

Gov't reviews viability of infra plan



By: Ben O. de Vera
 THE Duterte administration is reviewing the viability of its ambitious "Build, Build, Build" program, with the possibility of including in the pipeline emerging big-ticket projects to be rolled out by the private sector as the government wanted to start and finish as many infrastructure as possible before the President steps down in 2022.

"We're reviewing the list and may make changes," Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Ernesto M. Pernia told the Inquirer Monday.

Infrastructure agencies are reviewing Build, Build, Build—currently comprised of 75 "flagship" projects, of which only nine have private sector participation—as well as eight public-private partnerships (PPPs) and one to be fully rolled out by a private firm.

The Duterte administration had been shunning the PPP mode as its economic team had said the process from project approval to rollout had been slow during the previous administration of President Benigno Aquino

no III, wherein only 10 projects were implemented during its six years in office despite a promise to roll out 10 each year.

Duterte's economic managers were instead pushing for a "hybrid" PPP model wherein the government rolled out the projects and later bid out operations and maintenance (O&M) contracts to the private sector.

Officials told the Inquirer that slow-moving projects might be removed from the list, while huge PPP projects that were recently approved by the government but not yet part of the Build, Build, Build pipeline could be included.

The government recently approved the massive P735-billion New Manila International Airport project of San Miguel Corp. in Bulacan, while Neda's Investment Coordination Committee-Cabinet Committee last week approved the proposal of Naia Consortium—comprised of seven tycoons—to rehabilitate the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, the country's congested main gateway.

Also being reviewed by Neda

ICC and other agencies are airport projects to be undertaken by Aboitiz Group in Bohol, Dennis Uy-led Chelsea Logistics' venture in Davao and other PPPs to be undertaken to expand Mactan-Cebu, Laguindingan and Kalibo airports.

As of July, 46 big-ticket infrastructure projects worth P1.6 trillion belonging to the Build, Build, Build pipeline were under implementation, although only nine were under construction.

At this pace, 21 projects worth P187.6 billion out of the 75 flagship projects worth a total of at least P2.4 trillion will be finished in 2022 or the year President Duterte steps down, the latest Neda status report on the progress of Build, Build, Build showed.

"The remaining 54 projects will be completed beyond 2022, but may commence implementation during the current administration," it noted.

Of the 46 projects currently under implementation, two were already completed, six undergoing detailed engineering and design, 10 being procured, 12 were undergoing budgeting/financing, and seven will be re-evaluated by the Investment Coordination Committee.

Out of the 75 Build, Build, Build projects, 20 are under project development, five for review and four are pending government approval.

The nine ongoing projects included the Clark International Airport Expansion, a PPP build-and-transfer project that was 63-percent completed as of April. Construction of three other PPPs in Clark via joint venture was 65-percent accomplished in April.

Senate panels urge DSWD, PNP, AFP to craft de-radicalization program



By: Neil Arwin Mercado
 MANILA, Philippines — A joint panel of the Senate has recommended the adoption of a de-radicalization program for minors who have been recruited and indoctrinated by communist groups.

This was among the recommendations submitted in a Senate report by the committees on public order, headed by Senator Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa, and national defense chaired by Senator Panfilo Lacson following the investigation on the cases of missing minors who were allegedly recruited by leftist groups.

The report stated that the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWS), in coordination with the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), should come up with the said program.

"Integrated into this de-radi-

calization program is the DSWD Memorandum Circular No. 11, Series of 2019, where former rebels are now given the opportunity to be re-integrated into society, covering multiple dimensions of human life – financial, material, psychosocial, and other aspects necessary for their full return into the community," the report noted.

The report noted that the said DSWD Memorandum order is "more focused on distributing financial assistance to former rebels" thus, the need for a program that is mainly concentrated on providing psychosocial intervention and de-radicalization.

A total of 17 senators signed the committee report, with Senate Minority Leader Franklin Drilon indicating that he affixed his signature "only for the purpose of submitting the report for plenary debate/consideration."

Bill granting night shift differential pay to gov't employees reaches Senate

By: Neil Arwin Mercado
 MANILA, Philippines — A bill seeking to grant night shift differential pay to government em-

ployees including those in government-owned or controlled corporations has reached the Senate floor.

Senator Bong Revilla Jr., who chairs the Committee on Civil Service, Government Reorganization and Professional Regulation, sponsored Senate Bill 643, which was contained in Committee Report No. 13.

Under the bill, qualified government employees shall be paid night shift differential at a rate not exceeding 20 percent of the hourly basic rate for each hour of work performed between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. the following day.

However, public health workers who are already covered by Republic Act No. 7305 and government employees whose services are required, or are on call, 24 hours a day such as uniformed personnel of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), the Philippine National Police (PNP), the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), and the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) are not covered.

"The granting of night shift differential pay is in recognition of the efforts of employees to work beyond their regular schedule despite the late hours of the day to serve our people," Revilla said in his sponsorship speech Wednesday.

The committee report was signed by 20 senators.

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