

CAVITE GAZETTE

P U B L I S H I N G

VOL.1 NO.17

July 15-21, 2025

P10.00

DMW PADLOCKS CAVITE SALON, TRAINING HUB USED FOR ILLEGAL RECRUITMENT



CLOSURE OPERATION. The Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) shuts down VMJ Beauty Salon and the Jef & Eds Learning Center in Imus, Cavite on Wednesday (July 9, 2025). The DMW said the salon and the training center allegedly serve as fronts for illegal recruitment activities. (Photo courtesy of DMW)

MANILA – The Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) on Wednesday shut down an illegal recruitment agency fronting as a beauty salon and training center in Imus, Cavite. DMW Assistant Secretary Jerome Alcantara led the closure operation of VMJ Beauty Salon and the Jef & Eds Learning Center, in coordination with the city government and the Imus Police Station.

"Nandito tayo ngayon sa bisa ng kapangyarihan ng

DMW sa pamamagitan ng RA (Republic Act) 11641 na nagbigay sa amin ng mandato at sa direktiba rin ng Pangulo Bongbong Marcos Jr. at Secretary Hans Leo Caddac na paigtingin ang kampanya natin laban sa illegal recruitment at human trafficking (We are here today by virtue of the power of the DMW through RA (Republic Act) 11641 which gave us the mandate and also the directive of President Bongbong Marcos Jr. and Secretary Hans Leo Caddac to intensify our campaign against illegal recruitment and human trafficking)," Alcantara said.

The closure operation was launched after the DMW's Migrant Workers Protection Bureau (MWPB) received a request from the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) Cavite North District to investigate the two establishments based on complaints of illegal recruitment.

The MWPB conducted three surveillance operations on June 5, 11, and July 1

"Nagpositibo ang VMJ Salon ng paniningil ng PHP15,000 sa mga aplikante para umano sa kanilang training sa hairstyling at spa at pag-refer sa mga trainee sa kontak na recruitment agency para makapagtrabaho sila sa Saudi Arabia na may buwanang suweldo na PHP35,000 (It was found out that the VMJ Salon was charging applicants PHP15,000 for their hairstyling and spa training, and then referring trainees to a recruitment agency so they could work in Saudi Arabia with a monthly salary of PHP35,000)," the DMW said.

The DMW, together with police operatives, made the simultaneous raids of the VMJ Beauty Salon located at the Golden Market, Diamond Golden City, and of Jef & Eds Learning Center inside the Richlane Subdivision in Imus.

Operatives found a beautician at the salon while a caretaker with three applicants was at the so-called learning center, which allegedly also served as accommodation for recruits.

Owners of the two establishments now face charges for violation of RA 8042, or the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act.

The DMW will also recommend the cancellation of their business registration certificates with the local government and the Department of Trade and Industry.

These closures bring to 18 the total number of illegal recruitment fronts shut down by the DMW so far this year.

The DMW-MWPB urges victims of the two establishments to come forward and file complaints through its hotline at +63 2 8721-0619, via email at mwpb@dmw.gov.ph, or through its official Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/dmwairtip>.

"Kaya doon sa mga illegal recruiter, eh kung hindi po kayo titigil, talaga pong lalo pa magsisipag at magpupursige yung Department of Migrant Workers kasama ng Philippine National Police, National Bureau of Investigation, at ng iba pang mga government agency sa ilalim ng administration ni President Bongbong Marcos, tutugisin po namin kayo, ipapasara at ipapakulong (So to those illegal recruiters, if you don't stop, the Department of Migrant Workers, together with the Philippine National Police, National Bureau of Investigation, and other government agencies under the administration of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., will work even harder. We will hunt and shut you down, and have you imprisoned)," Alcantara said. (PNA) **BY MARITA MOAJE**

ACCEPTING ADS, PLEASE CALL : 09954361217/cavitegazette@gmail.com

REGIONAL LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON, NAARESTO NG TANZA POLICE

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Arestado ang isang Most Wanted Person na nasa Regional Level List sa bisa ng warrant of arrest sa ikinasang operasyon ng Tanza Municipal Police Station dakong 1:40 ng hapon noong Hulyo 10, 2025 sa Barangay Daang Amaya 2, Tanza, Cavite.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL AL-RIEZAS KINANG, Hepe ng Tanza MPS, ang akusado na si alyas "Rodolfo", residente ng Brgy. Bagtas, Tanza, Cavite.

Ang operasyon ay isinagawa ng Warrant Personnel ng Tanza MPS na may suot na Alternative Recording Device (ARD), bilang pagsunod sa patakaran ng PNP sa transparency. Nagresulta ito sa pagkakaaresto ng akusado na may kinahaharap na kasong Rape na may Criminal Case No. TMCR-957-25-CICL, walang inirekomendang piyansa, at kasong Sexual Assault in relation

to R.A. 7610 na may Criminal Case No. TMCR-960-25-CICL, na may inirekomendang piyansa na Php 200,000.00. Ang mga nabanggit na warrant ay inilabas ng Family Court, Fourth Judicial Region, Branch 5, Trece Martires City, Cavite, noong Hulyo 3, 2025.

Kasalukuyang nasa kustodiya ng Tanza MPS ang akusado habang inihahanda ang pormal na pagsasauli ng warrant sa korte ng pinagmulan.

Sa kanyang pahayag, sinabi ni PCOL Dwight E Alegre, Provincial Director ng Cavite PPO, "Ang patuloy na pagtugis sa mga kriminal, lalo na yaong may kasong karumal-dumal laban sa kabataan, ay bahagi ng ating paninindigan sa pagprotekta sa mga walang kalaban-laban. Ang Cavite PPO ay hindi titigil hanggang ang lahat ng may sala ay mapanagot sa batas."

TOP 10 CITY LEVEL MOST WANTED, NAARESTO NG TRECE MARTIRES CITY POLICE

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Arestado ang isang kabilang sa Top 10 Most Wanted Person (City Level) sa bisa ng bench warrant of arrest sa ikinasang operasyon ng Trece Martires Component City Police Station dakong 7:20 ng gabi noong Hulyo 9, 2025 sa Southville 2, Barangay Aguado, Trece Martires City, Cavite.

Kinilala ni PMAJ RODEL S SALVADOR, Officer-in-Charge ng Trece Martires CCPS, ang akusado na si alyas "Alvin", residente ng Brgy. Aguado, Trece Martires City, Cavite.

Ang operasyon ay isinagawa ng Warrant Personnel ng Trece Martires CCPS, gamit ang Alternative Recording

Device (ARD) alinsunod sa patakaran ng PNP sa transparency, sa kawalan ng Body Worn Camera (BWC). Nagresulta ito sa pagkakaaresto ng akusado sa kasong Robbery with Force Upon Things na may Criminal Case No. DC-31-21-16.

Ang bench warrant ay inilabas ng Regional Trial Court, Fourth Judicial Region, Branch 90, Dasmariñas City, Cavite noong Hulyo 3, 2025, na may inirekomendang piyansa na Php24,000.00.

Naipabatid sa akusado ang kanyang mga karapatang konstitusyonal sa wikang nauunawaan niya. Kasalukuyan siyang nasa kustodiya ng Trece Martires CCPS habang isinasagawa ang pormal

PROVINCIAL LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON, NAARESTO NG CAVITE CITY POLICE

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Arestado ang isang Most Wanted Person na nasa Provincial Level List sa bisa ng warrant of arrest sa ikinasang operasyon ng Cavite Component City Police Station, katuwang ang 401st Regional Mobile Force Battalion, dakong 12:15 ng tanghali noong Hulyo 9, 2025 sa Barangay 62-A, Cavite City.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL SOCRATES SOLINAP JACA, Officer-in-Charge ng Cavite CCPS, ang akusado na si alyas "Rolando", residente ng Tandang Sora, Batasan Hills, Quezon City.

Ang operasyon ay isinagawa ng Warrant Personnel ng Cavite CCPS, sa tulong ng RMFB-401st, gamit ang Body Worn Camera at Alternative Recording Device (ARD) bilang pagsunod sa patakaran

ng PNP sa transparency. Nagresulta ito sa pagkakaaresto ng akusado na may kasong Theft, alinsunod sa Criminal Case No. 145-2024.

Ang warrant of arrest ay inilabas ng Municipal Trial Court in Cities, Branch 1, Cavite City, na may petsang Hulyo 9, 2025, para sa kasong may hatol na pagkakakulong.

Sa kasalukuyan, ang akusado ay nasa kustodiya ng Cavite CCPS habang isinasagawa ang pormal na pagsasauli ng warrant sa korte ng pinagmulan.

Sa kanyang pahayag, sinabi ni PCOL Dwight E Alegre, Provincial Director ng Cavite PPO, "Ang patuloy na pag-aresto sa mga most wanted ay bahagi ng ating layunin na tiyakin ang hustisya at seguridad sa bawat komunidad. Walang puwang ang mga nagtatago sa batas sa ating lalawigan."

CITY LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON NAARESTO NG BACOR CITY POLICE

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Arestado ang isang Most Wanted Person (City Level) sa bisa ng warrant of arrest sa ikinasang Manhunt Charlie Operation ng mga tauhan ng Bacoor Component City Police Station dakong 9:25 ng

na pagsasauli ng warrant sa korte ng pinagmulan.

Sa kanyang pahayag, sinabi ni PCOL Dwight E Alegre, Provincial Director ng Cavite PPO, "Ang tagumpay ng mga operasyong ito ay patunay ng dedikasyon ng ating kapulisan sa pagtugis sa mga taong may kinahaharap na kaso. Katuwang ang komunidad, patuloy ang ating misyon para sa kapayapaan at hustisya."

umaga noong Hulyo 9, 2025 sa Barangay Talaba 2, Bacoor City, Cavite.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL ALEXIE A DESAMITO, Officer-in-Charge ng Bacoor CCPS, ang akusado na si alyas "Star", residente ng Silangan, Brgy. Talaba 1, Bacoor City, Cavite.

Ang operasyon ay isinagawa ng Warrant Section ng Bacoor CCPS gamit ang Alternative Recording Device (ARD) alinsunod sa polisiya ng PNP ukol sa transparency sa mga operasyon. Nagresulta ito sa pagkakaaresto ng akusado na may kasong paglabag sa Section 14, Article 2 ng Republic Act 9165 (Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002).

Ang pagkakaaresto ay base sa warrant of arrest sa ilalim ng Criminal

APAT NA SUSPEK SA SHOPLIFTING, NAHULIHAN PA NG BARIL, GRANADA AT SHABU, ARESTADO NG TANZA PNP

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite

— Arestado ang apat (4) na indibidwal sa kasong Theft (Shoplifting) at paglabag sa Republic Act 10591 (Comprehensive Firearms and Ammunition Regulation Act) at Republic Act 9165 (Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002), sa isinagawang mabilis na operasyon ng Tanza Municipal Police Station na naganap sa dakong 7:30 ng gabi ng Hulyo 10, 2025 sa Brgy. Halayhay, Tanza, Cavite.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL AL-RIEZA S KINANG, Hepe ng Tanza MPS, ang mga suspek na sina alyas "Harci", "Mary Jane", "Ariel", at "Christian", pawang mga residente

ng Dasmariñas at Indang, Cavite.

Ayon sa imbestigasyon, dakong 7:30 ng gabi nang tangayin ng mga suspek ang iba't ibang grocery items mula sa Puremart Halayhay, na tinatayang nagkakahalaga ng Php 28,000.00. Agad namang nakatanggap ng tawag ang Tanza MPS na kung saan ay agad na rumesponde ang Sector 2 patrollers. Nasabat ang mga suspek sa A. Soriano Highway, sa harap ng SM City Tanza, sakay ng kulay abong Mitsubishi Lancer.

Sa isinagawang paghalughog sa sasakyan at mga suspek, narekober ang sumusunod na mga ebidensya:

Mga grocery items na pinaniniwalaang galing sa iba't ibang convenience stores sa Tanza at karatig bayan

Limang (5) sachet ng hinihinalang shabu na tumitimbang ng humigit-kumulang 3.5 gramo Isang (1) cal. 38 revolver na may anim (6) na bala, Isang (1) piraso ng granada

Ang mga suspek ay kasalukuyang nasa kustodiya ng Tanza MPS habang inihahanda ang kasong isasampa sa kanila.

Sa kanyang pahayag, sinabi ni PCOL Dwight E Alegre, Provincial Director ng Cavite PPO, "Ang mabilis na aksyon at pagkakaaresto sa mga suspek ay patunay ng kahandaan ng ating kapulisan sa pagresponde sa anumang uri ng krimen. Hindi natin palalampasin ang mga bumabaluktot sa batas, lalo na kung may kaugnayan ito sa ilegal na droga at armas."

LAGUNA LGUS INTENSIFY FLOOD CONTROL EFFORTS

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna (PIA)—Government leaders in Laguna have started ramping up flood control efforts to prepare for the onset of the rainy season.

Re-elected San Pedro City Mayor Art Joseph Francis Mercado signed Executive Order No. 1 enjoining all barangay officials in the city to prioritize clean-up of clogged drainage systems, creeks, water inlets, and other waterways.

Mercado said the city often experiences flashfloods and that the clean-up of waterways is just one of the solutions eyed to solve the perennial problem of flooding.

“We are all aware of the news reports about places that get flooded even with just short periods of rainfall. We are listening to your concerns. The entire city government and I are taking action to find solutions to this problem. This is just the beginning of a series of steps to address the issues that are burdening our community,” Mercado said.

He directed barangay chairpersons, in coordination with the City Environment and Natural Resources Office, City Health Office, and the City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office, and other national government agencies to start the operations by July 5 and every second and fourth Saturdays of the month.

Mercado said public participation is crucial to the cause of making the city clean, safe, and orderly.

“A reminder to all our fellow constituents: you have an important role to play in this. Let’s start with the simple discipline of proper waste disposal. Every drain we keep clean is a step away from disaster.” In Biñan City, officials have announced the commencement of pumping operations, particularly in Barangay Dela Paz and Malaban, to siphon off the floods in

some areas.

Mayor Angelo Alonte said in a press conference that they are using pumps donated by the private sector while the city government is in the process of procuring their own pumps.

“We’ve already activated the pumping station to help siphon the water. We also have trucks that extract water and temporarily release it into our lake. We’re just fortunate right now that Laguna de Bay’s water level isn’t too high yet and it can still absorb the rainwater.”

Vice Mayor Jonalina Reyes then voiced her support for the Executive-Legislative Agenda of Alonte that includes the rehabilitation of the city’s drainage systems and construction of new anti-flooding facilities.

“Even before, we have already been working on projects to address the flooding problem, such as rehabilitating the drainage systems in Biñan and constructing riprap along our rivers.”

Biñan officials noted that dredging of Laguna de Bay remains the long-term solution to flooding. They expressed the hope that Congress and national government agencies involved will support the measure.

“We will also need the help of our Lone District Representative, Cong. Arman Dimaguila, to coordinate with the national government and encourage the representatives of all the towns surrounding Laguna Lake to work together on Mayor Gel’s proposed dredging project in Laguna Lake,” Reyes adds.

Meanwhile, Governor Sol Aragonés said in a statement that she will propose the improvement of waste management policies, modern urban planning, and the enactment of modern eco-friendly initiatives as part of a plan for the Laguna de Bay rehabilitation to lessen incidents of flooding in

QUEZON LGU TIGHTENS ENFORCEMENT OF ‘NO BALANCE BILLING POLICY’ IN PUBLIC HOSPITALS

LUCENA CITY, Quezon (PIA)—The provincial government of Quezon is intensifying the implementation of the “No Balance Billing and No Out of Pocket Expense” policy to ensure that residents, especially the most vulnerable, can access public hospital services without financial burden.

Under this policy, patients admitted to basic accommodations or ward sections of public hospitals are not required to pay any fees.

Governor Angelina Tan said the initiative aims to ease the financial burden of medical expenses, especially for senior citizens, persons with disabilities, solo parents, and beneficiaries of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps).

“Beyond upgrading hospital facilities and modernizing equipment, we are committed to fully enforcing the no balance billing and no out of pocket expense policies across public hospitals in Quezon, so that every Quezonian in need of medical care can focus on recovery rather than worry about expenses,” Tan said.

The move supports the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation’s (PhilHealth) push for equitable healthcare access through the Universal Health Care Law, which encourages hospitals to fully implement no balance billing for

communities.

“Through infrastructure projects and the strengthening of solid waste management programs, residents will achieve a more comfortable, cleaner, and prosperous way of life. Our initiatives focus on improving safety, health, and the quality of life of every Lagunense,” the governor said. (CH/PIA-Laguna)

BY CHRISTOPHER HEDREYDA

eligible members.

Vincent Garcia, a resident of Lucena City, shared his appreciation and expressed gratitude to the provincial government for enforcing the policy.

“The no balance billing and no out of pocket policy in public hospitals is a big help, especially for indigenous people like me, because we no longer have to pay anything when confined in public hospitals,” Garcia said.

Lima Alpah, whose husband was confined at the Quezon Medical Center, also expressed gratitude to the provincial government, as the no balance billing policy helped them with hospital expenses.

“Thank you very much to Quezon Medical Center for the free medicine, kind doctors and nurses, and the staff of PhilHealth and Malasakit. Through the no balance billing policy, my husband was able to receive treatment.”

Tan added that the provincial government is also working to upgrade equipment and improve facilities across Quezon’s public hospitals under the Quezon Provincial Health Network to ensure quality healthcare services.

Now serving her second term as governor, Tan vowed to continue the province’s health programs under her HEALING Quezon governance agenda, ensuring that no Quezonian is left behind due to financial constraints in accessing healthcare.

She added that her administration’s efforts are already producing results, with more citizens now actively seeking medical care.

“More people are now open to getting checkups, undergoing treatment, and trusting public hospitals for surgical procedures. These are clear signs that public trust in our healthcare system is being restored.” (RO, PIA Quezon) **BY RUEL ORINDAY**

EDITORIAL HIV, posible nang hindi makahawa?

HIV, maaari nang maging undetectable o hindi nakakahawa sa tulong ng mga regular testing at anti retroviral therapy. Kaya naman ayon sa Health Department ay marapat na magpatest na sapagkat ito ngayon ay libre na at madali ang proseso.

Hindi isang kahihyan kung ang isang tao ay magkakaroon ng HIV. Hindi dapat ikinatatakot ang pagpapakonsulta kung ito rin ay para sa ating sariling kapakanan. Ang HIV ay isang sakit na matagal nang hinahanapan ng karampatang gamot ngunit patuloy pa ring dumadaan sa ibang masusing pag-aaral.

Kaya naman, isang magandang balita ang unti-unting pagkadiskubre ng kaalaman ukol sa sakit na ito. Isang bagay na maaaring maibigay na tulong ng isang mamamayan ay pag-iwas sa pangungutya ng mga taong nakaani ng ganitong sakit at tamang paggabay sa pagkakaroon ng sapat na kaalaman ukol dito. Magpacheck upang masigurado ang kalusugan.

CAVITE GAZETTE PUBLISHING

ANABELLE K. DUMALI
Publisher / Editor in Chief

JOHN RENNIEL K. DUMALI
Circulation Manager

BRYAN V. DE LUNA
Editor Consultant

JO-ANN K. ALCANTARA
Lay Out Artist/Special Project Coordinator

Ang **CAVITE GAZETTE PUBLISHING** ay inilalathala tuwing araw ng Martes na may tanggapan sa 217 Ligas 1, Bacoor City Cavite.

Contact #: 09954361217

Email: cavitegazette@gmail.com

PAUNAWA: Ang dyaryong ito ay natanggap ng kontribusyon na balita, artikulo sariling pananaw o opinyon ng mga kolumnista ang nilalaman ng kanilang mga artikulo ay wala pong kinalaman at pananagutan dito ang pamunuan ng publishing

ADVERTISING RATES
COMMERCIAL - - - - P200/COL.CM
LEGAL NOTICES - - - P160/COL.CM

PALACE: NOT INSINUATING MARK VILLAR BEHIND RISE IN PRIMEWATER DEALS

MANILA – Malacañang on Tuesday clarified that it is not insinuating that former Public Works Secretary and incumbent Senator Mark Villar was behind the joint venture deals entered into by PrimeWater with local water districts.

In a press briefing, Palace Press Officer Claire Castro addressed questions regarding the timing of the deals, which increased around 2019 when Villar was head of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), then the supervising agency of the Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA).

“Ang pagkaka-describe lang naman natin ay mas dumami noong 2019 at noong ito’y na-attach nga sa DPWH, ‘yung LWUA (What we noted is that the number increased in 2019, when LWUA was attached to DPWH),” Castro said.

“Hindi tayo nagbibigay ng insinuation na dahil kay Sec. Mark Villar at the time. Nagkataon kasi siya ‘yung namumuno sa DPWH (We are not making any insinuation that this was because of Secretary Mark Villar. It just happened he was leading DPWH at the time),” she added.

PrimeWater, owned by Villar’s brother and part of

the Villar family’s business group, is currently under government investigation following consumer complaints over service interruptions and inconsistent supply in various parts of the country it serves.

It operates under joint venture agreements with several local water districts. Villar said he had no direct or indirect stake in PrimeWater and had no role in any transactions involving the firm during his time as DPWH chief.

“Sa aking pagkakabasa, wala siyang partisipasyon patungkol dito sa mga transaksyon (From what I’ve read, he had no participation in the transactions),” Castro said. “Mas maganda sana kung siya ay nagkaroon ng mas malalimang pagparticipate dahil baka mas naiwasan pa ang problema ng PrimeWater (It might have helped if he had participated more deeply — perhaps the problems with PrimeWater could have been avoided).”

Villar led the DPWH from 2016 to 2021 under the previous administration of former president RODRIGO DUTERTE. (PNA) **BY DARRYL JOHN ESGUERRA**

PANGILINAN SEEKS TO REVISIT KEY FOOD, FISHERIES, RICE POLICIES

MANILA – Senator Francis “Kiko” Pangilinan on Wednesday filed a set of Senate resolutions seeking urgent legislative review of landmark agriculture and fisheries policies, saying reforms must be made to ensure that farmers and fisherfolk are not left behind. The resolutions lead the second batch of his legislative priorities for the 20th Congress and aim to assess the effectiveness of the Sagip Saka Act, the impact of the Rice Tariffication Law, and the effect of commercial fishing in municipal waters on small-scale fishers.

“These are issues I heard directly from our farmers and fisherfolk during the campaign. We need to make sure the laws we passed are truly working for them,” Pangilinan said. The first resolution calls for an investigation into the status of the Sagip Saka Act, a 2019 law authored by Pangilinan to link farmers and fisherfolk directly to markets, especially government procurement. The senator said some local government units have yet to fully implement the law.

The second resolution urges the Senate to revisit the Rice Tariffication Law, including the possibility of restoring the regulatory and market intervention powers of the National

Food Authority (NFA). The move comes amid persistent concerns over unstable rice prices and the law’s impact on local palay (unhusked rice) producers. A third resolution seeks to evaluate the effects of allowing commercial fishing within the 15-km. municipal waters, a zone traditionally reserved for small-scale fisherfolk. Pangilinan said complaints from coastal communities raise the need to determine whether policy changes are undermining the livelihood and rights of small fishers. “These are not just policy issues—they affect the daily lives and incomes of our most vulnerable workers,” Pangilinan said. He added that all three resolutions are consistent with his campaign promise to advocate for food security, farmer and fisher welfare, and pro-poor policy reforms.

The senator also filed a new set of bills alongside the resolutions, including measures on political dynasty prevention, bank deposit transparency, land use planning, and environmental protection. However, he emphasized that the resolutions reflect his priority to hold the government accountable for the implementation and impact of already existing laws. (PNA) **BY WILNARD BACELONIA**

CAYETANO PUSHES FOR NATIONWIDE ESTABLISHMENT OF ELDERLY CARE CENTERS

MANILA – Senator Alan Peter Cayetano has filed a bill seeking to establish wellness and care centers for senior citizens in every city and municipality in the country, citing the growing need to institutionalize elderly care as the population continues to age.

Cayetano said on Wednesday that Senate Bill No. 107, or the proposed Center for the Elderly in All Cities and Municipalities Act, mandates the creation of Local Centers for the Elderly that will serve as wellness hubs, safe spaces, and access points for health care, social services, and recreational activities.

“Our senior citizens deserve more, and it is the duty of the State to prioritize them and ensure that our programs and services truly respond to their needs and protect their right to live safely and comfortably,” Cayetano said.

The measure directs the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to lead the rollout of the centers in coordination with local government units. LGUs and private groups may also establish additional or satellite centers based on the needs of their senior populations.

Cayetano said the proposal aims to modernize the existing 1995 law on senior citizen

centers, which has yet to meet current demands. At present, there are only 76 residential care facilities across the country, most of which serve multiple vulnerable sectors and not just the elderly.

The bill also provides tax and tariff exemptions for imported equipment and supplies needed to build and operate the centers. A Special Committee on Local Centers for the Elderly will be formed to oversee program implementation and ensure each facility meets minimum standards.

To promote excellence, a Seal of Excellence Awards system will be established to recognize outstanding local centers.

Cayetano cited Taguig City, which in 2019 opened a five-story, disabled-friendly Center for the Elderly as a model. He said the facility has been effective in providing care to seniors with low-risk conditions and should be replicated nationwide.

“We are doing this because napakalaki ng contribution ng mga senior citizen sa ating lipunan. We are honoring them [through this measure] because they have done so much (We are doing this because senior citizens have contributed greatly to our society. We are honoring them through this measure because they have done so much),” Cayetano said. (PNA) **BY WILNARD BACELONIA**

PBBM PREPARING DETAILED REPORT FOR 4TH SONA – PALACE

MANILA – President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. is currently preparing for his fourth State of the Nation Address (SONA), with focus on presenting a clear and comprehensive report to the Filipino people, Malacañang said Tuesday. Marcos is scheduled to deliver his SONA before a joint session of Congress on July 28 at Batasang Pambansa, where he is expected to outline his administration’s progress midway through his term, and reaffirm policy directions including the

economy, infrastructure, agriculture, digitalization, and national security.

In a press briefing, Presidential Communications Office (PCO) Undersecretary and Palace Press Officer Claire Castro said Marcos continues to work on refining the address, emphasizing the need for a clear and detailed report to the public.

“Ngayon po ay nagpiparepare pa rin po at kailangan po na maging mas maganda ang pag-uulat sa taumbayan

patungkol sa kaniyang mga naging proyekto at mga achievements and accomplishments (As of now, the President is still preparing to ensure a better report to the people on his projects, achievements, and accomplishments),” Castro said.

The House of Representatives has started SONA preparations as early as May, with around 27,000 security and response personnel being eyed to be deployed to secure the Batasang Pambansa. (PNA) **BY DARRYL JOHN ESGUERRA**

NBI RAID YIELDS P8-M FAKE BABY POWDER, BODY CLEANSERS

MANILA – The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) on Wednesday announced the seizure of PHP8 million worth of fake baby powder and body cleanser products during a raid on a Pasay City establishment.

In a statement, NBI Director Jaime Santiago said units from the NBI-National Capital Region (NBI-NCR) and the Intellectual Property Rights Division (IPRD) implemented two search warrants against the

subject establishment last July 3 for violation of Republic Act 8293 (Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines).

The operation resulted in the discovery and seizure of a total of 9,093 pieces of various counterfeit products, bearing the trademarks “Johnson’s,” “Johnson’s Baby,” “Aveeno,” “Cetaphil” and “Cetaphil Gentle Clear.”

Johnson’s and Aveeno are registered trademarks of Kenvue Inc., while Cetaphil is a registered trademark

of Galderma Holdings SA. The search warrants were obtained through the complaint filed by Orion Support, Inc., representing Kenvue Inc., and Galderma Holdings.

“The NBI reminds the public to refrain from patronizing pirated products to give protection to the intellectual property rights owners and enhance our economic growth,” Santiago said. (PNA) **BY BENJAMIN PULTA**

DHSUD DIRECTS REGIONAL OFFICES TO BE PROACTIVE IN DISASTER RESPONSE

MANILA – Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) Secretary Jose Ramon Aliling has instructed the agency's regional offices (RO) to adopt a more proactive and anticipatory approach in leading shelter-related disaster response efforts.

The directive follows the guidance of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. during a recent emergency situational briefing with the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council.

"As lead, you bear the primary responsibility for coordinating, guiding, and facilitating shelter-related activities under your areas of responsibility," Aliling said in a news release on Friday.

Citing that ROs are Regional Shelter Cluster Leads, he emphasized the need for swift, coordinated, and strategic action among them.

"You are to engage with the local government units, key shelter agencies, partners, and stakeholders within your respective jurisdictions to foster a unified and effective response, monitor progress, identify gaps, and ensure that needs

are met efficiently and equitably," Aliling said.

He also reminded ROs to ensure timely communication of the Department's shelter assistance programs, particularly the Integrated Disaster Shelter Assistance Program.

All regional units are required to submit daily situational reports to support DHSUD's central disaster operations.

"Let's continue to be proactive and collaborative. Your dedication and hard work are important in ensuring safe shelter for those who need it most," he said.

On Thursday, the DHSUD released a memorandum where regional units were told to ensure that their disaster response strategies are aligned with national objectives, especially in light of the ongoing typhoon season.

The memorandum also called for strengthened coordination with local government units, shelter agencies, humanitarian organizations, and other partners to ensure an effective and unified response. (PNA) **BY MA. TERESA MONTEMAYOR**

DIGITAL DRIVER'S LICENSE RENEWAL NOW ON EGOVPH APP

MANILA – Drivers may now renew their license completely online following the launch of the online driver's license renewal system (ODLRS) integrated with the eGovPH mobile application (app).

During the launch at the Land Transportation Office (LTO) Central Office in Quezon City on Thursday, Department of Transportation (DOTr) Secretary Vince Dizon said the new online system makes the renewal process easier and fixer-free.

"Hindi ka na kailangan pumunta sa LTO office. Hindi ka na mabibiktima ng fixers (You don't need to go to the LTO. And you won't be victimized by fixers)," Dizon said.

The LTO's digitalization efforts are part of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s order to improve online accessibility of government services.

The launch was made in cooperation with the DOTr and the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT).

LTO Chief, Assistant Secretary Vigor Mendoza II, said the digitalization of their services is intended to

make all transactions in the LTO "fast and comfortable to all our clients."

"We are continuing to evolve to further improve our digital services and expand the reach to all Filipinos even in abroad," Mendoza said.

To renew a license through the eGovPH app, drivers would need to download and install the app on their smartphones, available in both the Apple App Store and Google Play.

Once installed and the user is verified, they would need to find the NGA icon, click LTO, select "Online Driver's Application," and then "Renew Your Driver's License."

The user would be asked to upload a photo of the front and back of their physical driver's license; go through validation, review, and verification of details; and then have their photo taken that abides with the LTO's required standard format.

In addition, renewal applicants can also have their medical examination online through the LTO ODLRS portal and book a telemedicine appointment. The LTO's online Driver's Enhancement Program (DEP), a required five-hour education program, is available through the LTO ODLRS portal.

Applicants can also pay for their driver's license renewal online.

Mendoza advised applicants to complete the medical examination and the DEP beforehand as these are requirements that they will need to upload as part of the online license renewal process.

Once the process is complete and the transaction is successful, the applicant's driver's license is already renewed, with an electronic driver's license automatically generated and can be viewed in the eGovPH app. Users may then choose to have their physical card delivered to their preferred address or have it ready for pick-up at the nearest LTO district office. (PNA) **BY RAYMOND CARL DELA CRUZ**

PBBM EYES 'BETTER' POLICY FOR ONLINE GAMBLING

MANILA – President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. is seeking a "better" policy to address issues concerning online gambling, Malacañang said on Tuesday.

Speaking to reporters, Palace Press Officer Claire Castro said Marcos understands the sentiments of families who are having problems with a household member because of addiction to online gambling games.

"Ang Pangulo po ay nakikisimpatiya sa mga pamilya na nabibiktima ng ganitong klaseng gambling dahil po iyong ibang nilang kasama sa bahay ay nagiging gumon sa pagsusugal (The President sympathizes with families who fall victim to this type of gambling because other members of their household have become addicted to gambling)," Castro said.

"So, iyan po ay tinitingnan din po ng Pangulo para mas maganda po ang maging polisiya pagdating po sa online gambling

(the President is looking into that to come up with a better policy on online gambling)."

Marcos is open to the Department of Finance's proposal to regulate and impose taxes on online gaming platforms, Castro said on Monday.

The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (PAGCOR) and the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) are collaborating to take down all illegal gaming websites. The DICT has so far removed 7,000 unauthorized online gaming sites identified by PAGCOR, according to data released by Malacañang on June 19.

The Palace also encourages the public to report to PAGCOR the names of individuals who are getting addicted to deny them access to any online gaming platforms. (PNA) **BY RUTH ABBEY GITA-CARLOS**

COMELEC TRIAL OF 'REGISTER ANYTIME, ANYWHERE' PROGRAM SET IN AUGUST

MANILA – The Commission on Elections (Comelec) will pilot test its "Register Anytime, Anywhere" program in the National Capital Region (NCR) when voter registration resumes next month.

"Expect us to conduct voter registration in selected hospitals, call centers, transport terminals, airports, and other public places. We will have the registration even at night," Comelec Chairperson George Garcia said in an interview on Thursday.

"Once we have a longer voter registration period, we can adopt this program nationwide."

Though the nationwide voter registration period will be from Aug. 1 to 10, the pilot test in the NCR will be conducted only until Aug. 7.

"We need the last three days to forward those who availed of the 'Register Anywhere Program' to the concerned local Comelec, where they will become registered voters," Garcia explained.

The 10-day nationwide voter registration next month has been approved by the Comelec en banc. It is in connection with the Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan Elections scheduled on Dec. 1. (PNA) **BY FERDINAND PATINIO**

SOLON WANTS GOV'T HOSPITALS TO PURCHASE FOOD DIRECTLY FROM FARMERS

MANILA – Senator Francis Pangilinan on Friday urged the Department of Health (DOH) to fully implement the law seeking all public hospitals to purchase their food directly from local farmers and fisherfolk.

Pangilinan was referring to Republic Act 11321, or the Sagip Saka Act he authored in 2019, which aims to uplift the lives of agricultural workers by guaranteeing market access through direct government procurement.

He said the law's intent is clear – to make the government the biggest and most reliable buyer of local produce, ensuring

income for producers and nutrition for communities.

Pangilinan said during their meeting on July 8, Health Secretary Teodoro Herbosa committed to issuing a department order for the full implementation of the Sagip Saka Act.

There are 60 public hospitals nationwide, which means there are also 60 canteens or cafeterias operating in every hospital. Pangilinan said he also plans to discuss the enactment of the Sagip Saka Act with agencies and local governments, underscoring the need for their full participation so the law's intended

beneficiaries – the farmers and fisherfolk – can reap the rewards.

"Saan nila binibili ang kanilang pagkain araw-araw? Dapat may porsyento niyan direkta ang bili sa mga magsasaka (Where do they buy their daily food? A percentage of that should be directly sourced from farmers)," he said.

Pangilinan warned that he plans to defer the budget approval of agencies that cannot present a concrete plan on implementing the Sagip Saka Act. (LEONEL ABASOLA/PNA)

BACOLOD CITY CALLS FOR CIVIC ACTION IN FLOOD MITIGATION EFFORTS

BACOLOD CITY – The city government here enjoined Bacolodnons to take part in flood mitigation efforts after 26 tons of garbage were dredged from Mambuloc Creek on Thursday.

In a statement on Friday, Mayor Greg Gasataya, who personally supervised the initial dredging operation, said civic participation is critical to the long-term success of the initiative.

"I urge everyone to take part in protecting the environment. Maintaining clean waterways is a shared responsibility of the people," he said.

The clean-up drive in waterways is part of the city's flood mitigation efforts targeting vulnerable areas, including Barangays 2, 8, and 10, which are located in the city proper, adjacent to shopping malls and other major business establishments.

"We can clean this today, but if people keep throwing trash, nothing will change. Cooperation is the key. While the city can implement infrastructure solutions, lasting change requires active participation from the community," Gasataya said.

To help maintain the cleanliness of the creek, he said the city would install catch nets and other reinforcements along the waterways.

Based on the waste analysis and characterization study of the Bacolod Environment and Natural Resources Office, this highly urbanized city generates an average of 577 tons of garbage each day, about 400 tons of which enter the sanitary landfill daily. (PNA) **BY NANETTE GUADALQUIVER**

QUEZON PROVINCE SPOTLIGHTS DISASTER RESILIENCE MONTH

LUCENA CITY – Lucena City experienced hands-on disaster preparedness activities, including rappelling and basic life support demonstrations, during a two-day static display at SM City Lucena.

The event, held from Thursday to Friday, was a collaborative effort by the Quezon Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office (PDRRMO), Philippine Coast Guard, Philippine Navy, AFP-Philippine Army, Bureau of Fire Protection, Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), and SM City Lucena.

The event, organized by the PDRRMO, is part of the celebration of July as National Disaster Resilience Month,

according to Dr. Melchor Avenilla, head of the office. In a Friday interview, Avenilla expressed his belief that most Quezon residents are prepared to face any disaster, noting that his office regularly conducts earthquake drills and other life-saving training.

"Our biggest challenge is to stress to our citizens the seriousness of such drills. They tend to treat drills as a 'mundane matter,' but if we can get 50 out of 100 participants seriously regarding the drill, that is an accomplishment enough for us," Avenilla said.

He recounted that when a 5.3 magnitude earthquake struck Gen. Nakar town a few weeks prior, the public's learned practice of "duck, cover, and hold"

50 APAYAO HS STUDENTS TRAINED AS MENTAL HEALTH PEER RESPONDERS

BAGUIO CITY – The Apayao Provincial Health Office has strengthened its mental health response program by training 150 high school students to serve as peer support responders for fellow learners experiencing mental health issues.

Loremia Pareja of the Apayao provincial government information office, said the student-responders came from four secondary schools: Apayao National Agro-Industrial High School in Calanasan, Conner Central National High School, Sipa-Imelda National High School in Sta. Marcela, and Bacda National High School in Luna.

"A total of 150 students from four secondary schools in the province have stepped up to serve as mental health peer supporters who will respond to peers suffering from mental health issues,"

Pareja said in an interview on Thursday.

The students underwent a five-day training under the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Program (MHPSS) initiated by the Provincial Health Office.

The training included real-life scenarios, role-playing exercises, and open discussions to prepare them as frontliners in providing basic peer intervention and emotional first response.

"These peer supporters will be the first line of assistance for classmates dealing with stress, anxiety, or personal difficulties," Pareja noted.

The initiative is part of Apayao's efforts to expand access to mental health support among youth by implementing school-based, peer-led programs. (PNA) **BY LIZA AGOOT**

SAMAR GOV'T TURNS OVER 17 HOUSES TO EX-REBELS

TACLOBAN CITY – The Samar provincial government has completed 17 houses intended for former rebels in two towns in the province as part of the government's efforts to wipe out insurgency. Ten units were handed over to former members of the New People's Army (NPA) in Calbiga town and seven in San Jose de Buan town.

This is the second batch of houses awarded to beneficiaries in San Jose de Buan. The government held a turnover of the first 10 houses in April 2024.

Each 150-square-meter house costs PHP250,000 to PHP280,000, with each unit designed with "amakan" (woven split-bamboo mats) with two bedrooms, a kitchen, and a living room.

In a statement on Friday, Samar Governor Sharee Ann Tan said they have plans to expand the Saad

nga Balay (promised houses) initiative to benefit more former rebels.

"We thank our former rebels for choosing a more peaceful life. They are the living witnesses to how their lives have improved since they abandoned the armed struggle," Tan said.

"The turnover underscores the continued commitment of the provincial government to sustain peace efforts by supporting former rebels as they rebuild their lives and communities," she added.

The provincial government, the Philippine Army, the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace and Reconciliation, the Unity Program, and other national government agencies kicked off the housing project in San Jose de Buan town in September 2023, targeting to build 17 units.

A similar project was launched in Calbiga town in May 2024, with plans laid out to build 10 houses. In Matuguinao town, the provincial government plans to construct 30 houses.

Using the "bayanihan" concept, the project allows government agencies to actively participate in a program that aims to provide decent shelter to former rebels who surrendered and wanted to live a normal life with their families.

The project aims to provide a safe, secure, and decent home for the former rebels with livelihood opportunities and to facilitate their integration into mainstream society.

It is also expected to encourage NPA members and supporters to surrender and avail themselves of the benefits being offered by the government so that they can experience living in peace and without fear. Since 2020, several active NPA members and staunch allies in Samar province have yielded to authorities and turned over firearms. (PNA) **BY SARWELL MENIANO**

DOH DEPLOYS 74 DOCTORS IN REGION 8 RURAL COMMUNITIES

TACLOBAN CITY – At least 74 doctors are now currently deployed in different areas in the Eastern Visayas to address the lack or scarcity of physicians in rural communities.

Included in the 42nd

kicked in, resulting in zero casualties in both government and private establishments.

Avenilla added that his office is equipped to conduct search and rescue operations on land, air, or water, and his personnel are on "office duty" during calamity situations. He mentioned that, instead of hazard pay, his personnel are provided with insurance for their own safety, pending national law implementation. (PNA) **BY BELINDA OTORDOZ**

batch deployed by the Department of Health (DOH) nationwide are 14 new doctors who were deployed on June 26 in 14 areas of the region, DOH Eastern Visayas regional information officer Jelyn Lopez-Malibago said Thursday.

They were assigned in Liloan and Anahawan in Southern Leyte; Palompon, Palo, Calubian, Mahaplag, Burauen, Bato, and Babatngon in Leyte; Naval in Biliran; Motiong and Matuguinao in Samar; Arteche in Eastern Samar; and Silvino Lobos in Northern Samar.

Assigned under DOH's Doctors to the Barrios (DTTBs) program, the new doctors have been assisting in the delivery of healthcare services, including regular check-ups, vaccinations, health education, and emergency

care.

"The deployment is based on the matching process with local government units who requested doctors. Priority areas are those without doctors, high populations with no access to healthcare, and a number of isolated communities," Malibago said.

Each doctor serves in their assigned local government unit for three years, receiving a starting monthly salary of PHP98,185 (salary grade 24).

The health department urged recipient local government units to ensure the safety of doctors and retain them after their term. The DTTB program is a continuation of the initiative that began in 1993 to address the lack or scarcity of physicians in rural communities across the Philippines. (PNA) **BY SARWELL MENIANO**

DOE BREAKS GROUND 64-MW PEAK SOLAR POWER IN AJUY, ILOILO

MANILA – Construction of the PHP2.37-billion, 62-megawatt peak solar power plant in Ajuy, Iloilo started Friday, eventually boosting power capacity in Panay Island while reducing reliance on fossil fuels.

The Ajuy-1 Solar Power Project, located in Tipacla, Ajuy, and covers a 47.86-hectare area, is the province's first major ground-mounted solar facility, being developed by Jin Navitas Solaris, the Department of Energy (DOE) said in a press release.

It will be connected to the Panay Island grid through the Sara-Panit 69 kV transmission line and has already completed the required System Impact Study. It is seen to enhance grid stability in northern Iloilo.

It is part of DOE's Green Energy Auction Program 2 (GEA-2) and is entitled to a green energy tariff of PHP4.35 per kilowatt-hour. It will contribute to the move to increase the share of renewable energy to the country's total energy mix to around 35 percent by 2030 and 50 percent by 2040.

"This groundbreaking initiative not only marks a significant step in reducing our carbon footprint but also empowers local communities by providing them with reliable and renewable energy resources," Energy Secretary Sharon Garin said.

"The Ajuy Solar Power Plant is a testament to our collective commitment to a sustainable energy future." (PNA) **BY JOANN VILLANUEVA**

PAGCOR ORDERS TAKEDOWN OF GAMBLING BILLBOARDS

MANILA – The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (PAGCOR) has ordered the immediate dismantling of all billboards and out-of-home (OOH) gambling advertisements as part of its intensified efforts to regulate gambling-related promotions in public spaces.

In a statement Friday, PAGCOR said it issued a memorandum on July 7, directing all licensees, suppliers, system administrators, and gaming venue operators to take down gambling ad materials, including those displayed on trains, buses, jeepneys, and taxis.

PAGCOR clarified that only institutional or responsible gaming campaigns, which are subject to its approval, will be permitted moving forward.

"We have given all our licensees and stakeholders until Aug. 15 to completely remove all gambling-related ads," said PAGCOR chairperson and CEO Alejandro Tengco.

"Prior to that, stakeholders

must also submit an inventory of their existing billboard and wallscape advertisements by July 16."

Tengco said the inventory must include the size, material, location, rental contract expiration, and the corresponding permit number from the Ad Standards Council (ASC).

"While PAGCOR is mandated to regulate the gaming industry and generate revenues for nation-building, we do not want to encourage a culture of gambling addiction," he said.

"Regulating excessive and pervasive gambling advertisements is a critical step in protecting vulnerable sectors of society, especially the youth."

PAGCOR also warned against replacing the dismantled advertisements with new gambling promotions, adding that non-compliance will be dealt with accordingly. (PNA) **BY ANNA LEAH GONZALES**

OFFICE MARKET REBOUNDS DESPITE POGO BAN

MANILA – The office leasing market sustained a strong momentum in the first half of 2025, with demand reaching 67 percent of full-year 2024, despite the withdrawal of Philippine Offshore Gaming Operators (POGO), real estate advisory firm Leechiu Property Consultants (LPC) said Thursday.

"Demand has been strong for the first half of the year. We believe it will continue. We never know what will happen, but we are optimistic about it," Mikko Barranda, LPC director for Commercial Leasing, said during the presentation of the LPC Q2 2025 Philippine Property Market Report in Makati City.

The Information Technology and Business Process Management (IT-BPM) took up 50 percent of the total leasing activity, or 365,000 square meters, in the first half of 2025.

Traditional industries, on the other hand, accounted for 48 percent, or 354,000 sqm, of the demand, while government offices took the rest of the share at 21,000 sqm.

At least 79 percent, or 581,000 sqm, of the overall

demand came from Metro Manila, with Bonifacio Global City representing 146,000 sqm, while provincial demand was at 21 percent to 159,000 sqm, with Cebu covering 81,000 sqm.

Barranda reported that the net demand has breached more than 50 percent to 271,000 sqm of the firm's projection for the year.

"Contractions are tapering off and net take-up in terms of what we have projected back in Q1, which we feel will be at 490,000 sqm levels, were already touching 55 percent," he said.

In the absence of POGOs, LPC Chief Executive Officer David Leechiu said this surge is already the highest since 2017.

"We are all shocked at the amount of leasing activity in the first six months of the year that we have not seen those levels since 2017," he said.

"These numbers are already happening without the POGO steroid factor. So, we can say that is the highest number of leasing activity we've seen since 2017 net of POGO." (PNA) **BY JOYCE ANN L. ROCAMORA**

PH OFFICIALS TO MEET US COUNTERPARTS ON 20% TARIFF

MANILA – Philippine officials will fly to the US next week to discuss with their counterparts the 20 percent tariff imposed by the Trump government on Philippine exports, higher than the 17 percent announced last April.

The tariff rate will be in effect starting Aug. 1, 2025. Trade Secretary Cristina Roque, in a briefing on Thursday, said she has yet to meet other trade and economic officials to discuss how they will negotiate tariff issues.

She declined to elaborate on their next move, saying they only received the letter from the US government

regarding the tariff rate earlier in the day.

"Even the US is open for negotiation, so let's see what happens when we get there. And let's see what will happen when we convene," she said.

"As we mentioned in our statement, the 20 percent rate is the second lowest. But we will have to talk about it."

In a statement, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said it is "concerned" about the tariff rate imposed on Philippine exports, "notwithstanding our efforts and constant engagement."

Despite this, the statement

PROPOSED NUCLEAR ENERGY CIRCULAR AN OPTION, NOT A MANDATE: DOE

MANILA – The draft circular on nuclear power, which will be discussed during a public consultation next week, proposes to give power distribution utilities (DUs) another option to meet demand, a Department of Energy (DOE) official said on Wednesday.

DOE's Energy Utilization Management Bureau Director Patrick Aquino said the proposed circular gives DUs other alternative sources of capacity.

"It is not a mandate to contact. It will be guided sa prinsipyo pa rin ng EPIRA (Electric Power Industry Reform Act) na least cost. Binibigyan lang po ng circular na ito ng choice ang ating pong mga electric power industry participants na pumasok kung nakikita nilang bagay or akma ito sa kanilang pangangailagan na mangontrata ng isang nuclear power project.

(It will be guided by the principles of EPIRA regarding the least cost. It gives our electric power industry participants a choice to enter a contract with a nuclear power project if they see it fit for their needs)," he said in a press briefing.

Aquino explained that the government's nuclear program, which will be discussed during a hybrid public consultation to be hosted by the DOE on July 15, will further expand the country's energy mix to help ensure energy security.

Among the other benefits of using nuclear energy include having environment-friendly power plants that do not have emissions, supports economic growth due in part to a very intensive value chain, and grid harmonization and integration.

Aquino said nuclear power also has competitive pricing.

In an earlier statement, DOE said the release of the draft circular was made ahead of the expected signing into law of the proposed Philippine National Nuclear Energy Safety Act, which establishes the Philippine Atomic Energy Regulatory Authority (PhilAtom).

"Yun po ang ating assurance sa ating mga kababayan na kung tayo po at papasok sa nuclear ito po ay masusunod ang ating safety, security, at safeguards (This is an assurance to the public that if we will go into nuclear, the polices will be heeded for our safety, security, and safeguards)," Aquino added. (PNA) **BY JOANN VILLANUEVA**



NU MEN'S VOLLEYBALL TEAM TO COMPETE IN FISU WORLD UNIVERSITY GAMES

MANILA – Five-time UAAP men's volleyball champion National University will join the 2025 FISU World University Games scheduled in Germany from July 16 to 27.

The Bulldogs ruled the Philippine University Volleyball League (PUVL), the qualifying tournament organized by the Federation of School Sports Association of the Philippines (FESSAP) to determine the country's representative.

The NU roster consists of Leo Ordiales, Rwendmel Taguibolos, Jimwell Gapultos, Jan Lian Fred Abanilla, Greg Augustus Luis Ancheta, Mac Arvin Bandola, Leo Aringo Jr., Jenngerard Arnfranz Diao, Michaelo Buddin, Jade Alex Disquitado, Jeffe Gallego Jr., and Herbert Miguel Egger.

Multi-titled Dante Alinsunurin Jr. heads the coaching staff composed of Ariel Dela Cruz, Jessie

Lopez, Raymund Franza, John Aries, Benedict Pejo, and Albert Ray Alejandro, while Dennis Abcede Jr. is team manager.

The Philippines is one of only 16 member-countries invited to compete in men's volleyball. The groupings are: Pool A (Australia, Brazil, Portugal, Taipei), Pool B (China, Czech Republic, Iran, Japan), Pool C (Argentina, Colombia, Philippines, Poland) and Pool D (Germany, Italy, Korea, United States).

The Philippines will face Poland at the Horst-Korber-Sportzentrum in Berlin on July 17, Colombia at the Ballsporthalle Köpenick and Argentina at the Grosse Sporthalle Sportforum on July 19.

"Being chosen to represent the Philippines in the World University Games, also known as the Summer Universiade, is a great accomplishment for the country," FESSAP president Edwin Fabro said

in a statement Wednesday.

"Let's give credit to the hard work and dedication of all the FESSAP officials and members working as part of the FISU family," added Fabro, the flag-bearer during the opening ceremony.

Alvin Tai Lian will serve as head of the Philippine delegation.

Other members are David Ong of Philippine Airlines, Christian Tan of Healthy Options, Mary Ng, Frank Lao, lawyer Baldomero Estenzo, Graham Lim, Cecille Sarmiento, Prof. Robert Milton Calo, and Allan Soria.

More than 8,000 student-athletes from 100 countries are taking part in 18 sports in this year's edition of the FISU World University Games to be held in five cities in the Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan region and Berlin. (PNA) **BY JEAN MALANUM**

MENDOZA TAKES COMMANDING LEAD IN JPGT SOUTH PACIFIC

MANILA – Cebuana Denise Mendoza delivered an impressive performance in the opening round of the ICTSI Junior PGT Championship girls' 7-10 division Wednesday in Davao City.

Amid humid conditions and overcast skies, the 10-year-old came up with a 64 after scoring birdies from No. 10 through 15 at the South Pacific Golf and Residential Estates to post a 23-stroke lead over Del Monte leg winner Soleil Molde heading into the final round of the 36-hole competition.

Molde had an 87 while Francesca Geroy registered a 91.

"I was surprised –I really didn't expect to score this low, especially on a course

I've never played before," said Mendoza, following her father's advice to "stay calm and stick to the basics, especially when you hit a bad shot or things start to go wrong."

"Most of the time, my approach shots left me with easy birdie chances –usually within five feet. That meant I didn't need to make a lot of long putts. I'll just play exactly the same way," the Cebu Learning Center student added.

In the boys division, Jamie Barnes carded a 71 highlighted by clutch birdies at the end of his round to take an eight-stroke lead after Davao's Miguel Revilleza finished with a 79.

Cebu's Kvan Albuero placed third with an 80 followed by

Shaqeeq Tanog (84) and James Roldida of Cagayan de Oro (90).

"I think I played really well, especially in the last three holes. That made me very happy. I also had a lot of fun out there," the nine-year-old, eyeing a rare three-peat after ruling the Del Monte and Pueblo de Oro legs, said.

"The course is tricky, especially the greens. Some are fast, then some are really slow, and a lot of them have big slopes. But I still managed to get some birdies," Barnes, who studies at Wellington College International in Thailand, said.

Meanwhile, South Cotabato's Jared Saban carded a 74 to post a three-stroke lead over Guio

PH SENDS 5 ATHLETES TO WORLD AQUATICS CHAMPIONSHIPS IN SINGAPORE

MANILA – Four athletes will see action at the World Aquatics Championships in Singapore, the Philippine Aquatics, Inc. announced Friday.

Swimmers Gian Christopher Santos and Adrian Philipp Eichler, and divers Rose Ocmec and Ariana Hannah Drake are among the 2,500 athletes from 206 countries participating in the tournament held for the first time in Southeast Asia from July 11 to Aug. 3.

Eichler, a Filipino-German, is entered in the 100m and 200m freestyle. His best time in 100m is 0:51.20 (2021). He registered a season best 0:51.34 at the World Aquatics-approved CIJ Luxembourg meet on March 7-9.

In the 200m, Eichler set a personal best and Philippine record 1:50.29 at the German Nationals last May, breaking the 1:50.82 mark of Jessie King Lacuna.

Last year, he set new Philippine records in 400m freestyle (3:51.62) and 4x50m mixed medley (1:46.56) both

at the World Aquatics Swimming Championships in Budapest, Hungary in December, and in the 200m freestyle (1:47.98) at German Nationals in November.

Adrian and brother Alexander are members of the Swimming Club Wiesbaden 1911 team that won the 2024 German Premier League. Like Eichler, Santos qualified for the World Aquatics Championships by achieving Qualifying Times (QT) B.

The Columbia University student clocked 3:55.61 in 400m freestyle during the Summer National Championships in Irvine, California, last July 2024.

"In Singapore, I hope to achieve my best times in both the 400m free and 200m IM events. I committed to intense, rigorous training this summer to proudly represent the country at this competition and I am excited to compete against the best athletes in the world, including Olympians and record holders," said the 19-year-old Santos in

an interview.

He was born and raised in California. His father is from Pampanga and his mother from Bacolod, Negros Occidental.

Santos bagged one silver (400m IM) and three bronzes (200m IM, 1500m freestyle and 4x100m relay) at the 2022 Southeast Asian Age Group Championships in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

He also competed at the 2022 World Junior Championships (Lima, Peru) and 2023 World Junior Championships (Netanya, Israel).

At the 2024 Philippine National tryouts, he won all his events and set two junior national records to earned the Most Valuable Swimmer award.

Other members of the Philippine contingent in Singapore are PAI president Michael Angelo Vargas, secretary general Eric Buhain and executive director Anthony Reyes, and coaches Ryan Paolo Arabejo (swimming) and Xiao Feng Cui (diving). (PNA) **BY JEAN MALANUM**

LIM BANNERS PH TEAM IN DAVIS CUP ASIA/OCEANIA GROUP IV

MANILA – Alberto Lim Jr. will banner the Philippine team in the Davis Cup Asia/Oceania Group IV in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia next week.

Joining him are Eric Olivarez Jr., Ruben Gozales Jr. and Francis Casey Alcantara. Head coach is US-based Joseph Lizardo, himself a veteran Davis Cupper.

Aside from the Philippines, other countries eyeing promotion in the zonal competition are Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Pacific Oceania, Qatar, Iraq, and Nepal.

There will be two pools of

four teams. The top team in each pool will play a promotion play-off against the No. 2 in the other pool. The teams finishing in third place in each pool will play a relegation play-off against the teams finishing fourth in the other pool.

Two will be promoted and two will be relegated.

Meanwhile, Lim defeated Olivarez, 7-5, 6-2, to win the men's singles title in the Mayor Benedict Calderon Cup National Open at the Lado del Rio Resort and Roxas Tennis Club in Roxas, Isabela last Tuesday.

On his way to the final, Lim beat Martelino Ezio, 6-0, 2-2 (ret.) in the opening round, Pablo Gonzaga, 6-0, 6-1 (2nd round), Nilo Ledama, 6-2, 6-0 (quarterfinal) and Vicente Anasta, 6-0, 2-0 (ret.) in the semis.

Olivarez, on the other hand, prevailed over Raven Matias (6-1, 6-1), Philippe Coteron (6-3, 6-0), Noel Salupado (6-2, 6-1), and John Benedict Aguilar (6-2, 6-7, 6-4).

In the doubles, Olivarez teamed up with Anasta to secure the doubles

crown over Lim and Lance Fernandez, 6-7(6), 6-4, 10-8, in the event supported by the Palawan Pawnshop tennis circuit, led by president and chief executive officer Bobby Castro.

The winners in other categories were Jing Cabauatan and Rachelle Meneses (Classified Women's B minus), Beverlyn Galleta and Cristina Espinosa (Classified Women's B plus), Ivan Manila and Neil Tanggalin (Legends Men's 30-and-below), Cliff Acaso and Roy Tan (Legends Men's 30-and-above), Reynante Galvante and Apollo Torres (Legends Men's 40- and 50-and-above), Gerry Monsanto and Manny Lucas (Legends Men's 60-and-above) and Paula Uy and Loucas Fernandez (Open Mixed).

Next on the Palawan Pawnshop-PPS-PEPP calendar is the Rep. Eric Olivarez National Open on July 19 to 30 at the Olivarez Sports Center in Sucat, Parañaque. (PNA) **BY JEAN MALANUM**