

DOST SHOWCASES ‘SILYANG PINOY’ AT ITS DAY CARE CENTER

Pupils at the DOST Day Care Center (DDCC) in Bicutan, Taguig City will soon use eco-friendly furniture in their classrooms. The DOST- Forest Products Research and Development Institute (DOST-FPRDI) has turned over 12 sets of Silyang Pinoy – a school furniture primarily crafted from engineered bamboo.

Developed by DOST-FPRDI, Silyang Pinoy is a multi-functional furniture (a combination of a chair and table) that easily transforms into a bed. This innovation proves invaluable during natural disasters when public schools are converted into evacuation centers.

“The Silyang Pinoy is an important innovation and is in line with DOST’s commitment to develop and support technologies in disaster preparedness, rehabilitation and recovery. Not only does it showcase modern and aesthetic design; it also highlights the versatility and potential of sustainable forest products such as bamboo,” said DOST Secretary Renato U. Solidum, Jr.

Prototypes underwent strength and durability testing at the Institute’s Furniture Testing Center, adhering to the PNS ISO 7173:2006 standard. Subsequently, these were distributed and tested for acceptance in schools located in disaster-prone areas, including Mandaragat Elementary and Secondary Schools in Puerto Princesa, Palawan; Sto. Nino Integrated School in Catarman, Camiguin; and Consuelo Elementary and Secondary Schools in Sta. Marcela, Apayao. Funded by DOST-PCAARRD, the Silyang Pinoy project aimed to enhance bamboo usage, as mandated by Executive Order No. 879, series of 2010. The directive says that at least 25% of school furniture in public elementary and secondary schools in the country will be made from bamboo.

“This is an important milestone in the Institute’s effort to showcase and strengthen the promotion of Silyang Pinoy among schools in the country,” explained DOST-FPRDI OIC Director Rico J. Cabangon. “We hope that by showing the versatility of bamboo as a raw material for school furniture, we can help the local bamboo industry by enhancing the demand for bamboo poles,” he added.



DOST-FPRDI OIC Director Cabangon (in white) explains the features of Silyang Pinoy to DOST Secretary Renato U. Solidum, Jr. and DOST Asec. Diane L. Ignacio (Photo by Henry de Leon/DOST-STII)

The turn-over ceremony was held during the Kick-Off of DOST’s National Women’s Month Celebration last 01 March 2024, led by Secretary Solidum, DOST Assistant Secretary Diane L. Ignacio, and DOST-FPRDI OIC Director Cabangon.

DOST LAUNCHED A HALAL-COMPLIANT INSTANT “TSOKOLATE-EH” DRINK FOR LOCAL PRODUCERS



Indulge a little sweet treat and experience an instant boost of comfort that will make your day even better as the Department of Science Technology- Industrial Technology Development Institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST-ITDI) introduced recently developed globally competitive Halal Compliant Instant Chocolate beverages during “2024 Cacao Cultural Ceremony on Shelf-Stable Beverages from Philippine Tablea” held on 22 February 2024, at the DOST-ITDI, STI-CA-KM Platform in Bicutan, Taguig City, Metro Manila. Cacao was first introduced to the Philippines during the Spanish colonization in the 17th century through the Galleon Trade. The primary areas for the cultivation of cacao at that time were Batangas, Laguna, and Cebu. The increasing popularity of cacao led to a significant innovation in the taste and food history of our country. It gave rise to Filipino hot “tsokolate” or “sikwate” which is now enjoyed by many Filipinos.

In terms of history, the tablea drink has become a status symbol for some people. The terms “Tsokolate Eh” and “Tsokolate Ah” are a reference to the popular novel of the late National Hero Jose Rizal called “Noli Me Tange-re”. Jose Rizal made fun of Padre Salvi’s way of hospitality in the novel. There were various claims that “Tsokolate Eh” was derived from the word “espresso” meaning thick and rich tablea, which was commonly served to visitors who belonged to a higher social status. On the other hand, the “Tsokolate Ah” which means “aguado” was a diluted, watery tablea drink that was served to housemaids or Indios.

The DOST-ITDI has come up with a name for their cacao drink, which they named “Tsokolate-Eh”. The name was chosen to signify that the drink is accessible to everyone, regardless of their social status. DOST-ITDI’s Tsokolate-Eh is an artisanal chocolate drink that is rich, thick, and pure chocolate. The best part is that it does not require the traditional manual process of using a wooden tool called batirol.

Dr. Anabelle V. Briones, Director of DOST-ITDI, highlighted that the product of the Institute’s Food Processing Division (FPD) complied with the Philippine National Standard (PNS) for tablea and a ceremonial grade – made from organic and undiluted Criollo Cacao bean paste with minimal added sugar to maximize the health benefits of cacao– compared to other instant chocolates that can be found in the market.

Michelle Evaristo, the food developer of this beverage said that she was driven to resurrect the traditional taste and the real flavor of tablea/tableya drink that still has the health benefits of the cacao, as she was also exposed to high sugar, chilled and altered chocolates that were present to the market. The greatest endeavor for the development of these shelf-stable products was to promote social enterprise, which will help our local farmers and manufacturers to be globally competitive with chocolates around the globe by creating four variants of tablea drink:

Tablea Concentrate - This chocolate syrup is made from Philippine tablea, sweetener, and non-dairy creamer. Its natural, dark chocolate flavor makes it ideal for creating artisan chocolate-based drinks and baked goods. The syrup is shelf-stable and can be purchased in glass bottles or 1kg pouches for institutional use.

Dairy-based Tablea Drink - This chocolate drink is made from high-quality Philippine tablea, sugar, and full cream milk. It has a rich and creamy texture that will surely please your taste buds.

Lactose-free Tablea Drink - Introducing a lactose-free chocolate drink made from tablea concentrate that can be enjoyed hot or cold. This dark chocolate beverage has a perfect blend of bitter and sweet flavor and is ideal for those who are lactose intolerant and cannot consume regular milk.

Vegan Tablea Drink - This plant-based chocolate drink is made with plant-based milk, Philippine tablea, and sweetened with cane sugar. It’s a delicious alternative to dairy-based chocolate drinks that offer the same comfort and indulgence.

Vegan Tablea Drink (Sugar-free) - This chocolate drink is vegan and made with premium Philippine tablea, plant-based milk, and non-nutritive sweeteners. It’s ideal for people who need to watch their carbohydrate intake or are sensitive to sugar.

DOST DEVELOPS INNOVATIONS ON PROCESSING, STORAGE TO PROTECT FURNITURE

Recent reports of bed bugs infesting metal and wooden furniture at Ninoy Aquino International Airport have raised health and safety concerns for airport facilities. The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) offers support in addressing this issue by introducing local innovations to enhance furniture made from indigenous materials, such as rattan.

“This news may have caused apprehension towards using rattan and other non-timber forest products (NTFP) for furniture, but DOST-Forest Products Research and Development Institute (DOST-FPRDI) would like to clarify that technologies and methods are available to prolong their service life,” explained Rico J. Cabangon, DOST-FPRDI Officer-in-Charge, Office of the Director.

Cabangon clarified that bed bugs are attracted to the woven pattern of wicker furniture, like rattan, not the material itself. Bed bugs thrive in items with tiny cracks and crevices, regardless of the material—whether rattan, metal, cloth, or concrete. Apart from bed bugs, rattan furniture can also be infested with biodeterioration agents such as fungi, termites and powder-post beetles or bulkbok.

“Rattan is one of the leading raw materials used in furniture and handicraft products. It is often combined with metals and wood to enhance its aesthetic appeal. Like any lignocellulosic materials, rattan furniture and handicrafts are prone to attacks of biodeterioration agents. Proper maintenance is key to using indigenous materials like rattan,” Cabangon added.

DOST-FPRDI has studied various methods to protect NTFPs against biodeterioration agents—from processing, storage, and transit. One method is applying wood preservatives to freshly cut and conditioned materials.

Another approach involves non-chemical control methods, such as kiln drying, to achieve low moisture content and ensure proper drying of raw materials.

The Institute is also researching ecofriendly ways to safeguard wood and NTFPs, one of which is thru thermal modification. According to DOST Scientist Juanito P. Jimenez, “Thermal modification uses high heat to change the kind of chemicals present in a piece of wood. This makes the material more durable as it becomes more stable (more weather-proof, less prone to swelling and shrinking) and less appetizing to termites.”

DOST-FPRDI recommends minimizing exposure of treated materials to prolonged wetting to extend their service life. “We urge the public not to be discouraged in using furniture made from rattan and other NTFPs. It is a triumph of Filipino ingenuity that indigenous materials have been showcased for public use in NAIA. Through science, technology, and innovation, we can continue to take pleasure in bug-free Filipino craftsmanship,” ended Cabangon.



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

For we walk by faith, not by sight

2 Corinthians 5:7

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PRAGUE — The Czech Republic is ready to supply the Philippines with the latest defense technology and equipment to support its ongoing military modernization program, Prime Minister Petr Fiala told President Marcos.

During the two leaders’ bilateral meeting here on Thursday, Fiala assured Marcos of support for the Philippines’ efforts to boost the country’s defense amid rising tensions in the West Philippine Sea. Fiala said Czech companies “are very interested” in helping in the modernization of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Marcos, for his part, said the Czech government’s assistance comes at a time when the country is in the process of strengthening

the capabilities and the capacities of its military.

He told Fiala of the Re-Horizon Phase 3 of the Revised AFP Modernization Program, which involves the acquisition of more ships, aircraft and radar systems mainly for boosting the military’s archipelagic defense capabilities.

“The Czech Republic has always been active as a source of equipment for the Philippines. And so, we come again to Czech Republic and offer the partnership with the Czech Republic and the Philippines,” Marcos said. “We invite the Czech defense companies, defense industry for them to submit proposals and to once again participate... to supply the Philippines’ future

3 ‘WANTED’ FALL IN LAGUNA

WANTED ARRESTED. Alias “Romeo” and “Danilo,” who were arrested in Calamba City for separate crimes, being processed by arresting officers of Laguna province on Friday (March 15, 2024). Both have standing arrest warrants for kidnapping with homicide and murder. (Photo courtesy of Laguna Provincial Police Office) CALAMBA CITY, Laguna – Government authorities arrested three wanted individuals in separate operations Friday. Col. Gauvin , director of the Laguna Provincial Police Office, said in a report Saturday



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CAPABILITY BUILDING EVENT STRENGTHENS EFFORTS AGAINST TRAFFICKING AND VIOLENCE IN CAVITE

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DENR LOOKING INTO OTHER STRUCTURES AT CHOCOLATE HILLS

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MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will look into other establishments operating at the Chocolate Hills in Bohol amid reports that there are other such structures within the protected area.

At a press conference, DENR Undersecretary for field operations-Luzon, Visayas and environment Juan Miguel Cuna yesterday said the department would apply all the rules and regulations equally at Chocolate Hills.

“We will just apply all rules and regulations equally to everyone. We already gave instructions to our regional office to determine if there are other establishments in the area of Chocolate Hills,” Cuna said. Cuna added that officials of DENR Region 7 will determine if the establishments were able to secure clearance from the Protected Area Management Bureau. “The DENR will determine the classification of the lands, their location. The Captain’s Peak

MARCOS SIGNS NEW LAW FOR ONLINE PASSPORT APPLICATIONS IN PHILIPPINES

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Preserving Nature's Masterpiece: The Enigma of Structures in the Chocolate Hills

Nestled in the heart of the Philippines lies a natural wonder unlike any other: the Chocolate Hills. These conical geological formations, spread across the landscape of Bohol, have captivated visitors for generations. However, recent developments have brought to light a concerning issue – the emergence of structures within this cherished natural landscape. As stewards of our environment, it is imperative to address this issue with the utmost care and consideration.

Preserving Natural Integrity:

The Chocolate Hills are not merely geological formations; they are a testament to the Earth's intricate processes and the passage of time. Each hill stands as a silent sentinel, bearing witness to centuries of natural evolution. The sudden appearance of structures threatens the integrity of this delicate ecosystem, disrupting the delicate balance that has existed for millennia.

Environmental Impact:

The construction of structures within the Chocolate Hills pos-

es a myriad of environmental risks. From habitat destruction to soil erosion, the consequences are far-reaching and irreversible. These hills are home to a diverse array of flora and fauna, many of which are endemic to the region. Any disturbance to their habitat could have catastrophic effects on local biodiversity.

Cultural Significance: Beyond their ecological importance, the Chocolate Hills hold significant cultural value for the people of Bohol and the Philippines as a whole. They are not merely geological formations but symbols of pride and identity. To desecrate this natural heritage with man-made structures is to disregard the rich tapestry of history and tradition that defines the region.

Sustainable Solutions: While the allure of development may be enticing, it is imperative that we prioritize sustainability over short-term gain. Rather than exploiting the natural resources of the Chocolate Hills, we must seek alternative avenues for economic growth that are both environmentally and socially responsible.

This could include promoting eco-tourism initiatives that celebrate the natural beauty of the landscape without compromising its integrity.

Community Engagement:

The preservation of the Chocolate Hills cannot be achieved in isolation. It requires the collective efforts of government agencies, local communities, and stakeholders to enact meaningful change. By fostering dialogue and collaboration, we can work towards sustainable solutions that benefit both people and the planet.

The issue of structures in the Chocolate Hills is not merely a question of development but one of ethics and stewardship. It is incumbent upon us to safeguard these natural wonders for future generations to enjoy. By embracing sustainable practices and fostering community engagement, we can ensure that the Chocolate Hills remain a source of wonder and inspiration for centuries to come. - **ANG KABITENYA**

CZECH...

defense capability requirement," the Chief Executive said.

Fiala said he acknowledged the Philippines as a key partner in the Indo-Pacific region.

"We are interested in stronger economic and trade with your country. We can assist this diversification of your country's economic model," the prime minister said.

"And I saw in Manila many possibilities for our future cooperation. We discussed cooperation, agriculture, defense, aviation and energy," he said.

At a joint press briefing with Marcos on Thursday, Czech President Petr Pavel also assured the Philippine leader of his country's commitment to assist in the AFP modernization.

"The Czech Republic has had a long tradition when it comes to defense industry. We have a lot to offer," Pavel said when asked about the kind of cooperation the Philippines and the Czech Republic are exploring in defending international law, particularly in the South China Sea.

Czech griculture exec Also at the briefing held at the Octagon Hall of the Prague Castle on Thursday, Pavel announced that his country's agriculture minister Marek Vyborný and a delegation of businessmen are set to visit the Philippines next week with "specific plans" to expand cooperation in the area of food security.

"Very soon our minister of agriculture shall visit the Philippines with a numerous delegation of our businessmen with specific, particular plans to offer," Pavel said.

"We also have compa-

nies that are involved in defense industry, manufacturing, in farming and agriculture, science, technology, energy sector, power sector, many of these businesses do have particular specific plans for the future cooperation with the Philippines," he added.

Výborný will meet with Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. and lead a business forum to be held in Makati City on March 21.

The group will also visit Davao for a business forum and farm visit at the Tagum Agricultural Development Co. Inc., which is located in Davao.

The Czech Republic has provided the Philippines with assistance in analyzing and improving value chains in its dairy industry.

According to the Presidential Communications Office, the Czech Aid-for-Trade granted the National Dairy Authority (NDA)'s proposal to fund the technical exchange of experts. This initiative was in line with the DA's five-year program to raise milk production in the country from one to 10 percent.

The NDA completed two projects in cooperation with the Czech Republic – the Expert Assistance on the in-depth Analysis of the Supply Chain of the Philippine Dairy Industry conducted in 2018 and the Strengthening Capacities of Dairy Farmers and Extension Workers project undertaken in 2019.

Marcos said he also tackled with his Czech counterpart the two countries' potential in increasing bilateral trade.

"I also highlighted to the President, the Philippines'

remarkable economic performance, making it an attractive destination for Czech investments in the areas of IT-BPM (information technology-business process management), in electronics, manufacturing, food and agriculture and automotive/EV manufacturing, amongst others," Marcos said.

Also on Thursday, Marcos and Pavel witnessed the signing of the Joint Communiqué on Labor Consultations Mechanism, which guarantees greater protection for Filipinos working in the Czech Republic.

The European nation is increasing its quota for workforce coming from the Philippines starting in May.

Department of Migrant Workers officer-in-charge Hans Leo Cacdac and Czech Republic's Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs signed the joint communiqué.

"We are ready to cooperate in ensuring the orderly deployment of Filipinos to your country, in accordance with both Czech and Philippine laws," Marcos said at their joint press conference.

As of December last year, there were 7,026 Filipinos in the Czech Republic based on data from the Czech Ministry of Interior.

The Filipino workers are engaged in the processing industry, automotive, repairs of appliances, manufacturing, IT communications, real estate, health/wellness and household service work.

Currently, Prague hosts the highest number of Filipinos in the Czech Republic with 1,511, fol-

The suspects are currently detained at the Calamba City Police Station and Calauan Municipal Police Station.

On Thursday night, two suspects were scratched off Calabarzon Region's "most wanted" list -- a suspected child rapist and an armed robber nabbed in separate operations in San Pedro City. (PNA)

Calauan. The three have standing arrest warrants issued by various regional trial courts in Laguna with no bail recommended. "With the arrest of these accused, justice will be given to their victims and the Laguna police will not stop conducting such operations to arrest all those hiding from the law," Unos said in a statement.

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that the first to fall was a kidnapping and homicide suspect identified only as "Romeo." He was arrested in Barangay Burol in this city. On the same day, one "Danilo" who was wanted for murder was apprehended in the same barangay.

The third suspect identified as "Ariel," a murder suspect, was nabbed in Barangay Lamot 1,

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Fire Safety Advocacy in Cavite



March 11, 2024, marked a significant day for fire safety advocacy in Cavite as the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) Provincial Roadshow 2024 took center stage at SM City, Rosario. The event brought together BFP personnel from various cities and municipalities in Cavite, showcasing their dedication to promoting public awareness and safety.

The program kicked off with the warm opening remarks by FSINSP Mark Anthony M. Manarin, Municipal Fire Marshal of Rosario F5. His words set the tone for a day filled with valuable insights and activities aimed at fostering a safer community. Welcoming the guests with enthusiasm, he emphasized the importance of collaboration in achieving the shared goal of fire prevention.

One of the highlights of the event was a presentation featuring different types of uniforms worn by BFP Officers and Personnel, showcasing the diverse roles and responsibilities within the bureau. This visual representation served as a tribute to the dedication and professionalism of the individuals working tirelessly to ensure public safety.

FSUPT Maria Victoria Padua-Bruar, DSC, Assistant Regional Director for Operations-BFP R4A, delivered a compelling fire prevention message on behalf of the regional director. Her words underscored the critical role that fire prevention plays in safeguarding communities and encouraged active participation from all sectors.

FSUPT Gay Faltado Florentino, DSC, Provincial Fire Marshal, introduced the esteemed guest of honor and speaker, Hon. Ramon "Jolo" B. Revilla III, Cavite 1st district representative. In his inspiring address, Cong. Revilla emphasized the importance of supporting the BFP not only during Fire Prevention Month but throughout the entire year. His commitment to community safety resonated strongly with the audience, fostering a sense of collective responsibility.

The second part of the program featured a thrilling simulation exercise performed by BFP's Special Rescue Force. This hands-on demonstration showcased the skill and readiness of the rescue teams, providing valuable insights into their capabilities in responding to emergencies.

The third and final part of the event comprised competitions in spoken poetry, digital art making, and poster making. These competitions aimed to engage students, artists, and enthusiasts from various cities and municipalities in Cavite, encouraging them to contribute to the promotion of public fire safety. The creative endeavors of the participants reflected a shared commitment to raising awareness and inspiring action within the community.

The Cavite BFP Provincial Roadshow 2024 not only served as a platform for showcasing the BFP's dedication but also as a catalyst for community engagement. By involving diverse sectors and encouraging active participation, the event underscored the collective responsibility we all share in building a safer and more resilient Cavite. /PR

Medical Mission in Brgy. Samala Marquez, Kawit, Cavite.

On March 6, 2024, the dedicated medical team of the Provincial Government, comprised of doctors, and medical mission staff, assisted by volunteer nurses from QualiMed AC Health and Ayala Company Health, embarked on a journey to bring health and hope to the community in Brgy. Samala Marquez, Kawit, Cavite.

During the medical mission, they provided free medical consultations, check-ups, and distributed prescription medicines, vitamins, and mosquito repellent lotion to a total of 566 patients. The success of the medical mission was made possible through the support of local officials, barangay council led by Chairperson Rainbow Reyes, and Barangay Health Workers. The constituents of Kawit expressed their gratitude to the local government for the outreach program rendered to their community. /PR



Napolcom pushes for more career opportunities for female police officers



The National Police Commission (Napolcom) regional office in Calabarzon is pushing for programs that would help female members of the police force to have an equal opportunity for advancement in the police service.

According to lawyer Joicel Sopena-Bote, the focal person for Gender and Development at Napolcom, there are only a few female police officers who have reached third-level positions in the Philippine National Police and the disparity is reflected by the reality that there is only one star-ranked female officer in the entire PNP.

"Actually, we only have one female police general in Camp Crame, but in Calabarzon there is none. Because for them, if you are a woman, you cannot fight," Sopena said as she referred to Brig. Gen. Portia Manalad, director of the Women and Children Protection Center, who is the first female graduate of the Philippine National Police Academy to have reached the rank of police general.

Manalad has broken barriers and paved the way for other women to pursue high-ranking positions within the police force, Sopena said.

As the Napolcom celebrates the annual National Women's Month, it has formed a Women's Desk, with independently designated officials from the agency, where the wives, partners, and female Non-Commissioned Officers (PNCO) can independently voice out their grievances on the lack of equal opportunities for promotion, physical and emotional distress, and other professional concerns.

"We decided to organize [a Women's Desk], and with that organization they will be more encouraged to express concern or any issues concerning PNCOs. They will have a voice to form or unify what are the solutions for all their concerns for improvement, aggressive complaints, grievances, and because of this organization, we can act faster to address those concerns," Sobeña said.

According to lawyer Joicel Sopena-Bote, the focal person for Gender and Development at Napolcom, there are only a few female police officers who have reached third-level positions in the Philippine National Police and the disparity is reflected by the reality that there is only one star-ranked female officer in the entire PNP. (Christopher Hedreya/PIA-Laguna)

The Police Regional Office in Calabarzon also oversees the Officers Ladies Club whose membership is exclusive to female police officers, as well the wives and partners of their personnel.

The group is meant to foster camaraderie, professional growth, and an avenue for gender and development programs within the police force.

Sobeña urges her fellow women in the law enforcement to step outside of their comfort zones and pursue roles traditionally held by men as it helps challenge preconceived notions about gender roles in law enforcement.

"What a man can do, a woman can do too. Let us not let them label us 'just a woman' and think that because you're a woman you're just for HR and personnel [works]," she said.

She added: "Challenge yourself and let your superior know that you can do more than what they think you can, because I believe there's a lot [of women] on our line that can physically investigate and do work as an intel, so there must be no [gender] hindrance to opportunity." Moreso, Sobeña's message of empowerment serves as a reminder that women have a valuable role to play in law enforcement and should be supported in their efforts to pursue their professional aspirations without limitations based on their gender. (AM/PIA-4A)

WOMEN'S RUN PH AT SM BY THE BAY: A CELEBRATION OF STRENGTH, SISTERHOOD, AND FITNESS

SM Supermalls and the Filipina CEO Circle (FCC) successfully hosted the Women's Run PH at SM By the Bay on March 10, 2024, highlighting a triumphant return for the event during International Women's Month in March.



Participants in the 10K race category pound the pavement with perseverance and endurance.



Runners unite for the empowering Women's Run.

Thousands of women, from seasoned runners to enthusiastic novices, participated in the various race categories, including a 1KM Kids Dash, a 5KM Women's Run, a 10KM Women's Run, and a 10KM Buddy Run for male-female pairs.



The top finishers in the 10K category are Maria Jonna Lina Abutas, winning 1st place (center), followed by Maricar Camacho in 2nd place (left), and Jennelyn Isibido in 3rd place.



Princess Valerie Oaperina clinches first place in the 1K Kids race (third from left), flanked by Leeara Kirzen Sagun in 2nd place (second from left) and Rienethsme Bella in 3rd place (third from right). They are joined by Women's Run PH founder Nicole de la Cruz (second from right), and Filipina CEO Circle (FCC)'s Ambe Tierro (left) and Karen Roa (right).



Watsons Philippines honors inspiring women, including (L-R): 76-year-old Linda Ogsimer, Breast Cancer survivor April Perre-ras, visually-impaired athlete Andrea Estrella, fitness coach and athlete Tes Nocyo, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual (LGBTQIA) advocate Thysz Estrada, who participated in the run.

The success of the Women's Run PH at SM By the Bay underscores the growing importance of women's health and fitness initiatives. The event not only promoted physical well-being but also fostered a sense of community and unlocked potential among Filipina participants.



The Women's Run breaks barriers with the power of inclusion.



76-year-old runner Linda Ogsimer shows that diligence in running knows no bounds.

"SM Supermalls is committed to promoting healthy lifestyles and empowering women," stated SM Supermalls' Vice President for Corporate Marketing Grace Magno. "We are proud to support the Women's Run PH, where they showcased their resilience, spirit, and pure joy of running. This event proved that, together, Filipinas can conquer any finish line."



The competitors prepare to start the race at the gunstart, anticipating the challenge ahead.

Committed to championing Filipina business leaders, the FCC collaborated with Women's Run PH and SM Supermalls to ignite women's inspiration through running, emphasizing their unified strength and amplifying their successes. /PR



The 2024 Filipina CEO Circle Women's Run PH honors female triumph and impact.

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lowed by South Moravia with 1,242 and Central Bohemia, 905. "I took note of the Czech Republic's announcement that you have increased the quota for Filipino workers from 5,500 to almost double that from January 2024 to 10,300 per year starting in May of 2024," Marcos said. Pavel said the labor market in the Czech Republic suffers from shortage. "The Philippines ranked among the top countries that send to us (workers) where we have topped qualified, highly skilled workers," Pavel said. Philippines-EU free trade Meanwhile, at the Philippine-Czech business forum here on Friday, President Marcos pushed for the resumption of negotiations for a free trade agreement between the Philippines and the European Union (EU), saying

it would encourage more investments to the country. "We believe that the resumption of these negotiations will be a big step in furthering our trade relations, with the end view to establish a stable, predictable and enabling business environment that promotes inclusive and sustainable growth and development," he said. Negotiations for the Philippines-EU trade and investment agreement were launched on Dec. 22, 2015 followed by the second negotiations in February 2017. The negotiations had since been put on hold until July 2023 while the EU and the Philippines announced their intention to begin technical discussions with a view to potentially resuming negotiations. /PHILSTAR.COM

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SSS...

LUNGSOD NG BATANGAS (PIA) — Patuloy ang Social Security System (SSS) sa pagpapaligay ng RACE campaign o Run After Contribution Evaders sa lalawigan ng Batangas. Kamakailan ay nag-ikot ang mga kawani ng SSS Batangas Branch sa lungsod ng Batangas upang paaalalahanan ang ilang mga establisimiyento ukol sa pagbabayad ng kontribusyon ng kanilang mga empleyado. Ayon kay Atty. Alejandro Diaz, OIC Vice President-SSS South Luzon II Division, ito ang unang RACE sa taong 2024 at nais nilang maipalaganap ang kahalagahan ng pagiging miyembro ng SSS. "Ito ay palagi ang ginagawa ng SSS at lahat ng mga branches sa buong bansa ay nagsasagawa nito ng sabay-sabay. Layon nitong maipaanawa sa mga employers ang kanilang obligasyon alinsunod sa batas at obligasyon na din sa kanilang mga empleyado," ani Diaz. Sinabi naman ni Tiffany Lobo, SSS Batangas Branch Head, ang kampanya ay nagpapakita na seryoso ang ahensya sa kanilang mandato at hindi nito hangad na takutin ang mga employer bagkus ay ipakitang sila ay dapat magkatuwang sa pagtataguyod ng kagalingan ng kanilang mga empleyado. "Minsan sa dami ng ginaga-

wa o inaasikaso ng mga employers nakakalimutan nila ang obligasyon sa kanilang mga empleyado. Ito ay pagpapalala lamang," ani Lobo. "Ito ang unang RACE namin sa unang quarter ngunit magsasagawa pa kami ng iba pang parehong aktibidad. Basically ay tatlo kada quarter ang aming target isagawa. Sa mga binisitang employers ngayong araw, siyam dito ang may delinquency at isa ang non-registration of business," dagdag nito. Binigyang-diin naman ni Atty. Marc Villanueva ng South Luzon II Legal Section na may pailan ilang mga establisimiyento ang nabibigyan ng demand letter pero dahil sa pagsasagawa ng RACE agarang sumusunod ang mga ito sa kanilang obligasyon. "Mas maraming RACE ang isasagawa sa taong ito dahil maganda ang naging impact nito, in terms of awareness at positibo ang naging pagtanggap ng mga employers dito," ani Villanueva.

Kabilang sa mga business establishments na dinalaw at pinaalalahanan ng ahensya ang driving academy, contractor, printing press, catering service, hydraulic service, tire supply, air conditioning supply, travel agency at pet/supply shop.(BHABY P. DE CASTRO-PIA Batangas)

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DENR...

(Resort) is an alienable and disposable land. It is titled and classified as a multiple-use zone but the others can be located in the forest lands. All these things will be looked into," Cuna added. For her part, Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga blamed the local government unit (LGU) of Sagbayan, Bohol for the issuance of building permit and mayor's permit despite the Captain's Peak Resort's failure to secure an environmental compliance certificate (ECC). "What we also have discovered in our investigation, the Captain's Peak was able to secure a building permit from the local government and when that happens, the PAMB has already issued a resolution but you have to go for the ECC and get yourself permitted. We also discovered that the building permit started to be issued in 2020 and there was definitely no ECC at that point," Loyszaga said. "The LGU knows what needs to be submitted before it can issue a build-

ing permit in a protected area," she said. Cuna added that charges and fines await the owner of the resort for operating without an ECC. And based on the inspection of the EMB, the Captain's Peak Resort used deep wells without necessary permits. "The National Water Resources Board has already issued a certification that they don't have a permit, nor do they have an application for this," he added. Cuna added that the Captain's Peak Resort owner could face a fine of up to P5 million for operating in a protected area. "It also has a criminal liability of minimum of six years to a maximum of 12 years imprisonment for putting up structure without appropriate permits within the protected areas," he added. However, Cuna added that the DENR could not order the demotion of the resort since it is a private property. "When it comes to the issue of demolition, we need to study this carefully as it was not involved in illegal

occupation since it is a private property and they own the structure. What they cannot do is to operate without an ECC," he said. Binay: Unacceptable Even after the voluntary closure of the resort in the heart of Chocolate Hills in Bohol, the "willful violations" and the environmental damage were unacceptable, Sen. Nancy Binay said yesterday. Binay, chair of the Senate committee on tourism, also criticized the Sagbayan local government, which has jurisdiction over the UNESCO-protected Chocolate Hills, for being nonchalant in handling the matter. "It is very clear that there were infractions and willful violations of law at all levels. Apparently, the Sagbayan LGU admitted that it was only this March 13 that the DENR advised the resort to 'voluntarily' undergo a temporary closure," she noted. "So, we can see that the enforcement is clumsy and the term 'voluntary closure' means 'optional,' meaning the resort has a

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MARCOS...

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has approved the "New Philippine Passport Act," designed to modernize passport application processes nationwide. The law aims to greatly improve accessibility and streamline procedures, especially benefiting senior citizens, overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), and individuals with special needs or exceptional circumstances, according to the Presidential Communications Office (PCO) on Friday. The recently enacted law, signed on March 11, replaced Republic Act No. 8239, also known as the Passport Act of 1996. ADVERTISING "The new passport law now authorizes DFA to provide offsite and mobile passport services in areas outside of the con-

sular offices and foreign service posts (FSPs)," the PCO said. "The DFA is also mandated by the new law to arrange accommodations for the applications of regular passports by senior citizens, PWDs, pregnant women, minors aged seven years old and below, solo parents, OFWs, and individuals with emergency and exceptional cases," it added. To ensure passport security, the PCO explained that the law sets tough penalties for unauthorized passport handling. Offenders could face at least 12 years in prison and fines ranging from P1 million to P2 million. The New Philippine Passport Act addresses offenses such as passport forgery and misuse, with penalties including imprisonment for six to 15 years and fines ranging from P100,000 to

P250,000. It also targets unfair practices in passport issuance, prescribing penalties like suspension, dismissal, fines of up to P250,000, and imprisonment for a maximum of six years. According to the PCO, regular passports, meant for Filipino citizens ineligible for diplomatic or official passports, will be issued under the new law, serving government officials or employees traveling abroad for personal reasons. "Government officials and employees and members of their families may, during their incumbency in office, hold two passports simultaneously," the PCO said. The New Philippine Passport Act will take effect 15 days after its publication in either the Official Gazette or a widely circulated newspaper. /PHILSTAR.COM

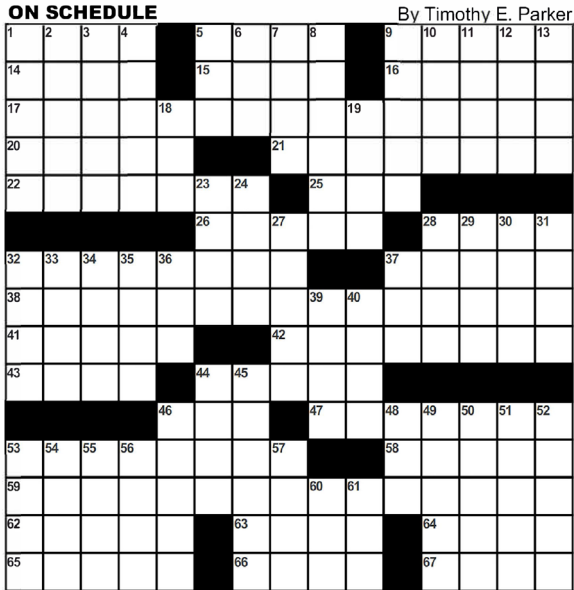
choice not to stop its operations." In Congress, the Makabayan bloc has filed a House resolution that seeks to investigate the construction of Captain's Peak Resort right at the foot of the declared National Geological Monument. In House Resolution 1638, party-list representatives Arlene Brosas of Gabiela, France Castro of ACT-Teachers and Raoul Manuel of Kabataan have directed the committee on natural resources to do the probe "in aid of legislation." Bohol Rep. Alexie Tutor has meanwhile sought the demolition of the resort, underscoring that the Chocolate Hills "should not have been allowed to be built there in the first place." "It should be demolished and the construction site should be restored, with costs borne by the owners of that resort. But before these can happen, we have to follow due process," she added. /PHILSTAR.COM

From Page 1



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ACROSS

- 1) Standard
- 5) Kind of thermom-eter
- 9) Comedian Silver-man
- 14) Dueling sword
- 15) Off-limits double negative
- 16) "All My Children" vixen
- 17) Count calories
- 20) Instant
- 21) When most peo-ple work
- 22) Clambake item
- 25) Part ofTGIF
- 26) Sleeveless gar-ments
- 28) Dance bit
- 32) Potent pepper
- 37) Omit a vowel in speech
- 38) Microwave feature
- 41) Alpaca relative
- 42) Military equip-ment
- 43) Harp's old cousin
- 44) Antique shop item
- 46) Dadaist pioneer
- 47) Type of horse bit
- 53) City in Florida
- 58) Farm machine
- 59) Reason for an NBA video review
- 62) Blazing
- 63) Brown bag tip-pler, in stereotypes
- 64) Endings for East or West
- 65) Used a 58-Across
- 66) Traditional Indi-an bread
- 67) "Let it stand" in editorial circles

DOWN

- 1) Small amphibians
- 2) Eyeball-twisting drawings
- 3) Catch up with again
- 4) Place of pilgrimage
- 5) Lennon's bride
- 6) First name in the "Happy Days" cast
- 7) From the beginning
- 8) Become unglued
- 9) Hunts
- 10) Extremely dry, as land
- 11) Capital of Latvia
- 12) In need of a mas-sage
- 13) Lids
- 18) Skirt's edge
- 19) Dampens
- 23) "Be it_ so humble ...
- 24) You'll get a deal there
- 27) Navigational aid
- 28) Like some margins or chances
- 29) It marches on
- 30) First habitat
- 31) Bold and sassy
- 32) Become cohesive
- 33) Comrade in arms
- 34) Type of jet
- 35) As high as one can get
- 36) Bake sale org.
- 37) Flight guess (abbr.)
- 39) State flower of Tennessee
- 40) "Follow me!"
- 44) Gator's cousin
- 45) Like Billy Joel's girl
- 46) Posed a question
- 48) Early school lesson
- 49) Fearsome three-some of destiny
- 50) Bat an eye toward?
- 51) Africa's Sierra_
- 52) Artist Max
- 53) Striker's enemy
- 54) Romeo (sports car)
- 55) Muddy up
- 56) Farmland measure
- 57) Highlight for opera goers
- 60) Genetic material
- 61) Long, long time

CITY OF BACOR NEWS

BIRTHDAY JOB FAIR | 2024



Mark your calendars!

Looking for a new job? Join Mayor Strike B. Revilla's Birthday Job Fair happening on March 20, 2024 at the SOMO - A Vista Mall, gates are open at 8:00 AM! This is a great opportunity to meet with various companies and explore job openings that might be perfect for you. Don't miss this chance to kickstart your career!

"BIRTHDAY JOB FAIR NI MAYOR STRIKE"... samahan po natin sa MARCH 20, 2024 - Wednesday alas-8 ng umaga sa SOMO Vis-ta, Molino 4 si Mayor Strike B. Revilla para sa kayang BIRTHDAY JOB FAIR 2024. Mayroon tayong 50 companies na accredited ng Bacoor PESO na handang mag HIRE ON THE SPOT at magbigay ng TRABAHO sa ating Ba-cooreño. Magdala po ng maraming UPDATED RESUME at sariling ballpen. Tara! Mag apply na po tayo!/*PR*

AICS Distribution: Pamimigay ng Tulong Pinansyal para sa mga Bacooreño

Nitong nakaraang March 12, muling nagsagawa ng AICS distribution para sa mga mamamayan ng Bacoor na ginanap sa Strike Gymnasium. Ang nasabing programa ay pinangunahan ng tanggapan ng alkalde, kasama ang opisina nina Sen. Bong Revilla Jr., Agimat Partylist, at Congresswoman Lani Merca-do Revilla. Ito ay dinaluhan naman nina Mayor Strike B. Revilla, Vice Mayor Rowena Bautista Mendiola, at Cong. Bryan Revilla. Kasama rin sa AICS distribution ang mga konsehal bayan na sina Councilor Alde Pa-gulayan, Councilor Rey Fabian, Councilor Karen Sari-no-Evaristo, Councilor Rey Palabrica, Councilor Sim-plicio Dominguez, Councilor Obet Advincula at LNB Vice Pres. Kap. Randy Francisco. Bumisita rin ang mga kapitan ng Barangay Molino 1 at Barangay Molino 6 na sina Kap. Jeo Dominguez at Kap. Ronald Javier, kasama ang kanilang mga constituents. Maliban sa pamamahagi ng tulong pinansyal, nagsaga-

wa ang BDRMO ng seminar hinggil sa Disaster Pre-paredness and Response, habang ang Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) ay nagbahagi ng mga kagamitang may kaugnayan sa Fire Safety Tips. Bukod dito, bilang pagpupugay sa buwan ng kababai-han, isinama rin sa mga aktibidad ang pagdiriwang ng Women's Month. Ibinahagi rin ang kalulunsad lamang na Paleng-QR PH at ang One Ticketing System ng BTMD katuwang ang LTO. Bilang isang pagpapakita ng pagkakaisa at saya, nagkaroon din ng mga kantahan at sayawan na hatid naman ng CICRD Band. Upang mas maiapabot ang kanilang mga pasasalamat sa nasasakupan, nagpadala rin ng mensahe sa pamamagi-tan ng video ang mga kinatawan tulad nina Sen. Bong Revilla Jr. at Kongresista Lani Mercado Revilla. Hindi rin maitatangging isang mahalagang yugto sa kas-aysayan ng lungsod ang pagsasabatas ng Revilla Law, na naglalayong mabigyan ng pinansyal na tulong na nagka-kahalagang P10,000 ang mga senior citizens lalo na ang mga nasa edad 80, 85, 90, 95 hanggang 100. Ang AICS Distribution ay hindi lamang pagbibigay ng tulong pinansyal, kundi paghahatid din ng mga impor-masyong mapapakinabangan ng mga Bacooreño.*/PR*



Last week's solution:



11K kababaihan sa Sariaya, nat-ulungan sa mga programang pangkabuhayan



LUCENA CITY (PIA) — Mahigit 11,000 kababai-han na kasapi ng Gilas Kababaihan sa bayan ng Sa-riaya ang nakikinabang na sa iba't ibang livelihood programs na ipinapatupad ng pamahalaang bayan. Ito ang inihayag ni Mayor Marivic Gayeta na siya ring Pangulo ng samahan sa idinaos na Kapihan sa PIA Quezon kamakailan. Binigyang diin ng alkalde na simula ng itatag ang sa-mahan ay naging katuwang na sa paghahanapbuhay ang mga kababaihan sa loob ng kanilang pamilya. "Ilan sa mga programa na pinagkakakitaan na ng mga kababaihan dito ay dishwashing making, bi-gasan sa barangay, supot making, longanisa making, peanut butter making, ensaymada baking, hog rais-ing, tahian sa barangay at iba pa," sabi pa ni Gayeta. Samantala, inihayag naman ni Sariaya Municipal Gender and Development Focal Point Person Randy Tronila ang mga aktibidad ng pamahalaang bayan Sariaya sa pagdiriwang ng Buwan ng Kababaihan. Ayon kay Tronila, kabilang dito ang pagpapalakas ng kakayahan at kagalingan ng mga kababaihan. Bukod dito, isinasagawa rin nila ang gender sen-sitivity training, pagpapalakas ng samahang Men Opposed to Violence against women Everywhere (MOVE), gayundin ang pagpapalawak ng health ac-cessibility hanggang sa mga barangay. Kaugnay nito ang pamahalaang panlalawigan ng Quezon sa pamamagitan ng Provincial Gender and Development Office ay kasalukuyan nagdaraos ngayon ng "Tiangge ni Juana" sa harapan ng kap-itolyo ng Quezon na naglalayong matulungan ang mga mga samahan ng mga kababaihan na maibenta ang kanilang mga produktong ginawa. (Ruel Orin-day-PIA Quezon)



Capability Building Event Strengthens Efforts Against Trafficking and Violence in Cavite

More than 60 dedicated attendees comprising members of the Cavite Provincial Committee on Anti-Trafficking and Violence Against Women and their Children (PCAT-VAWC) together with mu-nicipal and city social workers from various Local Government Units (LGUs) in the province, gath-ered on March 13, 2024, at The Bayleaf Hotel in the City of General Trias for a capability building event. The activity, organized by the Provincial Govern-ment of Cavite through the Office of the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Officer, aimed to equip participants with essential knowledge and strategies to combat the pressing issues of trafficking and violence affecting the province's most vulnera-ble populations. Mr. Alvin S. Mojica, Provincial Administrator for Community Affairs, set the tone with his insightful opening remarks emphasizing the importance of the Omnibus Guidelines for the Protection of Chil-dren Against Violence and Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC). He urged all attendees to embrace their role in safeguarding children and echoed the need for collaborative ef-forts across all LGUs. Representing BM Romel R. Enriquez, Chairperson of SP Committee on Women, Family, Children, El-derly and Social Services, Ms. Marife V. Bautista de-livered an inspirational message, underscoring the significance of solidarity and continued support in the fight against trafficking and violence. The discussion sessions were led by distinguished speakers who provided comprehensive under-standings and expertise. Atty. Mary Marjorie P. Martin-Chan, Senior Leader of the National Prose-cution Development, and International Justice Mis-sion presented crucial topics such as Understanding Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children, OSAEC Law and its implementing rules and regu-lations, and Localizing OSAEC Law through local ordinance. Additionally, Mr. Teodoro R. Romo, Jr., Former Assistant Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), shed light on the Gaps and Challenges in Providing Care to OSAEC victims and survivors, emphasizing the necessity of a robust network of support. The open forum provided a platform for fruitful exchanges and brainstorming on future strategies, followed by a post-test to gauge participants' under-standing and retention of the discussed topics. In her closing remarks, Ms. Precyl T. Ramos ex-pressed gratitude to all participants for their active engagement and reaffirmed the commitment of the Provincial Government of Cavite to continue its un-wavering support in combating trafficking and vio-lence/*PR*



PGC's Libreng Pustiso Pro-gram brings smiles and confidence to Silangeños



A significant milestone in the ongoing battle against drug abuse was achieved as more than 100 participants consisting of senior citizen leaders in Cavite gathered at the Bayleaf Hotel in the City of General Trias on March 1, 2024 for an Orientation Seminar on Drug Abuse Prevention Education for Senior Citizens. Organized by the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) in collaboration with the Provincial Government of Cavite through the Office of the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Of-ficer (OPSWDO), the seminar aimed to raise awareness of the dangers of drugs and substance use, and to en-courage the active participation and support of the se-nior citizens in the prevention of anti-illegal drugs. This event was graced by esteemed personalities includ-ing Mr. Alvin S. Mojica, Provincial Administrator for Community Affairs, who delivered the message that the seminar is not just about imparting knowledge but also empowering senior citizens to be agents of change by harnessing the influential role of the elderly in disse-minating crucial information on drug prevention within their families and communities. Assistant Secretary Ma-ria Belen Angelita V. Matibag, Deputy Executive Direc-tor for Operations at DDB, shared a powerful message emphasizing the importance of collective action in com-bating drug abuse among senior citizens. Throughout the seminar, participants delved into critical topics such as the Effects of Drugs on the Human Body, Treatment, and Rehabilitation Programs, presented by Dr. Jose Bienvenido M. Leabres from the Department of Health-Las Pinas Treatment and Rehabilitation Cen-ter. Asoc. Matibag shed light on the National Household Survey's findings on drug abuse patterns and trends, while Atty. Ferdauusi B. Masnar elaborated on the provi-sions and penalties outlined in RA 9165, also known as the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002. The seminar also featured a comprehensive presentation on the Philippine Anti-illegal Drugs Strategy (PADS) and the current drug situation in the country. Asoc. Ma-tibag led discussions on overcoming the social stigma associated with drug abuse prevention, underlining the importance of empathy and support in rehabilitation ef-forts. The event concluded with a post-test and evaluation, fol-lowed by the distribution of certificates of participation to acknowledge the commitment of attendees towards promoting a drug-free community.*/PR*