

Philippines ahead of SONA : Riders labour group demand ayuda

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The riders' rights group Kapatiran sa Dalawang Gulong (Kagulong) asked the government for a package of social assistance for the so-called "bagong bayani" ahead of the first SONA of President Bongbong Marcos.

Kagulong held a pre-SONA online gathering yesterday where riders aired their grievances and tabled a set of demands. The group plans to join the alternative SONA mobilization of civil society groups on Monday.

"Protection of riders' rights, livelihood and safety are the three main issues facing the riding community. These can be addressed by the new government through legislation or executive action," stated Don Pangan, Kagulong secretary-general.

He explained that the incomes of food delivery, courier and motorcycle taxi riders have been severely affected by rising prices of gasoline. As independent contractors, fuel costs as well as vehicle maintenance are shouldered by riders and not the apps.

"When gas prices were around P60 per liter, riders spent P200 to P300 for travelling for 8 to 10 hours a day. Now that gas costs P70 to P80 per liter, fuel expenses have risen to P300 to P400 but gross incomes have remained the same. So, a rider earning P800 daily gets to take home only P500 today instead of P600 or more previously. This net income is now below the minimum wage. Riders are falling into the ranks of the working poor. Thus, the urgency of the demand for subsidized fuel and basic goods," Pangan elaborated.

He added "In addition, riders set aside P50 daily for vehicle maintenance and P100 to P150 weekly (P150/7 days = P21.42) for their cellphone load. This just leaves P428.58 as the take-home pay of a rider. If the spouse also works as a rider, the aggregate household income comes up to only a little more than P800 daily which falls short of the P1,300 cost of living estimate of Partido Manggagawa. No wonder that if riders fall sick or meet an accident then they plunge into debt given that they have no social protection as self-employed workers. Therefore, we demand recognition as employees with labor rights and social security."

Kagulong is also asking Congress to repeal the Doble Plaka law for being discriminatory to riders and authorities for better enforcement of road safety laws.

Kagulong

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P.-S.

- PM. Thursday, July 21, 2022 :
<http://partidongmanggagawa2001.blogspot.com>