

DOJ inspects magnetic lifters in multi-billion shabu haul

MANILA -- The Department of Justice (DOJ) on Thursday inspected the magnetic lifters used to smuggle billions of pesos worth of illegal drugs into the country last year.

Assistant State Prosecutor Mary Jane Sytat and members of her panel conducted the inspections at the warehouse in General Mariano Alvarez (GMA), Cavite, where the four magnetic lifters are be-

ing kept.

Sytat said the panel will proceed to the Manila International Container Port (MICP) on Friday, where the two other magnetic lifters are being kept.

The DOJ is conducting a preliminary investigation of the complaints filed by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) and the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), in connection

with the smuggling of billions of pesos worth of shabu concealed inside the magnetic lifters, which are meant to be attached to heavy equipment.

Named as respondents in the complaint are former Customs Commissioner Isidro Lapena, Vener Baquiran, Zsae Carrie de Guzman, John Mar Morales, and Benjamin Cajucom for allegedly having committed der-

eliction of duty in violation of the Revised Penal Code; violation of Section 3(e) of the Republic Act 3019 (Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act); and grave misconduct in violation of the Code of Conduct for Public Officials and Employees.

Also included in the NBI criminal complaint are 40 other persons, including the three alleged "core conspirators" -- former Customs intelligence officer Jimmy Guban, former Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) Deputy Director for Administration Ismael Fajardo, and dismissed Police Col. Eduardo Acierto. (PNA)

NCRPO chief serves warrant vs. cops

MANILA -- National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) chief Maj. Gen. Guillermo Eleazar on Thursday personally served the warrant of arrest against seven Las Piñas cops who are facing kidnap for ransom charges inside the NCRPO headquarters in Taguig City.

The operation stemmed from the coordination made by Maj. Resty Soriano, Silang, Cavite police chief, to the NCRPO Regional Special Operations Unit (RSOU).

Staff Sgt. Joel Lupig, Corporals Vener Gunalao and Jayson Arelano and Patrolmen Jeffrey DeLeon, Mark Jeffreson Fulgencio, Raymart Gomez, and Erickson Rivera, were under restrictive custo-

dy at the NCRPO Custodial Detention Facility of Regional Headquarters Support Unit (RHSU) when they were arrested.

Eleazar said She-lane Lagutan, a sister of an arrested drug suspect, complained that the seven police officers tried to demand money from them in exchange for the release and dropping of charges against her brother in November 2018.

The suspects earlier eluded arrest during an entrapment operation conducted against them but they later surrendered to Eleazar.

They underwent documentation prior to return of warrant of arrest to the court of origin for the issuance of commitment order.

Aside from criminal charges, the seven cops were also charged with grave misconduct.

Meanwhile, another cop was arrested for estafa inside the Custodial Detention Facility in Camp Bagong Diwa on Tuesday.

Staff Sgt. Rafael Muchuelas allegedly scammed Master Sgt. Jenaline Sad-Ang and

his wife by making them invest PHP2.6 million in his company, Rafael Muchuelas Group of Companies.

He promised the couple that with his company's ties with the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation they would profit from their investment.

However, the Sad-Ang couple never got their profitable return, prompting them to file a case against Muchuelas.

It was also found out through verification with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) that the Rafael Muchuelas Group of Companies does not exist.

Muchuelas was brought to the Regional Special Operations Unit (RSOU) for documentation and the warrant of arrest will be returned to the court of origin.

"This is the result of the intensification of our anti-criminality campaign. We assure the public that the PNP especially NCRPO will run after criminals no matter where they try to hide," Eleazar said. (PNA)

Deployment of voting machines, ballots starts next month

MANILA -- The Commission on Elections (Comelec) is set to start next month the deployment of vote counting machines (VCMs), the official ballots, as well as other poll paraphernalia to its designated service providers.

The poll body said the equipment and supplies will be used in all polling centers nationwide.

May 2019 National and Local Elections (NLE).

Covered by F2 Logistics Phils., Inc. are 10 regions composed of Ilocos Region, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Cordillera Administrative Region, Zamboanga Peninsula, Northern Mindanao, Davao Region, Soccsksargen, Caraga, and Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in

Muslim Mindanao.

Airfreight 2100, Inc., will be serving Calabarzon, Mimaropa, Bicol Region, and the National Capital Region while Western, Central, and Eastern Visayas regions will be handled by LBC Express, Inc.

Meanwhile, the Comelec started this week the transfer of some official ballots printed by the NPO to its

warehouse in Marikina City.

"Due to insufficiency of space at the NPO, the packed official ballots for use in the May 13, 2019 National and Local Elections will be transferred to the Comelec Warehouse

in Marikina City starting March 6, 2019 for temporary storage and pre-staging," it added.

The official ballots for the National Capital Region, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, and Mimaropa will remain at the NPO. (PNA)

DOTr deploys 3rd Dalian train set for test runs

MANILA -- The Department of Transportation (DOTr) on Friday deployed for test runs another set of trains purchased from Chinese firm CRRC Dalian for the Metro Rail Transit Line-3 (MRT-3).

The Dalian trains will also undergo test runs Monday next week from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. to complete the necessary 150 hours of validation runs, the DOTr said in its advisory.

The trains have completed the 1,000-kilometer test run after it was deployed to the MRT-3 from January 23 to February 1.

After the trains completed the tests, the Philippine National Railways (PNR) will evaluate if they can be utilized for the regular operations of the

railway system.

The MRT-3 has deployed the first Dalian train set from October 27 to November 21 last year, while another was deployed from Dec. 11 to 23, 2018. Each set consists of three train cars.

These first two train sets are being eyed for permanent deployment to the MRT-3 system this month following the completion of the test runs, DOTr Undersecretary for Railways Timothy John Batan.

A total of 48 Dalian light rail vehicles were delivered to the country in 2016 but were not deployed to the MRT line due to compatibility issues. CRRC Dalian eventually agreed to absorb the costs for the adjustments of the trains. (PNA)

MBDA France bags contract for frigates' surface-to-air missiles

MANILA -- A European firm bagged the contract to supply surface-to-air missiles for the two frigates currently being constructed by South Korean shipbuilder, Hyundai Heavy Industries (HHI).

In a Notice of Award dated January 30 posted on the Department of National Defense website, the agency accepted the

bid of MBDA France to supply the surface-to-air missiles for 10,690,000 Euros (PHP639,262,000).

The amount is pegged at an exchange rate where one euro is equivalent to PHP59.80, during the time when the notice of award was issued.

"This is to inform you that the proposal of MBDA France for the Acquisition of

Frigate Lot 2 (Missiles and Munition) -- Lot 2B Surface-to-Air Missile Project of the Philippine Navy, with a corresponding contract price in the amount of Ten Million Six Hundred Ninety Thousand Euros (10,690,000 Euros) is hereby accepted," Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said in the notice.

Earlier, the Department of National Defense Bids

and Awards Committee 1, in a resolution, declared MBDA France's proposal as the "Single Calculated and Response Quotation for the Acquisition of Frigate Lot 2 (Missiles and Munition) -- Lot 2B Surface-to-Air Missile Project and Recommending the Issuance of a Notice of Award in its Favor."

Almost 2.5K persons nabbed for gun ban violations: PNP

MANILA -- Close to 2,500 persons have been arrested for violating the election gun ban.

Philippine National Police (PNP) spokesperson, Col. Bernard Banac, said as of 6 a.m. Friday, a total of 2,473 persons have been apprehended in 277,296 police operations since the implementation of the gun ban by the Commission on Elections (Comelec) last January 13.

Of this number, 1,355 suspects were intercepted during police patrol operations, 474 through search warrants, and 406 during "Oplan Bakal, Sita, Galugad" operation.

Banac said the figure includes 211 persons apprehended in checkpoints and 27 others during the serving of warrants of arrest since the gun ban started.

He said 2,329 of those arrested are civilians while the other 45 were security guards; 39 were government and elected officials; 24 were police officers; three were military personnel; six were law enforcers; one was a member of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology; and one was a foreign national.