

# DATELINE PHILIPPINES

## Comelec won't extend deadline for registration

MANILA – The Commission on Elections (Comelec) said it would not extend the Oct. 31 deadline for the registration of voters.

Speaking at the weekly Kapitan sa Manila Hotel media forum, Comelec spokesman James Jimenez said the early deadline is to enable the screening and printing of the voters' list for next year's automated elections.

Jimenez also said the Comelec has stopped satellite registration in schools and other public places.

Registration of voters would be done only in Comelec offices, he added.

Various groups and personalities, including Sen. Francis Escudero, have asked the Comelec to extend the deadline for registration of voters from Oct. 31 to December to give the youth more time to register.

However, Comelec commissioner Lucenito Tagle said that prolonging the registration would adversely affect the print-

ing of the voters' list, which has to be submitted to the Election Regulatory Board (ERB) before approval and inclusion in the computerized voters' list (CVL) for the 2010 elections, the Comelec said.

Between March 11 and 25, 2010 notices would be sent for the inspection, verification, and final check of the precinct books before these are sealed between March 26 and April 10, the Comelec added.

### 'I'm not being probed'

A Comelec official linked to the "Hello, Garci" scandal denied on October 26 that he is facing an investigation.

In a statement sent to The Star, lawyer Ray Sumalipao, Comelec director for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, said that he had no knowledge of any case filed against him.

"For the nth time, myself was condemned, public outcast, for a wrong I never committed, and will never commit," read the statement.

"Worst, it appears that I was charged, informed, tried and even convicted, all in one occasion in the papers."

He was reacting to a report in The Star that 13 Comelec officials, including Sumalipao, will

not be given a significant role in next year's elections by Comelec chairman Jose Melo.

The Comelec law department has reportedly recommended the filing of administrative charges against them.

Records at the law department showed that charges of insubordination and misconduct were recommended against Sumalipao in connection with the Sultant vs. Calandada case.

Sumalipao also belied any "wrong act" contained in the alleged wiretapped conversation between former election commissioner Virgilio Garcillano and President Arroyo.

"Scrutiny on the published transcript of the conversation therein contained, crystally revealed that myself committed no wrong," he said.

Sumalipao said he was named regional director in 2008 after Garcillano had resigned.

"During Commissioner Garcillano's incumbency, many were appointed directors but not me," he said.

"My several applications made (since 2003) were simply ignored... (until) the time Commissioner Garcillano was long out in 2005 or three years thereafter." (Philstar.com)

## Leptospirosis cases going down, says DOH

by SHEILA CRISOSTOMO  
Philstar.com

MANILA – Leptospirosis cases continue to go down but the Department of Health (DOH) reiterated on October 26 that the public should not let its guard down against the flood-borne disease.

In a report, the DOH said that from Oct. 23 to 26, a total of 69 more cases of leptospirosis were brought to 15 sentinel hospitals, bringing the number of cases to 2,158. The death toll was pegged at 167.

This means that for the past three days, some 23 new cases were reported daily and this is significantly lower than the 43 cases on Oct. 22 and the 83 cases on Oct. 21.

But the DOH urged the public not to be complacent against leptospirosis especially since more typhoons are expected to hit the country.

The DOH said the public should

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