

GO NEGOSYO PILOTS YOUTH ENTRE-
PRENEURSHIP MENTORING IN
MANILA PUBLIC SCHOOL



Hundreds of students from the Rajah Soliman Science and Technology High School give the thumbs-up with Go Negosyo founder Joey Concepcion and entrepreneurship mentors at the pilot of the in-school Youthpreneurship event at the school's campus in San Nicolas, Manila last December 13, 2023. The event is part of Go Negosyo's partnership with the Department of Education to promote entrepreneurship among the Filipino youth.

Senior High School students from a public school in Manila became the first to benefit from the pilot run of Youthpreneur, Go Negosyo's joint project with the Department of Education to teach entrepreneurship among young Filipinos.

More than 450 students from the Rajah Soliman Science and Technology High School participated in the half-day program last December 13, 2023 at its campus in San Nicolas, Manila. The students are under the Academic and the TVM (Technical-Vocational-Livelihood) tracks of the DepEd's K to 12 Basic Education Program. The event was facilitated by the DepEd's Bureau of Curriculum Development, and is designed to promote an entrepreneurial mindset among the youth and build skills that complement the entrepreneurial aspect of the Senior High School curriculum.

"We want to help the students in these schools succeed in life," said Go Negosyo founder Joey Concepcion. In his message to the students, Concepcion said that having an entrepreneurial mindset is possible both as an employee and an employer. "Negosyo is one way, but it is not the only way," he said.

He encouraged the students to do their best in school and learn the basics by first becoming employees before trying their hands at business. "Learn from your employer and then eventually find that idea that matches your skill; then you can start your own business," he said.

"For those who are not able to reach college, it is not the end of your journey," he told the students. "Strive for what you want to be. Determine if you have the skill to fulfill that dream, and make sure that your training will lead you to it," he told the students.

For ABM student Cedrix Justin Tan, attending Youthpreneur opened his mind to the "possibilities and outcomes ng real world." As students, he said, their lack of experience and exposure may lead them to believe that putting up a business is easy. "As we get exposed to people na merong experiences knowledge and credibility, mas na-o-open ang perception naming sa reality ng mundo," he said.

For his part, Rajah Soliman school principal Raffy Caballes thanked the DepEd and Go Negosyo, saying that the Youthpreneur program aligns with the vision of the Senior High School program and equips the students to transform their lives through the inspiration and mentoring of the speakers who were brought to the school by Go Negosyo.

The first half of the Youthpreneur program was a plenary session, starting with a talk by author and entrepreneurship consultant Henry Tenedero on how to have an entrepreneurship mindset. Also on hand to speak to the students was Shawarma Shack CEO Walther Buenavista, on how he founded and grew the successful food business. Later, entrepreneurs and content creators Ariella Diaz and Christine Jacob shared how they use social media for business. They also related how their academic backgrounds did not determine their future success as entrepreneurs, and how they instead capitalized on their skills to find their own niche markets.

In the second half of the program, Concepcion led entrepreneurship mentors and successful businessmen in directly mentoring the students. Volunteering their time to speak to the students were entrepreneurs Arnold De Guzman and Jordan Patente, franchise guru Butz Bartolome, Yovel East President James Amparo, and veteran entrepreneurship mentor Renea Tan.

This is the first in-school Youthpreneur event of Go Negosyo, following the success of its free mall-based mentoring event for students at the SM City Fairview in Quezon City. Youthpreneur is part of Go Negosyo's Memorandum of Agreement with the DepEd, which was signed last November to promote entrepreneurship, build skills through mentorship, increase financial literacy, raise agricultural awareness, cultivate entrepreneurial skills in agriculture, and facilitate industry connections for mentorship.



Go Negosyo founder Joey Concepcion personally mentors Senior High students from the Rajah Soliman Science and Technology High School during the Youthpreneur event at the school's campus in San Nicolas, Manila last December 13, 2023. With him is Go Negosyo Senior Adviser Engr. Merly Cruz.

PH AGRI COMPANIES EXPLORE
PARTNERSHIPS WITH ISRAEL AGRI GIANT



One of Israel's largest agriculture companies met with several Philippine agriculture companies to explore possible partnerships, specifically on agriculture technology. Israel's Innovative Agro Industry (IAI) met with companies who are part of the Kapatid Angat Lahat sa Agri Program (KALAP) of Go Negosyo, led by founder Joey Concepcion.

The group from Israel was led by Israel's Ambassador to the Philippines H.E. Ambassador Ilan Fluss, and IAI CEO LiorCrystal. The company specializes in agricultural technologies for rural development, including water, energy, telecom, health, and construction. It is an affiliate of the LR Group, which has undertaken over 100 projects worldwide and has over US\$2.5 billion in capital investments in sustainable project development.

"This is about helping MSMEs, and among the MSMEs, the biggest challenge is really with those in agriculture," said Concepcion. "We are pushing for access to technology and access to markets," he said, adding that unless agricultural production in the country achieves scale, it would be difficult to entice banks to lend to small farmers. "It is the dilemma that we face. Scale is important, and how to achieve scale is the challenge," he said.

Ambassador Fluss said that the Philippines "is a country whose potential in agriculture is unbelievable." He also noted the need for developing strong local partnerships, and that the Philippines might do much better in agriculture than Israel did because of its tropical climate. Despite its challenging geography, Israel has used science to grow a thriving agricultural sector, making it a global leader in agricultural technologies and a significant exporter of fresh produce. "If you do it scientifically, if you do it commercially, [Philippine agriculture] has the potential to succeed big-time," said Fluss.

Helping farmers achieve scale is one of the solutions put forward by KALAP, which was created to address challenges in making agriculture viable in the Philippines by bringing sustainable and inclusive business models to micro farmers, and forging partnerships and collaborations between government and the private sector.

IAI's core strength, said Lior, is in bringing in Israeli technologies and implementing these in developing countries. He added that beyond providing technologies and best practices, it is looking at the Philippines as a long-term investment and already has a local project team in place in the country. "Our strategy in the Philippines is also to come in as equity partners and invest in places where we believe would make sense. We put our money where our mouth is," he said. Since before the pandemic, IAI has set up a strategic partnership with a local company in dairy farming and greenhouse production.

In the meeting were top executives of the big-brother companies participating in KALAP, namely Toby Gatchalian of Metro Pacific Agroventures, James Amparo of Yovel East, Christian Moeller of Lionheart Farms, Francisco Dizon of Dizon Farms, Kenner Foods's Simon Bakker, Mat Maderazo of Planters Products, and Jojo Ocol of Agrabah, as well as Go Negosyo Senior Advisers Engr. Merly Cruz and Dr. William Dar.

Among the areas put forward for possible collaborations were dairy production; fertigation, distilling systems, and other technologies for high-value crops and commodities such as rice, corn, cutflowers, cacao, seaweed, and fruits and vegetables; water management; solar-powered desalination technologies; and regenerative farming, as well as sustainable and inclusive business models in the agriculture sector.

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PHILIPPINES WOOS JAPAN,
ASEAN INVESTMENTS IN
RENEWABLE ENERGY

President Marcos reported yesterday P14.5 billion in indicated investments following the Department of Trade and Industry-led business event during the Asean-Japan Commemorative Summit in Tokyo. Under the new signed agreements and pledges updates, trade officials said those investment commitments could generate a total of 15,750 job opportunities.

TOKYO — Now open to full foreign ownership, the renewable energy sector is a ripe for picking as a viable investment, President Marcos said yesterday as he invited Japan and members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to give it a try, along with "other emerging technologies."

In a speech at the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC) leaders' meeting here, Marcos said promoting the use of clean energy is important in ensuring a sustainable future. He added that the Philippines needs partnerships as it transitions towards the use of sustainable, just, affordable and inclusive energy.

"I would like to invite our AZEC partners, including Japan, to invest not only in the Philippine renewable energy industry, but also in other emerging technologies and introduce energy efficiency and conservation measures," the President said.

ADVERTISING

ASEAN member-countries, Japan and Australia comprise AZEC. Marcos enumerated policies that seek to promote the renewable energy sector, including tax incentives and the lifting of foreign ownership limits.

The Philippines has also set in place a framework for building a robust offshore wind industry, he added.

"Investors in the Philippines can also now avail of the simplified rules for building renewable energy facilities and may also avail of additional incentives such as income tax holidays and duty-free importation of capital equipment," the Chief Executive said.

Marcos said the first wind farms in Southeast



OVER 82,000 DISPLACED IN
MINDANAO DUE TO 'KABAYAN'
— NDRRMC

PRESIDENT MARCOS
UPSET BUT WON'T
SEEK CHINA
ENVOY'S RECALL

PRESIDENT MARCOS ON
2024 BUDGET: SECRET
FUND ISSUE ALREADY
SETTLED



TRANSPORT
STRIKERS MULL
CHRISTMAS
CAMPOUT AT
MALACAÑANG



PBBM JOINS AZEC
IN PUSHING FOR
DECARBONIZATION
TO COMBAT
CLIMATE CHANGE

Navigating the Economic Storm: Unpacking the Growing Inflation in the Philippines

In recent months, the Philippines has found itself grappling with an economic challenge that has been a cause for concern among citizens and policymakers alike—growing inflation. As prices of goods and services continue to surge, the Filipino people are left to navigate the complex web of economic repercussions. This editorial aims to shed light on the factors contributing to the inflationary pressures, assess the impacts on various sectors, and explore potential strategies to mitigate the adverse effects.

Factors Driving Inflation: Several factors contribute to the rising inflation in the Philippines, creating a perfect storm that challenges the nation's economic stability. Key drivers include:

- Supply Chain Disruptions:** The global supply chain disruptions triggered by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic have caused shortages and increased production costs, directly impacting the prices of imported goods.

- Rising Oil Prices:** The surge in global oil prices has a cascading effect on transportation costs and the prices of goods and services. As the Philippines heavily relies on oil imports, any increase in global oil prices amplifies domestic inflationary pressures.

- Weakened Peso:** The depreciation of the Philippine Peso against major currencies contributes to the higher costs of imported

goods, as businesses need more pesos to purchase the same quantity of foreign currency.

Pandemic-induced Labor Market Challenges: The disruptions caused by the pandemic have led to labor market challenges, affecting incomes and contributing to reduced consumer spending power.

Impacts on Various Sectors: The growing inflationary pressures reverberate across various sectors, impacting both businesses and households:

- Consumer Burden:** Everyday essentials such as food, fuel, and utilities become more expensive, placing a heavy burden on the average Filipino household's budget.

Business Challenges: Rising input costs for businesses squeeze profit margins, leading to potential challenges such as reduced investment, job cuts, and a slowdown in economic growth.

Government Response: The government faces the dual challenge of addressing inflation while ensuring social welfare programs remain effective. Balancing fiscal and monetary policies becomes crucial to stabilizing the economy.

Mitigation Strategies: Addressing inflation requires a multi-faceted approach that combines short-term measures with long-term structural reforms:

Monetary Policy Adjust-

ments: The Central Bank may consider adjusting interest rates to manage inflation. However, this must be done cautiously to avoid negatively impacting economic growth.

Supply Chain Resilience: Enhancing the resilience of supply chains through diversification and innovation can help mitigate the impact of global disruptions.

Social Safety Nets: Strengthening social safety nets, such as targeted subsidies for vulnerable populations, can help cushion the impact on those most affected by rising prices.

Investment in Agriculture: Addressing food security concerns by investing in agricultural productivity and supply chain efficiency can help reduce reliance on imported goods.

Conclusion: The growing inflation in the Philippines demands a coordinated and strategic response from policymakers, businesses, and citizens alike. By understanding the root causes and implementing a comprehensive set of measures, the nation can navigate these economic challenges and emerge with a more resilient and stable economy. As the Philippines grapples with the complexities of inflation, unity and proactive measures will be the key to ensuring a sustainable and prosperous future for all. -ANG KABITENYA

PHILIPPINES...

Asia were built in Ilocos Sur province during his term as governor.

He revealed that the Philippines seeks to raise the renewable energy share in its power generation mix to 35 percent in 2030 and to 50 percent in 2040. This would amount to about 3.3 billion tons of avoided greenhouse gas emissions over the 2023-2050 planning horizon, almost doubling the country's targeted emission reduction from the business-as-usual for the same period, Marcos added.

Marcos also thanked Japan for its interest in partnering with the Philippines for the creation of a roadmap for energy transition. "I hope that this collaboration will pave the way for the creation and realization of the AZEC Center, which I have been informed is currently being organized," he added.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida affirmed the importance of achieving a common goal of "net-zero emissions through various pathways" and of a triple breakthrough of simultaneously achieving "de-carbonization, economic growth and energy security."

He also assured AZEC members that Japan would continue to contribute to achieving de-carbonization in Asia.

Joint statement

At the same meeting, leaders of the AZEC countries issued a joint statement highlighting their commitment to adopt various measures toward de-carboniza-

tion to address climate change. They vowed to advance cooperation toward carbon neutrality and net zero emission to contain the increase in the global average temperature to well below two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

The AZEC leaders also agreed to promote policy support and collaboration in tangible projects through tailored approach towards de-carbonization with the use of various technologies such as heat pumps, scaling up renewable energy, energy storage, regional inter-connectivity and improving grid flexibility, as well as the use of nuclear energy, including small modular and other advanced reactors.

They also committed to foster public-private partnerships to fast-track energy transitions through the creation of specific energy transition projects.

During Marcos' visit here, the Philippines signed nine business deals worth P14 billion, a development that officials said reflected investors' interest in the Philippines, officials said.

The agreements, inked during a business roundtable meeting yesterday, involved mutual cooperation in sectors like infrastructure, manufacturing and business process outsourcing.

"I think the number that was given to us for today, just for those pledges...it was nine companies but to the value of P14 billion. But some of these are exten-

PASKONG TERNOCON 2023 AT SM AURA

A grand celebration of Pinoy culture and couture this Christmas

tural forms, while Mobo's was a celebration of draping, unabated maximalism, color, and folk aesthetics.



"Masaya," she smiled as she looked around the new SCRHU. "Dati, nakakapaghatid kami ng serbisyo kahit hindi conducive to working ang lugar. Kaya't itong renovation mas magiging fulfilled kami dahil maganda 'yung environment na aming gagalawan. Mas mapapaigting pa namin ang pagsisilbi namin sa komunidad."

"Iba kasi pag maganda ang surroundings mo. Minsan, 'yun lang ay sapat na para gumaan ang pakiramdam mo. Ngayong comfortable na ang center, mae-enhance na ang communication namin. Sa tulong ng organized at good environment, maipaliwanag ng mabuti at magagawa kung ano ang nararapat na treatment para sa pasyente," she added.



(L-R): Acclaimed fashion designer Lesley Mobo, Bench founder Ben Chan, Cultural Center of the Philippines Vice Chairperson Margie Moran-Florendo, First Lady Liza Araneta-Marcos, SM Investments Vice Chairperson Tessie Sy-Coson, Taguig City Mayor Lani Cayetano, SM Supermalls President Steven Tan, and celebrated fashion designer Joey Samson



(L-R, front): Acclaimed fashion designer Lesley Mobo, SM Supermalls President Steven Tan, and celebrated fashion designer Joey Samson, accompanied by models Miss Universe Philippines 2023 Michelle Dee (left, back) and actress Janine Gutierrez (right, back)

Set against the backdrop of SM Aura's exquisite Filipiniana-themed Christmas centerpiece, the runway showcased the impeccable technique and artistry of Samson and Mobo, as well as the range and versatility of the Philippine terno. Samson's collection showcased masterful minimalism and tailored, architec-

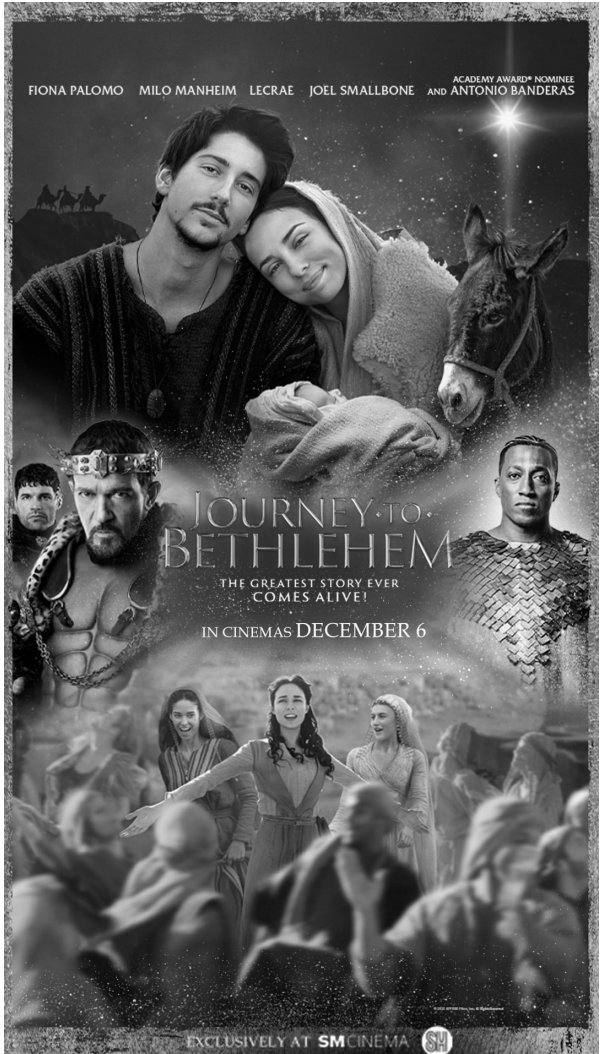
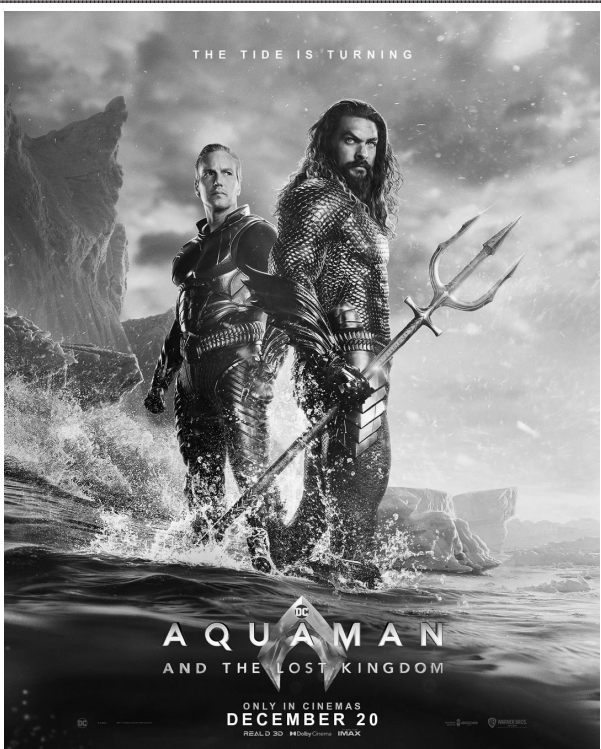
But more than a fashion spectacle, Paskong TernoCon served as a platform for inclusivity, making the best of Philippine design more accessible to a wider audience.

"The event epitomizes SM Supermalls' commitment to championing Filipino culture and artistry, and provides a platform to bring this closer to more people through our malls", said SM Supermalls' President Steven Tan. "The exquisite designs by Lesley Mobo and Joey Samson beautifully represent our rich cultural traditions and Filipino creativity, and SM is honored to have been part of this trailblazing project".

Paskong TernoCon's glittering front rows comprised some of the biggest names from Philippine fashion, film, culture, business, and society – who all came out to support and celebrate Pinoy culture and fashion. Gracing the occasion were First Lady Liza Araneta-Marcos, Taguig City Mayor Lani Cayetano, SM Investments Corporation Chairperson Tessie Sy-Coson, Bench founder Ben Chan, Cultural Center of the Philippines Vice Chairperson Margie Moran-Florendo, and SM Supermalls' President Steven Tan. Likewise, the runway featured actors Janine Gutierrez and David Licaucó, Miss Universe Philippines 2013 Ara Arida, model-photographer Jo Ann Bitagcol, and Michelle Dee in her first public appearance after the Miss Universe pageant.



Paskong TernoCon 2023 is a celebration of the Filipino spirit, artistry, and creativity that define the country's vibrant culture. The event was also made possible by collaborators of the two featured designers. For Joey Samson: Lakat for the footwear and Unang Panahon for the jewelry. For Lesley Mobo: Ash & Muff and Harold & Harry for the earrings, and Adante Leyesa for the bags.



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EMBRACING THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT WITH OPEN ARMS

SM group spreads social good with 'Christmas Cheers'

SM Foundation recently concluded its two-day medical mission in Leyte, bringing essential healthcare services to nearly 1,800 beneficiaries.

The missions, held at Alang-Alang and Tanuan, aimed to address the medical needs of the underserved population and underscored SM Foundation's dedication to making healthcare accessible to all.

The beneficiaries received a range of services, from basic check-ups and consultations for various health concerns to free blood tests, medicines, and vitamins.



SM employee-volunteers from SM CDO Downtown with some of the beneficiaries of Christmas Cheers

The season of giving is within our midst. As the world embraces the spirit of Christmas with open arms, SM group employees stepped out of the holiday rush and into the shoes of volunteers, spreading social good through the Christmas Cheers gift-giving initiative.

Spearheaded by SM Foundation and SM Supermalls, the program stood as a testament to the dedication of volunteers to create meaningful contributions and build memories with communities, one act of kindness at a time.

The spirit of Christmas is synonymous with generosity and the joy of giving, and for one individual in Cagayan de Oro, Philippines, this sentiment came to life through their involvement in the Christmas Cheers distribution volunteer program. In a recent interview, a member of the volunteer team shared insights into their motivations, experiences, and the profound impact they witnessed during the holiday season.

A manifestation of love, kindness

For Carl Maglangit, SM CDO Downtown's Public Relations Manager, the motivation to join the Christmas Cheers stemmed from a deep-seated belief in Filipino generous culture and how it has a magical way of spreading joy and building a supportive society.

Upon hearing about the opportunity to give back, he promptly embraced the role of coordinating and organizing the program for the community.

"I have always been inspired to someday share my blessings with the community. Now, it has happened and the experience felt magical for me. It taught me the value of generosity and that giving is a manifestation of love and kindness. I am now more empowered in community giving, and with this passion, I can influence other people to do the same," Carl said.

As the gift-giving activity unfolded, he knew that the beauty of it would resonate with him beyond the holiday season, especially after hearing a message from one of the beneficiaries, PWD and Christmas Cheers recipient Liza Corpuz.



PWD members of the Cagayan de Oro community and their loved ones smile as they receive Christmas Cheers packs from SM group.

Carl narrated: "She felt honored that their sector was chosen as one of the recipients of this program and has gotten the impression that they are acknowledged in the community as equally essential citizens. Previously, she shared that they felt ignored and forgotten and felt terrible that they lacked the opportunity to receive help. Since last year, the Christmas Cheers program has uplifted their spirit to celebrate a merrier yuletide this year. The food packs make one person happy, and the entire family will."

At the end of the event, Carl saw the strong convergence of the season of giving and Filipino generosity: "The Filipino value of generosity has truly been lived through this activity. I am a firm believer that the true meaning of Christmas is giving. In this season, we will continue to aim to serve our community and give the message of how sharing happiness can uplift each other despite the many challenges we encounter."



PWD and Christmas Cheers recipient Liza Corpuz expresses her gratitude to the SM group, saying the initiative uplifted their spirits when they felt ignored and forgotten.

Happily spreading cheers

Another SM volunteer who keeps bayanihan alive is Ron Ryan Malitig, an Operation Assistant at SM City Calamba. Like Carl, it was his first time volunteering to help make Christmas Cheers a memorable experience for the beneficiaries. For him, it's definitely not the last.



Having been with the mall for just a month, Ron Ryan discovered the opportunity through the mall's communication channels. With a burning desire to extend a helping hand, he joined.

"Nothing beats the feeling of knowing that everyone in the community gets to celebrate Christmas with a smile on their faces and hearts. I know that volunteering would allow me to do just that—share my skills and bring genuine happiness to the community we happily serve," he said.

As the spirit of giving takes center stage, SM group's employee-volunteers embody the real meaning of celebrating Christmas: giving to others for a kinder, stronger community.

Gift....

TOKYO — As he prepares to sign the P5.768-trillion budget program tomorrow, President Marcos yesterday declared as a "settled issue" the controversy over the aborted inclusion of P650-million confidential funds in the 2024 budgets of the Office of Vice President Sara Duterte and the education department which she heads.

Speaking to reporters who covered his visit here, Marcos said he was "fairly comfortable" with the way the budget has turned out, even as he acknowledged that "a little work" has to be done to make sure that the items in the spending plan would be funded.

"Yes, I think we are scheduled for Wednesday," the President said.

"That was actually the initiative of the Vice President," he said when asked about the confidential fund issue that observers said had soured his relationship with Duterte and her supporters.

"I'm not actually talking about the confidential funds and to not insist that they have such confidential funds. So I think as far as I'm concerned, it is a settled issue," he pointed out. Speaker Martin Romualdez also said the President is set to sign the budget program tomorrow.

"The budget I think...very, very closely follows what our original NEP (National Expenditure Program) was... There is still a gap, a differential between the appropriated funds and the funds we have collected thus far. There is a certain amount that we have extra and we have to collect," he added.

Congress has realigned the combined P650-million confidential funds of the OVP and the DepEd, fueling rumors that there is a rift between Duterte and some allies of Marcos.

Duterte, who ran alongside Marcos in the Uniteam ticket during the 2022 elections, has withdrawn her request for the funds. The secret funds were instead allocated to agencies dealing with security threats in the South China Sea.

While the realignment increased the funding for efforts to secure the Philippines'

maritime interests, Marcos admitted that the Philippines' defense spending remains incomparable with that of China, which is claiming practically the entire strategic waterway.

"Even if we go up to the desired level of spending on defense of up to two percent of GDP (gross domestic product), we will still be very not comparative in terms of actual military force to the Chinese. That is obvious to everyone," Marcos, also the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, said.

"So that's not the only side to the problem. We have to continue to ally ourselves with as many countries around the world, especially in Asia and the Indo-Pacific area (and) around the world... being able to speak with a unified voice is essential and that will only come with strong coalitions among different countries," he added.

Romualdez also told Palace reporters covering the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit in Tokyo that the budget program is ready for signing, possibly tomorrow. "It's ready for signing. In fact, he could have signed it before he left (for Tokyo)," Romualdez said, referring to the bicameral conference committee-approved General Appropriations Act of 2024 embodying the P5.768-trillion national budget for next year. "I think there are still some printings that have to be done," the House leader said. The administration stalwart, a first cousin of Marcos, also expressed belief — when asked by reporters — that no provisions in the new budget program would be altered or vetoed.

"He's not stating any. We're just complying with the parameters (on the budget) and we're working closely with the Office of the President," he said.

Romualdez also confirmed that, as agreed upon by both houses of Congress, no confidential and intelligence funds had been allocated to the Office of Vice President and the DepEd.

/PHILSTAR.COM

PBBM...

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. joined other leaders comprising the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC) on Monday in making a commitment to adopt various measures toward decarbonization to address climate change, a common global challenge.

In the AZEC Leaders' Joint Statement released in Tokyo, they pledged to advance cooperation toward carbon neutrality and net zero emission with the end goal of maintaining the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

Recognizing Asia, particularly the ASEAN region, as the engine of the global economy that requires big energy demand, the leaders agreed to promote decarbonization towards carbon neutrality while also achieving economic growth.

"We welcome the outcome of the first Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC) Ministerial Meeting held in March 2023 in Tokyo, which set up these common understanding among partners countries," the leaders said in the joint statement, adding that they will promote cooperation through the AZEC platform.

The leaders also agreed to promote policy support and collaboration in tangible projects through tailored approach towards decarbonization with the use of various technologies such as heat pumps, scaling up renewable energy, energy storage, regional interconnectivity and improving grid flexibility, as well as the use of nuclear energy, including small modular and other advanced reactors.

Other means include the use of hydrogen and its derivatives, electrolyzer technology, biomass and carbon capture utilization and storage (CCUS) across sectors and industry, recycling of common minerals while promoting electrification and fueling switching, and the use of liquefied natural gas (LNG).

Reliable renewable-based micro-grids will also be deployed to remote islands and perovskite solar cells, and offshore wind power will also part of the mix, in addition to the adoption of technologies such as electric vehicles (EVs), biofuels and hydrogen and its derivatives.

The leaders also agreed to foster public-private partnerships (PPPs) and co-operation among private sectors to accelerate energy transitions through the creation of specific energy transition projects.

"In this regard, we welcome activities to promote public-private cooperation in partner countries such as those in AZEC Advocacy Group, AZEC/GX Promotion Working Team in Vietnam, AZEC Japan-Indonesia Joint Task Force in Indonesia and Cleaner Energy Future Initiative for ASEAN," the leaders said in the joint statement.

The AZEC community also affirmed the importance of adequate financing to support the acceleration of energy transitions in the region, highlighting the necessity for transition finance as a financial instrument to achieve whole-of-economy transition in the energy sector.

At the same time, they also recognized the importance of promotion and implementation of high integrity carbon markets and crediting schemes such as through collaboration models, but not limited to the Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM). The leaders also welcomed collaboration with all other countries within and beyond Asia that wish to support the region's energy transition and energy security, recognizing the importance of reaching out to countries through existing bilateral frameworks.

President Marcos made a separate commitment on Monday to promote and shift to clean energy during the AZEC Leaders' Meeting in Tokyo, as he invited AZEC Partners to invest in the renewable energy industry and emerging technologies in the Philippines, and introduce energy efficiency and conservation measures in the country.

In his statement, the President said that the Philippines is joining its AZEC Partners in recognizing the need to accelerate a clean, sustainable, just, affordable and inclusive energy transition towards carbon neutrality, or net-zero emissions. AZEC is a platform consisting of Asian countries that promotes the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emission in Asia while supporting a sound economic growth in the region. PND

Over....

MANILA, Philippines — Over 82,000 people were displaced after cyclone Kabayan struck Mindanao, causing heavy rain and triggering flooding, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council reported Tuesday. Of the 82,703 individuals who fled their homes, around 67,105 sought refuge in evacuation centers in Northern Mindanao, Davao region, and CARAGA.

According to the NDRRMC, about 22,000 were pre-emptively evacuated in Central Visayas, Eastern Visayas, Northern Mindanao, Davao region, and CARAGA.

The disaster agency stated that Kabayan resulted in at least one person being injured, while an individual from the Davao region was reported missing.

Kabayan dissipated into a low pressure area as it crossed the rugged terrain of Mindanao after making landfall in Davao Oriental Monday morning.

But state weather bureau PAGASA said Tuesday the threat of flash floods and landslides remains in Visayas Mindanao, MIMAROPA, Bicol region, Quezon province, and Aurora due to rain brought by the LPA and the shear line.

The government has so far allocated P92,676 in assistance to support affected residents.

The Philippines has so far experienced fewer storms in 2023 than in any of the past 25 years. Only 11 cyclones have hit or come close to the Philippines so far this year, a significant drop from the average of 20. /PHILSTAR.COM

TRANSPORT....

MANILA, Philippines — Striking drivers and operators are mulling to spend Christmas in front of Malacañang amid the Dec. 31 deadline set by the government for the phaseout of the traditional jeepneys, transport group Manibela president Mar Valbuena said.

"The transport strike will go on this week and it is possible that it will be extended even after Christmas. We are contemplating to march toward Malacañang to spend our Christmas there while our President is eating delicious ham. The government gives us different challenges involving our source of livelihood," he said.

Members of Manibela started the two-week transport strike on Monday as the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) officially issued an order revoking the franchises of units that do not comply with the consolidation requirement.

Valbuena said other transport groups and cooperatives are expected to join the strike. "Even cooperatives who were forced to consolidate will join our transport strike," Valbuena said.

At the same time, Valbuena criticized the Department of Transportation and the LTFRB for using President Marcos in forcing the drivers and operators to join the consolidation. He also criticized Marcos for his failure to fulfill his campaign promises.

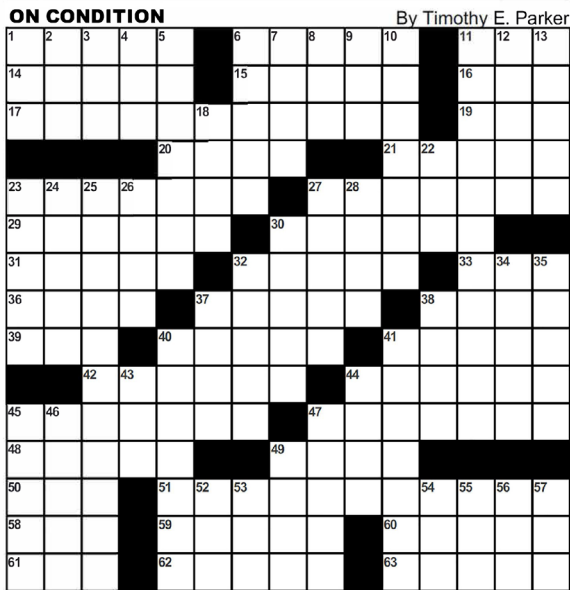
"How are the promises of the President to the majority who voted for him? We want to hear a concrete solution instead of pride," Valbuena said.

"Here in the NCR, more or less 50,000 jeepneys will be affected. It has a big impact as passengers are already affected even if it is only a 10 percent reduction of jeepneys," he noted.

Under Memorandum Circular 2023-051, all provisional authorities issued to individual operators and for routes without consolidated transport service entities (TSE) will be deemed revoked by Jan. 1, 2024.

The LTFRB Board signed the MC on Dec. 14, the first day of the transport strike of Pagkakaisa ng mga Samahan ng Tsuper at Operator Nationwide. /PHILSTAR.COM

CROSSWORD



freedailycrosswords.com

ACROSS

- 1) Flat-bottomed harbor boats
- 6) It's a matter of taste
- 11) Parking place
- 14) Chicago landing spot
- 15) Alistair or Sam
- 16) Words said before a pastor
- 17) Drives recklessly ...
- 19)Mauna_
- 20) Cursed
- 21) Scenic walking paths
- 23) Opposite of a crooner
- 26) Far-off
- 27) Elevates
- 28) Beyond ordinary understanding
- 29) Inquire
- 30) Evil spirit
- 32) Casino bandits?
- 3) Average grades
- 37) Traditional bodies of knowledge
- 39) Blockhead
- 40) Creme de la creme
- 42) Comes up short
- 44) "Much_ About Nothing"
- 45) "The Wizard of Oz" character
- 4) 7) Like the nervous system
- 49) Any person
- 51) Bounce on one's knee, as a baby
- 52) Gathered, as cattle
- 53) Fund one can't touch?
- 55) Country hotel
- 56) Repeat what one hears ...
- 61) To and_
- 62) Continent separator
- 63) Moon-related
- 64) In great shape
- 65) Oktoberfest tune
- 66) About to weep

DOWN

- 1) Costa del
- 2) "Tai" follower
- 3) Common deciduous tree
- 4) Takes from by force
- 5) Sushi wrap
- 6) Surgery evidence
- 7) Top-notch
- 8) Finger food of the islands
- 9) Giraffe relatives
- 10) Hires different actors
- 11) Runs from a battle ...
- 12) Classic movie theater name
- 13) Breakfast staple
- 18) Tasty crumb
- 22) Artificial leg?
- 23) Crutch, essentially
- 24) Artist's stand
- 25) A critic's job is to critique ...
- 26) Force units
- 28) Definitely not a rocket scientist
- 31) Grinder in the back
- 33) Kind of wave
- 34) Lifted, so to speak
- 36) Confined to a pig pen
- 38) Parody
- 41) Surround completely
- 43) Chefs sprinkle, sometimes
- 46) Doc
- 48) "That's a lie!"
- 49) Slight smell
- 50) Artist Matisse
- 53) Heavy, durable furniture wood
- 54)_ good race (competed well)
- 57) Kenan's Nickelodeon co-star
- 58) Biochemistry abbr.
- 59) Propel on water, in a way
- 60) "Don't give up!"

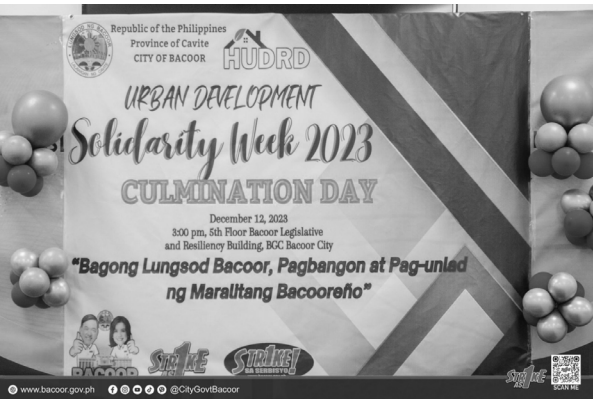
CITY OF BACOOR NEWS

Home Awards 2023 SGLG Seal of Good Local Governance National Awarding Ceremony



It is a joyous day for the people of Bacoor as Mayor Strike B. Revilla, Vice Mayor Rowena Bautista Mendiola, and the members of the Sangguniang Panglungsod proudly received the SGLG Award for the year 2023. This esteemed event, organized by the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), aims to recognize and honor local governments that have demonstrated excellence and good governance in their communities. The ceremony was led by Atty. Benjamin C. Abalos Jr., Secretary of the DILG and Chairman of the Commission on Good Local Governance (CGLG), together with Mr. Reginaldo Revilla, CLGO Officer of DILG Bacoor. Representatives from various local governments across different provinces, cities, and municipalities, who also received the SGLG award, were present at the ceremony. The objective of the event was for Bacoor to receive its 7th consecutive award, spanning from the House Keeping category to the prestigious Seal of Good Local Governance. This remarkable achievement sets Bacoor apart as the sole recipient of such recognition in the entire province of Cavite since the time of Secretary Jessie Robrero. The ceremony took place at the Fiesta Pavilion of The Manila Hotel on December 14, 2023. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to the City of Bacoor, under the leadership of Mayor Strike B. Revilla and Vice Mayor Rowena Bautista-Mendiola, along with the Sangguniang Panglungsod and all the dedicated employees of the Bacoor City Government. Your success in receiving the 7th consecutive SGLG award is a testament to your unwavering commitment and effective governance in your community. Maraming salamat po sa Buong Team ng City Government of Bacoor! Congratulations to all Bacoorenos!

Housing Urban Development & Resettlement Department (HUDRD) ang Urban Development Solidarity Week 2023, Matagumpay na naidaos



Matagumpay na idinaos ng Housing Urban Development & Resettlement Department (HUDRD) ang Urban Development Solidarity Week 2023. Ginanap ang programa noong, December 12, 2023 sa Bacoor Legislative & Resilience Building. Kasama sa mga dumalo sina Mayor Strike B. Revilla, Konsehala Karen Sarino Everisto, Atty. Aimee Torrefrangco-Neri, Atty. Paul Sanggalang, Fidel V. Dones, Annie V. Nacienceno, at Konsehal Alde Pagulayan na naghatid ng mensahe mula kay Vice Mayor Rowena Bautista Mendiola. Layunin ni Mayor Strike B. Revilla na magkaroon ng sariling tahanan ang lahat ng Bacooreño, lalo na ang mga miyembro ng Urban Poor Association. Nagbigay rin ang City Government of Bacoor ng grocery packs at 1,000 pesos sa 167 na kalahok sa pamamagitan ni Mayor

Strike B. Revilla.

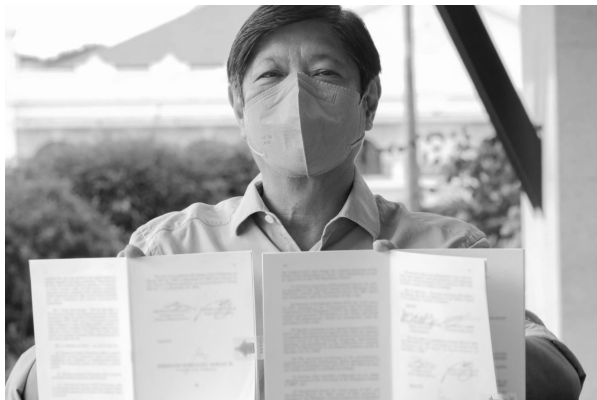
Ang Urban Development Solidarity Week 2023 ay nagpapakita ng sama-samang pagsisikap ng City Government of Bacoor, HUDRD, at mga urban poor organizations. Layunin nito ang paglikha ng mas magandang urban environment para sa lahat ng Bacooreño. Sa patuloy na pag-unlad ng Bacoor City, patuloy ang pangako ni Mayor Strike B. Revilla na maghatid ng tahanan para sa lahat, lalo na sa mga nangangailangan. Binabati natin ang lahat ng mga kalahok at mga nag-organisa ng Urban Development Solidarity Week 2023. Patuloy tayong magkakapit-bisig para sa maunlad na Bacoor City.

Last week's solution:



HOW THE INTERNET TRANSACTIONS ACT CAN REVOLUTIONIZE ONLINE SHOPPING

Get ready for a revolution in the way you shop online! The Philippines has taken a giant leap forward with the Internet Transactions Act (ITA), a landmark law signed by President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. on December 5, 2023 that promises to boost safety, trust, and growth in the e-commerce sector. Here's how the ITA will benefit you and the entire Filipino community, according to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI):



President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. proudly presents the newly signed Public-Private Partnership Code of the Philippines (PPP Code) and the Internet Transactions Act of 2023 while in isolation in his residence in Bahay Pangulo in Manila. He said the two measures show the country's commitment and readiness to accelerate its development and to embrace the digital economy. (PCO)

Benefits for consumers

Say goodbye to online scams. The ITA cracks down on unfair trade practices, protecting you from fake products, misleading advertising, and hidden fees. Shop with confidence. An online business database will let you check a seller's credentials and track their reputation before clicking "buy." Get your voice heard. A government-wide complaint system gives you a platform to report problems and hold online businesses accountable. Enjoy faster resolutions. The DTI's new e-commerce bureau will have the power to investigate complaints and issue swift penalties for violators.

For merchants

Help create a level playing field. The ITA creates fair competition by setting clear rules and standards for everyone in the e-commerce ecosystem. Build trust with customers. The e-commerce trust mark will be a badge of honor, helping you attract more buyers and grow your business. Streamlined operations. The law provides clarity on regulations and procedures, making it easier for businesses to operate online. Access to resources. The DTI will offer support and training to help businesses navigate the e-commerce landscape.

For the Philippine economy

Job creation. A thriving e-commerce sector means more jobs in logistics, technology, marketing, and other related fields. SME empowerment. Smaller businesses get a chance to compete on a larger scale and reach new markets. Increased GDP. A vibrant e-commerce ecosystem boosts the national economy by generating additional revenue and taxes. Digital transformation. The ITA paves the way for a more digital and future-ready Philippines.

ARCHITECTS AND HERITAGE EXPERTS UNITE TO REBUILD THE ICONIC MANILA CENTRAL POST OFFICE

This story is about bringing history back to life.

From ashes to grandeur, the historic Manila Central Post Office (MCPO) ,which was destroyed by fire early this year, is set to rise again, thanks to a collaborative effort between the Philippine Postal Corporation (PHLPost), the Philippine Institute of Architects (PIA), and Pacific Paint (Boysen) Philippines, Inc.

These dedicated architects, heritage experts, and paint specialists have signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) to voluntarily provide essential expertise towards the restoration of this architectural gem located in the heart of Manila. This selfless act will breathe new life into the building that has stood as a silent witness to Philippine history for decades. This story is about bringing history back to life.

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PHLPost Assistant Postmaster General (APMG) for Administration and Finance Atty. Lori Ann D. Atal representing Postmaster General Luis Carlos, Ar. Carmelo T. Casas of Philippine Institute of Architects, Guild of Philippine Architects in Conservation Vice President Ar. Robert Benedict C. Hermoso, Archaeological & Heritage Co. CEO Victor J. Paz, UAP Bulacan-Del Pilar Chapter President Ar. Catherine U. Buenaluz, Pacific Paint (BOYSEN) Phils. Inc. Marketing Manager Vergel V. Dyoco, Casas Architects Design Architect Ar. Jose Maria Rafael C. Casas, Casas Architects IT Head Jerkins E. Canoy, PHLPost Engineering & Infrastructure Planning Division Chief Engr. Reynaldo D. Cadano and Conservation Consultant Ar. Joel Rico during the ceremonial signing held at the historic Manila Central Post Office Building. (Photo courtesy of PHLPOST)

A symbol of resilience and unity

Designed by renowned Filipino architects Juan M. Arelano, Tomas Mapua, and Ralph Doane, the MCPO's construction began in 1926 and was completed in 1930. Its strategic location along the Pasig River, its majestic neoclassical architecture, and its 14 imposing pillars - representing the 14 provinces that revolted against Spanish rule - all stand as testaments to the cultural and historical significance of the Philippine Postal Service.

More than just bricks and mortar, the MCPO embodies the Filipino spirit of resilience and unity. It has served as a vital communication hub and a symbol of national pride for generations. The recent fire that ravaged the building was a devastating blow, but it has also sparked a wave of support and determination to rebuild.

Its neoclassical architecture stands as a testament to the cultural and historical significance of the Philippine Postal Service. The façade features 14 imposing pillars, representing the 14 provinces that revolted against Spanish colonial rule in the 1896 Philippine Revolution. These pillars remind every Filipino of the country's rich heritage and the struggles of our forefathers for independence. A collaborative effort for a brighter future

The collaboration between PHLPost, PIA, and Boysen Philippines represents a united front in the fight to preserve history and build a brighter future. This partnership will provide invaluable expertise in architectural conservation, archeological research, and documentation, ensuring that the MCPO is restored to its former glory while preserving its historical authenticity.

"It's like bringing pieces of architectural history back to life," Postmaster General Luis D. Carlos aptly said. This restoration project isn't just about rebuilding a building; it's about reviving a symbol of national identity and ensuring that its legacy continues to inspire future generations.

The involvement of the National Historical Commission of the Philippines, the National Commission for Culture and Arts, the Department of Tourism, and various private organizations further strengthens the resolve to restore the MCPO. This collective effort demonstrates the power of unity in preserving our heritage and building a nation where history and progress go hand in hand.

Meanwhile, PHLPost, through the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority of the Department of Tourism procured a detailed architectural and engineering study and even commissioned Ar. Franz Ignacio, as a consultant, to aid in the restoration of the MCPO Building.

The restoration of the Manila Central Post Office is more than just a project; it's a symbol of hope, resilience, and a shared commitment to the future. As the project progresses, it will not only preserve a piece of history but also create new opportunities for cultural exchange, economic growth, and national pride. (PIA-NCR)

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