LTFRB to review Grab's fare rates

MANILA – The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) will review the fare setting of ride-sharing company Grab Philippines (Grab) following the recent fine imposed on the company for overcharging.

In a statement released Thursday, the LTFRB said the fine imposed by the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) was due to Grab's failure to follow through with a voluntary commitment it made with the antitrust body.

"To put it in proper context, the fine issued by PCC in its decision recently rendered pertains to the failure of Grab to fulfill its commitment to PCC as embodied in Grab's Undertaking which it voluntarily submitted to PCC. It has nothing to do with LTFRB's fare structure," LTFRB Board Member Ronaldo Corpus said in a meeting between the LTFRB and the PCC on Monday.

The LTFRB said a review would be made to find out whether Grab violated the existing fare structure imposed by the board.

"The agency shall continue to work closely with the PCC regarding this issue," the LTFRB said.

According to the LTFRB's Memorandum Circular 2019-036 which contains the fare matrix imposed by the LTFRB on Transportation Network Vehicle Services (TNVS) such as Grab, TNVS companies shall charge a flag down rate of up to PHP40 for car sedans, up to PHP50 for premium Asian utility vehicles/sport utility vehicles (SUV), and up to PHP30 for hatchbacks/sub-compact vehicles.

There will be a PHP15 additional charge per kilometer for sedans, PHP18 for SUVs, and PHP13 for hatchbacks—aside from PHP2 charge per minute of travel.

TNVS companies are also allowed to double their per kilometer and per minute charge through surge pricing.

In a statement on Tuesday, Grab contested claims of overcharging against the company and the call for additional fines from Puwersa ng Bayaning Atleta Party-list) Rep. Jericho Nograles.

Grab clarified that its fares were within the fare matrix of the LTFRB and the acceptance of the fine imposed by the PCC was made "in the interest of showing good faith."

"We will comply with the PCC although clearly we could have filed a motion for reconsideration or appealed to a higher authority, which we did not since we want to focus on our business instead," said Brian Cu, Grab Philippines president.

On Nov. 18, the PCC imposed a total fine of PHP23.45 million on Grab for breaching its voluntary pricing commitments during the first to third quarters of the initial undertaking between Grab and the PCC.

Through amendments made between the two parties, the total fine of PHP5.05 million for its overcharging violations in the third quarter of the undertaking will be refunded to Grab's customers instead of being paid as a fine to the national treasury. (PNA)

3 cohorts of arrested CPP-NPA leader face raps

MANILA -- Ranking Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA) official Jaime Padilla's three companions, who were arrested along with him inside a hospital in San Juan City, are now facing criminal raps, the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) said on Wednesday.

Brig. Gen. Debold Sinas, acting NCRPO chief, said Rey Rafa, 30; Jefren Banjawan, 26; and Kay Ann Trogon, 27, all residents of Laguna, have undergone inquest before the San Juan City Prosecutor's Office on Tuesday for violation of Section 1, Paragraph C of Presidential Decree 1829 (Penalizing Obstruction of Apprehension and Prosecution of Criminal Offenders) and Violation of Article 19 Paragraph 3 of the Revised Penal Code (Harboring, concealing or assisting in the escape of the principal of the crime).

Sinas said the three persons are acting guards of Padilla, spokesperson of the NPA Southern Tagalog and a member of the CPP's National Information Bureau, who has a standing warrant of arrest for multiple murder and kidnapping.

Padilla was arrested by joint operatives from the Eastern Police District and the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group-National Capital Region after receiving information about his location in one of the private rooms at the Cardinal Santos Medical Center in San Juan City around 7:30 p.m. Monday.

Meanwhile, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Secretary Eduardo Año commended the PNP and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) for "another victory" in the arrest of Padilla.

"It's another victory for the government and the country as we, little by little, extinguish these terrorists who only harbor fear among our people. Kudos to the joint team of the PNP-Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG), the National Capital Regional Police Office (NCRPO), and the AFP Southern Luzon Command for this arrest. Keep up the good work," Año said in a statement.

Año said the arrest of Padilla, spokesperson of the CPP-NPA's Southern Tagalog Melito Glor Command, and three of his companions, is a result of the persistent and continuous efforts of the national government and all of its armed instrumentalities to go after the enemies of the state who have continued to sow terror and wage war against the government.

"With this victory, the DILG assures the public that the government will exercise all legal means to ensure that our country will not succumb to the threat of terrorism, and our people will continue to enjoy their freedom," Año said.

In a press conference on Wednesday, DILG Spokesperson and Undersecretary Jonathan Malaya said Padilla's capture is a big blow to the CPP-NPA.

He said the CPP-NPA continuously suffered huge setbacks because of the increasing number of rebel surrenderers, the successive arrest of communist personalities, and the success of the whole-of-nation approach adopted by the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict or NTF-ELCAC.

No security threats on SEA Games: AFP spox

MANILA -- The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) said on Thursday it has yet to detect any security threats that might possibly mar the 30th Southeast Asian (SEA) Games from November 30 to December 11.

"So far, there are no monitor threats (on the SEA Games)," AFP spokesperson, Marine Brig. Gen. Edgard Arevalo said in Filipino during interview over Radyo Pilipinas 1's "Operation Lokal".

Arevalo, however, said the AFP will continue to closely monitor the situation and appeal to the public to immediately report to authorities the presence of suspicious-looking persons in the vicinity.

"Despite the calm, we will continue to monitor the security situation with other government agencies (to ensure the peaceful and orderly conclusion of the) sporting event," the AFP spokesperson added.

Around 1,000 AFP personnel from the Northern and Southern Luzon Commands are helping the Philippine National Police to secure the activities.

Aside from the security contingent, a total of 127 military personnel are participating in the SEA Games as athletes and coaches in various sports events.

"We also have contingents and delegations (participating in the sports events)," Arevalo said. (PNA)

GC holds Provincial Women's Summit 2019

Hundreds of women from different cities and municipalities in the province representing women's organizations, Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) beneficiaries, LGUs, barangay health workers, uniformed personnel of the PNP, the academe and employees of the provincial government gathered at the Provincial Gymnasium on November 25, 2019 for the Provincial Women's Summit 2019.

In an opening message, Provincial Administrator for Community Affairs Mr. Alvin Mojica addressed the guests and participants with affirmation that Cavite is one of the most gender-sensitive provinces promoting programs and initiatives for the protection and empowerment of women. He concluded with high hopes that the event will be fruitful for all the participants.

Representing Governor Jonvic Remulla was Executive Assistant and former Board Member Irene Bencito who is a known advocate of women empowerment in the province. She lauded the efforts of the of the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office and the Cavite GAD Focal Point System for organizing the event. In her message, she pointed out that the fight for women's rights are equally beneficial to men as it is to women since it protects the rights of their wives, mothers, sisters and daughters.

On behalf of keynote speaker Mayor Agnes D. Tolentino, Tagaytay City Councilor Lorna Sarabia Toledo delivered her message of inspiration and challenge for all the women in attendance. It acknowledged the role of women in development and how they can influence society amidst the challenges that confront them. It also underscored the positive impact of the summit as it provided women with opportunity to assess their contribution in all aspects of society while fostering solidarity in the advocacy for women empowerment.

Ms. Mylene Sotolombo, Local Legislative Staff from the Sangguniang Panlalawigan discussed the Provincial GAD Code and some of its salient features for the information of the participants. From the Department of Education, Ms. Felisa C. Matel, Education Program Specialist talked about the Alternative Learning System (ALS) and how it has been an instrument for providing lifelong skills and learning through continuing education for non-completers of formal elementary and secondary education.

PLTCOL Atty. Arvie Paraon-Bueno of Cavite Provincial Police Office presented in brief the Magna Carta of Women and its focus on eliminating discrimination against women in all aspects, promoting women empowerment and pursuing equal opportunities for men and women. She stressed that it is not the sole duty of the state to uphold these rights but called on all women to assert and fight for these rights as a personal responsibility recalling how cases of abuse go down the drain whenever women victims withdraw their complaints on accounts of forgiving the perpetrators.

TESDA GAD Focal Person Ms. Jenelyn Dino enumerated the programs being offered by their institutions for different clients including women.

Simultaneous activities were done in the afternoon which include medical and dental Mission, livelihood training on decorative balloon making, beauty and wellness services including manicure/pedicure and free haircut and the mini trade and agri fair set up outside the venue.