Inc. (CPG) said its board has approved the merger of subsidiaries as part of a restructuring plan, subject to approval from shareholders, creditors, and regulators.

In a disclosure on Monday, the company said the board approved the merger of PHirst Park Homes, Inc. into CPG, with the parent firm as the surviving entity.

It also approved the merger of Century Limitless Corp. (CLC) and Century Communities Corp. (CCC), with CLC as the surviving entity.

"The respective plans of merger will be submitted for approval by the stockholders during the upcoming annual stockholders' meeting.

The consummation of the proposed mergers shall be subject to the approval of creditors and relevant regulatory authorities," the company said.

CPG said the restructuring aims to improve resource allocation and operational synergies, enhance financial management, utilize tax assets, and improve regulatory and tax administration.

Separately, the board approved the company's financial report for the year ended Dec. 31, 2025.

The board also approved the appointment of SyCip Gorres Velayo & Co. (SGV) to provide non-audit services related to merger support, including compliance, financial reporting, and due diligence requirements.

At the local bourse on Monday, shares in Century Properties Group, Inc. closed unchanged at P0.67 apiece. — **Alexandria Grace C. Magno**



Foodpanda sees higher oil prices driving online grocery demand

ONLINE delivery platform Foodpanda Philippines said volatility in oil prices linked to conflict in the Middle East could increase demand for its online grocery service, pandamart, as consumers seek to manage transport costs.

"We see this as an opportunity to drive trials, especially among customers who may not have tried online grocery shopping yet," Foodpanda Philippines Director for Q-Commerce Joseph Wijesekera said in an e-mailed reply to questions.

Escalating conflict in the Middle East has pushed oil prices higher in recent weeks, with Brent crude averaging about \$100.75 per barrel as of April 12.

Philippine Energy Secretary Sharon S. Garin said on Monday that oil companies would cut diesel prices by P23 per liter this week.

Despite fluctuations in oil prices, the company said it does not plan to raise prices, Mr. Wijesekera said.

"For us, this is also an investment in helping educate Filipinos that there are now more convenient and accessible ways to do their grocery shopping," he said.

Foodpanda Philippines also expects pandamart to double its business this year, supported by its 24/7 operations.

"We expect pandamart to double as a business this year, and our 24/7 service is one of the key growth drivers supporting that momentum," Mr. Wijesekera said.

Last month, Foodpanda said its pandamart service would operate 24/7 nationwide to address demand for availability and speed in the quick-commerce (q-commerce) sector.

Mr. Wijesekera said the shift to a 24/7 grocery service aims to support convenience for consumers managing long work hours and commutes.

"It's not meant to replace offline shopping, but to complement it in a way that fits how people live today," he said.

With its 24/7 model, pandamart aims to serve demand for deliveries beyond regular store hours.

The service offers a full grocery selection, including produce, meat, seafood, and household items.

Growth in digital payments may also support demand, Mr. Wijesekera said, as more consumers adopt contactless transactions.

Data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas showed that 57.4% of retail payments were made through digital channels as of 2024.

Foodpanda launched pandamart in Singapore in 2019 and has since expanded the service to markets across Asia-Pacific, including the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. — **Beatriz Marie D. Cruz**

Eton tightens delivery standards, centralizes customer experience oversight

LISTED property developer Eton Properties Philippines, Inc. is shifting its strategy toward tighter execution and centralized customer experience oversight, its chief executive officer said.

At its 19th anniversary gathering on March 25, the real estate arm of LT Group, Inc. outlined plans to strengthen delivery

standards, customer experience governance, and operational discipline across the organization.

The company said the shift forms part of its operating direction called "Eton in Motion," which focuses on aligning internal processes and accountability measures.

"Eton set out to build more than developments. Nineteen

years of commitments honored. Standards held. Trust earned — quietly and consistently — in the daily work that most people never see. Eton in Motion is not an anniversary theme. It is a declaration of how this company moves: with clear standards, consistent delivery, and the discipline to hold the standard even when it is inconvenient,"

said Donna Kristine Salgado, assistant vice-president for marketing, public relations, and corporate communications, in a statement on Monday.

Eton said it is strengthening oversight of customer experience through a centralized tracking framework managed by its Customer Experience Committee, which will measure

performance based on customer feedback.

The company also introduced an internal handbook covering brand and customer experience standards, aimed at establishing a consistent approach across operations.

"Nineteen years ago, Eton Properties was a promise. Today, that promise is still being kept

— and still being earned. There is a lot of work ahead of us," said President and Chief Executive Officer Kyle Ellis Tan.

"But we are moving in the right direction. Not because of the milestone. Because we have made a deliberate choice to be honest about where we are and disciplined about where we are going." — **ALB**