



SELF-LEARNING MODULES - Teachers and property custodians of Geronimo Santiago Elementary School sort out the bundles of lessons that compose the 'self-learning module' that will guide the students through a new educational system that involves distance learning and online classes. The bundles of the self-learning modules will be distributed to students of the city of Manila starting July 21, as part of DepEd's Learning Continuity Plan. (Jansen Romero)

Galvez pushes 4 hospitals in Metro dedicated to COVID-19 patients

By MARTIN A. SADONGDONG

The National Task Force (NTF) Against Coronavirus Disease proposed on Tuesday the establishment of four hospitals in Metro Manila that would solely cater to COVID-19 patients with the continued rise in the number of infected individuals.

NTF chief implementer Carlito Galvez Jr. raised the idea to President Duterte during a recent meeting stressing the need because more metro hospitals are now quickly filling up.

Last week, data from the Department of Health (DOH) showed that Metro Manila's bed capacity has already reached the "danger zone" with 76 percent of beds allotted for COVID-19 patients occupied.

The DOH mandates hospitals to provide 30 percent of its total bed capacity for COVID-19 patients.

But according to Galvez, hospitals are now resorting to using beds originally intended for non-COVID patients.

"The non-COVID patients are the ones being compromised, those undergoing dialysis, the cancer patients, they may be the casualties," he said

in Pilipino.

According to Galvez, this could only be mitigated with the establishment of four hospitals dedicated to COVID-19 patients as done by China in February.

We will be recommending that if we ever have a zoning in the National Capital Region, we should have four COVID hospitals like in China," he said in Pilipino.

Galvez said they are looking at the mega emergency room that is currently being constructed at the Quirino Memorial Hospital in Quezon City, which can house 50 ICU beds as a possible site dedicated to COVID-19 patients.

Galvez is also eyeing the East Avenue Medical Center in Quezon City where about 275 ICU and isolation beds can be used by COVID-19 patients.

In a related move, the chief implementer directed Public Works and Highways (DPWH) Secretary and isolation czar Mark Villar to convert some evacuation centers into isolation facilities.

Villar has constructed 167 evacuation buildings and we are using 68 facilities for COVID patients. More than 2,500 patients are housed there, Galvez said.

Gov't ready to borrow, sell properties to purchase vaccine

By GENALYN D. KABILING

President Duterte is prepared to borrow money and sell government properties for the procurement of the coronavirus vaccine for Filipinos.

The President said he intends to raise funds to procure 110 million vaccines to immunize all Filipinos from the disease as he welcomed the advancement in the clinical trials of coronavirus vaccine abroad.

"As a matter of fact, I would need about 110 million para mapainom ko sa lahat para... Ang COVID nandiyan pa pero mag-inginutil na... they remain on the air but we are immunized already so maghintay lang kayo nang kaunti (As a matter of fact I would need about 110 million for the people. The COVID is there but it will be inutile...they remain on the air but we are immunized already so let's wait for a bit)," Duterte said during his televised remarks Tuesday.

"Para sa mga plano natin, put it something like hanggang towards the end of the year. But if there is a thing that develops which is really good for you, mauna ako - mag-utang ako. Magpabili ako kung saan magpabili ng lupa para ipagbili ko ng - ibili ko ng medisina (For our plans, put it something like towards the end of the year. But if there is a thing that develops which is really good, I'll be the first. I will borrow money. I will sell properties to buy medicines)," he added.

Duterte said the clinical trials for the coronavirus vaccine are in the final stages, citing progress in Russia, China, and the United States.

"Actually ang ipinangako ko sa inyo kung mayroon ng vaccine. Mayroon na, final trial. Sa Russia, binitawan na nila. I'm sure China has already won, ang Amerika (Actually I made a promise to you that if there will be a vaccine; there is one. The trials are in the final stages. In Russia, they released it. I'm sure China has already won. America also has one)," he said.

The country has started to collaborate with foreign institutions in the country's research and development for the planned coronavirus vaccine.

Among the government partners are Sinovac Biotech Ltd., Adimmune Corporation, Academia Sinica, Chinese Academy of Science - Guangzhou Institute of Biomedicine and Health, and SinoPharma-Wuhan Institute of Biological Products and Beijing Institute in the development of a potential coronavirus vaccine.

Gov't to purchase ARB's products for food in prisons, hospitals

By ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ

Agricultural products produced by agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) will be sourced out to meet the regular food requirements of prisons and hospitals in Zamboanga Peninsula and Caraga Region.

Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) Secretary John Castricones led the virtual signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on Tuesday, July 21, with the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) and district hospitals to help boost the income of ARBs in these regions amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Sotto: We can't turn a blind eye on suspicious deaths of nine NBP high-profile inmates

By VANNE ELAINE P. TERRAZOLA and HANNAH TORREGOZA

People should not turn a blind eye on suspicions surrounding the death of the high-profile inmates in the New Bilibid Prison (NBP), Senate President Vicente Sotto III said on Tuesday.

"If the PDLs (persons deprived of liberty) died because of COVID-19 or were killed for some reason, [that will be] no issue to some. But what if they are missing? Shall we turn a blind eye?" Sotto said on Twitter.

Sotto issued the statement after some of his colleagues dismissed the need to investigate the deaths of at least nine drug convicts in the NBP after allegedly being infected with the coronavirus disease which the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) initially did not publicize and relay to higher authorities.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) later confirmed the deaths, including that of high-profile inmate Jaybee Sebastian, after BuCor Director Gerald Bantag was summoned by Secretary Menardo Guevarra on Monday to explain the matter. The BuCor is an agency under the DOJ.

During the meeting, Bantag reportedly informed Guevarra of "the protocol followed by the BuCor in the event of an inmate's death from COVID-19, including the mandatory cremation of the cadaver within 12 hours to prevent the further spread of infection."

"Are the documentations complete? Pics and certificates? DNA?" Sotto said in a text message to the Manila Bulletin, when asked if he was convinced with the protocols reported by Bantag to Guevarra.

Senate minority leader Franklin Drilon on Tuesday described the lack of detailed information about Sebastian's death as both scary and suspicious.

"Natakatok ako rito. Hindi mo alam kung ano nangyayari. (I am alarmed

about this. We do not know what really happened)," Drilon said in an interview over GMA News Tv.

Drilon insists the Data Privacy Act doesn't apply in Sebastian's case.

"Itong death, hindi kasama iyan sa sinasabing sensitive personal information na hindi pwedeng i-release (His death is not included in what they call sensitive personal information that could not be released). In fact, kailangan mo nga ng (you really need a) death certificate, a public document [for this]," he pointed out.

Drilon also said that as a person deprived of liberty (PDL), Sebastian's right to privacy is already suspended.

Sebastian is among key witnesses in the illegal drug case against Sen. Leila de Lima.

On Monday, Sotto filed a resolution calling for a legislative inquiry into the supposed COVID-19 related deaths in the national penitentiary. He mentioned previous statements casting doubts on the BuCor's decision to immediately send the deceased for cremation supposedly without informing authorities or their relatives.

Senate President Pro Tempore Ralph Recto said the BuCor should produce photos of the remains of deceased inmates to dispel doubts about their identities.

"If there is, then doubts will be laid to rest," Recto said.

"Isn't it SOP (standard operating procedure) that prisoners in the Bilibid are photographed for records? If there is a photo of his first entry, then there should be a photo when an inmate leaves the prison for good, whether he walks out a free man, or is carried out horizontally," Recto said in Pilipino.

Guevarra has directed the NBI to conduct a full probe on the matter. The BuCor has yet to give the DOJ the death certificates of the eight other high-profile drug convicts.

BOs, eight district hospitals, and BJMP headquarters in Caraga Region.

Undersecretary for Support Services Emily Padilla said this is the second time DAR has successfully conducted a virtual signing of agreement.

"We have conducted the very first successful virtual signing of MOU in the country and it was done in Pampanga involving the DAR, BJMP, and ARBOs in Region 3. We received positive feedback from our farmers there since the partnership," Padilla said.

Regional Directors Leomides Villareal and Ramon Madronal Jr. from Caraga Region and Zamboanga Peninsula, respectively, both signified their commitment to supervise and fully support this program for the improvement of the economic conditions of the ARBs.

S. No. 1541
H. No. 6895

Republic of the Philippines
Congress of the Philippines
Metro Manila
Eighteenth Congress
First Regular Session

Begun and held in Metro Manila, on Monday, the twenty-second day of July, two thousand nineteen.

[REPUBLIC ACT No. 11480]

AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 3 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7797, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "AN ACT TO LENGTHEN THE SCHOOL CALENDAR FROM TWO HUNDRED (200) DAYS TO NOT MORE THAN TWO HUNDRED TWENTY (220) CLASS DAYS"

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. Section 3 of Republic Act No. 7797, otherwise known as "An Act to Lengthen the School Calendar from Two Hundred (200) Days to Not More Than Two Hundred Twenty (220) Class Days", is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 3. Start of the School Year. - The school year shall start on the first Monday of June but not later than the last day of August: *Provided*, That in the event of a declaration of a state of emergency or state of calamity, the President, upon the recommendation of the Secretary of Education, may set a different date for the start of the school year in the country or parts thereof.

Notwithstanding the provision of any law to the contrary, the deferred school opening shall apply to all basic education schools, including foreign or international schools.

In the implementation of this Act, the Secretary of Education shall determine the end of the regular school year, taking into consideration the Christmas and summer vacations, and the peculiar circumstances of each region.

In the exercise of this authority, the Secretary of Education may authorize the holding of Saturday classes for elementary and secondary levels for public and private schools."

SEC. 2. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within thirty (30) days after the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Education, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for its effective implementation.

SEC. 3. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, acts, presidential decrees, executive orders, administrative orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof, inconsistent with, or contrary to the provisions of this Act are hereby modified, amended, or repealed accordingly.

SEC. 4. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect immediately upon its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,

ALAN PETER S. CAYETANO
Speaker of the House of Representatives

VICENTE C. SOTTO III
President of the Senate

This Act was passed by Senate of the Philippines as Senate Bill No. 1541 on June 1, 2020 and adopted by the House of Representatives as an amendment to House Bill No. 6895 on June 4, 2020.

JOSE LUIS G. MONTALES
Secretary General
House of Representatives

MYRA MARIE D. VILLARICA
Secretary of the Senate

Approved: JUL 17 2020

RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE
President of the Philippines

