

Palace justifies surveillance, raids in activist groups' offices

MANILA -- Malacañang on Thursday said it sees nothing wrong with the joint operations conducted by police and military personnel in offices of activist groups who were suspected to be militants in Bacolod City and Metro Manila.

"The government policy is always to investigate complaints on criminal activities and if they have evidence, then they will take action," Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo said in a Palace briefing.

Panelo, also Chief Presidential Legal Counsel, said security forces have the basis to conduct raids if "evidence shows that they

have been engaged in criminal activities."

He pointed out that security forces have to conduct surveillance as long as they had a basis to do so.

On Oct. 31, security forces conducted joint operations in offices of activist groups including Bayan Muna, Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), Gabriela, and Negros Federation of Sugar Workers (NFSW) which led to the arrest of at least 60 suspected militants, including 13 minors.

The law enforcers found that some activist group members had firearms, explosives, and subversive documents.

In a column pub-

lished on Sun Star, Karapatan claimed that evidence was planted in their offices and described their raids as "Gestapo-esque" or similar to raids conducted by the secret state police in Nazi Germany noted for its brutal methods of interrogation.

Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO) Secretary Martin Andanar slammed these allegations insisting that no individuals were harmed during the operations.

Andanar pointed out that military and police secured search warrants before conducting joint operations. (PNA)



PGC WELCOMES DELEGATES FROM JEOLLABUKDO OFFICE OF EDUCATION

The Provincial Government of Cavite through the Provincial Information and Communications Technology Office in partnership with the Department of Education-Cavite (DepEd-Cavite) warmly welcomed the delegates from Jeollabukdo Office of Education of Korea headed by Senior Supervisor Yun-Rok Lee with Jin-Ho Choi, Hee-Jeong Kim, Sang-Ho Song, Hye-Lim Jeon and Dong-Gyun Han during their visit to the province on October 29-30, 2019.

In her welcome message, Ms. Cherrylou D. Repia, Schools Division Superintendent expressed her deep gratitude to the Jeollabukdo Office of Education for sustaining the partnership with the provincial government and DepEd-Cavite regarding information and communications technology trainings for teachers. She also presented the existing ICT education programs in the province.

Delegates made a courtesy call to Mayor Yuri Pacumio of Tanza and toured the Cavite Computer Center-Tanza Satellite Office as well as the Flaviana Arayata Elementary School. They also visited Emilia Ambalada Poblete National High School in Silang and Gov. Ferrer Memorial National High School-Biclatan Annex in the City Gen. Trias. These institutions were recipients of computers from Jeollabukdo Office of Education.

In a farewell dinner, 2018 and 2019 ICT trainees had the opportunity to express their gratefulness for the skills and knowledge they acquired during the trainings in Korea through the PGC-Jeollabukdo Office of Education partnership. Likewise, they also cited some suggestions and recommendations to improve the ICT training which the delegates guaranteed to take into consideration.

The partnership which started in 2005 has produced to date a total of 331 ICT-trained public elementary and secondary teachers and some PGC employees while almost 2000 set of computers were donated to the province and distributed to 160 public elementary and secondary schools.---PICAD

Transpo bodies urged to craft IRR for student fare discount law

MANILA – Senator Grace Poe on Thursday prodded concerned transport agencies to fast-track the crafting of their respective implementing rules and regulations (IRR) for the law granting students a 20-percent fare discount on various modes of public transportation.

Poe made the call after the Civil Aeronautics Board issued its IRR for Republic Act No. 11314, also known as the Student Fare Discount Act.

Poe, a co-author of the Senate version of the measure, also urged local airline companies to comply with the law, particularly covering the discount on domestic airfares.

"Nananawagan tayo sa mga airline company na ipatupad ang batas para naman kahit paano maging maluwag sa bulsa ng ating

mga estudyante ang pagbiyahe (We are calling on airline companies to abide by the law so that we could ease the financial burden of students when traveling)," Poe said.

Under the law, a 20-percent student discount shall be implemented for regular domestic fares of all kinds of public transportation utilities, such as public utility buses, public utility jeepneys, taxis, and other similar vehicles-for-hire, tricycles, passenger trains, aircraft, and marine vessels for the entire time that the students are enrolled. The discount will be in effect even on weekends and holidays.

"Ang matitipid dito ay pwedeng idagdag sa pambili ng pagkain o kaya naman ay ibang gamit o bayarin sa eskwelahan (Their savings from this [discount] can be used to

pay for food, as well as school supplies or fees)," Poe said.

"We hope this will bring a little ease on families faced with high prices of goods and services," she added.

To avail of the discount, students must show their school ID or a validated enrollment form together with a government-issued ID.

For air public transportation, the discount will only apply to the base fare or the price of the ticket before taxes and costs for ancillary services. It shall not apply to promotional fares.

Excluded from coverage of the law are individuals enrolled in dancing or driving schools, short-term courses of seminar-type and post-graduate studies such as those taking up medicine, law, masters and doctorate degrees. (PNA)

15 modern PUVs to ply Nichols-Parañaque route

MANILA – Transport group Pasang Masda, together with its partners from the government and the private sector, announced on Thursday the rollout of 15 modern public utility vehicles (PUV) to ply the Nichols-Parañaque route starting November 11.

"Itong pong ruta na ito ay consolidation ng biyahe naming Villamor-Baclaran-MOA (This route is a consolidation of our Villamor-Baclaran-MOA)," Pasang Masda president Robert 'Ka Obet' Martin said in a press briefing.

In a news release, the Department of Transportation said the route of the new modern PUVs will begin at Nichols and will go through Magallanes, Mall of Asia (MOA), Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX), and back.

The new units, the DOTr said, fulfill the PUV modernization program's (PUVMP) Class 2 require-

ments which include air-conditioning, CCTV, Wi-Fi, GPS, and a side entrance apart from its compliance with the Euro IV standard.

Hajime Koso, Isuzu Philippines president, said the new modern PUV units were the second batch of Isuzu PUVs to ply the streets of Metro Manila since the first batch of 15 modern PUVs plying the Manila-Quezon City route.

"I am proud to say that Isuzu not only achieved another milestone but also continued its legacy by having these Isuzu PUVs to run the public's roads under the government's PUV modernization program," Koso said.

Parañaque City Administrator Fernando Soriano said the city welcomes the entry of more modernized PUVs in their streets.

"Ako po'y natutuwa na pati yung kahabaan ng Sucat po natin, mod-

ernized na po tayong lahat (I'm glad that for the stretch of Sucat, we're all modernized)," Soriano said.

During the program, Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade lauded Pasang Masda and its partners' contributions to the progress of the PUVMP.

Tugade further spoke of DOTr's partnership with a private PUV manufacturer to create an affordable Class 1 PUVMP-compliant modern jeepney.

"Before the end of this year, Class 1 will come out, passenger capacity is 12 and 13, the price is not more than a million," Tugade said.

He added that such vehicles, aside from its affordability, will be able to ply the country's smaller streets due to its compact stature.

"Mali ho yung sinasabi ng mga ibang nag-iingay na mahal ang sasakyan. Oo nga ang Class 2 is PHP1.2 million upwards. Meron naman Class 1 na PHP1 million

cap, all-in. Maliit at pwedeng pumunta sa mga corner-corner na daanan (The claim of noisy critics that these vehicles are expensive. Yes, Class is PHP1.2 million upwards. But there's Class 1 with a PHP1 million cap, all-in. It's smaller and can fit in tight corners.)," Tugade said.

Through the government's PUVMP which began in June 2017 and will end in June 2020, public transport cooperatives may purchase a PUVMP-compliant vehicle through a financing arrangement the DOTr calls "5, 6, 7, PHP80,000."

The arrangement requires 5-percent equity from the purchaser at 6 percent interest and 7-year term while the government provides a subsidy of PHP80,000 to the buyer.

"Believe that the government will be one with you in giving you the support and the cooperation so that we can launch the modernization program to its ultimate culmination," Tugade said. (PNA)