

**MEDIA INTERVIEW AT THE VILLAMOR AIR BASE, PASAY CITY**

December 19, 2024

[00:00:00]

REPORTER: Sir, ngayon po na nasa Pilipinas na si Mary Jane, mabibigyan po ba siya ng clemency as requested by the family?

**PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.:** Ang layo pa— malayo pa tayo doon. We still have to have a look at really what her status is. And then of course, we're aware of the request for clemency from her representative and, of course, from her family.

And we will leave it to the legal judgement — the judgment of our legal experts to determine whether the provision of clemency is appropriate.

So, we'll have to look at the — wala namang kondisyon ang binigay iyong Indonesia. So, it's really up to us. But we're still at the very preliminary stage of her pag-uwi.

REPORTER: Mr. President, yesterday you convened some of the Cabinet Secretaries to review the proposed 2025 national budget. So, ano po 'yung napag-usapan? Ano po 'yung items and provisions na ivi-veto niyo and kailangan po natin ie-expect na ma-sign 'yung 2025 budget?

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**PRESIDENT MARCOS JR.:** Well, we had to have a look because maraming nagbago from the budget requests from the different departments and we have

to put it back in the same shape that we had first requested. So, unfortunately, we are only left now—I am only left now with the veto power because tapos na sa Bicam. So, na-approve na ng House, na-approve na ng Senado. Now, it's up to us on how we regain control of the spending program and I cannot give you the details yet because that was — we are now — that is what we are doing. We're going through item by item, line by line to see what is priority and what is not. That's what we will come up with.

We were originally scheduled to sign into law the GAA tomorrow, the 20th, pero parang hindi kami matatapos pa at that time. So, I cannot give you a date because it will take as long as it would take; but I want to be very, very sure that the budget for 2025 is directed at the important projects that we have prioritized, number one.

And secondly, that there is a stronger safeguards on the spending for the different programs kaya baka mag-a-assess na naman tayo ng mga project-project na pinasok, sa insertion. Because iyong insertion na ginawa ay hindi naman kasama iyon sa budget request. So, ano ngayon iyong mangyayari? Talaga bang kailangan? Baka iyong iba hindi naman kailangan. Kailangan pang—baka puwedeng i-defer. Iyong iba walang masyadong— we are starting to see some project proposals that do not have the appropriate program of work, walang appropriate na documentation, hindi maliwanag kung saan pupunta ang pera. Kaya't iyon ang liliwanagin natin. Maging maliwanag...

Hindi naman — it's not as if that we have a — hindi naman tayo nagkaroon ng napakalaking budget na savings. Hindi nga. Kulang-kulang. Kaya't kailangang maingat na maingat tayo kasi iyong ginagastos diyan ay—hindi naman karamihan—pero meron diyan utang iyan. Kaya't kailangan mapunta sa tama para mabayran natin iyong utang. May bawi naman tayo doon sa ginastos natin, doon sa inutang natin. And that's what we are trying to clarify.

REPORTER: So, sir, nakasalalay na po siya sa veto power? Hindi niyo na po siya isasauli o ibabalik sa Congress 'yung proposed budget?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS JR.:** Hindi — wala sa procedure iyan. There is no procedure to return it to the Bicam. It's finished already in the House, it's finished already in the—it's finished in Congress. Tapos na. So, it's up to us now to look at the items and to see what are appropriate, what are relevant, and what are the priorities.

REPORTER: Malalagdaan mo po before December 31?

[00:04:38]

**PRESIDENT MARCOS JR.:** I think we'll be able to do it before the year ends.

REPORTER: Sir, reaction nalang po natin doon sa recommendation ng quadcom to file charges against former President Duterte and other senators?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS JR.:** Yes. Well, the DOJ has to make that assessment. May recommendation ang quadcom—ganoon naman talaga ang proseso. When they do an oversight hearing, mayroon silang findings, ifo-forward nila ngayon sa DOJ with their own recommendations as to how to handle the findings in the hearings.

So, we will go now to DOJ. The DOJ will look at it and see if it is time to file cases, what cases to file, how to produce the evidence that we will need to actually build the case up. Titingnan pa iyan, kailangan pang i-assess ng mabuti kung ano iyong maaaring maging kaso, kung tama ba iyong direksiyon ng rekomendasyon ng committees from the House.

REPORTER: Mr. President, na-float din po 'yung idea nung...

**PRESIDENT MARCOS JR.:** I'm sorry?

REPORTER: Mr. President, sa House po na-float din 'yung idea ng suspension ng PhilHealth premium for one year daw sabi ni House Speaker Martin Romualdez. Is this something you're open to approve?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS JR.:** That was an idea, but this is just in response because of what is... Let me there be very clear, I really wish sana naman iyong mga nagko-comment tungkol sa PhilHealth subsidy, pag-aralan ninyo nang mas malalim-lalim at tingnan naman ninyo... At ito iyong guarantee ko, napakasimple lang ng guarantee ko: kahit na subsidy, kahit walang subsidy, kahit anong contribution, all of these issues — hindi mababawasan ang serbisyo ng PhilHealth, hindi mababawasan ang bayad ng PhilHealth sa insurance claim. In fact, baligtad, padadamihin pa namin ang serbisyong ibibigay ng PhilHealth, pararamihin — palalakihin pa namin ang pagbayad sa insurance claims.

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So, I would like to just assure everybody, huwag niyong inaalala na mababawasan ang serbisyo kahit na kanino. Para sa senior, para sa mga mahihirap, para sa middle class, walang mababawasan kahit isang kusing. Quite the opposite, dadagdagan natin iyan in 2025. Mas dadami pa ang magiging serbisyo na ibinibigay ng PhilHealth, mas lalaki pa ang magiging payment na ibibigay sa insurance claim.

Kaya't huwag po kayong magaalala, walang mawawala sa serbisyo ng PhilHealth. Mas pinapaganda pa nga namin ang pagpatakbo ng PhilHealth para mas marami pang maibibigay sa taumbayan.

All right.

REPORTER: Thank you, Mr. President, puwede pong malaman anong plano ninyo sa Pasko? Saan po kayo magpapasko?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS JR.:** Well, the only usual na ano namin — Christmas eve sa Malacañang, sa palace. At siguro on Christmas day aakyat ako ng north, go up north and spend the holiday. Maybe up north pero babalik ako ng Maynila. Depende, very flexible naman ang schedule ko kasi hindi ko maaaring sasabihin na hindi aalis. Aalis ako kasi, you know, baka may mangyari, baka kailangan ako; whatever it is, I'm always available. But siyempre lahat tayo we could use a little break. So, I will use the time... Ang dami kong libro na hindi pa nababasa. So, babasahin ko silang lahat habang bakasyon.

REPORTER: Mr. President, Ilocos ba o Baguio 'yung pupuntahan ninyo?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS JR.:** Both.

Q: Sasama daw si Ian. (laughs)

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** On Christmas Day? On Christmas day I'll be in Manila but I'll go to Baguio but after that wala pa, we haven't really decided as a family. Lahat busy. Ito nga — iyong mga anak ko ang hirap nang hilain. Hindi sila — marami silang mga pinaplano but maybe the First Lady and I will spend a little quiet time.

Q: Sir, just to make sure. Sir, definitely on Christmas day you will be taking your off?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** I will be?

Q: Taking your off on Christmas day.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** I will be taking my?

Q: Holiday break, sir, off, break.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** I don't have off days. [laughter] Hindi ako kasama diyan. Hindi kami kasama sa bakasyon, sa holiday, sa weekend. Hindi kami kasama diyan. We're always on call.

REPORTER: Thank you, sir.

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**BAGONG PILIPINAS**