

PGH...from page 1

the amount be retained, which if inflation is factored in, actually constitutes a reduction," he added.

Recto's remarks came after the Inquirer published a special report on the overcrowding in PGH, which highlighted the state-owned hospital's lack of facilities for its patients, a majority of whom are indigents from the provinces.

According to the Senate leader, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) earmarked only P2.77 billion for PGH's expenses next year, or a 14-percent drop from the P3.23 billion that Congress allocated in 2019.

Recto said the budget adjustments pruned PGH's allotments for capital outlay and for maintenance and operating expenses.

"The proposed 2020 budget of the PGH will harm its patients. Not only must the cuts be restored, its budget must be increased," he said.

"The PGH is often the first option and the last resort of the poor and the middle class to get the best medical treatment, so any cut on its budget hurts the deepest," he added.

DOH shortchanged

Recto earlier disclosed that the Department of Health (DOH) and Philippine Health Insurance Corp. had been shortchanged by P28.3 billion in their share of the sin tax collection in the Duterte administration's proposed P4.1-trillion spending program for 2020.

He also urged the DBM to restore the P10-billion cut in the health department's expenditure for its Health Facilities Enhancement Program, saying the government's budget planners should refrain from treating public spending like an "accounting ledger."

The reduction in PGH budget, Recto noted, would translate to P1.25 million less in daily allotment for its operations.

P200M restored

The House of Representatives, however, has moved to restore P200 million in the budget of PGH amid complaints of crowded and overstretched facilities, although it's still less than half of the P456-million cut suffered by the state-run hospital.

Half of the amount would go to medical services and the other half to a quick-response fund, according to Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano, who announced the P9.5 billion worth of "institutional amendments" made by the House to the proposed P4.1-trillion budget for

2020.

On top of the additional funding for PGH, the House also put in another P200 million in the budget of the DOH, split evenly between the National Center for Mental Health and a quick-response fund, Cayetano said at a press conference.

The House approved the proposed budget for 2020 on third reading on Sept. 20, but allowed itself a window of time to make changes to the proposal through a small committee, a process questioned by senators.

Cayetano gave details on the P9.5 billion worth of amendments collected and approved by the small committee last week.

P3B for palay

The biggest realignment, he said, was the infusion of an additional P3 billion to the original P7-billion fund to buy palay, or unhusked rice, from local rice farmers devastated by rice import liberalization.

Another P500 million was realigned to the budget of the Department of Agriculture for a quick-response fund that would enable the agency to respond immediately to emergencies, such as the outbreak of African swine fever.

K-12, day care

The Department of Education's budget was also augmented by P800 million, with P650 million going to the operations of schools for the K-12 program, and the rest going to modal day care centers, Cayetano said.

The Speaker said P1 billion was added to the budget of the Department of the Interior and Local Government, including a P100-million camp development fund for the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

A P500-million fund was also added for the national electrification program. The same amount was realigned to the environment department for its national resources conservation and development program, Cayetano said.

Finally, the House put in another P500 million in the budget of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority to cover salary increases for its 4,000 job-order personnel, and a special allowance for traffic enforcers and field workers.

Cayetano earlier said the funds would come from unused right-of-way funds and from the allocations for the scheduled 2020 barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections, which Congress planned to postpone until 2023.

SOUTH KOREA...from page 1

craft was shown at an official event since the first two of the planes were delivered here in March, according to the state-run Defense Acquisition Program Administration.

Moon, a liberal who espouses greater reconciliation with North Korea, was behind a flurry of North Korea-U.S. diplomacy on the North's nuclear program. During his third summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Pyongyang last September, the two Koreas struck a set of agreements meant to ease military animosities such as halting front-line live-fire exercises and dismantling guard posts along their border.

Many conservatives in South Korea have said the deals greatly undermined South Korea's national security because North Korea's nuclear threats remain intact.

Moon said during Tuesday's ceremony that strong national security would support dialogue and cooperation with North Korea and an effort to build a lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula.

Nuclear diplomacy largely remains stalled since the second summit between Kim and President Donald Trump in Vietnam in February collapsed due to disputes over U.S.-led sanctions on North Korea. Kim and Trump held a brief, impromptu meeting at the Korean border in late June and agreed to resume diplomacy.

Malabonians of California, USA and Canada



Get-together of old friends and 'Kaba-Barrios met in a simple lunch in Green Banana Leaf Restaurant in Artesia. (Top photo): Bebot Bates, Sally Salvio and Benny Navarro, (Center photo): Bebot, Daya, Meh, Sally, Basil and Arnie. (Bottom photo): Friends and relatives joined the sumptuous meal.

PIOLO...from page 8

"I won't deny the fact that there are days when I feel sad. Parang, 'OK ka lang ba na magisa ka lang?' But I get to enjoy my quiet moments," he said. "You get to reflect on where you are in life. You try to figure out your purpose, how to move forward and which road to take. I'm trying to discover myself as to how else I can grow as an individual, singer, actor, producer—anything."

Piolo doesn't feel the pressure to become a "family man," either. "I feel young, and I still have a lot to offer," said the actor, who also cited his lack of time and travel goals as two of the reasons that stop him from going out and seeking a partner. "I love to travel, that's

my only splurge. And I still want to be able to cover more countries; this is the thing that I have always wanted to do, to travel the world. And now, I'm finally able to do that. I'm enjoying the freedom of being able to travel at my own pace," he said. "That's why I don't want to entertain thoughts of being in a romantic relationship."

This year's edition of SunPIOLOgy—dubbed "SunPIOLOgy Xone"—will feature three major events: Sun Life Virtual Run, a long-distance race participants complete anywhere (Oct. 15 to Nov. 15); Sun Life Cycle PH, which will offer courses for cyclists of different age brackets and fitness levels (Nov. 23); and Sun Life Resolution Run (Jan.

18, 2020), a race that aims to boost awareness about diabetes prevention and management.

Piolo, who's one of the most health-conscious and sports-minded personalities in show biz, said that maintaining an active lifestyle helps him do his job as an actor better. "When you have training, you're forced to sleep and wake up early; you get to avoid partying, stuff like that in the process. And you also have positive energy on the set," he pointed out.

"The endorphins and energy you feel after working out is addictive. It's not tiring, but rejuvenating. Nakakabata," he quipped. "I hope to inspire more people to lead a healthier life. It doesn't matter how old you are. You have to start somewhere."

DEATH...from page 3

body to do more or less than what a reasonable observer would consider fair or just. If De Lima demanded or took bribes from any of the convicts in exchange for privileges in prison, she should be charged for corruption or extortion, not for conspiracy to trade in prohibited drugs, a nonbailable offense. She should be freed and allowed to post bail while the cases against her are being heard.

What probably got the ire of Panelo was the overt warning that anyone who participated in the politically motivated imprisonment of De Lima could be barred from entering the United States. While I'm sure President Duterte has no desire or intent to visit the United States anytime soon, many in the present

government may be regular visitors and holders of long-term multiple entry US visas. They're forewarned.

But if their consciences are clear, they should have nothing to fear. The worst thing that could befall them, if they happen to be on the US Immigration lookout list, is that they would be sent back to wherever they came from, on the next available flight.

To determine whom to bar or to admit into one's country is a sovereign prerogative of every nation. Panelo knows this, for sure. There wasn't anything that former ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales and former foreign secretary Albert del Rosario could do after they were refused entry into Hong

Kong recently. They were not even told why they were being barred, though it was easy to guess the reason.

If the Durbin-Leahy amendment passes US congressional scrutiny and becomes part of the 2020 Appropriations Bill, it would be interesting to know who lands in the "prohibition on entry" list as a result of the handling of the De Lima case. I doubt that it will be made public. But there lies its potency as a deterrent against the malicious weaponization of legal processes to punish, silence or intimidate dissenters and critics of government. It is worth noting that this amendment also refers to "wrongful detention" in countries like Turkey, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, and seeks the application of the same measure to these cases.

America is simply putting its laws where its mouth is. If Malacañang feels truly offended by, to quote Panelo, this "insult to the competence of our duly constituted authorities," "it is an outright disrespect to our people's clamor for law and order," the Duterte administration could counter the perceived insolence of these two American senators by declaring them persona non grata and barring them from entering the Philippines.

But Panelo must be aware that the country under President Duterte's watch has already lost so much support from many of its traditional allies. After ranting against foreign interference in our internal affairs, he meekly concludes: "We shall leave it to the international community to

ascertain which nation values the rule of law in accordance with the principle of state sovereignty." Sus!

Answers from Page 13

