

PCGG to probe 'secret' Marcos offshore trust

MANILA- A Philippine government body said April 4 it would investigate an allegation that the eldest daughter of late dictator Ferdinand Marcos was the beneficiary of a secret offshore trust.

A report published by the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism alleged Imee Marcos, 57, now a provincial governor, had failed to declare the trust in the British Virgin Islands as legally required.

Andres Bautista, head of a presidential body tasked with recovering the billions of dollars the Marcos family stole during his 20-year rule, told AFP his office would look into the allegations.

"We are duty bound to investigate and, depending upon informed preliminary findings, decide whether to pursue the matter," Bautista said.

An army-backed popular uprising topped Marcos in 1986 and he died in US exile three years later. His famously extravagant wife, Imelda, has always denied she and her hus-

'Let's leave that aside for now and let the lawyers take care of it.' - Ilocos Norte Gov. Imee Marcos

band were corrupt.

The Presidential Commission on Good Government, which Bautista heads, has recovered \$4 billion in assets that the Marcoses illegally acquired, including money from Swiss bank accounts and U.S. properties.

But Bautista told AFP in January that, with Imee, Imelda and Ferdinand Jr having re-established political influence in the Philippines, the commission was considering giving up the chase for billions more believed to be hidden.

"It's been 26 years and people you are after are back in power. At some point, you just have to say, 'We've done our best', and that's that. It is really difficult," he said at

the time.

The Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) said the work looking into the Marcos trust was a collaboration with the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, which includes major foreign media groups.

It said the research had uncovered "scores of documents" showing Imee Marcos was a financial adviser for, and beneficiary of, the secret trust although it was not known what assets it held.

Interviewed on ABS-CBN television April 30, Imee Marcos referred inquiries to her lawyers. "Let's leave that aside for now and let the lawyers take care of it," she said curtly.

Calls by AFP to Imee Marcos's office went unanswered earlier Thursday. The PCIJ said she had failed to respond to its requests for comment.

Imee Marcos is running unopposed in next month's mid-term elections for a second term as governor of Ilocos Norte province, which was her father's political stronghold.

Imelda Marcos is likely to retain her seat in Congress representing a district in the province. Ferdinand Jr, a senator, is widely expected to run for president in 2016. - AFP

SENATE from A1

senatorial candidates' former senator Jamby Madrigal with 7.25 minutes; reelectionist Koko Pimentel, seven minutes; Edward Hagedorn, 5.25 minutes; and Nancy Binay with 3.5 minutes.

With much of its candidates using their TV airtime, UNA also tops the use of political party advertisements on TV with 52 minutes already used up, while the Liberal Party only utilized 4.5 minutes so far. Both parties air radio and TV ads in support of their candidates.

Buhay party-list was the lone sectoral representative aspirant that has a TV broadcast log with three minutes.

RESOLUTION 9615

For TV ads, Comelec issued Resolution 9615, which limits candidates and registered political parties for national elective position to no more than an aggregate total of 120 minutes of television advertising, regardless if it appears on national, regional, or local, free or cable television.

The Liberal Party utilized six minutes out of its radio ad limits so far.

Among party-lists, Bagong Henerasyon Party List advertised 26 minutes worth of radio propagandas while LPGMA Party List used 13.5 minutes.

Candidates for senator, party-list and political parties are given an aggregate total of 180 minutes of radio advertising, whether airing on national, regional, or local radio.

The resolution also said that when there are two or more candidates or parties who are together in the broadcast election advertisements, the length of time will be counted against the airtime limits allotted for the said candidates or parties, and the cost of the said advertisement will also be considered as their expenditures, "regardless of whoever paid for the advertisements or to whom the said advertisements were donated."

Resolution 9615 requires broadcast entities to submit a certified true copy of its broadcast logs for

the review and verification of the frequency, date, time and duration of advertisements aired for any candidate or party to the Commission.

While candidates from the local and national levels head an all-out media campaign, two from the Team PNoy senatorial candidates are set to be endorsed by an actor and a singer, respectively.

"Bam" Aquino 4th, the youngest in the Team PNoy slate at 35 years old, said that he will appear with actor Dingdong Dantes in a music video to promote youth participation in elections, and indirectly helping his campaign known as 'Bamwagon'.

"Even before I became a member of the Liberal Party, Dingdong already told me that he wanted to help me in my bid. The music video is about the youth, in a summer gimmick with a cause," Aquino said.

"The video will be posted on the Internet, but I hope that the traditional media will pick it up," Aquino, ranking sixth and 10th in two recent opinion surveys, added.

Meanwhile, Hontiveros of Akbayan party-list said that veteran singer Ogie Alcasid wants to endorse her. Alcasid was a known supporter of the presidential bid of then senator Benigno Aquino 3rd in 2010.

"I hope that this will work out and I will continue to fight and work hard," said Hontiveros, who remains in 16th and 18th places in recent surveys.

NEXT 40 DAYS

Team PNoy spokesman, Rep. Romero Quimbo of Marikina City believes the next 40 days can only get better since the majority of the incumbent officials belong to the Team PNoy coalition.

"It is important that 92 percent of the local candidates are from Team PNoy, and we see it to the advantage of our candidates. We will conduct the national campaign closely with the local campaign," Quimbo added.

However, in the southern part of the country, boxing legend and Rep. Manny "Pacman" Pacquiao of Sarangani province officially endorsed the entire senatorial slate of the UNA

party over the weekend, promising to campaign for them in Mindanao.

Pacquiao believes that the nine UNA senatorial candidates are able to relate to the people in Sarangani and neighboring provinces in southern Mindanao who have been complaining of eight to 12-hour blackouts, causing many businesses to shut down leaving many jobless.

Pacquiao is also campaigning for his wife, Jinkee, who is running for vice governor in the province, while his brother Ruel is running for a Congress seat in the First District of South Cotabato City.

To top the highly-publicized campaigning for the coming elections, the rumors are confirmed that the youngest sister of President Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, entertainment celebrity Kris Aquino is set to run for vice president in the coming 2016 elections.

Former Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) president and Archbishop emeritus Oscar Cruz said that the information was confirmed by credible sources from within the present administration.

"Formerly, it was only in whispers. Now, it has become more commonly said and heard that the youngest sister of the president of the Republic will also run as vice president of the Republic come 2016," Cruz said.

"I'm not saying that she will do it in 2016. I'm just saying that, up to now, this is what is being said," he added.

Asked if the movie and television actress has a strong chance of succeeding Vice President Jejomar Binay, Cruz was optimistic about Ms. Aquino's success in politics.

"She's an actress and the Filipino electorate, in general, likes actors and actresses. Like Senator Lito Lapid... if she's going to run, let her run because it takes so little to qualify for public office from the local to the national level," he said.

Cruz called on Aquino and her allies to address the issue squarely to "appease" the public.

KRIS from A1

player James Yap, she surprised no one. A few years back, she had chosen the same medium to disclose her domestic dispute with then-partner Joey Marquez.

But when she announced March 21 that she was "sacrificing show business for the sake" of her younger son, many took notice. Reaction ranged from semi-sympathetic to incredulous to downright cruel, especially those hiding behind cyber-identities.

U.S. advocates for family health and safety, however, commended Aquino's plan.

"Turning her back on the dazzle of the cameras might help her and her 5-year-old son heal from past experiences," said licensed psychologist Dr. Jei Africa, who stressed the need for Aquino to take the opportunity to "spend time to face, understand and address the issues that are affecting her and her family."

San Mateo County area public health nurse Jeannette Trajano agreed.

"It is so important to provide positive experiences for our children because we adults are teachers - intentionally or unintentionally - for them and our community," said Trajano. "Her choice to make the changes to keep her son safe from further exposure to trauma is an example that she sets for her son about the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships."

Bay Area lawyer Robert Uy put the situation in perspective.

"Unwanted sexual advances are clearly a form of domestic violence and sexual assault and the assault of a mother in front of a child also constitutes child abuse," said the vice president of the Filipino Bar Association of Northern California. "If what Ms. Aquino alleges indeed took place, she and her child need protection through the legal process."

Aquino is represented by former solicitor general Frank Chavez. Lorna Capunan is Yap's legal counsel.

Aquino on March 23 flew out of the country reportedly for a two-week vacation with her two sons and a nanny after a judge rejected a petition for a hold-departure order from Yap, against whom Aquino took out a 30-day temporary restraining order. She accused him of "overstepping

his bounds" and making "unwanted sexual advances" in front of their son. He allegedly uttered "mean and malicious statements" when she resisted. The incident took place during one of Yap's twice-weekly parental visitations.

The petition for the restraining order claimed that the child placed himself between his parents, pleading with his father to "stop hurting" his mother.

"The physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and moral harm and injury foisted was occasioned by the unfettered access of respondent Yap on the household and persons of the petitioners," claimed the petition for TRO.

Yap denied the allegations and accused Aquino of invoking the name and power of her brother.

The judge later placed a gag order on the case, but by then Aquino had made her position clear.

SACRIFICE

"I have to make a sacrifice. I don't want to be selfish anymore," Aquino told ABS-CBN news anchor Ted Failon in an exclusive interview March 21 at the Aquino family residence in Quezon City with Aquino's sisters Ballsy Cruz, Pinky Abellada and Viel Dec.

"We agreed to support Kris all the way," Cruz explained their rare television appearance in support of their sister. "...Kris and James - they're adults. But Bim (the boy's nickname) is suffering, kawawa ang bata."

An emotional but composed Aquino said on camera that she wanted to clarify her reasons for obtaining the temporary restraining order her ex.

She did not retract her earlier allegations that he had made unwanted sexual advances against her, threatened her and grabbed her on Dec. 3, 2012.

Yap's alleged behavior that day was not what prompted her to seek the restraining order, she told Failon, but how it affected their son.

"He tried to harm me. He did that in front of our son," said Aquino.

She said she has decided to change her lifestyle for James "Bimby" Yap Jr., her son with Yap. (She has an older son, Josh, with actor Phillip Salvador.)

"My son is intelligent, he knows what's right from wrong," she ex-

See KRIS, B3

PACQUIAO from A1

said, citing comments Pacquiao made to her on Wednesday.

Pacquiao, 34, is running for re-election as a congressman in next month's Philippine mid-term elections, and he is currently on the campaign trail.

Tamayo said Pacquiao wanted his next fight to be outside the United States, where he has traditionally fought in front of huge crowds and for enormous pay-per-view television revenues, to avoid high taxes.

"Manny wants to fight outside the United States because of the taxes... Singapore is one of the top places for consideration. There is also Macau and Dubai," Tamayo told AFP.

Pacquiao has won an unprecedented eight world titles in different weight divisions, and was until recently regarded by many as the best pound-for-pound boxer.

But Pacquiao lost his World Boxing Organization welterweight crown in June last year in a contro-

versial points decision to U.S fighter Timothy Bradley, then suffered his shock knockout defeat to Marquez..

His losses prompted calls for him to retire, but Pacquiao has consistently signalled his intention to keep on fighting.

Pacquiao's sporting achievements lifted him and his family out of deep poverty, as he became one of the highest paid sportsmen in the world and an endorser of a myriad of products in the Philippines.

He translated his boxing success into the political ring, winning a seat in the nation's lower house of parliament in 2010.

Pacquiao is running for re-election unopposed in the May polls, while seeking to build a power base for his family. Pacquiao's wife and brother are also running for political posts in the May elections.

Many Philippine politicians draft in relatives to stand for other elective positions to spread their influence and strengthen their power networks. - AFP

REODICA from A1

the Speedy Trial Act, 18 U.S.C. § 3161.

The court also found that "the ends of justice served by the continuance outweigh the best interest of the public and defendant in a speedy trial; and failure to grant the continuance would likely make a continuation of the proceeding impossible, or result in a miscarriage of justice."

Court documents stated: "The case is so unusual and so complex, due to the nature of the prosecution, that it is unreasonable to expect preparation for pre-trial proceedings or for the trial itself within the time limits established by the Speedy Trial Act; and failure to grant the continuance would unreasonably deny defendant continuity of counsel and would deny defense counsel the reasonable time necessary for effective preparation, taking into account the exercise of due diligence."

ARREST

Reodica, a fugitive for more than two decades, was arrested by the FBI at the Los Angeles International Airport on November 27, 2012 (PNews January 11-17, 2013). He was traveling under the assumed name 'Coscolluela,' but his fingerprints gave him away. Authorities matched those with an arrest warrant.

Trial was set for January 29 but was continued to March 12.

According to court records, Reodica disappeared in 1988, after visiting the Philippines on a trade mission with then-California Gov.

George Deukmejian. The politically active Reodica was appointed commissioner by Deukmejian for the California State Dept. of Motor Vehicles. His inventory manager Danilo L. de Castro also disappeared the same year since an investigation into their business practices began in July 1988.

In August 1988, Reodica placed his dealerships under protection of Chapter 11 of the federal bankruptcy laws, hounded by angry creditors and investors. Authorities believed they had fled to the Philippines, and warrants for their arrest were issued.

Both Reodica and De Castro were charged in 1993, not only for defrauding various banks and savings and loan associations that had extended credit lines to GWG totaling over \$300 million, but also for fleecing banks from California to New York from \$70 million to as much as \$120 million.

If convicted, Reodica faces a maximum penalty of 144 years imprisonment and fines of \$12,750,000. De Castro remains a fugitive.

NEW IDENTITY

According to court records, after Reodica left in 1988, his wife Hilda Hilao and their four children moved to Seattle, where she later filed for divorce and changed her name. He then lived and worked in Cairns, a city in Queensland, Australia, in the early '90s became a citizen and married Leticia Coscolluela in 1993.

The Coscolluelas, who owned the R.C. Insurance Pty. Ltd., reportedly had allegedly committed fraud

against many Filipinos down under amounting to millions of Australian dollars. The couple was due to appear at a civil trial at the Brisbane Magistrates Court on January 29, the original criminal trial date in Los Angeles for Reodica aka Roberto A. Coscolluela.

The Coscolluelas, who had abandoned their home in Carseldine, Queensland, a residential suburb north of Brisbane, left the country two months before the trial, allegedly to get away from angry investors.

NIGHTMARE

A native of Pagsanjan, Laguna, Reodica came to this country in 1971, with grand academic credentials: summa cum laude in accounting from the University of the East, and a certified public accountant. He was an achiever throughout his early school years -- valedictorian from the grades to high school. A cousin said "his was a rags- to -riches story because he came from a poor family."

He started as a busboy, then a GM showroom attendant, and after four years became vice president of a Southern California General Motors dealership.

In 1978, Reodica mortgaged his home and took out several loans and bought Grand Chevrolet in Glendora. He owned 25 other car dealerships throughout California all raking up "phenomenal" car sales.

At one time, the Glendora city treasury was collecting \$1 million a year from the car dealership which had become one of the largest auto sales companies in the country.

BUS from A1

Apostol - who worked for the transit agency for 22 years - was hit March 26 during his usual late-night shift and passed away two days later at San Jose Medical Center, authorities said.

Apostol was struck by a bus driven by a fellow employee - whose identity was not released and who has been placed on administrative leave as is standard procedure, the transit agency said.

Agency spokeswoman Brandi Childress said the tragedy was caught on video at 10:40 p.m. at the 33-acre bus yard at 2240 S. Seventh St. near Tully Road and the Santa Clara County Fairgrounds.

Apostol typically cleaned and fueled buses during his late shift, Childress said.

Apostol's niece remembered him as someone who had a "fun sense of humor" and enjoyed playing music.

Her uncle formed a band with two brothers and two friends when part of the Apostol family still lived in Alaska, Christina said.

"They were called the Pulsating Heartbeat and played '60s music," she said. "He played drums and was a singer."

Apostol's passing follows the death of his brother - Christina's father - in October 2010 from cancer. So the past two and a half years have been particularly tough on the family, Christina said.

Her uncle will be buried at the Santa Clara Mission Cemetery, she said.

In a statement, Michael Burns, the transit agency's general manager, said: "I am deeply sorry for the loss of our employee. It is of the utmost importance to thoroughly understand the facts surrounding this incident as the safety of our employees and customers is our top priority. Our thoughts and prayers are with Raul's family, his colleagues and all who have been affected by this tragic incident."

The agency waited a few days to say something about the incident as it was isolated and did not involve the traveling public, Childress said.

The agency deemed the incident "an internal matter" and does not plan to release any more information out of respect for the families of the two employees involved, Childress said.

The state Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal-OSHA) and the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office are investigating the case.

By state statute, Cal-OSHA has six months to complete its investigation. "If any safety violations occurred, citations will be given," Cal-OSHA spokesman Greg Siggins said.

The sheriff's investigation is expected to take several weeks. No one has been arrested or cited at this point.

The San Jose Mercury News contributed to this report.