

Air Force in the market for UH-1H engine assembly

MANILA -- The Armed Forces of the Philippines, through the Philippine Air Force Bids and Awards Committee, is allocating the sum of PHP35 million for the acquisition of the so-called "T53-L3B engine assembly" needed for the maintenance of two UH-IH/D helicopters.

The parts are intended for the UH-1 helicopters with tail numbers 508 and 8189.

Submission of bids and opening is scheduled for June 14, 9:15 a.m. at the PAF Procure-

ment Center, Conference Room, Villamor Air Base, Pasay City, the bid bulletin posted at the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System website said Thursday.

Prospective bidders should have participated in a similar project within the last five years.

"The Philippine Air Force reserves the right to reject any and all bids, declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract at any time prior to contract in accordance with Section

41 of RA 9184 (Government Procurement Reform Act) and its IRR (Implementing Rules and Regulations) without incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders," said PAF Bids and Awards Committee chair Brig. Gen. Carlo N. Buena in the bid bulletin.

The PAF is known to operate around 30 to 40 types of the UH-1H helicopters which it uses for troop and cargo transport, humanitarian and disaster relief, as well as combat missions. (PNA)

Angkas eyes 6-month pilot run by end June

MANILA -- Motorcycle ride-hailing firm Angkas is eyeing to start the six-month pilot run of its operations by the end of June as it trains its drivers to ensure road safety and improve the services for its riders.

"Sana po by third week or last week of June makapaglargang kasi promise natin sa publiko na June ang pilot (Hopefully we could start by third week or last week of June because we promised to the public that June will be the pilot)," said Angkas regulatory and public affairs head George Royeca in a press conference on Thursday.

"The purpose of the pilot is really to assess the different safety guidelines this is ongoing even as we continue our operations. So if there are safety guidelines that are needed to be tweaked in the middle of the operation of the pilot, we will be tweaking it," he added.

The Department of Transportation (DOTr) has approved last May the pilot implementation of motorcycle taxi operations for six months in Metro Manila and Cebu.

The pilot run aims to assess the safety level of motorcycle taxis and was recommended by a technical working group created by DOTr to study the issue of legalizing motor-

cycles as public utility vehicles.

Angkas will retrain its 27,000 accredited biker-partners through rigorous riding skills assessments, written tests, and extensive safety training to ensure they meet very high safety standards in preparation for the pilot operation. It intends to train 2,000 drivers a day.

"Currently, we have retrained 12,000 drivers so we still need to train additional 15,000 more to fully train the 27,000 before we can launch the pilot," said Angkas operations head David Medrana.

The company will provide special reflectorized vests with side straps to help bikers become more visible at night and aid passengers in holding on to the biker's waist. Each vest has the biker's unique ID number ensuring that only officially-registered bikers can take ride bookings.

All Angkas biker-partners and their passengers are also insured for every ride.

A feedback mechanism is also installed on its mobile app to closely monitor the performance of drivers and quickly address passenger concerns.

Royeca hopes that Congress will be able to pass a law that will legalize motorcycle taxis

after the six-month pilot run.

"I think even before the six months are over, we hope to refile the bill in Congress and in Senate. We hope to have a very healthy dialogue with the Committee on Public Services in Senate and the Committee on Transportation in Congress so that we can update them on a regular basis on the operations of the pilot program," Royeca said.

The motorcycle ride-sharing firm assured passengers that it will not impose fare increases amid the implementation of its safety features.

Motorcycle taxis shall have a fare of PHP50 for the first two kilometers, an additional PHP10 per kilometer until seven kilometers, additional PHP15 for succeeding kilometers, and a surge rate cap of 1.5x in Metro Manila based on the guidelines set by the DOTr.

The initial charge will be PHP20 for the first kilometer, an additional PHP20 per kilometer up to eight kilometers, and PHP20 per kilometer for destinations beyond eight kilometers in Metro Cebu.

Angkas will also not add motorcycle taxis during the pilot operation.

Motorcycles are currently prohibited from operating as public transport services under Republic Act 4136 or the Land Transportation Code. (PNA)

PNP bats for modernization towards proper law enforcement

MANILA -- The Philippine National Police (PNP) has vowed to push for modernization of its system and equipment towards proper law enforcement.

PNP spokesperson, Col. Bernard Banac made the remark following the arrest of Davao Today columnist Margarita Valle, which the police later called a case of mistaken identity.

"The PNP shall endeavor to push for modernization of its systems and equipment that will be capable of real-time validation of information to aid our operating units in performing the mission to enforce the law and serve court processes against wanted persons diligently, judiciously and effectively

with utmost respect for human rights," Banac told reporters.

Banac said that they understand what the veteran journalist felt over her ordeal from the time she was arrested at the Laguindingan Airport in Misamis Oriental up to the time when she was taken to a police office.

"The mistaken arrest of Ms. Margarita Valle is indeed too regrettable. In fact, the Regional Chief (of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group) Colonel (Tom) Tuzon has already asked for understanding and expressed sincerest apology," said Banac.

"We assure the public that a full-dress investigation is now in progress to determine culpability for the ap-

Legarda receives award of distinction from EU

MANILA -- The European Union (EU) Delegation in Manila, led by Ambassador Franz Jessen, has conferred on Senator Loren Legarda a special award for her contribution in strengthening the Philippine-EU bilateral relations.

The Award of Distinction by the EU was given to Legarda to honor her work as chairperson of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, and her role in the process of ratification of the Framework Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation Between the Philippines and the European Union (PH-EU PCA).

Legarda sponsored the Senate's concurrence in the ratification of 33 treaties when she chaired the Foreign Relations Committee in the 15th and 17th Congresses. Among the treaties are the PH-EU PCA, the Free Trade Agreement Between the European Free Trade Association States and the Philippines, the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the Social Security Conventions with Spain, Germany, and Sweden.

"I am deeply grateful and honored to be given

the Award of Distinction by the European Union. I share this recognition with my colleagues in the Senate who supported me as chair of the Committee on Foreign Relations and unanimously voted for the ratification of the PH-EU Partnership and Cooperation Agreement," she said in a news release issued on June 7.

Legarda, who will be ending her third term as senator on June 30, and will assume her post as representative of the province of Antique, assured the EU Delegation that she will continue to be a strong voice in supporting PH-EU relations as a member of the House of Representatives.

"I will always help out not only in economic initiatives but also in cultural diplomacy," Legarda said, adding that she looks forward to nurturing the robust bilateral relations between the Philippines and the EU through the implementation of the PCA.

Legarda said she will also propose the establishment of a PH-EU parliamentary association in the House of Representatives.

Present at the awarding were Ambassadors Michel Goffin of Belgium,

parent lapses and oversight to prevent similar incidents in future police operations," he added.

On Monday, PNP chief, Gen. Oscar Albayalde, directed the Internal Affairs Service (IAS) to conduct an inquiry into the matter.

He said part of the investigation is how deep the case buildup was made before the joint team of police and military personnel conducted the arrest.

Albayalde said the PNP IAS will look into possible lapses of the police personnel involved in the operation.

Valle was arrested on June 9 while waiting for a flight home to Davao City at the Laguindingan Airport in Cagayan de Oro.

According to the re-

port, the subject of the operation was a certain Elsa Renton who has a standing arrest warrant over charges of multiple murders, frustrated murder, and damage to government properties. Renton is also using names such as Tina Maglaya or Fidelina Margarita Valle y Avellanosa.

Valle was brought to the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) office in Zamboanga City and was immediately released after an informant confirmed that Valle was not the actual suspect although they have a "major resemblance".

Albayalde said the PNP will assist Valle if she will file a complaint against the arresting cops. (PNA)

Jana Sediva of Czech Republic, Jan Top Christensen of Denmark, Gordon Kricke of Germany, Jozsef Bencze of Hungary, and Saskia de Lang of The Netherlands; EU Deputy Head of Delegation Thomas Wiersing; French Embassy Chargé d'affaires Christine Carole; Deputy Counsel of Embassy of Italy Eugeniu Rotaru; Embassy of Poland Chargé

d'affaires Jaroslaw Szczepankiewicz; and British Embassy Deputy Head of Mission Alastair Totty.

The Award of Distinction was started by Ambassador Jessen in 2017 for individuals who have contributed to EU-PH bilateral relations. Previous awardees include former Secretary Jesus Dureza and National Artist for Literature F. Sionil Jose. (PR)

PRRD wants cleansing of party-list system: Palace

MANILA — President Rodrigo R. Duterte wants a cleansing of the party-list system in the country, Malacañang on Thursday said.

Responding to queries from the media in a briefing, Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo said Duterte may be keen on abolishing the party-list system or on putting in marginalized sector representatives in the organizations.

"Baka papunta roon (abolition) kung ganyan ang sentimyento niya or baka gusto niya na iyong nagrepresent coming from that sector (It might be heading to abolition or maybe he wants representatives to really come from the marginalized sector)," he said.

Panelo said it is up to the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to institute reforms in the party-list system.

"Actually nasa (it's up to) Comelec. Sila ang nagkaqualify ng mga nominees (They are the ones who qualify nominees)," he said.

"He (Duterte) is expressing an idea and that's for the Comelec to respond to it," he added.

The President on Wednesday said the party-list system is dominated by millionaires.

"The rich people fund the party-list. They are named after laborers but their nominees are the millionaires," he said in his speech at the oath-taking of newly-elected local government officials of Cagayan de Oro City. (PNA)