

## Sound Snipings

BY Jimmy Cabato

As rains continue to be scarce and the dry spell goes unabated, scarce, too, on statements have been our government agencies tasked to undertake the cloud seeding operations on their efforts.

Whatever did happen to such moves? There appears no inroads, as no rains have not been experienced in the city. Had there been some in the mountains, at least, we could have noticed the darkened clouds from afar. But the days past have all been clear-skied. And water level on our impounding dams remains critical.

We are no in no way belittling efforts of government, we are simply tickling our tasked agencies to inform us appropriately to help cushion our anxieties for fear for being entirely waterless in the weeks ahead before June, the possible onset of the rainy season.

It is alarming really. From today up to the hoped-for June rainfalls, is quite a long way to go. And to date, we are serviced with only seven hours a day of water.

With rainless months ahead, fear and anxiety would be gyrating in our minds. SOS!

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Prolific Manila-based writer Batas Mauricio drops a line that he believes “massive cheating is already a done deal” for the May elections.

Two angles stir the Aquino government to resort to that, he said.

One is to ensure victory of an Aquino anointee to guarantee Aquino stays out of jail when he steps out of Malacañang when his term ends in July.

Two, Aquino needs to block the triumph of Bongbong Marcos so that the EDSA gains, “whether imagined or real, would not be thrown down the sewer drain.”

Aquino, he says dreads that “it would be during his watch as president that the once iron-grip that the Aquinos have on Philippine history - which was responsible for painting them as patriots and as conquerors of dictatorial regimes - would be loosened and ultimately lost”

Mauricio added that today Filipinos feel their lives were better off under the Marcos-led Martial Law years.

He concluded with a seemingly snide warning, “Are you listening, Bongbong?”

Friends, with that wake-up call this fair-haired of a boy must be ready to counteract that evil move. His efforts in campaigning will go to naught, if cheating succeeds. He must counter the devilish plan.

Question: Can the VCR”s, the same dog with a different collar - PCOS - still be stopped?

A big poser. The four features mandated under the Automated Election Law (AEL), one of which in particular, is the Voters Verification Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) have been scrapped by Comelec.

Minus VVAPT, and the there security features, there is no way to determine, if indeed, the votes

cast were credited to voters' chosen candidates.

God save the country!

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The well-placed and proven highly-credible sources of The Manila Times (TMT) within the chamber of the Supreme Court (SC) have again been made revelatons, "JUSTICES of the Supreme Court (SC) were offered P50 million each to disqualify Senator Grace Poe from running as a presidential candidate in the May elections,".

The bribery attempt was bared a day before the SC en banc session where SC justices were expected to vote on the disqualification case against the senator.

The sources disclosed, two attempts were made to buy off the votes of the magistrates, both by persons "very close" to President Benigno Aquino 3rd and Manuel "Mar" Roxas 2nd, the standard bearer of the Liberal Party (LP).

The first offer, the same sources said, came from a female lawyer who supports the Roxas' presidential bid. The sources, however said the offer of P50 million for each justice who will disqualify Poe refused the deal.

The source said a lawmaker and his "partner," a former businessman close to Aquino and Roxas, were behind the second attempt to bribe the justices, and that a member of the ruling LP dangled the same offer to a senior justice, who also declined it.

TMT tried to interview several justices but they refused to discuss the bribery attempt.

The bribery offer was compared to what happened during the Senate impeachment trial for Chief Justice Renato Corona.

This was shored up by Senator Jose “Jinggoy” Estrada, who had earlier said there was an offer of P50 million for each senator who would convict Corona, who was later impeached.

Justices of the high tribunal will tackle the disqualification case against Poe today, the last day for the magistrates to submit their dissenting or concurring opinions to the draft decision written by Associate Justice Mariano del Castillo, who pushed for the disqualification of Poe because she failed to meet the residency requirement for presidential candidates.

If no voting is held today, it is likely to resume on Wednesday during a special en banc session the tribunal has set.

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Senator Francis Escudero maintained a scanty six-point lead over his closes rival, Sen. Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marfcos, Jr., in the vice presidential race, based on the latest The Standard Poll results.

Escudero led with 30 percent, followed by Senator Ferdinand Marcos Jr. (24 percent), Camarines Sur Rep. Leni Robredo (20 percent), Senator Alan Cayetano (11 percent), Senator Antonio Trillanes IV (seven percent) and Senator Gringo Honasan (4 percent).

The nationwide survey of 3,000 respondents, conducted from Feb. 24 to March 1, showed that Cayetano lost the most in terms of voter support, dropping four percentage points from 15 percent in January.

Cayetano’s rating went down across all major geographic areas, but especially in the National Capital Region and Mindanao. (PS)

With drastically noticeable drop in percentage points - Escudero continued holding on to the lead - but in spite of that, Camarines Sur Rep. Leni Robredo, the vice presidential candidate of the Liberal Party (LP), admitted on Monday that Sen. Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. is the candidate to beat in the VP race.

Now, now, now, Robredo appears campaigning for “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. Read on...

In explaining that Marcos is the man to beat, Robredo explained his numbers are steadily rising. Such noted rise is not the same for Senator Chiz Escudero because he has been up early due to popularity, but his numbers are going down.

And here’s more... “I believe that he (Bongbong) is a formidable opponent because he has vast resources at his disposal. There’s air and ground support. It is difficult to match such huge war chest,” Robredo, wife of former Interior Secretary Jesse Robredo, added.

fairness, Robredo, however, is not raising the white flag, as yet. (TMT-sourced)

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Backing the bulletin from the Department of Health (DOH), Malacañang on Monday assured the public that there is no Zika virus epidemic in the country and there is no reason to panic.

Coloma said the government, through the Department of Health (DOH), is ready to ensure the safety of citizens against the virus.

Health Secretary Janet Garin has stressed this is a single case and that there is no epidemic and no outbreak. Zika viral disease is characterized by fever, rash, conjunctivitis, joint pain, muscle pain, headache and vomiting.