

PRRD orders stricter road safety checks after SoCot truck mishap

MANILA -- President Rodrigo R. Duterte has ordered a more stringent enforcement of road safety checks after a private truck used to ferry a family to an outing fell into a ravine in South Cotabato, killing 21 people and injuring 14 others on Tuesday.

In a news release issued Thursday, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) said the President made the directive during a meeting with Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade, Senator Bong Go, Land Transportation Office (LTO) Chief Assistant Secretary Edgar Galvante, Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board Chairman Martin Delgra III, DOTr Undersecretary for Road Transport and Infrastructure Mark de Leon, and officers of the Philippine National Police.

Duterte directed the immediate roadworthiness inspection of public utility vehicles (PUVs) and the conduct of regular inspections

in PUV terminals.

He instructed the concerned government agencies to intensify roadworthiness checks, improve driver's licensing requirements, conduct periodic drug testing, and financial capability checks for operators.

He also pushed for the urgent nationwide implementation of the PUV Modernization Program to improve the level of safety and security of passengers.

"Modernization of public transport is non-negotiable," Duterte said.

He also underscored that private vehicles used beyond their legitimate purpose should be banned and that the need for PUV operators to invest in road safety equipment and facilities should be pushed further.

He said operators who do not have the financial capability for safety improvements should cease to operate.

The President, accord-

ing to the DOTr, also emphasized that driving a motor vehicle should require a minimum IQ (intelligence quotient) level, and that drug tests be made mandatory for drivers to reduce the risk of accidents.

"The loss of lives due to crashes is too unacceptable. We already have good roads but there are a lot of ignorant drivers," Duterte said. "When you take drugs, you are out to hurt somebody."

He ordered the police to pursue criminal cases against drivers involved in road mishaps, and study the imposition of minimum imprisonment sentences to erring drivers.

The DOTr said an executive order on stricter road safety enforcement would soon be issued.

Meanwhile, Tugade committed to improve road safety by checking roadworthiness through the Motor Vehicle Inspection System.

He said the comprehensive driver training

and education under the "Tsuper Iskolar" Program with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, as well as improved driver's licensing requirements using the IT system of the LTO, are needed to keep the roadworthiness of vehicles.

"Ilang buhay na naman 'ho ang nawala sa atin. Itigil na ang kawalan ng disiplina. Itigil na ang pagiging pabaya sa kalsada. (We have lost several lives again. Stop the lack of discipline. Stop being reckless on the road)," Tugade said.

"Sa utos ng ating Pangulo, sisikapin naming masiguro na tanging mga roadworthy vehicles lang ang bibiyahe sa kalsada, at lahat ng driver ay may sapat na kaalaman at disiplina sa pagmamaneho (As the President ordered, we will make sure that only roadworthy vehicles will be allowed to travel and that all drivers have enough training and discipline)," Tugade said. (PR)

PDEA opens 'evidence room' to disprove drug recycling claims

MANILA -- The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) on Thursday opened to media its newly-improved Evidence Room where seized dangerous drugs are being kept.

"In the past, only a limited number of people are allowed entry inside the Evidence Room. But now, we are opening it to the media as a testament of transparency and accountability in handling illegal drugs confiscated during anti-drug operations," PDEA Director General Aaron N. Aquino said adding this is the first time in PDEA's history that the depository of seized drugs will be exposed to the public.

"From the moment the public first laid eyes on the Evidence Room, PDEA hopes to foster credibility, improve public trust, and build transparent and accountable government for the whole nation to see," the PDEA chief said.

The laboratory and storage facilities for drug evidence are housed in a new three-story building of the PDEA Laboratory Service, considered to be the country's premier drug forensic center, at the agency's national headquarters in Quezon City.

The PHP25 million-building was inaugurated last June 1, 2018.

The new PDEA evidence room has an upgraded security system, making it inaccessible to unauthorized personnel.

Closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras were installed for 24/7 monitoring which leaves no blind areas on the premises. ABC-class fire extinguishers were placed as part of the fire exhaustion system. Metal grills and double doors were also installed around the facility.

The doors of the evidence room are secured with three sets of locks under the custody of three authorized key holders, which makes the absence of one key holder makes the entry to the room impossible.

Air conditioning units, exhaust fans, and dehumidifiers were also installed for proper ventilation inside the facility in order to preserve physical evidence.

A biometrics machine is also installed outside the evidence room to

control access to the facility. The procurement of 10 new steel racks is also in the offing to enhance the storage of evidence.

PDEA has the sole authority to take charge and have custody of seized drug evidence under Section 21 (Custody and Disposition of Confiscated, Seized, and/or Surrendered Dangerous Drugs, Plant Sources of Dangerous Drugs, Controlled Precursors and Essential Chemicals, Instruments/ Paraphernalia and/or Laboratory Equipment) of Republic Act 9165, or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, as amended by Republic Act 10640.

Restriction in the accessibility of the storage facility is one of the controls instilled by PDEA to assure the security of drug evidence and avoid legal implications in the future.

However, a three-man audit team from the Commission on Audit (COA) was granted access to the new PDEA Evidence Room on May 15, 2018. The entry to the restricted area is PDEA's way of showing transparency with regard to safekeeping of drug evidence and let COA do its functions.

Based on the 2018 audit report of the Commission on Audit (COA) on PDEA's safekeeping, monitoring, and disposition of seized/confiscated dangerous drugs in its custody, the agency was commended for improving its evidence room by fully implementing all the recommendations of the audit team in the previous year.

The forensic laboratories of PDEA in the regions are now using an automated inventory system through tagging and bar-coding for speedy and accurate documentation and accounting of drug evidence.

Known as PDEA Evidence Inventory and Information System, or PEIIS, the system provides additional security features, achieves organized data collection while preserving the integrity and evidentiary value of seized drug evidence received in its custody during legitimate anti-drug operations.

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PATAS AT MAKATARUNGANG PAHAYAGAN

YOUR NATIONAL NEWSPAPER

Prayer for Healing

JESUS, may Your pure and healthy blood circulate in my ailing organism, and may Your pure and healthy body transform my weak body, and may a healthy and vigorous life throb within me, if it is truly Your holy will. Amen.

O BLOOD AND WATER WHICH FLOWED OUT FROM THE HEART OF JESUS AS A FOUNTAIN OF MERCY FOR US, I TRUST IN YOU!



Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, Have Mercy on us and on the whole world. Amen.

3 O'CLOCK PRAYER

"You died Jesus, but the source of life flowed out for souls and the ocean of mercy opened up for the whole world. O Fountain of Life immeasurable Divine Mercy, cover the whole world and empty Yourself out upon us."

"O Blood and Water which flowed out from the heart of Jesus as a Fountain of Mercy for us, I trust in you!"

"Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One have mercy on us and on the whole world." (3x) Amen.

Jesus, King of Mercy, I trust in you!

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