

TECH-VOC SCHOLARS IN REGION VIII RECEIVE CERTIFICATES, ALLOWANCES, TOOL-KITS



Thousands of technical vocational education and training (TVET) scholars in Region 8 received their certificates, allowances, and starter toolkits from the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). Last April 18, TESDA Deputy Director General Aniceto D. Bertiz III, representing Director General, Secretary Suharto T. Mangudadatu graced the TESDA Region VIII's 1st Regional Mass Graduation Ceremony and Distribution of Scholarship Toolkits and Allowances in Tacloban City, Leyte. In a statement, Secretary Mangudadatu commended the graduates for their dedication and perseverance, emphasizing the vital role they play in driving economic growth and development in the region. "As graduates of TESDA, you are joining the country's pool of valuable human resources as globally competitive and highly qualified workers. We trust that your training and qualifications will continue to open up different opportunities for you," Secretary Mangudadatu said. The TESDA chief underscored the agency's unwavering commitment to providing accessible and quality technical education, ensuring that every Filipino has the opportunity to unlock their full potential. During the ceremony, a total of 1,298 scholars hailing from various provinces across the region in different qualifications received their hard-earned certificates. Among the qualifications the scholars finished were Organic Agriculture Production NC II, Computer Systems Servicing NC II, Cookery NC II, Driving NC II, and Bread and Pastry Production NC II. Additionally, 1,013 scholars received allowances, while scholarship toolkits in different programs were distributed to 728 scholars from the provinces of Leyte and Southern Leyte. Meanwhile, also present during the ceremony were Leyte Provincial Administrator Corazon M. Alvero, representing Governor Carlos Jericho "Icot" L. Petilla, Mr. Alexis Yu, representing Hon. Yedda Marie K. Romualdez of TINGOG Party List, and other TESDA officials and employees in Region VIII.



TESDA EXECS VISIT GERMAN TECH FAIR, AUTOMATION COMPANY



To ensure that the country's tech-voc sector remains at par with international standards, top officials of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) attended a technology fair in Germany. Last April 22-26, TESDA Deputy Directors General Rosanna A. Urdaneta and Aniceto D. Bertiz III, along with other TESDA officials visited the booths at Hannover Messe 2024, an annual technology fair in Hannover, Germany. The executives also visited the facilities of German automation company Festo to experience firsthand how they utilize cutting-edge automation technology that incorporates industry robotics and Industry 4.0 principles. In a statement, TESDA Director General, Secretary Suharto Mangudadatu, shares that TESDA has gained valuable insights from various participating companies and institutions on how to improve the country's technical vocational education and training (TVET). "TESDA's presence at Hannover Messe is testament to our commitment to global excellence in skills development. Through collaborations and knowledge exchange, we can better prepare our kababayans and this nation for a brighter, more interconnected future," the TESDA chief said. Through this immersive visit, TESDA aims to engage in private sessions and discussions with industry experts, thought leaders and key stakeholders to discover the latest educational technologies and

solutions designed to empower the next generation skills professionals. Hannover Messe is an international event that gathers companies from all over the world to showcase groundbreaking innovations and products. This year, the more than 4,000 exhibitors came from such industry sectors as automotive, electrical and automation, energy, research and development, and mechanical and plant engineering. Additionally, the Festo facilities visited by the TESDA executives is a model for Industry 4.0 implementation. The visitors gained insights into the seamless integration of technologies such as IoT (Internet of Things) sensors, cloud computing, and artificial intelligence as they are used in Festo's manufacturing operations. As Festo also places a strong emphasis on sustainability and safety practices, the TESDA officials also observed the company's strategies in minimizing its environmental impact through efficient energy usage, waste reduction, and eco-friendly product development. Meanwhile, the TESDA Deputy Directors General were joined by TESDA Directors Jovencio Ferrer, Jr., Charlyn Justimbaste, Juliet Orozco, Angeline Chaves, and other officials and employees.

TESDA OPENS SLOTS FOR VARIOUS COURSES

Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) announced the available slots for various courses in the National Capital Region. The Philippine-Korea Technological Training Center under TESDA-National Capital Region is now accepting enrollees for Mechatronics Servicing NC III, 3D Animation NC III, Game Programming NC III, and Electrical Installation and Maintenance NC III. TESDA Secretary Suharto Mangudadatu encourages the public to enroll in these training programs to further strengthen their technical skills and complement their existing employability skills. "I urge our kababayans to seize this opportunity and take advantage of the available scholarship slots. TESDA is dedicated to providing all Filipinos, regardless of background or circumstance, access to inclusive learning opportunities. Our highly competent trainers and state-of-the-art facilities ensure that you receive the training and guidance you need to succeed," Secretary Mangudadatu said. There are 25 slots available for each mentioned qualification. These trainings are under the Training for Work Scholarship Program (TWSP), and scholars shall receive free training, free assessment, and training support fund amounting to Php160.00/day. The training duration for Mechatronics Servicing NC III is 206 hours, 3D Animation NC III is 1,100 hours, Game Programming NC III is 934 hours, and Electrical Installation and Maintenance NC III is 168 hours. All of these qualifications are set to be delivered using a blended approach of both online and on-site learning instructions. Interested enrollees may register using this link <https://www.tinyurl.com/registerhrdc>. They may also contact the Phil-Korea Technological Training Center through email [pktcc@tesda.gov.ph](mailto:pktcc@tesda.gov.ph) or phone call (02) 8374 1109. The Phil-Korea Technological Training Center is located at 2nd Floor PK-TCC Building Phil-Korea Friendship Center, Bayani Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City. Those interested to take up other courses may also visit the nearest TESDA office in their location to know more about the agency's programs and services

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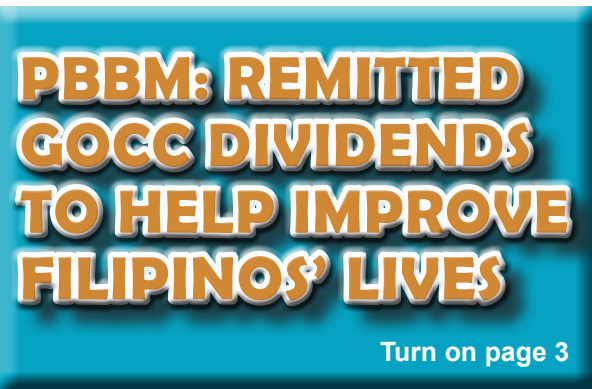
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MANILA – President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. on Monday said he would certify as urgent the bill proposing to amend the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL), citing the need for the government to have control over or influence in the local rice market. Marcos said amending the charter of the National Food Authority (NFA) and the RTL would give the government the needed leeway to act when retail prices of rice go up. "Ang problema kasi kaya tumataas ang presyo ng bigas dahil ang mga trader ay nagko-compete. Pataasan

silang presyuhang pag-bili ng palay at wala tayong control doon (The problem is that the price of rice is increasing because traders are competing. They will increase the price for buying rice and we have no control over that)," Marcos said in a media interview at the Philippine International Convention Center in Pasay City, where he graced the Government-Owned or -Controlled Corporations' Day. "Kung magkaroon ng mga amendments sa NFA at sa Rice Tariffication, sa NFA charter at saka sa Rice Tariffi-



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## How Filipinos Celebrate Mother's Day today

As Mother's Day dawns upon the Philippines, it's a momentous occasion where Filipinos come together to celebrate the incredible women who have shaped their lives. While the essence of honoring mothers remains unchanged, the modern Filipino celebration of Mother's Day has evolved, reflecting the dynamic nature of Filipino culture and society.

Traditionally, Filipino families would gather for a special meal, perhaps prepared with extra love and care, to honor their mothers. This cherished tradition still holds strong, but today, it often comes with a modern twist. Many families opt to dine out at restaurants offering special Mother's Day menus, treating their mothers to a culinary experience beyond the confines of their home kitchen. Others may choose to order in from their favorite eateries, indulging in a feast without the hassle of cooking and cleaning.

Gift-giving has also taken on a new dimen-

sion in contemporary Filipino Mother's Day celebrations. While flowers and chocolates remain popular choices, Filipinos now have a plethora of options to express their appreciation. From personalized gifts like custom jewelry and engraved keepsakes to experiential presents such as spa vouchers and weekend getaways, there's no shortage of ways to make mothers feel extra special on their day.

In the digital age, technology has revolutionized how Filipinos celebrate Mother's Day, especially for those separated by distance. Video calls have become a lifeline for families separated by seas and continents, allowing them to share heartfelt moments despite being miles apart. Social media platforms are flooded with tributes and dedications, as Filipinos take to the digital realm to publicly express their love and gratitude for their mothers.

Yet, amidst the evolution of traditions and the embrace of modernity, the core values of Filipino Mother's Day endure. It remains a

day of heartfelt gratitude, a time to reflect on the sacrifices mothers make and the unconditional love they give. In a culture deeply rooted in family, Mother's Day is not just about honoring biological mothers but also all maternal figures – grandmothers, aunts, godmothers, and even elder sisters – who have played nurturing roles in the lives of Filipinos.

As Filipinos celebrate Mother's Day today, they do so with a blend of tradition and innovation, honoring the past while embracing the present. It's a day to shower mothers with love, appreciation, and the recognition they truly deserve – not just for a day, but for every day they've devoted to shaping the lives of their children and families.

-ANG KABITENYA



## PBBM...

cation Law, magagawa natin, mako-control natin, mayroon tayong influence doon sa presyuhang sa pagbili ng palay at sa pagbenta ng bigas (If there are amendments to the NFA, and to the Rice Tariffication, to the NFA charter and then to the Rice Tariffication Law, we can do it, we can control it, we have an influence on the pricing of the purchase of rice and the sale of rice). So, that's what we are going to do," he added.

When asked if he would certify the proposed bill as urgent, the President said: "Yes, I think it justifies an urgent certification."

Earlier, House of Representatives Speaker Martin Romualdez said Con-

gress is eyeing to amend the five-year-old RTL to allow the NFA to sell cheaper rice in public markets, targeting to reduce the retail price of the staple to PHP30 per kilo from the current range of PHP40 to PHP50.

Romualdez, in a statement Monday, strongly supported President Marcos' decision, saying the legislative action underscores the government's commitment to reducing market prices and protecting farmers and consumers from unscrupulous traders and profiteers.

"The certification of this bill as urgent by President Marcos is a critical step forward in our concerted efforts to improve the livelihood

of our local farmers and ensure food security for all Filipinos," he said.

"This amendment will allow us to address the challenges and limitations of the current law, ensuring that it serves the best interest of the agricultural sector and the consumers," he added.

The proposed amendments to the Rice Tariffication Law aim to enhance the competitive edge of Filipino rice farmers by providing them with more robust support and protection. The changes are also designed to stabilize rice prices by reducing the influence of unregulated rice importation and curbing the ability of middlemen to inflate prices excessively./PNA

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## FILIPINOS...

HONOLULU, Hawaii – Filipinos in Hawaii are confident about the government's response to defend the Philippines' rights over the West Philippine Sea (WPS) where Chinese harassment against civilian vessels continues, the Philippine Consulate General in Honolulu said.

In an interview with reporters on the sidelines of the Fiesta de Mayo event organized by the Filipino community in Waipahu on May 4 (Hawaii time), Consul General Emil Fernandez said Filipinos living and working on the islands have been monitoring the developments over the waters.

"Filipinos here keep abreast of developments back home because they still have relatives and friends living there," he said.

He said they see and read about the incidents happening in the area, but they are "confident that our government, our administration, are doing the right things to protect us, to protect our sover-

eignty". Meanwhile, Filipino Community Center (Fil-Com) in Hawaii vice chairperson Eva Rose Washburn-Repollo said she believes most Filipinos in the state "are very concerned" about the WPS issue.

Given the geographical location of Hawaii, she said she was anxious about the possibility of a conflict erupting over the WPS. The same goes for Filcom Board of Directors member Edmund Aczon, saying a rift between China and the US over this is "always a possibility". Similar concerns are felt by Filipinos in New York and California.

In a recent interview, Philippine Consul General in New York Senen Mangalile said a number of Filipinos in his areas of jurisdiction are "sympathetic" to the Philippines. When it comes to the WPS, he said they understand that what happens in the area could be a potential threat to their families back home.

President Ferdinand R.

Marcos Jr. has assured Filipinos that the Philippines "will not lose an inch of its territory" and that it will continue to uphold its territorial integrity and sovereignty. Since the start of the administration, the Philippines has filed dozens of diplomatic protests against Chinese incursions into the country's exclusive economic zone. Most recently, the Department of Foreign Affairs summoned the Chinese Embassy of Manila Deputy Chief of Mission Zhou Zhiyong over the harassment of Philippine vessels conducting routine humanitarian missions to Bajo de Masinloc last April 30. During the latest mission, China Coast Guard and Chinese maritime militia ships subjected the Filipino vessels to "harassment, ramming, swarming, shadowing and blocking, dangerous maneuvers, and use of water cannons," among other aggressive actions. (PNA)

## PNP chief vows legal aid for cops facing counter-raps



MANILA – Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Gen. Rommel Francisco Marbil on Monday vowed legal assistance for police officers facing counter-charges. Speaking during the regular flag-raising rites in Camp Crame, Quezon City, Marbil said this is among the main challenges encountered by police officers in the performance of their duties.

"Alam ko naman lahat kayo na operatiba ang pinaka problema natin sa PNP is 'yung mga counter charges and minsan kapag nakaka-counter charge kayo ang mga pulis natin bumubunot ng kanilang pera (I'm aware that our main problem in the PNP are these counter-charges and sometimes, police officers who face counter-charges have to spend for themselves)," he said.

Marbil said he also wants every police officer to have a health insurance and is looking forward to the donation from the Public Safety Mutual Benefit Fund Inc.

"We are trying to do anything for our policemen para iisa lang ang iisipin niyo, ibibigay natin lahat para sa pulis natin pero isa lang ang request namin sa inyo. Do the best para sa mga tao natin, sa mga kliyente natin (so that our police officers would only think of one thing. We would like to provide everything for our police officers but we only have one request. Do the best for our people, our clients)," said Marbil.

No diversion of rice subsidy Marbil also dispelled rumors on the reallocation of funds intended for the rice allowance of uniformed police personnel to the food allowance of persons deprived of liberty.

Marbil admitted hearing rumblings among the ranks over the issue, which also include alleged reallocation of Combat Incentive Pay and Combat Duty Pay.

"I just want to say there is a difference between a wise man and a fool. A wise man talks because he has something to say. A fool talks because he has to say something. Fools come up with so much stories that destroy the organization. That is not right, that is not what we want. I'm not pleased with this fake news that disrupts us. That's not really true," he added.

Uniformed police personnel started receiving an allowance equivalent to 20 kilos of rice per month in 2017 following the order of then-president Rodrigo R. Duterte. In 2022, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. also issued an order authorizing the grant of one-time rice assistance for all government personnel, including police officers.

Another reshuffle Meanwhile, two ranking officials were included in the latest reorganization of the PNP.

Based on Marbil's order dated May 6, intelligence chief Maj. Gen. Robert Alexander Morico II and research and development chief Brig. Gen. Westrimundo Oblique switched posts.

PNP spokesperson Col. Jean Fajardo said the latest reshuffle came after the retirement of some high-ranking officials. (PNA)

## Smart greenhouse project for cooperatives launched in Batangas



BATANGAS CITY (PIA) — The city government of Batangas launched the Smart Greenhouse Project for agri-based cooperatives in the city as a push for urban farming and as a means to support the food security initiative of the national government.

In a memorandum of agreement signed on April 24 between the city government, represented by Mayor Beverley Rose Dimacuja, and the cooperatives represented by their respective chairperson, including Shelwyn Giganto of Bucal Multi-Purpose Cooperative (MPC), Rodolfo Geron of San Isidro Multi-Purpose Cooperative (SIMCO), and Edelyn Briones of Talumpok Silangan Multi-Purpose Cooperative (TASIMCO), the city laid down the support it will provide for each cooperative and the obligation of each beneficiaries.

Beneficiaries will manage and maintain the greenhouse project for 15 years, funded entirely by the city government and provided with technical assistance from the City Agriculture Office to monitor its operations.

According to City Agriculturist Flor Alvarez, the greenhouse project will utilize hydroponics or the planting of crops without using soil. Instead, they are planted in water enriched with nutrients.

"The process is simple with hydroponics because it's easy to grow vegetables, it's pest-free, and it's also a good source of livelihood," Alvarez said.

Mayor Dimacuja stated that the cooperatives that were made project beneficiaries should take good care of the facilities and pass on their farming knowledge through it.

"My request is for everyone to nurture and protect this project, and also to encourage our youth to engage in farming while they are young because there are many innovations now that they can use," Dimacuja said.

The leaders and members of the cooperatives expressed their gratitude for the vow to further develop and enhance the greenhouse project by using the free vegetable seeds given to growers in the city.

The smart greenhouse project is part of Batangas City's compliance with Republic Act 8435 or the 'Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act of 1997', a law that promotes food security and self-sufficiency through modernization. /PIO BATANGAS



EQUAL PAY. Contractual government employees, like the street sweepers in this undated photo, receive less pay than their "plantilla" counterparts or those holding permanent positions. The Calamba City government in Laguna province aims to raise the salaries of its job order employees to closely approximate the pay received in the private sector. (PNA file photo)

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna – The city government is implementing incremental salary increases for its contractual employees so they would closely match the pay received by permanent or "plantilla" local government unit workers.

In an interview on Saturday, Vice Mayor Angelito Lazaro Jr. said his office was surprised to learn that many of the city's contractual or job order (JO) employees are paid about PHP250 per day only.

Incremental wage adjustment elevated the daily pay to PHP350 in 2023 and further to PHP400 by the third quarter this year.

"Our vision is to align JO workers' remuneration with the minimum wage for private sector counterparts. We recognize Calamba's role as a burgeoning hub in the Calabarzon Region, experiencing rapid urbanization and industrialization," Lazaro said.

The minimum wage in Calabarzon currently stands at PHP520 per day.

Lazaro, also the city council's presiding officer, explained that an ongoing reorganization in the city government epitomizes inclusivity, ensuring no individual is left behind. Appointments are also based on meritocracy.

The overarching aim is to bolster efficiency and efficacy in municipal governance, he added.

"By prioritizing the enhancement of city employees' welfare and acknowledging the invaluable role of volunteers and collaborative partnerships, the current administration underscores its unwavering commitment to fortify worker conditions and foster synergistic growth for the city," Lazaro said. (PNA)



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## MEDICAL MISSION PAVES PREVENTIVE HEALTHCARE PROMOTION IN BULACAN, BATANGAS, QUEZON CITY



An elderly patient avails of free medical services at SM City Marilao's SM Foundation medical mission.

Social good initiatives like medical mission's uplift populations who put healthcare last and prioritize more immediate concerns like securing food and shelter. These missions bring essential healthcare services directly to vulnerable populations to alleviate immediate health concerns and promote long-term well-being and empowerment.

As it continues to promote healthcare in various communities, SM Foundation recently held three successful medical missions in Brgy. Krus na Ligas, Quezon City, SM Center Batangas, and SM City Marilao, Bulacan. A dedicated team of healthcare professionals and volunteers joined to provide free medical and dental services, as well as free medicines, to the local communities. With over 1,900 patients receiving much-needed medical attention and treatment.



Social good collaboration for healthcare. Joining the medical missions were volunteers and partners from Krus na Ligas Elementary School alumni group, Health Departments of Marilao and Quezon City, Willore Pharmaceutical, Marilao and Krus na Ligas LGUs, Batangas Medical Center, Batangas and Bulacan Chapters of Philippine Red Cross, GX International, and MX3 - DMI Medical Supplies.



The SM Foundation sends its mobile clinic to the medical missions to extend free ECGs and X-Rays.

## FROM UPCYCLING TO CREATING A CYCLE OF SOCIAL GOOD



The SM Store and Filipino artisanal fashion brand Zarah Juan gave new life to used tarpaulins while supporting various social good causes in the Philippines.

The Tarp Project, launched on Earth Day, April 22, 2024, is a joint endeavor between SM Green Finds and fashion designer Zarah Juan. It supports SM Group's commitment to leveling up its circularity programs with social inclusion.

### Weaving communities' goals together.



The bags were cut and cleaned by persons deprived of liberty (PDL) from Quezon City and were assembled by Filipino artisans from Bulacan.

The social good collaboration collects, repurposes, and transforms used tarpaulins from SM Stores into stylish and sustainable bags and pouches, with proceeds donated to SM Foundation's School Building and Health and Medical programs.

For the initial phase, the goal was to collect about 5,000 square meters of used tarpaulins, which will be cleaned and cut by persons deprived of liberty (PDL) in Quezon City, and then assembled by communities in Bulacan into approximately 4,000 reusable bags and 1,400 reusable pouches.

"It looks very simple, pero napaka laki ng puso ng bag na ito," entrepreneur and designer Zarah Juan said. "The bags first go through the PDLs of Quezon City, which will help in their hope, rehabilitation, and life transformation."

"The tarps will then be transformed by our partner Filipino artisans in Bulacan. This collaboration will provide them with additional livelihood opportunities, and since these are upcycled bags, we will help reduce waste going into landfills. By buying this, mayroon ka ng magandang bag, marami ka pang natulungan," she added, saying that customers' purchases go a long way.



## From circular economy to ripples of social good



Through the collaboration of SM Green Finds and Zarah Juan, discarded tarpaulins from SM Store are being transformed into stylish bags by PDLs and local artisans. The project not only diverts waste from landfills but also empowers various communities through livelihood opportunities. The Tarp Project further creates ripples of social good through the program's beneficiary, the SM Foundation Inc.

SM Foundation Executive Director for Education programs Carmen Linda Atayde also shared that proceeds from The Tarp Project sales will contribute to supporting SMFI's initiatives. This includes the installation of smart classroom boards and the implementation of rainwater catchment systems in partner community health centers as part of their health and medical program.

"This project is truly commendable as it not only supports local artisans but also serves a greater purpose. By purchasing these bags, we not only provide livelihood opportunities but also contribute directly to SMFI's school building program, benefiting countless school children, as well as supporting SMFI's health and medical programs, aiding patients and health workers alike. It's a powerful example of how supporting initiatives like this can create a ripple effect of social good," she said.

SM Store has long championed sustainable living through its SM Green Finds program, a green retail initiative implemented across more than 70 branches nationwide alongside other SM retail affiliates.

Looking to further expand this green effort, the company sought a circularity program that would create an opportunity to convert waste into something more useful, while also supporting communities and creating a cycle of social impact. /PR



## PAGASA...

DEHYDRATED. A man walks on dried grass at the University of the Philippines Sunken Garden in Diliman, Quezon City on April 24, 2023. At least 30 areas are forecast to experience danger level heat index, while the country will continue to experience fair weather with isolated rain showers, the weather bureau said Monday (May 6, 2024). (PNA photo by Joan Bondoc) MANILA – Forecasting the heat index in every municipality across the country is impossible at the moment due to budget and manpower limitations, an official of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said Monday. PAGASA Deputy Administrator Marcelino Villafuerte II said putting up stations would require a lot of resources to install instruments, apart from additional manpower. Villafuerte, who is in charge of heat index forecasts, was asked for his comment on Senator Sherwin Gatchalian's suggestion that PAGASA should come up with

more "granular and location-specific heat indices" to help local government units and schools decide if they should cancel face-to-face classes. "Currently, that's near impossible because there are only 82 PAGASA stations, mostly located in the cities and over 100 automatic stations," Villafuerte said in an interview with PNA. A station is only capable of forecasting the heat index in nearby cities, he added. For example, the station in Quezon City cannot forecast the heat index in Mandaluyong City. PAGASA's list of areas with forecast high heat indices are actually incomplete, Villafuerte said. "What we told Senator Gatchalian is that PAGASA is currently exploring two alternatives --the numerical weather prediction model and the satellite-derived information," he said. "We're already trying these two methods and include these in forecasting. Research and development, however, usually takes three to four years." (PNA)

## ILLEGAL...

MANILA – Telecommunications firm Globe Telecom Inc. (Globe) has noted a 967 percent increase in the number of illegal online gambling sites it blocked in the first quarter of 2024. Globe said a total of 1,345 domains in its network were blocked, a 967 percent increase from the same quarter last year when 126 sites were barred. "Of the total, 260 sites were blocked in January, 855 in February, and 230 in March," Globe said in a statement Monday. It took note of the massive annual increase of blocked illegal gambling sites from only 52 sites in 2021, 396 in 2022, and 4,237 in 2023. Anton Bonifacio, Globe's chief information security officer, said illegal online gambling can have "devastating financial and social consequences" and expose their users to

potential fraud, malware, and cybercrime. "We have an ethical obligation to make the internet safer and are continuing our relentless push to identify and prevent access to these unlawful sites on our network," Bonifacio said. Anti-illegal gambling efforts include network-level blocking measures and the deployment of content filtering systems. To date, he said Globe invested USD2.7 million for advanced content filtering infrastructure capable of detecting and restricting websites and imagery that promote illegal content such as illegal gambling, child pornography and online piracy. "This forms a key pillar of the company's aggressive #MakeITSafePH program to foster a secure online environment," he said. (PNA)

## DA...

CHEAP NFA RICE. Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa expresses support for the urgent amendment of Rice Tarification Law during an ambush interview on Monday (May 6, 2024). He said the amendments to the RTL would allow the National Food Authority (NFA) to sell rice at a cheaper price, especially in emergency situations. (PNA photo by Ben Briones) MANILA – The Department of Agriculture (DA) on Monday backed the proposed amendments to Republic Act 11203 or the Rice Tarification Law (RTL) to allow the National Food Authority (NFA) to sell rice to markets at a lower price. The DA issued the statement after President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. said he would certify the proposed amendments to RTL as urgent, considering that the NFA's mandate is now limited to national buffer stocking under RTL. In an ambush interview, Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said the legislative action may be favorable in preparation for the looming La Niña and other emergen-

cy cases. "Supportive ang DA dun (The DA is supportive of that). Mas maganda kung may ganitong provision lalo na kung may emergency cases. Mas maganda kung makaka-intervene ang NFA and DA doon sa market (It's better to have this provision especially if there are emergency cases. It's better if NFA and the DA can intervene in the market)," de Mesa said. Former Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol also expressed support for the urgent amendment of RTL, saying the NFA may sell rice at around PHP40 per kilogram to PHP45/kg. Piñol said that at this range, although higher than the original PHP27/kg, the subsidized price is much lower than the current offer of private traders who typically double the market price. "I think it is the moral obligation of government to provide an option for the poor consumers na puwede nilang takbuhan at makabili sila ng bigas na makain nila (to run to and buy affordable rice to eat) three times a day. And that is an obligation of government," he said in a separate interview at the

Bagong Pilipinas Ngayon. Piñol also lauded Marcos for the urgency to correct a "flawed legislation" that enabled "rice cartel or mafias" to control market prices. "Kailangan ibalik sa supervision ng gobyerno iyong (We need to bring back to the government the supervision of the) rice industry. We cannot allow the state of food of the Filipinos to be controlled by the rice cartel. And I would like to thank the President for this," he said. He added the PHP20-billion excess tariffs collection from rice importation is nothing compared to around "PHP68 billion worth of additional expense" shouldered by rice consumers. NFA rice. Meanwhile, de Mesa said the NFA Council has earlier approved a selling price of rice 20 percent lower than the prevailing market price. "So halimbawa, PHP50 ang na-monitor na price (example, if the monitored is PHP50) minus 20 percent. So that's minus PHP10," he said, suggesting it shall be around PHP40 per kilogram considering the current mar-

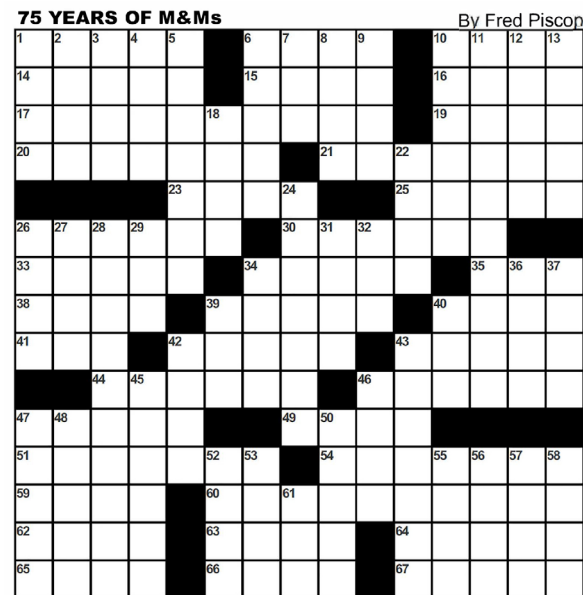
ket prices. The 20-percent markdown is applicable if the NFA has three to six months of stocks, he said. "So, kung more than six months naman at pwede pa, ay 30 percent lower naman than the prevailing market price na na-monitor ng PSA (Philippine Statistics Authority) (If it's more than six months and it is still feasible, it can be sold at around 30 percent lower than the prevailing market price monitored by the PSA)," de Mesa added. He said this may be a win-win solution considering that the NFA's buying, drying and milling costs range from PHP37/kg to PHP39/kg. The average farmgate price of palay (unhusked rice) is pegged at PHP26.9/kg, with other prices varying from PHP23/kg to PHP30/kg per area. As of Monday, the prevailing market price of local regular milled rice in Metro Manila is pegged at PHP50/kg, and PHP48 to PHP55/kg for local well-milled rice; while the imported rice is set at PHP48 to PHP51/kg and PHP51 to PHP54/kg for regular and well-milled rice, respectively. (PNA)

## From Page 1

PHP2.7 billion  
9. Philippine National Oil Company – PHP2.64 billion  
10. National Transmission Corporation – PHP2.16 billion. (PNA)

- Personalized
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ACROSS

- 1) Babka and baba
- 6) "Boola Boola" collegians
- 10) Cut out
- 14) Bird-related
- 15) Jaunty tune
- 16) Cathedral center
- 17) Vodka cocktail with lime garnish
- 19) Filmmaker Kazan
- 20) Not at sea
- 21) Fly's undoing
- 23) Salon 'do
- 25) Sorority members, once
- 26) Hose down
- 30) Tack on
- 33) Paperless birthday greeting
- 34) Creative output
- 35) Work on the fairway
- 38) Pizzazz
- 39) Stave off
- 40) Enjoy Spago, say
- 41) CNN founder Turner
- 42) Workshop gripper
- 43) Sweetly, on a score
- 44) Place to dock
- 46) Knocked flat
- 47) Diagonal line, to a bowler
- 49) Indoor ball brand
- 51) Not the entire distance
- 54) Most authentic
- 59) Cleveland's lake
- 60) Combination of paint, ink and collage, say
- 62) In the neighborhood
- 63) "Iliad," notably
- 64) Happening
- 65) Refuse to authorize
- 66) Straw home
- 67) Bum a bit

DOWN

- 1) Hunter's garb, for short
- 2) (ding-dong) " \_ calling"
- 3) Gene Simmons' rock band
- 4) Pricing word
- 5) Was nosy
- 6) Fudd of cartoons
- 7) Lucy of "Ally McBeal"
- 8) Pandora's boxful
- 9) Goulash, for example
- 10) Large pickup
- 11) Soda fountain order
- 12) Vine-covered
- 13) Goes like the dickens
- 18) Tiny songbird
- 22) Does perfectly
- 24) Mafia member
- 26) Delinquent's problem
- 27) Zoning unit
- 28) Robin's sweetie
- 29) Brave, Chief or Indian
- 31) Suspect, in cop lingo
- 32) Light touch
- 34) Lend! of tennis
- 36) In days past
- 37) Whacker's target
- 39) Boxer played by Will Smith
- 40) A Disney dwarf
- 42) Team on the Thames
- 43) Publicly bad-mouths
- 45) Main lane
- 46) Scott who sued for freedom
- 47) Fork over
- 48) "Gay" city
- 50) Standing upright
- 52) Revival cry
- 53) "Holy cow!"
- 55) "Chuck" star Zachary
- 56) Blissful spot
- 57) Turn state's evidence
- 58) \_ Modern (London gallery)
- 61) Greek conso-

CITY OF BACOR NEWS

## Feel the fiesta vibes every night with Bacoor Marching Band Association!

**Bacoor Town Fiesta 2024**  
"SERENATA ALAY KAY TATA IGE"  
PLAZA DE PADRE MARIANO GOMES  
MAY 5-11, 2024 | 7PM

**SERENATA SCHEDULE**

<b>MAY 5</b> PANAPAAAN REGIMENT 29 DRUM AND BUGLE CORP	<b>MAY 6</b> POWER 7 YOUTH BAND STA. CECILIA BAND 95 BAND INC.	<b>MAY 7</b> ALDOAN BAND VIRGEN DEL ROSARIO BAND BANDA MALIKSI UNO 45
<b>MAY 8</b> VICTORY BAND ST. MICHAEL SYMPHONIC BAND	<b>MAY 9</b> BANDA UNO ANAK ZAPOTE BAND INC. OUR LADY OF MEDIATRIX BAND	<b>MAY 10</b> D'ORIGINAL BAND OF PROF. RUBIO EL GOBERNADOR BAND ASSN.
<b>MAY 11</b> SAN LORENZO RUIZ BAND 2003 INC. BLACK NAZARENE BAND QUATRO FAMILY BAND BACOR		

**STR1KE**

**Ms. Jhulie Ann R. Guevarra-Santos**  
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENT CATHOLIC CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST, CATHEDRAL OF JESUS, THE GOOD SHEPHERD (ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL AND ALL ANGELS)

**Ma. Melisa Malabanan DeGuzman**  
PARISH OF ST. MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL BACOR CATHOLIC CHURCH

**Sis. Eugenia "Evelyn" Santonil Gaudier**  
JOLESA FILIPINA INDEPENDENT CATHEDRAL OF ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

Witness our community marching bands perform at Plaza de Padre Mariano Gomes for 'Serenata Alay Kay Tata Ige' from May 5 to 11, 2024, 7PM. This is FREE and OPEN to the public.

## ICYMI: The San Nicolas 1 Adonis Football Club Team visited the office of Mayor Strike B. Revilla after winning the Cavite Football Tournament

BACOR CITY – The San Nicolas 1 Adonis Football Club team paid a visit to Mayor Strike B. Revilla to celebrate their remarkable victory. The event was organized by Barangay San Nicolas 1.

The team, led by Team Owner Jojo Gamboa, Team Manager Manny Basallaje, and Coach Khensu Mercado, emerged as champions in the U-10 category of the Cavite Football Tournament held at Sangley Pt. Cavite City last April 27, 2024. Their exceptional skills and teamwork were on full display throughout the tournament.

During the courtesy call, Mayor Strike B. Revilla warmly welcomed the team and expressed his congratulations on their outstanding achievement.

He commended their dedication and hard work, which led to their success in the tournament. The mayor took pride in honoring the San Nicolas 1 Adonis Football Club team and

encouraged them to continue striving for excellence in their future endeavors.

The courtesy call, which took place at the Office of The Mayor on May 6, 2024, provided a platform to showcase the talent and sportsmanship of young athletes in Bacoor City. The team's victory serves as an inspiration to aspiring football players and highlights the community's support for sports development.

Last week's solution:



## GC's health program held at General Trias, Cvaite



More than 400 Gentriseños benefit from the PGC's health program. On May 2, 2024, a medical and dental mission took place in Barangay San Francisco, General Trias City serving more than 400 beneficiaries. The activity organized by the provincial government of Cavite through the Office of the Provincial Governor in partnership with the Office of the Provincial Health Officer and the local government of Gen. Trias City addressed the healthcare needs of residents, especially medical and dental care.

The medical team, comprising doctors, nurses, and support staff, offered a wide range of services including medical check-ups, consultations, and the provision of prescribed medications. For dental care, services such as dental check-ups, tooth extractions, and oral health education were provided, addressing various dental concerns and promoting preventive measures for oral hygiene.

Board Members Morit Sison and Kerby Salazar, some local officials and community leaders expressed their gratitude to everyone involved in making the mission a success. Likewise, they commended the collaborative efforts and reaffirmed the city's commitment to promoting health and wellness initiatives for its residents. Barangay Captain Clodualdo Mendoza also extended his appreciation to the organizers and volunteers for their dedication and hard work in serving the community.

The health event was a testament to the collaborative efforts of the local government, healthcare providers, and volunteers who worked tirelessly to ensure the success of the mission. / **Cavite PIO**

## PGC's Ugnayan sa Barangay program brings hope and cheer to Cavite communities.

Hundreds of residents across different municipalities and localities in Cavite experienced a renewed sense of hope and happiness as Governor Jonvic Remulla spearheaded another series of successful round of Ugnayan sa Barangay Program for the month April 2024.

Joined by Vice Governor Athena Bryana Tolentino, Cavite Board Members, Congressmen, mayors, councilors, and enthusiastic constituents, the event provided a platform for meaningful

interaction and dialogue. Residents were given the opportunity to voice their concerns, fostering a sense of community empowerment and solidarity. Through the collaborative effort, the provincial government reaffirmed its commitment to addressing the needs of Cavite's diverse communities and promoting the overall welfare of its residents. / **Cavite PIO**



## Medical and Dental Mission Benefits 358 Residents of Tanza, Cavite



The provincial government of Cavite organized a commendable medical and dental mission on April 30, 2024, in Brgy. Capipisa, Tanza, Cavite, benefiting 338 individuals.

The event received support from 7th District Board Members Francisco Gabriel "Abeng" Remulla and Raymundo Del Rosario. Esteemed officials including Vice Mayor Archangelo "SM" Matro, Councilor Maricel del Rosario Morales, ABC President Peter Aricayos, SK Federation President Patrick Bocalan, Capipisa SK President Jaira Caringal, and Punong Barangay Chairperson Tony Matro, actively participated.

The success of the program was attributed to the collaborative efforts of medical and dental practitioners from GEAMH, RHU Tanza, OPG's medical mission team, and local officials, including BHWs and staff. This joint endeavor underscores the commitment to enhancing healthcare accessibility and promoting community well-being in Tanza, Cavite. / **Cavite PIO**



With its commitment towards a healthier and Malaria-free province, the Office of the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) marked the Provincial Celebration of World Malaria Day on April 25, 2024 at the Cavite Collaboration Center for Public Health, Trece Martires City. The event, with the theme "Advancing Health Equity, Gender Equality and Human Rights in the Fight Against Malaria", was attended by representatives from different health units in Cavite.

The short program commenced with Dr. Armand Dotollo, Infectious Diseases head, welcoming the participants and instilling in their minds the importance of collective responsibility and action in safeguarding human health and eliminating Malaria disease and its life-threatening impacts. More so, Dr. Dotollo stated that the celebration was an opportunity to see the progress in addressing this global burden.

Likewise, talks of Ms. Michelle Malawig from DOH - Regional Office IV-A and Mr. Raffy Macdonald from Cavite OPHO underscored the strategies, preventive measures, and prompt response to Malaria. The Online Malaria Information System (OLMIS II) and 1-3-5 Strategy are the practices implemented for the surveillance of, and guidelines in Malaria elimination.

Event's highlights were the Pledge of Commitment, through which the participants dedicated themselves to meaningful contribution in mitigating the threat of the disease; and the awarding of certificate for the efforts, hard work, and support of the agencies to malaria control.

The province of Cavite was declared Malaria-free in 2005, and continues to take action in sustaining its status until the future generations. / **Cavite PIO**

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