Revival of Panay Railway faces delay

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The proposed rehabilitation of Panay Railway Incorporated (PRI) is now facing delay due to lack of budget that could fund the revival of 117-kilometer length of Panay Railway System from Iloilo to Roxas City.

PRI-Iloilo director Cesar Capellan said they are still waiting positive feedback from the Korean investors to submit their project plan which will indicate that they are willing to invest for the said project.

Capellan, although, said they are willing to enter into a Private Public Partnership (PPP) with the interested investor just to materialize the proposal.

Capellan said the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) has already approved their feasibility study for the railway rehabilitation amounting to P 16 billion.

As proposed plan, the railway will be alleviated from Iloilo City particularly along Loboc area going to Iloilo Airport in towns of Sta. Barbara-Cabatuan, Iloilo.

Capellan added the light-rail transit (LRT) will pass through its old main railway from Sta. Barbara to Lawaan, Roxas City vice versa.

Once materialized, the travel time from Iloilo City to Roxas City will be shorten and will take only 1 hour to 30 minutes, compared to the current four-hour travel.

Capellan said there will be five LRT and 17 stop stations that will cater for regular, express and night cargo passengers for neighboring towns of Iloilo and Roxas City.

He added transport fare will be P 1.50 per kilometer which is very affordable to everybody.

Meanwhile, around 3,000 occupants along railway will be relocated once the rehabilitation will start.
Capellan, however, stressed that majority of these occupants are illegal settlers while others are their lessees having the lease of contract with them who have been paying since year 1906.

He added occupants are living within the 30 meters width of the railway’s right of way and other exclusive operations.

Capellan said the PRI is now reviewing the lease of contract with their lessees and since, the PRI is under the Phividec Railways Inc. which is owned by the national government, they are also willing to provide relocation site to the affected families.

To recall, some 130 affected households in Brgy. Railway in La Paz, Iloilo City expressed objection last year over the proposed rehabilitation which could trigger for a mass eviction.

This was only stopped after Punong Barangay Nestor Canong of Brgy. Railway sought help from city officials to air their sentiments to Department of Transportation and Communication (DOTC) Secretary Manuel Roxas who earlier expressed opposition to the revival of the train operations in Panay Island saying that it is not the priority concern of the present administration. IMT


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