BI Main Building still close until Thursday

MANILA, Philippines - The Bureau of Immigration (BI) announced that its main building in Intramuros, Manila will remain closed until Thursday to enable all of the employees working there to undergo rapid antibody tests for the COVID-19 virus.

According to BI Commissioner Jaime Morente, only about half of the nearly 700 employees assigned at the bureau's main office were tested by the Bureau's Medical Section on Monday and Tuesday, hence the need to extend the building's shutdown for another two days.

Morente added that the Bureau's General Services Section has also requested that they be given ample time to complete the disinfection and sanitation of the entire four-storey building and its premises.

The BI earlier said it was suspending operations at its main building after three of its employees reportedly tested positive for the coronavirus.

Despite the shutdown of its main office, Morente said the public may transact their business in the Bureau's satellite and extension offices in Metro Manila, particularly at the SM Aura mall and PEZA building in Taguig City; SM-North mall in Quezon City; and BOI building in Makati City.

"Those who have registered with our online appointment system will be notified or may inquire about their new schedule by contacting our hotlines that can be viewed at immigration.gov.ph," the BI chief added.

Meanwhile, Manila Mayor Isko Moreno assured the BI personnel that the medical and quarantine facilities of the city government are always available to any immigration employee who may be infected or suspected of having the virus.

Moreno gave the assurance after accepting a plaque of appreciation from BI Deputy Commissioner Aldwin Alegre in recognition of the assistance the Manila City Government extended to the Bureau last month in conducting rapid test for more than a thousand immigration employees assigned at the BI Main Office and the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA).

It was also learned that last week the Manila City Government donated to the BI
an automatic disinfectant passage system which was installed and is now operating at the entrance doors of the BI main building.