

## WORD WAR IN SENATE

## 'Kuryente queen' slams 'Corruption king'

by MAILA AGER  
Inquirer.net

SENATOR Ana Consuelo "Jamby" Madrigal and former congressman Gilbert Remulla traded barbs over the senator's claim that Senator Manuel Villar met secretly with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo abroad.

"Kuryente queen" for allegedly making up the story while the senator called him the "Corruption king in Cavite."

In journalist-speak, "kuryente," which is Filipino for electricity, means a news report is false or a journalist was fed the wrong information.

Remulla is the spokesman of Villar's Nacionalista Party while

Madrigal is the complainant in the ethics case filed against Villar for allegedly benefiting from the P200-million double entry in the 2008 budget for the rehabilitation of C-5 road.

"Kuryente Queen. *Pang apat na yatang kuryente na nakuha nya* [That's the fourth false information she got], from ZTE, PNR, port- X ray machines now this?" Remulla said in an interview at the Senate.

"*Nasaan na ang* credibility *ni* Senator Madrigal [Where is Senator Madrigal's credibility]?" he said.

Remulla said Madrigal should face the ethics committee for "insulting a fellow senator."

Madrigal shot back at Remulla, whom he described as the "Corruption king in Cavite"

Villar is a billionaire real estate developer before he joined politics. Remulla comes from a prominent political clan in Cavite province.

Contrary to Remulla's claim, Madrigal said all her exposés in the Senate were backed up with evidence.

She also stood by her allegation that Villar was supposed to meet with Arroyo, originally in Spain but that meeting reportedly took place in the Middle East.

"The information that is extremely reliable is that Mrs. Villar got a Syrian visa," Madrigal said, referring to Villar's wife.

"Why are they so defensive? If they did not meet with the President, their conscience is clear," she said.

Madrigal also shrugged off Remulla's statement that she should be the one facing an ethics case at the Senate for making "unparliamentary" remarks against Villar.

"That's a desperate move from Gilbert Remulla. Why should I be charged with an ethics complaint when the issue here is corruption versus Villar," she said. ■

## All 7 poll automation bidders disqualified—Comelec

by SHEILA CRISOSTOMO  
Philstar.com

THE seven consortiums bidding for the P11.3-billion poll automation contract have all failed eligibility requirements, but the Commission on Elections (Comelec) said the situation is not hopeless.

Comelec spokesman James Jimenez said the poll body could have a "negotiated contract" as a "last recourse" in choosing the provider of the 80,000 automation machines to be used in the 2010 elections.

The Comelec's Special Bids and Awards Committee (SBAC) finished reviewing the eligibility documents last May 7, of Gilat of Israel and F.F. Cruz and Company Inc. of the Philippines.

But the automation contracts they submitted were not those of the consortium but of Gilat's subsidiaries.

The SBAC had earlier rejected six other consortium bidders—

Avante International of the United States, Canon Marketing Philippines of Japan and Netnode Technologies, DB Vizards and Creative Points, all of the Philippines;

Indira Sistemas of Spain, Strategic Alliance Holdings Inc. of the Philippines and Hart Intercivic of USA; Universal Storefront Services of the Philippines and Sequoia Voting Systems of USA;

Total Information Management Co. of the Philippines and Smartmatic of the Netherlands;

Amalgated Metro Philippine and Syrex Inc., both of the Philippines and Anishin Inc. of Taiwan; and AMA Group of Companies of the Philippines and Election System and Software of USA.

The six consortiums failed to submit various documents such as ISO 9000 Certification, Certificate of Appreciation, Certificate of Registration from the Securities and Exchange Commission, and license to import.

But SBAC chairman and Comelec's Law Department director Ferdinand Rafanan said they expect the seven consortiums to submit their motions for reconsideration.

## Palace trusts Comelec

Malacañang expressed confidence that the Comelec could hurdle the difficulties in bidding out the automation project and prevent the country from reverting to manual polls.

Deputy Presidential Spokesman Anthony Golez said "the Comelec is an independent body and we trust in the judgment of the commissioners on this issue."

Comelec chairman Jose Melo said failure in the bidding might result in Comelec reverting to manual elections next year.

The Office of the Ombudsman is keeping an eye on the Comelec's procurement process for counting machines after all the interested suppliers have been disqualified.

Observing the bidding procedure forms part of the tasks given to the Task Force Poll Automation created by Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez.

Deputy Ombudsman Orlando Casimiro heads the task force. ■

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