

PROSPECTIVE DEPUTIZED
ENR OFFICERS UNDERGO
TRAINING IN RIZAL



Over 40 individuals from the people’s organizations in Antipolo, Upland Farmers Association, IP Farmers Association, and bantay gubat and forest patrollers of WawaJVCo, Incorporated along with personnel of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and Rizal Provincial Office participated in a two-day training for prospective Deputized Environment and Natural Resources Officers (DENROs) at Boso-Boso Highlands Hotel and Resort, Rizal last March 6-7, 2024.

The said activity was facilitated by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) CALA-BARZON through its Enforcement Division.

“Marami ang natawag, ngunit kakaunti ang napili. Kayo ang napili upang maging kaagapay ng DENR Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) at ng Probinsya sa pagpapatupad ng mga environmental laws”, said by Engr. Robert Estrada from the Provincial Government of Rizal as he relayed the message of Rizal Governor Hon. Nina Ricci Ynares to the participants.

The training aims to capacitate prospective DENROs to assist DENR in the enforcement of environmental laws, conduct of Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) activities, and documentation of the Administrative Confiscation Proceedings.

According to the data of the National Mapping and Resources Information Authority (NAMRIA), 51 percent of the total land area of Rizal are classified forest lands. PENRO Rizal Technical Services Division Chief, Ernesto M. Diso, Jr., recognized the lack of manpower to patrol the area they cover. He shared “Ang average na kailangang i-patrol ng isang forest ranger namin ay 1,400 hectares. Kaya po andito kayo, upang makatulong naming mabantayan at mapatrol ang kagubatan”.

Government Affairs and Public Relations Head of WawaJVCo, Inc Ms. April Adis emphasized the need for reinforcements in the protection of Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape (UMRBPL) – a 26,126 hectare Protected Area (PA) in Rizal. “Mayroon lamang po tayong 17 Forest Rangers protecting Upper Marikina... Ito ay hindi birong gawain kung kaya’t tayong mga IPs ng Antipolo at Montalban at iba’t ibang ahensya na nakapaloob sa Protected Area, at mga nakatira sa PA, ay responsibilidad nating tulungan ang DENR na mapangalagaan ang PA”, Adis said.

Meanwhile, For. Lorenzo Cordova, Jr, Company Forester of WawaJVCo underscored the significant role of the community in protecting the PA. He said “Binibigyan natin ng halaga ang partisipasyon ng komunidad...Kailangan ang mas malalim na pagsasanay para kayo mismo na nasa frontline ng pagprotekta sa ating kalikasan ay maipatupad ng tama ang batas.”

DENROs are authorized to arrest, even without a warrant, any person who violated environmental laws. They

may also appear in court as witnesses against environmental violators.

The two-day training covered discussions on environmental laws, rules, and regulations under the forestry, biodiversity, and land sector. Further, salient features of Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, and Philippine Mining Act were also tackled.

The training was requested by the WawaJVCo, Inc that primes to supply water to 2 million residents of Rizal Province and Metro Manila.

DENR-PENRO CAVITE CHAMPIONS
PRIE-HRM PRINCIPLES AMONG
CAITE SCIENCE INTEGRATED
SCHOOL-REGIONAL SCIENCE HIGH
SCHOOL STUDENTS THRU WORK
IMMERSION PROGRAM



In a knot-tied collaboration between the DENR-Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) of Cavite and Cavite Science Integrated School-Regional Science High School through a Memorandum of Agreement, nine Grade 12 students embarked on an 80-hour work immersion program from February 12-23, 2024.

This initiative, guided by the principles of Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM) and DepEd Order No. 30 s. 2017, offered students an immersive experience in environmental stewardship while fulfilling academic requirements.

DepEd Order No. 30, s. 2017 sets the guidelines in the conduct of Work Immersion primarily aimed to enhance the quality of education in the Philippines by prioritizing the holistic development of learners. It emphasizes the integration of values education, career guidance, and work immersion programs into the school curriculum to equip students with the necessary skills and competencies for personal and professional success.

Designed to bridge classroom learning with practical application, the work immersion program offered students with firsthand exposure to the vital functions and responsibilities within DENR—under the mentorship of PENRO personnel from Land Records Unit, Compliance Monitoring Unit, Accounting, Manila Bay Site Coordinating and Management Office (MBSCMO), Surveillance, Investigation and Intelligence Unit (SIIU), Planning and Management Section, and Administrative Section.

Students gained practical insights into environmental conservation efforts, natural resource management, and sustainable development practices. Furthermore, the work immersion program provided them with a platform to actively apply Prime HRM principles in their daily activities.

By fostering a culture of collaboration, innovation, and continuous learning, DENR-PENRO Cavite empowered students to develop essential competencies such as critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving – qualities essential for success in both academic and professional spheres.

The culminating activity involved the awarding of certificates to students for their successful completion of the program. This recognition ceremony served as a testament to the students’ dedication, effort, and achievement throughout the immersion period. It also provided an opportunity to celebrate their accomplishments and acknowledge the valuable contributions they partook to the DENR-PENRO.

During the recognition ceremony, selected students were in-

vited to share their reflections on their experiences as DENR trainees. Part of the activity had students respond to prompts such as “I am DENR trainee, of course I am _____”, where they expressed their personal commitment to environmental conservation and sustainability. Mr. James Bryan Orosco responded, “I am DENR trainee, of course I am Makakalikasan!”. The said activity highlighted the students’ aspirations to become advocates for environmental protection, agents of positive change, and stewards of nature.

In a nutshell, the successful completion of the work immersion program not only reflects DENR-PENRO Cavite’s dedication to excellence in education but also reinforces its role as a beacon of environmental stewardship in the region. By embracing PRIME-HRM principles, DENR-PENRO Cavite continued to empower students to become active agents of change and champions for a sustainable future.###

VARIOUS SECTORS CONVENE
FOR ONSERVATION, MANAGE-
MENT OF QUEZON'S RICH FOREST



Quezon Provincial Multi-sectoral Forest and Environmental Protection and Management Council (PMFEPC), composed of various national and local agencies from the government, other Law Enforcement groups, academe, Non-Government Organizations (NGO) and private groups, convened for its first quarter meeting in Tayabas City, Quezon to discuss actions for the protection, conservation and management of the province’s rich forestland and natural resources.

Quezon PENR Officer Cyril Coliflores presided over the meeting. Reports of accomplishments from both the partners and the DENR were presented. Some of the remarkable presentations were shared by the Department of Public Works and Highway (DPWH) in which the presenters cited the Department Order that obliges its corporate partners to return portions of its earnings back to the environment regeneration programs. Also, DPWH shared that the office conducts tree growing activities along the road of their areas of operation every last Thursday of the month.

The CENR Officers of Calauag, Catanauan, Real, and Tayabas City also reported their respective accomplishments on forest protection and law enforcement activities such as apprehension of illegally transported forest products, monitoring of wildlife, and conduct of patrolling using LAWIN forest and biodiversity protection system.

The meeting highlighted the preparation of an action plan for 2024 that includes various environment-related activities to be conducted by the Council.

The PMFEPC members may have differences in terms of agencies and group mandates, but they are all geared towards one direction of sustainably protecting, conserving, and managing Quezon’s rich environment and natural resources.###



For we walk by faith, not by sight

2 Corinthians 5:7

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MPT SOUTH PREPARES FOR
INCREASED TRAFFIC AHEAD OF
HOLY WEEK 2024



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CAVITE
DECLARES
STATE OF
CALAMITY DUE
TO PERTUSSIS
OUTBREAK

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DEPED'S SHS
VOUCHERS FALL SHORT OF
DECONGESTING PUBLIC
SCHOOLS, HELPING POOR
LEARNERS

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PAWS FILES ANIMAL
CRUELTY RAPS VS
'KILLER' OF GOLDEN
RETRIEVER KILLUA

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MMDA SUSPENDS
NUMBER COD-
ING SCHEME ON
MARCH 28, 29

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MANILA, Philippines — President Marcos joined Filipino Catholics in marking the beginning of the Holy Week on Palm Sunday, reminding the faithful not to forget the essence of the religious occasion by spreading kindness and selflessness. “In this solemn occasion, let us not only seek to unravel the mysteries of our faith, but also to illuminate the path for others through acts of kindness and selflessness,” Marcos said in his Holy Week message. Catholics yesterday observed Palm Sunday, the final Sunday of Lent and the beginning of Holy Week in the Christian calendar. More than 85 million Filipinos are Roman Catholic, representing 78.8 percent of the over 108 million people counted in the 2020 Census of Population and Housing by the Philippine Statistics Authority. Travelers Immigration officials are warning the public against scammers and online scams operating fake websites with charging fees for eTravel registration. “We advise the traveling public to be cautious and register exclusively on the official government website, or through the eGovPH application. The eTravel registration process is absolutely free of charge,” said Immigration Commissioner Norman Tansingco. The eTravel system launched earlier this year serves as a single

Reflecting on Holy Week 2024: A Time of Spiritual Renewal Amidst Challenges

As the Philippines commemorates Holy Week in 2024, amidst the backdrop of ongoing challenges and uncertainties, it serves as a poignant reminder of the enduring power of faith and the resilience of the human spirit. Traditionally a time of solemn observance and spiritual reflection, this year's Holy Week takes on added significance as communities grapple with the complexities of a rapidly changing world.

At the heart of Holy Week lies the narrative of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection—a story of sacrifice, redemption, and hope that transcends time and circumstance. In the Philippines, where Christianity holds a central place in the cultural and spiritual landscape, Holy Week is observed with fervor and reverence, marked by rituals and traditions that have been passed down through generations.

However, this year's observance unfolds against the backdrop of unprecedented challenges, both global and local. The lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to cast a shadow over daily life, with restrictions and safety protocols shaping the way communities gather and worship. Economic hardships, political tensions,

and environmental concerns further compound the sense of uncertainty and unrest.

Yet, it is precisely in times of adversity that the message of Holy Week resonates most deeply. The story of Christ's journey to the cross speaks to the universal experience of suffering and resilience, offering a message of comfort and consolation to those who are burdened by trials. In the midst of darkness, it reminds us that light will ultimately prevail—that even in the depths of despair, there is reason to hope.

As Filipinos come together to observe Holy Week, they are called to reflect not only on the sufferings of Christ but also on the sufferings of their fellowmen. In a nation marked by inequality and injustice, Holy Week is an opportunity to recommit to the values of compassion, solidarity, and social justice. It is a time to reach out to the marginalized and vulnerable, to advocate for the oppressed, and to work towards a more inclusive and equitable society.

Moreover, Holy Week invites believers to deepen their personal relationship with the divine—to engage in prayer, meditation, and self-examination in order to cultivate a greater sense of spiritual awareness and enlight-

enment. In a world that often seems consumed by noise and distraction, Holy Week offers a space for silence and contemplation, a chance to reconnect with the sacred and the eternal.

As we navigate the challenges of the present moment, may Holy Week serve as a beacon of hope and inspiration, guiding us through the darkness towards the promise of a brighter tomorrow. May it remind us of our shared humanity, our shared struggles, and our shared aspirations for a world filled with peace, justice, and love. And may it renew our faith in the power of redemption, reminding us that even in our darkest hour, we are never alone.

In observing Holy Week this year, let us not only commemorate the events of the past but also recommit ourselves to building a better future—a future grounded in faith, compassion, and solidarity. For in the words of Saint Augustine, “We are an Easter people, and alleluia is our song.” May that song resound throughout the Philippines and beyond, filling hearts with joy and hope as we journey together towards the light.

- ANG KABITENYA

PRESIDENT...

data collection platform for arriving and departing passengers, integrating border control, health surveillance and economic data analysis. Passengers have reportedly been duped by fake eTravel websites charging them between P3,000 to P5,000. The official web address is etravel.gov.ph.

Fraudulent websites or entities demanding online payments must be reported immediately to the Cybercrime Investigation and Coordinating Center, Tansingco said.

There are eTravel kiosks deployed at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport and major international airports. Meanwhile, the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) yesterday placed 44 airports under its management on heightened alert as part of the Department of Transportation's "Oplan Biyaheng Ayo: Semana Santa 2024."

Service chiefs and airport managers have been directed to implement round-the-clock operations such as direct communication lines. A "no leave policy" was observed to ensure passenger safety and comfort.

Malasakit help desks have also been set up in all airports, with medical teams on standby for emergencies. Departing passengers received snacks and bottled water while waiting for flights, according to Roxas City Airport manager Monico Basalote.

The Iloilo International Airport and other airports are expected to follow suit.

CAAP and local authorities from the Philippine National Police - Aviation Security Unit, Office of Transportation Security, the Department of Tourism, the Civil Aeronautics Board and airlines have coordinated for efficient processing of passengers, especially at check-in counters.

Based on data from the Aerodrome Development and Management Service, CAAP recorded 3.1 million passengers from March to April 2022 while air travelers reached 4.4 million in the same period in 2023.

This year, CAAP expects an increase of seven to 10 percent in passenger movement during the Holy Week.

Road safety Oil companies have been urged to assist motorists along national highways, major roads and tollways during Holy Week.

They could partner with car manufacturing companies for road safety campaigns and offer support in traffic management by providing information on road conditions, alternate routes and emergency contacts, according to the Department of Energy (DOE).

Pump prices are estimated to increase by P1.90 to P2.10 per liter for gasoline, P1.35 to P1.50 per liter for diesel and P1.40 to P1.50 per liter for kerosene next week, based on The STAR's earlier report.

"We can compensate them with efficient services by ensuring that service stations are well-stocked and the staff

can handle the increased volume of cars, including offering extended hours, if necessary," said DOE-Oil Industry Management Bureau assistant director Rodela Romero.

Households leaving for the Holy Week are urged to inspect electrical outlets, cords and extension cords for damage to prevent electrical hazards such as short circuits and fires.

Repentance The Holy Week is a special time for Catholics to return to Jesus Christ, cry for repentance and live a renewed life, Manila Archbishop Jose Cardinal Advincula said in his homily at the Manila Cathedral on Palm Sunday.

"Let us admit where we have gone wrong and decide to follow Jesus again," he said.

As for Catholics posting content on social media, Archdiocese of Manila vice general Fr. Reginald Malicdem said there is no problem as long as they dedicate time for prayer.

"It is a joy to see that even up to now, almost everyone goes out to visit churches. With the age of social media, we can see that there are people vlogging or people posting the places where they have been. It serves as proof that they really visited a particular church," he said.

"Instead of going against social media, we could use it to promote, to encourage people, on what religious activities they could do during Holy Week," he added. /

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CAVITE...

MANILA, Philippines — The province of Cavite was placed under a state of calamity due to the rising cases of pertussis or whooping cough.

The province's Sangguniang Panlalawigan declared a state of calamity on Wednesday, according to the Cavite's information office.

The declaration of a state of calamity allows the provincial government to use P40 million from its quick response fund "to effectively respond to the said calamity."

Thirty-six cases of pertussis were reported in the province, including six deaths.

Confirmed pertussis infections in the country rose to 568, the Department of Health (DOH) said on Wednesday. Forty people have died from the highly contagious respiratory infection this year.

Pertussis is especially dangerous in infants. In the Philippines, unvaccinated infants under six months old were the most affected.

The areas with the most local government units reporting cases increases were Calabarzon, Metro Manila, Western Visayas, Mimaropa and Central Visayas.

Pertussis spreads easily through droplets produced by coughing or sneezing. Pertussis causes flu-like symptoms and a characteristic hacking cough.

The health department reminded the public that whooping cough can be prevented with vaccination and treated with antibiotics.

The DOH is expecting three million more pentavalent doses, which protects people from pertussis, "at the soonest possible time." /PHILSTAR.COM

More first responders to be deployed to Cavite expressways



HEAVY TRAFFIC EXPECTED. This undated photo shows traffic on a normal day at a stretch of expressway managed by Metro Pacific Tollways South (MPT South). Company president and general manager Raul Ignacio said on Tuesday (March 26, 2024) they expect an 8 to 10 percent increase in traffic volume during Holy Week. (Photo courtesy of Metro Pacific Tollways Corporation) CALAMBA CITY, Laguna – The management of Metro Pacific Tollways South (MPT South) announced it will be augmenting its roadside personnel in anticipation of increased vehicle traffic this Holy Week.

In a message to reporters on Tuesday, MPT South president and general manager Raul Ignacio said they expect an 8 to 10-percent increase in traffic on all roads managed by the company, including the Manila-Cavite Expressway (CAVITEX), Cavite-Laguna Expressway (CALAX), and its C5 Link segment.

He disclosed that on a normal day, some 170,000 vehicles pass through the CAVITEX, 43,000 vehicles pass through the CALAX, and 12,300 vehicles pass through the C5 Link.

PUBLIC ADVISORY

RESOLUTION NO. 3050-2024

A RESOLUTION DECLARING THE PROVINCE OF CAVITE UNDER A STATE OF CALAMITY DUE TO THE OUTBREAK OF PERTUSSIS IN THE PROVINCE

SOURCE: OFFICE OF THE SANGGUNIAN PANLALAWIGAN
DATE POSTED ON FB: 27 MARCH 2024

PERTUSSIS "WHOOPING COUGH"

Ang **PERTUSSIS** o "**Ubong dalahit**" ay lubhang nakakahawang impeksyon na hindi ng bakterya na *Bordetella Pertussis*. Lahat ng edad ay maging kapitan ng Pertussis ngunit higit na mapanganib sa mga bata at sanggol. Ito ay nakakaapekto sa mga bata at daluyan ng hangin na maaaring maging sanhi ng matindi at walang humapay na pag-ubo.

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cles pass through the CAVITEX, 43,000 vehicles pass through the CALAX, and 12,300 vehicles pass through the C5 Link.

Ignacio said that aside from the usual toll collectors and traffic management staff, more personnel will be deployed this week to provide emergency medical assistance and incident response.

Beginning Holy Wednesday, the company will also be providing free towing services for stalled Class 1 vehicles (cars, sport utility vehicles, pick-ups) up to the nearest exit, he said.

He added construction activities and lane closures along the carriageway are suspended unless safety repairs are necessary to ensure the unimpeded flow of traffic when more vehicles are on the road.

Meanwhile, Ignacio urged motorists to switch to the radio frequency identification (RFID) mode of payment instead of paying their toll fees manually to save time and prevent the accumulation of vehicles in key areas of the expressways.

"Utilizing Easytrip RFID at MPTC Toll Plazas significantly reduces travel time compared to waiting in long cash lanes," he said.

He also encouraged motorists to download the MPT DriverHub app to efficiently manage their Easytrip RFID account and receive real-time traffic updates across various MPTC toll roads.

Ignacio also called on motorists intending to make long trips to first go through their vehicle safety checklist as

summarized in the acronym, "BLOWBAGETS," meaning battery, lights, oil, water, brakes, air, gas, engine, tire and self.

"Poor vehicle maintenance remains a leading cause of breakdowns on expressways causing inconvenience to motorists," he added.

MPT South is a subsidiary of Metro Pacific Tollways Corporation. (PNA)

Tollways brace for surge in motorists this Holy Week



GENERAL TRIAS CITY, Cavite (PIA) – Tollway operators are preparing for the high volume of traffic and the anticipated surge in motorists during the Holy Week observance.

The Metro Pacific Tollways South (MPT South), toll operator for Cavite-Laguna Expressway (CALAX) and Manila-Cavite Expressway (CAVITEX), as well as its C5 Link segment, foresees an 8 percent to 10 percent rise in vehicle traffic on its toll roads.

Heavier than usual traffic is expected from March 25, to Sunday, March 31, from the usual 43,000 daily traffic on CALAX, 170,000 on CAVITEX, and 12,300 on C5 Link, where tourists and those going home in the provinces converge.

In a statement, Raul Ignacio, president and general manager of MPT South, highlighted the app and RFID features of the toll operator to better serve motorists.

"Motorists were encouraged to download the MPT DriveHub app to efficiently manage their Easytrip RFID account and receive real-time traffic updates across various MPTC toll roads. Utilizing Easytrip RFID at MPTC Toll Plazas also significantly reduces travel time compared to waiting in long cash lanes," Ignacio said.

As a prepared measure, the toll operator reactivates its motorist assistance program, dubbed "Safe Trip Mo, Sagot Ko", which adds more workforce for services including traffic management, toll collection, standby emergency medical services, and incident response teams.

Even with all of the safety measures in place, Ignacio reminds motorists to perform BLOWBAGETS or the comprehensive checklist for vehicle maintenance of its parts including battery, lights, oil, water, brake, air, gas, engine, tire, and self.

"Poor vehicle maintenance remains a leading cause of breakdowns on expressways, causing inconvenience to motorists. With an anticipated increase in holiday travel during Holy Week, we advise motorists to conduct a thorough BLOWBAGETS check on their vehicles before hitting the road for a smoother travel experience." (RF/PIA-Cavite; with reports from MPTC South)/PR

WORRY FREE CRUISING: HOLY WEEK TRAVELS WITH SM SUPERMALLS' 50 EV CHARGING STATIONS

#ReChargeWithSM through an extensive network of FREE Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (EVCS) at 50 SM malls

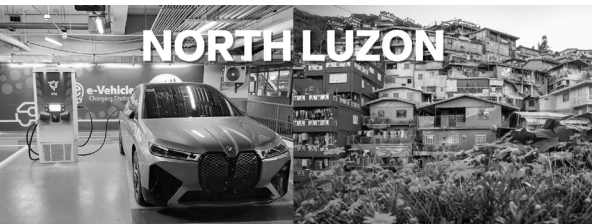
As the Holy Week approaches, many Filipinos are gearing up for a well-deserved break, seeking the perfect blend of relaxation and adventure. Whether you're planning a road trip up north or a leisurely drive down south, you can #ReChargeWithSM through an extensive network of FREE Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (EVCS) at 50 SM malls around the Philippines, ensuring your journey is smooth, convenient, and eco-friendly.



#ReChargeWithSM and enjoy your Luzon road trip worry-free at SM Supermalls.

Before setting off on your Holy Week adventure, drive worry-free as SM Supermalls' EVCS remain open to serve you, with the exception of The Podium from Maundy Thursday and Good Friday (March 28-29) and SM City Manila, SM San Fernando Downtown and SM San Pedro on Good Friday (March 29).

Now, let's start your #EVTravelsWithSM with scenic routes and exciting destinations for your Holy Week getaway:



Catch the cool breeze in Baguio and make stops up on your northbound travel routes at these Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (EVCS) at SM malls.

Bataan - Dive into History and Nature

Embark on a historical journey to Bataan, where remnants of World War II stand alongside stunning natural landscapes. Don't forget to power up before exiting Metro Manila in various EVCS at SM malls, with SM North EDSA and SM Grand Central as your closest stops before hitting NLEX. Before leaving, don't forget to grab some delicious Bataan peanuts or local handicrafts, such as woven baskets or wooden carvings, as pasalubong options for your loved ones back home. With SM Supermalls' EVCS branches scattered along the way, including SM Clark and SM Olongapo Downtown, you can recharge your vehicle worry-free while immersing yourself in Bataan's rich history and scenic beauty.

Subic - Thrills and Tranquility by the Sea

For those craving seaside adventures, Subic offers a perfect blend of thrills and tranquility. Kickstart your journey with a recharge at SM malls in Metro Manila before heading towards Subic. Recharge your vehicle at SM Clark or SM Olongapo Central. With SM Supermalls' Head to open outlet stores or grab intricately designed shell crafts as pasalubong for your friends and family. EVCS branches strategically located, including SM Olongapo Downtown, you can enjoy uninterrupted adventures in Subic without worrying about your EV's battery life.

Baguio - Cool Mountain Escapes

Escape the summer heat and head to Baguio, the Philippines' summer capital, for a refreshing mountain getaway. Begin your journey from Metro Manila and make a pitstop at SM North EDSA to charge up your EV. Enroute to Baguio, take in the breathtaking views along Kennon Road or Marcos Highway and recharge your vehicle at SM Baguio or other SM Supermalls' EVCS branches like SM Tarlac and SM Urdaneta Central. With numerous charging options available, including SM Baguio, you can view Baguio's attractions such as Burnham Park and Mines View Park with peace of mind from SM's Sky Terrace. Before heading home, don't forget to pick up some fresh strawberries or intricately woven Igorot blankets as pasalubong treats too!

Tuguegarao - Culinary Delights and Cultural Treasures

Immerse yourself in the culinary delights and cultural treasures of Tuguegarao, the capital of Cagayan province. Begin your journey from Metro Manila and charge your EV at SM North EDSA before hitting the road. From a stop at SM Clark, recharge your vehicle at SM Cabanatuan or SM Tuguegarao Downtown. Stock up on delicious Tuguegarao longganisa or pancit batil patung to bring home. With SM Supermalls' EVCS branches ensuring reliable charging solutions, you can indulge in Tuguegarao's local cuisine and heritage sites without any worries.

La Union - Surf, Sand, and Sunsets

Experience the laid-back vibe of La Union, known for its surf-worthy waves, golden beaches, and breathtaking sunsets. Kick off your journey from Metro Manila and recharge your EV at SM North EDSA before heading towards La Union to ride the waves and get some locally brewed craft beer or handmade woven accessories. As you drive along the scenic coastal roads, recharge your vehicle at SM Tarlac or SM Urdaneta Central. With SM Supermalls' EVCS branches conveniently located, including SM Baguio, you can enjoy endless hours of surfing, beach hopping, and sunset watching in La Union.



Heading down South? Enjoy mountain views and beachfronts all the way until Bicol and recharge at any of these Electric Vehicle Charging Stations at SM malls.

Tagaytay - A Taste of Cool Breezes and Scenic Views

Escape the city heat and head to Tagaytay, where cool breezes and scenic views await. Start your journey from Metro Manila and charge your EV at SM Mall of Asia or SM Sta. Rosa before hitting the road. As you ascend the winding roads to Tagaytay, enjoy panoramic views of Taal Volcano and recharge your vehicle at SM Sta. Rosa if needed. Don't forget to make more happy memories at Skyranch Tagaytay and pick up some freshly baked goodies such as the famous Tagaytay buko pie or local delicacies like tawilis (freshwater fish) before heading home. With SM Supermalls' EVCS branches ensur-

ing convenience, you can savor the cool mountain air and indulge in Tagaytay's delectable cuisine without worrying about your EV's battery life.

Laguna - Nature's Haven and Cultural Gems

Explore the natural wonders and cultural gems of Laguna, a province teeming with beauty and history. Begin your journey from Metro Manila and charge your EV at SM Mall of Asia or SM BF Paranaque before setting off. Along the way, immerse yourself in nature at Pagsanjan Falls or discover the artistic heritage of Pila town. Make sure to pick up some local delicacies such as espasol (rice cake), and artisanal crafts like pottery or wood carvings as pasalubong gifts for your family and friends. Recharge your vehicle at SM San Pedro if needed, and continue your exploration of Laguna's wonders with ease, knowing that SM Supermalls' EVCS branches are there to support your journey.

Batangas - Beach Bliss and Underwater Adventures

Embark on a beach getaway to Batangas, where pristine shores and vibrant marine life await. Start your journey from Metro Manila and charge your EV at SM Mall of Asia or SM BF Paranaque before heading south. Recharge your vehicle at SM Lipa if needed, and continue your beach bliss knowing that SM Supermalls' EVCS branches are there to power your adventure.

Legazpi - Majestic Volcanoes and Pristine Beaches

Discover the majesty of Mayon Volcano and the flavors of Bicolandia in Legazpi, a city steeped in natural beauty and culinary tradition. Begin your journey from Metro Manila and charge your EV at SM Mall of Asia before embarking on the scenic drive to Legazpi. Along the way, marvel at the picturesque landscapes of Sorsogon or the pristine beaches of Caramoan. Recharge your vehicle at SM Legazpi and explore the wonders of Legazpi, from the fiery beauty of Mayon Volcano to the spicy delights of Bicol Express. Grab some pili nuts or pinangat (taro leaves cooked in coconut milk) and souvenir items like miniature Mayon Volcano figurines or intricately woven abaca products before driving home!

Cruising into Holy Week with SM Supermalls EV Charging Stations

As you embark on your Holy Week adventure, let SM Supermalls' extensive network of EV Charging Stations guide your way. Vacations in the Visayas and Mindanao can also recharge at SM Cebu, SM Cagayan de Oro Downtown and SM Cagayan de Oro Uptown and SM Lanang in Davao. With FREE charging services in strategically located branches nationwide, you can pack your bags, hit the road



DEPED...

From Page 2

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Education's senior high school voucher program had mostly benefited non-poor students and largely failed to decongest public schools even as it forked over large sums of money for private schools to absorb students, new data shared during a Senate hearing showed.

Described as a "wastage" and a "leakage" by Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian, DepEd's voucher program appears to have failed to help at least 542,000 senior high school students considered as "aisle learners" enroll in private schools in school year 2023-2024 alone. Aisle learners refer to students who already count outside the regular class size in school.

Meanwhile, DepEd data shows that 53% or P7.21 billion of the P13.69 billion allocation for the senior high school voucher program went to non-poor students in SY 2021-2022, or students whose families earned an income less than the poverty threshold. This was higher compared to SY 2019-2020, where 39% or P7.30 billion of the P18.76 billion budget for the senior high school voucher program also went to non-poor students.

These estimates by Gatchalian, who chairs the Senate basic education panel, are similar to the findings raised by the Commission on Audit in 2018 that the Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education (GASTPE) program — which the SHS vouchers are under — was benefiting "non-poor" students due to DepEd's inability to ensure its efficient implementation. "It's a waste that we don't solve the problem of congestion because we are randomly giving the voucher program to students," the senator said.

Gatchalian pointed out during the March 20 hearing that DepEd should have established an effective "targeting mechanism" to ensure that the 1.2 million voucher beneficiaries this school year already included the 542,000 estimated aisle learners. Citing data from the Annual Poverty Indicators surveys in 2020 and 2021, Gatchalian

also said that the voucher program needs to be "corrected" immediately as 70% of the voucher recipients in SY 2021-2022 belonged to non-poor households. "For me, it's wastage and leakage. We need to correct this immediately and I plan to raise this during our budget hearing because we have to make sure that every centavo allocated to the government goes to our poor learners and efficient projects and programs," he said.

Lawyer Tara Rama of DepEd vowed to review GASTPE's guidelines to address the program's non-prioritization of poor students, as well as its ability to target students in overcrowded public schools. Similar to the COA findings five years ago, Gatchalian described the matter as one where the government "is not being efficient."

Gaps in DepEd's voucher 'solution' Since it introduced grades 11 and 12 under the K to 12 program, DepEd has relied on its senior high school voucher program to move financially challenged students from overcrowded public schools to private schools through voucher subsidies.

These vouchers range from P8,750 to P22,500 a year, depending on the student's household income and location, with the expectation that the student's families would cover the excess. However, a 2018 performance report on the SHS voucher program by the COA found that DepEd "does not check whether or not the students are actually underprivileged."

COA said that, in "promoting greater choice," DepEd had also extended financial assistance to students coming from non-poor families. A Philippine Center of Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) report in 2020 found that the voucher subsidies fell short in helping students enroll in private schools due to the economic difficulties brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, revealing the inadequacy of the department's main financial assistance program for senior high school students. **/PHILSTAR.COM**

MERALCO...

MANILA, Philippines — Electricity concessionaire Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) said that it is prepared to attend to the electricity needs of its customers during Holy Week.

In a press release, the firm assured customers that its personnel will be available 24/7 to address electricity concerns, even though its offices will be closed from Maundy Thursday (March 28) to Black Saturday (March 30).

"We are one with the nation in observing a solemn and safe Holy Week. As a 24-hour service company, we assure our customers that our crews are on standby to attend to concerns and unexpected power interruptions," Joe Zaldarriaga, head of corporate communications of Meralco, said.

The company also reminded the public to practice electrical safety, cautioning them against octopus connections, or the "plugging in extension cords into a single power outlet."

"With the Holy Week coinciding with the start of the dry season, Meralco also reminds the public to practice electrical safety and energy efficiency for a safe and worry-free break," Meralco said.

"Refrain from using 'octopus connections' or plugging in extension cords into a single power outlet as this could overheat and result in fire and other accidents," it added.

On March 22, state weather bureau PAGASA de-

clared the start of the dry season in the Philippines. During the dry season, structures are most vulnerable to fire due to "the combination of heat and the absence of moisture" which dries up materials, according to the Bureau of Fire Protection.

Meralco issued a reminder to avoid placing and running electrical cords under rugs or carpets, as this can damage the insulation of the wires. They emphasized the importance of keeping all wires and cords organized, tucked away and stored properly. Additionally, the firm advised keeping electrical equipment and devices away from showers, sinks and tubs.

The Department of Energy also reminded the

public to observe safety precautions before going out to their households during Holy Week. "Before hitting the long drive this Holy Week, we advise our homeowners to inspect their electrical outlets, cords, and extension cords thoroughly for any damage, and to repair damaged components to prevent the risks of electrical hazards, such as short circuits or electrical fires," DOE Secretary Raphael Lotilla said in a statement.

The Holy Week break will begin Thursday, with Maundy Thursday (March 28), Good Friday (March 29) and Black Saturday (March 30) declared as non-working holidays. /PHILSTAR.COM

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PAWS...

MANILA, Philippines — Non-government organization for animal rights Philippine Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) on Monday filed criminal complaint against the individual who struck the golden retriever Killua which resulted to its demise.

PAWS filed charges of animal cruelty, under the Animal Welfare Act of 1998 and the Anti-Rabies Act, before the Camarines Sur Office of the Provincial Prosecutor. Killua was killed in Camarines Sur on March 17, after resident Anthony Solares hit it, claiming that the dog was being "aggressive." The incident was captured on closed-circuit

television and shared on social media by Killua's owner, Vina Rachele Arazas. In the footage, Solares can be seen striking the dog as it attempts to flee.

PAWS said that charges for Anti-Rabies Act was filed against Solares after the non-profit org found that the latter brought the slain dog to a known slaughterhouse and dog meat cooking area after it was killed. This law also prohibits the trading of dog meat. If found guilty, Solares may face imprisonment of one to four years and will be fined with no less than P5,000.

If found guilty of animal cruelty, on the other

hand, Solares may face six months to two years imprisonment or a fine of not less than P1,000 nor more than P5,000.

Positive for rabies PAWS also reported that the slain golden retriever has tested positive for rabies, according to a lab report the organization released on Monday. The organization then urged the individuals who were scratched or bitten by Killua to "immediately get post-exposure shots."

According to the Bureau of Animal Industry's Manual of Procedure for Rabies, the standard procedure for an animal suspected of having rabies is to either "be mon-

itored for 14 days" or, in cases where rabies is highly suspected, "be humanely euthanized without damaging the head."

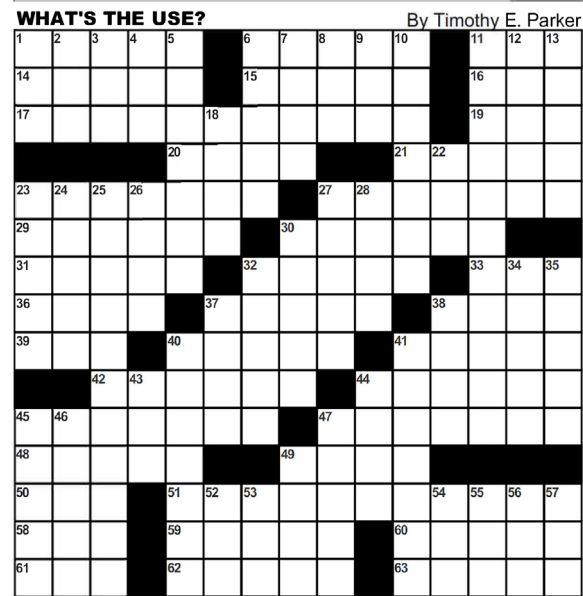
However, PAWS said that the result of the testing of the slain dog "may not be accurate" as its body might have been contaminated as it was buried in an area where stray dogs have been slaughtered.

"PAWS is making this announcement to ensure that any bites or scratches will be reported promptly in the interest of public health and safety," the organization's statement read. **/PHILSTAR.COM**

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lane from sidewalk), Quezon City
•Luzon Avenue SB, Congressional Avenue Ext. to before Luzon Flyover (1st lane from center), Quezon City
•Commonwealth Avenue, Landbank to Elliptical Road (3rd lane from sidewalk), Quezon City
•Mindanao Avenue, Tandang Sora Avenue to Longines St. (truck lane), Quezon City
•Mindanao Avenue Tunnel to Sauyo Road (truck lane), Quezon City
•Payatas Road, Batasan

Road to Bayanihan St., Quezon City
•Payatas Road between Singko St. & Leyte St., Quezon City
•Payatas Road before Maynilad Pumping Station to Petron Gas Station (1st lane from sidewalk), Quezon City
•IBP-San Mateo Road, Quezon City
•Roxas Boulevard NB between Lourdes St. & Vicente Sotto St., Pasay City
•Roxas Boulevard NB between Remedios St. & Pasaje Del Carmen St., Pasay City



freedailycrosswords.com
ACROSS

- Stops
 - Fastball speed detector
 - Increase (with “up”)
 - Vertical, while sailing
 - Nitrous_ (laughing gas)
 - Reptile that will put the squeeze on you
 - Without any significance
 - Commandment violation
 - Grimacing look
 - Accustom, as to hardship
 - Synthetic
 - Infuriated
 - Bring about, as suspicion
 - Threw rocks at
 - Capital of Belarus
 - Refers to
 - He preceded Jack as president
 - Untidy condition
 - Big picture?
 - Old lab burner
 - Certain pint
 - Feed a party
 - More likely to deceive
 - An essential vitamin
 - Successfully market used goods
 - Not to be missed, as a TV show
 - It's the best policy, it's said
 - Somewhat off
 - Greek cheese
 - Major U.S. net-work
 - Not suitable for use
 - Afternoon drink, for many
 - Depth charge target
 - Be bombastic
 - “Is that ?”
 - Speaks like the Lord?
 - Gave stars to
- DOWN
- Cheese and bread go-with
 - Do an impression of
 - Grazing expanse
 - Browning achievement?
 - Thing worn at Aspen
 - Scalawag
 - One of two on an automobile
 - Cease to exist
 - Program interrupters
 - Quits a job
 - Highly illogical situations
 - Fabric with a wave-like design
 - Like glass windows
 - “Lymph” follower
 - Society page word
 - Broadway musical “Mia!”
 - Disney mermaid
 - Too bizarre to understand
 - “No_, no fuss!”
 - Essential oil from roses
 - Holiday tune
 - Ambulance sound
 - Adorable one
 - Genuflected
 - Before the due date
 - Defensive spray
 - “... or I”
 - Mr. Clay before he was Muhammad
 - Capitol Hill person
 - “only money”
 - Campus military org.
 - Kind of ray
 - Flower cluster
 - Late actor Ledger
 - House on campus
 - Lofty degree
 - Common Hawaiian dish
 - Popular savings vehicle
 - Household pet
 - Dined
 - Trailed no one

CITY OF BACOR NEWS

BACOR MEET BASKETBALL CHAMPION HERMAN HARREL HORNE SCHOOL PAYS A COURTESY VISIT TO MAYOR STRIKE B. REVILLA



The City Sports Unit organized a special event on March 25, 2024, at the Office of the Mayor, where the Herman Harrel Horne School Basketball Team paid a courtesy visit to Mayor Strike B. Revilla. The purpose of the visit was to seek support and assistance as the team prepares to represent Bacoor in the upcoming Regional Athletic Association Meet (RAAM), scheduled from April 5 to 13, 2024.

Led by School Director Ma. Luz Villanueva Ed.D., LPT., Head Coach Francis Oval, and Assistant Coach Albert Lazaro, the Herman Harrel Horne School Basketball Team showcased their skills and dedication during the visit. The team comprises talented players such as Raphael Ligas Artiga, Ethan Molino Demesa, Jansen Molino Demesa, Paul Rosello, Sherlan Romano, Leandro Gatdula, Clarenz Trono, Yosef Fernando, Lllance Hermoso, Sebastian Kaneko, RJ Zamora, and CJ Marcos. The purpose of the courtesy visit was to personally meet Mayor Revilla and seek his support for their upcoming competition. The team expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to represent Bacoor in the RAAM, and they shared their aspirations to bring pride and honor to their school and the city. During the visit, Mayor Revilla warmly welcomed the Herman Harrel Horne School Basketball Team and expressed his admiration for their dedication and hard work. He assured the team of his full support and pledged to provide the necessary assistance to help them excel in the upcoming competition.

The Mayor emphasized the importance of sports in promoting unity, discipline, and healthy competition among the youth. He commended the team for their commitment to sportsmanship and encouraged them to continue striving for excellence. The courtesy visit served as a platform for the team to establish a personal connection with Mayor Revilla and receive his words of encouragement. It also highlighted the city's commitment to supporting local athletes and fostering a culture of sports

excellence in Bacoor.

As the Herman Harrel Horne School Basketball Team prepares for the RAAM, they carry with them the support and well wishes of Mayor Revilla and the entire city of Bacoor. The team is determined to give their best performance and make their school and community proud. The City Sports Unit, under the leadership of Sidney Solis, played a crucial role in organizing the successful courtesy visit. Their efforts in promoting sports and supporting local athletes have been instrumental in Bacoor's growing reputation as a hub for athletic talent.

With the support of the city and their dedicated coaches, the Herman Harrel Horne School Basketball Team is ready to face the challenges of the RAAM and showcase their skills on a regional stage. The team's journey represents the spirit of determination and excellence that defines Bacoor's sporting community.

Plan your Visita Iglesia itinerary ahead of time. Consider these Faith Tourism sites in Bacoor for your spiritual journey this Holy Week.



Last week's solution:



CODE WHITE ALERT, ITINAAS NGAYONG SEMENA SANTA

Itinaas ng Department of Health (DOH) ang 'Code White Alert' status sa buong Calabarzon bilang paghahanda sa #SemanaSanta2024. Kaakibat nito ay tiniyak ng ahensya sa publiko na mananatiling bukas ang lahat ng kanilang Disaster Risk Reduction and Management in Health (DRRM-H) counterparts sa mga lokal na pamahalaan at ospital upang magbigay ng serbisyo sa buong linggong paggunita ng Semana Santa. Siniguro rin ng DOH ang kahandaan at pagbibigay nito ng agarang serbisyo mula sa kanilang Health Emergency Response Team kung kinakailangan. Na-kaantabay rin ang mga suplay, medical equipments at iba pang pangangailangang medikal upang tumugon sakaling magkaroon ng posibleng mass casualty management at admission. Mahigpit namang pinaalala ni DOH Assistant Secretary Ariel Valencia sa publiko na making alerto ukol sa food-borne diseases o food poisoning na dulot ng iba't ibang infectious agents tulad ng bacteria, viruses, parasites gayundin ang non-infectious agents na dulot naman ng kemikal, animal at plant toxins. | via Health Education and Promotion Unit - DOH CHD Calabarzon /PR

Lisa Guerrero-Nakpil is new NHCP chairperson



MANILA – The National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) on Tuesday announced the election of its new chairperson, Lisa Guerrero-Nakpil. She took her oath before National Commission for Culture and the Arts Chair Victorino Mapa Manalo, who is also an ex-officio member of the NHCP Board in his capacity as Executive Director of the National Archives of the Philippines, the NHCP said in a news release. Nakpil was first appointed NHCP Commissioner in 2020, representing the private sector. She is a noted public historian, curator, and writer who has championed the promotion of historical knowledge through her various award-winning books and newspaper columns. Her mother, Carmen Guerrero-Nakpil, also served as Chair of the then-National Historical Commission from 1967 to 1971. “The NHCP Board believes that Chair Nakpil's broad experience in art and culture, as well as media and events, will strengthen the NHCP's mandate in bringing Philippine history alive and building love of the country and a sense of Filipino identity,” the Commission said. Nakpil succeeded Dr. Emmanuel Franco Calairo, who specializes in the study of local history in Cavite. The NHCP is the principal government agency mandated to strengthen Filipino's nationalism through the promotion of Philippine history and the protection of cultural heritage. (PNA)

PGC Supports Peace and Order with Distribution of New Vehicles



The Provincial Government of Cavite led by Governor Jonvic Remulla bolstered its commitment to ensure peace and order in the province with the distribution of new vehicles to support law enforcement efforts. A total of two hundred (200) NMAX motorcycles, ten (10) Wigo patrol vehicles, and ten (10) Lite Ace patrol vehicles were distributed to the police force in the province through a simple turnover ceremony on March 20, 2024 at the Provincial Capitol Grounds in Trece Martires City. As part of its continuing initiative to enhance public safety and security, the Provincial Government has allocated resources to provide vehicles to support the invaluable effort of the PNP. The move affirms the shared dedication of the PGC and Cavite police force to safeguarding and serving the community. The newly acquired vehicles will serve as important assets in the province to maintain peace and order effectively. With enhanced mobility and operational capacity, law enforcement officers will be more equipped to respond promptly to emergencies, conduct patrols, and engage in the community policing activities. “Cavite is the most mobile police force in the entire country. We have settled over 700 four-wheeled vehicles, we now have 200 two-wheeled vehicles, and in the next two years, we're gonna invest some more and make it up to 600 two-wheeled vehicles para sa lahat ng pulis ng Cavite”, stated Gov. Remulla. In turn, the Cavite Police Provincial Office through PCOL Eleuterio M. Ricardo, Provincial Director, extended gratitude to the Provincial Government of Cavite for the support and commitment to have a more peaceful and progressive province. In his message, PCOL Ricardo said, “All chiefs of police, I would like to reiterate that you are responsible for monitoring a patrol mobile. As I conclude let us look forward and instill in our minds our primary duty to maintain peace and order in the province of Cavite.”/POC

PGC's Medical Mission Brings Vital Healthcare Services to Julian Felipe, Cavite City.

A successful medical mission was conducted in Julian Felipe, Cavite City on March 13, 2024 providing essential healthcare services to underserved residents through the collaborative efforts of medical professionals, local government officials, volunteers, and Barangay Health Workers (BHW). The event garnered substantial support and participation from the community with the presence of Board Member Ram Revilla, Mayor Denver Chua, Andrienne Mark B. Ng, Chief Political Affairs Officer, SK Federation President, and staff from the office of 1st District Congressman Jolo Revilla. The medical mission witnessed the convergence of expertise and compassion, with a diverse team of healthcare professionals offering a range of services including

medical consultations, preventive screenings, and distribution of essential medications. Additionally, vital health education sessions were conducted to empower residents with knowledge for healthier living practices. The resounding success of the mission was emphasized by the overwhelming turnout, with 599 residents benefiting from the healthcare services provided. /POC



Cavite Entrepreneurship Students Caravan: Cultivating an Entrepreneurial Mindset

On March 14, 2024, the Office of the Provincial Cooperative Development Officer (OPCDO) spearheaded the Cavite Entrepreneurship Students Caravan bannered the theme, “Entrepreneurial Mindset: The First Step Towards Success,” at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) - Maragondon Campus. The event aimed to ignite the entrepreneurial spirit within the hearts and minds of the students. The caravan attracted a diverse crowd, primarily composed of first and second-year students enrolled in Business Administration Major in Human Resource Management and Financial Management, and Bachelor of Science in Entrepreneurship programs. These young minds, eager to explore the realm of entrepreneurship, eagerly participated in the day's activities and discussions. Ms. Liza Gabatan, OPCDO-Entrepreneurial Division Head, formally opened the program. Her message set the tone for a day filled with insights, inspiration and opportunities for growth. She also took the opportunity to introduce the services offered by the OPCDO. With a passion for supporting aspiring entrepreneurs and small businesses, OPCDO provides a range of resources, mentorship programs and networking opportunities to help individuals kickstart their entrepreneurial journeys. Engr. Rosalia Pinlac - Head, PUP Academic Program, also gave her message wherein she highlighted the need for continuous learning, creativity and strategic thinking to thrive in an ever-evolving market environment. Highlight of the caravan was the lecture on entrepreneurial mindset by Mr. Joey P. Espiritu, a titan in the entrepreneurial landscape. As the President and CEO of Tent King, Food Chow, Manang's Catering, and FORRENT, Mr. Espiritu brought a wealth of experience and insights to the forefront. His journey from a humble entrepreneur to a successful businessman served as an inspiration to the aspiring entrepreneurs in attendance. Throughout his keynote address, Mr. Espiritu emphasized the significance of cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset. He underscored the importance of resilience, creativity, and adaptability in navigating the challenges of the business world. Drawing from his own experiences, he shared practical strategies and invaluable lessons that resonated deeply with the audience. The caravan sparked meaningful conversations, fostered invaluable connections, and instilled a sense of purpose and determination among attendees. As the curtains closed on the event, participants departed with newfound inspiration and a renewed commitment to nurturing their entrepreneurial dreams /POC

