

RP economy improves in second quarter - NEDA official

by IRIS C. GONZALEZ
Philstar.com

MANILA—The economy improved in the second quarter of the year, growing faster than the 0.4 percent registered in the previous quarter because of an improvement in consumer spending and the government's pump-priming efforts, an official from the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) said on June 23.

While there are no available economic growth projections yet, NEDA Deputy Director-General Rolando Tungpalan said that the country's gross domestic product (GDP) expanded faster in the second quarter than in the first three months of the year due to accelerated government spending during the period.

He is optimistic that the Philippines will not slip into a recession, contrary to warnings earlier raised by economists and analysts from the private sector.

"Things are looking better. I can't imagine that the second quarter will be worse than the first quarter. Surely, there's no recession,"

he told reporters on the sidelines of the launch of Alternatives to Migration, Decent Jobs for Filipino Youth, a three-year joint program funded by the Spanish government and implemented by the Philippines and the United Nations.

Tungpalan said drivers of growth in the second quarter of the year include continued dollar inflows from overseas Filipino workers, accelerated government spending, and an improvement in personal consumption of Filipinos.

He noted that 60 percent of the government's stimulus package has already been spent during the first half of the year.

The target, he said is for state-owned agencies to spend the remaining 40 percent by the end of September, way ahead of the end-December deadline.

"We are pressing the agencies to spend," he said.

On top of this, Tungpalan said the proposed P100 billion public-

private sector initiative is expected to be tapped starting this year.

He noted that there are various schemes on how businesses can tap the P100 billion. One possible scheme is through the grant of loans to businesses by government financial institutions.

The NEDA official said the P100 billion is intended as a medium-term initiative, to be disbursed in a span of three to five years starting this year.

In the first quarter of the year, the economy grew by only 0.4 percent compared to the same period in 2008.

It shrank by a seasonally adjusted 2.3 percent from the last three months of 2008, its lowest level recorded for the past 20 years. ■

Navy whistle-blower runs to SC for help

by NORMAN BORDADORA
Inquirer.net

MANILA—Whistle-blower Navy Lt. Nancy Gadian asked on Monday, June 22 the Supreme Court to amend the Court of Appeals decision that recognized threats and placed her under the protection of Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro.

Gadian, through her lawyers, asked that the appeals court decision on her petition for a writ of amparo be amended to allow the Catholic Church group, Association of Major Religious Superiors, to continue giving her protection and sanctuary.

She also asked that the AMRS be given the means necessary to continue giving the protection and sanctuary under the writ of amparo.

Gadian sought and was granted the writ of amparo on claims that her life, liberty and security were under threat in connection with her allegations that more than P40 million in funds meant for the joint RP-US military exercises was misspent by military brass.

The Navy lieutenant was apparently uncomfortable about being given protection by the Secretary of National Defense especially after Teodoro released a statement expressing concern for the military chain of command and discipline when her petition for a writ of amparo was pending before the Court of Appeals.

"This is a clear indication that the Secretary, now tasked with

protecting herein Aggrieved Party-Petitioner, is more concerned with the military chain of command than Lt. SG Gadian's right to life," the petition said.

Gadian also argued that while the Department of National De-

fense was civilian in character, "it could only extend protection to herein Aggrieved Party-Petitioner through its military personnel."

"This is unacceptable and continues to be so because of the

obvious security risk posed by military personnel protecting a military whistle-blower whom the Court of Appeals found to be the subject of threat emanating also from the military institution," the petition added. ■

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