

QC permits issued 2-5 days

Belmonte says cutting red tape limits opportunities for corruption

Daily Tribune (Philippines) · 24 Jul 2019 · A24 · By Alvin Murcia DAVID JOHN CUBANGBANG

Quezon City Mayor **Joy Belmonte** yesterday backed the push of President Rodrigo Duterte for local government units (LGU) to cut bureaucratic red tape and ensure the ease of doing business in their localities.

By Pat C. Santos

The National Museum is willing to return to

the City of Manila the famous "Filipino Struggles Through History" paintings of national artist Carlos "Botong" Francisco, but only after payment of P20 million in restoration works.

Manila city officials revealed the willingness of museum officials to return the four paintings originally mounted as a mural at the ceiling of the Villegas Hall inside the Mayor's Office. The murals are now on display at the National Museum after five years of painstaking restoration of the artwork completed by Francisco just months

among rustlers."

Last year, then Manila Mayor Joseph Estrada and the City Council signed an agreement to keep the paintings, comprising four panels, at the National Museum to make them more accessible to the public.

The paintings were removed from City Hall to undo the ravages of time and water damage through restoration works by at least 10 professional restorers.

In return for allowing its display at the National Museum, museum officials pledged to provide Manila City Hall with more durable reproductions of the paintings.

Officials of Manila, the National Museum, the National Historical Commission of the Philippines, Cultural Center of the

culture and arts met to discuss the murals' possible return home.

Museum officials said the paintings are on loan with them "but we are willing to discuss with you new arrangements."

City officials asked the experts gathered in the meeting how to best protect the paintings if and when they are returned to the ceiling of the Villegas Hall.

The mural was commissioned by Manila Mayor Antonio Villegas in 1968 and it depicted the struggles of Filipinos from pre-colonial Tondo to the end of the American colonial period in 1946.

Also known as the "History

for a time until the national museum, through its head at the time Gemma Cruz-Araneta, clarified that it had been sent to them by Mayor Alfredo Lim for restoration.



In his fourth State of the Nation Address (SoNA) on Monday, the President challenged the various LGU to issue business clearance and related permits within three working days.

Belmonte said that fast-tracking the processing of permits, clearances and licenses in Quezon City is included in her 14-point agenda, adding that for so-called low-risk businesses they can issue a business permit within two days.

"For businesses that need close scrutiny, we will issue permit within one week," she said. "With this, we can encourage businessmen to invest in Quezon City while limiting opportunities for irregularities in the city."

Meanwhile, a lawyers organization yesterday posed a question over the call of President Rodrigo Duterte for Congress to bring back the death penalty, asking for whom is it?

The National Union of People's Lawyers, in a statement signed by its secretary general Ephraim Cortez, pointed out that several politicians had already been found guilty of plunder "but we have yet to see them behind bars, with some (of them) in their extravagant barongs and Filipinianas, attending the SoNA."

In his SoNA, the president said he is willing to go to jail in his continuous war against illegal drugs and corruption.