



# POC Online

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## Palembang: POC Team Prepares for RP Delegation Arrival

By: Clarito Samson

Palembang—Work came to a halt today to celebrate a Muslim holiday and the confirmation that popular entertainment personality KC Concepcion is going to perform during the opening ceremony of the 26th Southeast Asian Games could only excite all of one Filipino resident and the Philippine embassy officials sent to assist the RP contingent in Palembang.

This quiet city of about 1.6 million people, including Filipino optometrist Laing Lais, will only return to work after 5 p.m. today after observing Ied-al-Adha, a commemoration of a Muslim story similar to the “prodigal son” of the Catholic faith.

“As far as I know I am the only Filipino here and in all of my 29 years here, I have not heard of any other Filipino coming here to reside or work,” said the Filipina who is married to an Indonesian-Chinese.

Lais, RP Administrative Attache Abdullah Rasuman, based in Jakarta and Richard Billedo, the RP Cultural Officer in Manado, are excited that television host, singer and actress KC Concepcion, scheduled to arrive here on November 9, will be part of the opening ceremony.

Concepcion will sing “Together We Will Shine” with Indonesian Agnes Mojica and Malaysian Jacklyn Victor.

Early impressions here are that organizers in Palembang may still have a lot of work to do in terms of accommodation and accreditation.

“It is a good thing we arrived here early to make arrangements for our more than 270 athletes competing here and we are getting all-out support from our Embassy in Jakarta,” said Philippine Deputy Chief of Mission Romeo Magat. RP embassy officials Rasuman and Billedo were dispatched by Ambassador Ma. Rosario Aguinaldo to assist the RP athletes and officials in Palembang. The ambassador will attend the opening rites with POC President Jose Cojuangco, Jr. on November 11 at the newly-built track and field stadium in the Jakabaring district.

Five days before the formal opening, organizers have yet to make final decisions on where to billet a host of dignitaries, royalty and technical officials expected to come in droves from November 8 to 10.

Only one of three ships offered by business tycoon Tommy Winata to supplement the needs for lodging of Games officials and functionaries has arrived in Palembang.

“We are hopeful that organizers would be able fix all of these problems in the coming days,” DCDM Magat said.

## Football: RP to face Timor Leste

By: Clarito Samson

Jakarta—All of a sudden, the situation in group B seemed as interesting as in the “group of death” of the 26th Southeast Asian Games football competitions here.

Myanmar held Vietnam to a scoreless draw on Saturday to assume early co-leadership also painting into a corner the Philippines when it faces on Monday at 4 p.m. (5 p.m. Manila time) Timor Leste, a 2-1 winner over the weakest link of group B, Brunei Darussalam.

After the 1-3 loss to Vietnam in the inaugural last November 3, the match against Timor Leste becomes a must-win for the Filipinos if they seek to make the semi-final opposite the two teams from the dreaded group A composed of defending champion Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia and Cambodia.

Coach Hans Michael Weiss of the Philippines is keeping his fingers crossed that his aces have recovered from jet lag, which he said was the culprit in the loss to Vietnam, looking like a solid semis bet with a point and a half along with Myanmar that registered its full point via a 3-2 win over Laos. Vietnam is staring at a well-paved road to the semis with only Laos and Brunei as low hurdles.

At the back of Monday’s double-header is the Brunei-Laos tiff set at 7 p.m.

“Medyo delikado na ang lagay, kailangan natin ng panalo so we could maintain our hopes for the semi final,” said Deputy Chief of Mission Julian Camacho, who arrived Saturday night after the delegation send-off on Friday in Manila.

The send-off that was arranged by Philippine Olympic Committee President Jose Cojuangco and PSC Chairman Richie Garcia was attended by Vice President Jejomar Binay and Education Secretary Armin Luistro, who represented President Aquino. The bulk of the delegation leaves Manila on November 8 and 10 in time for the November 11 opening ceremony in the City of Palembang, a one hour plane ride from Jakarta.

Undoubtedly a crowd favourite, the Filipinos need to raise their game a notch to overcome Timor Leste, which has also called on players trained in Europe to beef up its campaign for the most important gold medal of the biennial event.

“We will take it day by day,” Weiss said during the post-game press conference last Thursday.

A victory against Timor Leste would turn the Philippines-Myanmar match on November 13 as a deciding encounter for the second semi-final slot in group B.

Group A matches, which is fancied to draw the big crowds at the historic Gelora Bung Karno stadium, start on November 9 with Malaysia opening its defense of the crown it won in Laos in 2009 against Singapore while host Indonesia takes on Cambodia.