

MODERN TECH TO ENHANCE LEARNING AT IMUS PUBLIC SCHOOL

IMUS CITY, Cavite (PIA) — In a move to modernize public education and enhance student learning experiences, the City Government of Imus officially turned over 30 state-of-the-art 75-inch digital interactive display units to Tanzang Luma Elementary School.

According to the city government, the initiative seeks to enhance classroom engagement and improve literacy by integrating advanced technology into teaching and learning.

Third District Representative Adrian Jay Advincula who graced the official turnover of the digital interactive displays, underscored the urgent need to address reading comprehension challenges among students in public schools.

“Many of our students can read, but they struggle with understanding what they read. Through these interactive display TVs, we hope to provide a more immersive and effective learning experience,” Rep. Advincula said during the ceremony.

The interactive displays function like oversized tablets, featuring built-in operating systems, internet browsing, media playback, whiteboarding, and annotation tools—making them ideal for dynamic and student-centered instruction.

Mayor Alex Advincula echoed the congressman’s message, highlighting the need to empower both students and educators through access to modern tools and resources.

“We want our students to keep pace with global trends and equip our teachers with the skills to harness technology in the classroom,” the mayor said. “Next year, we plan to install air conditioning units in every classroom to ensure that these devices operate efficiently and create a more comfortable learning environment.”

The mayor added: “This development marks a significant milestone not only for Tanzang Luma Elementary School but for public education in Cavite, as it sets the tone for a more digitally inclusive and future-ready learning environment.” (RF, PIA Cavite) **BY RUEL FRANCISCO**



INDANG, Cavite (PIA) — The Cavite State University (CvSU) reaffirmed its commitment to agricultural innovation and education by partnering with the Department of Agriculture (DA) Calabarzon to establish an integrated Techno Demo Farm for research, training, and sustainable farming.

According to CvSU, the farm to be developed on a 1.3-hectare portion of CvSU’s STAR Farm in Indang, is expected to strengthen agricultural innovation and education by promoting sustainable farming practices, advancing research, and empowering local farmers and students with modern technologies and skills.

“The initiative also seeks to address pressing issues related to food security, climate-resilient agriculture, and the

competitiveness of local farmers in an evolving agribusiness landscape,” CvSU said in a statement.

Under the partnership, CvSU and DA Calabarzon will collaborate in sharing knowledge and resources while implementing programs that promote sustainable farming technologies and agribusiness development. These efforts will include instruction, research, extension services, and the monitoring and evaluation of activities, policies, and technologies related to the project.

“This partnership with DA Calabarzon aligns with CvSU’s mandate to conduct research and extension services, and to provide progressive leadership in agriculture, science and technology, education, and other related fields,” CvSU added.

Representatives from various national and local agencies, including the Bureau of Plant Industry, Bureau of Agricultural Research, Department of Science and Technology – Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development, local agricultural offices, and farmer cooperatives, were present at the launch held recently, underscoring strong multi-sectoral support for agricultural development.

DA Calabarzon officials expressed optimism that the partnership will facilitate the transfer of modern farming technologies and business practices to rural communities, addressing the challenges posed by outdated techniques and limited access to innovation. (RF, PIA Cavite) **BY RUEL FRANCISCO**

TOP 1 MOST WANTED SA LALAWIGAN, ARESTADO NG MAGALLANES MPS SA ALFONSO, CAVITE

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Lungsod ng Imus, Cavite — Arestado ang isang Listed Most Wanted Person (Provincial Level - Rank 1) sa isinagawang joint operation ng Magallanes Municipal Police Station at Lubang MPS, Occidental Mindoro dakong 10:50 ng umaga noong Hunyo 18, 2025, sa Barangay Kaysuyo, Alfonso, Cavite. Kinilala ni PMAJ RAYMOND T. BALBUENA, Chief of Police ng Magallanes MPS, ang akusado na si alyas Jenry, kasalukuyang naninirahan sa Brgy. Kaysuyo, Alfonso, Cavite. Naaresto ang akusado sa bisa ng Warrant of Arrest na inilabas ng Family Court, Fourth Judicial Region, Branch 3, Tagaytay City noong Hunyo 9, 2025, para sa mga kaso na Qualified Rape of a Minor (2 counts) — Criminal Case Nos. TG-25-458 (AS) at TG-25-459 (AA) (Non-Bailable), at Acts of Lasciviousness (2 counts) — Criminal Case Nos. TG-25-460 (AA) at TG-25-461 (AA) sa ilalim ng Article 336 ng Revised Penal Code kaugnay ng Section 5 (B) ng RA 7610, na may piyansang ₱360,000.00. Isinagawa ang operasyon ng Warrant Section ng Magallanes MPS katuwang ang anim (6) na tauhan, at ang Warrant Personnel ng Lubang MPS, Occidental

Mindoro. Ang buong operasyon ay naisagawa gamit ang Alternative Recording Device (ARD) para sa wastong dokumentasyon. Naipabatid sa akusado ang kanyang mga karapatang konstitusyonal sa malinaw at nauunawaang paraan. Siya ay kasalukuyang nasa kustodiya ng Magallanes Municipal Police Station habang isinasagawa ang pagsasaauli ng warrant sa korte ng pinagmulan. Sa pahayag ni PMAJ RAYMOND T. BALBUENA, Chief of Police ng Magallanes MPS: “Ang pagkakaaaresto kay Jenry ay isang patunay ng masigasig at walang humpay na operasyon ng ating kapulisan sa Cavite upang panagutin ang mga kriminal, lalo na ang sangkot sa karahasang sekswal laban sa kabataan.” Samantala, sinabi ni PCOL DWIGHT E. ALEGRE, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite Police Provincial Office: “Ang pagkakadakip sa Top 1 Provincial Most Wanted ay nagpapakita ng matatag na dedikasyon ng ating mga kapulisan na tiyaking walang puwang sa lalawigan ng Cavite ang mga lumalabag sa batas, lalo na yaong mga sangkot sa mabibigat na krimen laban sa kabataan.”

PROVINCIAL LEVEL MOST WANTED, ARESTADO NG SILANG MPS SA BARANGAY BULIHAN

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Lungsod ng Imus, Cavite — Arestado ang isang Listed Most Wanted Person (Provincial Level) sa isinagawang operasyon ng Silang Municipal Police Station dakong alas-5:00 ng hapon noong Hunyo 18, 2025, sa Barangay Bulihan, Silang, Cavite. Kinilala ni PLTCOL LOUIE DC GONZAGA, Chief of Police ng Silang MPS, ang akusado na si alyas Paopao, kasalukuyang naninirahan sa Barangay San Luis 1, Dasmariñas City, Cavite. Naaresto ang akusado sa bisa ng Warrant of Arrest na inilabas ng Regional Trial Court, Branch 133, Tagaytay City, Cavite, noong Oktubre 17, 2023, para sa kasong paglabag sa Section 4 (D) ng

Republic Act No. 9995 (Anti-Photo and Video Voyeurism Act of 2009) kaugnay ng Section 6 ng Republic Act No. 10175 (Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012) sa ilalim ng Criminal Case No. TG-23-095, na may inirekomendang piyansang ₱200,000.00. Isinagawa ang operasyon ng Warrant Personnel ng Silang MPS gamit ang Alternative Recording Device (ARD) para sa maayos na dokumentasyon. Naipabatid kay Paopao ang kanyang mga karapatang konstitusyonal sa paraang malinaw at nauunawaan. Ang akusado ay kasalukuyang nasa kustodiya ng Silang Municipal Police Station habang isinasagawa ang

REGIONAL LEVEL MOS WANTED PERSON, ARESTADO NG GMA PNP

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Lungsod ng Imus, Cavite — Arestado ang isang Listed Most Wanted Person (Regional Level) sa isinagawang operasyon ng GMA Municipal Police Station dakong alas-3:30 ng hapon noong Hunyo 17, 2025, sa National Road, Barangay Molino II, Bacoor City, Cavite.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL SAMUEL MELCHOR FERNANDEZ, Officer-in-Charge ng GMA MPS, ang akusado na si alyas Ronald, residente ng Brgy. Molino II, Bacoor City, Cavite.

Naaresto ang nasabing akusado sa bisa ng Warrant of Arrest na inilabas ng Regional Trial Court, Branch 129, Dasmariñas City, Cavite, noong Hunyo 4, 2025, para sa kasong RAPE sa ilalim ng Article 266-A, Paragraph 1 (B) kaugnay ng Article 266-B, Unang Talata ng Revised Penal Code, sa ilalim ng Criminal Case No. 17573-25-FC. Ang kaso ay walang piyansa.

Isinagawa ang operasyon ng Warrant Personnel ng GMA MPS sa ilalim ng direktang superbisyon ng hepe ng himpilan, gamit ang Alternative Recording Device

(ARD) para sa maayos na dokumentasyon, na nagresulta sa matagumpay na pagkakaaaresto ng akusado.

Naipabatid kay Ronald ang kanyang mga karapatang konstitusyonal sa paraang malinaw at nauunawaan niya. Siya ay pansamantalang nakakulong sa GMA Municipal Police Station Custodial Facility habang isinasagawa ang pagsasaauli ng warrant of arrest sa korte ng pinagmulan.

Sa pahayag ni PLTCOL SAMUEL MELCHOR FERNANDEZ, “Ang matagumpay na pagkakaaaresto kay Ronald ay isang malinaw na indikasyon ng walang humpay na pagtutok ng ating kapulisan sa paghuli sa mga itinuturing na pinakamapanganib na kriminal sa rehiyon.”

Samantala, sinabi ni PCOL DWIGHT E. ALEGRE, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite PPO: “Ang determinadong pagtupad sa tungkulin ng ating mga kapulisan sa Cavite ay patunay ng ating layunin na panagutin ang mga may sala at tiyaking may hustisyang nakakamit ang bawat biktima.”

P204-M HALAGA NG SHABU, NADISKUBRE SA NAIC, CAVITE

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Tinatayang nasa P204 milyong halaga ng hinihinalang shabu ang natuklasan sa isang abandonadong maleta sa gilid ng kalsada dakong 2:10 ng madaling araw ngayong Hunyo 20, 2025 sa Friendship Road, Brgy. Sabang, Naic, Cavite.

Alinsunod sa programang patruyang magilas ng Cavite PPO. Habang nagpapatrolya ang Quick Response Team (QRT) 2 ng Naic MPS sa kahabaan ng Friendship Road, Brgy. Sabang, Naic, Cavite, nilapitan sila ng guwardiya at upang ipagbigay alam ang isang malaking berdeng maleta na iniwang nakatengga sa gilid ng kalsada.

Agad na rumesponde ang mga pulis at nang kanilang siyasatin ang maleta, tumambad ang tatlung (30) heat-sealed na pakete ng hinihinalang shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) na tinatayang may kabuuang timbang na 30 kilo at halagang aabot sa Php 204,000,000.00 batay sa standard drug price. Bukod dito, natuklasan din ang isang surveillance camera na nakakabit sa kalapit na konkretong poste, na posibleng bahagi ng

modus ng mga nasa likod ng ilegal na aktibidad.

Ayon sa paunang imbestigasyon, hinihinalang isang “dead drop” ang naturang pamamaraan ng pagtago ng droga para kuhanin sana ng ibang kasabwat.

Kaugnay nito, agad na isinagawa ang mga sumusunod na hakbang: Pag-request sa Provincial Forensic Unit para sa crime scene processing; CCTV backtracking sa lugar at Digital forensic examination sa narekober na surveillance camera.

Ayon kay PLTCOL Resty E Soriano, ACOP ng Naic MPS, ginagawa na ang lahat ng legal na hakbang para matukoy ang mga nasa likod ng ilegal na aktibidad.

Pahayag naman ni PCOL Dwight E Alegre, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite PPO, “Ang insidenteng ito ay patunay na hindi natutulog ang ating kapulisan. Ang mabilis na aksyon ng ating mga tauhan ay nagsilbing hadlang sa posibleng pagkalat ng malaking halaga ng ilegal na droga sa ating lalawigan. Patuloy tayong magbabantay para sa isang ligtas at maayos na Cavite.”

REGIONAL MOST WANTED, NAARESTO SA TRECE MARTIRES CITY

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Matagumpay na naaresto ng mga awtoridad ang isang Most Wanted Person — Regional Level sa isinagawang manhunt operation dakong 11:00 AM ngayong Hunyo 19, 2025, sa Brgy. Conchu, Trece Martires City, Cavite. Kinilala ni PMAJ Rommel C Dimaala, Chief of Police ng Indang MPS, ang suspek bilang alyas “Manny”, at kasalukuyang naninirahan sa Brgy. Inocencio, Trece Martires City. Siya ay nahaharap sa kasong Paglabag sa Section 11, Article II ng Republic Act

pamamaraan at maagap na aksyon.”

9165 (Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002) sa ilalim ng Criminal Case No. NC-6537. Ang warrant of arrest ay ng RTC Branch 15, Naic, Cavite noong Hunyo 17, 2025 para sa service of sentence.

Ang operasyon ay pinamunuan ng warrant personnel ng Indang Municipal Police Station bilang lead unit, katuwang ang mga tauhan ng Trece Martires Component City Police Station at Cavite Maritime Police Station, gamit ang Alternative Recording Device (ARD) upang matiyak ang transparency at dokumentasyon. Ayon kay PMAJ Rommel C Dimaala, Chief of Police

ng Indang Municipal Police Station, “Ang pagkakaaaresto kay asa suspek ay mahalagang hakbang sa pagpapatibay ng seguridad at kaayusan sa aming nasasakupan. Patuloy ang aming pagsusumikap na tugisin ang mga indibidwal na lumalabag sa batas upang mapanatili ang katahimikan sa komunidad,” Dagdag pa ni PCOL Dwight E Alegre, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite PPO, “Hindi titigil ang kapulisan ng Cavite sa pagtugis sa mga kriminal upang mapanatili ang kapayapaan at kaayusan sa lalawigan. Sa bawat matagumpay na operasyon, isang hakbang ito tungo sa mas ligtas na Cavite.”

VISUAL AIDS, MURALS IN CLASSROOMS VITAL FOR CHILD LEARNING, EDUCATOR

SANTA ROSA CITY, Laguna (PIA) — An education official in Laguna took great importance on the visual aids and murals being used in classrooms, as it helps with the overall learning experience of students during their formative years.

Department of Education (DepEd) Schools Division of Santa Rosa superintendent Hereberto Jose Miranda said that visual arts play a crucial role in inspiring students to learn, dream, and stay engaged in their classroom environment.

"In these works of art, we see not just colors or shapes, but dreams, hope, and inspiration. Each character, each scene on the wall, is an invitation for our young ones to dream, to ask questions, and to learn."

Miranda said that arts promote learning and nurtures creativity among children, particularly during their formative years.

"At a young age, an environment like this is important for broadening their perspective and deepening their love for learning," he adds.

The DepEd superintendent said the remarks during the formal turnover of two refurbished classrooms donated by Enchanted Kingdom, to be used by the kindergarten students of Caingin Elementary School in Santa Rosa City, Laguna.

The classrooms were given fresh coat of paint, improved electrical flow, new television sets, and storage drawers. Core values of the theme park are also painted inside the rooms — including integrity, loyalty, love of God, innovativeness, and respect — values that they wish to also be ingrained to students.

The management of the park has supported DepEd Santa Rosa for 11 consecutive years during the annual Brigada Eskwela and have donated various instructional materials and refurbishment of school classrooms.

Enchanted Kingdom President and CEO Mario Mamon said that they will continue to fulfill their mission of making learning more conducive for students, as education remains an integral part for progress of the country.

"It makes learning more conducive, especially for first-time and kindergarten students who will be using these classrooms. Education is key to the future of our country, which is why Enchanted Kingdom fully supports Brigada Eskwela and other initiatives of DepEd."

In improving the state of education in the country, Miranda believes that partnership between the government and its private partners are important to ensure the sustainability of projects and continuity of initiatives.

"Today, let us prove that when the government, private sector, and schools come together, we can create a brighter and more colorful future for every child."

The city government of Santa Rosa, together with DepEd Santa Rosa and their private partners, will meet to formulate an improved Education Code within the year that will serve as a roadmap and guide in ensuring sustainable and long-term education initiatives that address the needs of learners, teachers, and schools. (CH/PIA-Laguna)

BY CHRISTOPHER HEDREYDA

LAGUNA BREAKS GROUND FOR CALAMBA-BAY BYPASS ROAD

BAY, Laguna (PIA)— The much-awaited Calamba-Bay bypass road project, which will provide an alternate route to motorists long saddled by traffic woes on the national road from Calamba City and the towns of Los Baños and Bay, finally broke ground on June 11.

Spanning 15 kilometers and a four-lane toll road from Calamba to Bay, the road project is designed to reduce travel time from Canlubang-Cadre road in Calamba to Masapang highway in Bay to only 20 minutes from more than an hour, the Laguna provincial government has reported.

The provincial government had initiated the project and partnered with private firm Ecotoll Road Development Corporation (ERDC) to ease the congested national road and accelerate economic growth in Laguna's eastern towns.

Mayor Romeo Amorado said the farming town of Majayjay will benefit from the project as farmers will now have better access to transport their products to Metro Manila.

"This project will allow our farmers to deliver our vegetables to markets faster and fresher. While there may be a toll fee, we can slightly adjust prices to cover the cost. You see, when products come from Majayjay as well as from Liliw and Nagcarlan, the cost of transport is cheaper because the distance is shorter, and we use less fuel. So even with the added toll fee, the bypass road will be a big help for us farmers, allowing us to sell our products more quickly,"

Amorado said.

For Leonard Derecho, a Majayjay resident and studying law at Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila, the project will be highly beneficial since he travels home every week.

"A lot of time that should have been spent studying or resting is wasted due to traffic from Los Baños to Calamba," Derecho added.

Additionally, the project is expected to improve access to health services for remote towns by making it easier to transport patients to hospitals in nearby cities and in Metro Manila.

The road project is designed to have an interchange entry and exit point in Los Baños while the entry and exit ramps will be located in two different areas to minimize traffic congestion on the existing barangay road.

Funded entirely through a public-private partnership with ERDC, the project benefited from technical assistance provided by the provincial government throughout its planning, construction, and implementation phases.

The bypass road proposal was submitted to the National Economic and Development Authority back in 2011 for review.

Once established, the ERDC will operate and maintain the bypass road project for 50 years while the provincial government will share the gross revenue at 0.5 percent for the first eight years of operation until the traffic projection reaches 700,000 vehicles per day. (CO/PIA4A) **BY CHARMAINE ODONG**

EDITORIAL

Mga alternatibong gawain upang maiwasan ang trapiko sa EDSA, isinusulong.

Ngayong buwan ng hunyo ay inaasahang magkakaroon ng dambuhalang trapiko dahil sa pag-kukumpuni ng EDSA kaya naman isang nakikita at hinihikayat na solusyon ng Department of Labor and Employment of DOLE na magkaroon ng alternate work arrangement para sa mga empleyado.

Para sa akin ay isa itong magandang ideya upang kahit papaano'y maiwasan ang paghigpit ng trapiko kung sakaling simulan na ang pagkukumpuni ng EDSA. Kadalasang binubuo ng mga taong pumapasok sa trabaho ang dumadaan sa kahabaan ng EDSA na sa sobrang dami ng mga ito ay sumisikip ang mga daan dahil sa pag-uunahan ang mga ito upang makarating sa kani-kanilang mga trabaho.

Isa ring paraan ang work from home upang makasama ng mga empleyado ang kani-kanilang pamilya sa kabila ng pagttrabaho ng mga ito. Kaya naman, tingin ko ay karamihan sa mga empleyado ay sasang-ayon sa ideyang ito upang kahit papaano ay masolusyunan ang pagkakaroon ng dambuhalang trapiko na sasabay sa pagpasok ng mga estudyante.

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HALT IN OFW DEPLOYMENT TO AREAS NEAR IRAN, ISRAEL URGED

MANILA — Senator-elect Erwin Tulfo on Friday urged concerned government agencies to temporarily suspend the deployment of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) to areas near Israel and Iran amid their armed conflict.

At a news forum, Tulfo called on the Department of Migrant Workers, the Department of Foreign Affairs, and the Bureau of Immigration to hold for the meantime the sending of OFWs to the "surrounding areas of Iran and Israel."

"Not all of the Middle East, but the surrounding areas of Iran and Israel like Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Bahrain, and there are also Jordan and Egypt," he said during the monthly Balitaan sa Harbor View organized by the Manila City Hall Reporters' Association.

"Now, if we keep sending (OFWs) and the war might

escalate, we will have a hard time because we have millions of OFWs in the Middle East. Maybe we can hold them for now because our countrymen are in danger."

The incoming senator said the deployment could resume once there is a ceasefire or the war has concluded.

Anadolu News Agency reported that tensions between the two nations have escalated since June 13, when Israel launched coordinated airstrikes on multiple sites across Iran, including military and nuclear facilities, prompting Tehran to launch retaliatory strikes.

Israeli authorities said at least 24 people have been killed and hundreds injured in Iranian missile attacks since then. (PNA) **BY FERDINAND PATINIO**

2 FILIPINO SEAFARERS HELD HOSTAGE IN HAITI BACK IN PH

MANILA — Two Filipino seafarers who were held hostage by suspected pirates in Port-au-Prince Anchorage in Haiti in early April this year are now back in the Philippines following their safe release.

The Department of Migrant Workers (DMW), in a news release Friday, said the two were among the crew members of the MV Century Royal, which was raided in early April.

"The President was very glad to hear of your safe release. His words were, 'Very good.' Nandito ang government (the government is here), rest assured you will be supported and will be provided assistance for your recovery and reintegration," Migrant Workers Secretary Hans Leo Cacdac told the seafarers during their visit to the DMW central office in Mandaluyong City on

Thursday.

In May, 14 Filipino crew members from the Panama-flagged bulk carrier had already been repatriated.

The DMW said the repatriated seafarers arrived separately last May 23 and June 17.

The two Filipino seafarers each received PHP75,000 in immediate financial assistance from the AKSYON Fund of the DMW.

Additional support from the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) is also underway as additional support, especially for their children.

The DMW is also closely coordinating with the seafarers' manning agency to ensure their full recovery and provide necessary support to them. (PNA) **BY MARITA MOAJE**

MIAA VOWS FULL PROBE OF ALLEGED NAIA EXTORTION SCHEME

MANILA — Regulator Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) on Friday vowed a full investigation into the alleged extortion scheme imposed on taxi drivers at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA).

MIAA's statement came after at least five airport police were relieved from their posts for allegedly getting 40 percent of taxi drivers' earnings.

The Department of Transportation said the extortion scheme forces the drivers to charge exorbitant fees as they would be apprehended or not allowed at NAIA premises if they don't give in to the demands.

The MIAA said it is working with the Land Transportation Office (LTO) to verify reports of questionable ticket violations allegedly issued to taxi drivers.

"The MIAA underscores its commitment to ensuring that the investigation is conducted with full transparency, due process and fairness," it said in a statement.

An investigating committee under the Intelligence and Investigation Division was formed to gather evidence, conduct interviews and submit formal recommendations to ensure that those responsible are held accountable.

In an interview with the

Philippine News Agency on Friday, MIAA General Manager Eric Ines said he doesn't recall any taxi driver that was sent to jail under his administration.

"There were those who were issued a ticket due to traffic violation. Many taxis were also towed due to illegal parking," he said.

Ines, however, said there was an instance when MIAA sought the help of the Philippine National Police — Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (PNP-CIDG) to apprehend a transport dispatcher who was caught in the act conniving with illegal taxi cabs at Terminal 1 in Parañaque City.

"The dispatcher was handcuffed. We sought the help of CIDG because the MIAA APD (Airport Police Department) is only authorized to oversee traffic violations and criminal activities," he said. Many violators were endorsed to the LTO and the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board, but Ines lamented they "never got any feedback" on the agencies' actions.

In its statement, MIAA affirmed its continued trust "in the many honest and dedicated men and women within the APD who remain committed to serving the public with integrity." (PNA) **BY MA. CRISTINA ARAYATA**

NO PUV FARE HIKE YET AS LTFRB AWAITS DEPDEV STUDY

MANILA — The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) on Friday clarified that it has not yet approved a new fare increase for public utility vehicles (PUVs).

In a statement, LTFRB Chair Teofilo Guadiz III said any adjustment to current fare rates remains on hold pending the outcome of an ongoing study by the Department of Economy, Planning, and Development

(DEPDev), formerly the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA).

"We want to be clear: no fare increase has been approved at this stage," Guadiz said.

He said fare adjustments are a "serious matter that requires careful study" especially considering the current economic conditions.

"We are not rushing into a decision. We are waiting for [DEPDev's] analysis,

CFO CALLS FOR DEEPER, MORE INCLUSIVE DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT

MANILA — The Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) is calling for a stronger and more inclusive approach to diaspora engagement, emphasizing that overseas Filipinos are not just remittance senders but also active partners in national development.

Speaking at the Bagong Pilipinas Ngayon briefing Friday, CFO Chairperson Secretary Dante "Klink" Ang II highlighted the multi-faceted impact of the Filipino diaspora, from advancing Philippine culture and boosting international demand for local products, to producing trailblazers in science, media, and public service abroad.

"They serve, among other things, as ambassadors of the Philippines abroad. They also open up trade for the Philippines kasi po, sa dami po nila, siyempre, ang demand po (with their number, of course, the demand) for Philippine products where they live also increases," he said.

"And of course, lagi po natin sinasabi yung remittances, hindi lang po galing yan sa mga OFWs (overseas Filipino workers). Bagamat marami po sa kanila yung proportion of their income talagang mas malaki po yung proportion na yan, but mas marami po kasi mga overseas Filipinos, doon po galing yung

mga remittances natin na (we always say that remittances, it doesn't just come from OFWs. Although they have a larger proportion of their income, that proportion is actually larger, but there are more overseas Filipinos, that's where our remittances come from, which) I think reach about 10 percent of GDP, (Gross Domestic Product)."

Ang also cited the CFO's Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino (LINKAPIL) program, which, he said, has facilitated over PHP3.4 billion in philanthropic donations and investments from overseas communities in the past decade.

He also noted that many contributions remain undocumented, especially those coursed through private individuals or directly to their beneficiaries.

Another CFO program that Ang highlighted under LINKAPIL is the "Balikturo" program, which he said brings Filipino teachers based in the US back to the Philippines to teach during visits, as well as plans to expand partnerships with the Department of Science and Technology under the Balik Scientist Program.

"Yung ambag po ng mga Filipinos overseas, hindi lang po siya (The contribution of Filipinos overseas, they are not only) remittance but they are human capital, they're cultural, and there are many other things," Ang said.

He said these CFO initiatives aims to encourage a shift in mindset, from seeing overseas Filipinos as workers, to recognizing them as sources of innovation, knowledge, and leadership.

Meanwhile, Ang shared that the CFO aims to collaborate with creative overseas Filipinos to help diaspora youth connect with Filipino heritage in meaningful and modern ways. (PNA) **BY MARITA MOAJE**

and the Board will act based on facts and expert recommendation."

The statement comes after proposals from transport groups sought a fare increase in response to the increasing prices of fuel.

The rise in fuel prices is largely driven by global supply disruptions caused by the ongoing Ukraine-Russia war, as well as the Israel-Iran conflict. (PNA)

BY RAYMOND CARL DELA CRUZ

SC TO EMPLOYERS: PROVE WORKERS ARE PAID WITH PAYROLL BANK RECEIPT

MANILA – The Supreme Court has ruled that to prove salary payment through banks, employers must show the payroll was submitted to and received by the bank.

This ruling was contained in a 36-page decision of the SC First Division on April 5 when sent back to the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC) for a case involving the 1998 strike by 49 Philippine Airlines (PAL) pilots, according to a news release Friday.

The ruling, penned by Chief Justice Alexander Gesmundo, affirmed the Court of Appeals ruling that PAL did not sufficiently prove payment of salaries and 13th month pay to its former employees.

"The Payroll Listing and 13th Month Pay Payroll Register presented by PAL were not enough, as they did not provide proof of actual receipt of payment by the employees," the SC said.

In their complaint file before the NLRC, the PAL pilots alleged illegal dismissal, unfair labor practice and non-payment of various monetary benefits, such as salaries, allowances and bonuses.

The labor arbiter dismissed the claims of illegal dismissal and unfair labor practice.

As for the monetary claims, PAL presented

payroll documents to prove payment, which were accepted by both the arbiter and the NLRC.

However, the CA reversed it, stating that the documents were not sufficient proof of payment. In affirming the CA, the SC emphasized that payroll records and vouchers can only be considered strong proof of payment if they clearly show that the employees actually received the money and when the payment was made.

For bank-based salary payments, the SC noted there were three stages: preparing the payroll, submitting it to the bank and crediting the salaries to the employees' bank accounts.

"Thus, to prove payment, employers must show evidence of the second stage: That they transmitted a copy of the payroll or advisory to the bank and that the bank received it," the SC said.

The tribunal noted that in the PAL case, the documents indicated payroll preparation but did not show submission to or receipt by the bank, failing to demonstrate actual payment.

The SC returned the case to the NLRC to determine the exact amount owed to the former employees. (PNA) **BY BENJAMIN PULTA**

PBBM TO TACKLE MISINFORMATION, DISINFORMATION AT 4TH SONA – PALACE

MANILA – The rise of misinformation and disinformation on social media is one of the issues that may be raised on President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s fourth State of the Nation Address (SONA), Malacañang said on Friday.

This, as concerned government agencies, including the Presidential Communications Office (PCO) and the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) prepares to take down artificial intelligence (AI)-altered versions of Marcos' SONA that will be posted on social media to sow public confusion.

"Sa ngayon po ay wala pa po tayong detalye at malamang po sa SONA ay makakasama po ito dahil noon pong nagkaroon ng statement ang Pangulo noong Independence Day, binanggit niya rin po ang patungkol sa (Right now, we don't have any details and it's likely that this will be included in the SONA because when the President made a statement on Independence Day, he also mentioned the issue of) fake news," Palace Press

Officer Claire Castro told reporters.

On Thursday, House Secretary General Reginald Velasco said the PCO and the DICT made a commitment to be on the lookout for the AI-generated posts intended to distort Marcos' actual message in his 2025 SONA.

It could be recalled that Marcos fell victim of an AI-generated deepfake video which was released just before his third SONA last year.

Marcos will be delivering his fourth SONA at the session hall of the House of Representatives at the Batasang Pambansa Complex in Quezon City on July 28.

In his speech during the 127th Independence Day celebration, Marcos urged his fellow Filipinos to protect the nation from fake news and misinformation, saying these are the "scourges of our freedom."

Marcos also expressed dismay that some are propagating false information for the interest of others and not for the welfare of Filipinos. (PNA) **BY RUTH ABBEY GITA-CARLOS**

IMPROVED NFA WAREHOUSES TO HELP LOCAL FARMERS, HIKE PALAY BUYING – DA

MANILA – The Department of Agriculture (DA) on Friday underscored the importance of refurbished National Food Authority (NFA) warehouses in helping local farmers and increasing the volume of local palay (unhusked rice) procurement in the country. At least seven NFA warehouses in Northern Luzon have been rehabilitated in line with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s directives to intensify support for local farmers and help reduce the country's post-harvest losses through agri-infrastructure and modernization.

"I'm very happy na nakakita ako ng bagong refurbished na warehouse ng NFA. Kung nakita niyo ho yung panahon na before refurbishment, talagang napabayaan po ng panahon (I'm very happy that I saw newly-refurbished NFA warehouse. If you have seen it before the refurbishment, it has been neglected through time)," Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. told journalists at the sidelines of the inspection of an NFA warehouse in Roxas, Isabela.

The refurbished warehouses include those in Burgos, Roxas, and Tumauni, all in the province of Isabela. These warehouses can store up to 148,000 50-kilogram bags of rice in total.

Other refurbished warehouses include those in Bagabag and Bayombong in Nueva Vizcaya, which has a capacity of 160,620 50-kg bags; and in Alfonso Lista

and Lagawe in Ifugao, with 28,880 50-kg bags capacity. The warehouses' upgraded features include new roofs, improved ventilation systems and pest control systems, reinforced walls, and strengthened flooring. The agriculture chief said opening of more rehabilitated NFA warehouses around the country will follow to help protect farmers from unscrupulous traders who take advantage of them by buying rice at low prices.

"I'm very happy na nag-open tayo nito. There are 134 na bubuksan na kaya't makikinabang dito iyong farmers. At makakabili tayo ng mas maraming palay sa kanila ngayon (I'm very happy that we have opened these refurbished warehouses. There are 134 more that will be opened and farmers will benefit from it. And we can buy more palay from them)," he said.

In a separate statement, the DA disclosed that farmgate price of palay fell to as low as PHP10 per kilogram in some areas in the country, lower than the estimated production cost of PHP12-PHP14 per kilo.

The NFA's average buying price, however, is set at PHP18/kg of fresh and wet palay, and PHP24/kg for clean and dry palay.

NFA Administrator Larry Lacson also said opening of rehabilitated NFA warehouses will allow them to "accommodate more palay from farmers who have waited in line for NFA to buy their harvest." (PNA) **BY STEPHANIE SEVILLANO**

PNP SPOX FAJARDO NAMED NEW COMPTROLLER

MANILA – Philippine National Police (PNP) Gen. Nicolas Torre III has designated Police Regional Office (PRO) 3 (Central Luzon) chief and police spokesperson Brig. Gen. Jean Fajardo as the new chief of the Directorate for Comptrollership effective Friday.

Fajardo, as Director for Comptrollership, will assist the Office of the Chief PNP in the administration and management of the police force's financial resources.

She will replace Maj Gen. Neil Alisañgan, who will now head the Area Police Command-Eastern Mindanao.

It was not immediately clear if Fajardo will remain as PNP spokesperson.

Meanwhile, Brig. Gen. Rogelio Peñones was named PRO 3 officer-in-charge while Brig. Gen. Gerry Villas Protacio, Brig. Gen. Josefino Ligan and Brig. Gen. Dindo Reyes were named officers in charge of PROs

2 (Cagayan Valley), 6 (Western Visayas) and 1 (Ilocos), respectively.

They are among dozens of senior police officials who received new assignments under the latest leadership reshuffle.

Torre III earlier said the reshuffle aims to strategically position officials.

He urged them to remain committed to fairness and integrity in performing their duties. (PNA) **BY CHRISTOPHER LLOYD CALIWAN**

ABANDONED PARCELS YIELD P16-M DRUGS AT NAIA

MANILA – Over PHP16 million worth of illegal drugs were discovered in three abandoned parcels at the Central Mail Exchange Center (CMEC) in Pasay City, the Bureau of Customs – Ninoy Aquino International Airport (BOC-NAIA) said Friday.

The drugs — 3,025 grams of ketamine approximately worth PHP15,125,000 and 858 grams of "kush" or high-grade marijuana worth PHP1,201,200 — were discovered during the physical examination of the

parcels.

The physical examination was conducted after x-ray scans showed suspicious images, the BOC-NAIA said.

One parcel arrived from the United States containing 240 grams of "kush" while another came from Thailand with 618 grams of "kush."

Meanwhile, a third parcel shipped from Poland contained five plastic bags of ketamine inside a coffee maker.

The BOC-NAIA said no

one claimed the parcels, which were turned over to the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) on Thursday for disposition and laboratory examination.

"This operation is part of the agency's intensified border protection efforts and supports the national government's campaign against illegal drugs, in line with the directive of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.," the BOC-NAIA said. (PNA) **BY FERDINAND PATINIO**

IMPROVED GARBAGE MANAGEMENT IN ABRA'S CAPITAL TOWN EYED

BANGUED, Abra (PIA) — Abra Congressman-elect Cong. JB Bernos and Bangued Mayor-elect Perfecto Cardenas disclosed plans to improve the garbage collection and management in the capital town.

In a Facebook live, Bernos committed the La Paz temporary landfill to cater to the garbage collected in the municipality of Bangued.

"Dadiay pagbasura yo i-cater mi pay lang idiy La Paz. Dadiay temporary landfill idiy La Paz, isu pay laeng ti usaren ti Bangued," he said.

Bernos also shared that the municipality of La Paz can also lend one garbage compressor truck to help in garbage collection in Bangued where most businesses, offices, schools, and restaurants are located.

Meanwhile, Cardenas assured that a garbage collection system will be in place with ongoing repairs of the two local government unit-owned garbage trucks. "Panggep ti pannakakoleta ti basura, aramiden tayo met ti garbage collection system wenno schedule

and iadado tayo ti truck nga aghakot ti basura ti aglawlaw, kayat tayo nga maaramid daytoy the soonest possible time," he assured.

The newly elected officials seek the cooperation and discipline of the public to improve waste management in the municipality.

"Idawdawad tayo kadakayo nga kakailian nga saan tayo nga tila komporme ti pangibasuraan tayo, ipadamag minto to husto nga schedule ken wagas ti pannakakolekta ti basura," Cardenas urged.

For a long time, Bangued was not able to implement a garbage collection and management system resulting in improper waste disposal such as burning of waste and throwing of garbage everywhere.

Aside from garbage management, the incoming local chief executive with the assistance of the congressman-elect has started pilot testing a new traffic scheme to improve mobilization and vehicle flow in the province's business district. (JJMT, PIA-CAR, Abra) **BY JAMIE JOIE P. MALINGAN**

DENR UNCOVERS 160-HECTARE SEAGRASS BED

ROXAS CITY, Capiz (PIA)—The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), during an underwater dive into the Tucad Reef in Pilar town as part of the preparatory activities for the Protected Area Suitability Assessment (PASA) has discovered a 160-hectare seagrass bed.

The seagrass, locally known as "lusay," plays a vital ecological role as a sediment stabilizer and primary producer, while serving as feeding and nursery grounds for various marine species.

"In our initial dive, we stumbled upon about 160 hectares of seagrass," said DENR Capiz OIC Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer Ernest Federiso during a Kapihan program of the Capiz Government Information Center of the Philippine Information Agency.

Federiso added that a proposal will be made for funding to protect one of the widest seagrasses in

the country.

The data gathered from the dive will be crucial in completing the PASA and supporting the recommendation to include Tucad Reef under the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS).

Federiso noted that the Environment Month Celebration in the province kicked off in Pilar town through the local government unit's PlanTree For The Planets, tree planting and coastal clean-up, eco-thrill biking competition, and a jamming session with the environment.

"For now, DENR is always engaged with Pilar because it is also a pilot site for the Foreshore Survey and Delineation that is underway to identify and map the area where the tide alternately covers and uncovers the shore," said Federiso.

The process helps in managing and understanding coastal resources, particularly for purposes like land use planning, resource protection, and conflict resolution.

The municipality, about 46.8 kilometers away from Roxas City, also boasts its 9.3-hectare beach forest in Barangay San Ramon as part of its greening initiatives and climate change mitigation measures. (AGP/AAL/PIA Capiz/Cover Photo from DENR Capiz) **BY ALEX LUMAQUE**

and faster project implementation," he added. NIA MIMAROPA noted that this will further boost rural development and ensure national food security in the face of environmental challenges in the region. (ALG/PIA MIMAROPA-Oriental Mindoro/With information and photos from NIA MIMAROPA) **BY ARIEL GAA**

PCG MAINTAINS PROFESSIONALISM AMID CHINA'S HARASSMENT IN WPS

TUGUEGARAO CITY, Cagayan (PIA)—Despite repeated harassment by the China Coast Guard (CCG), the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) has remained committed to professionalism, restraint, and adherence to international law in protecting the country's sovereign rights in the West Philippine Sea (WPS).

According to Commodore Jay Tristan Tarriela, PCG spokesperson for the WPS, three PCG vessels were recently deployed to install 20 floating fish aggregating devices, or payaw, in the West Philippine Sea as part of the government's ongoing efforts to support Filipino fisherfolk and assert maritime rights.

During the mission, the PCG again experienced harassment by the CCG, which deployed three of its vessels. The Chinese ships conducted dangerous maneuvers and issued aggressive radio challenges in an attempt to disrupt the PCG operation. However, the Philippine Coast Guard completed its mission, with all 20 payaw units deployed as planned.

"Despite the harassment, we do not respond with unlawful or emotional actions. What we do is report the incidents to the National Task Force for the West Philippine Sea and document them through photos and videos. It is then up to the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Justice, which are part of the task force, to recommend or carry out appropriate actions in response to the illegal behavior of the Chinese government," Tarriela said.

He added that all PCG personnel undergo thorough briefings

and training before deployment, especially in Palawan. They are instructed to uphold professionalism and not respond emotionally, in line with the directive of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to engage with China peacefully and diplomatically while firmly protecting Philippine interests.

"We ensure that our actions are always aligned with international law," he said.

Tarriela also addressed public sentiment, acknowledging the anger and frustration many Filipinos feel when witnessing these acts of intimidation on television or social media.

"If ordinary Filipinos feel anger over what they see, they must also understand that our Coast Guard personnel onboard feel twice as much. But because of their professionalism and respect for the president's guidelines, and knowing this is what's best for the country, we choose to maintain composure and not retaliate. We stand firm in our duty without compromising our values," he said.

Tarriela further clarified that the West Philippine Sea's resources and rights are not dictated by any foreign power.

"The wealth of the West Philippine Sea is not dictated by anyone. We are not being dictated by foreign countries. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has already made it clear that we think and act independently as a sovereign nation. The West Philippine Sea issue is not just a government concern—it is the concern of every Filipino," he said. (OTB/MFJ/PIA Region 2)

BY MARY JOY F. JAVIER

NIA UPGRADES IRRIGATION CAPABILITIES WITH NEW FLEET IN ORIENTAL MINDORO

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro (PIA) — The National Irrigation Administration (NIA) in MIMAROPA works to strengthen its operations with the recent deployment of a new fleet of vehicles and heavy equipment in Oriental Mindoro.

NIA MIMAROPA noted that the delivery was in time with the simultaneous ceremonial turnover of equipment led by President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. held in Taguig City on June 2, marking the latest phase of the agency's ongoing Re-fleeting Program, said in an agency's press release.

The third tranche of the initiative delivered a range of operational and maintenance vehicles to the MIMAROPA regional

office, which arrived at the agency's facilities in Bayanan II, Calapan City.

The newly acquired equipment includes a mini-bus, a survey vehicle, a motor grader, three loaders with backhoe, seven dump trucks and two self-loading trucks.

According to NIA MIMAROPA Regional Manager Ronilio M. Cervantes, the fleet expansion will improve the irrigation project implementation, maintenance and emergency response in the whole region.

"This re-fleeting effort is not just about machinery, it's about empowering our farmers and strengthening our food systems amid the growing threats of climate change," Cervantes said.

The upgraded fleet will allow NIA personnel to clear irrigation canals, repair aging infrastructure and transport heavy machinery with greater efficiency—tasks that are increasingly urgent as extreme weather events become more frequent.

Meanwhile, the addition of mini-buses will enhance staff mobility, enabling more effective field inspections and coordination between government agencies. Cervantes expressed his appreciation to President Marcos and NIA Administrator Eduardo Eddie G. Guillen for the continued support.

"This investment will directly benefit our farmers, particularly in remote areas by ensuring reliable irrigation services

ARTA: PH'S COMPETITIVENESS RANKING INDICATION OF REGULATORY REFORMS

MANILA — The Philippines' improved ranking in the 2025 World Competitiveness Yearbook is an indication of the country's ongoing commitment to regulatory reform and enhancing public sector performance, the Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA) said.

The Philippines recently ranked 51st out of 69 economies in the 2025 World Competitiveness Yearbook (WCY) by the Switzerland-based International Institute for Management Development (IMD).

This was an improvement from the previous 52nd ranking.

"This positive trajectory reflects our unwavering commitment to reform, resilience, and progress," ARTA said in a statement on Friday.

The Government Efficiency pillar—one of the four core components of the WCY framework—continues to be a fundamental strength for the Philippines.

ARTA said that while the country's ranking experienced a slight adjustment from 49th to 51st, the performance remains stable amid intensifying global competition.

"Encouragingly, significant strides have been made in the government's management of taxes and public funds. These improvements underscore efforts to sustain economic stability, ensure prudent fiscal management, and guarantee that public services effectively reach those who need them most," ARTA said.

"At the same time, we recognize the structural challenges that remain."

The 2025 WCY highlighted concerns, particularly in start-up procedures (67th), bureaucracy (60th), and rule of law (62nd).

ARTA said these rankings reinforce the urgency of strengthening regulatory transparency, minimizing

administrative burdens, and enhancing institutional accountability.

According to ARTA, policy interventions are already underway.

Executive Order No. 59, which streamlines permitting processes for infrastructure flagship projects, and Executive Order No. 18, which establishes Green Lanes for strategic investments, are crucial steps in creating a more investor-friendly business climate.

ARTA, in collaboration with government institutions, the private sector, and international development partners such as the World Bank Group, also developed the Philippine Ease of Doing Business (EODB) Reform Guidebook, a policy document that provides a comprehensive roadmap for optimizing the business regulatory landscape.

The Guidebook identifies and prioritizes critical reforms affecting the business climate; provides a detailed implementation roadmap, including responsible agencies, timelines, and key deliverables; and serves as a unified reference document for policymakers, regulators, and development partners to drive sustained improvements in the country's business environment.

"We call on all branches and levels of government and the private sector to reaffirm their commitment to reform. Through whole-of-government collaboration, strategic policy coherence, and unwavering political will, we can elevate the Philippines' global standing—not just in rankings, but in the real, tangible progress felt by our citizens, entrepreneurs, and investors in the Bagong Pilipinas," ARTA said. (PNA) **BY ANNA LEAH GONZALES**

BSP: MAY 2025 GIR REMAINS HEALTHY

MANILA — The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) said the country's balance of payments (BOP) position recorded a deficit in May but the gross international reserves (GIR) remain healthy.

In a statement late Thursday, the BSP said the country's BOP posted a deficit of USD298 million, reflecting the national government's drawdowns on its foreign currency deposits with the BSP to service external debt obligations.

The BOP summarizes a country's economic transactions with the rest of the world for a specific period.

The overall position can be in surplus, deficit, or balance.

As a result, the year-to-date BOP shifted from a USD1.6 billion surplus in January to May 2024 to a USD5.8 billion deficit in January to May 2025.

"Preliminary data indicate that the year-to-date BOP deficit was largely due to the continued trade in goods deficit," the BSP said.

Based on preliminary data from the Philippine Statistics Authority, the

trade deficit for January to April settled at USD15.91 billion.

The BSP, however, said the decline was partly muted by the sustained net inflows from personal remittances from overseas Filipinos, foreign borrowings by the national government, and foreign portfolio investments.

The BOP position mirrored the slight drop in the country's GIR, which decreased from USD105.3 billion in April to USD105.2 billion in May.

"Despite the modest decline, the GIR level remains a strong external liquidity buffer, sufficient to cover 7.1 months' worth of imports of goods and payments of services and primary income," the BSP said.

"Additionally, it covers approximately 3.3 times the country's short-term external debt based on residual maturity."

The GIR is viewed to be adequate if it can finance at least three months' worth of the country's imports of goods and payments of services and primary income. (PNA) **BY ANNA LEAH GONZALES**

PH ECONOMY REMAINS RESILIENT DESPITE GEOPOLITICAL TENSIONS—BPI

MANILA — The Philippine economy remains resilient despite renewed geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, BPI Securities Corporation said.

In a report on Thursday, BPI Securities said improved domestic supply conditions and stable inflation would help anchor investor sentiment.

"Tensions between Israel and Iran undoubtedly pose risks to the global economy," BPI Securities president and chief executive officer Mark Race said.

"As a major oil importer, the Philippines is exposed to price shocks. However, we take a measured view—year-to-date, the key inflation drivers for the early second quarter reflect

moderation, particularly in food and utility costs, and easing transport prices."

Race said improved rice supply helped temper food inflation.

"Year-on-year rice prices are down by more than 11%, and that has a meaningful impact on overall inflation expectations for the rest of the year," he said.

On the equities front, Race said that despite external pressures, the Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi) remains technically supported.

"We continue to trade above the 6,300 level, with 6,500 acting as immediate resistance. Over the next two weeks, we expect the PSEi to remain within this band. However, our longer-term outlook is constructive

GOV'T EXTENDS FINANCING AID TO 1K FARMERS IN BUKIDNON

MANILA—The government has extended financing assistance to 1,000 farmers in Bukidnon through state-owned Land Bank of the Philippines' (LandBank) enhanced AGRISENSO Plus program, empowering them to boost productivity and livelihoods.

In a statement, the Department of Finance (DOF) said the distribution was led by Finance Secretary and LandBank Chairman Ralph Recto, LandBank President Lynette Ortiz, Bukidnon Governor Neil Roque, Department of Agriculture Undersecretary Roger Navarro on Friday in Malaybalay, Bukidnon.

AGRISENSO Plus, or the Agriculture Growth and Resource Integration through Strategic and Enhanced Delivery of Support and Opportunities, is LandBank's value chain-based financing program designed to empower small farmers, fishers, agrarian reform beneficiaries, and agri-micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) with better access to credit, capacity-building, and market linkages.

The program is in line with President Ferdinand

R. Marcos, Jr.'s goal to boost the agriculture sector, accelerate rural development, and strengthen the country's food security.

"Ang programang ito ng LandBank at ni Pangulong Bongbong Marcos Jr. ay isang konkreto at inklusibong sagot sa matagal niyo nang panawagan na tulong pinansyal (This program by LandBank and President Bongbong Marcos Jr. is a concrete and inclusive response to your long-standing call for financial assistance)," Recto said.

Launched in May 2024 and upgraded in October of the same year, AGRISENSO Plus finances agri-fishery needs—from crop and fisheries production to the acquisition of farm machinery, pre- and post-harvest facilities, and pond development.

The program integrates financing with skills training, market access, and innovation adoption.

A key component of the program is the Agri-Fishery Support through Capability Enhancement for Nationwide Development (ASCEND), which delivers tailored capacity-building support to ensure sustainable and profitable agri-business ventures.

As of May 2025, AGRISENSO Plus has disbursed PHP1.16 billion in loans, benefitting 6,853 borrowers and helping finance over 21,000 hectares of farmland within just six months.

LandBank aims to bring the program to at least 10,000 new beneficiaries by the end of the year, as part of the government's broader push to modernize and uplift rural livelihoods.

"Lahat po kami ay nandito para makinig, umalalay, at tumugon sa inyong mga pangangailangan (We are here to listen, support, and respond to your needs). As your true partners in progress, our goal is to further strengthen our agriculture sector so that we may all advance and prosper together," Ortiz said. (PNA) **BY ANNA LEAH GONZALES**



BATAAN AIMS TO BECOME PREMIER TRIATHLON DESTINATION

MANILA – Bataan is gearing up for the first 5150 FAB Triathlon on Nov. 16, a milestone event that aims to make the province a top-level sports tourism destination.

The province is known for its pivotal role in World War II through the Battle of Bataan and the Bataan Death March.

The 5150 FAB Triathlon, organized by Sunrise Events, Inc., features an Olympic distance format of 1.5-km swim, 40-km bike ride and 10-km run.

"The 5150 FAB Triathlon reflects our strong belief in the Freeport's capacity to

become a hub for world-class sporting events.

It's an opportunity to showcase not just our world-class facilities, but also Bataan's stunning coastal landscapes and the indomitable community spirit that defines our people," said Freeport Area of Bataan (FAB) Administrator and CEO Hussein Pangandaman in a press statement on Friday.

"This triathlon is a catalyst for economic activity and tourism growth in Bataan. It's a springboard to our goal of becoming a top-tier sports tourism destination,"

he added.

Mariveles and the Freeport Area of Bataan, with a unique combination of challenging terrain, scenic views of the sea and mountains, and well-developed infrastructure, are emerging as strong contenders to rival established triathlon venues like Subic, Puerto Princesa and Cebu.

The 5150 FAB Triathlon offers wide-open roads, fresh air, and coastal vistas that promise both a physical test and a scenic experience. (PNA) **BY JEAN MALANUM**

RISING SOON: DORMITORY FOR NAT'L ACADEMY OF SPORTS STUDENT-ATHLETES

MANILA – Filipino student-athletes are set to receive a game-changing upgrade with the planned construction of a Student-Athletes' Dormitory at the National Academy of Sports (NAS) in New Clark City, Tarlac.

Speaking at the celebration of the institution's fifth anniversary on Wednesday, Department of Budget and Management (DBM) Secretary Amenah Pangandaman said the facility will house up to 400 promising athletes in quad-sharing rooms with separate male and female wings—ensuring they have the safe, supportive environment needed to level up their training and studies.

"Malaking bagay po ito sa ating mga atleta (This will benefit our athletes). This facility is a major investment in the future of our youth and national athletes," Pangandaman

said in a news release Thursday.

She said the dormitory will include a dining hall, kitchen, recreational rooms, and laundry area—designed to keep athletes physically ready and mentally sharp as they chase medals for the country.

"We're not just giving them a roof over their heads. We are giving them a real home that supports their well-being, nutrition, and performance," Pangandaman added.

Construction is expected to start in January 2026 with the bidding process set to begin in August this year.

The project is a partnership between DBM and the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA), which referred to NAS as a "critical component" of New Clark City's vision.

"Its world-class academy

reinforces our will to provide an environment where athletic prowess and academic achievement can flourish," said BCDA President and CEO Joshua Bingcang.

"By equipping our young athletes with the best possible resources and environment, we are not merely cultivating future champions; we are shaping the next generation of leaders."

Since opening in 2020 under Republic Act No. 11470, NAS has awarded full scholarships to talented young athletes covering tuition, lodging, meals, and gear.

The school recently produced its first batch of junior high school completers and currently supports 240 student-athletes for the 2025–2026 school year, many of whom are medal hopefuls for future international competitions.

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The 5150 FAB Triathlon offers wide-open roads, fresh air, and coastal vistas that promise both a physical test and a scenic experience. (PNA) **BY JEAN MALANUM**

PH LAWYER AGRA REACHES CAREER-HIGH NO. 159 IN PADEL WORLD RANKINGS

MANILA – Filipino lawyer Jessica Agra reached a career-best No. 159 in the International Padel Federation (FIP) world rankings after reaching the semifinal round of a Bronze category event in Bali, Indonesia last Sunday.

Agra and Russian partner Alena Vasileva, however, lost to second seeds Ainize Santamaria Landa of Spain and Angelina Neizvestnaya of Russia, 1-6, 4-6.

Santamaria Landa and Neizvestnaya also failed to secure the title after bowing to top seeds Carla Fito Fernandez and Patricia Araus Lopez of Spain, 1-6, 2-6, in their title

showdown.

Fito Fernandez and Araus Lopez defeated Japanese tandem Yoshino Kushima and Kae Tokumoto, 6-3, 6-2, in the semifinal.

"I'm happy I was able to play my third semifinal in a FIP Bronze tournament. The semifinal match was actually a rematch of my last FIP semifinal in Hong Kong where I played with the same partner, Alena Vasileva from Russia, and against the same opponents, Ainize Landa and Angelina Neizvestnaya," Agra said in an interview on Wednesday.

"We lost, 1-6, 4-6, and we were happy with how we played the second set but a bit disappointed since we performed better in the HK match where the score was 7-6, 4-6, 5-7. Could have done better but still very happy overall with the progress. It's always nice to play against girls at this level."

At No. 159 with 113 points, Agra is among three players from Asia in the Top 200, the others being No. 168 Kotomi Ozawa (101 points) and No. 189 Kae Tokumoto (79 points) of Japan.

"I can't believe I have reached this ranking at this point of my padel journey. What started out as something I wanted to do to stay active again after retiring from tennis in 2013 when I graduated

from college, turned into something that got me back into sports as a competitive athlete," the former top junior tennis player said.

"I really enjoy playing padel and I have been taking things one step at a time - trying out national tournaments, then trying regional ones and then now the FIP circuit this year. I feel really blessed that I'm able to get this far. Hopefully, I can still get better and reach the top 150 within the year," said Agra, a member of the Philippine Padel Association (PPA) founded by Alenna Dawn Magpantay.

Agra's next tournament is the FIP Bronze Reap Phuket by Asia Padel Events in Thailand this weekend. She will team up with Russian Anastasiia Ryzhova.

Agra was a quarterfinalist at the FIP Silver Melbourne (January), FIP Bronze Hong Kong and FIP Bronze Manila (March), and FIP Silver Dubai (April) this year.

She took the No. 1 spot in the Asia Pacific Padel Tour rankings in June 2024 with 2980 points after a runner-up finish with Spanish Maria Mayoral Estrada at the Bali Open in Indonesia. Padel, a racket sport of Mexican origin, is a mix of tennis and squash and is usually played in doubles on an enclosed court surrounded by walls of glass and metallic mesh. (PNA) **BY JEAN MALANUM**