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PROVINCIAL LEVEL MOST WANTED SA CAVITE, ARESTADO NG PULIS GENERAL TRIAS CCPS

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Lungsod ng Imus, Cavite – Isang Provincial Level Most Wanted Person na kabilang sa Top 5 ng Cavite ang naaresto ng Warrant Personnel ng General Trias Component City Police Station sa dakong 12:30 ng tanghali noong Mayo 15, 2025 sa Barangay Pinagtipunan, General Trias City, Cavite.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL Jaymar B Marbella, Hepe ng General Trias CCPS, ang suspek na si alyas Juben, at residente ng Brgy. Pinagtipunan, General Trias City, Cavite.

Ang matagumpay na operasyon ay naisagawa sa bisa ng warrant of arrest na inilabas ng Family Court, Fourth Judicial Region, Branch 5, Trece Martires City, Cavite, para sa kasong Acts of Lasciviousness in relation to R.A. 7610 (5 counts) na may docket numbers TMCR-505-25 hanggang TMCR-509-25, na may inirekomendang piyansang Php180,000.00 bawat kaso. Gamit ang Alternative Recording Device (ARD),

naisagawa nang maayos at dokumentado ang operasyon. Kasalukuyan nang nasa kustodiya ang suspek sa General Trias City Custodial Facility, Brgy. Bagumbayan, General Trias City, Cavite habang inihahanda ang mga kaukulang dokumento para sa pagsasauli ng warrant of arrest sa korte ng pinanggalingan.

Pinuri ni PLTCOL Marbella ang kasipagan at dedikasyon ng kanyang mga operatiba sa matagumpay na pagdakip sa akusado. "Patuloy tayong makikiisa sa layunin ng ating kapulisan na panatilihin ligtas ang ating komunidad at matuldukan ang mga gawain ng mga kriminal," aniya.

Ayon kay PCOL Dwight E Alegre, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite PPO, "Patuloy nating pinagbubuti ang mga operasyon laban sa mga taong nagtatago sa batas. Hinihikayat namin ang publiko na makiisa sa ating layunin—sapagkat sa Bagong Pilipinas, ang gusto ng Pulis — Ligtas ka!"

REGIONAL LEVEL MOST WANTED SA MUNISIPALIDAD NG GMA, ARESTADO

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Lungsod ng Imus, Cavite – Isang Regional Level Most Wanted Person ang naaresto ng pinagsanib na puwersa ng Carmona Component City Police Station dakong alas-5:40 ng hapon noong Mayo 15, 2025 sa Barangay San Gabriel, GMA, Cavite.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL JACK E ANGOG, Acting Chief of Police ng Carmona CCPS, ang suspek na si alyas Lorenz, residente ng Brgy. Acacia, Silang, Cavite.

Ang operasyon ay naisagawa sa pamamagitan ng koordinadong aksyon ng Warrant Operatives at duty WCPD ng Carmona CCPS, gamit ang dalawang (2) Alternative Recording

Devices (ARDs). Naaresto ang akusado batay sa kasong Rape sa ilalim ng Article 266-A(1) ng Revised Penal Code, Criminal Case No. CAR-2025-205, at Sexual Assault sa ilalim ng Article 266-A(2) ng RPC. Ang Warrant of Arrest ay inilabas noong Mayo 9, 2025, ng Regional Trial Court, Branch 109, Carmona City, Cavite.

Walang inirekomendang piyansa para sa kasong Rape, habang ang Sexual Assault ay may piyansang Php200,000.00.

Sa kasalukuyan, nasa kustodiya na ng Carmona CCPS ang akusado at ang warrant of arrest ay isasauli sa nag-isyu nitong hukuman.

Pinuri ni PLTCOL ANGOG ang epektibong pagkilos

REGIONAL LEVEL MOST WANTED SA CAVITE, ARESTADO NG PULIS GEA SA LAGUNA

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Lungsod ng Imus, Cavite – Isang Regional Level Most Wanted Person ang naaresto ng Warrant Personnel ng General Emilio Aguinaldo Municipal Police Station (GEA MPS) dakong 11:40 ng umaga ng Mayo 15, 2025 sa Barangay San Rafael, San Pablo City, Laguna.

Kinilala ni PMAJ Hilario G Lacaste Jr, Hepe ng GEA MPS, ang suspek na si alyas Joshua, at residente ng Brgy. Lumipa, General E Aguinaldo, Cavite.

Ang matagumpay na operasyon ay naisagawa sa bisa ng warrant of arrest na inilabas ng Regional Trial Court, Branch 135, Tagaytay City, Cavite, para sa kasong Murder (Art. 248 ng Revised Penal Code) sa ilalim ng Criminal Case No. TG-25-348, may petsang Abril 28, 2025, na may walang inirekomendang piyansa. Gamit ang dalawang Alternative Recording Devices (ARD), naisagawa nang maayos at dokumentado ang operasyon. Samantala, ang suspek ay kasalukuyang nasa

kustodiya ng GEA MPS habang inihahanda ang mga kaukulang dokumento para sa pagsasauli ng Warrant of Arrest sa korte ng pinanggalingan.

Pinuri ni PMAJ LACASTE ang kasipagan at dedikasyon ng kanyang mga operatiba sa matagumpay na pagdakip sa akusado, na isa sa mga most wanted sa buong rehiyon. "Patuloy tayong makikiisa sa layunin ng ating kapulisan na matuldukan ang kriminalidad sa ating komunidad. Ang hustisya ay magsisimula sa pagpapanagot sa mga salarin," aniya.

Ayon kay PCOL DWIGHT E ALEGRE, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite PPO, "Patuloy nating pinagbubuti ang mga operasyon laban sa mga taong nagtatago sa batas. Hinihikayat namin ang publiko na makiisa sa ating layunin—sapagkat sa Bagong Pilipinas, ang gusto ng Pulis — Ligtas ka!"

MOST WANTED PERSON, PROVINCIAL LEVEL NABBED BY SILANG PNP

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City — In a successful police operation, personnel from the Warrant Section of the Silang Municipal Police Station arrested the Rank No. 8 Most Wanted Person at the provincial level on May 13, 2025, at around 6:45 PM in Barangay Anahaw 2, Silang, Cavite.

The operation was conducted in full compliance with standard operating procedures, including the use of an Alternative Recording Device. PLTCOL LOUIE DC GONZAGA, Chief of Police of Silang MPS, identified the arrested individual as alias Dario, resident of Barangay Anahaw 2, Silang, Cavite. The suspect was arrested by virtue of a Warrant of Arrest issued by the

P170K SHABU, NASABAT SA DASMARINAS CITY

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Lungsod ng Imus, Cavite – Dalawang Street Level Individuals ang naaresto ng mga operatiba ng City Drug Enforcement Unit ng Dasmariñas Component City Police Station sa isinagawang matagumpay na buy-bust operation dakong alas-7:30 ng gabi noong Mayo 13, 2025, sa Barangay Paliparan 1, Lungsod ng Dasmariñas City, Cavite.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL REGINO LARRAQUEL OÑATE, Hepe ng Dasmariñas CCPS, ang mga suspek na sina: alias "Eve" at "Herman", parehong residente ng Brgy. H2, Dasmariñas City, Cavite.

Ang operasyon ay naisagawa matapos ang koordinasyon sa PDEA. Naaresto ang mga suspek matapos magbenta ng hinihinalang shabu sa isang undercover na operatiba.

Nakumpiska mula sa mga

suspek ang sumusunod na ebidensya: apat (4) na heat-sealed transparent plastic sachets na naglalaman ng hinihinalang shabu, may kabuuang timbang na 25.00 gramo at tinatayang nagkakahalaga ng Php170,000.00 sa standard drug price.

Pinuri ni PLTCOL REGINO LARRAQUEL OÑATE ang kahusayan ng kanyang mga operatiba sa matagumpay na operasyon, sabay sabing, "Ang tagumpay na ito ay bunga ng masigasig at matatag na kampanya ng ating mga kapulisan laban sa ilegal na droga. Hindi tayo magpapatinag sa ating layuning gawing ligtas at drug-free ang ating komunidad."

Samantala, muling ipinaabot ni PCOL DWIGHT E ALEGRE, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite Police Provincial Office, ang kanyang buong suporta sa nagpapatuloy na anti-drug operations ng mga lokal na yunit ng pulisya sa lalawigan.

"Ang bawat operasyon ay patunay ng ating determinasyon na wakasan ang salot na droga sa Cavite. Nananawagan kami sa ating mga kababayan na patuloy na makipagtulungan sa pamamagitan ng pagbibigay ng impormasyon upang mas mapabilis pa ang ating mga aksyon," pahayag ni PCOL ALEGRE.

Ang mga naarestong suspek ay nasa kustodiya na ngayon ng Dasmariñas CCPS at mahaharap sa kasong paglabag sa Republic Act 9165 o Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002.

reinforces the unwavering commitment of the Cavite PNP in pursuing justice and ensuring the safety of the community by apprehending wanted individuals.

SSS, DICT PARTNER TO BOOST SERVICES IN REMOTE AREAS VIA E-WHEELS

LUCENA CITY, Quezon (PIA) — More enhanced Social Security System (SSS) services now await grassroots communities as the SSS and the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) team up for the SSS e-Wheels program.

Through this partnership, the DICT has equipped the SSS e-Wheels with free high-speed internet, enabling the delivery of SSS services to far-flung areas.

SSS Lucena Branch Head Frederick D. Isip explained that the partnership will strengthen the SSS e-Wheels program by ensuring seamless online services in areas with limited or no internet connectivity.

"This satellite internet technology directly addresses the challenges in remote locations, significantly improving system uptime and reducing client waiting time. This is a game-changer for SSS Lucena, as it allows us to bring our digital services closer to members," Isip said.

Covering 29 municipalities and two cities in Quezon Province, including geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDAs), Isip added that

SSS Lucena is now better equipped to provide uninterrupted digital services to its members.

SSS Lucena can now offer faster access to the My.SSS portal and SSS Mobile App, real-time processing of contributions (RTPC), membership applications, online registration, verification, and benefit consultations in last-mile communities.

"This initiative reflects our commitment to innovation and excellent public service, ensuring that no member is left behind due to connectivity challenges. We can now efficiently bring essential transactions closer to the people, making our services more accessible and reliable. In fact, we are set to conduct e-Wheels visits in the majority of towns and municipalities under the jurisdiction of SSS Lucena," Isip said.

He added that the partnership serves as great example of how interagency collaboration can truly make a difference.

"We thank the agency for their continued support, and we look forward to exploring more ways to work together to bring social security services closer to every Filipino," Isip said. **(PIA) BY RUEL ORINDAY**

ARMY GENERAL CALLS FOR CREATION OF COMMUNITY-BASED NSRC UNITS

CALAMBA CITY (PIA) — A ranking officer of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) emphasized the importance of civilian support in the registration of personnel for the National Service Reserve Corps (NSRC).

Brig. Gen. Ronald Jess Alcudia, commander of the 202nd Brigade of the Philippine Army, urged government agencies to support the formation of community-based NSRC units.

During a meeting with the Sectoral Committee, Alcudia cited a resolution of the Regional Peace and Order Council creating an interagency technical working group (TWG) for the registration of reservists in the region.

"This is something that has not been attempted in any region in the country, and CALABARZON will be the pilot test for the reservist registration. This is one way by which we can account for our reservists, and prepare for any contingency that may happen."

Formalized under Republic Act 9163, also known as the National Service Training Program (NSTP) Law, the NSRC is composed of graduates of the non-Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) components. These individuals may be tapped by the State for literacy and civic welfare activities.

"Based on this law, whatever program you take. You will become a part of the reserve force, including those who took ROTC, the Citizen Armed Force administered by the AFP, the CWTS (Civic Welfare Training Service) and LTS (Literacy Training Service) are members of the National Service Reserve Corps."

Its main functions include: assisting in disaster preparedness, mitigation, response, and rehabilitation; serve as auxiliary to disaster risk reduction and

management response units; assist in promoting civic welfare activities and implementation of literacy programs, to respond in case of national emergency, assist in environmental protection and, perform other functions given by higher DRRM authorities.

"This is where our community-based NSRC units, the graduates of our CWTS and LTS may be asked to volunteer and serve their communities in times of need."

Graduates of the CWTS and LTS programs make up approximately 85 percent of students graduating from state universities and colleges.

Alcudia added: "Unfortunately, 22 years into the implementation of the NSTP [law], we have not seen the NSRC wherever there are calamities and disasters. This is the thrust of the Office of Civil Defense."

"Because of the absence of the NSRC, in many cases it is the graduates of the ROTC who provide the augmentation to local government units for disaster response."

Citing Resolution No. 2025-003 of the CALABARZON Regional Peace and Order Council, Alcudia stated that Region 4A has been designated as the pilot area for the initiative, which will be spearheaded by city and municipal treasurers.

"There is a need right now to look back on the intent of the law, so we can look at how we can tap the graduates of the NSTP for disaster response missions. This is because of the current developments in the security environment, and the Armed Forces of the Philippines and our reserve force are more into military defense preparedness and training."

The official noted: "We need to have a civilian reserve that our local government units can rely on during times of disaster and calamities."

During the School Year 2021-2022, around 259,595 students graduated from the NSTP in the CALABARZON and MIMAROPA regions. **(PB/PIA4A) BY PATRICIA BERMUDEZ**

EDITORIAL

'Vacation Scam' kalat ngayong bakasyon

Mahigpit na pinag-iingat ng mga awtoridad ang publiko dahil sa mga kumakalat na 'vacation scam' kung saan mayroong mga fake pages ng mga resort at humihingi kaagad ng bayad.

Sa mga ganitong klaseng bakasyon ay nahuhulog ang mga mamamayan sa pagpunta sa iba't-ibang pasyalan lalo pa at kasabay ng mga ito ay ang summer. Kaya naman, hindi magkamayaw ang mga tao sa paghahanap ng mga resort o paliguan sapagka't ito ang isa sa mga pinakasikat na gawain tuwing nagkakaroong ng pagkakataon na magbakasyon. Ngunit sa panahon ngayon ay hindi na rin limitado ang mga taong sinasamantala ang kasabikan ng mga bakasyonista.

Narapat na maging maingat at mapanuri sa mga binubook online. Bago magbayad o mag-inquire ay dapat na magtanong-tanong at icheck kung totoo ba ang mga reviews at ipinopost ng mga resorts online. Ngayong, kahit marami ang likes ng mga page ay hindi maiwasang parte ito ng scam

DTI QUEZON BRINGS BUSINESS SERVICES IN INFANTA

INFANTA, Quezon (PIA) — Local entrepreneurs in Infanta recently gained access to a wide array of government services as the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) — Quezon Provincial Office rolled out its "i-HAYIN ang Serbisyo Caravan" in the municipality.

Spearheaded through the collaboration of the of Infanta municipal government, national agencies, and partner organizations, the caravan empowered residents by providing accessible, on-the-ground public services.

Ella Queen V. Aguelo, Business Counselor at the Negosyo Center-Infanta, represented DTI Quezon and actively participated in the caravan by delivering essential services to support local entrepreneurs.

Aguelo facilitated

online business name registration, provided personalized business advisory services, and served as a point of contact for addressing a wide range of DTI-related questions and concerns.

Through these efforts, Aguelo ensured that clients had direct access to accurate information and guidance on DTI programs and services.

"The participation of DTI Quezon underscores a shared mission to strengthen communities by promoting entrepreneurship, supporting micro, small, and medium enterprises and facilitating ease of doing business," Aguelo said.

Through collaboration, accessible services, and sustained community engagement, the Infanta local government and DTI

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DAR CANCELS OVER P500K UNPAID AMORTIZATIONS FOR 220 CEBU FARMERS

MANILA – A total of 220 agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) in Cebu province were relieved from paying some PHP502,468 in unpaid amortizations under the condonation program of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR).

In a news release on Thursday, Agrarian Reform Secretary Conrado Estrella III said the condonation covered a total of 170.382 hectares of agricultural land across the municipalities of Pinamungajan, with 157 ARBs; Toledo City, with 52 ARBs; and Aloguinsan, with 11 ARBs.

"This is not just about land, it's about giving our farmers a better life," he said.

Estrella stressed the importance of empowering farmers by freeing them from decades of debt.

Farmer Bienvenido

Tango-an of Pinamungajan was among those who celebrated the milestone. "Malipay gyud ko. Sa wakas, dili na mi mobayad sa Land Bank (I'm truly happy. Finally, we don't have to pay to the Land Bank of the Philippines anymore)," he said.

The debt relief is part of the implementation of Republic Act 11953, or the New Agrarian Emancipation Act, which was signed into law by President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. on July 7, 2023.

The law aims to condone over PHP57 billion in unpaid amortizations, benefitting more than 600,000 ARBs across the country.

DAR said with their debts canceled, these Cebu farmers are now better positioned to invest in their livelihoods, improve farm productivity, and support their families' future. **(PNA)**

BY MARITA MOAJE

NEW LAW ADDRESSES CHILD DEATHS WITH EARLY CARE ACCESS

MANILA – A lawmaker on Thursday said the newly signed Early Childhood Care and Development System (ECCD) Act will help reduce infant and child mortality by ensuring access to proper health and nutrition from pregnancy through early childhood.

Las Piñas Representative Camille Villar lauded President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s signing of Republic Act No. 12199, which aims to institutionalize a comprehensive approach to early childhood care.

"This law will boost our government's policies in nurturing our children, from birth to toddler years. I am glad that this law saw the light of day," Villar said. Villar, who is one of the law's principal authors in the House of

Representatives, said the new law would ensure that adequate health and nutrition programs are accessible to young children and their parents and parent-substitutes, from the prenatal period throughout the early childhood year.

"The development of children, from birth to their toddler years, is important. Sadly, many Filipino families are unable to fully take care of these needs due to various reasons," she said.

RA No. 12199, according to Villar, aims to safeguard and promote the right of every child to holistic well-being, growth, and dedicated care, recognizing the age-appropriate stages of development.

Under the new law, the government commits to create nurturing environments for children that ensure a healthy and sustainable program for nutrition, age-appropriate development, and special protection with full recognition of the nature of childhood.

It also assigns primary implementation responsibilities to local government units, including creating ECCD offices, establishing plantilla positions for child development teachers (CDTs) and workers (CDWs), and providing essential resources.

To address the long-standing issues of underemployment and low pay, RA 12199 mandates professionalizing ECCD workers, setting qualifications, training, certification, and salary standards.

Villar is poised to join the Senate in the 20th Congress based on partial unofficial results of the May 12 elections as of Thursday afternoon. **(PNA) BY FILANE MIKEE CERVANTES**

BIG CASINOS TERMINATE 2 JUNKET OPERATORS LINKED TO QUE KIDNAPPING

MANILA – The Philippine National Police (PNP) said six big casinos terminated the operations of the two junket operators linked to the kidnapping of businessman Anson Que.

In a press briefing at Camp Olivas in San Fernando City, Pampanga on Thursday, PNP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Jean Fajardo said the six casinos made the decision due to the junket operators' possible violation of laws.

The PNP previously alleged that junket operators 9 Dynasty Group and White Horse Club facilitated a money laundering operation involving approximately PHP200 million ransom paid for the release of Que, also known as Anson Tan.

On Monday, the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC) said it has started a probe into the alleged money laundering of the ransom money paid.

The AMLC said the ransom monies were originally paid in Philippine peso and US dollars but were later converted to cryptocurrency.

Que and his driver, Armanie Pabillo went missing on March 29 after leaving the former's office in Valenzuela City. The following day, Que's family received a ransom demand of USD20 million through a phone chat application.

Their bodies were found by a roadside in Rodriguez, Rizal on April 9. **(PNA) BY CHRISTOPHER LLOYD CALIWAN**

NEW RULES ON CLAIMS FOR VICTIMS OF VIOLENT CRIMES, UNJUST IMPRISONMENT

MANILA – The Department of Justice (DOJ) on Thursday announced the adoption of the revised implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of the Board of Claims (DOJ-BOC) for victims of unjust imprisonment and victims of violent crimes.

Justice officials said the need to fine tune the coverage of the program is long overdue as Republic Act No. 7309, which created the DOJ-BOC, was passed in 1992.

The revision in the IRR broadens the scope of crimes and beneficiaries covered within the law while streamlining the process of claims for victims of unjust imprisonment/

detention and other forms of injustices attuned to the demands of modern times. Under the DOJ-BOC's Victims Compensation Program, among those qualified for compensation are those accused and detained and who were subsequently cleared on appeal; those unjustly detained without being charged; victims of forced detention by authorities; victims of violent crimes, involuntary disappearances, and online sexual abuse or

exploitation of children; trafficked persons; and victims of torture.

A claimant or spouse, child, parent or sibling must file a claim with the DOJ or the nearest regional, provincial or city prosecutor within six months after being freed from detention or from the date where the crime or injury was experienced.

"Those whose lives were disrupted, freedoms taken and security violated would have a mechanism that adopts, listens and responds to their evolving needs," Justice Secretary Jesus Crispin Remulla said in a message read by Undersecretary Raul Vasquez at the DOJ building in Manila.

"The collective efforts towards the effective implementation of RA 7309 ensures that compensation processes are more transparent and inclusive consistent with the DOJ's mantra of providing real justice in real time," Remulla said.

The signing of the IRR coincides with the 33rd Anniversary of the BOC which marks this ceremonial signing as a milestone in the DOJ's relentless pursuit for justice. **(PNA) BY BENJAMIN PULTA**

FTI, NFA ADDRESS LOGISTICS HICCUPS FOR P20/KG RICE PROGRAM EXPANSION

MANILA – The Food and Terminal Inc. (FTI) and the National Food Authority (NFA) on Thursday assured that efforts are in place to resolve "logistics hiccups" for the expansion of the PHP20 per kilogram rice program in the country.

The program, dubbed "Benteng Bigas Meron Na," is being rolled out in 32 Kadiwa ng Pangulo (KNP) Centers and stalls in Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

The rollout in Luzon started on May 13 after the Department of Agriculture (DA) adhered to the assistance ban 10 days before the May 12 midterm elections.

The pilot rollout of the P20/kg rice program was held in Cebu on May 1.

In a media interview, FTI president Joseph Lo said they are continuously procuring trucks and other vehicles for easier delivery of NFA rice stocks from warehouses to KNP sites.

"Ongoing naman po iyong mga improvements na ginagawa natin katulad sa mga meetings natin weekly (The improvements that we are doing like in our weekly meetings are ongoing)," he said.

To date, he said, 15 out of the 30 target vehicles have already been purchased for the three-phase implementation of the program nationwide.

For Luzon alone, Lo said they need 30 drivers; while talks with other local government units (LGUs) are underway to plan logistics setup in Visayas and Mindanao.

For its part, the NFA said it is working on the flexibility of shipment delivery for NFA rice stocks.

"So, I'm making the contract na medyo (somehow) flexible. So kung manggagaling ng Mindoro, dapat pwede siyang maka-deliver kahit saan (So, if it will come from Mindoro, it

should be allowed to deliver anywhere else)," said NFA Administrator Larry Lacson, citing that shipment of NFA stocks is part of their operational costs.

The NFA has started unloading 35,000 bags of NFA soon-to-age and aging well-milled rice in Cebu port from Mindoro, with the next batch of the same volume being prepped.

To date, Lacson said there are 400,000 bags of NFA rice allocated for the pilot rollout in the Visayas region, while some 248,000 bags are available in the Valenzuela warehouse for the distribution in Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

The DA said it will expand the program in 55 KNP sites in Metro Manila in June and roll out its Phase 2 and Phase 3 in July and September, respectively, which will include areas in Mindanao. **(PNA) BY STEPHANIE SEVILLANO**

TESDA, GCASH PARTNER TO EXPAND ONLINE COURSES REACH

MANILA – The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) announced Thursday the partnership it reached with GCash to expand the agency's online program's reach.

With the recent partnership, GCash users could view the TESDA Online Program (TOP) website through the GCash app's GJobs icon, making more people aware of the courses.

"Through the partnership, learners will be able to access industry-relevant courses and effortlessly explore employment opportunities via GJobs, powered by PasaJob. By linking skills development with job accessibility, this collaboration will help Filipinos move efficiently from education to workforce readiness, supporting their long-term career growth," TESDA said in a news release.

"By integrating TESDA's programs within the

GCash platform, we are empowering individuals with the tools they need to build financial independence and secure meaningful job opportunities in the digital economy," G-Xchange Inc. vice president and head of Innovations Leonardo Ferdinand Byron Perez was quoted as saying.

TESDA and GCash will also conduct consultative meetings to explore how financial technology tools and innovations can improve TOP and digital learning.

"Through this collaboration with GCash, we can reach more Filipinos and equip them with the industry-relevant skills and opportunities they need to succeed in today's evolving job market," TESDA Secretary Francisco Benitez said.

TOP offers 187 courses and is accessible via e-tesda.gov.ph. **(PNA) BY MA. CRISTINA ARAYATA**

LTO SUSPENDS LICENSE OF BUS DRIVER IN EDSA MULTIPLE COLLISION

MANILA – The Land Transportation Office (LTO) has temporarily suspended the license of a bus driver involved in a multiple vehicle collision near EDSA Quezon Avenue on Wednesday.

In a statement on Thursday, Department of Transportation (DOTr) Secretary Vince Dizon said the suspension is in line with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s directive to ensure the safety and comfort of commuters and other road users.

"Kung kinakailangan na i-suspende lahat ng license ng mga driver at prangkisa ng mga operators na pabaya sa daan at the expense of our commuters and road users, we will do it. We will keep on doing this until matuto at magtino lahat (If we need to suspend the licenses of all drivers and franchises of

operators who are careless on the road at the expense of commuters and road users, we will do it. We will keep on doing this until they learn)," Dizon said.

He lauded the LTO's immediate issuance of a show cause order (SCO) against the driver identified as Albeth Gemina and the bus operator Diamond V-Eight Transport Inc.

He warned other public utility vehicles (PUV) drivers and operators that endangering commuters and other road users will face heavy penalties.

At around 6 a.m. on Wednesday, a multiple collision occurred near EDSA Quezon Avenue involving a motorcycle, a UV Express, and a passenger bus.

According to the SCO issued by the LTO, the bus hit the rear portion of the UV Express, causing it

NBI RAIDS YIELD P55-M IN COUNTERFEIT LUXURY GOODS

MANILA – The National Bureau of Investigation Intellectual Property Rights Division (NBI-IPRD) on Thursday reported that PHP55 million worth of counterfeit products have been seized in a series of operations conducted on May 6-7 in Parañaque, Malabon and Manila.

The seizures followed multiple search warrants served for violation of Section 155 (Trademark Infringement) and Section 168 (Unfair Competition) in relation to Section 170 of Republic Act 8293 or the Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines.

The cases stemmed from complaints filed by lawyers and representatives of Oakley, Gucci and Yves Saint Laurent.

On May 6, a search warrant was implemented against AJS Online and/

or Sarigayo Online Store in Parañaque, resulting in the seizure of 1,083 pieces of counterfeit products bearing the "Oakley" trademark with an estimated value of PHP3,556,500.

On May 7, search warrants were enforced against four stores in Binondo, Manila and a warehouse located in Malabon City, resulting in the confiscation of 1,024 pieces of fake "Gucci" and "Yves Saint Laurent" products with an estimated value of PHP51, 646,470.

NBI Director Jaime Santiago reminded the public to refrain from patronizing counterfeit products to give due protection to the rights of intellectual property owners and enhance the country's economic growth. **(PNA) BY BENJAMIN PULTA**

DBM CHIEF VOWS TO PROTECT WOMEN PDL' RIGHTS

MANILA – Department of Budget and Management (DBM) Secretary Amenah Pangandaman has underscored the need to respect and uphold the human rights of women persons deprived of liberty (PDL).

This, as she paid a visit to women PDL at the Correctional Institution for Women (CIW) in Mandaluyong City on Wednesday, according to the DBM's statement posted on its official Facebook page on Thursday.

During her visit to the CIW, Pangandaman assured them that they will not be left behind and will not be denied their rights as women.

"Ang sabi nila (They say), 'Women in prison are often invisible to society.' Hindi po tayo papayag dito (We will not allow this),"

to be pushed forward and collide with the motorcycle. At least four persons were injured in the incident. **(PNA) BY RAYMOND CARL DELA CRUZ**

Pangandaman, as quoted by the DBM, said.

"The promise of our President [Ferdinand] Bongbong Marcos [Jr.] and the promise of the New Philippines, we can achieve progress if all members of society are included – especially women."

Pangandaman also visited the institution's infirmary, PDL work and livelihood products facilities, religious facilities, educational facilities, and the bakery.

The visit was in collaboration with SPARK! Philippines, a partner of the DBM in promoting inclusive governance and women empowerment.

Pangandaman was accompanied by DBM Undersecretaries Wilford Wong and Margaux Salcedo, DBM Assistant Secretaries Mary Anne Dela Vega and Diana Camacho-Mercado, CIW acting Superintendent Marjorie Ann Sanidad, and SPARK! Philippines Executive Director Mikaela Luisa Carmen Teves.

(PNA) BY RUTH ABBEY GITA-CARLOS

PH COMMITS MORE FORCES FOR UN PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS

MANILA – Department of National Defense (DND) Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. has expressed the Philippines' commitment to deploy more Filipino troops in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions worldwide.

He made this commitment during the Pledging Session I-Training and Capacity Building, Partnership, Cross-Cutting Issues of the 2025 UN Peacekeeping Ministerial in Berlin, Germany, on Wednesday (local time).

"As a trusted partner, innovative pathfinder, and committed peacemaker, the Philippines supports all efforts to revitalize and further strengthen peacekeeping missions. We are prepared to expand our participation and help shape the future of peacekeeping," Teodoro said.

The DND chief added that peacekeeping is one of the clearest symbols of the UN's promise to protect people and preserve peace.

"We honor the more than 70,000 UN peacekeepers—women and men—who serve under challenging conditions worldwide," Teodoro said.

He also committed to increasing the number of Filipino peacekeepers deployed globally in the years to come.

"In this regard, we are honored to announce our new pledges: the deployment of one light infantry battalion and one formed police unit under the UN Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System. The Philippines will also continue to deploy military observers and individual police officers and to support staff offices of United Nations missions worldwide," he added.

Teodoro said these contributions build upon the Philippines' existing pledges, which include a quick reaction force company and a military construction engineering company.

"On new peacekeeping models, there must be a

clear outcome when we engage in a peacekeeping mission, and that political outcome must be based on and in line with the United Nations Charter," he added.

Teodoro also reiterated that the Philippines will continue to deploy military and police personnel in any area while taking into consideration their effectiveness in fulfilling the mandate of their deployment.

While doing so, the DND chief stressed that all Filipino personnel continue to uphold the highest standards of conduct and professionalism in fulfilling their mandates.

"Finally, we are honored to announce that the Philippines will host the 2025 ASEAN Peacekeeping Staff Exercise this September, underscoring our dedication to fostering regional cooperation and strengthening partnerships between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations," Teodoro said.

Aside from this, the DND chief said the country reaffirmed its commitment to support the UN's capacity-building initiatives.

"To this end, we pledge to host the United Nations Triangular Partnership Programme Training Courses in the ASEAN region in the Calendar Year 2029 to 2030. We also pledge to provide certified military mobile training teams to enhance peacekeeper preparedness in addressing both emerging and persistent challenges," he added.

Teodoro also said the Philippines strongly supports the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in peacekeeping.

"We are proud to meet the Secretary-General's 2025 targets under the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy, and as part of our continued commitment, we pledge to increase the deployment of women peacekeepers across all roles," he added. **(PNA) BY PRIAM NEPOMUCENO**

DPWH WIDENS BRIDGE, BOOST CONNECTIVITY IN MINDORO

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro (PIA) — The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) has completed the widening of the Burabod Bridge along Calapan South Road in Mansalay town, improving connectivity and safety for residents and visitors in the municipalities of Mansalay and Bulalacao.

According to District Engineer Annielyn E. Padullo, the completion of the bridge project, which adds two new lanes, aims to accommodate the increasing volume of vehicles and tourists in the area.

Padullo added that the infrastructure upgrade is part of the national government's ongoing efforts to promote rural development under the administration of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.

Key components of the project include the expansion of the bridge's carriageway, construction of approach slabs, retaining walls, a dedicated bike lane and the installation of guardrails to enhance safety for all road users.

"This project will not only provide a safer and more

efficient route for motorists but also contribute to the economic growth of Mansalay and its surrounding communities," said Padullo.

In a statement, DPWH MIMAROPA said that the improved bridge is expected to facilitate the transport of goods and services, especially benefiting remote barangays and neighboring towns.

It added that the widened bridge stands as a testament to the government's commitment to infrastructure development and regional progress, ensuring that even the most remote communities are connected and accessible.

In a Facebook post, Andro Santiago, a resident and motorists from Mansalay town expressed his gratitude to DPWH MIMAROPA saying, "Maraming salamat po DPWH Mimaropa region."

Tunay na kaginhawaan ang hatid ng pagpapalawak ng tulay para sa mga motorista sa Southern Mindoro." **(ALG/PIA MIMAROPA-ORIENTAL MINDORO/PHOTO FROM DPWH MIMAROPA)**
BY ARIEL GAA

DIALYSIS CENTER OPENS IN LANA DEL SUR

MARAWI CITY (PIA) — A new dialysis center was recently opened at the Dr. Serapio B. Montaner, Jr. Al-Haj Memorial Hospital (Malabang District Hospital) in Malabang, Lanao del Sur, giving residents access to critical renal care without the need to travel to the provincial capital or outside the province.

This is the first dialysis center in the province operated under the Ministry of Health of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (MOH-BARMM). The facility, equipped with 10 dialysis machines, was established through the MOH-BARMM Health Facility Enhancement Program.

"This is a testament that we can do beyond dreaming. This is a realization of a dream come true. Matagal nating inasam ito at ngayon nagkatotoo na. This is actually a pride of the Bangsamoro region," said BARMM Health Minister Dr. Kadir M. Sinolinding, Jr.

The hospital has also opened additional units, including a Public Health Unit, an Acute Stroke Unit,

a 2D Echocardiography Section (2D Echo), and a Microbiology Section.

The hospital offers free medical services such as surgeries, diagnostic tests, and medicines. The dialysis unit is expected to ease the burden on patients who previously had to travel to urban centers for treatment.

Dr. Alinader Minalang, head of the Integrated Provincial Health Office, said the new enhancements at the Malabang District Hospital will significantly impact health outcomes, particularly for the poor and marginalized sectors.

"Through these initiatives, we are ensuring that no one is left behind in our journey to good health. This aligns with the Universal Health Care goals of equitable and quality healthcare for all Filipinos," he said.

Originally established in 1981 as the Malabang Emergency Hospital with 10 beds, the Malabang District Hospital is now licensed as a 150-bed Level 1 General Hospital. **(APB/PIA-10/LANA DEL SUR) BY APIPA P BAGUMBARAN**

NEW ROADS IMPROVE COMMUNITIES IN SURIGAO DEL SUR TOWN

CORTES, Surigao del Sur (PIA) — The team from the Department of Agriculture — Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP) Caraga recently visited the completed subprojects in Surigao del Sur to assess their sustainability and long-term impact on beneficiary communities, including the Poblacion—Manlico—Uba farm-to-market road (FMR) in Cortes, Surigao del Sur.

Completed in 2020, the 7.2-kilometer road project significantly transformed the everyday lives of residents, particularly farmers and fisherfolk. It reduced their travel time from four hours to just thirty minutes, enabling faster delivery of goods and access to wider markets.

Jures T. Tubo, a barangay kagawad from Capandan, shared how the newly improved road gave hope

DEPED INTENSIFIES DRIVE TO BRING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH BACK TO LEARNING

KIDAPAWAN CITY, Cotabato Province (PIA) — The Department of Education's (DepED) Alternative Learning System (ALS) program continues to provide opportunities for out-of-school youth and adult learners, particularly those who have not completed basic education, including senior high school.

Jocelyn Ordinario, the ALS focal person at the DepEd Schools Division Office (SDO) in Cotabato, stated that the ALS program in the division has experienced significant growth in recent years.

The program has grown from three schools offering senior high school ALS to now include 30 secondary schools across the division. "So additionally for this school year, we are going to implement the BYOB or the Be Your Own Boss and the WBL or the Work-based Learning that is another program of the Alternative Learning System that aims to enhance the career readiness of ALS learners by providing them with skills and

knowledge for employment and entrepreneurship," Ordinario said.

For the school year 2024–2025, a total of 172 ALS learners completed their senior high school education across the entire SDO, including six persons deprived of liberty (PDLs) from Don Antonio Jayme Memorial High School among the graduates.

Their graduation ceremony, which took place at the North Cotabato District Jail, marked the first event of its kind in the facility's history.

Ordinario also highlighted that the active support of local government units (LGUs) strengthens the implementation of the ALS program.

She also noted that local government units (LGUs) across the province allocate funds for school supplies and offer additional skills training for students.

"Dito po sa Cotabato Division, grabe po 'yung suporta ng aming mga LGU per municipality po. Nagbibigay po sila ng funds na magagamit din po ng teachers para mabigyan ng supplies ang learners, at 'yung iba naman po ay ginagamit nila sa pagka-conduct ng livelihood training skills," Ordinario shared.

(In the Cotabato Division, LGUs in each municipality provide funding. These funds are utilized by teachers to supply materials for our learners, while others use them to conduct livelihood skills training.)

To ensure the program reaches those that need it most, the division has been conducting community outreach activities, including barangay visits and consultations, she said.

This year, SDO-Cotabato is set to conduct a municipal consultative conference involving stakeholders such as TESDA, municipal and barangay LGUs, and other partners. **(CRM, PIA COTABATO PROVINCE) BY CHRISTIAN MATULLANO**

PUBLIC URGED TO STOP USING WATERWAYS AS GARBAGE DUMP

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY (PIA) — The Department of Public Works and Highways — Cagayan de Oro 1st District Engineering Office (DPWH-CDO 1st DEO) is reiterating its call for public cooperation in addressing flooding, pointing to improper waste disposal in waterways as a contributing factor.

"The public plays a crucial role in maintaining our waterways. No matter how often we clean, if garbage continues to be dumped irresponsibly, flooding will persist," said District Engineer Ana Lee M. Manzano.

The call came after a clean-up operation on May 3, during which maintenance crews removed approximately 15 cubic meters of waste

and debris from Sapang Creek. The creek passes through Barangays Patag and Kauswagan, which are identified as flood-prone areas, particularly along the Butuan-CDO-Iligan Road (BCIR). The BCIR serves as a main route for commuters and freight traffic bound for Iligan City, where flooding frequently causes transportation delays and road damage.

Waste materials collected included plastic bottles, tree branches, and discarded household items. These obstruct drainage and can lead to elevated water levels during rainfall.

"This operation is part of our ongoing efforts to ensure that our drainage systems and waterways remain clear, especially ahead of the rainy season.

By doing so, we help prevent flooding that not only disrupts road transport but also endangers nearby communities," Manzano said.

The DPWH confirmed that monitoring and maintenance activities will continue in identified flood-prone roads and adjacent water bodies, including Sapang Creek. The office is also coordinating with local government units and community groups to identify long-term flood management measures.

Manzano added that while regular clearing helps mitigate the issue, reducing waste in waterways depends on sustained community participation. **(JAKA/PIA-10) BY JAN ALBERT K. ARAÑA**

PAGCOR EXCEEDS DIVIDEND MANDATE WITH P12.67-B REMITTANCE

MANILA — The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) has remitted PHP12.67 billion in dividends to the National Treasury on Wednesday, representing 75 percent of its 2024 net income.

The remittance surpasses the 50 percent dividend remittance mandated under Republic Act 7656, or the Dividends Law.

"Our 75 percent dividends remittance is in line with Finance Secretary Ralph Recto's directive to government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs) to advance an additional 25 percent dividend to support government spending," Pagcor chair and chief executive officer Alejandro Tengco said.

Of the total remitted

amount, PHP8.45 billion accounted for the regular 50 percent share of Pagcor's net income, while PHP4.22 billion constituted the voluntary advance, which may be credited to future obligations.

Tengco turned over the dividends check to Deputy National Treasurer Eduardo Anthony Mariño at the Pagcor Corporate Office in Pasay City.

"This substantial dividend contribution will go a long way in boosting our fiscal resources and furthering the administration's development agenda," Mariño said.

The remittance highlights the increasing financial role of GOCCs in helping stabilize government finances and rising spending needs. **(PNA) BY KRIS CRISMUNDO**

PH ENERGY SECTOR GROWS TO P3.3-T

MANILA — The country's energy sector has grown into a PHP3.3-trillion industry, up from PHP630 billion in 2022, according to the Department of Energy (DOE).

DOE Secretary Raphael Lotilla said Thursday the figure was based on updated data from the Energy Regulatory Commission, including new audited financial statements as of March 2025.

"This more updated figure can give you a better view of how large, how healthy, and how vibrant the (Philippine) power sector," he said at a press briefing in Taguig City.

"What it, of course, underlines is that the energy sector as a whole is indeed an important contributor to the economy."

Lotilla said the industry value reflects the rising energy assets, including generation, transmission, and distribution.

"If the power sector does not grow, then that means that we will remain stuck in the doldrums. Our economy won't be able

to grow for as long as our per capita consumption of energy is low," he said.

Lotilla said an economy growing by 6 percent annually requires growth in the power sector at around 5.2 percent.

Moreover, to further lower the cost of electricity, the government is expanding renewable energy, investing in power transmission, and pushing for hybrid systems in off-grid areas to replace diesel with solar or liquefied natural gas.

"We are looking at increasing the share of energy sources indigenous to our country, which we have greater control over when it comes to the availability of supply, as well as pricing," Lotilla said.

Lotilla said the projects of the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines would also help in easing transmission bottlenecks.

"So, as more power supply is made available and there are less transmission constraints, then prices can, in fact, go down," he added. **(PNA) BY KRIS CRISMUNDO**

INVESTORS CONTINUE TO POCKET GAINS FROM STOCK MARKET, PESO REBOUNDS

MANILA — The local stock market continued to decline as investors were on a profit-taking activity for two straight days, while the peso rebounded on Thursday's trading.

The Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi) fell to 6,400-level, shedding 1.30 percent to 6,466.86, with All Shares down by 0.80 percent to 3,768.44.

Except for Holding Firms, which increased by 0.54 percent to 5,478.70, the rest of the counters closed in the red territory.

Biggest losses came from Mining and Oil sector, plunging by 3.34 percent to 8,903.61; followed by Financials, down by 2.97 percent to 2,421.43; Property, down by 2.46 percent to 2,272.20; Services, down by 0.40 percent; and Industrial, down by

0.29 percent.

"The PSEi corrected lower for the second straight trading day, considered a healthy profit-taking after gaining for most days over the month," Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. chief economist Michael Ricafort said. Losers outnumbered winners at 108 to 77, with 61 counters left unchanged.

Meanwhile, the Philippine peso gained during Thursday's trade, closing at 55.75 to the US dollar from a 55.86 finish on Wednesday.

Peso started at 55.80 before trading between 55.71 and 55.84, with an average rate of 55.78 to the greenback.

Trade volume decreased to USD1.87 billion from USD1.92 billion. **(PNA) BY KRIS CRISMUNDO**

MONDE NISSIN AIMS TO OPEN NEW LUZON BISCUIT PLANT IN NEXT 2 YEARS

MANILA — Listed snack food manufacturer Monde Nissin Corp. is set to break ground soon on a major manufacturing plant in northern Luzon, with parts of the facility expected to begin operations by 2026 or 2027.

In a virtual briefing Wednesday, chief financial officer Jesse Teo said the upcoming plant aims to boost its production capacity for the company's biscuit brands, including SkyFlakes and Graham amid rising local and international demand.

"We're still finalizing the plans for the new plant. I think the building will start soon and the spending will accelerate in the next few months, next few quarters, as we

target to start up some parts of the new plant, northern Philippines plant, sometime in 2026 and 2027," Teo said.

Monde Nissin has earmarked PHP7.55 billion in capital expenditures for 2025, of which PHP6.6 billion will go to its Asia Pacific branded food business, including the new biscuit plant.

For the first quarter of the year, the food company increased its revenues by 2.8 percent to PHP20.9 billion from PHP20.3 billion in the first quarter of 2024.

Its core net income for the first quarter of 2025 also rose 1.5 percent to PHP2.9 billion from PHP2.88 billion in the same period last year. **(PNA) BY KRIS CRISMUNDO**

MALAMPAYA DRILLSHIP TO ARRIVE IN JUNE, KICKING OFF PHASE 4 EXPANSION

MANILA — Drilling operations under Phase 4 of the Malampaya gas-to-power project are set to begin soon as the drillship is scheduled to arrive at its site off northwest Palawan by second half of June 2025.

"Timeline for rig arrival in the Philippines has moved to second half June from the initial estimated end of May schedule. This has come about due to delays in completion of the current drilling of the rig in Malaysia," the Department of Energy (DOE) said.

DOE Undersecretary Alessandro Sales said in a press briefing in Taguig City Thursday that the drillship Noble Viking and three other support vessels are currently at the port in Labuan, Malaysia for final inspections and loading of materials.

The drillship is set to arrive

at the northwest Palawan, with drilling of three wells—two for production and one for exploration—to follow.

Sales said the drilling would take around 150 days, which is expected to conclude by the last quarter of this year.

If successful, the output from the new wells could extend Malampaya's operations by 2034, up from the current projection of 2029.

"The actual hookup and pipelining to connect the two new wells to the existing production facilities will be undertaken immediately after, to begin in the last quarter of this year," Sales added.

Malampaya currently supplies 1.2 to 1.3 gigawatts (GW) of electricity, below its former output due to declining reserves.

The energy department

hopes to boost the Malampaya natural gas production to 1.5 to 1.7 GW.

"The third well being drilled is an exploration well, and hopefully with the good results on the exploration well called the 'Bagong Pag-asa', this will provide additional volumes for the field to be produced," Sales said.

Meanwhile, imported liquefied natural gas (LNG) is being used to fill the shortfall through two LNG terminals in Batangas.

The Marcos administration considers natural gas as a vital strategy to long-term energy transition, making it a transition fuel from coal to renewable energy.

In 2023, natural gas accounted for 22 percent of power generation. "Right now, the country's total primary energy supply, more than half, or

54 percent, is imported," DOE Secretary Raphael Lotilla said.

Lotilla noted that coal makes up 63 percent of the Philippines' power generation, with 83 percent of coal supply being imported — 99.5 percent of which came from Indonesia.

"So, the diversification of fuels, including renewable energy and natural gas, are important elements in this (energy transition). And of course, the remaining movement to the potential for future contributions even of nuclear power," the energy chief said.

Aside from Malampaya, the DOE is ramping up exploration activities in other parts of the country, including the East Palawan and Sulu Sea basins, where up to five service contracts are in various stages of award. **(PNA) BY KRIS CRISMUNDO**



LABINDAO EYES U18 AND U16 TITLES IN CEBU CITY JUNIORS TENNIS

MANILA – Rizzjun Myles Labindao of Aklan is seeking more success in the Varca Cebu City National Juniors Tennis Championships which kicks off on Saturday at the Villa Aurora Tennis Courts.

The 15-year-old Labindao is the No. 1 seed in both the U16 and U18 boys singles in the Group 2 tournament presented by Dunlop and part of the Palawan Pawnshop-Palawan Express Pera Padala (PPS-PEPP) circuit.

Last week, the native of Buruanga town pulled off a 6-4, 6-2 victory over Alexandro Vijandre of Cadiz City, Negros Occidental in the finals of the Bacolod leg.

"I'm hoping to win both U18 and U16 titles and earn the MVP [most valuable player] award again," Labindao said in an

interview Thursday.

The member of the Batang Onay Tennis Club was named MVP after a title victory in the U16 title and a runner-up finish in the U18 in Kalibo, Aklan.

"Andrian Rodriguez is one of my toughest opponents," said Labindao, incoming Grade 10 student at the Central Philippine University in Iloilo City.

Others in the U18 main draw are Kenneth Jumamoy, Gio Manito, Paul Verallo, AJ Gairanod, Fredrick Perlas and Aaron Lopez.

Rodriguez, Gairanod and Perlas are also entered in the U16 along with Gil Niere, Daniel Neri, Kenji Kue and Bryant Ada.

Siblings Pete and Gil Niere, Kue and Ciaran Alipo-on lead the U14 category while Ian Gairanod and Dale Diamante banner the

U12 category.

In the girls division, Tori Deocampo, Gesellyn Constanancio, Donna Mae Diamante and Mae Parangan are the top contenders for the U18 title.

Kathlyn Bugna of La Carlota, the top seed in the U14, will be challenged by Isobel Alipo-on, Theriz Zapatos, and Kate Chavez. Bugna seeks another win in the U16 category where she will battle top seed Molly Tan, No. 2 Mae Diamante and No. 3 Isobel Alipo-on.

After the Cebu leg, the PPS-PEPP circuit shifts to Mindanao, with Dipolog City hosting on May 22 to 26, followed by the Pagadian City leg from May 27 to 31. **(PNA) BY JEAN MALANUM**

ATENEO, ADAMSON TRIUMPH IN UAAP ESPORTS NBA 2K OPENER

MANILA – Defending champion Ateneo de Manila University kicked off its title-retention bid with a 2-1 win over De La Salle University Tuesday night in the UAAP Esports NBA 2K tournament at the Quantum Skyview Deck, Gateway 2 Mall in Quezon City.

The Blue Eagles claimed the victory after Paolo Medina's Boston Celtics defeated Keagan Yap's Oklahoma City Thunder, 71-64, in Game 3 of the best-of-three series.

The Thunder rallied from 32-43 to tie the score at 50-all heading into the fourth quarter. But the Celtics

outscored them, 21-14, to prevail.

"Well, I was confident before the game because the preparation we did, we prepared for La Salle because we knew they were still the opponent this year," said Blue Eagles head coach Nite Alparas.

"The match is pretty intense, because we're really preparing for both teams, OKC and Boston. So we're also prepared that if there ever is a Game 3, Paolo has to go to Boston, we'll do it," added the eGilas program director.

Earlier, Adamson University defeated National University, 2-1.

Joaquin Obado's Boston Celtics beat Dominic Peñaflorida's OKC Thunder, 55-50, in Game 1.

NU made it 1-1 after Jarrel Allaga, also using the Celtics, clobbered Joshua Advincula's Thunder, 57-39, in Game 2.

Obado and Peñaflorida met again in Game 3, with the Celtics pulling off an 83-80 overtime win.

"Honestly, due to time constraints, we weren't able to have proper practices, and because of budget issues, we didn't have a proper coach. Of course, there were performances with some lapses, but

LANAO NORTE TO BOOST SPORTS COMPLEX, SUPPORT ATHLETES

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY – Lanao del Norte is prioritizing upgrades to sports facilities to better support local athletes, outgoing governor and incoming 1st District Representative Imelda Dimaporo said Thursday.

The initiative follows recent improvements to the Mindanao Civic Center Sports Complex, including its new Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)-certified football field.

Dimaporo, who will assume her congressional post after midterm elections, pledged to continue developing sports infrastructure.

"In my return to Congress, I will work hard to add more sports facilities," she said. The upgrades aim to benefit youth athletes competing in events like Palarong Pambansa, National Schools Press Conference, and National Festival of Talents.

Dimaporo will be succeeded as governor by her son, Mohamad Khalid Dimaporo. **(PNA) BY NEF LUCZON**

PARA SWIMMER GAWILAN, 2 OTHERS QUALIFY FOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

MANILA – Two-time Asian Para Games champion Ernie Gawilan, Angel Mae Otom and Marco Tinamisan have qualified for the World Aquatic Championships on Sept. 16 to 27 in Singapore.

The three earned slots during the World Para Swimming (WPS) World Series in Fuji, Japan last month.

Gawilan, who competed at the Tokyo (2020) and Paris (2024) Paralympics, qualified in the S7 men's 400m freestyle and SM7 200m Individual Medley events.

Otom, a triple gold medalist at the 2022 ASEAN Para Games, met the qualifying times in the women's 50m freestyle, backstroke, and butterfly, while Marco Tinamisan,

who hails from Quezon, qualified in the S3/SB3/SM3 men's 50m, 100m and 200m freestyle events. Ariel Joseph Alegarbes (S14), another triple-gold winner at the 2022 ASEAN Para Games, and Gary Bejino (S6) will try to qualify through the bipartite system.

"This is part of their journey going to the 2028 Paralympic Games in LA. I always tell them, 'Let's continue to work hard and support each other to achieve our goal'," said head coach Tony Ong in an interview Thursday.

The national athletes are also preparing for next year's ASEAN Para Games in Thailand and Asian Para Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan. **(PNA) BY JEAN MALANUM**

GILAS DRAWS TOUGH GROUP WITH AUSTRALIA, NZ IN WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

MANILA – Gilas Pilipinas is facing a daunting path in the 2027 FIBA World Cup Asian Qualifiers after being drawn into a stacked Group A alongside world No. 7 Australia, No. 22 New Zealand, and Guam.

The draw was held Tuesday night (Manila time) in Doha, Qatar.

The qualifiers begin this November and will follow a home-and-away, double round-robin format across three windows — November 2025, February 2026, and July 2026.

The top three teams from each group advance to the second round.

Group A teams will merge with those from Group C, which includes perennial contender Iran, Jordan, Syria, and Iraq.

In the second round, teams play only the qualifiers from the other group, with results from the first round carrying over.

These games will be held in August 2026, November 2026, and February 2027.

The top three teams from each second-round group, along with host nation Qatar and the best fourth-placed team, will qualify for the FIBA World Cup 2027, set for Aug. 27 to Sept. 12.

In other World Cup draw results: Group B features Japan, China, Korea, and Chinese Taipei, while Group D includes Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, India, and Qatar.

Ranked No. 34 in the world, Gilas will also meet New Zealand in the FIBA Asia Cup group stage in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, which is set from Aug. 5–17.

The Philippines splits its two previous meetings with the Tall Blacks in the FIBA Asia Cup Qualifiers.

The Philippines is looking to make its fourth straight World Cup appearance. **(PNA) BY DARRYL JOHN ESGUERRA**