

PH airports ready for Holy Week: CAAP

MANILA -- The Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) on Thursday said the country's airports are ready for the influx of passengers this Holy Week.

CAAP said it is expecting an increase in the number of air passengers this season.

In April 2018, Philippine airports welcomed a total of 5,508,498 domestic and international passengers, with 3,036,274 of them arriving and departing through the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA).

Additional security measures will be in place and additional airline personnel will be deployed.

Maximum deployment of service and security personnel will be observed, CAAP said.

Help desks will also be set up to accommodate passenger concerns. Travelers are reminded not to bring prohibited items to the airport.

Earlier, Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) General Manager Ed Monreal reminded passengers to follow airport protocols, noting that these are vital for safe travel.

"We don't do these for the inconvenience of the passengers. We follow guidelines and procedures necessary for a safe and secure travel," he said in a video message posted on MIAA's social media page.

Monreal reminded passengers of things:

1. Check flight schedules.
2. Check LAGs (liquids, aerosols and gels).
3. Inform the airline if you need special assistance.
4. Check passport validity.

Be at the airport at least three hours before the flight schedule, he said. Within those three hours, the passenger must undergo Customs, Immigration, and Quarantine procedures, he added.

After check-in, Monreal said passengers should be at the boarding gate and wait for the announcement of their flights. "So that the airlines would not need to look for you, which may result (in) flight delays," he explained.

Every container must not exceed 100 ml. Otherwise, this will be confiscated.

Passports should be valid for at least six months. Monreal said some airlines might not allow passengers to board the aircraft if their passport's validity is less than six months since this is a requirement in Immigration.

"We call our passengers to cooperate with these security requirements. We do these for their safety," he reiterated. (PNA)

PH raises anti-terror campaign in Singapore forum

SINGAPORE — The Philippines flagged terrorists' global funding schemes to homeland security authorities of Asia-Pacific countries, seeking cooperation to combat a wide international network of communist-infiltrated front organizations.

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Deputy Chief of Staff for Civil Military Operations, Maj. Gen. Antonio Parlade Jr., in his speech at the Milipol Asia-Pacific 2019 Conference in Singapore on Thursday, warned that the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its armed units, are masking themselves as humanitarian non-government organizations (NGOs) to secure funds from international donors – which are then used to conduct terrorist activities.

He said the 50-year-old CPP has already established an international network, named the International Department, comprised of some 252 member-organizations based in 39 countries. The group established 16 chapters abroad through the International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS) headed by CPP chairperson Jose Maria Sison.

"We foresee that this problem, if not checked can turn out to be a hybrid scheme that can be a transnational crime problem. The purpose of this presentation is to make you aware that there is such a thing, and because of how intricate these international funding is being done. It may not be in our radar," Parlade said.

He also named local organizations that are affiliated with the ILPS, such as the IBON Foundation, General Assembly Binding Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership, and Action (Gabriela), Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT), Karapatan, National Union of Peoples' Lawyers, among others.

Parlade said these organizations conduct international solidarity missions where they publish inaccurate reports to portray a tyrant and oppressive Philippine government.

He said these groups also lobby for funds from foreign institutions, claiming that they will be used for projects to solve the fabricated issues, but will rather be used to fund terrorist activities.

The CPP-infiltrated organizations, he added, publish inaccurate information such as weak employment generation, and bloated figures on displaced indigenous communities, among others.

"They've been fabricating reports, they've been tweaking, distorting reports so that the Philippine government will be perceived as incompetent, inefficient. They submit all these reports, false and fabricated reports, to the EU (European Union), UN (United Nations), and other governments, again for funding," he said.

In December 2018, President Rodrigo R. Duterte signed Executive Order No. 70, creating the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF ELCAC).

"This national task force is not only about a military or police solution, but it's about good governance. It's approaching the problem in many perspectives, and you can see

Daraga mayor, 5 others face murder raps for twin slay

MANILA-- The Camarines Sur provincial prosecutor's office has ordered the filing of two counts of murder against Daraga, Albay mayor Carlywin Baldo and five others for the killing of Ako Bicol party-list Rep. Rodel M. Batocabe and his police escort, Orlando S. Diaz, last December 22.

Batocabe succumbed to eight gunshot wounds during an ambush as he was attending an event for senior citizens and persons with disabilities at the Burgos Elementary School, in Brgy. Burgos, Daraga, Albay.

Aside from Baldo, indicted for the twin killings are Christopher Naval, alias Tuping; Emmanuel A. Rosello, alias Boboy; Jaywin I. Babor, alias Gie; Henry G. Yuson, alias Rommel Yuson; and Rolando Arimado, alias Lando.

Prosecutors said the plan to kill Batocabe was hatched sometime in June last year at Baldo's compound and the group later moved to a safehouse in Villahermosa, Daraga, Albay. The group then regularly monitored Batocabe's movement before deciding to attack.

Baldo's group is also facing charges for attempted murder after bystanders Nelia Millena, Gregorio Mediavillo, Jesus Medez, Florencita Mendones, Ellen Mansos, and Haydie Llorca were wounded during the shootout between the gunman and authorities.

Prosecutors, however, cleared Baldo's driver Ramon Marbella, alias Mamo, who drove the vehicle (Isuzu Altera) owned by the mayor's wife and who gave money to the wife of the gunman after the incident.

"His mere obedience to an order or instruction of his employer, being his driver, does not make him liable with the other respondents," prosecutors ruled. (PNA)

PRRD ‘frustrated’ over unending efforts to end war on drugs

MANILA -- President Rodrigo R. Duterte is "frustrated" that despite efforts to make his war on drugs "harsher" than ever, the entry of illegal drugs in the country still persists, Malacañang said on Thursday.

Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo made this remark after the President said, during a PDP-Laban campaign rally in Malabon City on April 2, the drug problem has worsened because of the involvement of government officials, including police and military.

"Napu-frustrate siya kasi nga despite lahat ng ginagawa niya ay may nakakapasok pa rin (He is frustrated because despite all his efforts, the entry of drugs in the country is continuous)," Panelo said in an interview over DZMM radio.

Panelo cited how some law enforcement officials have already been relieved for having a hand in the illegal drug trade.

"Alam ni Presidente iyan, 'di ba naglabas nga siya noon ng mga listahan niyan - nung mga kasama diyan. (The President is aware of this, that's why he has released a list of those involved in the drug trade)," Panelo said.

Meanwhile, the Philippine National Police (PNP) has already expressed support for Duterte's decision to release the list of narco-cops.

"Nakahanda ang PNP na imbestigahan lahat ng mga pangalan ng mga aktibong pulis na mapapanaganan ng ating Pangulo (The PNP is ready to investigate all names of active police who will be named by the President)," PNP spokesperson Col. Bernard Banac said.

Banac also reminded police personnel to stand by their mandate to serve and protect the people and steer away from illegal activities.

He said the PNP has been conducting internal cleansing program meant to weed out scalawags and restore the pride of uniformed personnel.

Aside from narco-cops, Duterte has previously bared names of national and local government officials involved in illegal drugs. (With reports from Lloyd Caliwang/PNA)

LTFRB exec suspended over corruption raps

MANILA -- An official of the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) has been suspended due to allegations that he received PHP4.8 million in exchange for granting an application for a public utility vehicle (PUV) franchise.

In a statement Thursday, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) said Secretary Arthur Tugade had issued a 90-day preventive suspension order against LTFRB Executive Director Samuel Jardin Jr. on Wednesday due to charges of grave misconduct; receiving for personal use a valuable thing in the course of official duties wherein such gift was given in the expectation of receiving favorable treatment; and conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the service.

"The formal charge alleges that Jardin solicited money amounting to PHP4.8 million in exchange for facilitating and granting the application for a Certificate of Public Convenience (CPC)," the DOTr said.

Jardin is required to submit a verified answer, including documentary evidence within three days from receipt of the formal charge, as part of the internal investigation of the agency.

"Secretary Tugade strongly reiterates that any corrupt deed, or the perception thereof, in the ranks of the DOTr offices and attached agencies will not be tolerated," according to the DOTr.

Meanwhile, the LTFRB said it supports the call for immediate and full investigation of the case.