

BACOOR CITY RESIDENTS GRATEFUL FOR PBBM'S AFFORDABLE RICE PROGRAM

BACOOR CITY, Cavite (PIA) — Beneficiaries of the 'Benteng Bigas Meron Na' program in Bacoor City, Cavite have expressed their gratitude to President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. for his administration's efforts in fulfilling one of his campaign promises of making rice affordable for Filipinos.

A total of 2,500 beneficiaries from

vulnerable sectors, including senior citizens, solo parents, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and members of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), lined up at the Kadiwa ng Pangulo outlet at the Zapote Public Market on Wednesday (July 2) to purchase the affordable rice.

One of the senior citizen beneficiaries, Rodolfo

Barlis, thanked President Marcos Jr. for making the program possible and praised the government's efforts in helping poor families.

"Before, I could only buy 3 kilos of regular rice at P38 per kilo, but now I can buy 10 kilos for only P20 per kilo. The benteng bigas is a great help to us; this is a blessing for those of us living below the poverty line," Barlis said.

"I can't thank the President enough for proving that he can implement benteng bigas successfully. This is a good initiative to reduce poverty here in Cavite," he added.

A 78-year-old beneficiary from Barangay Zapote II, Bedelia Andalajao, shared how the initiative benefits her family.

"There are two of us in the family. Before, we bought P40-per-kilo rice from the market, but I'm grateful to line up here because I can save money. For 10 kilos, I only need to pay P200," Andalajao said.

"With this affordable rice, I have extra money to buy a dish and serve it at our table. This is really a great project of President Marcos," she added.

Another beneficiary, Rosita Grado, 69, from Bacoor, expressed hope that the government will sustain the initiative.

"This P20 rice project is good. I can buy 5 kilos for only P100. I hope President Marcos will continue this program. Affordable rice is very important to us. His administration is doing a great job," Grado said.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) emphasized that 500 sacks of rice were prepared during the program and that residents can wait for further schedules to be announced by the city government of Bacoor.

The agriculture department added that members of the vulnerable sector could soon purchase the affordable rice up to 30 kilos in a month.

This initiative is part of the expansion of the "Benteng Bigas Meron Na" program, which is a fulfillment of the the Marcos Jr. administration's promise of a "Masaganang Bagong Pilipinas." (KA PIA4A) **BY KRISTIANNE ANDRADE**

DIGITAL BAYANIHAN PROMISES BETTER INTERNET CONNECTIVITY FOR CAVITE STUDENTS



GEN. MARIANO ALVAREZ, Cavite (PIA) – More public schools are gaining access to high-speed internet as the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) expands its

"Digital Bayanihan" connectivity project in Cavite.

On July 1, the DICT led the distribution of Starlink satellite units at the Bulihan National High School in Silang and the Eulogio "Amang" Rodriguez Institute of Science and Technology (EARIST) in General Mariano Alvarez both in Cavite as part of the Digital Bayanihan initiative, in cooperation with the Department of Education (DepEd) and the local government unit.

DICT Secretary Henry Aguda, who led the distribution, said the move supports President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s directive to equip public schools nationwide with reliable internet access, helping bridge the digital divide in education.

The DICT's Starlink provision offers satellite internet connectivity that can accommodate up to 250 users simultaneously. Aguda committed to connecting all public schools in the Philippines to the internet before the end of the year.

Meanwhile, DICT Calabarzon Regional Director Felix Tabanao Jr. assured that the agency will provide satellite internet connections to more schools in the region. Additionally, the government will supply Bayanihan SIM cards, which offer cellular data coverage within a five to six-kilometer radius.

"Following the directive of President Bongbong Marcos, we will not only provide one Starlink unit, but also Bayanihan SIM cards. This is a good option because the SIM can cover up to a 5 to 6-kilometer radius. Hopefully, we can add more Bayanihan SIMs

by next year," Tabanao added.

Tabanao also emphasized that the DICT remains committed to empowering students and educators by expanding free Wi-Fi services in remote and underserved communities across the Calabarzon region.

With the installation of satellite internet, students in government educational institutions in Cavite province can now enjoy better connectivity, which will help improve their learning experience.

Jay, a student, shared his excitement about using the new Starlink connectivity for his school work.

"This will really help us, especially in our research, because we don't need to pay for cellular data. With the help of Starlink, we can now have faster access to the internet," he said.

Cavite Fifth District Representative Roy Loyola expressed gratitude to DICT and emphasized the importance of internet access in modern education.

"In a time when internet connectivity is an essential part of learning, this initiative brings not only a reliable signal, but also hope, opportunities, and knowledge. It is a concrete step toward an inclusive, accessible, and future-ready education for every student and teacher in our district." **BY PATRICIA BERMUDEZ**

NEGOSYANTENG MOST WANTED SA REHIYON, ARESTADO SA DASMARIÑAS CITY, CAVITE

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Isang negosyante na kabilang sa listahan ng Most Wanted Person sa Rehiyonal na antas ang naaresto ng pinagsanib na puwersa ng kapulisan sa isang operasyon na isinagawa ngayong Hulyo 3, 2025 sa Brgy. Saint Peter 1, Dasmariñas City, Cavite.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL REGINO L ONATE, ACOP, Dasmariñas CCPS ang suspek na si alyas Jesven, at residente ng Brgy. Saint Peter 1, Dasmariñas City, Cavite. Siya ay naaresto bandang alas-12:50 ng tanghali sa kahabaan ng Congressional Avenue ng nasabing barangay.

Ang operasyon ay isinagawa ng Warrant Personnel ng Dasmariñas Component City Police Station katuwang ang mga tauhan ng RIU4A PIT Cavite na nagsilbing Intel Packet Provider. Ang operasyon ay naisagawa alinsunod sa bisa ng Warrant of Arrest para sa 87 bilang ng kaso ng paglabag sa National Internal Revenue Code, na may Criminal Case Numbers TMCR-697-25 hanggang TMCR-783-25. Ang nasabing warrant ay ipinalabas noong Hunyo

20, 2025 ng Presiding Judge ng RTC Branch 130, Trece Martires City, Cavite, na may inirekomendang piyansa na P60,000.00 kada bilang ng kaso.

Naitala ang buong operasyon gamit ang Body Worn Camera (BWC) at Alternative Recording Device (ARD) bilang bahagi ng transparency at standard procedure ng PNP.

Sa kasalukuyan, ang suspek ay nakapiit sa custodial facility ng Dasmariñas Component City Police Station habang inihahanda ang kaukulang dokumentasyon para sa pagsasauli ng warrant sa korte.

Pahayag ni PCOL DWIGHT E ALEGRE, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite PPO, "Ang pagkakaaresto sa isang most wanted na sangkot sa napakaraming kaso ng paglabag sa batas ay resulta ng maigting na pagtutulungan ng ating mga yunit at ahensya. Patuloy tayong magbibigay ng patas na hustisya at ipatutupad ang batas anuman ang estado sa buhay ng isang indibidwal. Salamat sa dedikasyon ng ating mga operatiba sa matagumpay na operasyon na ito."

MENDEZ POLICE INTENSIFIED CAMPAIGN APPREHEND REGIONAL LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite

- In an intensified campaign of the Philippine National Police against wanted persons, the operatives of Mendez Municipal Police Station successfully apprehended one (1) Regional Level Most Wanted Person during a manhunt operation conducted at around 08:00 AM on July 4, 2025, at Barangay Galicia 3, Mendez, Cavite.

PMAJ IAN JASPER M MONTOYA, Acting Chief of Police, Mendez Municipal Police Station, identified the arrested individual as alias Bert, and a resident of Mendez, Cavite. Based on the police records, the suspect was listed as a Regional Level Most Wanted Person and the subject of Warrant of Arrest for Violation of Sec. 11, Art. 2 of R.A. 9165 issued by the Acting Presiding Judge, Regional Trial Court, Branch 15, Naic, Cavite dated July 2, 2025 for service of sentence.

The arrested individual was immediately brought to Mendez MPS for proper disposition and the return of the warrant to the court of origin.

PCOL DWIGHT E ALEGRE, Acting Provincial Director of Cavite, in his statement, "I commended the operating teams for their dedication and professionalism in carrying out the operation. The Cavite PNP remains steadfast in its mission to uphold the rule of law and maintain peace and order in the province."

This successful arrest is a testament to our unwavering commitment to ensuring that fugitives are brought to justice. We will continue to intensify our efforts against criminal elements who pose a threat to public safety. We urge the public to remain vigilant and cooperate with law enforcement authorities in reporting any suspicious activities in their communities, he added.

MOST WANTED SA REHIYON, ARESTADO SA TANZA, CAVITE

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite

— Isang Most Wanted Person sa Rehiyonal na antas ang matagumpay na naaresto ng pinagsanib na puwersa ng pulisya sa Brgy. Amaya 5, Tanza, Cavite ngayong Hulyo 3, 2025.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL AL-RIEZA S KINANG, ACOP, Tanza MPS, ang naarestong suspek na si alyas Renalyn, at naninirahan sa Brgy. Amaya 5, Tanza, Cavite.

Bandang alas-12:30 ng tanghali nang isagawa ang operasyon ng CIDG Cavite Provincial Field Unit katuwang ang Warrant Personnel ng Tanza MPS, Cavite Provincial Maritime Unit, at NISG-NCR, gamit ang Alternative Recording Device (ARD) alinsunod sa itinatakda ng batas. Inaresto ang akusado sa

CARMONA POLICE ACTSWIFTLY AGAINST ARMED ASSAULT BY NEWLY RELEASED CONVICT

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, City of Imus, Cavite — A shooting incident occurred at approximately 9:20 AM on July 2, 2025, within the premises of the Carmona Component City Police Station involving a newly released convict.

PMAJ ROBERT S DIMAPILIS, Officer-in-Charge, identified the suspect as alias "AL".

The suspect, who was recently incarcerated at the Iwahig Prison and Penal Farm for a murder case and released only on June 28, 2025, was brought to the police station following a complaint of alleged trespassing. However, as the complainant declined to press charges, the suspect remained within the premises for documentation.

In a sudden and violent turn of events, the suspect grabbed the service firearm of a police officer and opened fire indiscriminately. The officer sustained two gunshot wounds, while another responding police personnel, who intervened quickly, was hit in the left leg. The suspect sustained

multiple gunshot wounds after the responding officers returned fire.

Both the injured police officers and the suspect were immediately given medical attention at the Pagamutang Bayan ng Carmona. One officer was later transferred to the Perpetual Help Medical Center for specialized care but later on he was declared dead by the attending physician while the other officer was discharged after treatment. The suspect was declared dead while undergoing medical treatment.

In response to the incident, crime scene investigators from the Provincial Forensic Unit were dispatched to process the scene. The firearm used, a Glock 9mm pistol, was recovered as part of the investigation.

PCOL DWIGHT E ALEGRE, Acting Provincial Director of the Cavite Police Provincial Office, commended the bravery and swift response of the police personnel involved. "While this unfortunate incident reminds us of the unpredictability of the threats we may face, it also highlights the heroism, courage, and quick action of our police officers in containing a potentially deadlier situation. We remain committed to our duty to serve and protect, and we will ensure that our police personnel receive the necessary support and recognition they deserve. Thorough investigations are ongoing to ensure that justice will be served and that preventive measures are strengthened."

The Cavite Police assures the public that security protocols are being reviewed, and that the safety of both police personnel and the community remains its top priority.

HIGH-VALUE INDIVIDUAL, ARESTADO SA BUY-BUST OPERATION; 50.48 GRAMS NG SHABU AT BARIL, NASAMSAM SA GENERAL TRIAS CITY

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite

— Isang High-Value Individual ang naaresto sa bisa ng isang matagumpay na Buy-Bust Operation ng City Drug Enforcement Unit ng General Trias Component City Police Station, dakong 2:30 ng hapon ngayong araw, Hulyo 2, 2025, sa Barangay Pasong Kawayan 2, General Trias City, Cavite.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL Bismark S Mendoza, hepe ng General Trias CCPS, ang suspek na si alyas "Danny", at residente ng Manggahan, General Trias City, Cavite.

Ang operasyon ay isinagawa sa bisa ng

PDEA at dokumentado sa pamamagitan ng Alternative Recording Device (ARD). Nasamsam mula sa suspek ang sumusunod na mga ebidensya: limang (5) piraso ng heat-sealed transparent plastic sachet ng hinihinalang shabu na may kabuuang timbang na 50.48 gramo at tinatayang halaga na Php343,264.00; isang (1) digital weighing scale; isang (1) itim na coin purse; at isang (1) Squires Bingham Cal. 38 na baril na kargado ng tatlong (3) bala.

Sa kasalukuyan, inihahanda na ang kaukulang kaso laban sa suspek para sa paglabag sa R.A. 9165 (Comprehensive

Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002) at paglabag sa R.A. 10591 (Comprehensive Firearms and Ammunition Regulation Act). Ayon kay PLTCOL Bismark S Mendoza, hepe ng General Trias CCPS, "Ang matagumpay na operasyong ito ay patunay ng ating tuluy-tuloy na laban kontra ilegal na droga sa lungsod."

Samantala, pinuri ni PCOL Dwight E Alegre, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite PPO, ang kahusayan at dedikasyon ng mga operatiba, "Patuloy nating paiigtingin ang mga operasyon upang tiyakin ang kaligtasan at kapayapaan sa ating lalawigan."

bisa ng Warrant of Arrest para sa kasong paglabag sa Section 11 ng R.A. 9165 (Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002) na may Criminal Case No. TMCR-711-19 na may petsang Hunyo 26, 2025. Ang warrant ay inilabas ng Presiding Judge ng RTC Branch 131, Trece Martires City, Cavite. Nasa ilalim na ng service of sentence ang kaso.

Kasalukuyang nasa kustodiya ng arresting unit ang suspek para sa kaukulang dokumentasyon at pagsasauli ng warrant sa korte.

Pahayag ni PCOL DWIGHT E ALEGRE, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite PPO, "Ang pagkakaaresto sa akusado ay patunay na seryoso ang ating kapulisan sa pagtugis sa mga itinuturing na most wanted sa rehiyon. Patuloy

po nating isinusulong ang hustisya para sa ating mga kababayan at sinisiguro natin na walang makaliligtas sa kamay ng batas. Saludo ako sa ating mga operatiba sa matagumpay na operasyon na ito."

DOLE 4A ADOPTS HYBRID SERVICE DELIVERY IN FIELD OFFICES

CALAMBACITY, Laguna (PIA) – In response to the increasing demand for accessible and efficient public services, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) in Calabarzon has adopted a hybrid service delivery approach, blending traditional in-person assistance with digital platforms to ensure no worker and transacting public are left behind.

This initiative is in line with the Marcos Jr. administration's Bagong Pilipinas governance thrust, which advocates for streamlined, transparent, and responsive governance through digital transformation across all sectors.

DOLE IV-A Regional Director Erwin Aquino emphasized that the agency's hybrid service model is a critical step to balance innovation and inclusivity.

"At DOLE Calabarzon, digitalization is being promoted with accessibility and inclusivity in mind. To ensure that no worker is left behind, we are implementing a hybrid service approach, we are integrating online systems with the help of our regional and field office staff, as well as Public Employment Service Offices (PESOs) in cities and municipalities," Aquino said.

Part of the hybrid initiative is the installation of information kiosks in DOLE field offices which serve as self-service stations where clients can access labor advisories, file grievances, check employment opportunities, and track the status of their applications. Simultaneously, on-site help desks remain active to accommodate

individuals who face technological barriers. Services such as the Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers (TUPAD), labor inspections, livelihood assistance, and job referrals are still processed in person to cater to marginalized groups, informal workers, and senior citizens.

To support this shift, DOLE Calabarzon regularly holds training and orientation sessions to personnel on using digital systems.

"Our frontliners are trained to personally guide workers who are struggling with online platforms, such as DOLE ERS and TUPAD MIS. Computer stations are set up in the offices for walk-in clients, and lines of communication are open via phone, email, and social media. This way, everyone—regardless of age, level of technological knowledge, or state of life—can keep up with the digital transformation the agency is implementing," Aquino stated.

The regional labor chief stressed that digitization should never come at the cost of accessibility.

"Digital transformation is not just about technology—it's about making government services more inclusive. With our hybrid model, we aim to provide equitable service delivery while moving forward with innovation."

As the department continues to expand its digitization efforts, it assures the public that physical access points will remain open to cater to all sectors, proving that modernization can co-exist with grassroots service. (AM/PIA 4A) **BY ANNA MOLE**

DICT'S EGOV PH APP DRIVES CALABARZON DIGITALIZATION WITH OVER 2M DOWNLOADS

CALAMBACITY, Laguna (PIA)—More residents in the Calabarzon region are now enjoying easier access to government services as the e-Government (eGov PH) super app reaches over two million downloads.

According to the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) Calabarzon, a total of 2,004,902 users have downloaded the application, placing the region second among 17 regions nationwide.

Launched on June 2, 2023, the eGov PH supper app serves as a one-stop-shop online application designed to simplify processes in government transactions and improve the delivery of essential services. It also supports the creation of a more business-friendly environment by bringing government processes online.

DICT Calabarzon Regional Director Felix Tabanao Jr. said the high number of downloads reflects growing public support for digital transformation in the region.

"We are glad that in terms of users who patronize the e-GovPH, Calabarzon is second in the entire country and the public is embracing digitalization and access to government services in one app," Tabanao said.

Among the region's top users are residents from Cavite, leading with 639,437 downloads, followed by Laguna (444,493), Rizal (410,289), Batangas (340,433), and Quezon (169,700).

Tabanao emphasized that DICT is continuously

strengthening the eGovPH system, adding more features and expanding digital government services within the reach of the public.

"With its 25 integrated digital platforms, eTravel or the single data collection platform for passengers arriving and departing from the Philippines, is the most frequently used followed by the Digital National ID," he said.

He added that eGov PH now hosts five digital versions of identification cards: the National ID, Senior Citizen ID, OFW eCard, PRC license, and PhilHealth ID, with e-TIN and PWD ID currently being integrated.

For many users, the app is a game changer. Humprey Albay, a resident of Sta. Cruz, Laguna, expressed his surprise about the app's accessibility.

"The app is very impressive; it's all-in-one. I have a digital national ID and also a PhilHealth digital ID, and I can view other services too. It is very convenient and accessible."

To ensure user safety, the DICT is continuously upgrading the app's cybersecurity defenses, employing AI-powered monitoring and multiple layers of protection, including two-factor authentication.

Through the eGov PH Super App, the Marcos Jr. administration is one step forward in building a digitally connected nation and driving inclusive economic growth, in line with the vision of Bagong Pilipinas. (KA, PIA4A) **BY KRISTIANNE ANDRADE**

EDITORIAL

Spekulasyon ukol sa mga mole people, ikinababahala ng nakararami.

Matapos makunan ang isang babae na lumabas mula sa isang imburnal, lumabas ang kanya-kanyang spekulasyon ng mga tao tungkol sa mga mole people. Lalong sumiklab ang balita ukol sa isyung ito nang mamataan ang paglabas ng dalawang lalaki mula sa concrete culvert ng isang creek. Depensa naman ng mga lalaki ay hindi sila rito nakatira at pahingahan lamang nila ito.

Dapat na magsagawa ng inspeksyon ang mga kinauukulan sa bawat creek na maaaring pamahayan ng mga ito. Hindi lamang ito dahil sa binabawalan ang mga itong manirahan ngunit isa itong dahilan upang mapahamak ang mga ito. Hindi naayon ang mga creek na ito upang maging pahingahan kaya naman hindi kapani-paniwalang ginagawa lamang itong pahingahan. Maaaring isa rin itong hideout upang makagawa ng mga ilegal na bagay nang patago. Sa lagay na ito ay hindi maiisip na maaaring magamit ang creek na ito upang maging hideout.

Marami ang maaaring maging posibilidad kung bakit may mga taong ginagamit ang mga creek o lumalabas mula sa mga imburnal. Kaya naman nararapat na bigyang pansin ito at mainspeksyon upang masigurado ang kaligtasan ng lahat.

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OWWA: 74 OFWS FROM ISRAEL TO ARRIVE HOME, GOV'T AID CONTINUES

MANILA – Seventy-four overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) from Israel are set to return to the country this week as the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) assured continuous repatriation efforts despite the lowering of the alert level following a ceasefire in the region.

In a Bagong Pilipinas interview on Wednesday, OWWA Administrator Patricia Yvonne Caunan said that while the Department of Foreign Affairs has downgraded the alert level in Israel to Alert Level 2, the government's monitoring and assistance remain in place for OFWs who wish to come home.

"Bukas may parating tayo na 21 galing Israel at sa Sabado may parating naman na 25, at may inaasahan pa rin tayong 28 na darating. I-update ko na rin, dumating din ang walo nating kababayan from Iran (Tomorrow, we have 21 arriving from Israel and on Saturday 25 are arriving, and we still expect 28 to arrive. Another update, eight OFWs from Iran have also arrived)," she said.

"Gusto ko i-assure ang ating mga kababayan na kahit meron tayong ceasefire ngayon, kahit na ibinaba ang alert level, ay patuloy na nag-monitor ang gobyerno sa sitwasyon sa gitnang silangan (I want to assure everyone that even though we have a ceasefire now, even though the alert level has been lowered, the government continues to monitor the situation in the Middle East)."

Caunan said that of the nearly 30,000 Filipinos working in Israel, 373 have expressed interest in returning home since June 23.

However, only 26 have already been repatriated, as Caunan admits that there are those who opted to stay due to various

reasons.

She said that in case they finally decide to come home, the government is always ready to assist them.

Caunan added that aside from Israel, OWWA continuously receive inquiries from OFWs in other parts of the Middle East, including Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Kuwait, about possible repatriation and support programs.

"Patuloy naman ang repatriation program, iyong ordinary repatriation para sa mga may problema talaga, mga distressed workers, araw-araw naman yan tinutulungan ng OWWA at DMW (The repatriation program continues, the ordinary repatriation for those those who really have problems, the distressed workers, they are being helped by OWWA and the DMW)," she said.

Beyond repatriation, Caunan said over 440 OFWs in Israel have received assistance, including psychosocial counselling, accommodation, food packs, and financial aid, through the joint efforts of the Philippine Embassy in Tel Aviv, the Migrant Workers Office, Labor Attachés, and OWWA Welfare Officers. Returning OFWs also receive medical help and referrals from the Department of Health, which covers expenses in certain cases and provides free treatment for those with serious illnesses like cancer.

To help them start anew and reintegrate, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) is offering vouchers for upskilling while the Department of Labor and Employment and the Department of Migrant Workers assist them in job-matching so they can find another job. **(PNA) BY MARITA MOAJE**

PALACE BACKS TRANSPARENCY IN BUDGET PROCESS

MANILA – Malacañang on Tuesday expressed support for the plan to make the bicameral budget deliberations open to the public to make the process more transparent.

"We respect the independence of the Congress pero kapag po ang pinag-usapan ay pagsasapubliko ng anumang transaksyon patungkol sa gobyerno mas maganda po talaga na maging transparent ang bawat galaw ng taumbayan (but when it is about making any transaction involving the government public, it would be better if every move is transparent)," Palace Press Officer Claire Castro said in a press briefing.

The Development Budget Coordination Committee has set the proposed 2026 national budget at PHP6.793 trillion.

The proposed budget for 2026 is equivalent to 22 percent of the gross domestic product and 7.4 percent higher compared to the 2025 national budget of PHP6.326 trillion.

Under the Constitution, the proposed national budget must be submitted to Congress within 30 days after the President's State of the Nation Address (SONA).

Budget Secretary Amenah

Pangandaman earlier said the National Expenditure Program (NEP) for 2026 is expected to be turned over to Congress two weeks after President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. delivers his fourth SONA on July 28.

The NEP is the national government's spending plan for the next fiscal year submitted to Congress. It becomes the General Appropriations Bill (GAB) when approved by the House of Representatives and the Senate.

The GAB will then become the General Appropriations Act (GAA) once signed into law.

Asked what the government is expecting once the NEP is submitted to Congress, Castro said Marcos is looking forward to doing "what is good for the people and for the country."

"Tandaan po natin, muli ang gusto po ng Pangulo ay mapaganda ang buhay ng bawat Pilipino, maging mas magaan at mabigyan nang magandang serbisyong medikal at pangkalusugan (Let us remember, again, what the President wants is to make the lives of every Filipino better, easier and to be provided with good medical and health services)," she said. **(PNA) BY RUTH ABBEY GITA-CARLOS**

LOWER RICE PRICES EXPECTED AS GLOBAL CONDITIONS IMPROVE, SAYS DA

MANILA – The Department of Agriculture (DA) on Thursday announced that the maximum suggested retail price (MSRP) for 5 percent broken imported rice will be lowered to PHP43 per kg. starting July 16, citing improved global supply and eased geopolitical tensions.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said the price cut follows a steady drop in global rice and oil prices, and positive harvest forecasts from major producers such as India, Pakistan, and Thailand.

"Global rice prices have since declined, alongside softening oil prices," he said.

The DA earlier postponed the initial plan to bring down the MSRP on 5 percent broken imported rice on July 1 due to the recent conflict in the Middle East.

To date, the MSRP for 5 percent broken imported rice is at PHP45 per kg., down from the initial PHP58 per kg. MSRP in January.

Besides declining oil prices in the global market, the Agriculture chief also mentioned good palay (unhusked rice) harvest from other major rice-producing countries.

"We are also seeing positive projections for

record harvests from key producers like India, Pakistan, and Thailand. These developments could improve global supply and help pull prices further down," Tiu Laurel said.

As of Wednesday, the prices of premium imported rice in Metro Manila range from PHP44 to PHP47 per kg., according to the DA Bantay Presyo (price watch).

Prices of imported well-milled rice, meanwhile, are between PHP38 per kg and PHP48 per kg.; and imported regular milled rice from PHP33 per kg. to PHP45 per kg.

Prices of premium local rice range from PHP42 per kg. to PHP60 per kg.; local well-milled rice, PHP37 per kg. to PHP48 per kg.; and local regular-milled rice, PHP35 per kg. to PHP42 per kg.

RCEF balance
Meanwhile, DA Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said the agency is seeking the release of the remaining balance of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) to support the upcoming planting season. Although PHP34 billion in rice tariffs was collected in 2024, only PHP10 billion was included in the 2025 national budget.

"Nine billion pesos will go to mechanization, PHP6 billion will go to inbred seeds. So that's PHP15 billion," De Mesa told reporters in a press briefing on Wednesday.

The remaining balance will be allocated for seven projects, including rice farmers' financial assistance, expanded rice credit assistance, solar-powered irrigation systems and water impounding for soil health improvement, composting facilities for biodegradable wastes, training and extension services, as well as pest and disease management. De Mesa, however, said that the approval of the proposed allocation will still be subject to the concurrence of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. **(PNA) BY STEPHANIE SEVILLANO**

MMDA EYES AI VIDEO DETECTION TO OPTIMIZE TRAFFIC FLOW

MANILA – The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) is eyeing the use of artificial intelligence (AI)-powered traffic signal systems with video detectors to improve traffic flow in the metropolis.

In a press conference at the MMDA head office in Pasig City on Thursday, MMDA Chair Romando Artes said the new system would improve public service by upgrading traffic detection from the current ground loop detection to video detection.

"As we phase in the adaptive signaling system, this innovation represents

a major step towards ensuring smooth traffic flow, minimizing road crashes, and optimizing efficiency," Artes said.

The MMDA is eyeing the installation of the new AI-powered system by next year.

According to the MMDA Traffic Engineering Center, the advantages of an AI traffic signal system with video detectors include being less susceptible to damage from roadworks, harsh weather, and physical interference.

The system can also capture additional information from passing vehicles, such as their

speed, direction, and license plate numbers.

He noted that the previous system was incompatible with traffic signal countdown timers, with some drivers deciding to speed through intersections, and beating the red lights, among others.

Last week, the MMDA announced the removal of traffic light countdown timers in 96 intersections along major roads in Metro Manila.

These were replaced with an adaptive signaling system that uses sensors. **(PNA) BY RAYMOND CARL DELA CRUZ**

DEDICATED LRT, MRT BOOTHS TO EASE STUDENT DISCOUNT ACCESS—TULFO

MANILA—Dedicated ticket booths for students riding the Light Rail Transit (LRT) and Metro Rail Transit (MRT) will ease their access to fare discounts, Senator Raffy Tulfo said Thursday, following complaints over long lines and tedious verification procedures.

The proposal came as the Senate Committee on Public Services received multiple reports from students discouraged by the current system, which they described as “time-consuming and inconvenient.”

“The goal of the student fare discount is to make transportation more accessible to learners—not to create new obstacles for them or for other commuters,” Tulfo said in a news release.

Tulfo’s team conducted inspections on July 2 and spoke with students who shared difficulties in availing of the discount.

Some said they were asked to present printed enrollment forms if their student IDs did not reflect

the current school year, while others were required to manually write down their personal details, causing long queues especially during rush hours.

In response, the senator urged the Department of Transportation (DOTr) to set up exclusive booths for students, separate from those designated for senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and regular passengers.

He also pushed for a shift to digital verification to replace manual encoding and reduce congestion at stations.

Tulfo further supported expanding the discount coverage to stored value or beep cards—not just single journey tickets.

He recommended that beep card issuers ramp up production and widen distribution through convenience stores and other commercial outlets, adding the cards often run out of stock at stations by afternoon. (PNA) **BY WILNARD BACELONIA**

19 MORE MEDICINES NOW VAT-EXEMPT: BIR

MANILA—Nineteen maintenance and lifesaving medicines have been included in the list of those exempted from value added tax (VAT), benefiting more people.

Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) Commissioner Romeo Lumagui Jr., during the Bagong Pilipinas Ngayon briefing on Thursday, said nine medicines were included under Revenue Memorandum Circular (RMC) 59-2025 issued on June 11, 2025 while the other 10 are covered by RMC 62-2025.

He said the inclusion of the medications for VAT exemption was based on the recommendation of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Of the total, seven of these medicines are for cancer

treatment; three each for diabetes, hypertension and mental illness; one each for high cholesterol, kidney disease, and tuberculosis.

“Ang mga ito ay mga maintenance at lifesaving medicines na ngayon ay hindi na papatawan ng VAT. Isang kongkretong hakbang para mas mapagaan ang gastuhin ng mga pasyente (These are maintenance and lifesaving medicines that will now be exempt from VAT. This move is a concrete step to lower patients’ expenses),” Lumagui said.

The BIR chief said both the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises (CREATE) law and the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) law provide VAT

ROMUALDEZ WANTS SENIOR, PWD DISCOUNT ON TOP OF PROMOTION OFFERS

MANILA—Leyte 1st District Rep. Ferdinand Martin Romualdez is pushing for a measure that will apply the 20-percent discount and exemption from the 12-percent value added tax (VAT) enjoyed by senior citizens and persons with disability (PWD) on top of any promotional offer or discount given by business establishments.

In a statement on Friday, he said House Bill No. 16 or “An Act enhancing the discount on the purchase of goods and services of senior citizens and persons with disabilities” aims to preserve the preferential treatment accorded to senior citizens and persons with disability.

The 20 percent discount and VAT exemption on goods and services are provided under Section 4 of Republic Act (RA) 7432 (Senior Citizens Act), as amended, and Section 32 of RA No. 7277 (Magna Carta for Disabled

Persons with Disability), as amended.

Under the proposed law, “the discount granted to senior citizens and persons with disabilities... shall be in addition to any prevailing promotional offers or discounts extended by business establishments, if any, has been provided, but in no way that it will require presentation of booklets in the procurement of goods.”

“In no case shall a promotion or discount offered by a business establishment to the general public be considered in compliance with Section 4 of RA No. 7432, as amended, and Section 32 of RA No. 7277, as amended,” HB 16 states.

Romualdez said the proposed measure is aimed at putting an end or to quell the usual quarrels between business establishments, and senior citizens and PWDs, as to the correct interpretation of the law.

To balance the interest between the two parties, he said the proposed measure provides that the input tax attributable to the VAT-exempt sale to senior citizens and persons with disabilities, and the special discount on necessities and prime commodities, shall be treated as part of deductible expense pursuant to Section 34 of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended.

“This is in line with the State policy of promoting a just and dynamic social order that shall ensure the nation’s prosperity and free its people from poverty,” he said.

The measure is co-authored by Tingog Party-list Representatives Andrew Julian Romualdez and Jude Acidre. (PNA) **BY JOSE CIELITO REGANIT**

DMW TO AGENCIES: UPHOLD ETHICAL RECRUITMENT OR FACE SANCTIONS

MANILA—The Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) reiterated its warning to private recruitment and manning agencies to strictly adhere to ethical recruitment standards or risk losing their licenses.

In a news release Thursday evening, Migrant Workers Secretary Hans Leo Cacdac said the DMW stands firm on its “zero tolerance” policy for unethical recruiters, as the government steps up efforts to protect millions of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) from abuse and exploitation.

“The protection and welfare of our OFWs is our utmost priority. The DMW affirms the decision of then POEA (Philippine Overseas Employment Administration) on its resolved cases involving private recruitment and manning agencies, found to be violating significant provisions of the rules intended to protect the rights and welfare of our OFWs,” he said.

The affirmed cases include the license cancellation of AMI Global Recruitment and Concept Placement Resources, Inc. in February 2023,

and Bailey Corp. in March 2023, after they were found to have repeatedly violated contract provisions and committed deployment irregularities.

The decisions were made not only by the then POEA, but by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) as well.

Cacdac reminded licensed recruiters to be diligent in submitting authentic documents and to monitor the status of deployed workers abroad.

He said that failure to comply could lead to sanctions, including permanent license cancellation.

The DMW also called on agencies to respond immediately to workers’ urgent concerns, stating that upholding ethical recruitment is a shared responsibility that directly impacts the lives of Filipino families worldwide.

“We are reminding our licensed recruitment and manning agencies to always safeguard the protection and well-being of our OFWs by ensuring strict compliance to our rules and regulations,” Cacdac said. (PNA) **BY MARITA MOAJE**

DOLE TO MONITOR WAGE HIKE COMPLIANCE IN NCR

MANILA—The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) will visit various establishments in Metro Manila to check their compliance with the PHP50 wage increase for minimum wage earners, which takes effect on July 18.

“(Labor) Secretary Benne Laguesma has given instructions to regional and field offices in NCR (National Capital Region) to conduct labor inspections to ensure the compliance of establishments with the new minimum wage and other labor standards,” Maria Criselda Sy, executive director of the National Wages and Productivity Commission, said in an interview at the Bagong Pilipinas Ngayon

briefing on Friday.

Sy noted that companies employing 10 workers or fewer and establishments severely affected by typhoons or man-made disasters are exempted from the wage increase.

“We have an existing mechanism to apply for exemption,” she said.

Sy urged the public to visit their website for the process on how to apply for the exemption.

Early this week, the NCR wage board approved a PHP50 daily minimum wage increase in Metro Manila, which will benefit about 1.2 million workers. The new minimum wage in Metro Manila now stands at PHP695, up from PHP645. (PNA) **BY FERDINAND PATINIO**

DEPED W. VISAYAS ORDERS ENHANCED SECURITY MEASURES IN SCHOOLS

ILOILO CITY – All schools divisions in Western Visayas have been ordered to strengthen security measures in school premises following two separate stabbing incidents in Antique and Iloilo this week involving learners.

In an interview on Friday, Hernani Escullar Jr., information officer of the Department of Education in Western Visayas, said OIC-Regional Director Cristito Eco has emphasized that division superintendents and school heads can seek assistance from the police, particularly in schools identified as bullying hotspots.

"These are schools with learners who are somehow assessed by our school heads to be at risk or part of gangs. They can ask for police visibility outside our schools to ensure the safety of everyone," Escullar said.

School officials, guards, and watchmen, he said, must conduct rounds within the school premises and implement necessary interventions to prevent the entry of illegal weapons.

"During the opening of classes, there was a regional memorandum for school heads to coordinate with local law enforcement entities to ensure peace and order in schools. But with the large population of students, not all could be monitored and checked, so probably there were (only) random checks, thus these happened," he said, referring to the stabbing incidents.

The first happened on Wednesday at San Joaquin School of Fisheries (SJSOF) in San Joaquin town, Iloilo, involving a Grade 9 and a Grade 10 learner.

According to reports, a commotion happened between the two students while they were doing

cleanup activities in the morning. The Grade 9 learner was able to secure a knife and stabbed the other student.

The victim was referred to a hospital in Iloilo City for further treatment, while the minor suspect was endorsed to the San Joaquin Municipal Police Office and the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO) in compliance with child protection protocols.

"To maintain learning continuity, the school has implemented Alternative Delivery Modalities (ADM) for the affected learners," according to a statement released by the DepEd Schools Division of Iloilo.

The other incident happened at Antique National School in San Jose de Buenavista on Thursday morning involving four students from Grades 7, 10, 11 and 12.

Citing information, Escullar said a misunderstanding happened a day before the incident, followed by a confrontation on Thursday that resulted in the stabbing of two students.

The two victims (Grades 7 and 12) were immediately discharged after receiving appropriate medication for their injuries, while the two perpetrators (Grades 10 and 11) are in the custody of their local social welfare office.

The Schools Division of Antique said the parents of the involved students were called for a conference by the school administration and an internal investigation is underway to determine the circumstances that led to the incident.

Escullar said the regional office would ensure continuous learning for the affected students. (PNA)
BY PERLA LENA

POWER COOP TO ENERGIZE 206 MORE SITIOS IN BAGUIO, BENGUET BY 2027

BAGUIO CITY – The Benguet Electric Cooperative (Beneco) is set to complete the electrification of 206 additional sitios across Baguio City and Benguet province by 2027, extending electricity access to more underserved communities.

According to Beneco General Manager Melchor Licoben, the project will benefit an estimated 26,438 households in 269 barangays located in the municipalities of Atok, Bakun, Bokod, Buguias, Itogon, Kabayan, Kapangan, Kibungan, La Trinidad, Mankayan, Sablan, Tuba, Tublay, and Baguio City, as well as parts of Pangasinan.

"Electricity is a necessity. There are many things we cannot do without power that is why it is pursued even in areas where there are few households or minimal power consumption," Licoben said in an interview on

Friday.

The electrification will proceed in phases: 98 sitios in 2025, 74 in 2026, and 34 in 2027.

The entire initiative is projected to cost PHP334.6 million.

Licoben noted that the program is funded primarily by the National Electrification Administration (NEA), with Beneco contributing PHP13 million from its internally generated revenues.

NEA has allocated PHP100 million for the 2025 rollout.

While the current plan targets existing sitios, Licoben said the growing population and expansion of residential areas may create new sitios needing future energization.

The sitio electrification program, despite limited return on investment, aims to ensure inclusive energy access nationwide. (PNA)

BY LIZA AGOOT

100 ANTIQUE KIDS WITH DISABILITIES RECEIVE FINANCIAL AID

SAN JOSE DE BUENAVISTA, Antique – Around 100 children with physical disabilities from this capital town of Antique received PHP10,000 financial aid under the Children's Health, Education, and Resources for Inclusion, Support and Hope (CHERISH) project of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) on Friday.

The amount is the first of the two-tranche financial support the recipients will receive for the School Year 2025-2026, said DSWD Regional Director Arwin Razo, who led the distribution of assistance.

The second tranche will be released in September.

"The beneficiaries are all in-school learners who have physical disability and need financial aid," he said in an interview.

The recipients can use the amount for their education, speech therapy, assistive devices and other needs.

CHERISH is a community-based intervention implemented with the Persons with Disabilities Affairs Office (PDAO) of San Jose de Buenavista, headed by Amie Dava, to improve the social functioning of children with disabilities.

DSWD signed a

P80-M ILLEGAL DRUGS SEIZED, 644 SUSPECTS NABBED IN H1 2025 IN BICOL

LEGAZPI CITY – Police seized some PHP80.1 million worth of illegal drugs and arrested 644 drug suspects in operations conducted from January to June this year, the Police Regional Office in Bicol (PRO-5) reported Thursday.

PRO-5 Director Brig. Gen. Andre Dizon said for the first six months of the year, 661 anti-drug operations yielded a total of 80,461.81 grams of marijuana and 10,359.8174 grams of shabu.

"Of the 644 suspects arrested, 37 were identified as high-value targets, 142 as street-level drug personalities, and 465 as newly identified drug personalities," he said in a report.

The arrests led to the filing of 662 criminal cases in courts across the region.

Among the region's provinces and cities, Camarines Norte recorded the highest value of confiscated illegal drugs, amounting to PHP30.27 million; followed by Camarines Sur with

PHP24.32 million; Albay with PHP12.19 million; Naga City with PHP9.33 million; Masbate with PHP3.55 million; Sorsogon with PHP238,420.80, and Catanduanes with PHP181,879.60.

PRO-5 also conducted a total of 962 anti-illegal gambling operations, resulting in the arrest of 2,743 persons involved in various unauthorized gambling activities.

Authorities confiscated a total of PHP1.4 million in bet money and filed 875 criminal cases against the apprehended suspects.

Dizon added that operatives launched a total of 174 operations against illegal fishing, resulting in the arrest of 352 violators.

The efforts also led to the confiscation of marine products and illegal fishing paraphernalia valued at PHP5 million. Out of the total apprehensions, 54 suspects have been formally charged in court for violating Republic Act 10654, which strengthens the implementation of the Philippine Fisheries Code.

In illegal logging, 185 operations were conducted, leading to the apprehension of 138 individuals and the seizure of PHP1.63 million worth of illegally sourced lumber and fitches.

Authorities have filed 32 cases for violations of Presidential Decree 705, also known as the Revised Forestry Code of the Philippines.

In its campaign against loose firearms, a total of 642 operations were conducted under the Kontra Boga and Bilang Boga programs, both of which target the proliferation of unlicensed and undocumented firearms.

During these operations, 146 persons were arrested for illegal possession of firearms, one suspect was neutralized during an armed encounter, and 401 criminal cases were filed in court. (PNA)
BY ANNABEL CONSUELO PETINGLAY

JUNE INFLATION AT 1.4% AS GOV'T MEASURES HELP EASE FOOD PRICES

MANILA – Headline inflation continued to remain below the lower end of the government's target range in June, despite a slight uptick due to a faster increase in non-food prices.

In a briefing on Friday, National Statistician Dennis Mapa said headline inflation settled at 1.4 percent in June from 1.3 percent in May.

This brings the year-to-date average inflation to 1.8 percent, well within the government's target range of 2 percent to 4 percent for the year.

Mapa said the slight uptick in headline inflation was driven by higher non-food inflation (1.9 percent from 1.5 percent), with faster price increases observed in electricity (7.4 percent from 2.8 percent) and education (5.4 percent from 4.2 percent).

Food inflation, however, eased to 0.1 percent during the month from 0.7 percent in May.

Mapa said the deceleration of food inflation in June was mainly due to the annual decrease in the prices of vegetables, tubers, plantains, cooking bananas, and pulses at 2.8 percent from an annual increase of 3.4 percent in the previous month.

Rice deflation also hit a record low of 14.3 percent in June.

Mapa said the rollout of the government's PHP20 per kg. rice program also contributed to the decline, especially in regular-milled rice prices.

In a separate statement, the Department of Economy, Planning, and Development (DEPDev) said government measures to stabilize food supply, boost agriculture, and improve logistics helped ease food inflation during the month.

"The sharp decline in food inflation over the past year underscores the continued progress

in our coordinated efforts to boost local production, improve logistics, and implement calibrated trade and biosecurity measures," DEPDev Secretary Arsenio Balisacan said.

"We will sustain these interventions and complement them with targeted initiatives to ensure a continuous, stable supply and shield consumers from future price pressures."

To further strengthen food supply chains, DEPDev said the Department of Agriculture (DA) would intensify the implementation of industry recovery and expansion programs, such as the Swine Industry Recovery Project and Livestock Economic Enterprise Development, to accelerate the rehabilitation of the hog industry and restore the pre-African Swine Fever hog population levels.

The DA will also establish the country's first Onion Research and Extension Center in Bongabon, Nueva Ecija for the development of effective methods to combat pests and diseases, enhance seed quality, and increase farm yields.

The Department of Energy, meanwhile, has partnered with private oil companies to offer fuel discounts to motorists affected by oil price fluctuations amid geopolitical uncertainties.

As of June 30, nine oil companies committed to providing fuel discounts to drivers of public utility vehicles (PUVs), non-PUVs, and transportation network vehicles.

"While the continued easing of food inflation is encouraging, we will maintain our vigilance against possible external and domestic risks. Volatile global markets and climate-related disruptions affecting fuel and electricity costs continue to threaten price stability," Balisacan said.

"We will remain focused

MERALCO TO ELECTRIFY HOUSEHOLDS IN PROTECTED AREAS BY 2026

MANILA – Manila Electric Company (Meralco) aims to energize the around 2,000 to 3,000 households in its service area that are located in Department of Environment and Natural Resources-protected sites starting in 2026.

In an interview Thursday, Meralco chief revenue officer Ferdinand Geluz said they cannot put up power lines in protected areas such as those in Tanay, Rizal and Mauban, Quezon, the usual mode to connect customers to the power grid.

"But we already have a proposed solution, which is the solar home system. We have filed it with the ERC (Energy Regulatory Commission) and once approved, the plan is to install solar battery system per household," he told the Philippine News Agency. Geluz said the customers will be given a fixed rate, not based on monthly consumption, since usage will depend on the capacity of the solar batteries.

He said the system works on a plug-and-play mode, with the solar panels to be installed on the households' roofs.

The project amounts to around PHP143 million, with the number of projected beneficiaries based on the 2020 census. The average consumption of these households is placed around 20 to 30 kilowatts (kw) per month. "Implementation is probably, at the earliest, next year," he said.

The Meralco official said funding for the program has been included in the company's capital expenditures, but the company cannot procure the needed materials pending the ERC approval. Amidst having households in its service area that remain to have no power, Geluz said the power distribution company has one of the highest electrification rate in the country at 99.97 percent. (PNA) **BY JOANN VILLANUEVA**

PAGCOR OPEN TO STRICTER REGULATIONS VS. ONLINE GAMBLING

MANILA – The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) on Friday said it is open to the proposal to impose stricter regulations against online gambling.

"It is the prerogative of our lawmakers to propose laws which they think will be beneficial to the

public," PAGCOR said in a statement following the filing of a Senate bill seeking tighter rules against online gambling. The bill, filed by Senator Sherwin Gatchalian, also pushes for the ban on the use of e-wallets for online gambling. PAGCOR assured the public that, together with like-minded agencies and organizations, it remains "fully committed" to intensifying its efforts against the proliferation of illegal online gaming activities. In a press briefing last month, Palace Press Officer Undersecretary Claire Castro said the Department of Information and Communications

BSP PROJECTS INFLATION TO REMAIN WITHIN GOV'T TARGET UNTIL 2027

MANILA – The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) said inflation is expected to settle well within the government's 2 percent to 4 percent target range until 2027.

The BSP made the statement on Friday after the Philippine Statistics Authority reported that last month's headline inflation settled at 1.4 percent.

"The June 2025 inflation outturn is within the BSP's forecast range of 1.1 to 1.9 percent," it said.

The BSP said inflation is projected to remain below the lower end of the target in 2025, primarily due to the continued easing of rice prices.

It noted, however, that this could be partly offset by the recent spike in oil prices.

For 2026 and 2027, inflation is expected to settle within the 2 percent to 4 percent target range. "Global economic activity

is showing signs of deceleration, influenced by uncertainty over US trade policy and ongoing geopolitical conflict in the Middle East. These developments may contribute to slower domestic growth," the BSP said.

"On balance, a more accommodative monetary policy stance is warranted.

Emerging risks to inflation from rising geopolitical tensions and external policy uncertainty will require closer monitoring, alongside the continued assessment of the impact of prior monetary policy adjustments."

The BSP assured that it would continue to safeguard price stability by ensuring that monetary policy settings are conducive to sustainable economic growth and employment. (PNA) **BY ANNA LEAH GONZALES**

DOE PUSHES FOR MORE PUBLIC-PRIVATE TIE-UPS ON RENEWABLE ENERGY

MANILA – An official of the Department of Energy (DOE) on Wednesday cited the need for more public-private tie-ups to meet the government's goal of increasing renewable energy's (RE) share in the country's energy mix to 35 percent by 2030.

This, after Energy Assistant Secretary Mylene Capongcol attended the commissioning of Samal Solar Renewable Energy Corporation's Samal Solar

Renewable Energy Project on Tuesday. In a statement, the DOE said the Samal Solar RE plant is now generating 41.92 megawatts (MW) of clean and sustainable energy to the Luzon grid.

"This Solar Project is a testament to the transformative power of renewable energy," Capongcol said. "It not only provides clean power but also fuels local development through employment and capacity building. This is the kind of sustainable, inclusive progress we are working to achieve nationwide," she added. DOE data show that as of the end of April this year, there are 1,392 active RE contracts in the country, with a total installed capacity of 7.05 gigawatts. (PNA) **BY ANNA LEAH GONZALES**

Technology (DICT) has already removed 7,000 unauthorized online gaming sites identified by PAGCOR.

Castro said the government would not tolerate the prevalence of unlicensed Internet gaming platforms, urging the public not to promote illegal websites. (PNA) **BY ANNA LEAH GONZALES**

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PH TO HOST FIBA WOMEN'S ASIA CUP 2027

MANILA – The Philippines will take center stage of Asian women's basketball as it has been named host of the FIBA Women's Asia Cup 2027.

The FIBA Regional Office-Asia made the announcement following a board meeting held on June 26, according to a FIBA news release Thursday.

This event marks the first time a continental-level basketball event will be hosted in the basketball-crazy nation in more than a decade.

The Philippines last hosted a continental event when Manila was the venue for the 2013 FIBA Asia Cup (formerly FIBA Asia Championships), when Gilas Pilipinas bagged silver and a ticket to the FIBA World Cup after a 36-year absence.

The Philippines has also played host to various international basketball events, including hosting the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2023.

"We are excited to return to the Philippines for a

FIBA Asia event," FIBA Executive Director-Asia Hagop Khajirian said.

The FIBA official said the Philippines' hosting will help draw attention to women's basketball in Asia.

"We believe hosting the FIBA Women's Asia Cup event in the Philippines, where basketball has a passionate following, will help FIBA's efforts to promote women's basketball in Asia. The event will also serve as a boost to the SBP's efforts to promote women's basketball in the Philippines," he said.

For its part, the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas (SBP) expressed excitement over the development.

"The Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas (SBP) is proud to be the host for the FIBA Women's Asia Cup 2027. The federation has always been an ardent partner of FIBA in prioritizing the growth of women's basketball, and it's about time for the Philippines to do even more," SBP

president Alfredo Panlilio said.

"The timing is perfect for the Philippines to host this competition as women's basketball in the country currently has great momentum behind it with the foundation of a women's professional league and some of our national team players getting opportunities to play abroad," he added.

Meanwhile, Indonesia was chosen as the host for the FIBA U16 Women's Asia Cup 2027 and FIBA U18 Asia Cup 2028 as a prelude to its hosting of the FIBA U17 Women's Basketball World Cup 2028 and FIBA U19 Basketball World Cup 2029.

Indonesia, along with the Philippines and Japan, were co-hosts of the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2023.

Qatar, which will host the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2027, was chosen as the host for the FIBA U18 Asia Cup 2026.

Kazakhstan will become the first Central Asian nation to host a FIBA Asia

ROOKIE SOREÑO SHINES AS CROSSOVERS CONQUER SOLAR SPIKERS

MANILA – Chery Tiggo recovered from a first-set meltdown to pull off a 20-25, 25-23, 25-12, 28-26 victory over Capital1 at the Premier Volleyball League (PVL) On Tour at Ynares Center in Montalban, Rizal on Saturday night.

Rookie Baby Jyne Soreño, a lefty hitter out of De La Salle University, scored 15 points on 14 attacks and a block for the Crossovers, ably making up for the absence of veteran Ara Galang and national libero Jen Nierva.

"It was nerve-wracking at the beginning, but eventually it eased up because our veteran players said, they will take care of the pressure. We just focus. Without them, I wouldn't be the Best Player of the Game either," Soreño said after

the two-hour, three-minute match.

Princess Robles topscored with 17 points on 15 attacks and two blocks, while rookie Renee Peñafiel added 11 points. Imee Hernandez and Pauline Gaston contributed eight and six points, respectively.

Capital1 was paced by Maria Shola May Alvarez with 13 points. Trisha Mae Genesis chipped in 12 points while Sydney Mae Niego had 10 points.

Chery Tiggo faces Akari at 4 p.m. on Sunday, while Capital1 battles ZUS Coffee at 6:30 p.m.

Meanwhile, the Sports Vision-organized series will head to the Capital Arena in Ilagan City, Isabela on July 12 and 13, before returning to the FilOil EcoOil Centre in San

Juan.

The City of Passi Arena in Iloilo province will then host the matches on July 19 on 20, followed by the Recoletos Coliseum in Cebu City on July 26 and 27.

Candon City Arena in Ilocos Sur be the venue of the third PVL event on July 29, featuring two marquee matchups -- Choco Mucho-Petro Gazz and Chery Tiggo-ZUS.

The remaining preliminary matches will be held alternately at FilOil EcoOil Centre and the Philsports Arena in Pasig City.

Pool B squads Creamline and Cignal swept Akari and Capital1, respectively, in the first leg held in Vigan, Ilocos Sur. (PNA)

BY JEAN MALANUM

FILIPINO NETTERS TRIUMPH IN ATF U16 SERIES 2 IN MALAYSIA

MANILA – As Filipino tennis sensation Alex Eala continues to make history, her younger compatriots are also making the country proud with their achievements.

At the Melaka Asian Tennis Federation (ATF) Under-16 Series

competition when it hosts the FIBA U18 Women's Asia Cup 2028. Jordan will once again host a FIBA Asia event with the FIBA U16 Asia Cup 2027. (PNA) **BY DARRYL JOHN ESGUERRA**

2 in Malaysia over the weekend, the Philippines dominated the doubles category in both boys and girls' divisions.

Top seeds Lucas Go and Kenzo Brodeth defeated fourth seeds Shun Him Luk and Cun Hiu Chan of Hong Kong, 7-5, 6-2, in the boys' doubles final.

The unseeded pair of Arriana Reign Maglana and Lorraine Jallorina secured the girls' doubles crown with a stunning 6-0, 6-0 upset of Indian Ahana Das and Filipino Ave Policarpio, the tournament top seeds.

Maglana, 13, is from Maragusan, Davao de Oro, while Jallorina hails from Iloilo City. They won the U18 doubles title at the Juntaphil Cup held at the Philippine Columbian Association (PCA) Manila in April.

Jallorina also bagged the mixed doubles bronze medal at the 2023 Batang Pinoy National Championships in Manila.

"We're both happy to win our first title abroad and we would like to thank the Philippine Tennis Academy (PTA), Tito Oscar Hilado and Tito Romy Chan for

their all-out support," the 15-year-old Jallorina said in an interview Sunday, referring to the PTA officials.

The four players are gearing up for the two-leg J60 Phinma International Tennis Championships starting next week at Manila Polo Club in Makati City.

"Considering that they are all rookies, they did very well in Melaka," PTA coach Bobie Angelo, a multi-medalist in the Southeast Asian Games, said.

"I see a very bright future for our young players. They train hard and always give their best on court. They have the potential, they just need more exposure abroad to improve their skills and gain confidence. Hopefully, they can also perform well in the upcoming J60 events."

The PTA, founded by long-time sports patron Chan, has produced several outstanding players, including 2023 Metro Manila Open champion Arthur Craig Pantino and 2017 PCA Open champion John Bryan Otico. (PNA)

BY JEAN MALANUM

NAILGA, GACCION RULE JPGT PUEBLO PREMIER CATEGORY

MANILA – Alexis Nailga displayed his brilliant form again in the ICTSI Junior PGT Series on Thursday, dominating the premier boys' 15-18 division at the Pueblo de Oro Golf and Country Club in Cagayan de Oro.

The 16-year-old from Bukidnon carded a 73 to win by seven strokes.

"It's a great feeling to score a three-peat. I now have a strong chance of making it to the national finals," Nailga, who also won the Del Monte and Mactan legs, said.

Nailga had a 36-37 round and a 54-hole total of five-over 221. CDO's Armand Copok fired a three-under 69 to finish second at 228, while Zamboanga's Mhark Fernando III, placed third at 229 after a 75.

Korean Eric Jeon was fourth with a 76 for a 230 total, edging Fawzi Espinosa, who had a 77 and finished with the same 14-over total, via countback.

In the girls division, homegrown talent Ally Gaccion carded a six-under 66 to beat Del Monte

rivals Crista Miñoza and Zero Plete by 17 strokes.

"My putter was really on fire, and I was hitting my approach shots close to the pin. I actually struggled with my driving, but I managed to save pars right from the first hole," the 18-year-old Gaccion said.

The Mindanao swing continues with the third leg on July 9 to 11 at the South Pacific Golf Club, followed by the final stop on July 14 to 16 at Apo Golf and Country Club, both in Davao.

The Visayas Series, which

had its second and third legs cancelled due to the Mount Kanlaon eruption, resumes on Sept. 15 to 17 at the Negros Occidental Golf and Country Club, followed by the Sept. 18 to 20 leg at Bacolod Golf and Country Club in Binitin, Murcia.

The Luzon Series, on the other hand, will hold its last three legs at Riviera Golf and Country Club (July 29 to 31), Pradera Verde in Lubao, Pampanga (Aug. 12 to 14) and Pinewoods Golf and Country Club in Baguio (Aug. 19 to 21). (PNA) **BY JEAN MALANUM**