

**CAVITEÑO SOLO PARENTS AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH
 EMPOWERED THROUGH FASHION ACCESSORIES
 MAKING TRAINING**



DREDGING OF MOLINO DAM UNDERWAY TO EASE FLOODING IN BACCOOR



CITY OF BACCOOR, Cavite (PIA) — The City Government of Bacoor has started dredging activities at the upstream portion of Molino Dam in an effort to address the city’s persistent flooding issues. According to the city government, the project, led by the City Engineering Office, is designed to increase the dam’s water storage capacity. It said this will help reduce the risk of flooding in nearby communities by temporarily storing excess rainwater during heavy downpours. Mayor Strike Revilla emphasized that the dredging is a significant project for Barangay 3 and the entire City of Bacoor. “The goal of this project is to improve Molino Dam’s capacity to store water, in

order to lessen the impact of flooding in our area,” Revilla said. He also expressed his vision to fully revitalize the dam and maximize its long-term benefits for the community. “Beyond flood prevention, we are also looking into the dam’s potential future use by Maynilad. This project is not only about mitigating floods but also about better managing our natural resources,” he added. Recently, the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), in coordination with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) Region IV-A and the Bacoor City Government, conducted a joint inspection to monitor the progress of the dredging operations. The inspection was led by NIA CBIMO Division Manager Engr. Edwin C. Nazareno and Senior Engineer Blue Kevin Borreo, along with representatives from the DPWH and the city’s engineering office. NIA also expressed support for the initiative, noting that the project will not only improve water storage but will also aid in flood prevention for surrounding communities. NIA also underscored that the collaboration between the City Government of Bacoor and NIA reflects a proactive and united effort to tackle critical challenges and ensure a safer, more resilient, and sustainable future for the people of Bacoor City. (RBF, PIA Cavite) **BY RUEL FRANCISCO**

In line with the Provincial Government of Cavite’s commitment to empower vulnerable sectors through sustainable livelihood initiatives, a skills training on Fashion Accessories Making was conducted on June 23, 2025, at the Office of the Provincial Engineer (OPE) Conference Room, New Provincial Capitol in Trece Martires City. A total of 26 Caviteños, composed of solo parents and out-of-school youth, participated in the hands-on training facilitated by Ms. Eleazara Asis, outsource trainer of the Office of the Provincial Cooperative Development Officer (OPCDO). The activity provided participants with essential skills in crafting various types of fashion accessories such as beaded earrings, bracelets, and necklaces—enabling them to create marketable items and explore possible income-generating opportunities. The livelihood initiative is part of the province’s continuing efforts to uplift the lives of marginalized sectors by equipping them with practical skills that promote self-sufficiency and entrepreneurship. — **OPIO**

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MOST WANTED PERSON (REGIONAL LEVEL – MC), NAARESTO NG GENERAL TRIAS POLICE SA PANGIL, LAGUNA

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite – Isang Most Wanted Person na kabilang sa Regional Level List ay naaresto ng mga tauhan ng General Trias City Component Police Station (CCPS) dakong 4:50 ng hapon noong Hunyo 26, 2025 sa Brgy. Balian, Pangil, Laguna.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL BISMARCK S MENDOZA, Officer in Charge ng General Trias CCPS, ang suspek na si alyas "Ruben", residente ng Brgy. Pasong Kawayan 1, General Trias City, Cavite.

Ang matagumpay na operasyon ay isinagawa ng Warrant Personnel ng General Trias CCPS gamit ang Alternative Recording Device (ARD) bilang pagsunod sa patakaran sa transparency sa mga operasyon ng kapulisan.

Nagresulta ito sa pagkakaaresto ng suspek para sa 7 count of Acts of Lasciviousness sa ilalim ng Art. 355 ng Revised Penal Code, kaugnay ng Section 5(b) ng R.A. 7610. Ang mga kaso ay may bilang na Criminal Case

Nos. TMCR-937-25 hanggang TMCR-943-25, lahat ay may petsang Hunyo 23, 2025, at inisyu ng Family Court, Fourth Judicial Region, Branch 5, Trece Martires City, Cavite. Ang bawat kaso ay may inirekomendang piyansa na Php180,000.00.

Sa kasalukuyan, ang akusado ay panandaliang nakakulong sa General Trias City Custodial Facility na matatagpuan sa Brgy. Bagumbayan, General Trias City, Cavite, habang hinihintay ang karampatang proseso ng batas.

Samantala, pinuri ni PCOL Dwight E Alegre, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite PPO, ang maayos na koordinasyon at pagsasagawa ng operasyon ng General Trias CCPS. Aniya,

"Ang pagkakaaresto sa isang most wanted person sa regional level ay nagpapakita ng dedikasyon at pagiging epektibo ng ating kapulisan. Patuloy tayong magsasagawa ng mga operasyon upang matiyak ang hustisya at kaligtasan ng mamamayan."

PHP 680,000.00 HALAGA NG SHABU, NASAMSAM; APAT NA HIGH-VALUE INDIVIDUAL ARESTADO

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite – Apat na High-Value Individuals (HVI) na sangkot sa ilegal na droga ang naaresto ng pinagsanib na puwersa ng Provincial Drug Enforcement Unit (PDEU) ng Cavite Police Provincial Office at Dasmariñas City Component Police Station (CCPS) sa bisa ng mahigpit na koordinasyon sa Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) sa isang buy-bust operation dakong 10:00 ng gabi noong Hunyo 26, 2025 sa Brgy. Datu Esmael, Dasmariñas City, Cavite.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL CHESTER NOEL BORLONGAN, Chief Provincial Intelligence Unit, ang mga suspek na sina alyas "Oding," "Alma," "Sam," at "Miss" ay pawang mga High-Value Individuals (HVI) na nakatira sa Brgy. Datu Esmael, Dasmariñas City, Cavite, at kabilang sa mga target ng operasyon kaugnay ng kampanya laban sa ilegal na droga.

Ang operasyon ay nagresulta sa pagkakakumpiska ng humigit-kumulang 100

gramo ng hinihinalang shabu na may tinatayang standard drug price na Php 680,000.00.

Nakumpiskang mga ebidensya: Isang (1) maliit na heat-sealed plastic sachet (buy-bust item); Isang (1) karagdagang maliit na sachet ng hinihinalang shabu; Isang (1) knotted transparent plastic ice bag na naglalaman ng hinihinalang shabu.

Ang buong operasyon ay naisagawa gamit ang Alternative Recording Device (ARD) bilang bahagi ng pagsunod sa mga patakaran ng PNP ukol sa transparency sa lahat ng anti-illegal drug operations.

Samantala, pinuri ni PCOL Dwight E Alegre, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite PPO, ang matagumpay na operasyon. "Ang pagkakaaresto ng apat na HVI at pagkakasamsam ng Php 680,000.00 halaga ng shabu ay patunay ng bisa ng ating mahigpit na ugnayan sa PDEA. Buo ang suporta ng Cavite PPO sa kampanya laban sa droga upang mapanatiling ligtas ang ating mga komunidad," aniya.

REGIONAL MOST WANTED PERSON, NAARESTO NG CAVITE CITY PNP SA DASMARINAS CITY

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite – Matagumpay na naaresto ng pinagsanib na puwersa ng Cavite Component City Police Station (Lead Unit) at 401st Regional Mobile Force Battalion ang isang Most Wanted Person sa antas ng rehiyon dakong 9:00 ng gabi noong Hunyo 25, 2025, sa Barangay Langkaan 1, Dasmariñas City, Cavite.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL Jesus Erickson S Polinag, Hepe ng Pulisya ng Cavite Component City Police Station, ang akusado na si alyas NINO, residente ng Barangay Langkaan 1, Dasmariñas City, Cavite.

Ang akusado ay naaresto sa bisa ng Warrant of Arrest na inilabas ng Regional Trial Court, Fourth Judicial Region, Branch 131, Trece Martires City, Cavite, noong Hunyo 5, 2025, kaugnay ng kasong paglabag sa Section 11, Article II ng Republic Act 9165 (Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002), sa ilalim ng Criminal Case No. TMCR-840-19. Isinagawa ang operasyon gamit ang Body Worn Camera at Alternative Recording Device (ARD) bilang pagsunod sa mga patakaran ng transparency at integridad sa mga aktibidad ng pagpapatupad

ng batas.

Ang suspek ay kasalukuyang nakakulong habang inaayos ang mga kaukulang dokumento para sa pormal na pagsasampa ng kaso at pagpapatuloy ng paglilitis.

Ayon kay PLTCOL Jesus Erickson S Polinag, Chief of Police, "Ang matagumpay na pagdakip kay Niño ay isang malinaw na patunay ng masigasig na pagtutulungan ng ating kapulisan at ng buong PNP upang tugisin at panagutin ang mga personalidad na may kaso at nananatiling banta sa ating mga komunidad."

Samantala, pinuri ni PCOL Dwight E Alegre, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite PPO, ang matagumpay na operasyon. Aniya, "Ang pagkakaaresto sa isang Regional Most Wanted Person ay isang mahalagang tagumpay para sa buong lalawigan. Ipinapakita nito ang determinasyon ng Cavite PPO na paigtingin ang kampanya laban sa kriminalidad at panatilihin ang kaayusan at kapayapaan sa ating mga pamayanan. Patuloy ang aming suporta sa mga lokal na yunit upang matiyak ang seguridad ng bawat Caviteño."

REGIONAL LEVEL MOST WANTED, ARESTADO SA TANZA, CAVITE

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite – Isa na namang Most Wanted Person sa antas ng rehiyon ang nasakote ng mga operatiba ng Tanza Municipal Police Station matapos ang ikinasang operasyon dakong 5:50 ng hapon noong Hunyo 24, 2025 sa Brgy. Julugan 1, Tanza, Cavite.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL Al-Rieza S Kinang, Acting Chief of Police ng Tanza MPS, ang naaresto na si alyas Leonard, at residente ng Brgy. Julugan 1, Tanza, Cavite.

Ang operasyon ay isinagawa ng Warrant Personnel ng Tanza MPS gamit ang Alternative Recording Device (ARD) sa bisa ng service of sentence para sa kasong paglabag sa Section 11 ng Republic Act 9165 (Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002) sa ilalim ng mga Criminal Case Numbers TMCR-902-19, TMCR-

903-19, TMCR-904-19, at TMCR-906-19. Ang nasabing service of sentence ay inisyu at nilagdaan ng Regional Trial Court, Branch 131, Fourth Judicial Region, Trece Martires City, Cavite, noong Hunyo 24, 2025.

Ang akusado ay kasalukuyang nasa kustodiya ng Tanza Municipal Police Station para sa nararapat na disposisyon alinsunod sa kautusan ng hukuman.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL Al-Rieza S Kinang, Acting Chief of Police ng Tanza MPS, ang pagkakaaresto bilang isang mahalagang tagumpay ng kanilang istasyon, "Patuloy ang mas pinaigting nating operasyon laban sa mga most wanted sa ilalim ng direktiba ng ating pamunuan.

Ang matagumpay na pagkakaaresto sa isang regional level target ay patunay ng masinsinang

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite – Tatlong hinihinalang drug personalities, kabilang ang isang babae na

intelligence coordination at dedikasyon ng ating mga kapulisan sa Tanza."

Samantala, ayon kay PCOL Dwight E Alegre, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite Police Provincial Office, "Ang bawat naaresto sa listahan ng mga most wanted ay isang tagumpay hindi lamang para sa ating kapulisan, kundi para na rin sa ating komunidad. Ito ay bahagi ng ating tuloy-tuloy na kampanya upang tiyaking ligtas ang bawat barangay sa Cavite laban sa mga kriminal at nagtatago sa batas."

TATLO TIMBOG SA BUY-BUST SA TAGAYTAY; P102K HALAGA NG SHABU NAKUMPISKA

nakalista bilang Street Level Individual (SLI), ang naaresto ng mga operatiba ng City Drug Enforcement Unit (CDEU) ng Tagaytay Component City Police Station (CCPS) sa isinagawang buy-bust operation dakong 12:01 ng tanghali ngayong Hunyo 25, 2025 sa Brgy. Tolentino East, Tagaytay City.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL Jefferson P Ison, Officer-in-Charge ng Tagaytay CCPS, ang mga naarestong suspek na sina alyas Mia, residente ng Brgy. Pasong Langka, Silang, Cavite; alyas Johnny, residente ng Brgy. Marinig, Cabuyao City, Laguna; at alyas Carmela, residente ng Brgy. Sinalhan, Sta. Rosa City, Laguna.

Ang operasyon ay isinagawa sa ilalim ng koordinasyon ng Philippine

Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) at may paggamit ng Body Worn Camera (BWC) alinsunod sa umiiral na batas.

Nasamsam sa operasyon ang sumusunod na ebidensya: Labing-isang (11) piraso ng heat-sealed transparent plastic sachet na naglalaman ng puting kristal na substansiyang hinihinalang shabu, na tinatayang may kabuuang bigat na 15 gramo at tinatayang halaga na Php 102,000.00.

Ang mga naarestong suspek ay kasalukuyang nasa kustodiya ng Tagaytay CCPS habang inihahanda ang kaukulang kaso laban sa kanila para sa paglabag sa Republic Act 9165 o Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002.

Ayon kay PLTCOL Jefferson P Ison, "Ang matagumpay na operasyon na ito ay patunay ng masigasig na pagtugon ng ating kapulisan sa problema ng ilegal na droga sa lungsod. Hindi natin hahayaan na sirain ng mga sangkot sa droga ang kinabukasan ng ating mamamayan."

Samantala, pinuri naman ni PCOL Dwight E Alegre, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite PPO, ang mahusay na aksyon ng Tagaytay police, "Mahalagang bahagi ang mga operasyong tulad nito sa ating mas malawak na kampanya laban sa droga. Patuloy nating susuportahan ang mga inisyatibong nagsusulong ng ligtas at maayos na pamayanan."

DOLE CITES PESO'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna (PIA) — The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) in Calabarzon has recognized the vital role of Public Employment Service Offices (PESOs) in implementing employment programs at the grassroots level, highlighting their contributions through the "Search for Best PESO Awards" program.

According to DOLE Calabarzon, the program not only honors the outstanding performance of local PESOs but also acknowledges their contributions to improving employment rates and facilitating job opportunities for millions of residents across the region.

"We want to highlight the recognition given to our PESO managers, their accomplishments, support, participation, and contributions that have helped improve the employment rate in Calabarzon," said DOLE Calabarzon Assistant Regional Director Marion Sevilla.

Sevilla emphasized that the awards program underscores the integral and indispensable role of PESOs in public service. The Search for Best PESO Awards also seeks to encourage PESOs to improve and strengthen the delivery of employment facilitation services nationwide.

"Through the Search for Best PESO Awards and the National PESO Congress, we are able to give back, even in a small way, for their hard work and dedication," Sevilla said.

She also shared that the DOLE Calabarzon

has completed the deliberation process to determine the winners in several categories, including: First-Class Province, Component City, First Class Municipality, Second to Third Class Municipality, Fourth to Sixth Class Municipality, and Job Placement Office.

The deliberation was spearheaded by the Regional Awards Committee (RAC), chaired by DOLE IV-A, with members from the Regional PESO Federation and representatives from the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and the Philippine Information Agency (PIA).

Winners at the regional level will be endorsed by the RAC to advance and compete at the national level, where top-performing PESOs from across the country will vie for the National Awards.

According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), Calabarzon remains among the regions with the highest employment rates nationwide. As of April 2025, the region recorded an employment rate of 94.7%, a gradual increase from 93% in January 2025.

DOLE Calabarzon also announced that the 25th National Public Employment Service Office (PESO) Congress is scheduled to be held in the Calabarzon region in October 2025. (CO/PIA4A)

BY CHARMARINE ODONG

HOMEGROWN CALABARZON MSMEs SHOWCASE PRODUCTS AT BANGKOK TRADE EXPO

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna (PIA)—The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Calabarzon continues to strengthen the global competitiveness of local micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) by sending 15 homegrown brands to ProPak Asia 2025—one of the region's largest international processing and packaging trade events held in Bangkok, Thailand.

The participating MSMEs were part of the Philippine delegation to ProPak Asia, held from June 11 to 14 at the Bangkok International Trade and Exhibition Center (BITEC). Their participation provided an opportunity to explore international markets, forge export partnerships, and showcase Calabarzon's innovative and sustainable products on a global stage.

ProPak Asia, organized by Informa Markets, gathers industry leaders, innovators, and policymakers from across Asia and beyond, offering a platform for cutting-edge solutions, networking, and market expansion.

DTI emphasized that the delegation's participation was geared toward promoting innovation, competitiveness, and market readiness in the Philippine MSME sector. "The activities offered valuable opportunities to explore regional best practices in packaging, branding, product innovation, and creative enterprise development," DTI said in a statement.

Among the participating entrepreneurs was Rhea Santillan, owner of Lucky Food Services and Pat & Kat Food Products in Cavite City. As a first-time delegate,

Santillan joined the expo to learn about new technologies to upgrade her food processing business.

"My business offers products such as crispy pata, crispy ulo, lechon kawali, and other marinated pork products. I discovered vacuum packaging equipment that can improve my product's packaging quality, enhance production efficiency, and maintain proper sanitation in handling marinated pork products," she added. She underscored the impact of one seminar conducted by the World Packaging Association that struck her as being a responsible business owner.

"The seminar that struck me the most was the one by the World Packaging Association. I'm in the retail industry, and it made me realize that I contribute to pollution. So, it helps me to be intentional and mindful in choosing [sustainable] packaging with my product," she explained.

With this effort of the government to MSME, Santillan expressed gratitude to DTI for empowering entrepreneurs like her to know the global trends and best practices.

According to DTI, this initiative reflects the Marcos administration's broader commitment to nurturing inclusive, innovation-led, and globally competitive MSMEs, in line with its Bagong Pilipinas vision.

The DTI stressed that it remains committed to empowering local MSMEs to align with international trends and adopt environmentally responsible practices. (KA, PIA 4A) **BY KRISTIANNE ANDRADE**

EDITORIAL

Pagkalat ng Monkeypox sa Pilipinas, dumarami na

Kamakailan lamang ay mababalitaang nagtala ang Pilipinas ng mga kaso ng monkeypox.

Ang sakit na ito ay kalimitang naipapasa sa pamamagitan ng pisikal na kontak sa isang tao na mayroong mpox. Sa kasalukuyan ay dumadami ang naitatalang kaso ng mga nagkakaroon ng sintomas ng monkeypox.

Dahil sa impormasyong ito ay nararapat na mag-ingat mga tao lalo na ang mga nakatira

malapit na mga lugar na naitala ang virus na ito. Hindi lamang ito simpleng sakit lamang na

maaring magamot sa simpleng gamot.

Ngayong may naitala na ng kaso na namatay dahil sa sakit na ito ay higit na nakakatakot ito para sa karamihan. Kaya naman dapat na sumunod sa alituntuning inilalabas ng DOH upang maiwasan na makasagap ng sakit at mahawa ang mga kasama sa bahay.

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DFA ENDORSES PH NAMES FOR 131 SPRATLY FEATURES

MANILA— The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) has formally endorsed the adoption of Philippine names for 131 features of the Kalayaan Island Group (KIG). Outgoing Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo announced on Friday that he officially signed the National Maritime Council (NMC) Resolution No. 002 (2025), recommending the adoption of the “standard set of Philippine names for 131 features of the KIG.” “The resolution is a recommendation to the President to standardize the Filipino names of the 131 features in the Kalayaan Island Group through an Executive Order,” Foreign Affairs spokesperson Ma. Teresita

Daza told the Philippine News Agency. “This will help demonstrate the Philippines’ right to name such features within its sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea,” she added. Daza said this would formalize the adoption of those names by government agencies, and serves to implement further the 2024 Philippine Maritime Zones Act. The KIG is located in the West Philippine Sea and is part of an archipelago of islet, sandbars, atolls, reefs, shoal and cays known internationally as the Spratly Islands in the wider South China Sea. (PNA) **BY JOYCE ANN L. ROCAMORA**

PBBM TO PAF: PROTECT PH'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, SOVEREIGN RIGHTS

MANILA — President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. on Friday called on the Philippine Air Force (PAF) to continue protecting the Philippines’ territorial integrity and sovereign rights, as the country faces external threats. Speaking before the PAF Air Education and Training Command (AETC) at Fernando Air Base in Lipa City, Batangas, Marcos reaffirmed his administration’s continued support for its modernization efforts to provide the troops with best equipment, training, and facilities. “Aniya, walang katumbas ang papel ng Philippine Air Force sa mga hamon ng seguridad na kinakaharap ng ating bansa (He said the role of the Philippine Air Force in the security challenges facing our country is unparalleled),” Palace Press Officer Claire Castro said in a press briefing, citing Marcos’ remarks during his camp visit. “Binigyang-diin ng Pangulo ang kahalagahan ng suporta ng Puwersang Panghimpapawid sa

buhay, lakas at pag-asa ng ating Philippine Navy at Philippine Army sa gitna ng laban (The President emphasized the importance of the Air Force’s support in the life, strength, and hope of our Philippine Navy and Philippine Army in the midst of the fight),” she added. Marcos stressed that with the AETC’s help, soldiers have become very well trained and well equipped as they fulfill their mandate in protecting the nation. Around 15,000 students have been trained by AETC from 2019 to 2025, according to government data. Marcos urged the PAF personnel to be “faithful in [their] service, love their homeland, serve the people, and cherish the trust and respect of the Filipino people.” “Nagbitaw din ng mensahe at hamon ang Pangulo sa ating kasundaluhan. Binigyan ng direktiba ng Pangulo ang AETC na tiyakin ang pagtugon nito sa mga kursong kinakailangan ng ating Air Force na naayon

MANILA — The utilization of new technologies such as drones and closed-circuit television (CCTV) has allowed the Philippine National Police (PNP) to step up and speed up its response to emergency situations, Malacañang said on Friday. It was the response of Palace Press Officer Claire Castro to Vice President Sara Z. Duterte’s comment on “traditional” visibility measures being undertaken by police officers. Duterte earlier told the PNP to prioritize the use of modern technology such as drones and CCTVs, instead of focusing on the traditional way of intensifying police presence in public spaces. Citing PNP chief Gen.

sa layunin ng AFP (The President also issued a message and challenge to our soldiers. The President directed AETC to ensure that it meets the courses required by our Air Force in line with the goals of the AFP),” Castro said. “Nais din ng Pangulo na panatilihin mataas ang kalidad ng programa at siguruhin na natatapos ng bawat estudyante ang kanilang pagsasanay. Ang Philippine Air Force naman, palawigin pa ang pakikipag-ugnayan sa AETC upang masiguro ang mga kagamitan at iba pang pangangailangan ay matugunan (The President also wants to maintain the high quality of the program and ensure that each student completes their training. The Philippine Air Force, on the other hand, will further enhance its cooperation with the AETC to ensure that equipment and other needs are met).” After delivering his speech, Marcos also received a “balispada” (balisong na espada) as a token of appreciation from the troops. (PNA) **BY RUTH ABBEY GITA-CARLOS**

NEW TECHNOLOGIES ALLOW PNP TO IMPROVE QUICK RESPONSE

Nicolas Torre III, Castro said the PNP has already incorporated technologies such as drones and CCTVs in its operations. “These have enabled us to build a strong foundation for our quick response,” Torre said, as quoted by Castro. Torre said the PNP is also ready to show Duterte how the police carry out emergency response. “The Vice President is welcome to come and visit us and we are more than happy to show her how important the deployment of our policemen in key areas in our quick response team,” he said. “Lastly, we respect everyone’s opinion on how the PNP should do their job. Of course, we are willing to listen to the opinions which are credible and make sense,” Torre added. On June 17, Torre said the government’s unified Emergency 911 system also plays a crucial role in providing Filipinos with faster and more reliable access to life-saving assistance. (PNA) **BY RUTH ABBEY GITA-CARLOS**

GSIS HIGHLIGHTS DIGITAL SHIFT, EASIER LOAN IN MEMBER-FIRST REFORM PUSH

MANILA—The Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) is accelerating its transformation into a fully digital, member-driven institution by launching new tools and policy reforms aimed at enhancing accessibility, reducing red tape, and easing member’s financial burdens. In a news release on Friday, GSIS President and General Manager Jose Arnulfo Veloso said the shift reflects the agency’s renewed focus on listening to members and reshaping services around their needs. “We listen to what our members need. Every reform we implement begins with their feedback,” Veloso said. A stakeholder dialogue was held Wednesday at the Sequoia Hotel Manila Bay where government agencies, state universities, and partner institutions discussed reforms, such as the rollout of digital platforms like

GOV'T READY TO GRANT FUEL SUBSIDY IF GLOBAL OIL PRICES GO UP: PALACE

MANILA — Malacañang on Friday ensured the government’s readiness to provide fuel subsidies to public utility vehicle (PUV) drivers, farmers, and fisherfolk if global crude prices rise anew. This, as Palace Press Officer Claire Castro said the grant of subsidies will depend on actual market movements, adding that the government continues to monitor the situation in Israel and Iran amid tensions between the two Middle East countries. In a Palace press briefing, Castro assured the public that the welfare of the transport workers, farmers and fisherfolk is among the priorities of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. “May mga pagkakataon po siguro na ganitong klaseng sitwasyon ay hindi po agad makakapag-decide ang Pangulo dahil depende po ito sa nagiging sitwasyon sa kasalukuyan (There may be times when in this kind of situation, the President will not be able to decide immediately because it depends on

the current situation),” she said. “Pero patuloy pong nagmo-monitor ang pamahalaan kung ano ba ang nangyayari sa isyu sa Israel at Iran (But the government continues to monitor what is happening with the issue in Israel and Iran),” Castro added. Castro stressed that for now, there is no need for fuel subsidy because the global price of crude oil only reaches USD65 to USD68 per barrel. “So, hindi po agad ito mati-trigger. Pero tandaan po natin, kung anuman po ang maitutulong sa kakayanan at naaayon sa batas natin at sa rules, hindi naman po ito ipagkakait ng pamahalaan. (This will not be triggered immediately. But let us remember, whatever can be done to our ability and is in accordance with our laws and rules, the government will not deny it),” she said. The government has allotted PHP2.5 billion for the Fuel Subsidy Program (FSP) to assist over 1.1 million transport workers, if global oil prices surpass the USD80 per barrel threshold amid the Israel-Iran conflict. The program will benefit an estimated 1,132,407 individuals, including 258,712 PUV operators and drivers, 723,695 tricycle drivers, and 150,000 ride-hailing application drivers. Marcos earlier said there was no need to implement the FSP yet, as global oil prices have not increased. (PNA) **BY RUTH ABBEY GITA-CARLOS**

With-Option-to-Buy program has enabled more than 4,000 families to acquire affordable homes, while nearly 2,000 borrowers have avoided foreclosure through the Housing Accounts Remedial and Condonation Program. Public asset protection was also expanded, with more than 130,000 public school buildings now insured through the National Indemnity Insurance Program, boosting government resilience against disaster risks. (PNA) **BY WILNARD BACELONIA**

PH TO HELP DRUG WAR WITNESSES SANS DIRECT COOPERATION WITH ICC: PALACE

MANILA – The Department of Justice (DOJ) will not directly cooperate with the International Criminal Court (ICC) in extending assistance to the witnesses who will testify against former president Rodrigo Duterte's drug war, Malacañang said on Friday.

In a press conference, Palace Press Officer Claire Castro said the DOJ is ready to help witnesses who will face not just the ICC but also other investigating bodies to give justice to the victims of Duterte's bloody campaign against illegal drugs.

This, as President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. stressed the need to "serve justice to those who deserve it," Castro said.

"It can be said that it is indirectly cooperating with the ICC but the primary intention of the government is to help the victims and the witnesses of the victims to get the justice they need," she told Palace reporters.

"Tutulongan ng DOJ ang mga witness para makapag-testify para mabigyan ng hustisya ang dapat mabigyan ng hustisya. Hindi directly makikipagtulungan sa ICC (The DOJ will help the witnesses to testify to give justice to those who should be given justice. It will not

directly cooperate with the ICC)," Castro added.

DOJ Secretary Jesus Crispin Remulla on Wednesday said there was a request to place the witnesses in the crimes against humanity case filed against Duterte before the ICC under the Witness Protection Program (WPP) for their security and protection.

Remulla said the ICC reached out to the DOJ's WPP but did not make an official request.

He said the DOJ would extend assistance to the witnesses, as long as they are under the Philippines' jurisdiction.

Duterte is facing charges of crimes against humanity for the deaths linked to his controversial war on illegal drugs.

The Philippine News Agency learned that the Australian government is "aware that former Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte has applied for interim release to a third unnamed country."

It is understood that Australia "has not agreed to host" the former chief executive if he is granted interim release, nor is it considering this. (With Joyce Ann Rocamora/PNA) **BY RUTH ABBEY GITA-CARLOS**

ARMY CHIEF LAUDS 11TH INFANTRY DIVISION FOR SECURITY EFFORTS

MANILA – Philippine Army (PA) commander Lt. Gen. Roy Galido lauded the officers and enlisted personnel of the Sulu-based 11th Infantry Division for their efforts to secure the province and other areas under their jurisdiction.

Galido made the remark during his visit to the headquarters of the unit at Camp Teodulfo Bautista in Busbus, Jolo, Sulu on June 24, PA spokesperson Col. Louie Dema-ala said in a statement Thursday night. "The CGPA (Commanding General of the Philippine Army) addressed the 'Alakdan' (nickname of the 11th Infantry Division) personnel where he

commended the troops for their significant combat accomplishments from the previous year up to present. Since January 2024, the unit succeeded in dismantling the Jolo and Basilan Abu Sayyaf Groups and apprehended local terrorists and lawless elements in their areas of responsibility," Dema-ala said.

No specific figures were given regarding this but it can be recalled that the Armed Forces of the Philippines announced that from Jan. 1 to June 12, its units neutralized 112 local terrorist group (LTG) members and supporters. This number consists of 103 who surrendered, two

US, PH SIGN FUNDING BOOST FOR LUZON CARGO RAILWAY PROJECT

MANILA – The Philippines and the United States signed a beneficiary deal that will boost US technical assistance in the construction of the Subic-Clark-Manila-Batangas (SCMB) Cargo Railway. Transportation Secretary Vince Dizon and US Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) Acting Director Thomas Hardy signed the agreement during a bilateral meeting in Arlington, Virginia on June 26.

The proposed 155-km. SCMB freight rail, a flagship project of the Luzon Economic Corridor (LEC), aims to link key industrial and trade zones in Subic Bay, Clark, Manila, and Batangas province.

Philippine Ambassador Jose Manuel Romualdez said the project is set to be a "game-changer" in the LEC, "demonstrating the firm commitment of the Philippines and the US to elevate economic cooperation and deepen the alliance."

The USTDA technical assistance involves transport model development, port-rail integration study, and legal and institutional framework analysis, among other areas.

"By supporting the

development of the SCMB Railway, we are ensuring that key infrastructure will flourish, increasing economic cooperation to develop an essential trading route that will mutually benefit American and Philippine citizens," Hardy said.

"Our partnership with the Philippines exemplifies the strength of American leadership in the Indo-Pacific and underscores our commitment to advancing our shared interests," he added.

Special Assistant to the President for Investment and Economic Affairs Secretary Frederick Go thanked the US government for this crucial support.

"Once operational, the SCMB Railway will attract investments, create new opportunities for businesses, and most importantly, generate quality jobs that will benefit millions of Filipinos," he said.

Dizon said the freight cargo railway aims to decentralize Manila Port and provide the additional transport capacity needed at the Batangas Port and Subic Bay, in line with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s directive to ensure the uninterrupted movement of goods.

"As a freight cargo railway, the SCMB Railway, is seen to solve port traffic and congestion in Manila Port, while ensuring the timely movement of products to and from adjacent major transport hubs," he said.

The Philippines, the US, and Japan launched the LEC in April 2024 to back development in Luzon, with the SCMB cargo railway as its flagship project.

Under LEC, the three countries commit to accelerating coordinated investments in high-impact infrastructure projects, including port modernization, clean energy, semiconductor supply chains and deployments, agribusiness, and civilian port upgrades at Subic Bay. (PNA) **BY JOYCE ANN L. ROCAMORA**

NORMALCY IN ISRAEL RETURNING; EMBASSY RECOMMENDS LOWERING ALERT – DFA

MANILA – The Philippine Embassy in Tel Aviv has now recommended the lowering of alert level in Israel, currently under repatriation phase, as the country returns to normalcy after its 12-day military campaign against Iran.

"For Israel, there is already a recommendation to lower it to alert level 2. But we still have to get the approval of the secretary," Foreign Affairs Assistant Secretary Germinia Aguilar-Usudan said in an interview with reporters on Thursday.

Alert level 2 means restriction phase, where new deployments are still prohibited.

She said completely removing the alert is unlikely as of the moment as "it has to go gradually" and that the Philippines needs to observe how the situation develops first.

Aguilar-Usudan, meanwhile, said the Philippines hopes the ceasefire deal between Israel and Iran would hold.

"Everybody is thinking about peace, we've experienced it a few days ago how difficult it was for our people in the Middle East and also all over the world," she said.

"We are hoping that this will hold, with the United States backing this ceasefire."

Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Eduardo Jose De Vega said both Philippine Ambassador to Israel Aileen Mendiola and Philippine Ambassador to Iran Roberto Manalo are reporting a return to normalcy in their jurisdictions.

Israel has officially ended its state of emergency after declaring a "historic victory" in its Operation Rising Lion, which decimated several Iranian nuclear sites from June 13 to 24.

The Israel Defense Forces Home Front Command has since lifted all restrictions on schools, public gatherings, and workplaces. (PNA)

BY JOYCE ANN L. ROCAMORA

SENATOR URGES OIL FIRMS TO PASS ON SAVINGS FROM FALLING CRUDE PRICES

MANILA – Expectations for easing of tensions in the Middle East has resulted to the drop in global oil prices, thus Senator Sherwin Gatchalian on Thursday urged oil companies to reflect this change in their prices.

"To help ease the cost-of-living burden on our people, I urge oil companies to mirror the decline in global crude prices at the pump," Gatchalian said in a statement.

The senator said the Department of Energy (DOE) must also intensify its market surveillance to ensure fair pricing and prevent undue profit-taking

during periods of price volatility.

"Ang pagbaba ng presyo ng krudo ay sapat na kaginhawaan sa mga Pilipinong patuloy na pinapasan ang pabagobagong presyo ng langis (The drop in oil prices offers much-needed relief for Filipinos who continue to bear the brunt of fluctuating fuel costs)," he said.

Gatchalian warned that without timely adjustments, consumers and the broader economy may continue to feel the ripple effects of geopolitical instability despite improving global conditions. (PNA) **BY WILNARD BACELONIA**

NEGROS OCCIDENTAL BIGASAN NG BAYAN SELLS 'BENTENG BIGAS' RICE

NEGROS OCCIDENTAL (PIA)—The Bigasan ng Bayan, an initiative of the provincial government and the Federation of Irrigators' Associations Central Negros-Bago River Irrigation System (FIACN-BRIS), Inc., is selling rice at P20 per kilogram to vulnerable sectors in Pulupandan town, this province.

Aligned with the directive of President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr.'s Benteng Bigas Meron Na, the initiative makes quality yet affordable rice available to about 500 qualified beneficiary-residents of the town.

Each qualified beneficiary can buy a maximum of 5 kilos in the Bigasan ng Bayan outlet.

Pedro P. Limpangog, president of the FIACN-BRIS, Inc., said the rice sold at the Bigasan ng Bayan in Pulupandan for P20/kg are products of farmers from central Negros particularly from nearby town, Valladolid.

"Subong adlaw, nagbaligya kita sang 50 ka sako sang bugas diri sa banwa sang Pulupandan. Sang una, P25 ang baligya natun, gin down pa namon sa P20 para ma align sa programa sang Presidente," Limpangog said.

(Today we sold 50 sacks of rice here in the town of Pulupandan. Before we

used to sell this at P25 per kilo but lowered down the price further to align with the P20 per kg program of the President.)

"Patubas ini sang central Negros. Didto ni siya nga ani sa Barangay Ayungon. Gin ani sang June 7, gin dry natun sa Tabunan Rice Processing Center sang June 9, gin galing sang June 11 intended para diri sa Bigasan ng Bayan sa Pulupandan, June 24", Limpangog proudly shared. (This is produced locally in central Negros. This was harvested in Barangay Ayungon last June 7, dried at the Tabunan Rice Processing Center, milled last June 11 as it is intended for the Bigasan ng Bayan today here in Pulupandan.)

Since 2023, the Bigasan ng Bayan sells rice at a low price through the contributions of the farmer-members of the irrigators' associations in central Negros.

The FIACN-BRIS is a federation of irrigators' associations with farmer-members in the cities of Bacolod, Bago, and La Carlota, as well as the municipalities of Murcia, Pulupandan, Valladolid, and San Enrique under the National Irrigation Administration-Negros Occidental. *(AAL/EAD-PIA6) **BY EASTER ANNE DOZA**

PCG, MARINA ASSURE PASSENGERS OF SAFE SEA TRAVEL IN CENTRAL VISAYAS

CEBU CITY, Cebu (PIA)—The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) in Central Visayas and the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) have assured the public of safe and secure sea travel aboard domestic vessels in the region.

MARINA Central Visayas Supervising Maritime Industry Development Specialist Engr. Rochyl M. Villamor emphasized that the agency strictly upholds the Maritime Safety Standards set by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

"We make sure that we have all those systems, standards, and regulations so that we prevent injury, we prevent loss of lives, and we also protect our marine environment," said Villamor during an interview over the Kapihan sa PIA.

She highlighted MARINA's major functions, which include overseeing domestic shipping operations—such as ship registration, licensing, and franchising—setting and enforcing maritime safety standards for vessels, crew, and operations, and supervising the training and certification of Filipino seafarers.

"For the crew, they need to be competent. They need to undergo the necessary education. They have to graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Marine Transportation for those in Deck and Bachelor of Science in Marine Engineering for the engines. Naa jud sila

mga necessary or relevant training para kahibaw sila unsay mga buhatonon when they are onboard na sa ship," Villamor explained.

(They must undergo the necessary or relevant training so they know what tasks to perform once they are already onboard.)

Meanwhile, PCG Station Central Cebu Commander Captain Jerome Lozada emphasized that maritime safety, law enforcement, and environmental protection remain at the core of the PCG's mandate. However, he also urged the shipping companies and the passengers to cooperate in implementing safety guidelines.

"What we are advocating right now being the regulators of maritime safety, we are trying to involve the shipping companies, yung owners ng vessels, kasi (and the vessel owners because) we cannot do this alone," said Lozada.

"This is everybody's responsibility, even the riding public. They should also help us to ensure that all these maritime safety guidelines are properly observed or enforced by the shipping companies," he added.

He said PCG is employing the assistive enforcement approach, especially in helping vessel companies that are non-compliant with safety standards to improve their practices and avoid penalties. (MYP/PIA 7 Cebu) **BY MYRTLE Y. PASIGAN**

LA UNION COMBINES REFORESTATION WITH SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD THROUGH FRUIT TREE PLANTING

SAN FERNANDO CITY, La Union (PIA) – In an effort to intertwine forest rehabilitation with sustainable livelihood, the Provincial Government of La Union (PGLU), through its Environment and Natural Resources Office (ENRO), led the planting of 300 fruit-bearing tree seedlings in Barangay Masicong, San Fernando City, La Union on June 25, in celebration of Philippine Arbor Day.

More than 100 participants—including members of the barangay council and representatives from national agencies—joined the activity, which aimed to breathe new life into degraded forestlands while offering long-term economic opportunities for upland communities. Jay-ar Raquedan, Environmental Management Specialist II at PG-ENRO, said, "By planting fruit-bearing trees, we are not only enriching our forestlands but also empowering local communities with sustainable sources of livelihood."

Seedlings of star apple, jackfruit, and cacao were chosen for their ability to restore biodiversity and improve forest cover, while also providing food and income in the long term.

These trees support agroforestry systems that can help communities build climate resilience and food security.

Barangay Masicong was selected as a site due to its extensive forestlands and the presence of areas

under the Integrated Social Forestry (ISF) program — where upland farmers manage public lands through stewardship agreements.

These public lands are co-managed with upland farmers, making them well-suited for community-led reforestation efforts that support La Union's long-term goals of climate resilience and poverty reduction.

Simultaneous tree planting efforts were also carried out in other municipalities, including Sudipen and Balaoan, under the Arbor Day initiative of PGLU and its component local government units.

Carol Laoang from the Office of the Governor emphasized the day's broader significance.

"Arbor Day should not end with planting—it should inspire continuous action. We want tree growing to become part of our daily life, our community planning, and even our disaster preparedness strategies."

This initiative is part of La Union's broader vision of environmental stewardship and inclusive development—anchored on the spirit of oneness among government, communities, and civil society.

Through activities like these, the province is cultivating more than trees—it is nurturing a future where people and the planet can thrive together. (AMB/KJCR, PIA La Union) **BY KATHLENE JOYCE C. RAMONES**

DOST BRINGS MOBILE 'FOODTRIP' FACILITY TO DIPOLOG

DIPOLOG CITY (PIA)—The Zamboanga State College of Marine Sciences and Technology (ZSCMST) is bringing its Department of Science and Technology (DOST)-granted Mobile Modular Food Processing Facility (MMFPF) to this City.

This initiative, the ZSCMST indicates, aims to identify potential partners from the local micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), particularly in the food processing industry, as well as farmer and

fisherfolk cooperatives. Also known as the Food-on-the-road Innovation and Processing Facility, or FoodtrIP for short, the facility is a drying and dehydration model designed to bring processing technologies closer to communities in need.

The facility comes with three cabinet dryers, vegetable peeling and peeling machines, a pedal-type sealing machine, industrial burner and stainless steel vat, a vacuum packing

machine, an industrial grinder, and an analytical balance instrument used to measure the weight of small objects with high accuracy.

Currently located in the Dipolog School of Fisheries in Barangay Olingan, FoodtrIP offered a two-day technology demonstration to MSMEs where they showcased different science-based drying technologies to enhance product shelf life and increase local product market competitiveness. They also offer MSME

consultations, a stakeholders forum, and an MMFPF tour during the duration of its stay in the city.

According to Professor Divine Ramillano, head of the ZSCMST Food Innovation Center, they hope that through these efforts, they can strengthen food innovation and processing not just in Zamboanga del Norte but in Zamboanga Peninsula as a whole. (EDT/PJF/PIA9-Zamboanga del Norte) **BY PAMELA JOYCE FUMERO**

3 MAJOR MICE FACILITIES SOON TO RISE IN CEBU

MANILA – Three major meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE) and event spaces — the SMX Convention Center Cebu, SM Seaside Arena, and Mactan Expo Center — are set to rise in Cebu by 2026.

The SM Hotels and Conventions Corp. (SMHCC) is looking to open its two projects by the first and fourth quarter next year, promising a modern space, with capacity enough to accommodate massive international events.

SMHCC Senior Vice President for Operations Walid Wafik said the firm targets serving huge events, mostly captured by neighboring MICE giants such as Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, and Hong Kong.

“Our aim now is to increase our percentage of international events,” he said at the 2025 Cebu Tourism Forum, organized by the Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry, on Thursday.

“We already have a secure share of local events, local associations and the usage of the current square meters that we have, but we are missing this international segment to come into the Philippines,” he added.

Wafik said the SMX Convention Center Cebu is scheduled to open by end of October 2026 and will provide at least 22,000 square meters of leasable space.

It is adjacent to a three-star hotel and the 16,000-seat SM Seaside Arena which will also open by February or March next year to accommodate international concerts and other major sporting and special events.

“We’re investing in an additional two hotels just to bring out and showcase the potential of Cebu. Cebu, with this rich culture, cuisine and the coastline will definitely have a lot to offer where we can also create memorable meetings and memorable experiences,” he said.

Megaworld’s PHP1.5 billion Mactan Expo Center, meanwhile, is slated for completion by

the end of 2025.

The two-level standalone convention center will offer nearly a hectare of MICE space that can host up to 2,600 people.

“If you see the availability of the venues, we are only getting size-appropriate MICE businesses -- those that our hotels are capable of hosting,” said Megaworld Hotels & Resorts Managing Director Cleofe Albiso.

“With the opening of SM Seaside Arena, SMX Convention Center, and the Mactan Expo Center, these will really beef up our capability of hosting MICE,” she added.

READ: Mactan Expo Center eyed for 2026 ASEAN tourism confab hosting

In the same forum, various stakeholders highlighted the growth potential of the Philippines, specifically Cebu’s MICE scene.

“We are aware that the Philippines has potential to grow because of the market size and the population—the venue capacity is always a challenge, and I believe with the new exhibition center (opening) up, maybe in the next few years, this will definitely grow,” said Dato Vincent Lim, honorary president of the Asian Federation of Exhibition and Convention Associations.

To date, Lim said major players like Malaysia and Thailand alone are already home to convention centers spanning 40,000 to 140,000 square meters in size.

Global travel and tourism expert Liz Ortiguera said Cebu is still one of the top Asia-Pacific Secondary City MICE destinations, only trailing behind Phuket and Pattaya, Thailand; Bali, Indonesia; Danang, Vietnam; Penang, Malaysia; and Siem Reap in Cambodia.

She said the country would do well to tap into its key strengths by bringing forward the Philippine culture and hospitality acumen.

“Western is secondary, leverage your musicality. And then lastly, make sure that logistics are great,” she said.

Branding-wise, Tourism Secretary Christina Frasco said Cebu can

BCDA PRESENTS OPPORTUNITIES FOR CANADIAN INVESTORS IN INVESTMENT HUBS

MANILA – Opportunities in prime investment hubs in Luzon were highlighted during the meeting between officials of the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) and the Philippine Consulate in Vancouver, Canada.

Among the places presented by BCDA Senior Vice President for Corporate Services, lawyer Elvira Estanislao and Vice President for Public Affairs Leilani Barlongay Macasaet are the New Clark City in Tarlac, Camp John Hay Special Economic Zone in Baguio City, and Poro Point Freeport Zone in La Union — sites that can house

readily market itself as a “multidimensional” MICE destination that offers a diverse tourism portfolio that goes beyond the usual sun and beach.

“We have heritage, culture, biodiversity, nature and adventure, wellness, gastronomy, you name it, Cebu has it,” she said.

“Offering such a diversified tourism portfolio, we believe that it can distinguish itself as a very exciting MICE destination in that you can make your deals and do your work in paradise and at the same time leave with a desire to come back again and again,” she added.

On the part of the government, Frasco said the Marcos administration is looking at MICE beyond a mere niche but as a “strategic pillar for tourism growth.”

“Under the leadership of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., we are transforming tourism into a true pillar of inclusive and sustainable economic growth. And Cebu stands at the center of that effort. Cebu is a gateway, not only to the Visayas, but to the world,” she said.

The DOT, through the Tourism Promotions Board, currently funds the MICEPLUS Program that offers financial and promotional assistance to organizers. (PNA)

BY JOYCE ANN L. ROCAMORA

manufacturing, logistics, tourism, and sustainable infrastructure-focused firms.

In a press release Thursday, BCDA said the recent meeting was “aimed to identify avenues for Canadian businesses and investors to engage with the Philippines’ dynamic growth sectors.”

“This presents a transformative opportunity to both BCDA and Canadian investors in developing projects that will contribute to economic growth,” Philippine Consul General to Vancouver, Canada Dr. Gina Jamoralin said.

She said authorities “see immense potential in this future collaboration, particularly with Canada’s strong commitment in sustainable development that aligns with BCDA’s vision for responsible growth across its economic centers.”

“We look forward to fostering long-term relationships that will drive innovation and progress in both countries,” she added.

The BCDA said the meeting “highlights BCDA’s commitment to attracting foreign direct investments that will catalyze national development through strategic infrastructure and economic zone development.”

“The engagement forms part of BCDA’s ongoing efforts to promote its developments as a prime investment and tourism destination. By leveraging Canada’s business environment and established Filipino community, the Authority seeks to create meaningful partnerships that drive mutual growth,” it said.

“BCDA’s proven track record in public-private partnerships positions its properties as ideal gateways for international investors seeking high-growth opportunities in Southeast Asia’s most dynamic economy. By forging stronger partnerships with

APECO, GLOBAL FIRM IWG EXPLORE PARTNERSHIP FOR OFFICE, HEALTH HUB

MANILA – The Aurora Pacific Economic Zone and Freeport Authority (APECO) is in talks with global workspace solutions provider International Workplace Group (IWG) for a possible partnership with the Casiguran-based ecozone.

In a statement Friday, APECO said the partnership would serve as an opportunity to introduce itself to international investors and business locators.

By managing and operating key facilities in the zone, APECO said the IWG can encourage its clients to explore investment opportunities within the ecozone.

APECO President and Chief Executive Officer Gil Taway IV said the interest from globally recognized companies like IWG “reflects the growing investor confidence in APECO.”

“It’s a result of our consistent reforms in APECO which also included new strategic directions for business development and marketing,” Taway said.

“As our branding of Bagong APECO grows, we are now engaged by more companies who see the potential of APECO as the country’s next premiere investment destination.” The possible partnership includes IWG’s

management of the ecozone’s Super Health Center.

The Super Health Center will initially offer primary care, including general check-ups and physical exams, diagnosis and treatment of common illnesses, laboratory and testing.

Taway and IWG Partnership Growth Director Michael Co met on June 19 at APECO’s office in Parañaque City to discuss the partnership.

They were also joined by APECO Deputy Administrator Angelo Gabriel Mantuano and Business Development and Marketing Division Manager Gene Angelo Ferrer.

IWG’s global CEO is expected to visit the Philippines in early July, with APECO preparing for further engagements during the visit.

“We’re excited about the opportunity to work with APECO and support its long-term development goals for the nation,” Co said.

“From our initial engagements, we’ve seen how responsive, professional, and action-oriented the APECO team is. These are qualities that are essential in building a successful and sustainable partnership,” Co added. (PNA) **BY ANNA LEAH GONZALES**

OIL PRICE ROLLBACK POSSIBLE NEXT WEEK

MANILA – Fuel prices may decline next week by PHP1 to PHP2 per liter after the more than PHP5 per liter increase this week.

Citing the four-day trading in the Mean of Platts Singapore, Department of Energy Oil Industry Management Bureau Director Rodela Romero said, “We are expecting a rollback in the prices of petroleum products by next week.”

international business communities, BCDA aims to accelerate its development goals, contributing significantly to the country’s economic resurgence.” (PNA)

The expected ranges are: Gasoline – PHP1 to PHP1.40 Diesel – PHP1.60 to PHP2.10 Kerosene – PHP2 to PHP2.20

“Bearish factor that counterbalance the bullish price last week is the announcement of President (Donald) Trump of possible ceasefire between Israel and Iran, thus crude oil future extends drop,” she added.

Global crude prices surged to more than USD78 per barrel in recent weeks due to the Israel-Iran conflict. However, prices declined after Trump announced on June 23 a ceasefire, calming markets. (PNA) **BY JOANN VILLANUEVA**



FIL-AM HARPER TAKEN 2ND OVERALL IN NBA DRAFT

MANILA – Dylan Harper became the second player of Filipino descent to be taken second overall in the National Basketball Association (NBA) Draft after the San Antonio Spurs selected the combo guard on Thursday (Philippine time) at the Barclays Center in New York City. The son of NBA legend Ron Harper and his Filipino wife, Maria, Dylan was drafted immediately after the Dallas Mavericks selected Cooper Flagg first overall.

"It definitely is surreal just because of my mom's family history and my family background and all the efforts her family put into me. Me just wanting to rep them, be out there, just show true to who I am, it's definitely great," Dylan said after he was drafted.

Dylan joins former National Basketball Training Center standout Jalen Green as the only two Filipino-Americans to be drafted at number two in the NBA, the fourth to be taken in the first round,

along with NBA legend Raymond Townsend and former Rookie of the Year contender Jared McCain, and fifth overall to be drafted to the league counting second-round selection Jordan Clarkson, who eventually became a member of Gilas Pilipinas. Harper is set to team up with 2024 Rookie of the Year Victor Wembanyama in San Antonio as the team begins contending again after years of rebuilding that bore fruit with the draft selections of the aforementioned players.

South Sudanese player Khaman Maluach, one of the inspiring stories of the 2023 FIBA Basketball World Cup in the Philippines, was drafted 10th overall by the Phoenix Suns, who acquired the pick from the Houston Rockets as part of the Kevin Durant trade that also sent Green to Phoenix.

The Portland Trail Blazers, on the other hand, pulled off a shocker by agreeing on a trade with the Memphis Grizzlies to drop

down to number 16 in the draft and select Chinese center Yang Hansen.

Yang, who was projected to be a second-round pick, was among the biggest winners of the draft as he was selected way earlier than expected.

The Oklahoma City Thunder, the newly crowned NBA champions, stacked up for their title defense and the foreseeable future by picking Thomas Sorber 15th overall and Nique Clifford 24th overall.

By having the best record during the regular season, the Thunder was supposed to be drafting 30th overall in the first round, but due to earlier trades, they did not just move up the draft but also had multiple first-rounders.

The Brooklyn Nets, the hosts of the draft, ended up with five first-round picks, headlined by number eight pick Egor Demin. (PNA)

BY IVAN STEWART SALDAJENO

KROGG, HUALDA TRIUMPH AT PHILCYCLING TAGAYTAY CITY CRITERIUM

MANILA – Maritanya Krogg displayed her brilliant form Wednesday to claim victory in the women's Youth (Under-17) category at the start of the PhilCycling Tagaytay City Criterium in Cavite.

Krogg, a consistent gold medalist in the PhilCycling National Road Championships, crossed the finish line on Crisanto de los Reyes Avenue in front of the new Tagaytay City Velodrome 39 seconds ahead of Yvaine Osias and almost a minute

over Princess Jaydee Pancho.

Krogg, winner at the Batang Pinoy Nationals, received PHP3,000 in cash.

Ronald Hualda, Daniel Cortero and Juan Carlos Barrios also ruled their respective categories in the race organized by PhilCycling and presented by the MVP Sports Foundation and the Philippine Olympic Committee and Tagaytay City headed by Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino. Hualda dominated the

sprint finish in the men's Masters B (40-above), beating Romeo Camingao and Marc Galedo by under two bike lengths in the event raced over a 2.1-km. rectangular circuit over Crisanto de los Reyes, Isaac Tolentino, Acle and Mahogany Avenues.

Hualda bagged PHP5,000 while Camingao and Galedo settled for PHP3,000 and PHP2,000, respectively. Alvin Benosa was fourth followed by Resty Aragon. In the men's Youth (U17),

PHILIPPINE YOUTH BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP UNFOLDS IN AUGUST

MANILA – The Philippine Youth Basketball Championship (PYBC), an innovative, stats-focused platform for future stars, will get off the wraps in August this year.

The inaugural season, which will run until June 2026, has two conferences with rotating age divisions under a single round-robin format.

The first conference, scheduled from August to October, features the Under-11 (born 2014), Under-13 (born 2012), and Under-15 (born 2010) divisions.

Tournament format calls for single-round eliminations, quarterfinals, knockout semifinals, and best-of-3 finals.

PBA Legend Benjie Paras (commissioner), Women's Maharlika

Pilipinas Basketball League (WMPBL) coach Paolo Layug (deputy commissioner) and Momentum PH founder Carl Villanueva (tournament director) are leading the league, which aims to provide top-notch action with focus on details by combining tradition and analytics.

"I think the most important thing for data and analytics, not only for the youth but basketball players in general, is to make things simple," said Layug in a press statement Tuesday.

"It's important to help the players understand that the data is just there to help them improve as players," added Layug, who steered Pilipinas Aguilas to the title in the WMPBL inaugural season.

The PYBC's program has a

structured competition that is complemented by digital solutions.

"It's important, especially at the younger age groups, to be able to record the statistics and be able to have that data over a long period so players can also track their progress as they grow older," Layug said.

The PYBC will provide halftime analysis for team performance evaluation, post-game performance reports with detailed analysis, statistical review of player performance, strengths, and growth areas, and advanced analytics and performance metrics.

The league also wants to be a pioneer of using player ranking per age group, by adopting a system used in the US and Europe. (PNA)

BY JEAN MALANUM

PH TO HOST 2026 ASIAN CYCLING TILT AT NEW TAGAYTAY VELODROME

MANILA—The Philippines is set to host the 2026 Asian Track Cycling Championships, marking a major breakthrough for local sports with the inauguration of the country's first International Cycling Union (UCI)-standard indoor Velodrome in Tagaytay City.

Unveiled during Olympic Day on June 23, the Velodrome is

now officially positioned as a premier venue for international cycling events, with the Asian Cycling Confederation (ACC) confirming it will stage the 2026 championships from March 25 to 31.

"This venue will host the 2026 Asian Track Championships... Mabuhay!" the ACC announced in a social media post, congratulating Philippine Olympic Committee (POC) President Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino for what it called a "historic" achievement. Tolentino, also president of PhilCycling, emphasized the national significance of the facility.

"Together with our national athletes and sports leaders, we truly felt the Olympic spirit, one that fuels our commitment to elevate Philippines and champion inclusivity, excellence, and unity

through sports," Tolentino said.

Located in the cool highlands of Cavite, the state-of-the-art Velodrome was inaugurated as part of the POC's Olympic Day celebration.

The event also featured the signing of a memorandum of agreement for the Paralympics and the awarding of Olympic Solidarity Scholarships to promising athletes.

Olympic icons, gymnast Carlos Yulo and boxer Nesthy Petecio, joined the launch alongside ACC President Dato' Amarjit Singh Gill, sports officials, and local leaders.

The Velodrome is expected to boost the country's standing in Asian cycling and serve as a training hub for Filipino cyclists aiming to qualify for the Olympics. (PNA) **BY DARRYL JOHN ESGUERRA**

BY JEAN MALANUM