

CAVITE'S LIVELIHOOD ON THE GO: EQUIPPING DASMARINAS RESIDENTS WITH MEAT PROCESSING SKILLS



LIVELIHOOD ON THE GO: MEAT PROCESSING
 15 JULY 2025 | SAMPALOC, CITY OF DASMARINAS

MULA SA BAYAN, PARA SA BAYAN

CAVITE EMPOWERS PEOPLE THROUGH INTEGRATED COMPASSIONATE CANCER CARE

The Provincial Government of Cavite, through OPG-Office of the Provincial Persons with Disability Affairs Officer, and the Philippine Society of Oncologist, Inc. worked together in successfully spearheading the 25th Midyear Convention,

themed “EPIC: Empowering People through Integrated Compassionate Cancer Care”, on July 11, 2025 at the International Convention Center, Cavite State University-Main Campus, Indang, Cavite. The initiative served as

a platform for shared knowledge and practices for diverse groups of Cavite health professionals and barangay health workers in combating cancer through integrated treatment and care. In his opening message, Governor Francisco

Gabriel D. Remulla addressed the battles and challenges many people face against cancer, and underscored the importance of cancer care, stating “It is imperative that we give significance to cancer care through raising awareness, and

empowering people with compassion.” Afterwards, Atty. Allan Chester Nadate, House of Representatives Director II, shared a keynote lecture on National Integrated Cancer Control Act Law and emphasized the collective effort of everyone to increase the level of health awareness and empowerment.

City of Dasmariñas. The activity was participated in by members of SAMAKA, 4Ps beneficiaries, and Solo Parents from the said barangay. Through the training, they gained hands-on knowledge and practical skills in meat processing, an accessible livelihood option that supports self-sufficiency and opens up opportunities for small-scale enterprise.

The program began with opening remarks from Ms. Sheryll H. Loyola, Development Management Officer IV who highlighted the importance of community-based livelihood programs in improving household income and quality of life.

The training was facilitated by Ms. Venus Romerosa, an experienced trainer who guided participants through the essential steps in meat processing – from food safety practices to preparation, preservation, and packaging techniques. Barangay Captain Virginia S. Campano delivered the closing remarks. She thanked the provincial government and organizers for bringing such a meaningful program to their community and encouraged participants to apply their newfound knowledge to start their own ventures.

The activity was made possible under the leadership of Ms. Rizalie Pinpin-Enero, Officer-in-Charge of the OPCDO, in support of the Provincial Government's continuous efforts to build resilient and economically empowered communities across Cavite. (R. Dones- Cavite Provincial Information Office)



MIDYEAR CONVENTION - EPIC: EMPOWERING PEOPLE THROUGH INTEGRATED COMPASSIONATE CANCER CARE
 11 JULY 2025 | CAVITE STATE UNIVERSITY-MAIN CAMPUS, INDANG, CAVITE

MULA SA BAYAN, PARA SA BAYAN

WANTED PERSON FOR QUALIFIED THEFT ARRESTED BY AMADEO PNP

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite

— A male individual listed as a Provincial Level Most Wanted Person was arrested by the personnel of Amadeo Municipal Police Station during an operation conducted at around 2:30 PM on July 15, 2025, at Purok 06, Brgy. Talon, Amadeo, Cavite.

PMAJ JULIUS R MARQUEZ, Officer-In-Charge, Amadeo MPS, identified the accused as alias GARRY, resident of Brgy. Talon, Amadeo, Cavite.

The arrest was carried out by virtue of a Warrant of Arrest for the crime of Qualified Theft under Article 310 of the Revised Penal Code, under Criminal Case No. 2986-06, issued by Hon. Rocille Aquino Tamasacan, Presiding Judge of the Regional Trial Court, Branch 21, Fourth Judicial Region, Imus City, Cavite, dated July 11, 2025. The warrant carried a recommendation for

service of sentence.

The operation was conducted by the Warrant Section of Amadeo MPS and was properly documented using an Alternative Recording Device, in line with the PNP's policy on operational transparency. The accused was informed of his constitutional rights, which he fully understood.

The suspect is currently under the custody of Amadeo Municipal Police Station while the return of the warrant is being prepared for submission to the issuing court.

In his statement, PCOL DWIGHT E ALEGRE, Provincial Director of Cavite PPO, emphasized, "The arrest of the accused demonstrates our continuous commitment to justice and public safety. We remain firm in our mission to hold accountable those who violate the law and disrupt the peace and security of our communities."

MENDEZ POLICE NABBED REGIONAL LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, City of Imus, Cavite-

In a intensified campaign against wanted persons, personnel of the Mendez Municipal Police Station apprehended one of the region's most wanted person at around 8:05 AM on July 15, 2025, joint warrant personnel conducted a police operation in Barangay Poblacion 6, Mendez, Cavite.

PMAJ IAN JASPER M MONTOYA, ACOP, MENDEZ MPS, identified the arrested person as Alias VER and resident of Barangay Poblacion 6, Mendez, Cavite. The accused, who is listed as a Most Wanted Person at the Regional Level, was arrested by virtue of a Warrant of Arrest issued on May 22, 2025, for

Violation of Section 11, Article II of Republic Act 9165 (Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002) and was issued by the Presiding Judge of RTC Branch 132, Fourth Judicial Region, Naic, Cavite, with service of sentence.

Following standard procedure, alias VER underwent physical and medical examination and is now detained at the Mendez Custodial Facility while the Warrant of Arrest will be returned to the court of origin.

PCOL DWIGHT E ALEGRE, Provincial Director of Cavite Police Provincial Office, lauded the swift action of personnel of Mendez MPS. The arrest of the Regional Level Most Wanted Person is a strong message to all fugitives

REGIONAL LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON, NAARESTO SA IMUS, CAVITE

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite

— Matagumpay na naaresto ng mga tauhan ng Imus Component City Police Station, sa pakikipagtulungan ng 401st A Maneuver Company, RMFB4A, ang isang lalaki na kabilang sa listahan ng Regional Level Most Wanted Person sa isinagawang operasyon dakong alas-11:30 ng umaga noong Hulyo 17, 2025 sa Brgy. Bayan Luma 8, Imus City, Cavite.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL Chey Chey I Saulog, Hepe ng Imus CCPS, ang naarestong suspek na si alyas Joeffrey, at residente ng Brgy. Bayan Luma 8, Imus City, Cavite.

Ang pag-aresto ay naisagawa sa bisa ng Warrant of Arrest para sa paglabag sa Section 5 at Section 11, Article II ng Republic Act 9165 (Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002) na may Criminal Case Nos. 23000-20 at 23001-20, inilabas at nilagdaan ng RTC Branch 123, Imus City, Cavite. Ang nasabing akusado ay nahatulan para sa

dalawang bilang ng paglabag sa Section 12, Article II ng RA 9165 noong Abril 21, 2025.

Ang operasyon ay isinagawa sa ilalim ng direktang superbisyon ni PLTCOL Saulog at dokumentado gamit ang Body Worn Camera (BWC) at Alternative Recording Device (ARD) alinsunod sa polisiya ng PNP sa transparency. Naipabatid rin sa akusado ang kanyang mga karapatang konstitusyonal, na kanya namang naunawaan.

Sa ngayon, nasa kustodiya ng Imus CCPS ang suspek habang inihahanda ang kaukulang dokumento para sa pagsusumite ng return of warrant sa korte.

Sa kanyang pahayag, binigyang-diin ni PCOL Dwight E Alegre, Provincial Director ng Cavite PPO, na, "Ang tagumpay ng operasyong ito ay patunay ng matibay na paninindigan ng Cavite PPO sa pagpapatupad ng batas at pagbibigay ng hustisya. Walang ligtas na kanlungan para sa mga nahatulan at patuloy na tinutugis ng batas."

HIGIT PHP146K HALAGA NG SHABU NASABAT SA BUY-BUST OPERATION NG DASMARINAS CITY PNP

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite

— Arestado ang isang kilalang Street Level Individual (SLI) sa

of the law, you can run, but justice will eventually catch up with you. Our police force remains committed to ensuring that wanted persons are held accountable. PD Alegre said.

The Cavite Police remains relentless in its pursuit of justice and continues to call on the public to support the PNP's campaign for a safer community.

isinagawang buy-bust operation ng Dasmariñas Component City Police Station dakong ala-1:00 ng madaling araw ng Hulyo 15, 2025 sa Barangay San Agustin 1, Dasmariñas City, Cavite.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL REGINO L OÑATE, Acting Chief of Police ng Dasmariñas CCPS, ang suspek na si alyas "Boy", residente ng Excess Lot, Barangay Sampaloc 1, Dasmariñas City.

Ang operasyon ay ikinasa ng Intel at City Drug Enforcement Team ng Dasmariñas CCPS nang may koordinasyon sa PDEA. Sa isinagawang

JOINT POLICE OPERATION LEADS TO ARREST OF REGIONAL-LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON IN ORIENTAL MINDORO

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite

— In a successful joint operation, police operatives arrested a Regional-Level Most Wanted Person listed under PRO-4A CALABARZON at around 12:30 PM on July 15, 2025, in Barangay Biga, Oriental Mindoro.

PLTCOL LOUIE DC GONZAGA, Chief of Police of Silang Municipal Police Station, identified the arrested individual as alias "JONAR", a resident of Barangay Malabag, Silang, Cavite, and currently residing in Del Pilar, Naujan, Oriental Mindoro.

The arrest was carried out through a joint police operation led by the Warrant Personnel of Silang MPS, in coordination with PIT Cavite RIU4A (Intel Pocket) and Calapan City Police Station.

The suspect was apprehended by virtue of a Warrant of Arrest issued by Hon. Raquel Ventura Aspiras-Sanchez,

Presiding Judge of the Regional Trial Court, Branch 3 (Family Court), Tagaytay City, Cavite, for two counts of Statutory Rape under Article 266-A of the Revised Penal Code, as amended by R.A. 11848. The charges are docketed under Criminal Case Nos. TG-24-1088 (AS) and TG-24-1089 (AS), both dated November 12, 2024. These cases are classified as non-bailable.

The operation was conducted in accordance with standard procedures and utilized an alternative recording device as part of evidence-gathering and compliance protocols.

The Warrant of Arrest has been returned to the court of origin for appropriate legal action.

PCOL DWIGHT E ALEGRE, Provincial Director of Cavite Police Provincial Office, commended the dedication and coordination exhibited by the operating units.

This accomplishment reflects PRO-4A CALABARZON's unrelenting commitment to its mandate of ensuring public safety and bringing fugitives to justice.

Unit sa Imus City, Cavite. Kasalukuyang inihahanda ang mga kaukulang dokumento para sa inquest proceedings sa Office of the City Prosecutor.

Sa kanyang pahayag, sinabi ni PCOL Dwight E Alegre, Provincial Director ng Cavite PPO, "Hindi tumitigil ang Cavite PPO sa pagtugis sa mga sangkot sa ilegal na droga. Ang operasyong ito ay patunay ng ating dedikasyon na linisin ang ating mga komunidad mula sa salot ng droga."

LABOR LAWS PROTECTING CHILD INFLUENCERS SOUGHT

CALAMBA CITY (PIA)—Child labor laws will soon cover influencers aged below 15 years if existing labor laws are expanded to include younger children involved in the creative industry, according to the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).

Ratified into law in 2003, Republic Act No. 9231 more commonly known as Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor Act currently only covers child entertainers but is yet to include online child influencers.

Lawyer Jerommel Gabriel, Bureau of Workers with Special Concerns-Young Workers Development Division chief, said existing labor laws are being updated to expand coverage for children involved in the creative industry.

"This also applies to child artists and models, [who are required] to secure a working child permit. However, it [R.A. 9231] has been 22 years and not much was mentioned regarding [online influencers] since vlogging is very recent because of technological advancements."

This year, the labor department has been conducting public consultations with the agriculture, construction, manufacturing, and creative industries for possible updating of the law. This includes stakeholders in the National Capital Region, CALABARZON, Central Luzon, Western Visayas, and SOCKARGEN regions who have raised concerns on policies

protecting children involved in the creative and media industries particularly those involved in vlogging —or video blogging —and online selling.

"The last DOLE regulation [on children involved in the creative industry] was signed in 2016, when there were less child influencers unlike today when vlogging has turned into a lucrative job."

Although a national-scale policy protecting online child influencers is yet to be ratified, local government units —such as Quezon City —have been passing ordinances to protect online influencers aged 15 and below.

"There are existing bills or ordinances for children involved in the digital economy, and we are consulting with stakeholders regarding that."

Countries have been pushing for policies protecting child influencers against exploitation and abuse.

In 2024, France introduced the Child's Image Right Law and the Child Image Law to reinforce their right to protection.

Last January, the United States followed suit as California signed child influencer laws where content creators featuring minors in at least 30 percent of their content must deposit 65 percent of the minor's gross earnings into a trust account. (PB/PIA4A) **BY PATRICIA BERMUDEZ**

CALABARZON'S BIG -TICKET ROAD PROJECTS IN FULL SWING —DPWH

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna (PIA)—The government's big-ticket road projects in Calabarzon are in full swing to decongest key cities and densely populated communities, the Department of Public Works and Highways said.

In Quezon province, the rehabilitation of key sections of the Maharlika Highway —a critical route connecting Metro Manila to Southern Luzon —is on track, said DPWH Region IV-A Director Jovel Mendoza in an interview with the Philippine Information Agency Calabarzon.

"The improvement of certain sections of the Maharlika Highway makes a significant contribution to the region's economic growth. As a major transportation route, this highway connects provinces, neighboring regions, and trade centers," he said.

"Upgrading and rehabilitating it will speed up the flow of goods and services, reduce travel costs and time, and boost tourism," he added.

According to DPWH Calabarzon, rehabilitation of the Maharlika Highway covers sections from Calamba City in Laguna to Tagkawayan in Quezon and requires a total budget of P14.39 billion.

Mendoza indicated no project completion even as he was optimistic that it will be sustained in the succeeding general appropriations.

He said of the estimated P14.39 billion for Maharlika's improvement, P1.827 billion from the 2023 budget has been completed; P3.833 billion from the 2024 budget is currently under

implementation, while P1.758 billion from the 2025 budget is presently in the bidding process.

In Batangas, the DPWH reported that the recently inaugurated Balagtas flyover has helped ease road congestion in the province.

The flyover serves as an alternative route from the STAR Tollway to the diversion road and city proper and improved access to Batangas Port, one of the country's busiest seaports.

"The flyover (resulted in) smoother flow of traffic. The number of accidents in Brgy. Balagtas has decreased from 56 incidents to just 38. Travel going to the port and the city proper has also become faster," Mendoza said.

The DPWH director is hopeful that construction of a flyover in Tagaytay City in Cavite will be completed by August 2025 while opening to motorists is expected by September 2025 providing road convenience for both tourists and locals.

Ahead of the fourth State of the Nation Address of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., Mendoza said the DPWH Calabarzon will continue to uphold best practices in road infrastructure development.

He said planning and pre-construction coordination with local governments and stakeholders are conducted to ensure that projects are tailored to the actual needs of communities and the population they serve. (CH/PIA-Laguna) **BY CHRISTOPHER HEDREYDA**

EDITORIAL

50% Discount sa Pamasaha para sa mga Senior Citizens at PWD

Mga senior citizen at pwd, may 50% discount na ang pamasaha sa MRT-3, LRT-1, at LRT-2. Mismong ang Pangulo ang nag-anunsyo nito kasunod ng anunsyong 50% din na discount para sa mga estudyante noong nakaraang buwan.

Isa itong magandang proyekto para sa mga komyuter na senior citizen at pwd. Kadalasan na ang mga mamayang nabibilang sa grupong ito ang kapos sa badyet dahil sa kawalan ng oportunidad na makapag hanapbuhay.

Kaya naman marapat lang na mabigyan ng mga ganitong klaseng discount ang mga mamayang nabibilang sa grupo ng mga senior citizen at pwd.

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DOTR CHIEF ORDERS PROBE INTO MISSING JEWELRY IN NAIA T3

MANILA – Transportation Secretary Vince Dizon on Thursday ordered an investigation into the missing and eventual return of a passenger's jewelry box at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 3.

In a statement, Dizon ordered the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) to conduct an investigation into the incident and to ensure it does not happen again.

"Bilang tugon sa utos ni Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr. na tiyakin ang kaligtasan at seguridad ng mga pasahero, mabilis na narekober at naibalik sa isang pasahero ang kanyang mga alahas na nawala (In line with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s order to ensure the safety and security of passengers, we have quickly recovered and returned the missing jewelry of a NAIA passenger)," he said.

Dizon's statement came after passenger Kimberly Nakamura praised the NAIA Terminal 3 Airport Police Department (APD) and Screening and Surveillance Division (SSD) in a social media

post for swiftly recovering her missing jewelry box after discovering its loss after arriving in Singapore on June 28 from Manila.

In a statement, the MIAA said the jewelry box was first tracked through closed-circuit television footage when it was left unattended at Gate 104 and passed around by more than 10 airline and security personnel.

"Despite multiple chances, none of the staff reported the item to the lost and found section," it said.

The NAIA Terminal 3 APD and SSD managed to recover all items from the jewelry box.

"Airport Police Officers Casey San Juan and Frelyn Leda, along with CCTV analysts, followed every lead, questioned all involved parties, and stayed committed until full recovery," it said.

Nakamura chose not to press formal charges, but the MIAA called on all airlines and security agencies of those personnel involved in the incident to take disciplinary action against those responsible. (PNA) **BY RAYMOND CARL DELA CRUZ**

DOJ CONFIRMS RECOVERY OF HUMAN REMAINS IN TAAL LAKE

MANILA – Department of Justice (DOJ) Secretary Jesus Crispin Remulla on Thursday confirmed that two of the four sacks recovered by the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) from Taal Lake contained human remains.

"Two sacks were found, I don't know how many people," Remulla told reporters, noting that cursory examination of the contents showed that they were clearly human remains and included "yung ribs ng tao (ribs of persons)."

The other sacks containing sand were believed to have been used as weights.

Remulla said the sacks from the lake were located with the help of boatmen in the area identified by whistleblower Julie Patidongan, alias Totoy.

"Tinuro ng mga bangkerong tinuro n'ya (The location

was pointed by boatmen identified by Patidongan)," he said.

The whistleblower earlier claimed that at least 100 victims were dumped in the lake.

Remulla said the discovery of the two sacks of human remains is "a positive indication that he (Patidongan) knew what he was talking about."

He said police investigators have also recovered three unclaimed cadavers buried at the town's public cemetery allegedly belonging to individuals recovered in the lake in 2020.

The individuals are believed to be among those involved in e-sabong who were abducted in Lipa, Batangas.

"One of them was pregnant," Remulla said, adding that one was identified by the basketball

SUPER HEALTH CENTERS STRENGTHEN HEALTHCARE ACCESS UNDER MARCOS ADMIN

MANILA – With just days before President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. delivers his State of the Nation Address (SONA), the government's continuing rollout of Super Health Centers (SHCs) has become a key highlight in the administration's health agenda.

According to the Department of Health (DOH), over 600 SHCs have already been funded and constructed nationwide since the program began in 2022.

These centers are designed to bring essential medical services closer to communities, especially in far-flung and underserved areas.

Citing that SHCs are part of the government's long-term strategy under Republic Act 11223 or the Universal Health Care (UHC) Law, DOH Secretary Teodoro Herbosa said these facilities are established to decongest hospitals and to provide quality and accessible healthcare at the community level.

They were introduced in 2021, serving as an enhanced version of rural health units equipped with basic to intermediate health services such as laboratory testing, X-ray, ultrasound, electrocardiogram, outpatient consultations, maternal and child services, tuberculosis screening, minor surgeries, ambulatory surgery.

They also serve as satellite vaccination sites, pharmacy dispensaries, and referral systems for more specialized care to date.

In 2022, about 307 SHCs were established nationwide. These were followed by 322 in 2023, and 132 in 2024. The DOH identifies the strategic areas where these centers will be established since they act as a key support layer between barangay-level health units and

jersey it wore.

Meanwhile, Remulla said authorities would monitor seismic events in the volcano before deciding to proceed with the diving activities. (PNA) **BY BENJAMIN PULTA**

hospitals.

This year, additional SHCs were opened in Pangasinan, Eastern Visayas, and Zamboanga City, apart from those already operating in Aklan, Agusan del Sur, Bulacan, Cebu City, Dinagat Islands, Leyte, and Northern Samar, among others.

Last Feb. 27, a groundbreaking ceremony for a super healthcare facility, which will cost PHP187 million, was held at Barangay Iluluan in Camalig, Albay.

DOH officials and the local government unit of Matag-ob in Leyte also led the groundbreaking ceremony of a PHP12-million SHC to be under the DOH Health Facility Enhancement Program last Feb. 28.

On March 24, then Manila Mayor Honey Lacuna led the groundbreaking ceremony for a PHP50-million SHC in Sampaloc.

Senator Christopher "Bong" Go is the main proponent of SHCs under the UHC Law and Republic Act 11959, or the Regional Specialty Centers Act, underscoring their importance in delivering preventive care and early disease detection.

He said the expansion of SHCs reduces hospital crowding and financial burdens from travel experienced by patients while strengthening the country's primary healthcare network.

Local government units have partnered with the DOH for construction and operations, with funding channeled through the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH).

The Marcos administration aims to complete hundreds more SHCs in the coming years, with improvements to include expanded diagnostics, mental health support, and digital health integration.

As the country continues to recover from the long-term effects of the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic, SHCs are expected to play a vital role in building a more resilient, inclusive, and community-based health system. (PNA) **BY MA. TERESA MONTEMAYOR**

MARINA BACKS DIGITAL PORTAL FOR PH MARITIME WORKFORCE

MANILA – The Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) on Thursday backed the launch of the Philippine Maritime Workforce Portal (PMWP) --a centralized digital platform for data on the Philippine maritime workforce.

In a statement, MARINA Deputy Administrator for Planning Nenita Atienza said the portal has a crucial role in shaping responsive, targeted, and future-ready policies for the maritime sector.

"The PMWP is more than a database --it is a strategic tool that will help us uplift the lives of Filipino seafarers and reinforce the country's maritime strength," Atienza said.

MARINA is among the designated data source agencies for the portal, along with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), and the Department of Migrant Workers-- National

Maritime Polytechnic (DMW-NMP).

As a data partner, MARINA will provide data for the portal to ensure the integrity, accuracy, and depth of the information shared through the PMWP. Once completed, the platform will contain data such as seafarer demographics, education and training statistics, employment records, and labor market insights.

"The initiative supports evidence-based planning and aims to align the supply of Filipino maritime professionals with global industry demands," Atienza said.

The portal was launched in a ceremonial signing of the project's memorandum of agreement (MOA) during the Maritime Research Forum in Manila on Tuesday.

The signing was led by the DMW-NMP with MARINA and other key agencies. (PNA) **BY RAYMOND CARL DELA CRUZ**

LTO WARNS MOTORISTS VS. USING FAKE PLATES

MANILA – The Land Transportation Office (LTO) on Thursday warned motorists against using fake plates due to the intensified crackdown against illegal manufacturers and sellers of fake plates.

In a statement, LTO acting Assistant Secretary Greg Pua Jr. said there is no more reason to use fake plates since the backlog on vehicle plates has been wiped out.

"Lahat may plaka na (All plates have been made), and right now, we are focusing on the immediate distribution of these plates to their owners. In fact, we have already downloaded millions of license plates down to the regional level for distribution," Pua said.

The intensified operation against illegal plates, he said, is in line with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s order to run after those who make money through illegal activities in the transportation sector.

To date, the LTO is coordinating with the Philippine National Police (PNP) for its intensified monitoring of sellers of fake plates on social media.

"Titiyakin namin na mananagot kayo, kaya ngayon pa lang, itigil na ninyo ang iligal na gawain ninyo (We will ensure that you will be punished, so, from this moment, stop your illegal activities)," Pua warned.

On Tuesday, Pua and Transportation Secretary Vince Dizon announced that the 11-year backlog on license plates --both for four-wheeled vehicles and motorcycles-- has been wiped out.

Last week, LTO personnel and operatives of the PNP-Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) arrested four people for manufacturing and selling fake license plates during an operation in San Idefonso, Bulacan. (PNA) **BY RAYMOND CARL DELA CRUZ**

AFP MODERNIZATION FOR PH DEFENSE, NOT OFFENSE

MANILA – The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is being modernized not for offensive purposes but to bolster the country's defensive capabilities, an official said Thursday.

"Just because we have our modernization program does not mean we have any intention to fight another country," Philippine Navy spokesperson for the West Philippine Sea, Rear Admiral Roy Vincent Trinidad, said in an interview with reporters.

"If I may paraphrase the commander-in-chief (President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.) in the command conference this morning when he mentioned, and I state, we have no desire to attack anyone."

Trinidad was referring to the AFP Mid-Year Command Conference held earlier in the day at Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, which was attended by Marcos, Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr., and other ranking Cabinet and military officials.

The Navy official also refuted a retired Philippine

Air Force general's claim that the Philippines is being turned into another Ukraine and used as pawn in the power play between China and the United States.

"We are not preparing the Armed Forces for offense. We are preparing the Armed Forces to defend what is legally and rightfully the Filipinos," Trinidad said, noting that the Philippines is a sovereign state that has its national interests.

The Philippines is locked in a long-running dispute with China over portions of the South China Sea, with the US among its vocal supporters, often calling out China over its aggressive actions against Philippine vessels.

"All the actions of the Armed Forces are in furtherance of this national interest. We will not fight for the interests of another country, nor will we be dictated by them. Standing up for our rights does not mean being subservient to the interests of another country," Trinidad said. (PNA) **BY PRIAM NEPOMUCENO**

DILG TO LGUS: PASS ORDINANCE TO PUNISH 911 PRANK CALLERS

MANILA – Interior Secretary Jonvic Remulla urged all local chief executives to enact ordinances penalizing prank callers to the national emergency hotline, as the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) prepares to roll out the upgraded Emergency 911 system in August.

Reports from the E911 National Office showed that in 2024, nearly 12 million calls were handled by the system, about 60 percent of which were identified as fraudulent, hoax, or prank calls.

"Dapat may ordinance ang lahat ng LGUs na may (All LGUs should have an ordinance that has) monetary fine, jail time basta (if it is a) prank call," Remulla said, emphasizing that prank callers should face real consequences.

He noted that detailed guidelines would follow once the integrated system is fully launched.

Remulla warned the public that the new system will have tracking capabilities to quickly identify prank callers.

"May geofence at geo data kasi ang lahat ng tatawag.

So, kung tumawag ka at prank call ka, within five minutes, mahuhuli ka nila (All calls contain geofence and geodata. So, if you make a prank call, within five minutes, you can be caught)," he said.

Currently, individuals who maliciously spread false information may face imprisonment of up to five years, a fine of up to PHP40,000, or both, under Presidential Decree 1727.

The enhanced system will also include language-sensitive capabilities and push-to-talk over cellular (PoC/PTToC) features that allow real-time coordination with more than 1,000 police officers nationwide.

Remulla said the upgraded system is part of the administration's broader push for faster police response in compliance with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s directive for improved police visibility and public safety.

"Despite the technology we are using, we are doing very well. Pero sa bagong sistema natin (But in our new system), I think the PNP will have better response time, better quality of response," he said.

He added that all local government emergency systems would be integrated into a single, unified 911 network.

"Ngayon, 34 ang LGU na may sariling 911. Tapos may sarili ang Crame. Ang gagawin natin, magkakaroon tayo ng unified system sa buong Pilipinas (For now, 34 LGUs have their own 911. Then Camp Crame has its own. What we will do [is] we will have a unified system in the whole Philippines)," he said. (PNA) **BY CHRISTOPHER LLOYD CALIWAN**

So long as they submit an application and the company hires them, we will help them process to get the job)," Alava said.

As part of the National Disability Rights Week celebration, the NCDA and its partners are organizing job fairs for persons with disabilities on July 18 in Cebu City and on July 22 in Cagayan de Oro. (PNA) **BY JOSE CIELITO REGANIT**

DENR TO LGUS: BE PROACTIVE IN ADDRESSING NCR FLOODING

MANILA – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Thursday urged local government units (LGUs) in the National Capital Region, including other urban areas, to include science-based, proactive measures in addressing the worsening flooding amid heavier rainfall due to climate change.

In a statement, the DENR cited the striking increase in rainfall volume attributed to climate change, as indicated in meteorological data issued by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA).

"This noticeable shift in weather patterns has exacerbated the challenges faced by urban areas like Metro Manila, where heavy rainfall can overwhelm drainage systems and lead to significant flooding," the statement reads.

"It is crucial that LGUs integrate comprehensive flood risk reduction programs into their design and solid waste management plans. By doing so, communities can better protect themselves from the adverse effects of increased rainfall."

The DENR said LGUs could implement several key strategies to effectively

address worsening flooding in Metro Manila.

These include an upgrade on drainage systems, incorporating modern drainage solutions to cope with more intense and frequent downpours, enhancing solid waste management to prevent garbage buildup that eventually blocks floodways, engaging communities in planning and implementing localized flood prevention initiatives, and restoring the ecosystem by implementing green infrastructure to improve water absorption.

The DENR said poor solid waste management remains one of the main contributors to flood-related damage in urban communities, as clogged waterways slow down rainwater discharge.

"As we confront the challenges posed by climate change, it is essential to adapt our urban planning strategies to safeguard our communities," it said.

Meanwhile, as the effects of climate change intensify, the DENR expressed commitment to working closely with the LGUs and the public to promote flood resilience and sustainable urban development. (PNA) **BY MARITA MOAJE**

DSWD: PARTNERSHIP WITH SHOOLS TO BOOST EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OF PWDS

MANILA – As the nation marks the National Disability Rights Week from July 17 to 23, the National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA), an attached agency of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), is exploring partnerships with learning institutions to ensure more persons with disabilities (PWDs) can access education and eventually secure employment.

"We have partnership forums with state universities and colleges (SUCs) para makatulong sa researches on ano yung mga need natin na mga move for education sa ating mga (to help in researching what moves we need to do for the education of) persons with disabilities," NCDA Regional Programs Coordinator, lawyer Walter Jason Alava, told reporters in a media forum at the DSWD Central Office in

Quezon City on Thursday.

The proposed collaboration, which aligns with the celebration's theme "Innovation for Inclusion: Building Inclusive Communities Together", aims to bridge the gap between education and employment of persons with disabilities.

Despite the provision of Republic Act 10524 that at least 1 percent of available positions in government agencies, offices or corporations shall be reserved for persons with disabilities, Alava acknowledged that there are still challenges in terms of their qualifications.

"In terms of qualification, doon tayo nagkakaroon ng (that's where we are facing) challenges and gaps because most of our persons with disabilities ay hindi po nakapag-aral (have no education). So, we are moving to forge partnership forums

with SUCs and schools para matulungan tayo to augment yung kakulangan sa education (to help us augment the gaps in education)," he said.

He said the NCDA is now in talks with SUCs and other educational institutions to roll out inclusive programs that will offer scholarships and other opportunities for qualified persons with disabilities.

The NCDA spokesperson said the council also links PWDs to companies offering job opportunities such as business process outsourcing (BPOs), courier services, and restaurants, among others. "Hindi naman tayo [namimili] kung anong klaseng disability. So long as mag-submit sila ng application nila and the company will hire them, we will help them process na makakuha sila ng job (We are not selective as to the nature of their disabilities.

SC: PROBE UNDERWAY AMID ONLINE THREATS VS. PASIG RTC JUDGES

MANILA – The Supreme Court (SC) is working with law enforcement agencies to investigate the online threats against judges of the Pasig Regional Trial Court (RTC).

In a statement Wednesday, the SC confirmed that the judges of the Pasig RTC received online threats sent via email earlier in the day.

"The Court is taking this matter seriously and is closely monitoring the situation. An investigation is underway, in coordination with law enforcement authorities. Appropriate security measures have also been put in place to ensure the safety and protection of the judges, court personnel, court

users, and the general public," SC spokesperson Camille Ting said.

She assured that the Judiciary remains committed to upholding judicial independence.

"Judges will continue to carry out their duties with integrity and calm resolve, guided by fairness and the rule of law," she added.

Among the cases pending before the Pasig RTC are those filed against former Bamban, Tarlac mayor Alice Guo and Kingdom of Jesus Christ pastor Apollo Quiboloy.

The SC urged the public and all concerned stakeholders "to remain vigilant and continue supporting the judicial process with trust and respect." (PNA) **BY BENJAMIN PULTA**

BFAR INITIATIVES SUPPORT SMALL, LOCAL FISHERS OF ANTIQUE

SAN JOSE, Antique (PIA)—The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR)-Antique reported initiatives to support local fishers, promote sustainable aquatic resource management, and eventually enhance food security in Antique.

BFAR Antique Aquaculturist Aileen Necor-Garcia, speaking on behalf of Provincial Director Rowena Langga, shared the major programs and strategic plans for 2025 of BFAR during the Philippine Information Agency radio program "Pagpaathag" on Radyo Natin San Jose.

These initiatives are in line with the commitment of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. during last year's State of the Nation Address, making a commitment to support the agriculture sector and ensure food security.

In compliance with this directive, BFAR in Antique has initiated programs both for coastal and inland communities.

BFAR provided motorized boats to seven fisherfolk in the towns of Libertad, Pandan, and Sebastell aimed at improving their fish catch under the National Fisheries Program in the amount of P422,909. Former Mayor Mary Jean Te, now elected Vice Mayor of Libertad, shared gratitude to BFAR for helping small fishers in their locality.

Another important intervention for the fisherfolk in the town of Culasi was the provision of seaweed farm implements, benefiting 180 seaweed farmers in the island barangays of Batbatan and Maningning, Culasi, northern Antique.

Likewise, the group of seaweed farmers in the island town of Caluya received various assistance from BFAR in previous years to boost their productivity.

Through the 2023 Typhoon Rehabilitation and Recovery Program, BFAR distributed 500 sets of seaweed farm implements,

and assistance continued into 2024, with each farmer in Caluya and Culasi receiving 100 kilograms of seaweed seedlings.

"Seaweed farming has become the main livelihood of most coastal residents in Caluya. Despite the damage caused by typhoons, we continue to assist in partnership with the LGUs," said Garcia.

BFAR also provided post-harvest facilities for fish vendors in the towns of San Jose and Patnongan in the combined amount of P130,000, benefiting five fish vendors and one fisherfolk association.

The beneficiaries were also trained on food safety to ensure the safe handling and maintain good quality of fish before selling to their consumers.

BFAR Antique also implements Phase 2 of the Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) program, which has supported the municipalities of Valderrama, Libertad, and Caluya since 2023.

Another notable accomplishment for SAAD is the establishment of the Integrated Demo Farm in Brgy. Binonogan, Valderrama, which features tilapia and catfish ponds and is being developed into a fully integrated agricultural model through joint support from BFAR and the local government. In 2024, BFAR Antique supported 22 aquaculture techno-demo farms provincewide, 16 farmers ventured into tilapia farming, and six into catfish farming, further enhancing aquaculture's contribution to the local economy.

Garcia emphasized that BFAR Antique remains committed to empowering fisherfolk, improving coastal livelihoods, and protecting aquatic ecosystems by working closely with local government units, community organizations, NGAs, NGOs, and other stakeholders. (AGP/PSM/PIA Antique with reports from VMT/GIP/DOLE) **BY PILAR MABAQUIAO**

P10-M ROAD PROJECT LAUNCHED IN CAGAYAN'S REMOTE BARANGAY

TUGUEGARAO CITY, Cagayan (PIA)—A remote barangay in Peñablanca, Cagayan will soon benefit from a P10-million road project, following a show of solidarity by local leaders who chose to pool their resources to improve access in one of the town's most isolated areas.

During the groundbreaking ceremony, Peñablanca Vice Mayor Washington Taguinod said the project will benefit residents in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDAs) in the town.

He thanked the 23 barangay leaders for passing a resolution waiving their right to participate in the Department of Social Welfare and Development's (DSWD) Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (KALAHICIDSS) program, choosing instead to allocate their share to Barangay Nanguilattan, one of the innermost barangays and a gateway connecting downstream municipalities to Tuguegarao City. It is also home to Gabur-

Gabur Falls, one of the town's most visited tourist destinations.

Taguinod said the move reflects unity and strategic thinking among barangay officials.

He assured the public that all necessary preparations were completed to ensure the project benefits the entire municipality.

DSWD Regional Director Lucia Alan said KALAHICIDSS, a community-driven development program, continues to empower less privileged communities by allowing them to identify, plan and implement projects that address urgent needs, such as roads, water systems, schools, health stations, disaster response facilities, and livelihood programs.

"Instead of the government dictating the projects, the people themselves decide, propose and manage the funds, promoting participatory governance, transparency and accountability," Alan said. (OTB/GVB/PIA-Cagayan with reports from LGU Peñablanca) **BY GENE V. BAQUIRAN**

KALINGA MAYORS THANK PBBM FOR BOOST IN LGU'S EMERGENCY RESPONSE CAPABILITIES

TABUK CITY, Kalinga (PIA) — Local chief executives in the province of Kalinga have expressed their gratitude to President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. for the patient transport vehicles (PTVs) the provincial government received.

Last July 9, the President led the ceremonial turnover of 387 PTVs for local government units (LGUs) in Luzon, as part of the administration's commitment to improving emergency response and strengthening public health services nationwide.

"This ambulance will make a significant difference in the lives of our people. It will save lives, bring comfort to families, and strengthen our health services, especially for those in far-flung barangays," Balbalan Mayor Almar P. Malannag

said following the turnover ceremony of the PTVs at the Quirino Grandstand in Manila.

Malannag shared that Balbalan LGU has long struggled to provide immediate medical assistance and transportation to patients due to the municipality's challenging topography and scattered communities. With the PTVs healthcare will now be safer and faster.

For his part, Lubuagan Mayor Joel B. Tagaotao said the vehicle will provide essential medical transportation services to the municipality, particularly in vulnerable and disadvantaged communities.

All of the seven municipalities and one city of Kalinga received one vehicle each from the 387

CANDON CITY, Ilocos Sur (PIA)—Salt producers in Barangay Calongbuyan, Candon City are set to increase output following the launch of a Shared Service Facility (SSF) on July 11, through a partnership deal between the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Ilocos Region and the city government.

The SSF provides modern tools and equipment that will allow the Barangay Calongbuyan Salt Makers Association to improve production efficiency, ensure product hygiene, and expand their market reach.

Through this facility, salt makers are expected to surpass their usual 10 sacks per week, as the new evaporating units and processing tools upgrade traditional salt-making methods practiced for more than two decades.

Also, the DTI also turned over several machines and tools such as a water pump with hose, digital salinator, impulse sealer, digital weighing scales, large utility drums, and storage shelves.

Fe Valdez, president of

FACILITY UPGRADE TO HELP ILOCOS SUR SALT MAKERS INCREASE YIELD

the association, thanked the government for its continued support. She noted that since the city government built the initial salt production facility in 2023, their work has become easier and faster.

"With this new equipment, we'll be able to produce more and hopefully expand our customer base beyond Candon," Valdez said.

Aside from salt, the association also makes bagoong (fermented shrimp paste) and dried fish—products that are also supported by the DTI and the city government, particularly in terms of packaging and marketing.

Mayor Eric Singson said the city plans to diversify salt production by adding colored varieties that can be sold as souvenirs.

"We aim to grow the salt industry not just for food but as a tourism draw. Colored salt is a popular souvenir in other countries," he said.

DTI Ilocos Region regional director Merlie Membrere agreed, saying the salt industry's success can benefit related sectors.

"Once we improve the salt industry here, other industries will also benefit, including the fish processing industry, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, and more, as salt has greater value beyond being a condiment," Membrere said.

Ilocos Sur Second District representative Kristine Singson Meehan also attended the turnover and pledged support to expand the salt industry across the district's eight coastal municipalities.

With support from both local and national agencies, the salt-making industry in Candon is now poised to thrive, offering residents more livelihood opportunities and encouraging local economic growth. (CCMT/JMCQ, PIA Ilocos Sur)

BY JOYAH MAE C. QUIMOYOG

systems in remote and underserved communities. (RGA-PIA CAR, Kalinga)

BY ROD ASURIN

PHILHEALTH TO GET OVER P53-B SUBSIDY IN 2026 – RECTO

MANILA – Finance Secretary Ralph Recto said state insurer Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth) will receive over PHP50 billion in subsidies next year.

In a recent informal presser, Recto said the national government will provide a PHP53.26 billion subsidy to PhilHealth next year, aiming to enhance benefit packages without hiking members' premium contributions.

"No plans for additional contributions. There's so much money with PhilHealth," Recto said.

According to Department of Finance (DOF) data, PhilHealth is projected to end 2025 with a PHP348 billion fund balance, even

with expanded member benefits.

Recto noted this includes a 30 percent to 50 percent increase in benefit packages.

"That should already be a significant improvement in PhilHealth services," he added.

"Ang problema natin, kulang ang ospital in the provinces. (The problem is, we lack hospitals in the provinces). But definitely, we will improve the services of all DOH-run hospitals within the year and next year," he added. Recto said education and health continue to be among the priorities of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. **(PNA) BY ANNA LEAH GONZALES**

PAGCOR DONATES MORE PATIENT TRANSPORT VEHICLES TO MILITARY UNITS, LGU

MANILA – The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) turned over five patient transport vehicles (PTVs) to select military units and a local government unit (LGU) on July 16.

In a statement Thursday, PAGCOR said the new PTV recipients were the municipality of Liliw in Laguna; the Army's 7th Infantry Division, Light Reaction Regiment and Fort Magsaysay Army Station Hospital, all based in Nueva Ecija; and the Headquarters Force Reconnaissance Group of the Philippine Marines in Ternate, Cavite.

The turnover ceremony was held at the PAGCOR Corporate Office in Pasay City.

The donation is in line with the order of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. to enhance emergency medical services in underserved and high-risk areas.

"These donations are part of our ongoing commitment to boost the government's emergency response efforts, especially in areas where every second can mean the difference between life and death," PAGCOR chairperson and chief executive officer Alejandro Tengco said.

To date, PAGCOR has donated a total of 40 PTVs to LGUs, public hospitals, and frontline agencies nationwide as part of its socio-civic programs. **(PNA) BY ANNA LEAH GONZALES**

BIR BEATS H1 TARGET, SEES STRONG GROWTH IN SMALL TAXPAYERS

MANILA – The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) has exceeded its revenue collection target for the first half of 2025, reflecting the agency's momentum amid a trimmed full-year goal prompted by slower-than-expected economic growth.

"We are proud to say that we have achieved that PHP1.5 trillion [target] for the first half of the year. So, the BIR is really doing well for the first semester," BIR Commissioner Romeo Lumagui Jr. said in a news release on Thursday.

He said the figure is 0.5 percent higher than the first-half target, the result of the BIR's continued drive to boost compliance and widen the tax base.

"This accomplishment says that the BIR is right on track, that we're going

the right path and what we're doing is good. We just have to continue and improve on a lot of certain things."

The BIR chief noted that growth has been particularly notable in specific sectors.

"For the sectors, we have in terms of growth rate, the percentage, we're looking at the arts, entertainment, and recreation. [They're] doing well in terms of percentage increase compared with the performance last year. We're also looking at administrative and support services. It also is performing well for this year in terms of percentage increase in collections," he said.

Lumagui added that household employment activities saw tax collections double year-on-year, while in terms of absolute numbers, a huge increase was seen in manufacturing and the information and communication industry.

A key highlight for the agency is the surge in contributions from small taxpayers -- those earning gross revenues between PHP3 million and PHP20 million annually.

"We've seen increase of more than 80 percent in tax collection from this taxpayer segment, a promising sign of broadening tax compliance across different income brackets," Lumagui said.

The BIR's first-half performance comes as the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) revised the 2025 fiscal program in light of a moderated economic outlook.

The DBCC lowered the national revenue target to PHP4.520 trillion from PHP4.644 trillion, with the BIR's collection goal adjusted slightly to PHP3.219 trillion from PHP3.232 trillion.

GDP growth is now projected at 5.5 percent to 6.5 percent, down from the initial 6.5 percent to 7.5 percent range.

Lumagui acknowledged that another recalibration could be possible.

"I think there might be a recalibration of the goal again considering that the assumption is not going to happen. But there's no final figure yet." **(PNA)**

PSEI, PESO DOWN FURTHER ON POSSIBLE FED LEADERSHIP CHANGE

MANILA – Talks about the possible change in the Federal Reserve's leadership pushed the Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi) and the peso deeper Thursday.

For the third straight day, the main stocks gauge slipped and ended the day's trade at 6,295.55 points, down 0.66 percent; and the broader All Shares by 0.67 percent to 3,723.14 points.

Mining and Oil led the sectoral counters with a decline of 2.35 percent, and was trailed by the Holding Firms, 1.41 percent; Industrial, 0.77 percent; Financials, 0.73 percent; Property, 0.61 percent; and Services, 0.59 percent.

Trading volume reached 2.41 billion shares amounting to PHP7.33 billion. Losers led gainers at 112 to 75, while 56 shares were unchanged.

"Philippine shares continue to tumble as concerns surfaced from a rumor regarding a potential Fed leadership change," Luis Limlingan, Regina Capital

Development Corporation head of sales, said.

He said concerns about the Fed rate adjustment, given the rising US inflation rate and its impact on the global market, also affected investors' sentiment.

On the other hand, Limlingan noted the decline in oil prices in the international market on concerns of higher US fuel inventories and the overall impact of the US' tariff policies.

The local currency also weakened further after ending the day at 57.29 against the US dollar, from its 57.08 close a day ago. It opened the day already on a depreciated level of 57.05 from day-ago's 56.85.

The peso improved to 56.95 mid-trade but was also pulled to 57.3. The average level for the day stood at 57.12.

Volume rose to USD1.93 billion from the previous session's USD1.58 billion. **(PNA) BY JOANN VILLANUEVA**

DOF: NO NEW TAX UNDER CMEPA

MANILA – The Department of Finance (DOF) on Thursday clarified that the Capital Markets Efficiency Promotion Act (CMEPA) does not impose a new tax but standardizes the tax rate on interest income to correct an unfair system that favored the wealthy.

In a statement, the DOF said under CMEPA, the tax on interest income was set at 20 percent to simplify compliance, eliminate confusion, and level the playing field for all Filipinos. Prior to the law's passage, the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997 imposes a 20 percent final tax on interest earned from bank deposits with a maturity of less than three years.

The DOF, citing data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), said more than 99.6 percent of total deposits were already subject to the 20 percent tax rate, while only 0.4 percent enjoyed preferential rates. "More specifically, the deposits that benefited from favorable rates are those with a maturity period of more than five years, which are tax exempt, while deposits that mature in 4 to 5 years and 3 to 4 years are subject to just 5% and 12% tax, respectively," said the DOF.

It noted that the special tax treatment favored those who can afford to park

their savings in long-term deposits, making the tax system unfair for short-term depositors who face liquidity issues and need immediate access to their funds.

"The CMEPA merely corrects this outdated and inequitable system that placed a heavier burden on ordinary Filipinos who do not have the extra cash to put in banks for longer periods. With the new law, interest income is now taxed uniformly with a flat rate of 20%, regardless of the maturity period," the DOF said.

The DOF also clarified that the standardized tax rate is not retroactive and does not apply to financial instruments that were issued or transacted before July 1, 2025.

Existing long-term deposits made prior to the effectivity of the law will continue to enjoy the preferential rate until their maturity.

The unified rate also does not apply to provident savings programs under the Social Security System (SSS), Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), and Pag-IBIG such as MP2.

These savings programs remain exempt from tax. Apart from leveling the playing field, the DOF said CMEPA empowers ordinary Filipinos to invest and diversify their sources

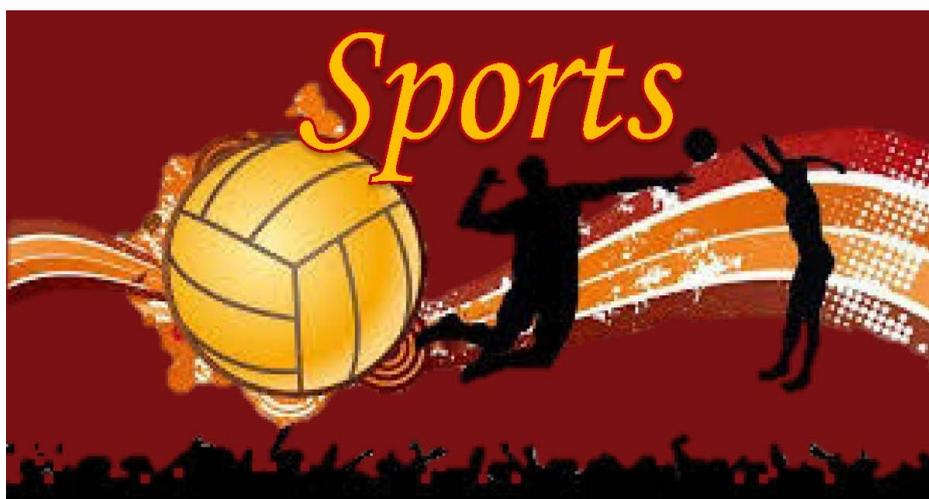
of income by reducing the stock transaction tax (STT) rate from 0.6 percent to 0.1 percent, reducing the documentary stamp taxes (DST) on original issuance of shares from 1 percent to 0.75 percent, and removing the DST on collective investment schemes.

CMEPA removed the DST on the original issuance, redemption, or transfer of mutual fund shares, as well as certificates or proof of participation in mutual funds or investment trust funds.

"These measures are seen to cut transaction costs, encourage market participation and financial planning, boost market liquidity, make the country's equities market regionally competitive, and increase capital market growth," the DOF said.

The DOF said CMEPA also imposes a uniform 0.75 percent DST on bonds, debentures, and certificates of stock or indebtedness issued in foreign countries, regardless of jurisdiction.

"The DOF will continue to exercise prudence in formulating sound fiscal policies to eliminate inconsistencies in the system and ensure a more equitable tax environment for the people," the DOF said. **(PNA) BY ANNA LEAH GONZALES**



WACAN COUSINS SECURE JPGT APO TITLES

MANILA – Homegrown talent AJ Wacan shot a final round 71 to rule the boys' 15-18 division in the ICTSI Junior PGT Championship at the Apo Golf and Country Club in Davao City on Wednesday. Wacan finished with a one-over 217 total over 54 holes, beating fellow Davaoño Adrian Bisera, who carded a 74 for a 218 total.

Three-leg winner Alexis Nailga had an 80 to settle for third at 231, while David Teves shot a 75 for fourth with a 232.

"It's a great feeling to win at home. Playing these past two weeks really taught me how to stay light and happy on the course. I've learned not to let distractions or frustration get the better of me, and just enjoy the game," said

the 16-year-old Wacan, who lost to Bisera by 11 strokes in last week's South Pacific leg.

"I know I still have a lot to work on, especially my long game and putting, and I'm determined to keep improving," he added.

AJ's cousin, Merry Rose Wacan, also triumphed in the girls division after beating Del Monte leg winner Zero Plete by seven shots with a 237 total, despite a closing 83.

Plete had a 79 for second at 244, while Mikela Guillermo carded an 82 to finish third at 264.

"I'm really happy to get my first win here at Apo. This experience showed me how important it is to stay focused on the task at hand, no matter what's happening around me. That mindset really helped

me stay steady throughout the round," said the 15-year-old, who narrowly lost to Del Monte's Crista Miñoza at South Pacific.

Meanwhile, the last two legs of the Visayas series – postponed due to the eruption of Mount Kanlaon last May – have been rescheduled for Sept. 15 to 17 at the Negros Occidental Golf and Country Club, and Sept. 18 to 20 at the Bacolod Golf Club in Binitin, Murcia.

The series serves as a qualifying event for the ICTSI North vs South Elite Junior Finals slated for Oct. 7 to 10 at The Country Club, where the top four players from each age division will square off against Luzon's best. (PNA) **BY JEAN MALANUM**

STRONG GROUP-PH ROLLS TO 4TH STRAIGHT WIN IN JONES CUP

MANILA – Strong Group-Philippines clobbered Qatar, 81-54, Tuesday night to stay perfect in the 44th William Jones Cup at the Xinzhuang Gymnasium in New Taipei City.

DJ Fenner and Javi Gomez de Liaño scored 18 points as the Strong Group collected its third win after prevailing over Chinese Taipei Blue (67-56) and Japan Developmental Team (79-67).

The Filipinos are now 11-0, dating back to their title sweep last year.

"Defense has been great for us. That's what we've been preaching from day one. Defense wins championships. We held

another team to below 60," head coach Charles Tiu said in the post-game interview.

Fenner, who scored 16 points in the first half, finished with seven rebounds, and one assist; while Gomez de Liaño scored 13 points in the second half.

Ian Miller chipped in 10 points and nine rebounds while Dave Ildfonso added eight points, five assists, and three rebounds. Andre Roberson had 10 rebounds, three assists, two blocks, and two steals.

Qatar took its third loss against one win. Kiefer Ravena, set to arrive in Taiwan by Wednesday

morning, is expected to banner as Strong Group prepares to face Australia at 5 p.m.

"We're banged up right now. Tajuan [Agee] is hurting, Roberson's knee is swollen, Ian [Miller]'s plantar is bothering him, and Rhenz [Abando]'s hamstring might keep him out for the Australia game. Even Dave [Ildfonso] and Geo [Chiu] are fighting off illness. Jason [Brickman] is very fatigued as well," Tiu said.

"Only issue right now is our health. But we will keep fighting 'til the end."

Bahrain is on top of the nine-nation field with a 4-0 win-loss card. (PNA) **BY JEAN MALANUM**

ISRAELI AMBASSADOR SEES SOON-TO-END TERM 'FASCINATING'

MANILA – As July comes to a close in exactly two weeks, Ilan Fluss is about to bid farewell to his tenure as the ambassador of Israel to the Philippines. Representing the Israeli community among the Filipino diplomats since 2021, Fluss sees his soon-to-end term as a memorable one.

"These were long and fascinating four years, and a lot of interactions with Filipinos from so many different parts of the Philippine society," Fluss told the Philippine News Agency on Thursday.

Fluss is still happy that Filipinos have received him with open arms during his ambassadorship.

"People have received me very, very well. I felt very welcomed with very warm feelings here, especially being the ambassador of Israel, and Israel has a special space in the hearts of so many Filipinos, and I feel also that I was able to accomplish a lot since I got here," he further said.

One of Fluss' farewell gifts is a basketball clinic in partnership with the

Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas (SBP) and the Laura Vicuna Foundation.

At least 20 female participants were chosen to participate in the basketball clinic at the PhilSports Arena in Pasig, where they received basic basketball lessons from veteran members of Gilas Pilipinas, led by the reigning Women's Maharlika Pilipinas Basketball League Most Valuable Player, Afril Bernardino.

"Itong part na ito, parang iba yung feeling na mahirap pero kailangan namin silang pasayahin at turuan kung anong passion namin (This part, it feels different, it's hard, but we need to make them happy and teach them what our passion is)," Bernardino said.

Despite having to play a new role as coach at least for one day, she said that it was a fulfilling one.

"Malaking part sa akin na i-share ko sa kanila yung experience ko at ituro sa kanila yung basics.

Malaking impact din sa akin yun para rin sa personal ko

na may matutunan din ako from them (It's a big part of me to share my experience with them and teach them the basics. It's also a big impact on me because I can learn something from them too)," Bernardino added.

This is the second straight year that the Embassy of Israel, SBP, and the Laura Vicuna Foundation joined forces for this project that caters to female teenagers who have suffered traumatic experiences in the past.

"Before I end my term in the Philippines, I was thinking what else we can do, and of course, sports is one of those tools that can help society and individuals in the growth and development," Fluss further told the PNA.

He hoped that the incoming ambassador will maintain the partnerships his administration started, including the basketball clinic, identify new opportunities, and build new bridges between the Philippines and Israel. (PNA) **BY IVAN STEWART SALDAJENO**

MADIS HURDLES RIVAL IN J60 PHINMA -ITF WEEK 1 OPENING ROUND

MANILA – Top seed Tennielle Madis overpowered

Soth Korean Kim Rae Youn, 6-1, 6-0, in the first round of the J60 PHINMA International Junior Tennis Championships Week 1 at the Manila Polo Club in Makati City on Wednesday. "I had a good game today, having played in the Billie Jean King Cup three weeks ago helped me a lot in preparing for this tournament," the 18-year-old Madis, No. 203 in the world junior rankings, said. The victory set her up against Japanese Reyna Geisler, who defeated local Sandra Bautista, 7-5, 6-1.

"I'll just do my best. I'll give it all, every point," Madis, born and raised in M'lang, North Cotabato, said.

No. 7 seed Stefi Marithe Aludo demolished Singaporean Emma Lam Singh Maan, 6-0, 6-1, while qualifier Mitchellen Alexa Cruspero survived Dakshanasree SR of India, 6-3, 4-6, 6-4, to also secure second round berths.

Aludo will be up against Filipino wild card Louraine

Jallorina, who scored a 3-6, 6-2, 6-3 victory over Korean Kim Seo-Youn. Cruspero, who hails from Tayasan town in Negros Oriental, will face No. 8 Chiang Yen-Ni of Chinese Taipei, a 6-0, 6-3 winner over South Korean Lee Mi Na.

Other first-round winners were No. 2 Aoi Watanabe, No. 3 Choo Yesung of South Korea, No. 4 Tsai Yu-ning of Chinese Taipei, No. 5 Chen Yuhan of China, No. 6 Haritha Shree Venkatesh of India, No. 8 Chiang Yen-Ni of Chinese Taipei, Taylah Lessue of Australia, Lara Rauti of Hong Kong, Park Seojin of South Korea and Christina Hansman of Sweden.

Meanwhile, rising star Alexandra Eala urged compatriots to make their country proud in the tournament she won in 2018.

"I hope that all of you can do your best in every match. This tournament meant a lot for me because it was at home," the 20-year-old world's No. 56 said during the opening ceremony

attended by PHINMA chairperson emeritus Oscar Hilado, Philippine Tennis Association (Philta) president Eric Olivarez and Executive Director Tonnette Mendoza, Philippine Tennis Academy President Romy Chan and Manila Polo Club president Alex Revilla.

"There is no tournament that is insignificant with my career. I try to treat every match with the same focus and the same intention that I do the last," the Rafael Tennis Academy graduate added.

"All of you, the contributions you've given to Philippine tennis have also come back to me in a certain way so I'd like to share all my success with everybody here. I hope you will also work hard and show the world what the Philippines is all about," said Eala, who lost to 2024 champion Barbora Krejčíková of Czech Republic, 6-3, 2-6, 1-6, in the first round of the Wimbledon Open last July 1. (PNA) **BY JEAN MALANUM**