

Palace hopes for successful PH hosting of SEA Games

MANILA -- Malacañang remains optimistic that the Philippines' hosting of the 30th Southeast Asian (SEA) Games will conclude "with flying colors" despite controversies besetting the regional sports meet.

While President Rodrigo Duterte had raised concerns over the supposed mishandling of SEA Games preparations by the private organizing panel, he wanted unity among Filipinos to ensure the successful conduct of the biennial multi-sport event, Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo said Thursday.

"(There are) certain allegations of fraud and he wants this probe(d), but after the SEA Games. Meanwhile, we have to help each other, cooperate, and hopefully, we will finish with the SEA Games with flying colors," Panelo said in an interview with ANC.

Issues on unfinished venues, transportation, accommodation, food, and other logistics hound the country's hosting of the SEA Games ahead of its formal opening at the Philippine Sports Arena in Bocaue, Bulacan on November 30.

The 30th SEA Games will take place from November 30 to December 11.

The Philippine SEA Games Organizing Committee (PHISGOC), a private entity responsible for the preparations for the SEA Games, assured the country on Wednesday that the concerns raised by participating countries have already been ironed out.

Panelo expressed hope that the PHISGOC, led by House of Representatives Speaker Alan Cayetano, would learn from its mistakes and become "more creative" to ensure the Philippines' successful hosting.

"Whatever mistakes we have, we have to learn from them. And then go

forward. Hindi naman pupwedeng basta na lang tayo reklamo nang reklamo, wala naman tayong gagawin (We cannot just complain without doing anything)," he said. "Whatever is lacking, then fill it up. The country's image and pride are at stake so let us pull our resources together."

Stop bashing, spreading 'false' news

Acknowledging that there was "something wrong" with the preparations, Panelo noted the need for PHISGOC to "perform better services expected of them."

Panelo likewise urged Filipinos to just support the government as it hosts the SEA Games, instead of making hateful comments.

He also encouraged media outfits to be "more prudent" in their reporting and avoid publishing unverified information, as he said that "allegations are remembered, not their clarifications or justifications."

"We ask everyone to be more circumspect in reading articles that may contain false information or fake news. Let us not believe them outright. Many of them turn out to be untrue," Panelo said in a statement sent to Palace reporters. "Let the games to continue without the attendant raucous bashing. Our local athletes deserve our support. Let us welcome our foreign guests with the kind of warm hospitality we are known for."

Probe set after SEA Games

Meanwhile, Panelo said the President had decided to conduct an investigation into the SEA Games' blunders after the event.

He said Duterte's office will conduct a separate probe.

It was, however, unclear whether the Chief Executive would tap the Presidential Anti-Corruption Commission (PACC) to lead the investigation.

"The Palace notes

that the Senate intends to conduct an inquiry on the issues, which hounded the organization of the event. We welcome such initiative," Panelo said. "The Office of the President will also be conducting a separate probe on the aberrations and irregularities in the administration of our country's hosting of the SEA Games immediately after the games."

PACC chair Dante Jimenez said on Tuesday that there would be an immediate investigation into the issues surrounding the SEA Games, once a complaint is lodged before his office.

Jimenez said the PACC may also "silently" launch a "motu proprio" (on its own) investigation against the SEA Games organizers.

Panelo guaranteed that Duterte would hold accountable all individuals, including his allies, who indeed made irregularities.

"Given the character of this President, wala naman ditong kaibi-kaibigan (he does not give preferential treatment to his friends). You see how he fires people. He fired people who are close to him. 'Pag may (If there is) irregularity, graft, corruption, he (the accused) will be accountable," he said.

PH image untainted

Despite controversies surrounding the SEA Games, Palo expressed his belief that the Philippines' image as this year's host of the biennial event remains untainted.

He also noted that some of the "fake" news about the country's preparations for the SEA Games had already been debunked.

"It's not as bad as you pictured it to be. Hindi naman. Like there are many complaints na hindi naman pala totoo (It's not because there are many complaints that are not true)," Panelo said

when quizzed if the issues on the SEA Games' preparations had an impact on the Philippines' image.

All government offices, consistent with their respective mandates, have been instructed to assist PHISGOC in preparatory activities, such as the procurement of necessary materials and equipment, provision of support services, and acceptance of donations for the country's hosting of the Games, according to Memorandum Circular (MC) 56 signed by Malacañang on January 25.

MC 56 also mandates the Philippine Sports Commission, the Philippine Olympic Committee, and all concerned national sports associations to coordinate and support one another for the effective preparation and successful participation of the Philippine delegates in the 2019 SEA Games and all preparatory and relevant competitions.

The President has also intended to give additional incentives and medals in the Order of Lapu-Lapu to winning Filipino athletes, Panelo said.



Provincial Government-Cavite Office of Public Safety conducts Security Management Seminar

Peace, security, and public order are essential bedrock elements in building the foundation for inclusive growth, a high trust and resilient society, and a globally-competitive knowledge economy - this is according to the National Economic and Development Authority. Aside from affecting people's mobility, confidence, and well-being, as well as business continuity and longevity, ensuring security, public order, and safety is one of the fundamental strategies of the Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022 as it facilitates the implementation of all other strategies.

At the Provincial Government of Cavite (PGC), the Provincial Government-Cavite Office of Public Safety (PG-COPS), among other PGC departments, is at the forefront of maintaining peace, security and public order towards a SAFER CAVITE. For this, the PG-COPS, headed by Ms. Cecilia D. Miranda, initiates programs such as capacity development to help fulfil such mission.

On November 13 and 14, 2019, a total of 120 personnel from the PG-COPS attended the Security Management Seminar held at the Cavite Collaboration Center for Public Health Auditorium, Trece Martires City, Cavite. Organized and facilitated by PG-COPS, the seminar's objectives are to review the duties and responsibilities of the security personnel, to strengthen their capacity in terms of security management, and to develop their skills in observation, emergency procedures, investigative techniques, loss prevention and crisis management.

Mr. O'Brien H. Guinto, the resource speaker, discussed the topics on Essentials of Security Management and Best Field Practices, Physical Security Barriers, Formula of Dynamic Guarding/Forms of Threat Assessment/In-House Security Training, and Functions of a Security Officer and a Security Guard to name a few. A Certified Security Professional, Mr. Guinto is the founder and principal of Lukkan Strategies, Threat Management and Consulting Firm.

The attendees, who were divided into 2 batches, were from the two divisions - Personal Protection Division and Environmental Protection and Operations Division - and administrative section of PG-COPS. Significantly, the said capacity development program was also initiated by PG-COPS to help the department and its personnel in the realization and implementation of Strategic Performance Management System. -- (reports from PG-COPS)

Senate approves P4.1-T 2020 budget on final reading

MANILA -- Voting 22-0, the Senate on Wednesday approved on third and final reading the proposed PHP4.1-trillion national budget for 2020.

The Senate approved House Bill No. 4228 after Senator Juan Edgardo Angara presented the highlights of the Chamber's amendments to the General Appropriations Bill (GAB).

Among the amendments mentioned by Angara were the PHP6 billion additional allocation for the Department of Education (DepEd) for its Last Mile Schools Program which seeks to address the gaps in resources and facilities of schools located in geographically isolated and disadvantaged and conflict-affected areas.

State universities and colleges (SUCs) got an additional PHP1.158 billion for their research programs, sports- and culture-related activities, and new buildings and facilities.

The Philippine General Hospital (PGH) also got an additional allocation of PHP644 million for the purchase of advanced medical equipment, including the Linear Accelerator to help fight cancer, and supplementary funding to the hospital's Medical

Assistance to Indigent Patients Program, among others.

On the other hand, the Senate set aside PHP3.173 billion for the Department of Health (DOH) under the Miscellaneous Personnel Benefits Fund (MPBF) to upgrade the salaries of nurses in accordance with the recent Supreme Court decision.

The fight against terrorism also got a boost under the Senate-proposed amendments.

Among these are the PHP920-million allocation that will be given to the Philippine Army for the deployment of one Infantry Division to address the continuing threat posed by the Abu Sayyaf Group in Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi areas.

The Philippine National Police also got an increase of PHP1.529 billion in its budget.

Meanwhile, workers in government could expect another round of salary increases as about PHP32 billion was allocated for Salary Standardization Law-5, which is also included under the MPBF.

After its Senate approval, the measure will be then submitted to the Office of the President for signature. (PNA)