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LIVELIHOOD TRAINING - TAKOYAKI MAKING
03 JUNE 2025 | AMADEO, CAVITE

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TAKOYAKI MAKING TRAINING BRINGS LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES TO FARMERS AND OFWS

In its continuous effort to promote sustainable livelihood programs, the Office of the Provincial Cooperative Development Officer (OPCDO), through its Livelihood Division, successfully conducted a Takoyaki Making Training on June 3, 2025, at the covered court of Amadeo, Cavite.

More than 30 participants from the province composed of farmers and OFWs took part in the hands-on training facilitated by Ms. Venus Romerosa, OPCDO Outsource Trainor, which aimed to equip residents with skills that could be turned into income-generating ventures.

The activity is part of the Provincial Government of Cavite and OPCDO's commitment to empower local communities by providing practical livelihood opportunities.

The training covered the basics of preparing and cooking takoyaki – a popular Japanese street food – as well as tips on sourcing affordable ingredients and managing a small food business.

Participants expressed appreciation for the engaging and informative session, which not only enhanced their culinary skills but also opened possibilities for starting their own food stalls or home-based businesses. — *OPIO*



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5 HVI AT 24 SLI, ARESTADO SA MAGKAKAHIWALAY NA OPERASYON SA CALABARZON

Camp BGen Vicente P. Lim- Sa loob lamang ng dalawang araw na operasyon mula Hunyo 10 hanggang Hunyo 11, 2025, matagumpay na naaresto ng kapulisan ng Police Regional Office 4A ang 5 High-Value Individuals (HVI) at 24 Street-Level Individuals (SLI) sa magkakahiwalay na anti-illegal drug operations sa rehiyon ng CALABARZON. Sa kabuuan, nakumpiska mula sa mga operasyon ang 145.79 gramo ng shabu at 26.31 gramo ng marijuana, na may tinatayang halaga na Php994,529.20.

Ayon kay PBGen Paul Kenneth T Lucas, Regional Director PRO 4A, ang operasyon ay bahagi ng kanilang mas pinaigting na kampanya laban sa ilegal na droga sa rehiyon alinsunod sa direktiba ng pangulo na hulihin at panagutin ang mga sangkot sa iligal na droga

maging maliit na pusher o street level individuals.

"Ang mga seryeng ito ng matagumpay na operasyon ay nagpapakita ng determinasyon ng ating kapulisan na sugpuin ang ilegal na droga sa bawat komunidad," dagdag ni RD Lucas.

Hinimok ng PNP ang patuloy na kooperasyon ng mamamayan sa pagsusumbong ng mga kahina-hinalang aktibidad upang mapanatili ang kapayapaan at kaayusan sa buong CALABARZON.

Ang mga naarestong suspek at mga nakumpiskang ebidensya ay kasalukuyang nasa kustodiya ng kapulisan ng PRO CALABARZON para sa wastong dokumentasyon at pagsasampa ng kaukulang kaso sa ilalim ng RA 9165 o ang Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002. **(RPIO4A)**

REGIONAL LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON, ARESTADO SA GENERAL TRIAS CITY, CAVITE

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Lungsod ng Imus, Cavite — Arestado ang isang Most Wanted Person (Regional Level) sa isinagawang operasyon ng General Trias City Police Station dakong alas-10:15 ng gabi noong Hunyo 11, 2025, sa Barangay San Francisco, General Trias City, Cavite.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL JAYMAR B MARBELLA, Chief of Police ng General Trias CCPS, ang akusado na si alyas "Mak-Mak", residente ng Brgy. San Francisco, General Trias City, Cavite.

Naaresto si "Mak-Mak" sa bisa ng Warrant of Arrest na inilabas ng Regional Trial Court, Branch 131, Trece Martires City, Cavite, para sa kasong paglabag sa Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, partikular sa Article II, Sections 5 at 11 ng R.A. 9165, sa ilalim ng Criminal

Case Nos. TMCR-100-20 at TMCR-101-20, na may petsang Hunyo 10, 2025. Ang kaso ay isinampa para sa service of sentence.

Isinagawa ang operasyon ng Warrant Personnel ng General Trias CCPS gamit ang Alternative Recording Device (ARD) bilang dokumentasyon, na nagresulta sa matagumpay na pagkakaaresto ng akusado.

Naipabatid sa akusado ang kanyang mga karapatang konstitusyonal sa paraang kanyang lubos na nauunawaan. Sa kasalukuyan, siya ay pansamantalang nakakulong sa General Trias City Custodial Facility, Brgy. Bagumbayan, General Trias City, Cavite, habang isinasagawa ang pagsasauli ng warrant of arrest sa korte ng pinagmulan.

Sa pahayag ni PLTCOL JAYMAR B MARBELLA,

TOP 1 MUNICIPAL LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON NABBED IN MAGALLANES, CAVITE

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, City of Imus, Cavite — The intensified anti-criminality campaign of Magallanes Municipal Police Station scored another successful arrest of the Top 1 Municipal Level Most Wanted Person in Magallanes, Cavite on June 11, 2025.

PMAJ RAYMOND T BALBUENA, Chief of Police, Magallanes Municipal Police Station, identified the arrested suspect as alias Mark, and a resident of Barangay Ramirez, Magallanes, Cavite.

According to the report, at around 5:35 PM, elements of the Warrant Section of Magallanes Municipal Police Station conducted a police operation at Barangay Ramirez, Magallanes, Cavite which resulted in the apprehension of alias Mark.

The arrest was made by virtue of a Warrant of Arrest issued by the Presiding Judge of Regional Trial Court Branch 132, Naic, Cavite, dated June 11, 2025. The accused is

facing Violation of Section 4 (A) and (D) of Republic Act 9995 (The Anti-Photo and Video Voyeurism Act) (7 counts) with bail recommended of Php 42,000.00 for each count. The Warrant of Arrest will be duly returned to its court of origin, while the arrested individual remains under the custody of the Magallanes Municipal Police Station for proper disposition.

PCOL DWIGHT E ALEGRE, Acting Provincial Director of Cavite Police Provincial Office, lauded the efforts of the operating team and stated "This accomplishment is a result of our relentless and intensified manhunt operations to ensure that those who attempt to evade justice are held accountable. We commend the dedication and vigilance of our personnel in keeping our communities safe from criminal elements. The public is assured that Cavite PNP remains committed to pursuing the lawless and protecting the peace and order in the province."

RANK NO. 6 CAVITE PROVINCIAL LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON, ARESTADO SA SUAL, PANGASINAN

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Lungsod ng Imus, Cavite — Arestado ang Rank No. 6 Cavite Provincial Level Most Wanted Person sa

"Ang pag-aresto sa mga Most Wanted Persons ay bahagi ng ating matinding kampanya laban sa kriminalidad. Ang bawat isa sa kanila ay dapat managot sa batas."

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."

isinagawang operasyon ng Maragondon Municipal Police Station dakong alas-8:40 ng umaga ngayong araw, Hunyo 12, 2025, sa Barangay Poblacion, Sual, Pangasinan.

Kinilala ni PMAJ MELVIN B ISIDRO, Officer-in-Charge ng Maragondon MPS, ang akusado na si alyas Richard, residente ng Barangay Poblacion, Sual, Pangasinan.

Naaresto si alias Richard, sa bisa ng Warrant of Arrest na inilabas ng Regional Trial Court, Branch 132, Naic, Cavite, noong Mayo 19, 2025. Ang suspek ay nahaharap sa kasong Sexual Assault sa ilalim ng Paragraph 2, Article 266-A ng Revised Penal Code, kaugnay ng Section

REGION'S 7TH MOST WANTED CAPTURED BY TANZA POLICE

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, City of Imus, Cavite — Joint operatives of the Tanza Municipal Police Station (MPS), Provincial Intelligence Team (PIT) Cavite, and Regional Intelligence Unit 4A (RIU-4A) arrested a Regional Level Most Wanted Person ranked No. 7, during a law enforcement operation conducted at Barangay Julugan 1, Tanza, Cavite at around 1:00 PM on June 12, 2025.

PLTCOL AL-RIEZA S KINANG, Acting Chief of Police, Tanza Municipal Police Station identified the accused as Eman, 42 years old, and was residing at Barangay Julugan 1, Tanza, Cavite. He was arrested by virtue of multiple Warrants of Arrest issued by the Presiding Judge of the Family Court, Fourth Judicial Region, Branch 5, Trece Martires City, Cavite, dated June 2, 2025 for seven (7) counts of Rape with no bail was recommended. Additionally, he is charged with five (5) counts of Sexual Assault with bail set at Php 200,000.00 each. He also faces three (3) counts of Acts of Lasciviousness with bail set at Php 180,000.00

each. During the arrest, the accused was informed of his constitutional rights and was immediately brought to the Tanza MPS for documentation and further legal processing. The entire law enforcement operation was properly documented and recorded using an Alternative Recording Device (ARD), in accordance with applicable guidelines and procedures.

This successful operation is a testament to the continuing efforts of the Cavite Police Provincial Office to pursue justice for victims and uphold the rule of law. In a statement, Acting Provincial Director of Cavite Police Provincial Office, Police Colonel Dwight E Alegre, commended the operating units for their unwavering commitment to public safety and dedication to duty. The Cavite PNP remain relentless in our efforts to apprehend fugitives and bring justice to the victims of heinous crimes. We assure the public that we will continue to strengthen our operations and partnerships to maintain peace and order in the Province of Cavite.

5(B) ng Republic Act 7610 (Dalawang Bilang), at may nakalaang piyansa na Php 200,000.00 para sa bawat kaso.

Isinagawa ang operasyon ng Warrant Personnel ng Maragondon gamit ang Alternative Recording Device (ARD) na nagresulta sa matagumpay na pagkakaaresto ng akusado.

Naipabatid sa akusado ang kanyang mga karapatang konstitusyonal sa paraang kanyang lubos na nauunawaan. Sa kasalukuyan, siya ay nasa kustodiya na ng Maragondon MPS at ang Warrant of Arrest ay isinasailalim na sa pagsasauli sa korte ng pinagmulan.

Sa pahayag ni PMAJ MELVIN B ISIDRO, "Ang mabilis na aksyon ng ating kapulisan ay bunga ng masusing pagtutok at kooperasyon ng bawat yunit upang mahuli ang mga indibidwal na may kinakaharap na mabibigat na kaso. Isa na namang hakbang ito tungo sa katarungan para sa mga biktima."

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."

INDUSTRY, INFRA KEY DRIVERS TO CALABARZON ECONOMY — DEPDEV

CALAMBA CITY (PIA) — Ongoing infrastructure programs and a growing industrial sector continue to drive economic growth in the CALABARZON region as it remains in its position as a top contributor to the national economy.

Ray Michael Abuso, Supervising Economic Development Specialist at the Department of Economy, Planning, and Development (DepDev) — formerly the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) — noted that ongoing infrastructure developments in the provinces of Laguna, Cavite, and Batangas have significantly bolstered the Regional Gross Domestic Product, valued at Php 3.10 trillion.

“All provinces in the region showed positive economic growth, reflecting growth-based economic momentum.”

Cavite Province recorded the highest growth rate in the region with 6.7 percent. Meanwhile, the City of Lucena—the region’s only highly urbanized city—posted an even higher growth rate at 8.9 percent.

DepDev reported that the industry sector—valued at Php 1.53 trillion—contributes the largest share in the Gross Regional Domestic Product, followed by the services sector at Php 1.42 trillion and the agriculture, forestry, and fishing sector at Php 138 billion.

“Economic performance in the provinces is slightly influenced by manufacturing, infrastructure development, and sector diversification. With their industry-based economy, Laguna and Cavite, offer opportunities for residential

and commercial development.”

Meanwhile, Batangas Province which hosts several power plants supplying the region also shows increasing growth potential in the tourism sector.

“Overall, the CALABARZON region’s economic growth is shaped by infrastructure and industry focused in the urban expansion.”

To sustain economic growth, DepDev recommended long-term and province-specific solutions. These include expediting critical infrastructure projects, diversification of economic activities, comprehensive economic partnerships, and modernizing the agriculture sector—particularly in the provinces of Laguna and Cavite.

Meanwhile, the provinces of Batangas and Quezon were encouraged to invest further in the agriculture sector by modernizing agricultural practices, developing value-added processing, upgrading farm-related infrastructure, and establishing agribusiness and agro-biotechnology centers.

On the other hand, Rizal Province—known for its burgeoning tourism industry—may further boost its growth by enhancing tourism infrastructure and integrating modern techniques and practices into its agricultural activities.

Housing major economic zones, the CALABARZON region contributes 14.7 percent to the National Gross Domestic Product, making it the second-largest contributor in the country. (PB/PIA4A) **BY PATRICIA BERMUDEZ**

GUARANTEE LETTERS FOR MEDICINES NOW ACCEPTED IN SELECT MERCURY DRUG STORES IN CALABARZON

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna (PIA) — Clients of the Department of Social Welfare and Development’s (DSWD) Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) and Ayuda para sa Kapos ang Kita (AKAP) can now access medicines in select outlets of the leading drugstore chain Mercury Drug around the Calabarzon region using guarantee letters (GLs).

The DSWD said that the GL serves as an assurance that the government will cover the cost of products and services including medicines given by partner service providers to DSWD beneficiaries.

In Calabarzon, participating Mercury Drug branches accepting GLs are Bayanan in Bacoor City, Sta. Cruz P. Guevarra in Laguna, and Antipolo Cathedral in Antipolo City, Rizal. Other Mercury Drug outlets that accept GLs are in the National Capital Region, Central Luzon, Mimaropa, Central Visayas, Western Visayas, Eastern Visayas, Zamboanga Peninsula, Northern Mindanao, Davao Region, SOCKSARGEN, and Caraga.

For Victoria, Laguna resident Donna Talucod, 43, whose husband is a kidney transplant patient, the letter offers much-needed relief.

“Unlike the usual cash aid, which is often limited, the guarantee letter covers a much larger amount. We can now avail of his post-

transplant medicines without worrying about how to pay. We are very thankful to the DSWD and Mercury Drug for making this possible,” she said.

Another client, Rowena Espiritu, a mother of four, thanked the government for the initiative, stressing that the provision of GLs is a big help for someone like her who needs maintenance medicine for hypertension.

“It eases my worries since I no longer have to think about where to get money to buy medicine. Thanks to the DSWD and Mercury Drug for this initiative,” Rowena shared.

Oliver Alub, store manager of the Mercury Drug-Pedro Guevarra branch in Sta. Cruz, Laguna shared that customer visits have increased since the program’s announcement.

“Many customers are coming in for quotations, typically for anti-hypertension, anti-angina, and diabetes medications. These quotations are then submitted to the DSWD, which determines the amount to be covered by the guarantee letter,” he explained.

He also assured the public that their staff are trained and ready to assist all customers with GL-related transactions. The DSWD encourages the public to visit their nearest field office to learn more about the program and how to avail of GLs for medical assistance. (CM, PIA4A) **BY CECILE MALOLES**

EDITORIAL

Ilang driving schools, suspendido

Land Transportation Office, nagbabala na maaaring makulong ang mga tumatangkilik ng pekeng lisensya. Sa kabilang banda naman ay sinuspinde naman ng LTO ang mahigit sa isang daang driving school na kasabwat ng mga fixer.

Sa dami ng mga nadiskubreng driving schools na kasabwat ng mga fixer sa pekeng lisensya, labis na nakababahala sapagkat maaaring maraming magoyo na driver at madamay sa aberyang dulot nito, isa pa ay mahal ang bayad sa mga driving schools at maging dahilan ng pagpunta sa wala ng mga perang ilalabas ng mga tao dahil lang sa panggogoyo ng mga driving school na ito.

Kaya naman dapat na maging mabusisi sa pagpasok sa mga driving school at maghigpit sa pag-abpruba ng mga ito. Nang sa gayon ay maiwasan ang mga ganitong isyu at posibilidad na dumami pa ang mga driving school na masangkot sa pamemeke ng lisensya.

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GATCHALIAN URGES DOH ACTION ON DISEASE SPREAD IN PAOCC DETENTION

MANILA—Senator Sherwin Gatchalian on Friday called on the Department of Health (DOH) to swiftly contain the reported spread of contagious diseases among Philippine offshore gaming operator (POGO) workers held in a government detention facility.

“The spread of contagious diseases among POGO workers in PAOCC custody demands urgent action from the DOH, including immediate containment, quarantine protocols, and the provision of proper healthcare to prevent further transmission,” Gatchalian said in a statement.

“Alternative facilities must be identified to ensure humane detention and effective disease control,” he added.

Authorities recently reported a surge of infections inside a holding facility managed by the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Commission (PAOCC), where hundreds of foreign nationals allegedly involved in illegal POGO

operations are being detained.

Gatchalian said the government must treat the outbreak seriously but warned against using it as a reason to delay law enforcement efforts.

“This health issue, however, must not be used as an excuse to suspend anti-POGO operations. Once cleared by the DOH, these POGO workers must be immediately deported,” he said.

Gatchalian underscored the urgency of sustaining the crackdown against illegal POGOs, many of which have been linked to crimes such as human trafficking, cyber fraud, and illegal detention.

“Kinakailangan ipagpatuloy ang kampanya laban sa mga POGO nang walang humpay upang tuluyang mapuksa ang kanilang ilegal na gawain (We must continue the campaign against POGOs without letup in order to completely dismantle their illegal activities),” the senator said. (PNA) **BY WILNARD BACELONIA**

CHR, DMW INK DEAL FORENHANCED PROTECTION OF PINOY MIGRANT WORKERS

MANILA — The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) and the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) have signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) to institutionalize a more robust and rights-based framework for the protection and empowerment of Filipino migrant workers and their families.

In a news release on Friday, CHR Chairperson Richard Palpal-latoc underscored the invaluable contributions of Filipino migrant workers to the economic growth and that they deserve tangible and sustainable programs that ensure their protection and meaningful participation in nation-building.

“Allow me to reaffirm that the Commission on Human Rights is steadfast in its

commitment to ensure that Filipino migrant workers are not forgotten and left behind -- but recognized, celebrated, and protected. Their rights are not mere declarations and principles on paper. Instead, these are acknowledged, exercised, and upheld at all times,” he said.

The MOA, signed on June 7, aims to strengthen human rights protection through increased awareness efforts, the provision of free legal and psychosocial services via legal clinic caravans, and the delivery of timely assistance in cases involving abuse, exploitation, or trafficking. It also includes mechanisms for joint quick response operations in the event of human rights violations, collaborative research, and policy development to

LTFRB SUMMONS BUS FIRM OVER VIRAL ASSAULT ON PWD

MANILA — Public utility bus (PUB) operator Precious Grace Transport will be summoned to explain the assault of a person with disability (PWD) by a bus conductor and some passengers, the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) said Friday.

In a statement, LTFRB chairperson Teofilo Guadiz III said the incident was caught on video and went viral on social media after it occurred inside one of the buses of PGT that ply the Epifanio Delos Santos Avenue (EDSA) Busway.

According to an initial investigation by the Department of Transportation's (DOTr) Surveillance and Action Information Coordinating Team (SAICT), the bus was registered with license plate no. NDC 2615, driven by Mark Ivan Ramos, with conductor Francis Sauro.

Guadiz said the SCO would be issued in line with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s directive to protect vulnerable commuters and ensure accountability among public utility vehicle (PUV) operators.

He said PGT would have to explain why their CPC

should not be suspended or revoked after the incident.

“We will not tolerate any act of violence, discrimination, or abuse, especially against persons with disability. Public utility operators are duty-bound to ensure the safety and dignity of all passengers,” he said.

In addition, the LTFRB ordered a 30-day suspension against 10 bus units of the company operating in the EDSA Bus Carousel.

“The DOTr, through the LTFRB and with the assistance of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) and SAICT and Coast Guard- Investigation and Detection Management Service (CG-IDMS), is now coordinating with the bus company's management to secure full cooperation from the identified personnel,” he said.

An investigation is underway to gather testimonies and verify the authenticity of the video footage.

“The LTFRB assures the public that swift and appropriate sanctions will be imposed,” he said.

He reminded PUV operators and commuters that any acts that violate the rights of passengers, especially against the most vulnerable, will face “serious consequences, as the administration continues to champion safe, dignified, and inclusive public transport for all.” (PNA) **BY RAYMOND CARL DELA CRUZ**

OVER 3K HIRED ON THE SPOT IN INDEPENDENCE DAY JOB FAIRS – DOLE

MANILA — Over 3,000 have secured employment on the spot during the simultaneous nationwide job fairs conducted by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) on Thursday in celebration of the 127th Proclamation of Philippine Independence.

Based on the preliminary report released by the Bureau of Local Employment on Friday, a total of 3,364 applicants were hired on the spot (HOTS) for the positions of cashier, service crew, production operator, ESL teacher, bagger, sales associate, clerk, production crew, loan officer, and store clerk.

It also said 25,876 job seekers registered in the 50 job fair sites nationwide jointly organized by the DOLE Regional Offices and the Public Employment Service Offices.

On the other hand, 4,676 job seekers were classified as near-hires pending final evaluations or document submission, while 21,419 were deemed fully qualified for the available positions.

Vulnerable groups also benefited, with 274 senior high school graduates, one person with a disability, and 10 beneficiaries of the Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged Workers (TUPAD) Program hired on the spot.

The DOLE also said 55 private company interns and 37 Government Internship Program (GIP) beneficiaries were hired.

A total of 1,573 employers

participated in the event, offering 153,187 local and overseas job vacancies.

The nationwide event also featured a one-stop shop of government services to assist in issuing pre-employment documents. Participating agencies also provided Jobseeker Auxiliary Services, including career development support, labor consultation, and programs on livelihood, skills training, and entrepreneurship.

As a result, 1,150 job seekers received career development support to improve job readiness and career prospects; 940 expressed interest in skills enhancement training; 323 availed of livelihood assistance; 79 explored entrepreneurship opportunities; and 9,142 accessed government services from agencies such as Pag-IBIG, Social Security System, and PhilHealth.

DOLE said it expects the numbers to increase as it will monitor and verify job fair data from its regional offices.

Meanwhile, the department is organizing a related job fair on June 19 at Ayala Malls Circuit Makati.

This initiative reflects President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr.'s commitment to uplifting the lives of Filipinos by generating employment opportunities and enhancing accessibility through regular job fairs. (PNA) **BY FERDINAND PATINIO**

PNP EYES STREAMLINING GUN PERMIT RENEWALS

MANILA — The Philippine National Police (PNP) is pushing to streamline and make more accessible the process of renewing permits to carry firearms.

In an interview on Friday, PNP chief Gen. Nicolas Torre III said he wants to fully computerize the process of renewing the license to own and possess firearm and firearm registration for gun owners.

To date, applicants still have to personally go to Camp Crame to avail of this service.

“I will be talking to the CSG (Civil Security Group) to

make the renewal and even the procurement, then the permit to carry firearms outside of residence for our kababayans to be more accessible because while it is not explicitly stated that it is a right to own firearms, it is certainly a privilege. Those interested to own and possess firearms and even carry it outside of their residence, once they pass the stringent requirements of the law, well, I see no reason for them to be denied of that privilege,” Torre said on the sidelines of the 3rd PNP Press Corps Invitational Shootfest in

Camp Karingal, Quezon City on Friday.

The CSG is the PNP office in charge of administrative and operational control in regulating firearms, explosives, and private security industries.

“Nationwide naman at lahat ng mga regions naman meron, tapos sa mga big cities, big provinces meron din mga front offices ang ating FEO (All our regions nationwide, in big cities, and big provinces, we have front offices of the Firearms and Explosives Office),” he added. (PNA) **BY CHRISTOPHER LLOYD CALIWAN**

PNP CHIEF ORDERS STRICTER POLICE FIREARMS PROFICIENCY

MANILA – Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Gen. Nicolas Torre III on Friday said he will impose a stricter firearms proficiency policy for all police officers to prevent the loss of innocent lives during operations.

In an interview on Friday, Torre said he plans to revisit the firearms proficiency of officers in top leadership positions by July, and later encompass personnel from the patrolman to general ranks.

"I will be very, very strict. Mayroong firearms proficiency standards ang ating DHRDD (Directorate for Human Resource and Doctrine Development) Our DHRDD has firearms proficiency standards. For quite a while, parang hindi masyado siniseryoso yan (it seemed that it was not being taken seriously), but I'll personally see to it and lead the test, exams. Kung bumagsak ako, edi mag-eretire ako (If I fail, I will retire)," Torre told reporters at the sidelines of the 3rd PNP Press Corps (PC) Invitational Shootfest in Camp Karingal, Quezon City on Friday.

"Walang sini-sino yung proficiency standards. Walang pinagkaiba sa PFT (physical fitness test) yan. Next month na yan, July, magkakaroon muna ako ng proficiency standards sa lahat muna nag-o-occupy ng top leadership position. Kapag tinst sila at bagsak sila sa marksmanship, aba'y tatanggalin ko ang mga commanders na hindi makapasa sa ating proficiency testing (Nobody is exempted from proficiency standards. It is no different from the PFT. Next month, July, I will have proficiency standards for everyone who occupies top leadership positions. If they fail in marksmanship, I will fire the commanders who cannot pass our proficiency testing)," he said.

The PNP chief pointed out that the law enforcement agency's Training Service offers simulations to help officers learn how to use their guns.

"Proficiency and efficiency

in the use of firearms, very, very important yan sapagkat buhay ang nakataya rito. Kapag ginamit mo at hindi mo alam kung paano gamitin, paano kung ang intended target, hindi mo tamaan, at ang tatamaan ay inosenteng tao, ayaw natin nun (because lives are at stake here. When you use it and you don't know how to use it, what if you miss the intended target and hit an innocent person instead, we don't want that)," he explained.

Torre also said he had ordered the procurement of more bullets for police officers to use for firearm proficiency practice.

"I signed a procurement contract para sa bala. Hindi magkukulang ang bala sa pulis. ibibigay namin sa pulis ang balang kailangan nila para makapag practice sila. Pababantayan ko lang sila, sayang ang bala ang mahal mahal tapos imi-miss mo lang. Pero you know we have sufficient resources para i-train ang ating mga pulis (for bullets. There will be no shortage of bullets for the police. We will give them what they need so they can practice. We will just have to monitor them. Bullets are expensive and it's a waste if you just miss the target. But you know, we have sufficient resources to train our policemen)," he said.

Meanwhile, the PNP Press Corps shootfest, which runs until Sunday, will also serve as a fundraising activity for emergency financial assistance for members in the event of harassment and attacks.

It is a Level 1 Philippine Practical Shooting Association (PPSA)-sanctioned match with five stages and 120 rounds for handguns and pistol caliber carbine (PCC).

Physical fitness Torre also ordered a dedicated physical fitness program for mobile force personnel with "broken-hour" shifts from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

"I am dedicating Tuesday and Thursday, 3 p.m. onwards para sa kanilang

PH MONITORING FILIPINOS, DEV'T IN IRAN AFTER ISRAELI ATTACK

MANILA – The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said Friday it is monitoring the developments in Iran, where more than 1,000 Filipinos are residing, after Israel launched a military strike on Tehran, eliciting

(for their) chosen physical fitness program. They can go swimming, they can go running, they can go badminton, they can even golf for as long as they use only that time for athletics kasi free tayo sa choice niyan (because they are free to make that choice)," he said.

The dedicated program, however, comes with the expectation of passing the PNP's mandatory physical fitness test, Torre stressed. He also warned personnel who will administer the tests to accurately report officers' results.

"Kapag ako ay nagduda at nasalubong ko 'yang pinasa niyo at pina-push-up ko at hindi kaya ang 40 push-ups, hahanapin ko kung sino ang nagpapasa sa kanya at makita natin kung sino yung kasama sa ating idi-dismiss (If I get suspicious and I meet the guy you passed, and I make him do 40 push-ups and he can't do it, I will find who passed the guy and we'll see who we will also be dismissed)," he said.

Torre has earlier ordered that all police personnel should pass a PFT and have a normal body mass index (BMI).

For most adults, an ideal BMI ranges from 18.5 to 24.9. A range of 25 to 29.9 is considered overweight, while those having 30 and above are considered obese.

PNP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Jean Fajardo said those failing to get the required BMI would be denied schooling, one of the main requirements for promotion.

She said Torre's directive to pass the PFT and BMI covers all police officers and is aimed at professionalizing the organization. (PNA) **BY CHRISTOPHER LLOYD CALIWAN**

fears of retaliation and wider regional conflict.

Pending a final embassy report, DFA Undersecretary Eduardo Jose De Vega said Filipino authorities are currently discussing measures to take, including the possibility of new advisories in both states.

"We are discussing it and awaiting the update from our embassy in Tehran," he said in a text message.

In a separate interview at PTV's Bagong Pilipinas Ngayon, De Vega said Filipinos affected may reach out to the Philippine embassies in Tehran and Tel Aviv for assistance.

"Matitiyak ng ating mga Pilipino na 'yong ating mga tanggapan will assist them. Complicated lang sa Iran dahil baka hindi sila payagang makalabas ng kaniilang mga asawa dahil mga Iranian citizens na sila (They can rest assured that our foreign service posts will assist them. It's just a bit complicated in the case of Filipinos who are already Iranian citizens in Iran)," he said.

Based on the latest DFA data, there are 30,742 Filipinos in Israel and at least 1,180 in Iran, most of whom are married to Iranian nationals.

Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Friday confirmed that Israel launched "Operation Rising Lion," a targeted military operation he said was aimed to "roll back the Iranian threat to Israel's very survival."

Israel earlier accused Iran of producing thousands of kilograms of enriched uranium to advance its nuclear weapon program. Netanyahu warned that the Israeli military strike would "continue for as many days as it takes" to remove threats on Israel.

On Friday afternoon, the Israel Defense Forces confirmed that the chief of staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, the commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, and the commander of Iran's Emergency Command were "all eliminated" in the Israeli strikes. (PNA) **BY JOYCE ANN L. ROCAMORA**

SENATE DENIES 'KILLING' WAGE HIKE BILL, LAMENTS HOUSE DELAY

MANILA – Senate President Francis "Chiz" Escudero and key senators on Friday pushed back against criticism that the upper chamber "killed" the wage hike bill, saying that the House of Representatives had over a year to act on it but waited until the final days of the session.

"This is a classic case of passing the buck," Escudero said in a statement, adding that the Senate passed its version of a bill seeking a PHP100 daily wage increase for private sector workers as early as February 2024.

"Bakit ba kung kailan huli biglang sasabihin dine-delay namin at wala kaming oras para i-adopt 'yung kapapadala lang nila (Why are they suddenly blaming us for delays when they only sent their version at the last minute)?" he said.

Escudero stressed that if the House had wanted to adopt the Senate version, it only needed to manifest this in plenary — a process that would have allowed the bill to be transmitted directly to Malacañang for the President's signature.

Senator Joel Villanueva, chair of the Senate Committee on Labor, confirmed that both he and Escudero met with House leaders and were told the lower chamber was amenable to adopting the Senate version.

But instead of formalizing this, Villanueva said the House only transmitted the required third reading copy of its PHP200 version on June 11, the last day of the session.

"We passed this measure more than a year ago. We were able to get the official third reading copy of the House of Representatives 48 hours before we would adjourn," Villanueva pointed out.

Senator Juan Miguel Zubiri, who originally filed the Senate's wage hike bill, expressed frustration over

the House's insistence on a PHP200 daily increase without data to support its feasibility.

"We would like to inform our workers that the Senate did its best to fight for the rights and fiscal incentive of having another PHP100 a day increase. Obviously, if we adopt the PHP200 minimum wage bill, mabiveto ni Presidente 'yan (the President will veto that), and if that will be vetoed, you torpedo the measure and it looks bad on everyone," Zubiri said. Senate President Pro Tempore Jinggoy Estrada echoed the sentiment, saying the House had more than 16 months to act on the measure but only did so two days before sine die adjournment.

"She should do a lot of research before opening her mouth," Estrada said, referring to House spokesperson Princess Abante, who had earlier accused the Senate of "killing" the PHP200 version.

"We passed our version more than a year ago. It was the House that waited until the last minute," he said.

Estrada said he even advised TUCP Rep. Raymond Mendoza to simply adopt the Senate version to avoid bicameral delays, but the House allegedly declined.

Senators stressed that time constraints could have been avoided if the House had acted earlier. They also pointed out that adoption of the other chamber's version without a bicameral is not unprecedented.

Senate Bill No. 2534, approved in February 2024, sought a PHP100 wage hike based on committee hearings and economic studies.

Escudero reiterated that both chambers must now refile their respective versions in the next Congress. (PNA) **BY WILNARD BACELONIA**

PMA WELCOMES 340 NEW CADETS FOR CLASS 2029

BAGUIO CITY (PIA) — The Philippine Military Academy formally welcomed and received 340 incoming cadets to compose the PMA Class of 2029 during the reception rites at Fort Del Pilar, Baguio City.

PMA Superintendent Vice Admiral Caesar Bernard Valencia, in welcoming the 274 male and 66 female incoming cadets from across the nation, emphasized that they are no longer ordinary citizens as they stepped into the hallowed grounds of Fort Del Pilar to begin a new chapter in their lives.

“From here on, you are no longer ordinary citizens. The next step you make, you do so as PMA cadets. On your shoulders, lie the trust and expectations of your families, communities, and most importantly, the Filipino people at large. You now belong to an institution built on honor, courage, and an unshakable commitment to the Filipino people,” Valencia said in his message.

The new entrants had undergone a competitive selection process, from a total of 37,295 applicants, 21,796 qualified to take the competitive entrance examination where only

1,701 passed. After a series of competitive complete physical and medical screening processes, only 340 have been admitted. They will have the rank of fourth class cadets in the Cadet Corps Armed Forces of the Philippines (CCAFP) and will undergo three months of Basic Cadet and Military Training before they start their academic education.

Over three months, the plebe cadets go through a rigid process of adapting to the system and the life of a cadet and military, including changing their posture from slouching to having a good “bearing” or having a straight back to look more dignified. They will then be incorporated as members of the CCAFP in rites called “incorporation”.

The new batch will be the pioneering class that will undergo the recently-approved enhanced Bachelor of Science in Management major in Security Studies curriculum which focuses on integration of territorial defense and modern warfare domains in its core subjects. (JDP/RMC-PIA **CAR**) **BY REDJIE MELVIC CAWIS**

DEPED TO WELCOME 47,000 LEARNERS FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2025-2026 IN QUIRINO

CABARROGUIS, Quirino (PIA) — The Department of Education – Schools Division Office (DepEd-SDO) Quirino has announced its readiness to open the 2025–2026 school year, welcoming approximately 47,000 learners across 204 schools starting June 16, 2025, in line with the national return to the traditional June school opening.

According to Information Officer Arnold Saballa, the expected enrollees include around 3,300 in kindergarten, 23,000 in elementary, 14,000 in junior high school, and 7,000 in senior high school. “To address learning gaps in basic education, the division has implemented several summer programs, including Bawat Bata Makababasa, Literacy Remediation, Summer Academic Remedial, Regional Remediation and the 2025 Learning Camp,” Saballa said, noting that students and teachers involved in these programs received allowances.

He explained that the camps were designed not only to provide academic support but also to offer students quiet, structured spaces for study, a need that became more evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. Saballa encouraged

families to support their children by creating home study corners and helping them adjust to the return to regular school routines. “Despite the ongoing digital shift, schools in Quirino continue to maintain physical libraries and reading corners, actively promoting the reading of physical books to improve learners’ comprehension,” he added.

He also noted that the SDO Quirino library has a collection of learning resources comparable to those found in countries like South Korea.

Saballa also announced that this year’s Brigada Eskwela will run from June 9 to 13, with the theme “Brigada Eskwela: Sama-sama sa Bayang Bumabasa” (Together for a Nation that Reads).

This year’s activities will emphasize literacy and reading comprehension alongside the usual classroom cleaning, repairs, and beautification efforts.

He expressed gratitude to teachers, local officials, and stakeholders, especially the Provincial Government led by Gov. Dakila Cua, for their continued support of Brigada Eskwela and critical infrastructure projects in schools. **(OTB/TCB/PIA-2 QUIRINO) BY THELMA C. BICARME**

POLICE EXPAND PERSONNEL DEPLOYMENT TO ENSURE PUBLIC ORDER, SAFETY

BACOLOD CITY (PIA) — The local police office is expanding the deployment of their personnel in Bacolod City and the rest of Negros Occidental.

In response to the directive of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to enhance police visibility throughout the country, the Negros Occidental Police Provincial Office (NOCPPO) and the Bacolod City Police Office (BCPO) have begun deploying police personnel across strategic points and public areas of convergence.

NOCPPO public information officer Police Captain Judesses Catalogo said they are augmenting their patrols not only in areas of convergence, such as public markets and plazas, but also on highways, as police presence thwarts criminality, at the same time, prompts motorists to be extra cautious on the road.

“We are performing sang gusto sang aton nga Presidente. Sa aton sa NOCPPO, ginapalapat naton ang deployment plan sang aton personnel. Kag, kung makita niyo, naga-blink ang [emergency] lights sang patrol [vehicles] sa checkpoints para mabatyagan gid ang presensya sang kapulisan,” he noted.

(We are performing the directive of our President. At NOCPPO, we are expanding the deployment plan for police personnel. And, as you may have seen, the [emergency] lights of police vehicles at checkpoints are on, so the people can feel our presence.)

Apart from these, Catalogo added that the

police are employing “crime clocks” to study the frequency of crimes at a specific time, allowing them to effectively and efficiently optimize police presence in various locations and enabling them to immediately respond to police calls.

“Understandably, kung ara ang pulis naton sa palibot, wala sang krimen nga nagakatabo,” the Catalogo stressed.

(Understandably, there is no criminality where our police personnel are present.)

Meanwhile, for the part of the BCPO, Deputy City Director for Operations Lieutenant Colonel Lester Leada said that City Director Col. Joeresty Coronica has instructed the police chiefs to enhance police presence in Bacolod City.

To ensure that police personnel use location sharing under the Integrated Police Deployment Plan (IPDP) to monitor the location of mobile patrols in real time and enable their swift deployment as soon as required.

“[Naga-serbe ini] nga sort of monitoring or audit [mechanism] nga indeed ang police naton ara sa ila respective areas [of assignment],” Leada said. (This serves as a monitoring or auditing mechanism for us in ensuring that our police officers are indeed in their respective areas of assignment.)

Despite traffic congestion on city streets, Catalogo added that they are striving to implement the “three-minute response time” to guarantee public safety and order in the community. (AGP/BPS/PIA Negros Occidental) **BY BERNARD CEASAR SUSBILLA**

DICT LAUNCHES 53 NEW FREE WI-FI SITES IN TAWI-TAWI

ZAMBOANGA CITY (PIA) —The Department of Information and Communications Technology Region 9, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi (DICT 9 and BaSulTa) launches 53 new free Wi-Fi sites across the province of Tawi-Tawi as part of the nationwide celebration of National ICT Month 2025.

DICT 9 and BaSulTa continues to expand its digital initiatives in the region, with a focus on strengthening connectivity and digital literacy in underserved communities.

The activity is part of the agency’s flagship Digital Bayanihan Roadshow, aimed at promoting digital inclusivity in far-flung areas.

Alongside the Free Wi-Fi rollout, DICT also turned

over TECH4ED ICT equipment and MWELL Telemedicine units to the Municipality of Tandubas. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DICT and the Ministry of Transportation and Communications (MOTC) was also signed to further support ICT development in the Bangsamoro region.

Board Member Melhan J. Masdal, representing Governor Yshmael Sali, expressed the provincial government’s continued support for ICT programs that empower communities and create equal opportunities for all.

In Zamboanga City, DICT Region 9 and BASULTA also inaugurated a new Digital Training Center (DTC) in Barangay Talon-

Talon. The center aims to offer digital literacy training to women, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, youth, and other marginalized groups. Assistant Secretary Maria Teresa Camba said “we want this center to be a hub of learning and opportunity. Digital literacy is a key tool in uplifting lives and building an inclusive digital economy.”

As part of the launch, DICT conducted a ceremonial turnover of ICT equipment to the Department of Education (DepEd) Zamboanga under Project CLICK, supporting Alternative Learning System (ALS) students with access to technology and 21st-century skills.

DICT Undersecretary Paul Joseph Mercado

said “this effort is in line with our commitment to bridge the digital divide and ensure that no Filipino is left behind. Access to the internet is no longer a luxury, it is a lifeline to education, employment, and essential services”.

He assured the public that the agency will continue to roll out programs that empower citizens through technology. The agency calls on local leaders, communities, and partners to join in the digital bayanihan, echoing this year’s ICT Month theme, “Walang Iwanan sa Digital Bayanihan.” (EDT/MLE/BNT/PIA9-Zamboanga City) **BY MYRA CEL L. ESPINOSA AND BEVANNE JAIRAH N. TIGO**

BSP CHIEF ELATED OVER PH'S REMOVAL FROM EC'S HIGH-RISK COUNTRIES

MANILA – Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Governor Eli Remolona Jr. on Wednesday considered as welcome news the European Commission's (EC) decision to remove the Philippines from its list of high-risk countries in terms of financial crime. "That's certainly good news. But the EU (European Union) Parliament will still need to confirm the EC decision," he said.

This, after the Belgium-based EC, in a press release issued June 10, said eight countries, including the Philippines, were delisted but several countries were added.

The move, it said, was made "to protect the EU financial system."

It said the latest decision "takes into account the work of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and in particular its list of 'Jurisdictions under Increased Monitoring'".

"As a founding member of FATF, the Commission is closely involved in monitoring the progress of the listed jurisdictions, helping them to fully implement their respective

action plans agreed with FATF. Alignment with FATF is important for upholding the EU's commitment to promoting and implementing global standards," it added.

Last Feb. 21, FATF, in a statement, released an updated list of high-risk and other monitored jurisdictions and announced the Philippines' removal from the list because of "significant progress in improving its AML/CFT (anti-money laundering/countering the financing of terrorism) regime."

It said the Philippine government showed effective risk-based supervision of Designated Non-Financial Businesses and Professions, demonstrated supervisors were using AML/CFT controls to address risks with casino junkets, implemented new registration requirements for money or value transfer services, and applied sanctions to unregistered and illegal remittance operations, among others. (PNA) BY JOANN VILLANUEVA

PAGCOR DONATES P16-M WORTH OF PATIENT TRANSPORT VEHICLES TO 8 LGUS

MANILA – The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) has turned over patient transport vehicles (PTVs) worth PHP16.20 million to eight local government units (LGUs) in Luzon.

In a statement Thursday, PAGCOR said beneficiaries include Rosario and Cuenca in Batangas; San Mateo, Isabela; Pola, Oriental Mindoro; and the municipalities of Dumaran, Brooke's Point, Magsaysay, and Coron in Palawan.

Officials and representatives from the recipient LGUs came to the PAGCOR Corporate Office in Pasay City to receive the donations on June 10. Each vehicle is equipped

with essential emergency medical features including a GPS navigation system, ambulance stretcher, oxygen supply, wheelchair, and first aid kit.

PAGCOR chairperson and chief executive officer Alejandro Tengco said the vehicles would help enhance the capacity of local health units to respond swiftly to medical emergencies, particularly in areas with limited access to hospitals and specialized care.

"Our PTV donation program is part of PAGCOR's commitment to help LGUs build more responsive and resilient healthcare systems," he said. "Through these vehicles,

DOE: POWER COOP TO IMPROVE SITUATION IN SIQUIJOR WITHIN THE WEEK

MANILA – Siquijor Island Power Cooperative (SIPCOR), the power supplier in the province, committed to improve the power situation within the week, Department of Energy (DOE) Undersecretary and incoming officer in charge Sharon Garin said Friday. "There was a commitment from SIPCOR themselves that they will fix the gensets (generator sets)," Garin said in a briefing at the DOE office in Taguig City.

Siquijor was earlier placed under a state of calamity due to long hours of power outages.

"At that time, there was five only running out of the nine gensets. For so many reasons. And that is still under evaluation. Pero what we needed was that the SIPCOR will commit na ayusin nila within the week (But what we needed was SIPCOR committed that they fix this within the week)," Garin said.

Garin said two generator sets already arrived in Siquijor.

"We are expecting SIPCOR to have their two gensets arrive. I think one arrived yesterday and another one arrived today. Let's see if they can connect that already to the system by this weekend," she said.

Garin assured that government agencies are working together to address the power crisis in the province.

"NEA (National Electrification Administration) is also working on it. All the agencies, all hands are on deck para ma-regularize naman 'yung sitwasyon sa Siquijor (All the agencies, all hands are on deck to regularize the situation in Siquijor)," Garin said.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. earlier visited Siquijor to personally

we help ensure that people living in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas can receive timely medical care," he added. (PNA) BY ANNA LEAH GONZALES

assess the situation. He ordered the deployment of at least two emergency generator sets from Palawan to Siquijor to address the power crisis in the province.

"We'd like to thank also the President for really going there and checking the gensets. And he went all over the compound of SIPCOR and demanded that SIPCOR should deliver what they are supposed to deliver," Garin said.

Nuclear energy The Department of Energy, meanwhile, thanked the Congress for the ratification of the Bicameral Conference Committee Report on Senate Bill No. 2899 and House Bill No. 9293, or the Philippine National Nuclear Energy Safety Act, which establishes the Philippine Atomic Energy Regulatory Authority (PhilATOM).

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla thanked the Congress for finally passing the bill after 18 years.

Garin, meanwhile, said that after almost two decades, the passage of the PhilATOM bill marks a historic turning point for the Philippines.

"We will now have the necessary legal and institutional foundations to guide the development of nuclear energy infrastructure with oversight for the highest standards of safety and security," Garin said.

"This is a critical step forward in strengthening our long-term energy security while ensuring that every action we take is anchored on responsibility, transparency, and public trust."

The Philippine National Nuclear Energy Safety Act was approved on third and final reading by the Senate on June 9, 2025. The House of Representatives earlier approved its counterpart measure in November 2023.

Garin said having a clear and legal nuclear framework will help encourage global investors to tap the country's nuclear potential.

Once enacted into law, PhilATOM will serve as

BIR EXTENDS OPERATIONS FOR ESTATE TAX AMNESTY PAYMENTS

MANILA – The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) said its district offices would extend their work hours until midnight to accommodate taxpayers who will avail of the estate tax amnesty.

"As long as taxpayers arrive in the district office on or before 5 p.m., the district office will entertain their application for estate tax amnesty whatever time they may finish, even if the district office has to extend beyond normal office hours," BIR Commissioner Romeo Lumagui said in a

statement on Friday. The estate tax amnesty deadline under Republic Act No. 11213, as amended, encourages taxpayers to settle their estate liabilities computed at a flat rate of 6 percent and all penalties, surcharges, and interest are waived.

The BIR also earlier issued a tax advisory stating that banking hours of all authorized agent banks are extended until 5 p.m. from June 4 to June 16, 2025 to accept estate tax payments. (PNA) BY ANNA LEAH GONZALES

DTI ROLLS OUT AI CHATBOT TO FAST-TRACK BUSINESS SERVICES

MANILA – The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) launched a new artificial intelligence (AI)-powered web interface to automate frontline services and simplify regulatory compliance

the country's sole and independent regulator for the peaceful, safe, and secure uses of nuclear energy and radiation sources.

It will also act as the official national point of contact in the event of nuclear or radiological emergencies, in line with international conventions and agreements to which the Philippines is a party. Garin said the creation of PhilATOM is essential in ensuring that all aspects of nuclear energy infrastructure, such as siting, construction, licensing, safety, and eventual operation, are effectively and comprehensively regulated by an independent and competent authority.

She, however, clarified that the establishment of PhilATOM does not signal the immediate construction of a nuclear power plant.

Garin said any country pursuing nuclear energy must undergo a rigorous, step-by-step process and comply fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency's

by streamlining business licensing and accreditation processes nationwide.

"The DTI is leveraging digitization through this new AI chatbot to cut red tape, improve access, and empower businesses under the 'Bagong Pilipinas' vision," DTI Secretary Cristina Roque said in a statement on Friday.

The digital assistant leverages AI technology to provide real-time responses, eliminating the need for queuing, in-person visits, and time-consuming email correspondence.

It is accessible 24/7 through the DTI's Integrated Registration Information System website at <https://iregis.dti.gov.ph/>, where it provides instant responses to inquiries on key DTI-related services.

The DTI reiterated its commitment to ease of doing business and contribute to a sustainable national economic growth. (PNA) By Anna Leah Gonzales

stringent requirements for nuclear infrastructure development.

Under the Philippine Energy Plan, the country targets to build its nuclear power plant by 2032. (PNA) BY ANNA LEAH GONZALES



PH HOPEFUL IN BILLIE JEAN KING CUP CAMPAIGN

MANILA – The Philippines has to hurdle Malaysia, Indonesia and Uzbekistan in a bid for promotional ranking in the Billie Jean King (BJK) Cup next week.

Shaira Hope Rivera and Alexa Joy Milliam from the University of Western Alabama, and Philippine Tennis Academy members Tennielle Madis and Stefi Marithe Aludo make up the national team that will see action in the BJK Cup Asia/Oceania Group 2 scheduled from June 16 to 21 at the National Tennis Centre in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

"Uzbekistan, Malaysia, and Indonesia are going to be the strongest teams," said Dy during the Philippine Sportswriters Association (PSA) Forum on Tuesday at the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) conference hall inside the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex on Tuesday.

Also in Group 2 are Northern Marian Islands, Iran, Pacific Oceania, Kyrgyzstan, Singapore, and Mongolia.

The team will leave on Saturday, while the tournament draw is on Sunday.

Rivera, who was part of the team that played in Group 3 last December in Bahrain, is a member of the NCAA All-American Team Division II, while Milliam was named Intercollegiate Tennis Association-ITA National Freshman of the Year.

"I'm very excited to play again (for the Philippines). We have

a good chance to win because (we) already know the players from other countries," said the 25-year-old Rivera, an interdisciplinary management student.

The Filipinas are drawing inspiration from world's No. 77 Alexandra Eala, a graduate of the Rafael Nadal Academy in Mallorca, Spain.

The 20-year-old, playing as a wild card, beat former French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko in the second round, 7-6-7-5; No. 5 and reigning Australian Open champion Madison Keys in the third round, 6-4, 6-2, and No. 2 and five-time Grand Slam champion Iga Swiatek in the quarterfinals, 6-2, 7-5 to reach the semifinal of the WTA1000 Miami Open in Florida in the United States last March. Despite her 6-7 (3), 7-5, 3-6 loss to fourth seed American Jessica Pegula in the semifinal round, Eala became the first Filipina in the Open era to beat a player in the WTA Top 5. She is also the first Filipina to break into the Top 100, reaching a career-high No. 75 world ranking.

Dy, a mixed doubles gold medalist at the Southeast Asian Games (SEAG) in Indonesia (2011) and Singapore (2015), is excited about her new role as coach.

"It's always an honor to serve my country, and now in a different capacity. I have faith in the team and I'm looking forward to great matches knowing that my players

will do their best," said Dy, who teamed up with fellow Fil-American Treat Huey at the 2019 SEAG. Dy, who also serves as head coach of Fresno State University, will be assisted by PTA head coach Bobie Angelo, a veteran of the Davis Cup, in the BJK Cup.

"Both Tennielle and Stefi are ready, they've been playing in the ITF Junior Circuit. I expect them to perform well in the BJK Cup," said Angelo, who also won medals in the SEAG.

The BJK Cup Asia/Oceania Group 2 format includes two round-robin pools of five (Pools A, B). The top two in each pool advance to the promotional play-offs (A1 v B2, B1 v A2).

The two winners of those play-offs will be promoted to Asia/Oceania Group I next year, while the bottom nation in each group (A5, B5) will be relegated to Group 3.

Philippine Tennis Association (PHILTA) Board member Dyan Castillejo and executive director Tonette Mendoza also attended the weekly session presented by San Miguel Corporation, Philippine Sports Commission, Philippine Olympic Committee, MILO, Smart/PLDT, and the country's 24/7 app ArenaPlus.

"The long term goal is to have more women players," said Castillejo, a former national player. "What Eala has done is great, she's an inspiration to young players." (PNA) **BY JEAN MALANUM**

PH TO JOIN ESPORTS WORLD CUP IN SAUDI ARABIA

MANILA – The Philippines will send four teams to the Esports World Cup scheduled from July 10 to Aug. 20 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

The Filipinos are playing in the Mobile Legends: Bang Bang category.

MPL Philippines Season 15 champion Team Liquid PH (TLPH) and runner-up Onic PH will try to reclaim the Mid-Season Cup (MSC) while the Natus Vincere PH and TLPH will defend the MLBB Women's Invitational (MWI) crown.

"Our team is hungry to redeem the title in the MSC while in the MWI, the goal is to retain the title," said Lee Vilorio, Moonton head of Business Development and Partnerships for

Philippine Esports, during the Philippine Sportswriters Association Forum on Tuesday at the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) conference hall inside the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

TLPH and Onic PH will be up against 14 other teams, including powerhouse teams from Indonesia and Malaysia, to reclaim the MSC title the Philippines last won in 2022.

"In the upcoming EWC, we will make sure that one of us will win. We are really preparing to get the MSC again since the Philippines has not been able to get it for several years," said Onic PH top player Duane "Kelra" Pillas.

"We don't want to lose

because we really want (the Philippines) to win the championship," said Kiel "Oheb" Soriano, who joined Pillas in the weekly session presented by San Miguel Corporation, PSC, Philippine Olympic Committee, MILO, Smart/PLDT, and the country's 24/7 sports app ArenaPlus. Navi PH, bannered by Gwyeth "Ayanami" Diagon, and TLPH, led by Trinity "Ramici" Ramos, are seeking back-to-back titles after dethroning Team Vitality of Indonesia last year.

The MSC event, with a total prize pool of USD3 million, is on July 10 to Aug. 2 while the MWI, with USD500,000 at stake, is on July 15 to 20. (PNA) **BY JEAN MALANUM**

ALAS PILIPINAS IN MUST-WIN MATCH VS. NEW ZEALAND

MANILA – Alas Pilipinas seeks to keep its semifinal bid alive against New Zealand on Wednesday in the AVC (Asian Volleyball Confederation) Women's Volleyball Nations Cup in Hanoi, Vietnam.

The match is set at 4 p.m. (PH time) at Dong Anh Arena.

After bowing to Iran, 25-16, 21-25, 26-24, 23-25, 13-15 Monday, the Philippines must hurdle New Zealand and Kazakhstan on Thursday.

Angel Canino said they have a big chance against New Zealand, which

survived Mongolia, 25-22, 25-22, 10-25, 20-25, 15-13, also on Monday.

"Jia [Morado-de Guzman, team captain] keeps our spirits up. She told us that we have more matches coming up and that we keep our chins up -- we fight to the end," Canino said during the tournament's rest day Tuesday, as quoted in a news release.

"Whatever outcome we had in this tournament, we've continued to learn and improve," added Canino, a former University Athletic Association of the Philippines top rookie and

Most Valuable Player.

Alas Pilipinas coach Jorge Edson Souza de Brito told his players not to give up.

"The mindset is to always fight hard," he said.

Kazakhstan and Iran have similar 3-0 records in Pool B, while Indonesia and Mongolia are winless.

Host Vietnam leads Pool A with a 2-0 card, followed by Chinese-Taipei (2-1), Australia (1-1), Hong Kong (1-2) and India (0-2).

The top two teams from each group advance to the final four. (PNA) **BY JEAN MALANUM**

ASIAN CUP QUALIFIERS: PH MEN'S TEAM DRAWS WITH TAJIKISTAN

CAPAS, Tarlac – Bjorn Kristensen had himself a night for the Philippine men's national football team as the squad salvaged a 2-2 draw against Tajikistan in a crucial AFC (Asian Football Confederation) Asian Cup Qualifiers match on Tuesday night in front of 10,854 fans at New Clark City Athletic Stadium here.

Kristensen opened the scoring for the Philippine team in the 28th minute, to the delight of the largest

crowd at the venue since the 2019 Southeast Asian Games.

However, Mabatshoev Shervoni pounced on a crucial error by Kevin Hansen and tied the match in the 30th minute before Umarbaev Parvildzhon put the Tajiks ahead in the 42nd minute.

Kristensen, though, saved the best for last as he converted a long kick by Hansen into a breakaway goal in the 79th minute.

Both teams are at four points on one win and one draw each, but the Philippines remains ahead of Group A on goal difference. The top team of each group will advance to the 2027 Asian Cup in Saudi Arabia.

Up next for the Philippines on Oct. 9 is Timor Leste, which is coming off a 1-0 win over winless Maldives for three points in the group. (PNA) **BY IVAN STEWART SALDAJENO**