

Bautista to lead Independence Day rites in QC

By Rio N. Araja

QUEZON City Mayor Herbert Bautista will spearhead today's 120th celebration of Philippine Independence with a theme of "Kalayaan 2018: Pagbabagong Ipinaglaban, Alay sa Masaganang Kinabukasan."

He said the 37-member city council and Vice Mayor Joy Belmonte will also take part in the commemoration of the freedom of the Filipino people from 400 years of Spanish rule.

Undersecretary Martin Diño of the Department of the Interior and Local Government is a guest of honor.

Chief Supt. Joselito Esquivel Jr. will welcome the guest of honor and lead in the hoisting of the Philippine flag.

Bautista has tasked retired general Elmo San Diego, Department of Public Order and Safety chief, to ensure the orderliness of the wreath-laying ceremony and smooth flow of traffic in the compound.

The Boy Scouts of the Philippines representatives will lead the oath of allegiance.

Meanwhile, Belmonte is batting for a 24/7 suicide helpline to prevent the increasing number of Filipinos committing suicide, especially youngsters.

She reacted to the suicide of American celebrity chef Anthony Bourdain and fashion designer Kate Spade in the United States, saying these should serve as a wake-up call to address the sensitive issue of mental health, particularly depression that often leads to suicide.

"We in the Philippines are not spared from this increasing global trend. Perhaps, our city can establish a helpline like the ones in the US and other countries with growing suicide rates," Belmonte said.