

Palace vows 'bolder' reforms after PRRD's trust ratings soar

MANILA -- Malacañang on Monday vowed to undertake “bolder reforms” after a survey showed that President Rodrigo Duterte’s trust and approval ratings soared this month.

The Pulse Asia Survey, conducted from Dec. 3 to 8, showed that 87 percent of respondents approved of the President’s performance while 83 percent of respondents trusted him.

Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo said these results showed that Duterte “inspires confidence and support from the Filipino people.”

“We are thankful for our people’s continuing trust and assure everyone that – regardless of the survey numbers -there is no room for complacency in this branch of the government,” Panelo said in a statement.

“We will continue to persevere to undertake bolder reforms to make the bureaucracy more efficient and responsive to the needs of our people and push this country to the heights heretofore not reached,” he added.

Panelo stressed that “a good leader is measured by the trust reposed on him by the people he serves.”

He pointed out that

since assuming as President, Duterte has maintained his trust rating at the top, which he said is a walking testament that he is a leader that Filipinos continue to “rely on.”

While 87 percent of respondents expressed approval of the President’s performance, 5 percent expressed disapproval, and 8 percent were undecided.

The 87 percent approval rating is 9 percentage points higher from his September rating.

Duterte, who hails from southern Philippines, received the highest approval rating from respondents in Mindanao (98 per-

cent), followed by Visayas (93 percent), and Luzon (83 percent).

On the other hand, 83 percent of respondents showed that they had “big trust” in the President, 6 percent had “small or no trust”, and 10 percent were “undecided.”

The 83 percent trust rating is also an improvement of 9 percentage points from his 74 percent grade in September.

Nearly 100 percent of respondents from Mindanao said they trusted the President.

He acquired an 89 percent trust rating in Visayas, 78 percent in the national capital region, and 75 percent in Luzon. (PNA)

TIEZA approves high-impact tourism infra projects

MANILA — The Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) Board has approved almost PHP4 billion worth of tourism infrastructure projects which seek to promote sustainable tourism, restore and rehabilitate cultural and historical sites, and improve overall visitor experience.

During a board meeting held recently, priority tourism infrastructure projects have been approved for the provinces such as Benguet, Palawan, Iloilo, Pampanga, Pangasinan and for Corregidor Island.

TIEZA Chief Operating Officer Pocholo Paragas said the approval of this fourth batch of high impact tourism infrastructure projects is a major milestone for the agency since it was reorganized in 2009.

Prior to the Meeting, TIEZA has approved PHP1.2 billion worth of tourism infrastructure projects which included the rehabilitation and improvement of the Chocolate Hills Complex.

In sum, TIEZA board approved a total of PHP5 billion worth of tourism infrastructure projects in 2019 alone.

“Our tourism infrastructure is not perfect.

We need to develop, and build better facilities to ensure that our local and foreign tourists will continue to enjoy our beautiful destinations without compromising environmental sustainability,” Chief Operating Officer Pocholo Paragas said in a statement.

Paragas explained that TIEZA is stepping up its investment in tourism infrastructure in key tourism destination sites to spur growth, create jobs in local communities, and ensure the sustainability of each sites for future generations.

“The approved projects were recommended by the TIEZA infrastructure Committee to the Board after careful evaluation and various consultations with different local government units and regional tourism officials as well as with concerned stakeholders in the respective areas,” he added.

Preserve, rehabilitate cultural sites

Among the big-ticket projects approved by the Board include: a) Rehabilitation of Burnham Park in Baguio b) Construction of Wastewater Treatment Facility, modular floating

docks and solar streetlights in Coron, Palawan c) Tagkawayan Beach Tourism Development Project, modular floating docks in various barangays in Puerto Princesa, Palawan d) Construction of Housing for Hyperbaric Chamber Facilities in El Nido and Coron, Palawan e) Restoration/Rehabilitation of three plazas in Iloilo namely Arealo, Molo, La Paz Plaza, f) Reconstruction and Retrofitting of St. Agustin Church and San Guillermo Church g) Reconstruction of breakwater in Corregidor Island in Cavite City.

“Our thrust is to preserve and rehabilitate cultural and heritage areas, as well as ensure environmental sustainability. One of our flagship infrastructure projects for this batch is the rehabilitation Burnham Park, an iconic landmark of Baguio, so that more local and foreign tourists can still enjoy the beauty of this tourist attraction,” Paragas said.

TIEZA has allocated PHP400 million for the rehabilitation of the Burnham lake and Children’s park to improve the recreational appeal and tourist value of this national asset.

Palawan, on the other hand, being the “The Last Ecological Frontier” of the Philippines and one of the world’s best islands this 2019, according to Travel+Leisure was also given high priority.

The TIEZA board approved a total of PHP854 million to fund various tourism infrastructure projects in Palawan to provide a better, safe experience for tourists and manage environmental sustainability amid growth in tourist arrivals.

“While we want to boost tourism investments and revenues in our island destinations, we also want to protect our natural resources. We are investing P500 million for the Coron Wastewater Treatment Facility to prevent water pollution that is detrimental to coastal and marine resources.” Paragas said.

The inclusion of rehabilitation of public plazas in Iloilo and old churches in Pampanga is in line with TIEZA’s mandate to provide support for the preservation and restoration of cultural heritage sites which include churches, shrines and plazas.

Specifically, TIEZA

Gov't grants P5-K cash aid for Pangasinan farmers

MANILA – The government has awarded a one-time cash assistance of PHP5,000 each to some 500 farmers in Mangatarem, Pangasinan under the Rice Farmers Financial Assistance Program (RFFAP).

According to a statement on Monday, Agriculture Secretary William Dar said the unconditional cash transfer, which was sourced from rice import tariffs, is available to farmers tilling 0.5 – 2 hectares farmland.

The cash aid shall come in the form of cash cards released by the Land Bank of the Philippines.

Dar said a total of 87,000 rice farmers in Pangasinan will receive Land Bank cash cards, equivalent to PHP435 million.

“Ito po ay tulong pinansyal, hindi pautang kaya di babayaran (We provide financial assistance, not a form of loan, so there is no need to pay back),” he said.

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According to the agriculture

Be wary of liquor purchase, Palace warns public

MANILA -- Malacañang on Monday urged the public to carefully assess their liquor purchases following reports that at least 11 people have died and hundreds hospitalized from drinking lambanog (coconut wine) in Laguna and Quezon provinces.

Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo said the Palace was “alarmed” over the reported cases of suspected lambanog poisoning especially during the holidays where alcohol is usually present in parties.

Panelo cautioned the public against purchasing alcohol that is not approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

“We remind the public that they should always check whether their alcohol purchases, or any product that they consume for that matter, have been registered or approved by the Food and Drug Administration,” Panelo said.

“Prudence dictates that we should always be mindful of what we ingest, particularly during this time of merrymaking,” he added.

Reports showed that residents from different parts of Rizal started being rushed to hospitals after showing signs of poisoning such as stomach ache, dizziness, and vomiting on Sunday afternoon.

The victims were taken to nearby health centers and hospitals in San Pablo, Laguna while others were brought to the Philippine General Hospital (PGH) in Manila because of the large number of victims.

Laguna police said the victims drank the lambanog bought from a retailer based in Barangay Pook in Rizal town, Laguna.

The owner of a lambanog distillery, Fred Rey, surrendered to authorities on Monday and promised to help shoulder the victims' expenses.

Laguna Governor Ramil Hernandez also ordered a temporary ban on the sale of lambanog across the province.