

QC court nixes provincial bus ban in metro

By Rio N. Araja

THE Quezon City Regional Trial Court on Friday issued a preliminary injunction against the prohibition on provincial buses to enter major roads in Metro Manila.

In a 25-page decision, Branch 223 Judge Caridad Walse-Lutero approved the writ of preliminary injunction filed by 18 bus groups, saying there was “just cause” to stop the implementation of the bus ban.

“The matter on hand greatly impacts on the welfare of the public,” the order read.

The prohibition, which was supposed to take effect on Aug. 7, bars provincial buses from passing through Epifanio De los Santos Avenue, Metro Manila’s main artery, to decongest traffic.

It also prohibits the operation of provincial bus terminals along EDSA.

The judge gave the Metro Manila Development Authority and Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board, which implemented the ban, the chance to file their comments until Aug. 14.

The MMDA and LTFRB have a lot of explaining to do why the point-to-point buses were spared from the ban, the QCRTC order noted.

The court’s order also suspended the prohibition of the issuance of business permits to all public utility vehicles and operators along Epifanio delos Santos Avenue, citing the livelihood of the bus operators, drivers and other employees would be affected by the scheme.

It said it was not clear to the court why P2P buses “are given a special privilege of plying EDSA,” adding that such distinction was “unreasonable.”

The court also noted that profits and wages of bus operators and employees alike will be affected by the ban.

MMDA spokesperson Celine Pialago said the agency would first consult its legal team and the Office of the Solicitor General.

“We will seek opinion from the lawyers. But of course we will follow what the court says,” she said in a statement.