

DOLE-ECOP deal on regularization of 200K workers scrapped

MANILA -- The regularization of over 200,000 workers will not push through as the signing of the memorandum of understanding between the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and the Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) was called off.

"There will be no regularization program which was committed by ECOP members. It was all a waste. The signing did not push through because the workers opposed," Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III said in an interview Thursday.

Bello was referring to

the Nagkaisa Labor Coalition, which denounced the signing of the MOU noting that it is a betrayal of the DOLE's mission to enforce legislation against illegal forms of contractualization.

"The employees and the union did not agree. They claim it is a ploy for the DOLE not to comply with the Security of Tenure (SOT) bill. It is not true," he said.

Senate Bill 1826, also known as the SOT Bill, aims to provide workers "security of tenure" by prohibiting rampant contractualization and labor-only contracting practices.

In a letter to Senate President Vicente Sotto III in

September last year, President Rodrigo Duterte certified the bill as urgent.

Earlier, the DOLE reported that they are set to sign the MOU with ECOP that will pave the way for the regularization of employees of the group's member companies in three years.

The commitment is included in the MOU on the National Voluntary Regularization Program with ECOP.

Majority of the employees who are supposed to benefit are from the National Capital Region and Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, and Quezon). (PNA)

Gov't doctor, 6 others nabbed in Mandaluyong buy-bust

MANILA -- Seven persons, including a government doctor, were arrested in a buy-bust operation in Mandaluyong City early Thursday.

Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) Director General Aaron Aquino identified the suspects as Vanjoe Rufo de Guzman, a medical officer from the Department of Health; Francis Gerald Pabunan Fajardo, alias Rain, an event organizer; Keanu Andrea Flores, a varsity lawn tennis player; Mohammad Abdullah Duga, Michael Melegrito Tan, Mohammad Arafa Morsy, and Mark Adrienne Reyes Echauz.

Aquino said at around 12:10 a.m., joint elements

of Special Enforcement Service (PDEA-SES) under Director Levi S. Ortiz and Mandaluyong City Police Office conducted a buy-bust operation in JK Tower III, Burbank California Garden Square Condominium, in Barangay Highway Hills.

Based on the report, de Guzman, uses his own unit as a drug den. Instead of sniffing shabu, the arrested suspects inject shabu in liquid form into their system.

The operating team confiscated one big knotted transparent plastic containing suspected shabu, weighing approximately 50 grams, worth PHP340,000; one transparent plastic sachet containing shabu residue; six transparent plastic

sachets; five bottles containing liquid substance suspected to be ecstasy, weighing approximately 200 ml worth PHP30,000; and assorted drug paraphernalia, including syringes.

De Guzman will face charges for violation of Section 5 (Sale of Dangerous Drugs), Section 6 (Maintenance of a Drug Den), Section 11 (Possession of Dangerous Drugs) and Section 12 (Possession of Drug Paraphernalia), Article II of Republic Act 9165, or The Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, while the rest will be charged for violation of Section 7 (Visitors of a Drug Den). (PNA)

Anti-illegal drugs TF accepts PRRD challenge to bust 8M users

MANILA -- Members of the anti-illegal drug task force have taken up the challenge of President Rodrigo Duterte to cut the number of illegal drug users by eight million.

"We take it as a decision-making tool, a challenge to perform even better and conduct more operations," Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency spokesperson Derrick Carreon said in a #RealNumbers press briefing on Thursday.

President Duterte's pronouncement is an increase from the previous four mil-

lion in 2017.

National Bureau of Investigation Director Ferdinand Lavin said the estimate is a guide for the agencies involved in the anti-illegal drug campaign, so it is still open to changes as the operation is ongoing.

"When the President first made the estimate when he assumed office in 2016, the basis for the estimate was limited in number. The President is a good strategist, he is trying to challenge us," Lavin said.

He added that this is an

indication that the operations are improving, noting that with every arrested person involved in illegal drugs, others "players" in the criminal activity are uncovered.

"The arrested addicts that provide information is a key contributor to the rise of the number," he added.

Since July 2016 to January 2019, there are already 119, 841 anti-drug operations conducted with the value of seized drugs and laboratory equipment placed at PHP25.94 billion. (PNA)

PNP implements law modifying rank classification

MANILA -- The Philippine National Police (PNP) has implemented the new law that modified the rank classification of police officers into similar ones used by their military counterparts.

In a memorandum signed by Director for Personnel and Records Management, Police Major Gen. Lyndon Cubos, on Thursday and was released to the media on Friday, the new rank classifications will be used immediately.

The new rank classification in the PNP are as follows:

- from Director General to Police General;
- from Deputy Director General to Police Lieutenant General;
- from Police Director to Police Major General;
- from Chief Superinten-

- dent to Police Brigadier General;
- from Senior Superintendent to Police Colonel;
- from Supt. to Police Lieutenant Colonel;
- from Chief Inspector to Police Major;
- from Senior Inspector to Police Captain;
- from Police Inspector to Police Lieutenant;
- from Senior Police Officer (SPO) 4 to Police Executive Master Sergeant;
- from SPO3 to Police Chief Master Sergeant;
- from SPO2 to Police Senior Master Sergeant;
- from SPO1 to Police Master Sergeant;
- from PO3 to Police Staff Sergeant;
- from PO2 to Police Corporal; and

- from PO1 to Patrolman/Patrolwoman.

On February 8, President Rodrigo Duterte signed into law Republic Act 11200, which standardizes the way PNP officers are called.

The new law also clarifies the command and responsibility in the PNP for effective and efficient supervision and control among its uniformed personnel.

Earlier, PNP spokesperson, Police Col. Bernard Banac, welcomed the President's move, noting that it will improve police performance output and productivity.

Banac said the modified classification will also make it easier for the public to understand the police ranking.

"The rank classification

Common crimes in NCR down 7%

MANILA -- Common crimes in Metro Manila decreased in the fourth quarter of 2018, the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) said Thursday.

NCRPO head, Director Guillermo Eleazar, said these include eight focus crimes such as murder, homicide, physical injury, rape (crimes against persons) and robbery, theft and carjacking of motor vehicles and motorcycles (crimes against property).

From 3,750 cases re-

corded in the third quarter of 2018, the figure dropped to 3,468 which is equivalent to 7.52 percent.

Crimes against persons declined by 4.01 percent from 1,423 to 1,366 cases.

Meanwhile, crimes against property decreased by 9.67 percent from 2,327 to 2,102 cases.

Theft of cars registered the highest drop at 31.48 percent from 54 to 37 cases, followed by murder at 14.86 percent from 175 to 149, robbery at 12.50 per-

cent from 648 to 567, and rape cases at 7.86 percent from 280 to 258.

Eleazar said the NCRPO will continue their efforts to prevent more crimes and intensify the campaign against all forms of criminality.

In a related development, NCRPO also reported that close to 780,000 individuals have been arrested since June last year in Metro Manila for violating various ordinances.

Based on NCRPO records, a total of 775,645

violators were nabbed from June 13 last year to February 28 this year with smoking ban offenders topping the list.

Police rounded up a total of 186,247 violators of the smoking ban as of 5 a.m. on Thursday, accounting for 24.01 percent of all the arrests.

Minors violating curfew hours had the next biggest number, although with a much lower figure of 47,034, or 6.06 percent of all those arrested all over Metro Manila in the

said period.

The NCRPO has also apprehended 41,715 individuals, or 5.38 percent of the total arrests, for going in public places 'half-naked'.

Those drinking in public places came next, with 36,615 rounded up, accounting for 4.72 percent of the total number of violators across the board.

The rest, 464,034 people, or 59.83 percent of the total arrests were violators of other city and municipal ordinances in the NCR.

will contribute to more performance output and productivity from the police for having high morale as they will be called again the way they were addressed before, in contrast to the present rank classification, which the public still find difficult to follow and understand," he said.

Interior Secretary Eduardo M. Año also hailed the signing of the new law.

"We hope after the signing of the bill and they will implement the new system of ranks, we will have a donning of new ranks," Año said. (PNA)