

CAVITE GAZETTE

P U B L I S H I N G

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CITY OF CARMONA, Cavite (PIA) – The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Cavite Provincial Office has recently partnered with local stakeholders through the newly established **KALINGYAKAP** Integrated Shelter Support and Services to enhance livelihood programs for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).

The gathering focused on evaluating the shelter's readiness and ensuring that its services align with the varied needs of its intended residents. Stakeholders engaged in detailed discussions to develop strategies that promote an inclusive, nurturing environment where PWDs can thrive.

A highlight of the initiative is the integration of DOST-supported

livelihood technologies within the shelter such as the Enhanced Nutribun Facility Project by the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (DOST-FNRI) and the Okara Flour Technology Adoption developed by the Industrial Technology Development Institute (DOST-ITDI).

According to DOST Cavite, these programs are expected to generate sustainable employment while addressing nutrition and food security in the community.

Representing DOST-Cavite, Ms. Anna Marie Daigan led discussions on technical assistance and collaborative planning. She underscored the agency's commitment to empowering vulnerable sectors through science and technology-driven solutions.

DOST-Cavite participated in a key coordination meeting with the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO), headed

DOST-CAVITE PARTNERS WITH KALINGYAKAP TO BOOST LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES FOR PWDs



by Ms. Ruby Rosales, and the Persons with Disability Affairs Office (PDAO), led by Ms. Rosebelle Mercurio. Also in attendance were sponsors and partners of the newly established KALINGYAKAP, a facility designed to serve as both a haven and a springboard for empowerment.

This partnership signals a significant milestone in advancing accessible, sustainable, and inclusive development for persons with disabilities across Cavite. (RBF/with report from Ms. Kimberly A. Azuelo) **BY RUEL FRANCISCO**

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MUNICIPAL LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON RANK NO. 10, NAARESTO SA GMA, CAVITE

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Naaresto ng mga tauhan ng General Mariano Alvarez Municipal Police Station ang isang Municipal Level Most Wanted Person Rank No. 10 dakong 11:20 PM ng Setyembre 9, 2025 sa Brgy. San Gabriel, GMA, Cavite.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL BONNA A OBMERGA, hepe ng GMA MPS, ang akusado na si alyas "Andrew," residente ng Brgy. San Gabriel, GMA, Cavite. Sa kanyang pahayag, sinabi ni PCOL ARIEL R RED, Acting Provincial Isinagawa ang operasyon ng warrant operatives ng GMA MPS laban sa Most Wanted Person gamit ang Alternative Recording Device (ARD) bilang dokumentasyon, na nagresulta sa

pagkakaaresto ng akusado sa bisa ng warrant of arrest para sa kasong Estafa Through Falsification of Public Document. Ang mga warrant ay inilabas ng Municipal Trial Court (MTC), na may kabuuang inirekomendang piyansa na Php 108,000.00.

Kasalukuyang nasa kustodiya ng GMA MPS ang akusado para sa wastong dokumentasyon at tamang disposisyon.

Sa kanyang pahayag, sinabi ni PCOL ARIEL R RED, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite PPO, "Ang patuloy na pag-aresto ng ating kapulisan sa mga Most Wanted Person ay patunay ng ating patuloy na kampanya para sa hustisya at katahimikan sa probinsya ng Cavite."

IMUS LGU BRINGS AID, SERVICES TO IMUSEÑOS THROUGH CARAVAN

CITY OF IMUS, Cavite (PIA) – More than 1,000 residents in Barangay Buhay na Tubig benefited from the newest community outreach initiative of the City Government of Imus. Through the "AAksyon Caravan," held on Monday, Sept. 8, the city government brought essential government services closer to the community by offering a wide array of social, medical, and legal assistance directly within local barangays.

Residents of the said barangay were among the first to benefit from the caravan's comprehensive lineup of services, which included medical consultations, social welfare assistance, and legal aid—all provided on-site and free of charge. Mayor Alex "AA" Advincula, who spearheaded the program, emphasized that the AAksyon Caravan reflects the city's ongoing commitment to making government programs more accessible and responsive to the needs of every Imuseño.

"We want to ensure that no one is left behind when it comes to basic services. Through this caravan, we are bringing City Hall

closer to the people," he said.

Among the key services provided during the inaugural rollout were free legal consultations and notary services facilitated by the City Legal Office, as well as complimentary late birth registration services handled by the City Civil Registrar. Medical teams from the City Health Office and Ospital ng Imus also conducted free consultations and distributed medicines.

In collaboration with the Office of Cavite 3rd District Representative Adrian Jay "AJ" C. Advincula, additional services such as free dentures, eye consultations, prescription eyeglasses, and cataract surgeries were made available. Support services from the Office of Senior Citizens Affairs, Persons with Disability Affairs, and the City Social Welfare and Development Office were also extended to attendees.

The AAksyon Caravan is set to roll out across various barangays in the coming months, continuing its mission to empower communities through direct, on-the-ground public service delivery.

MOST WANTED PERSON (PROVINCIAL LEVEL, TOP 6) NAARESTO SA LAS PIÑAS CITY

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Naaresto ng mga tauhan ng Maragondon Municipal Police Station ang isang Most Wanted Person (Provincial Level, Top 6), dakong 2:40 ng hapon ngayong Setyembre 9, 2025 sa Brgy. Talon 1, Las Piñas City, Metro Manila. Kinilala ni PMAJ MELVIN B ISIDRO, hepe ng Maragondon MPS, ang akusado na si alyas Mark, na residente ng Brgy. Bucal 1, Maragondon, Cavite.

Ang pag-aresto ay naisakatuparan sa bisa ng Warrant of Arrest na inilabas ng RTC, Fourth Judicial Region, Branch 15, Naic, Cavite na may petsang Marso 29, 2023, para sa dalawang (2) bilang ng Rape sa ilalim ng Article 226-A, Paragraph 2 ng Revised Penal Code kaugnay ng RA 7610, na

may tig-Php200,000.00 na piyansa. Ang operasyon ay maayos na naisagawa at naidokumento gamit ang Alternative Recording Device (ARD) sa kawalan ng Body-Worn Camera (BWC).

Kasalukuyang nakadetina ang akusado sa custodial facility ng Maragondon Municipal Police Station at ang Warrant of Arrest ay isasauli sa pinagmulan nitong hukuman.

Sa kanyang pahayag, binigyang-diin ni PCOL ARIEL R RED, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite PPO, "Patuloy nating tutugisin ang mga nagtatagong kriminal upang masigurong mananagot sila sa batas. Ang ating kapulisan ay walang kapaguran sa pagpapanatili ng hustisya at kaayusan para sa mga mamamayan ng Cavite."

PROVINCIAL LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON, NAARESTO SA GEN. TRIAS CITY

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Naaresto ng mga tauhan ng General Trias City Component Police Station ang isang Provincial Level Most Wanted Person dakong 10:25 AM ng Setyembre 9, 2025 sa Brgy. Pinagtipunan, General Trias City, Cavite. Kinilala ni PLTCOL BISMARCK S MENDOZA, hepe ng General Trias CCPS, ang akusado na si alyas "Paul," residente

ng Brgy. Pinagtipunan, General Trias City, Cavite. Isinagawa ang operasyon ng Warrant Personnel ng General Trias CCPS laban sa mga Most Wanted Person gamit ang alternative recording device bilang dokumentasyon. Nagtapos ito sa pagkakaaresto ng akusado sa bisa ng warrant of arrest para sa paglabag sa Section 12, Article II ng R.A. 9165 na inisyu noong Setyembre 5, 2025 ng Regional Trial Court, Fourth Judicial Region, Branch 88, Cavite City, Cavite, para sa pagsisilbi ng kanyang sentensya.

Kasalukuyang nakapiit ang akusado sa custodial facility ng General Trias City sa Brgy. Bagumbayan para sa tamang dokumentasyon at disposisyon.

Sa kanyang pahayag, sinabi ni PCOL ARIEL R RED, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite PPO, "Ang pagkakaaresto ng mga itinuturing na Most Wanted Person ay patunay ng determinasyon ng ating kapulisan na maihatid ang hustisya at tiyakin ang kaligtasan ng bawat Caviteño."

DALAWANG SUSPEK ARESTADO SA BUY-BUST OPERATION NG GEN. TRIAS CITY PNP, SHABU AT BARIL KUMPISKADO

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Naaresto ng mga operatiba ng General Trias Component City Police Station Drug Enforcement Unit ang dalawang Street Level Individuals dakong 9:00 PM ng Setyembre 9, 2025 sa Muslim Compound, Brgy. Tejero, Lungsod ng General Trias, Cavite.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL BISMARCK S MENDOZA, hepe ng General Trias CCPS, ang mga naarestong suspek na sina alyas "Uwe" at "Mida", kapwa residente ng Brgy. Tejero, General Trias City. Isinagawa ang operasyon ng DEU-GenTrias CCPS na pinamunuan ni PCPT Joseph I Sosa, ng may koordinasyon sa PDEA, na nagresulta sa pagkakaaresto ng mga Suspek at pagkakakumpiska ng sumusunod na ebidensya: apat (4) na heat-sealed transparent plastic sachet ng hinihinalang shabu na tumitimbang ng humigit-

kumulang 4.41 gramo na may standard drug price na Php 29,988.00; tatlong (3) piraso ng isang daang piso bilang buy-bust money; isang (1) black coin purse; at isang (1) Caliber 7.65 pistol na may kasamang magazine at tatlong (3) bala.

Ang mga nakumpiskang ebidensya ay dinala sa Provincial Forensic Unit, Imus City para sa kaukulang laboratory at ballistic examination.

Samantala, inihahanda na ang mga dokumento para sa inquest proceedings sa Office of the City Prosecutor. Ang operasyon ay naitala gamit ang Alternative Recording Device (ARD).

Sa kanyang pahayag, sinabi ni PCOL ARIEL R RED, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite PPO, "Patuloy ang ating pagtugis at pagsugpo sa ilegal na droga at kriminalidad upang masiguro ang kaligtasan at kapayapaan sa bawat pamayanan."

REGIONAL LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON, NAARESTO SA TANZA, CAVITE

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Naaresto ng mga tauhan ng Tanza Municipal Police Station katuwang ang PIT Cavite at RIU-4A, dakong 1:40 PM ng Setyembre 9, 2025 sa Brgy. Santol, Tanza, Cavite ang isang Regional Level Most Wanted Person sa bisa ng mga warrant of arrest.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL JOVEN T BAHIL, Officer-in-Charge ng Tanza MPS, ang akusado na si alyas "Sixto," residente ng Brgy. Pasong Camachile 1, General Trias City, Cavite. Ang operasyon ay naisagawa sa pamamagitan ng joint law enforcement operation na nagresulta sa pagkakaaresto ng akusado sa bisa ng warrant of arrest para sa kasong Statutory Rape na walang piyansang inirekomenda, at isa pang warrant para

sa kasong Sexual Assault in Relation to Section 5 (B) of R.A. 7610 na may inirekomendang piyansa na Php 200,000.00. Ang mga nabanggit na warrant ay inisyu ng Family Court, Fourth Judicial Region, Branch 5, Trece Martires City, Cavite.

Kasalukuyang nasa kustodiya ng Tanza MPS ang akusado para sa kaukulang dokumentasyon at tamang disposisyon.

Sa kanyang pahayag, sinabi ni PCOL ARIEL R RED, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite PPO, "Ang matagumpay na operasyon laban sa mga Most Wanted Person ay malinaw na patunay ng mas pinaigting na kampanya ng ating kapulisan laban sa mga kriminal upang matiyak ang hustisya para sa mga biktima at katahimikan ng mamamayan."

DEPED CALABARZON CITES GROWING CLASSROOM CHALLENGES AS NATION MARKS TEACHERS' MONTH

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna (PIA) — The Department of Education (DepEd) in Calabarzon has raised concerns over the growing challenges in classrooms, particularly the impact of technology, bullying, and mental health on students and teachers, as the nation observes National Teachers' Month.

According to Ariel M. Zuelo, Unit Head – Public Affairs Unit and Regional Information Officer of the DepEd Calabarzon, these issues make this year's National Teachers' Month a timely occasion to recognize the vital role of educators in shaping the country's future.

He added that the classroom environment today is far different from that of the 1970s and 1980s, largely due to the rise of gadgets and online platforms. While technology has opened new learning opportunities, it has also created new distractions.

"Young learners today already know how to manipulate gadgets like cellphones, tablets, and laptops at an early age. That is why teachers cannot afford to be left behind. We must advance alongside technology, especially for veteran educators who need to adapt to these changes," Zuelo emphasized.

Another pressing issue, he added, is the alarming rise in cases of bullying. This includes not only verbal bullying but also physical harm, with some cases linked to mental health struggles among students. Teachers themselves also face mental health challenges due to the growing demands of the profession.

"Students are still in the process of developing their identity and character. Teachers must serve as guides in shaping them into responsible and compassionate citizens," Zuelo said.

As these challenges persist, the nation takes time to honor teachers through the National Teachers' Month, celebrated from September 5 to October 5.

Dr. Eduarda M. Zapanta, Chief of the Education Support Services Division, highlighted that this month-long celebration is meant to give recognition to the heroism and invaluable contributions of teachers.

"Teachers spend more time with children than their parents do. The quality, character, and values of our students reflect the dedication of their teachers. Education is the great equalizer, and teachers are second parents who shape not just students but future citizens of our country," Dr. Zapanta said.

In Region IV-A CALABARZON alone, she noted, there are 3.7 million enrolled learners for School Year 2025, supported by 111,248 teachers across 6,007 schools—including 2,502 private institutions and 17 state universities and colleges. The region continues to have the largest school population in the Philippines.

Dr. Zapanta also highlighted that with over one million personnel, DepEd remains the largest government workforce—its reach extending to millions of Filipino families.

For Zuelo, the role of teachers goes beyond textbooks and classrooms.

MPT SOUTH'S 'BIYAHENG SOUTH' CAVITE TOURISM PASSPORT WINS BIG AT 21ST PHILIPPINE QUILL AWARDS

TRECE MARTIRES CITY, Cavite (PIA) – Metro Pacific Tollways South (MPT South), a subsidiary of Metro Pacific Tollways Corporation (MPTC), earned national recognition after clinching the Award of Merit at the 21st Philippine Quill Awards for its innovative 'Biyaheng South' Cavite Tourism Passport.

Presented by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Philippines, the Philippine Quill Awards are one of the country's most esteemed accolades in business communication. The award celebrates excellence in strategic and impactful communication, honoring projects that drive organizational and community progress.

MPT South's winning entry stood out in the Publications Category under the Communication Skills Division, with the 'Biyaheng South' passport recognized for its creative and strategic approach to

"The teaching and learning process is not confined to four walls. Many teachers take students outside to experience real-world lessons that prepare them for life," he explained.

"As the nation marks National Teachers' Month, it becomes an opportunity not only to honor the dedication of teachers but also to recognize the evolving challenges they face, reminding everyone that the future of the nation rests on the shoulders of these modern-day heroes," Zuelo added. (CM PIA4A)

BY CECILLE MALOLES

promoting tourism across Cavite.

The passport serves as a travel companion and collectible, guiding both locals and tourists through Cavite's rich cultural sites, heritage destinations, and culinary treasures.

Last August 1, 2025, MPT South relaunched an improved version of the passport in partnership with the Provincial Government of Cavite, further expanding its reach and engagement. The updated initiative offers a fresh and interactive way for travelers to rediscover the province while supporting local businesses and boosting regional tourism.

"We are truly honored to receive this Award of Merit for our 'Biyaheng South' Cavite Tourism Passport," said Arlette V. Capistrano, Vice President for Communication and Stakeholder Management at MPT South.

"This recognition inspires us to continue developing projects that celebrate local heritage, empower communities, and enhance the overall travel experience on our expressways," she added.

As MPT South continues to champion sustainable tourism and regional development, the success of 'Biyaheng South' highlights the growing role of creative communication in transforming how Filipinos explore and connect with their cultural roots—turning every road trip into a meaningful journey through history, identity, and local pride. (MPT South) **BY RUEL FRANCISCO**

EDITORIAL

Mababang Antas ng Kaalaman ng mga Estudyante sa Ikatlong Baitang

Ayon sa pag-aaral ng UNICEF, antas ng kaalaman ng karamihan sa mga grade 3 pupils sa Matematika, Pagbabasa at Pagsusulat, ay pang kinder lamang.

Ang kaalaman ang isa sa mga bagay na hinding hindi mananakaw ng kung sino man kaya nakakabahala na ganito ang lumalabas sa mga sektor ng edukasyon sa Pilipinas. Kadalasan ngayon ay ayos na ang salitang 'pasado' upang makitaan ang isang estudyante na makapasok sa mas mataas na baitang. Ngunit sa lagay na ito, hindi na masisiguro ang kalidad ng edukasyon.

Dapat na magkaroon ng mabusising pagtuturo sa kurikulum sa bawat baitang, hindi sapat ang pasado, dapat na masiguradong marunong nang magbilang, magbasa at mag-solve ang isang estudyante kung tatapak na ito ng ikatlong baitang. Nararapat lamang na bigyang pansin ang sektor ng edukasyon gayong karamihan sa mga kabataan ay nakakalagpas ng elementarya nang hindi man lamang marunong magbasa.

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7 NABBED IN QC JOINT ANTI-ILLEGAL ONLINE GAMBLING RAID

MANILA – Seven suspects were arrested for illegal online gambling during a joint operation of the Cybercrime Investigation and Coordinating Center (CICC), the Philippine Sweepstakes Office (PCSO), and the Philippine National Police (PNP) on Thursday.

In a press conference at Station 14 of the Quezon City Police District (QCPD), PCSO Shield Chair Orlando Malaca said the operation started when an authorized agent of the PCSO was caught continuing gambling operations despite the end of its contract with the agency in July. Malaca said such illegal activities affect PCSO's revenues and the charity activities provided by the agency to the public.

"Kung may mawawala na papasok dapat sa kaban ng bayan, ito po ay magiging losses din po sa mga nangangailangan din po ng tulong na umaasa sa PCSO. In particular yung mga medical assistance (If revenue to the government ceases, this will also be a loss for those who rely on the PCSO. In particular those who need medical assistance)," he said.

In response, the PCSO reached out to the CICC, who coordinated with the PNP for a joint investigation and raid carried out by the QCPD Station 14.

The raid resulted in the arrest of seven suspects, the confiscation of mobile devices, and other equipment used in the illegal online gambling operation.

These suspects face charges under the Cybercrime Prevention Act (RA 10175), Presidential Decree No. 1602 (Prescribing Stiffer Penalties on Illegal Gambling), and related statutes.

The suspects are now undergoing inquest proceedings, while the seized digital devices will undergo forensic analysis by the CICC to identify the broader network behind the operation.

During the event, Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) Secretary Henry Aguda said the operation is in fulfillment of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s marching order to cleanse the country's cyberspace of illegal activities.

"We hope to bring more cases like this within the year, especially interagency cases such as this, which show how much stronger we are when we work together," Aguda said.

On the other hand, CICC Acting Executive Director Renato "Aboy" Paraiso said such operations are carried out to protect the most vulnerable sectors of society.

"These illegal operators may seem small at first glance, but over time, their impact is significant. That is why we are relentless in pursuing them," Paraiso said.

FPJ Panday Bayanihan Party-list Rep. Brian Poe Llamanzares witnessed the operation and lauded its success.

"This event is a clear demonstration of strong collaboration across government agencies, and a strong case for capacitating these agencies with the adequate resources they need to sustain these victories against illegal online gambling," the lawmaker said. (PNA) **BY RAYMOND CARL DELA**

E-GOVERNANCE LAW TO BRING MORE TRANSPARENT SERVICES - CAYETANO

MANILA – Senate Minority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano on Friday said the newly signed E-Governance Law streamlines systems and improves government services.

Cayetano said the law would make government more transparent, accessible, and connected, which would translate into "more time, more trust, and more dignity" for Filipinos. "Technology can modernize government, but guided by purpose, it can truly uplift lives," he said in a statement.

The senator said the measure, together with the Konektadong Pinoy Law, would ensure that progress reaches communities by integrating digital transformation with inclusivity.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. signed the law earlier this week as part of efforts to digitalize public services.

The measure mandates the establishment of an integrated digital platform where citizens can transact with government agencies online, reducing paperwork and improving efficiency.

The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) will take the lead in implementing the law, working with other agencies and local government units to build and maintain the digital infrastructure.

It will also be tasked to ensure interoperability of platforms, protect data privacy, and strengthen cybersecurity.

The law is a consolidation of bills principally authored by Senator Christopher Lawrence Go and House Speaker Ferdinand

Martin Romualdez, with various senators, including Cayetano, supporting its swift passage.

The Senate and House of Representatives ratified the bicameral conference committee report on the measure in June before transmitting it to Malacañang for the President's signature.

The law had been filed in previous Congresses but failed to hurdle both chambers until the 19th Congress, when digitalization became a top government priority following the lessons of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Senator Sherwin Gatchalian also welcomed the law, saying it will revolutionize the delivery of government services through a secure digital system.

Gatchalian, a co-author of the law, said the measure would make government services more accessible, especially for citizens in remote areas and persons with disabilities.

"Sa pamamagitan ng bagong batas na ito, mas magiging madali at maaasahan ang mga serbisyon ibinibigay ng gobyerno. Paiigtingin din nito ang transparency sa pagpapatupad ng iba't ibang programa (Through this new law, government services will become easier and more reliable. It will also strengthen transparency in the implementation of various programs)," he said.

The chair of the Senate Committee on Finance added that the law would streamline processes, cut costs, and minimize corruption by ensuring projects are undertaken openly. (PNA) **BY WILNARD BACELONIA**

DMW RECALLS LABOR ATTACHÉ TO FACE FLOOD CONTROL PROBE IN PH

MANILA – Migrant Workers Secretary Hans Leo Cacdac has ordered the immediate recall of Labor Attaché Macy Monique Maglanque, currently stationed in Los Angeles, United States, to face an official investigation back home.

Maglanque was recently named in a privilege speech on the anomalous flood control projects by Senate Blue Ribbon Committee Chair, Senator Panfilo Lacson, on Tuesday, prompting the Department of Migrant Workers' (DMWs) swift action.

"Nag-isyu na tayo ng recall order para kay Labor Attaché Maglanque upang makauwi at personal na harapin ang imbestigasyon. Wala pa pong parusang ipinapataw, ngunit mahalaga na siya mismo ay humarap sa mga katanungan – hindi lamang ng DMW kundi maging ng iba pang imbestigasyong kinakailangan (We have issued a recall order for Labor Attaché Maglanque to return home and personally face the investigation. No punishment has been imposed yet, but it is important that she personally face the questions – not only of the DMW but also of other investigations that may be necessary)," Cacdac said in a statement Friday.

He said the move reflects the agency's adherence to accountability and transparency, as mandated by President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s Executive Order 94, which upholds integrity and good governance in public service.

"Dahil pinangalanan siya sa privilege speech ng Senate Blue Ribbon Chair, tungkulin natin na sumunod sa proseso at sa atas ng ating Pangulo na papanagutin ang sinumang opisyal, kung may alegasyon ng maling gawain o katiwalian (Since she was named in the privilege speech of the Senate Blue Ribbon Chair, it is our duty to follow the

process and the directive of our President to hold any official accountable if there is any allegation of wrongdoing or corruption)," he added.

Lacson alleged that Maglanque had connections to MBB Global Properties, a company reportedly involved in controversial flood control contracts. The issue has raised concerns over potential anomalies in public infrastructure projects.

He said the firm's 2024 general information sheet shows that Maglanque serves as the MBB Global Properties Corp. president, together with Sunshine Bernardo as corporate secretary, and Fatima Gay B. (Bonoan) Dela Cruz as its treasurer.

Lacson pointed out that these individuals are the children of Candaba, Pampanga Mayor Rene Maglanque, Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) Undersecretary Roberto Bernardo, and former DPWH Secretary Manuel Bonoan, respectively.

He said that the MBB stands for Maglanque, Bernardo, and Bonoan. Cacdac noted that the recall also protects Maglanque's right to due process.

"Haharap lamang siya sa imbestigasyon. Ito ay bahagi ng ating paninindigan para sa integridad at pananagutan sa serbisyo publiko (She will only face the investigation. This is part of our commitment to integrity and accountability in public service)," he said.

Cacdac pledged to cooperate fully with any Senate or government investigation, while continuing to strengthen internal safeguards against misconduct within its ranks. He also emphasized that preserving trust is essential to protecting overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), who rely on labor officials abroad for their welfare and support. (PNA) **BY MARITA MOAJE**

PBBM INSTITUTIONALIZES SHIFT TO E-GOVERNANCE

MANILA – President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has signed a law institutionalizing the transition to e-governance to foster a digitally empowered and integrated government through a regulated, secure, and robust information and communications technology (ICT).

Republic Act (RA) 12254, inked by Marcos on Sept. 5, applies to all executive, legislative, judicial, and constitutional offices, including local government units (LGUs), state universities and colleges (SUCs), government-owned or -controlled corporations (GOCCs). The new law also covers government instrumentalities located in the Philippines and abroad, which provide services covering business- and non-business-related transactions.

RA 12254 encompasses back-end operations within and between government agencies, including data sharing and coordination for policy-making, planning, and decision-making, as well as other inter-agency functions. “Nothing in this Act shall be construed to derogate from the fiscal and administrative autonomy and independence of government entities,” the law read.

The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), designated as the lead implementing body and administrator of RA 12254, is mandated to ensure that all ICT projects in the Philippines will be done in accordance with the National ICT Development Agenda and E-Government Master Plan, as provided under RA 10844 or the Department of Information and Communications Technology Act of 2015.

The law directs DICT to ensure that all ICT projects in the Philippines, whether national or local, are harmonized with the

overall ICT plans and in compliance with applicable standards.

Within a year of RA 12254’s implementation, the government will establish a unified E-Governance Project Management Office (EGov UPMO) to oversee portfolio, program, and project management across agencies.

The EGov UPMO is tasked to ensure effective handling of ICT projects in line with international best practices and standards.

Under RA 12254, the DICT will formulate and promote an E-Government Master Plan (EGMP) or its equivalent that will serve as a blueprint for the development and enhancement of all electronic government service processes and workforce to achieve digital transformation in the bureaucracy, taking into consideration the Philippine Development Plan.

The DICT, in coordination with relevant government agencies, will also develop E-Government Programs (EGPs) that will be regularly updated in consultation with stakeholders.

EGPs include the Citizen Frontline Delivery Services Platform; Electronic Local Government Unit (eLGU) System; Government Digital Payment Systems; Government Public Key Infrastructure Program; Online Public Service Portal; and Philippine Digital Health System.

The DICT will conduct a mandatory Privacy Impact Assessment, according to relevant National Privacy Commission guidelines, on the proposed systems for processing personal data included in the EGMP before its publication, to identify privacy risks and establish the appropriate control framework in line with existing data privacy and cybersecurity standards.

The DICT will also prescribe and implement minimum information security standard for

E-Government, aligned with internationally accepted standards, relevant laws, rules, and regulations, including its own policies, to ensure the security of all ICT systems. The DICT, in coordination with relevant government agencies and stakeholders, will issue guidelines for the protection of the government’s critical information infrastructure identified in the EGMP.

Subject to compliance with existing laws, rules, and regulations, the free public Internet access program will utilize the Free Public Internet Access Fund (FPIAF) to provide necessary computer systems, programs, databases, management and information systems, and core transmission and distribution networks to facilitate knowledge-building among citizens.

National government agencies, offices, instrumentalities, including local governments, are mandated to consistently enhance their existing websites and establish an e-Bulletin Board for efficient information dissemination. “All resources, information, or data stored in or transmitted through the government information systems and all networks interconnected to and interoperable with it, the portals, and websites shall be kept secure and free from interference or unauthorized access that can hamper or otherwise compromise the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of the ICT assets,” the law read.

According to RA 12254, national and local governments are not prohibited from entering into contracts, agreements, or partnerships with the private sector to provide various resources, assets, and services.

Any and all contracts or agreements with the private sector within the context of the law will be subject to the laws and rules on public accountability,

UNIFIED 911 EMERGENCY HOTLINE PROMISES FASTER RESPONSE NATIONWIDE

MANILA – The Philippine government launched Thursday the unified 911 emergency hotline that would provide faster and more coordinated responses to emergencies nationwide.

Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Secretary Jonvic Remulla said the hotline, which replaces multiple local emergency numbers, would serve as the central point of contact for police, fire, medical, and disaster response services.

“We had 35 LGUs [local government units] with their own numbers, we had the PNP (Philippine National Police), we had the BFP (Bureau of Fire Protection). We have the other 200 numbers then we have 40,000 barangays, where the constituents would call first the barangay captain to call

transparency, and good governance.

“To ensure inclusivity, public telecommunications entities (PTEs) and non-PTE internet service providers (ISPs) shall be allowed to enter into contracts with government agencies at the national and local levels to build and operate networks to provide internet connections in support of E-Government Programs, especially in the underserved and unserved areas,” RA 12254 said.

The DICT is instructed to reorganize and restructure its ICT Literacy and Competency Development Bureau, to develop rules and policies for the operations of the ICT Academy for E-Governance.

RA 12254, made public on Thursday, takes effect 15 days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation. (PNA) **BY RUTH ABBEY GITA-CARLOS**

for help before they would call the BFP or the PNP or any other response center. So with the Philippines being a very complicated country, it even became more complicated with the emergency response,” Remulla said during the launch at the PLDT office in Sampaloc.

“Today, we have one number and that is 911,” he added.

The 911 hotline is toll-free for all landline and mobile calls, making it accessible to both urban and rural communities.

Remulla said the initial phase would soon be expanded, targeting getting on board about 240 operators in 120 days.

He warned bogus and prank callers that their numbers would be blocked, making it difficult for them to ask for help when an emergency arises.

“Sa mga mag-bo-bogus call dito sa 911, baka pagsisihan niyo 'yan sa dulo. Dahil kung kayo may tunay na emergency, baka hindi na kayo puntahan. Hindi na tatanggapin ang tawag ninyo. So, huwag niyo 'yun subukan kasi kung kamag-anak mo magka problema, pamilya mo may problema, hindi ka na papansin ng 911 system (To those who make bogus calls to 911, you might regret it in the end. Because if you have a real emergency, they might not come to you. Your call will not be answered. So, don't try that because if your relative has a problem, your family has a problem, the 911 system will ignore you),” Remulla said.

The unified 911 is a joint initiative of the DILG, the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), telecoms firm PLDT Inc. (PLDT), and NGA 911 Philippines, the local arm of US-based NGA 911 LLC. It introduces next-generation emergency

communications technology already proven in the United States and Europe.

The system comes with advanced features designed to strengthen public safety, including GPS-based location tracking that allows faster and more precise dispatch of emergency teams.

It also uses internet protocol to transmit voice, text, and video between callers and responders, providing real-time data that enhances situational awareness.

Don Ferguson, co-founder and CEO of NGA 911 LLC, said the system “will help the DILG save more lives and empower more communities now that all systems have been unified into one nationwide system”.

PNP acting chief Lt. Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. said the unified hotline ensures immediate help to the public wherever they are in the country.

He said a single hotline number would eliminate confusion to the public and saves time.

“Alam mo 'yung bureau natin, sinabi na kanina, there are a lot of responders. Sa PNP pa lang, there are how many? 2,000 municipal police stations and other units, more than 2,000. Of course, that is for the PNP. Kung iba-iba 'yung platform, nagka-loko-loko na 'yan. So ito unified, isa lang ang platform (You know our bureau, I said earlier, there are a lot of responders. In the PNP alone, how many are there? 2,000 municipal police stations and other units, more than 2,000. Of course, that is for the PNP. If there are a variety of platforms, it would be a mess. So it's unified, there's only one platform),” he said. (PNA) **BY MARITA MOAJE**

IFUGAO LGU LAUNCHES ONLINE VOUCHER TRACKING SYSTEM TO BOOST TRANSPARENCY

AGUINALDO, Ifugao (PIA) — The local government unit (LGU) of Aguinardo has officially launched the Aguinardo Voucher Tracking System (AVTS) Project, an innovative online platform designed to streamline and improve the municipality's financial processes.

The new system aims to track all vouchers in real-time, ensuring accountability and timely payments to suppliers and vendors.

Jonaida Mahaldot of LGU Aguinardo shared that the AVTS Project was conceived and developed as an innovative initiative by the Accounting Office in close collaboration with the Information Technology section, Budget and Treasury Office.

Mahaldot added that this AVTS represents a key milestone in Aguinardo's commitment to responsible public service, ensuring that financial transactions are not only transparent but also efficient, benefiting both the local government and its partners.

This project was formally adopted under Ordinance No. 2025-05, solidifying its

role in the LGU's financial operations.

Municipal Local Government Operation Officer Mario Anggadna Jr. commended the initiative, encouraging employees to embrace innovation to improve the delivery of basic services. He also reiterated the unwavering support of the Department of the Interior and Local Government and other national agencies for innovations in government service.

Mayor Clemente S. Talusig expressed his profound appreciation to the local finance committee and the IT section for their productive collaboration. He underscored his full support for innovation and research in the LGU, extending an invitation for future collaborations with universities to further enhance the LGU's services.

He emphasized that the administration welcomes new ideas from all departments, fostering a culture of continuous improvement. (JDP/FBR-PIA-CAR, Ifugao) **BY FLORIDA ROBLES**

ALBAY LGU, PNP STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS AGAINST CRIMES

LEGAZPI CITY (PIA)— Albay Governor Noel Rosal reaffirmed his commitment to the Philippine National Police during a ceremony concluding National Crime Prevention Week at Camp Simeon A. Ola in Legazpi City.

In his keynote address, Rosal emphasized the importance of strengthening the partnership between the Albay provincial government and law enforcement agencies to support crime prevention initiatives.

He stressed that investing in peace and order is essential to achieving this goal.

Rosal highlighted the anti-drug campaign as a key focus area, noting that the government invests in livelihood programs to help persons who use drugs (PWUDs) reintegrate into society.

He also mentioned government initiatives aimed at combating crime in the province, particularly through empowering the youth and improving educational opportunities.

Additionally, Rosal announced that the provincial government will allocate 5 million pesos to enhance health programs across Albay.

In his remarks, he stated

that crime prevention is not solely the responsibility of law enforcement agencies and the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG); rather, it is a shared responsibility that involves everyone.

The governor commended the efforts and initiatives of the PNP, government partners, and civic organizations in their fight against crime, which is vital for ensuring a safe community.

"The LGU, PNP, and other government agencies could work together with one common goal that President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. told me about: We must keep the Bagong Pilipinas in mind, take it to heart and put it into practice," Rosal said.

This year's theme for National Crime Prevention Week (NCPW) is "Pinalakas na Pamahalaang Lokal para sa Ligtas na Pamayanan: Pagpapatibay ng mga Programa sa Pag-iwas sa Krimen sa Ilalim ng Community and Service-Oriented Policing (CSOP)." This theme underscores the importance of local government units collaborating with the police and the community to promote safer and more resilient neighborhoods. (PIA Bicol) **BY ANA-LIZA S. MACATANGAY**

PSA PRAISES LGUS, COMMUNITY EFFORTS FOR DROP IN ADOLESCENT BIRTHS IN NEGROS ORIENTAL

DUMAGUETE CITY, Negros Oriental (PIA) —The Philippine

Statistics Authority (PSA) has commended local government units (LGUs) and partner agencies for their initiatives to curb teenage pregnancy, after data showed a slight decline in adolescent births in the province last year. Teenage pregnancy in Negros Oriental dropped from 11.3% in 2022 to 10.9% in 2023, said PSA Negros Oriental Chief Engr. Ariel Fortuito.

"A decline in the number of babies born to adolescent mothers indicates the success of the initiatives run by the (LGUs) and other relevant organizations," said Fortuito.

He added that socioeconomic factors like education, employment, and family environment also play an important role. In 2023, the PSA recorded 2,189 babies born to mothers younger than 20 years old, or 10.9% of total registered live births in the province.

Of these, 47 were born to mothers under 15 years old, while 2,142 were born to mothers aged 15 to 19.

Fortuito encouraged LGUs to sustain programs addressing adolescent pregnancies, particularly in marginalized communities. "I firmly believe that LGUs should keep up their initiatives and strategies to address teenage pregnancy, especially in marginalized communities," he said.

PSA data identified the top five cities and towns with the highest number of adolescent births: Bayawan City with 268, Guihulngan City with 182, Siaton with 155, Sta. Catalina with 144, and Mabinay with 117.

For very young mothers

under 15 years old, the highest numbers were reported in Siaton with eight, Bayawan City with seven, Sta. Catalina with five, Mabinay with four, and three each in Ayungon, San Jose, and Tayasan.

The PSA noted that adolescent births in the province have been steadily declining: 2,254 in 2021 (11.4%), 2,211 in 2022 (11.3%), and 2,189 in 2023 (10.9%).

Fortuito also emphasized that parents must take the lead in promoting responsible behavior among adolescents to reduce risks.

Under the Parent Effectiveness Service (PES) Program Act (Republic Act No. 11908), the Department of Education or the LGUs are mandated to work with Parent-Teacher Associations to develop activities that strengthen parenting skills and support child development.

The law requires implementation of the PES program in every city and municipality nationwide.

The program aims to support all parents and guardians in strengthening their parenting skills, promote children's rights, and encourage positive early childhood development.

In the Philippines for the year 2023, adolescent mothers, particularly those under 15 years old, recorded the highest proportion of non-marital births, with 96.5% of their total births classified as non-marital.

This was followed by mothers aged 15-19 years old at 91.1% and aged 20-24 years old at 78.3%. (JCT/PIA-NIR Negros Oriental) **BY MARIA JENIFER C. TILOS**

DAVAO CITY EXTENDS AID TO 84 OFWS AND FAMILIES IN FIRST HALF OF 2025

DAVAO CITY — The Davao City local government unit through its City Social Welfare and Development Office's (CSWDO) OFW Crisis Center has provided assistance to 84 overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) and their families in Davao City from January to June this year.

OFW Families Welfare and Crisis Center (OFWCC) Coordinator Rosevic Joey M. Jayme reported that 51 of the cases involved distressed OFWs facing labor-related issues such as contract disputes, maltreatment, and the ongoing conflict in Israel. The remaining 33 cases involved family members in

crisis situations who were given immediate support.

Jayme said the OFWCC caters to both OFWs and their families, offering a range of services including psychosocial intervention, livelihood programs, educational assistance, protective custody, rescue operations, and financial aid worth ₱5,000 for individuals in crisis situations, subject to assessment.

She said that in partnership with agencies such as the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) and the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW), the CSWDO participates in service caravans to

inform OFWs and their families about available programs. Victims of TIP are also provided with legal assistance through partner agencies, while the DMW extends both legal and financial support for case filing. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) likewise offers recovery and rehabilitation aid, including financial assistance for TIP victims and their families.

To capacitate people in the grassroots level, Jayme said that OFWCC has scheduled capacity-building activities to train barangay frontliners on identifying and reporting

TIP cases.

"We will not stop in campaigning against illegal recruitment and trafficking in persons of course we have to capacitate first our frontline in the barangay level so that they will know how to report," she emphasized.

Those in need of assistance may contact the OFWCC Hotline at 0962 996 6520, email ofwcenter.davaocity@gmail.com, or message the official Facebook page: OFW Families' Welfare and Crisis Center Davao City. (PIA/FRG) **BY FERLIE GUMBOK**

MERALCO RATES DOWN IN SEPTEMBER DUE TO LOWER GENERATION CHARGES

MANILA – Lower generation charge allowed the Manila Electric Company (Meralco) to reduce power rates this September by PHP0.1852 per kilowatt hour (kWh), to PHP13.0851/kWh. In a briefing Wednesday, Meralco vice president and head of corporate communications Joe Zaldarriaga said generation charge declined by PHP0.2603/kWh due to lower cost from Independent Power Producers (IPPs) and the Power Supply Agreements (PSAs). The factors are, however, counted by the higher prices in the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market and the higher contract price set by some of their producers -- Sual Power Inc. (SPI) and the South Premiere Power Corporation (SPPC), with the latter based on an earlier Supreme Court

decision allowing power producers to adjust prices to cover additional fuel costs. Citing the SC decision, the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) has approved the collection of a total of PHP5.1 billion over a period of six months, starting this September. PSAs account for the largest source of Meralco's supply, at 65 percent, followed by IPPs, 29 percent, and WESM, 6 percent. With these changes, residential customers consuming 200 kWh per month will get PHP37 lower power expenses this month. "We hope that along with relatively lower consumption during this period, this rate cut will bring relief to our customers," Zaldarriaga said. (PNA) **BY JOANN VILLANUEVA**

INVESTORS' CONFIDENCE IMPROVING AS GOV'T RUNS AFTER ERRING EXEC'S

MANILA – Officials of an industry group on Thursday expressed optimism on government measures to address corruption, citing the ongoing investigations against individuals and firms involved in anomalous flood control projects.

In a briefing in Taguig City, Federation of Philippine Industries (FPI) chairperson Elizabeth Lee said President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s decision to name Secretary Vince Dizon to head the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and Commissioner Ariel Nepomuceno to lead the Bureau of Customs (BOC) is gaining ground.

She said the ongoing investigation and measures to run after erring government officials and private individuals as well as the move to check on their luxury vehicles are connected.

"That, actually, is a very strong signal for the business community to say, may nangyari, at may mangyayari (there

is something going on and something good will happen)," she said. For the issue on smuggling alone, she said this hurts local manufacturers and any measure to address it will help the industry sector "not just survive but to thrive."

FPI chairperson emeritus Jesus Arranza, during the same briefing, said industry stakeholders have been coordinating with the government to address these issues.

"But unfortunately, they don't reciprocate the same way as we have been doing. Pero ngayon, nagbago na ang simoy ng hangin. Siguro gaganda naman (But now, the breeze has changed. It might get better)," he said. To address anomalies, the group raised the need to institutionalize processes for BOC and DPWH that include limiting "bad actors" since "institutionalizing robust processes is essential."

"This involves embedding transparent, standardized workflows and accountability mechanisms

PSEI UP, PHP ENDS SIDWAYS VS. USD

MANILA – The Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi) rose on Thursday amid the wait-and-see stance of investors, and the peso finished sideways against the US dollar. The main stock index rose 0.11 percent to 6,126.89 points, and the All Shares by 0.01 percent to 3,691.73 points.

Only two of the sectoral gauges tracked the main index, namely Financials, 0.82 percent and Services, 0.56 percent.

On the other hand, Mining and Oil shed 1.28 percent, Property, 0.60 percent; Holding Firms, 0.23 percent; and Industrial, 0.03 percent.

Volume reached 3.09 billion shares, amounting to PHP5.8 billion.

Decliners led advancers

at 101 to 100 while 46 shares were unchanged.

"The market stayed flat but edged slightly higher as investors await key catalysts for a decisive move. Lower bond yields provided some support, though weak trading volumes suggest sentiment remains cautious," Regina Capital Development Corporation head of sales Luis Limlingan said.

On the other hand, the peso ended the day at 57.19 against the dollar from its 57.12 close against the US dollar.

It opened the day sideways at 57.05, and traded between 57.28 and 57.04. Average for the day stood at 57.17.

Volume reached USD1.57 billion, up from the USD1.44 billion. (PNA) **BY JOANN VILLANUEVA**

HOME CREDIT EXEC OPTIMISTIC OF HITTING P100-B LOANS THIS YEAR

MANILA – An Increase in partnerships and customer base makes an executive of financial services firm Home Credit hopeful for their loan receivables to hit PHP100 billion in 2025.

In a briefing on Thursday, Home Credit marketing and communications group head Sheila Paul said their loan receivables to date are around PHP85 billion, up from about PHP74

into daily operations to reduce opportunities for corruption or inefficiency," it said.

Other proposed measures include digital automation, regular audits, whistleblower protections, creating of secure channels for reporting misconduct, ensuring anonymity and protection for whistleblowers; and training and awareness.

"These measures can foster a culture of accountability and transparency, reducing the influence of bad actors," the group said in a statement. (PNA) **BY JOANN VILLANUEVA**

billion in end-2024.

"We're hoping to hit the magic 100 within the year," she said.

Paul traced her optimism to the strong rise of their customer base, which to date numbers around 12.2 million.

She said partnerships for product offerings have increased to around 18,000 stores nationwide, up from about 16,000 stores at the end of last year.

Sales force has also improved, she said, noting that they already have around 10,000 agents so far this year.

She said these staff, along with those from the partner stores, boost growth in utilization of their financial offerings.

Even with the rise in customers and receivables, Paul said non-performing loans (NPLs) remain below their 10 percent threshold, but declined to give specifics.

"So, our non-performing loans, we haven't reached any of our commitments. It's still below 10 percent. The lower, the better....

PH DELEGATION MEETS WITH JAPANESE INVESTORS TO ATTRACT INVESTMENTS

MANILA – The Philippine delegation, led by Finance Secretary Ralph Recto, met with the largest Japanese economic organizations to secure more investments. "In the Philippines, you are in the right place, at the right time, with the right partners, and the right opportunities to win big," Recto said during the High-Level Courtesy Meeting and Roundtable Discussion between the Philippine Delegation and the Kankeiren Executive Committee on Thursday in Osaka, Japan.

The high-level meeting served as a platform to demonstrate the Philippine government's strong commitment to deepen partnership with Japan's top business leaders.

The Philippine team was composed of Department of Economy, Planning, and Development (DEPDev) Secretary Arsenio Balisacan; Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Secretary Ma. Cristina Roque; Department of Energy (DOE) Secretary Sharon Garin; and senior officials from the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Transportation (DOTr), and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP).

Led by chairperson Masayoshi Matsumoto, the Kansai Economic Federation (Kankeiren), meanwhile, represents approximately 1,300 members, including Japan's most prominent conglomerates, multinational corporations, and small and medium enterprises (SMEs), spanning advanced manufacturing, electronics, energy, infrastructure, finance, and digital innovation.

The Department of Finance said that during the meeting, Recto hailed Japan as one of the Philippines' longest and strongest partners in growth, citing the country's

two "A-" investment-grade ratings from Japanese credit rating agencies.

"This is your vote of confidence in our fiscal management, our investment climate, and our growth trajectory — and we intend to keep earning it," he said. He assured Japanese investors that the Philippine government implemented reforms to make the country one of the most attractive destinations for foreign investments in Asia.

One of these is the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises to Maximize Opportunities for Reinventing the Economy (CREATE MORE) Act, which provides a more competitive and generous package of fiscal and non-fiscal incentives and exempts export-oriented enterprises from value-added tax.

Recto said the Philippines is also one of the fastest-growing economies in the world and underscored the Philippines' demographic sweet spot, with a median age of just 25 years old, offering Japan a unique strategic opportunity to form a powerful demographic partnership. "Paired with Japan's median age of 49, together we can form a powerful demographic partnership: your capital and technology, our talent and market," he said.

The Philippine delegation is currently in Osaka to convene the Philippines-Japan High-Level Joint Committee Meeting on Infrastructure Development and Economic Cooperation.

The delegation will meet with their Japanese counterparts, led by Dr. Mori Masafumi, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister of Japan, to review progress on big-ticket infrastructure projects financed by Japan and ensure their timely and successful delivery.

They are also set to engage with Japan's top investors through high-level one-on-one meetings and the Philippine Economic Briefing to secure financing support for the Philippines' big-ticket infrastructure projects and to attract more Japanese investments. (PNA) **BY ANNA LEAH GONZALES**

But as long as we're able to manage it within that threshold, I think we are fine. We're built for that," she added. (PNA) **BY JOANN VILLANUEVA**



ONCE IN A LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY', PH SPIKER ON FIVB WORLD TOURNEY

MANILA – Alas Pilipinas is in potentially strong hands with the young guns providing energy and determination to step up for a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity of playing in the FIVB Volleyball Men's World Championship that starts Friday at the SM Mall of Asia Arena.

Italian coach Angiolino Frigoni put his trust in younger players from the UAAP—Michaelo "Buds" Buddin, Jade Disquitado, Louie Ramirez, and Eco Adajar—as well as Josh Ybañez, Leo Ordiales and Peng Taguibolos, and Louie Ramirez, representing the NCAA as a two-time MVP out of the University of Perpetual Help, to prove that the future is bright for Philippine volleyball.

Buddin, who was once a kid from Palawan dreaming of playing in Manila, believes that making it to the historic Alas Pilipinas batch would mean the world to him after being a late call-up last year, stepping up in the Philippines' back-to-back bronze medals in the SEA V-League 2024, where he also won a pair of Best Outside Hitters.

"Honestly, this is a dream come true. I couldn't ask for more. Coming from the province, I just dreamed of making it to Palarong Pambansa, then I played for NU in the UAAP, and now the national team. It just feels like everything's been falling into place, especially if I end up getting lined up for the World Championship," said the 24-year-old Buddin.

"It's a once in a lifetime opportunity to play and represent the country. That would be a huge honor and probably the biggest

moment of my career so far."

For the 25-year-old Ramirez, who has shown versatility at Alas as an outside or opposite hitter, he is also carrying the pride of the NCAA if he makes it to the final roster and debuts on opening day against Tunisia at 7 p.m. after an electrifying kick-off ceremony featuring K-Pop group BOYNEXTDOOR and Cebuana singer-songwriter Karencitta.

"I'm proud that wherever I go, I still carry the NCAA with me. It means a lot to come from there," said Ramirez, who is now playing for Signal in the Spikers' Turf. "This will definitely be one of the best moments of my volleyball career. It's the world championship."

Disquitado, who received a call-up in the 2023 Southeast Asian Games when he was 19, has been the spark plug of the team, giving the much-needed energy from the bench. And for an outside spiker, who was discovered in Santa Rosa, Laguna, it's all about inspiring the next generation of volleyball players.

"Honestly, I never expected to reach this level. I'm really proud of myself for making it this far. It's not easy to get here," said the 21-year-old Disquitado, who was part of National University's five-peat team in the UAAP with Taguibolos, Ordiales and Buddin.

"This means a lot to me, especially for the experience. And for the younger players coming after us, I hope they work hard in training, listen to their coaches, and keep pushing so they can also

reach this level someday." Adajar, the La Salle setter, is facing a tall order of running the plays with Owa Retamar on the world stage. But he vows not to disappoint with his teammates and coaches and the whole Philippine volleyball community rallying behind the team.

"As a rookie and one of the youngest members of Alas, being a setter is definitely one of the toughest roles in volleyball and to top it off, I'm playing on the world stage. But with the guidance of our older teammates, the role doesn't feel too heavy because they're always there to lead us," said the 24-year-old Adajar.

"As a setter working alongside Owa, it's been a great learning experience. We constantly exchange knowledge during training and games. Plus, with the support of the home crowd, I think we'll feel lighter and more confident on the court knowing the Filipino fans are cheering us on."

These up-and-coming Filipino aces may be coming from different programs and have been competing against each other in their respective leagues. But all of them are on the same page, promising to stay ready and contribute when they get a chance to play — if not, they will be showing the same energy cheering for their team.

Alas also battles the No. 23 Egypt on Sept. 16 before taking on Asian powerhouse Iran on Sept. 18.

The final 14 will be known after the preliminary inquiry on Thursday. Tickets for the event are

AYALA FOUNDATION, MVPSF TO DEVELOP WORLD-CLASS ATHLETES

MANILA – Ayala Foundation Inc. (AFI) and the MVP Sports Foundation Inc. (MVPSF) agreed to develop more Filipino athletes who can compete on the global stage.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed by AFI president Tony Lambino and senior director for development programs Emil de Quiros, MVPSF president Al Panlilio with Ayala Corp. chair Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala and MVPSF chair Manny V. Pangilinan in Makati City on Monday.

Philippine Sports Commission Chair Patrick Gregorio witnessed the signing.

The MOU synergizes efforts of AFI's sports development arm, Atletang Ayala, and MVPSF to develop athletes who will excel abroad.

The first initiative created

through the partnership is the Atletang Ayala World Pole Vault Challenge, a brainchild of world No. 7 and Asian Games gold medalist EJ Obiena, at Ayala Triangle in Makati City on Sept. 20 and 21.

Under the MOU, both foundations will provide support to elite athletes, improve grassroots training and development, and collaboration on advocacy initiatives with government agencies supporting national sports development.

Atletang Ayala and MVPSF shall "provide comprehensive support to Filipino athletes" in their respective programs and collaborate to "establish sustainable pathways for athlete discovery and development."

"Right now, our next world champions could be anywhere in the Philippines, dreaming about their

first international match but finding themselves with limited or even no opportunities to compete," Zobel said in a news release Tuesday.

"We have an excellent opportunity to be the bridge between their dreams and reality. Let's work together and show them what's possible."

The two parties will engage government partners to explore opportunities for sports development and find ways to use sports in developing future leaders who can make a positive social impact.

"Sports is a metaphor for life. The kind of virtues and qualities you need in sports are the same ones you need in life: Hard work, discipline, focus, resilience," Pangilinan said. (PNA) **BY JEAN MALANUM**

NO OTHER GOAL BUT GOLD FOR PH FIVE IN THAILAND SEA GAMES

MANILA – The Philippines is looking at no less than retaining the men's basketball title at the 33rd Southeast Asian (SEA) Games set Dec. 9 to 20 in Thailand.

Norman Black, the multi-titled former Philippine Basketball Association (PBA) coach, said they are going to do everything possible to achieve the goal.

"Our preparations are going to be short that's why we need to get guys who can play together very quickly and who can play together very well," Black said during the Philippine Sportswriters Association Forum at the conference hall of the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex in Manila. Black's challenge in forming the team is the conflict of schedule for PBA players, collegiate players and those playing

as imports in Japan and Korea.

"Once the team is formed, we will be ready," Black assured. "It's gonna be tough. It's not gonna be easy. But we still have the talent to win the Southeast Asian Games."

Black was the also the coach of the Philippine team, led by collegiate stars Greg Slaughter, Kiefer Ravena, Chris Tiu and Ray Parks, that bagged gold in the 2011 Jakarta SEA Games.

Already in the fold for Thailand are naturalized players Justin Brownlee, who helped Gilas win in the 2023 Cambodia SEA Games, and Ange Kouame.

Others who have committed to play for the SEAG are Parks, Matthew Wright, Remy Martin, Dave Ildefonso, Jason Brickman and Veejay Pre.

Black said he has reached out to certain players but would rather keep things under wraps until their confirmation.

Once the initial pool of

players is formed, he would call for practices every Monday and prior to departure for Thailand. The team will then practice eight to nine straight days. He said winning the gold this time would be far different than 14 years ago in the Indonesian capital.

"It's a lot different now. Things have changed at how teams are recruiting players now. Things are different in the sense that everybody has improved in Southeast Asia," he said. "But the goal will definitely be to win the gold. There's a lot of work to be done."

Meanwhile, Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas executive director Erika Dy talked about their programs, including further promoting the sport in public schools in collaboration with the Department of Education and Philippine Sports Commission.

"Hopefully, we will be signing a memorandum of agreement soon," said Dy. (PNA) **BY JEAN MALANUM**

available through the official website: <https://www.philippineswch2025.com> (PR)