

Department of Energy prepares Visayas power supply augmentation

MANILA—The Department of Energy (DOE) through the Philippine Electricity Market Corp. (PEMC) is lining up preparations for the Visayas Supply Augmentation Auction (VSAA), particularly for the registration of participants.

This move is pursuant to the provisional authority issued by the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) last April 13.

The DOE sees the VSAA as one of possible ways to solve the power supply problem in the Visayas.

The registration process will cover all preparatory steps leading up to the official launch of the VSAA," Energy Secretary Angelo T. Reyes said.

The participant registration is being administered by PEMC and has started this April.

"This registration process is designed to ensure readiness of the participants for the VSAA and covers the actual filing of application to take part in the program, prequalification of participants, as well as participant training and familiarization with the VSAA through a trial operation program," Reyes said.

The VSAA is the infrastructure that will be the backbone of all VSAA transactions. It is composed of a solver, participant web interface and associated database that will ensure all transactions made during the program are monitored, validated and subsequently settled.

PEMC has also ensured the accessibility of VSAA-related information and documents by devoting a section in the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM) website covering, among other important documents, the VSAA application forms and registration guide.

"Assuming sufficient level of registered participants, promulgation of VSAA rules and ERC approval of VSAA pricing and cost recovery mechanism and administration fees are achieved, the program is expected to commence immediately upon the approval of the ERC," PEMC acting president Melinda L. Ocampo said.

The WESM began commercial preparations in Luzon in June 2006.

It is a centralized venue for buyers and sellers to trade electricity as a commodity where its prices is based on actual use (demand) and availability (supply). (Philstar.com)

Gonzalez tells NBI to ignore rumors, stick to facts on Failon case

by EDU PANAY
Philstar.com

MANILA—Justice Sec. Raul Gonzalez last April 27 ordered agents of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) handling the probe of the death of ABS-CBN news anchor Ted Failon's wife to ignore rumors and stick to the facts.

Gonzalez said he wants the NBI to be very selective in choosing the circumstances they would consider from the different stories on the death of Trinidad Arteche-Etong.

Trinidad was found with a gunshot wound to her head inside a bathroom of their houses on No. 27 General Aquino Street, Tierra Pura Subdivision in Tandang Sora, Quezon City last April 15.

Failon (Mario Teodoro Failon Etong in real life), a news anchor of ABS-CBN TV Patrol, claimed that his wife committed suicide due to financial problems, but the police were still investigating if there was foul play. Trinidad's relatives believe Failon's claim, which was confirmed by the house helpers. Trinidad died the next day at the New Era General Hospital.

Gonzalez said that wild rumors sometimes cloud the search for the truth.

"They say when there's smoke, there's fire. But we should not



Justice Sec. Raul Gonzalez

get carried away by those rumors which could cloud the investigation, just like prejudice," he explained.

He said he had instructed the NBI to focus on two angles – suicide and parricide.

NBI investigators interviewed Failon's house helpers but the probers refused to reveal details of their findings upon the request of Failon.

Lawyer Ricardo Diaz, NBI spokesman and chief of the Anti-Terrorism Division (ATD), said they have granted Failon's request not to release the interviews to avoid making the incident a "media spectacle."

"The purpose of the interview is for clarification and for new information. NBI probers started conducting re-interviews and this will supplement those that were earlier taken by the Philippine National Police (PNP)," said Diaz.

Diaz said Dr. Raquel Fortun, the private forensic expert hired

by Failon, the medico legal officer of the PNP who conducted autopsy examinations and even the doctors who treated Trinidad will be invited for a medical case conference.

Businessman Delfin Lee already appeared at the NBI last week to give a statement and even submitted a video grab that would back his claim that he was not at the house of Failon at the time the incident occurred.

"He said there were many policemen at the house of Failon when he arrived there. He submitted a video grab that would back up his claim that he was in the office and not at the house of Failon at the time the incident occurred," Diaz said.

The Scene of the Crime Operatives (SOCO) reports, the autopsy report and the statements of Failon, the driver, and the house helpers have been turned over to the NBI, which took over as the lead agency upon order of Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) Secretary Ronaldo Puno.

NBI Director Nestor Mantaring earlier ordered the bureau's National Capital Region (NCR) headed by Regional Director Edward Villarta to lead the investigation, replacing the Special Task Force (STF).

STF chief Arnel Dalumpines said the focus of the probe is the shooting incident and all angles would be looked into.

QC prosecutor to resolve Failon raps soon

Quezon city assistant prosecutor Mary Jane Pamitan would resolve the obstruction of justice charges filed against Ted Failon, his sister-in-law and the house helpers next week after both parties have submitted their reply and counter reply on the case.

Senior Superintendent Franklin Mabanag, suspended chief of the Quezon City Police District Criminal Investigation and

Detection Unit, told The STAR that the police would no longer submit a counter reply on the allegation of the camp of Failon that there was no obstruction of justice since the investigation of the case is ongoing.

The QCPD had filed charges of obstruction of justice against Failon, his driver Glen Polan, houseboy Pacifico Apacible, nanny Wilfreda Bollester, housemaid Carlota Morbos, and Trinidad's sister Pamela Arteche.

QCPD investigators said the house helpers cleaned the bathroom where Trinidad was found while the driver cleaned the Mitsubishi Pajero that was used to transport the victim to the hospital. The house helpers claimed that they cleaned the crime scene on their own and Failon did not order them.

Investigators said Failon might have obstructed justice when he gave limited details to the authorities and refused to surrender his mobile phone.

Failon and his lawyer filed yesterday their counter reply arguing that the investigation of the NBI on the death of Trinidad is still ongoing so there is no crime at this point in time.

"The investigation has not yet come out with their report on whether the death was suicide or parricide," said Failon's lawyer Alfred Molo after the hearing.

He said since there is no crime yet, there is no obstruction of justice.

But Mabanag said there is no need to prove a crime since there was a shooting incident and the police are mandated to determine the cause of the death of the person.

Mabanag also insisted that the alleged suicide letter was not written by Trinidad but by one of the house helpers.

"In fact, the NBI documents expert has considered it a questioned document," he said. ■

Don't rely on false claims and exaggerations...

The power is in your hands!

Check the Verified Audit Circulation website for independent and accurate circulation figures. The information can be quickly accessed online for public viewing. It only takes three easy steps!

Step One:

Go to the Verified Audit Circulation website – <http://www.verifiedaudit.com>. You will see the main page of the site on your screen. On the left hand menu, click on **View Circulation Data** under **Quick Links**.



Step Two:

Now you are on the **On-line Data & Reports** page – <http://www.verifiedaudit.com/reports.php>. Enter the name of the publication you wish to search for. For example, type in **Asian Journal**, and then press the **Search** button.



Step Three:

A new page will open with your search results. You can click on the publication name to view available reports and detailed circulation information.



Asian Journal is one of the leading media organizations in the nation who is part of Verified's Member/Client List. Search circulation figures for other Filipino-American newspapers, distribution companies and other related media through the Verified Audit Circulation website. **Just follow these three easy steps!**

Asian Journal takes responsibility in providing our valued advertisers, prospective clients and readers truthful and verifiable circulation figures. We are the first Filipino-American newspaper to meet and sustain the rigorous audit process by Verified Audit Circulation.



RP ranked one of world's best dive sites

THE Philippines was recently ranked and awarded by Japan's leading diving magazines as one of the world's top five diving areas.

The country also made it to the list of Top 10 Most Desirable Destination, Best Dive Resort (Bohol Tropics) and Favorite Dive Operator (Blue Coral, Cebu), according to a survey participated in by more than 50,000 Japanese dive enthusiasts.

Divers from Japan are seen to rise during the summer months as more vacation packages and even lower fares are being offered.

Survey voters included readers of top dive magazines in Japan namely; *Marine Diving*, *Travel Dive*, *Marine Photo* and *I love Diving*. These publications by Marine Art Co., Ltd., organizers of the 17th MDF, are best-selling magazines catering to serious divers in Japan.

Given at the recent 17th Marine Diving Fair (MDF) held in Tokyo, the largest diving fair in Asia, the MDF Awards are among the highly-acknowledged commendations for must-visit dive destinations in the world.

More than 65 countries representing various destinations, tourism boards, airlines, resorts, dive operators and other tourism-related companies were present in the 17th MDF, attracting close to 100,000 visitors.

"There are more than one million Japanese divers who annually travel worldwide returning to their familiar dive spots or in search of new locations. The country in gaining momentum in this niche activity signals our strong efforts in making people aware of the Philippines' diverse marine life that is worthy of every traveler's discovery," said Tourism Secretary Ace Durano.

Durano added the Department of Tourism (DOT) sees these achievements as a positive result of the promotional campaigns specifically targeted for this market segment.

Undersecretary for Tourism Planning and Promotions Eduardo Jarque Jr. added, "The Philippine participation to the annual MDF wants to maintain and further the Philippines' popularity

among the Japanese divers.

Bohol Tropics

"This is not the first time for the Philippines to win the award; we have always been in the Top 10 best dive destinations. The positive feedback we received affirms the country's standing as a premier dive destination."

Head of Team Japan, Director Benito Bengzon said, "The Philippines remains to be a favorite dive destination among the Japanese. For several years, Blue Coral Resort in Cebu has been voted as the number one Best Dive Operator."

This year, the Philippine del-



Blue Coral Cebu

egation exhibit booth featured a whale shark or 'butanding' backdrop and several sea water aquariums featuring small sea creatures found only in the Philippines, such as the multi-colored jelly fish.

Bengzon said "The Philippine participants are very happy with the outcome of the country's participation to the MDF. Optimism was evident despite the economic challenges, with their clients asking for return trips, and many prospective clients signifying strong interest."

Part of the Philippine delegation was Kasai Village Resort from Moalboal, popular for their expertise in taking divers around spectacular wrecks in Cebu.

General Manager Michael Pettersson said, "Moalboal is one of the oldest centers of diving in the country. The sites here are famous for the pygmy seahorse and frog fish, to name a few."

Kasai Village Resort will now be represented in Japan by Metropolitan Tours, one of Japan's biggest tour operators.

Japan named the other places of top 10 dive sites as Maldives, Palau, Ishigaki Island; Saipan, Okinawa Island, Zamami Island, French Polynesia, Mizako Island, and Guam. (PNA)