

Quarantine for GMA; SONA may be postponed

President Arroyo will go on self-quarantine when she returns from her five-day visit to Brazil this weekend as a precautionary measure and to set an example in efforts to slow down the spread of the Influenza A(H1N1) virus.

The virus has killed a 49-

year-old female employee of the House of Representatives.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita also said the Palace is open to the postponement of Mrs. Arroyo's annual State of the Nation Address (SONA) when Congress opens

Turn to Page 13

Quarantine

From Page 1

next month as there are confirmed cases of A(H1N1) infections at the House of Representatives.

First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo accompanied Mrs. Arroyo on the trip.

He said he received a call from Press Secretary Cerge Remonde who accompanied Mrs. Arroyo from Tokyo, Japan to

Brazil, that the presidential party "will submit themselves to screening (at the airport) and, for that matter, among themselves, they will undertake their own voluntary quarantine for several days.

"I'm very sure when they return, they will submit to thermal scanning and at the same time submit herself to

self-imposed quarantine - whether it's five days or 10 days," Ermita said.

He said while it would be hard for Mrs. Arroyo, who often visits the provinces, she would also be practicing "social distancing," a measure recommended by the Department of Health, for several more days.

On suggestions the SONA be postponed, he said: "If it becomes serious, why not?"

"We have not discussed it (postpone SONA). But that's a long way and there would even be typhoons coming our way but that's nothing. Remember self-quarantine is only 10 days," Ermita said.

The House of Representatives has shut down its operations until Monday because of the death of one of the employees who was infected by A(H1N1) due to complications.

- Paolo Romero