

PGC EXTENDS FINANCIAL AID TO 1,892 ISKOLAR NG LALAWIGAN IN NAIC



CANCER PREVENTABLE WITH HEALTHY LIFESTYLE AND SCREENING, SAYS ADVOCATE

TAGAYTAY CITY, Cavite (PIA) — The Philippine Cancer Society (PCS) has noted that an individual's economic situation and lifestyle choices may help prevent the risk of

developing cancer. Speaking at a media forum hosted by the Department of Health (DOH) last November 27, Romeo Marcaida, Operations Manager, warned that an

individual's lifestyle such as unhealthy food choices and lack of physical activity increases their risk of developing cancer. "But the profile of vulnerability depends on

the individual's lifestyle, especially those who have no time to exercise and eat street food. Most of the 50 percent are in the low income population, but this data can be biased,"

Marcaida said. While a patient's economic situation—specifically their ability to afford fresh and nutritious food—does contribute to various cancer risks, he cautioned that this should not be the only factor patients consider.

"Actually, the vulnerability for most cancer risk factors can be seen among the poor not only here in the Philippines, but in other countries as well. We have data that many of our poor kababayans are availing the patient admission program of the Philippine General Hospital (PGH)." According to 2022 data from the Global Cancer Observatory (Globocan), breast and lung cancers are the top cancer cases in the Philippines, recording 33,079 cases and 23,728 cases, respectively.

"About half of the cancer deaths are attributed to potentially quantifiable risk factors. This disease [can be attributed] to lifestyle factors and about 51 percent of these cases are

The Provincial Government of Cavite through its Provincial Scholarship Program under the leadership of Governor Abeng Remulla, extended financial assistance to 1,892 students during the Iskolar ng Lalawigan ng Cavite educational assistance distribution held on December 2, at Cavite State University–Naic Campus.

Joining Governor Abeng Remulla were Vice Governor Ram Revilla Bautista, Naic Vice Mayor Jacinta Remulla, and 8th District Board Member Jasmin Maligaya Bautista, who expressed their support and reaffirmed their continued commitment to supporting scholars.

Through programs like the Iskolar ng Lalawigan, the Provincial Government of Cavite remains steadfast in investing in the education of the youth, recognizing them as vital partners in building a stronger and more progressive province. ---R. Tanael / Cavite- PIO



potentially avoidable," said Marcaida.

He added, "Around one-third (35%) of cancer cases are preventable, meaning they can be prevented through medical intervention such as vaccines or screenings. Another 42% are potentially avoidable through a combination of medicine and lifestyle changes."

Access to health services, such as annual screenings and tests may also help in early cancer detection and treatment, according to Marcaida. (PB-PIA4A) BY PATRICIA BERMUDEZ

GEA POLICE ARRESTS SUSPECT, SEIZES LOOSE FIREARM IN CAVITE

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite— As part of the PNP's intensified campaign against loose firearms, personnel of the Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo Municipal Police Station, led by PMAJ HILARIO G LACASTE JR, Chief of Police, successfully arrested alias Pedro, following the implementation of a Search Warrant in Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, Cavite, on December 18, 2025.

The operation resulted in the confiscation of a caliber .45 pistol, magazines, live ammunition, and firearm accessories in violation of Republic Act 10591. The search was conducted in the presence of barangay officials and documented using Alternative Recording Devices to

ensure transparency and adherence to legal procedures.

The suspect is currently under police custody and inquest proceedings are underway.

PCOL ARIEL R RED, Acting Provincial Director of Cavite PPO, emphasized the significance of the operation stating, "This successful operation highlights our sustained efforts to curb the proliferation of loose firearms in Cavite. We will continue to enforce the law decisively to prevent firearms-related crimes and ensure the safety of our communities. The Cavite Police remain steadfast in its mission to protect lives and maintain peace and order."

HALOS KALAHATING MILYON PISONG HALAGA NG SHABU, NASAMSAM; LIMA KATAO ARESTADO SA BUY-BUST SA IMUS CITY

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite— Limang (5) indibidwal, kabilang ang dalawang (2) High Value Individuals (HVI), ang naaresto sa isinagawang buy-bust operation ng Provincial Drug Enforcement Unit (PDEU) ng Cavite Police Provincial Office (PPO) sa Imus City, Cavite, dakong alas-6:30 ng gabi ngayong Disyembre 17, 2025.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL CHESTER NOEL R BORLONGAN, C, PIU, ang mga suspek na sina alyas JOHN (HVI), SHERRY (HVI), JOEL (Street Level Individual o SLI), NERVIN (SLI), at CARLA (SLI).

Ang operasyon ay nagresulta sa pagkakakumpiska ng anim (6) na heat-sealed transparent plastic sachet na naglalaman ng pinaghihinalaang shabu. Ang tinatayang bigat ng

nasamsam na ilegal na droga ay umaabot sa 67 gramo, na may Standard Drug Price (SDP) na ₱455,600.00.

Bukod sa droga, nakumpiska rin ang isang (1) piraso ng ₱500.00 bill na ginamit bilang buy-bust money.

Ang mga naarestong suspek ay nahaharap sa kasong paglabag sa Seksyon 5 (Sale) at Seksyon 11 (Possession) ng Article II ng Republic Act 9165 o Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002.

Sa kanyang pahayag, sinabi ni PCOL ARIEL R RED, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite Police Provincial Office, "Ang matagumpay na operasyong ito ay nagpapatunay ng aming walang sawang pagpupursige na sugpuin ang ilegal na droga sa

MUNICIPAL LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON SA KASONG ESTAFA, ARESTADO NG NAIC POLICE

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite— Naaresto ng mga tauhan ng Naic Municipal Police Station ang isang Municipal Level Most Wanted Person sa Naic, Cavite dakong alas-4:04 ng hapon ng Disyembre 16, 2025.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL JEFFERSON P ISON, Acting Chief of Police ng Naic MPS, ang akusado na si alyas JOHN, residente ng Trece Martires City, Cavite.

Ang pag-aresto ay isinagawa ng mga Warrant Officers ng Naic MPS sa

bisa ng Warrant of Arrest para sa limang (5) bilang ng kasong ESTAFA na may inirekomendang piyansa na ₱18,000.00 bawat kaso.

Sa kanyang pahayag, sinabi ni PCOL ARIEL R RED, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite Police Provincial Office, "Ang pagkakaaresto sa isang Municipal Level Most Wanted Person ay patunay ng mas pinaigting na operasyon ng Cavite PPO laban sa mga kriminal at ng aming patuloy na pangako na ipatupad ang batas at protektahan ang mamamayan."

STREET LEVEL INDIVIDUAL, ARESTADO SA BUY-BUST OPERATION SA DASMARIÑAS CITY

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite— Naaresto ng mga tauhan ng Dasmariñas City Police Station, sa pakikipag-ugnayan sa Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, ang isang Street Level Individual matapos ang ikinasagang Buy-bust operation sa Dasmariñas City dakong alas-11:40 ng gabi noong Disyembre 21, 2025.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL REGINO L OÑATE, hepe ng Dasmariñas CCPS ang suspek na si alyas "Amino" at residente ng Dasmariñas City, Cavite.

Isinagawa ang operasyon ng mga operatiba ng Dasmariñas CCPS sa ilalim ng pakikipagkoordinasyon sa PDEA. Ang buy-bust operation ay maayos na naitala gamit ang Alternative Recording

Device, kung saan aktuwal na nagbenta ang suspek ng hinihinalang shabu sa isang pulis na nagsilbing poseur buyer kapalit ng isang pirasong limang-daang piso na ginamit bilang marked money. Matapos ang transaksyon, agad na inaresto ang suspek at ipinaalam sa kanya ang kanyang Miranda Rights at Anti-Torture Rights. Nakumpiska mula sa kanyang pag-iingat at kontrol ang dalawang pirasong heat-sealed transparent plastic sachets na naglalaman ng hinihinalang shabu na may kabuuang timbang na 25.48 gramo at may tinatayang standard drug price na ₱173,264.00, gayundin ang isang pirasong ₱500.00 bill na ginamit bilang buy-bust money.

Ang mga nakumpiskang ebidensya ay dadalhin sa Provincial Forensic Unit sa Imus City para sa laboratory examination. Ang suspek ay kasalukuyang nasa kustodiya ng Dasmariñas CCPS habang inihahanda ang mga kaukulang dokumento para sa inquest

PROVINCIAL LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON, ARESTADO NG CARMONA PNP

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite— Naaresto ng mga tauhan ng Carmona Component City Police Station (CCPS) ang isang Provincial Level Most Wanted Person sa isinagawang joint police operation sa Carmona City, Cavite dakong 1:10 ng madaling araw ng Disyembre 17, 2025.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL MELVIN M BALBA, Chief of Police ng Carmona CCPS, ang akusado na si alyas JOY, residente ng Carmona City, Cavite. Isinagawa ng mga warrant operatives ng Carmona CCPS (Lead Unit) katuwang ang mga tauhan ng 402nd Alpha Maneuver Company, RMFB4A, ang operasyon laban sa wanted person gamit ang

dalawang (2) Alternative Recording Devices (ARDs), na nagresulta sa pagkakaaresto ng akusado para sa kasong Qualified Theft through Falsification of Documents by Private Individuals, sa ilalim ng Article 48 kaugnay ng Articles 308, 310 at 172 ng Revised Penal Code (22 counts).

Sa kanyang pahayag, sinabi ni PCOL ARIEL R RED, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite Police Provincial Office, "Ang patuloy na pag-aresto sa mga wanted person ay patunay ng mas pinaigting na operasyon ng Cavite Police upang maipatupad ang batas at mapanatili ang kapayapaan at kaayusan sa lalawigan."

REGIONAL LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON, ARESTADO NG TRECE MARTIRES CITY PNP

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite— Naaresto ng mga tauhan ng Trece Martires Component City Police Station ang isang Regional Level Most Wanted Person matapos maisilbi ang Warrant of Arrest sa Trece Martires City, Cavite dakong alas-4:35 ng hapon ng Disyembre 16, 2025.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL DENNIS A VILLANUEVA, proceedings sa Tanggapan ng City Prosecutor ng Dasmariñas City dahil sa paglabag sa Sections 5 at 11, Article II ng Republic Act 9165.

Sa isang pahayag, sinabi ni PCOL ARIEL R RED, Provincial Director ng Cavite Police Provincial Office, na patuloy na paiigtingin ng kapulisan ang kampanya laban sa ilegal na droga upang mapanatili ang kaayusan at kaligtasan ng mamamayan sa buong lalawigan ng Cavite.

Chief of Police ng Trece Martires CCPS, ang akusado na si alyas BERTO, residente ng Trece Martires City, Cavite. Isinagawa ng mga tauhan ng Warrant Section ng Trece Martires CCPS ang operasyon matapos magpositibo ang akusado sa National Police Clearance (NPC) hit, na nagresulta sa pagsisilbi ng Warrant of Arrest laban sa kanya para sa mga kasong Slight Illegal Detention (Art. 268, RPC) at Robbery (Art. 293, RPC).

Sa pahayag ni PCOL ARIEL R RED, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite PPO, "Ang patuloy na pagkakaaresto sa mga Most Wanted Person ay patunay ng walang humpay na pagsisikap ng Cavite Police na maipatupad ang batas at mapanatili ang kapayapaan at kaayusan sa lalawigan."

FORGING SYNERGIES FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH: CAVITE ALIGNS MSME PROGRAMS WITH MSMED PLAN 2025-2028

The Office of the Provincial Cooperatives Development Officer (OPCDO), brought key stakeholders to the same room during the event "Forging Synergies for Inclusive Growth: A Consultative Meeting on MSME Program Convergence with the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development (MSMED) Plan 2025-2028," held on December 4, at the New Provincial Government Center in Trece Martires City.

The day-long engagement convened 48 participants representing 32 agencies, composed of local government units (LGUs), provincial offices, national government agencies, and non-government organizations. The broad participation highlighted a shared commitment to strengthening collaboration and aligning programs toward a unified, inclusive, and future-ready MSME development agenda for the province.

In her welcome remarks, Ms. Myrachel P. Cuadra, Officer-in-Charge of OPCDO, emphasized that meaningful growth for micro, small, and medium enterprises is best achieved through strong inter-agency convergence. Messages of support followed from Ms. Sheryll S. Loyola, Chairperson of the Provincial Government of Cavite Employees and Community Multi-purpose Cooperative (PGCECC) and Livelihood Division Head of OPCDO, and Ms. Lilibeth R. Chavez, OIC Provincial Director of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Cavite, both underscoring the importance of inclusive, sustainable, and resilient MSME development.

Setting the direction for the discussions, Ms. Liza C. Gabatan, Entrepreneurial Division Head of OPCDO, presented an overview of the activity, outlining its objectives and the

critical role of coordination in translating policy into impact.

The morning session was highlighted by the presentation of the MSMED Plan 2025-2028 by Ms. Susan Mae Salonga, Assistant Director of the Bureau of Small and Medium Enterprise Development (BSMED)-DTI. Her comprehensive discussion of national MSME priorities was followed by an interactive question-and-answer segment, allowing participants to clarify strategies and identify concrete opportunities for program alignment.

Existing MSME programs and services of LGUs and other stakeholders which were collated beforehand by the OPCDO was then presented, fostering transparency and surfacing areas for complementation and convergence. In the afternoon, stakeholders took part in a workshop session on MSME program alignment with the MSMED Plan 2025-2028, translating national strategies into actionable provincial and local initiatives.

The consultative meeting concluded with action planning and presentations of the harmonized Cavite MSME Development Plan and convergence opportunities, capped by a Pledge of Support and Commitment Setting. This collective affirmation reinforced the resolve of partner agencies and stakeholders to move forward not in silos, but in synergy.

Overall, activity marked a significant step toward institutionalizing program convergence in Cavite ensuring that MSME interventions are coordinated, inclusive, and responsive, and that economic growth across the province is not only sustained, but shared. — **R. Dones / Cavite-PIO**

CAVITE HOLDS SEMINAR VS. ILLEGAL RECRUITMENT AND TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

The Office of the Provincial Public Employment Service Manager, in coordination with DOLE and the Department of Migrant Workers, conducted the "Cavite Protecting Lives and Rights: An Anti-Illegal Recruitment and Trafficking in Persons Campaign Seminar" on December 1 at the New Provincial Government Center, Trece Martires City. The whole-day activity highlighted the province's continuing efforts to protect Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and jobseekers from illegal recruitment and human trafficking.

Learning sessions were conducted by resource speakers from the DMW Regional Office, namely Ms. Maria Corazon C. Foncardas and Ms. Patricia C. Sison, both Labor and Employment Officers of the Department. The sessions covered key topics such as DMW programs and services,

illegal recruitment, trafficking in persons, AIR- and TIP-related laws, common modus operandi, and the "5 Paalala," which aim to help participants avoid becoming victims.

In the afternoon, Ms. Lovelyn Costa-Giron De Lara of the Office of the Provincial Social Welfare Development Officer presented accomplishments on OFW-related programs, highlighting conducted orientations, welfare assistance provided, and reintegration programs for OFWs and their families.

Through the seminar, the Provincial Government of Cavite reaffirmed its commitment to safeguarding the rights, welfare, and dignity of workers by promoting awareness, education, and stronger protection against illegal recruitment and trafficking in persons. — **R. Tanael / Cavite-PIO**

2025 PGC PRAISE AWARDS SHINES A SPOTLIGHT ON PUBLIC SERVICE EXCELLENCE

On December 10, the Provincial Government of Cavite (PGC), through the Office of the Provincial Human Resource Management Officer and the Program on Awards and Incentives for Service Excellence (PRAISE) Committee, successfully organized the 2025 PRAISE Awards at the New Provincial Government Center in Trece Martires City, recognizing the exemplary commitment and contribution of Cavite's public servants towards the province's success.

During the awarding, ten PGC Best Organizations were recognized and one was awarded with plaque of appreciation. For the service awards, a total of 68 employees were recognized for their dedicated service to the government, and nine (9) posthumous awardees were honored for the legacy

they have engraved to the provincial government.

Atty. Judith A. Dongallo-Chicano, Assistant Commissioner for Professionalization and Cooperation of the Civil Service Commission graced the occasion giving her profound insights on government service. Also in attendance were Board Member Morit Sison, Sangguniang Panlalawigan Chair of the Committee on Personnel Affairs, and Provincial Administrator Engr. Gilbert Gandia, who both extended their felicitations to the awardees.

The 2025 PRAISE Awards was capped off with a continued commitment and dedication of Cavite's public servants in delivering public service with integrity, compassion, and professionalism. — **J. Reyes / Cavite-PIO**

EDITORIAL

Kilos-Protستا Kontra Katiwalian

Iba't-ibang grupo, nagsagawa ng kilos-protستا na ang panawagan ay ang pagpapakulong ng mga sangkot sa katiwalian.

Ilang buwan na rin ang nakakalipas nang pumutok ang balita ukol sa mga katiwaliang naganap sa bansa. Mga mamamayan ang naghihirap ngunit walang nananagot sa isyu na ito. Kaya naman, kailan pa matatapos ang problema kung walang mananagot?

Sana ay mapakinggan ang hinaing ng bawat Pilipino gayong sila mismong ng unang naapektuhan dito at higit na naghihirap sa bawat isyu ng katiwaliang nagaganap sa ating bansa.



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EXPANDED ZERO BALANCE BILLING FOR HEALTH WORKERS EYED

MANILA—The Department of Health (DOH) is studying the possibility of expanding the zero balance billing coverage to semi-private rooms for barangay health workers (BHW).

The plan, announced by Health Secretary Teodoro Herbosa on Friday, is aligned with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s directive to broaden the program's reach nationwide.

"Parte ng suhestyon ni Secretary of Health ay para sa mga BHW na ma-aadmit sa semi-private ward ng mga ospital ng DOH, nang walang babayaran (Part of the

secretary's suggestion is to allow BHWs to be admitted in semi-private wards of any DOH hospital without having to pay for bills)," the DOH said in a statement Saturday.

Under the zero balance billing, patients in DOH hospitals no longer have to pay for medical services, medicines, and the professional fees of doctors.

In September, the DOH reported that the daily average admissions in DOH hospitals increased from 3,297 to 4,067 since the policy was announced. (PNA) **BY JOYCE ANN L. ROCAMORA**

DOLE ASSISTS 359 WORKERS, MSMES IN SOCCSKSARGEN IN 2025

MANILA — The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) 12 (Soccksargen) has provided assistance to 359 workers and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) across the region in 2025 through its Adjustment Measures Program (AMP).

In a statement on Saturday, DOLE-12 said it released PHP7,906,081 to help enterprises sustain operations, protect jobs, and adapt to prevailing economic challenges.

The assistance, implemented throughout the year, benefited 16 establishments from various sectors, including agriculture, food processing, education, retail, services, and coffee-related enterprises.

Of the assisted firms, 10 were micro enterprises, four were small enterprises, and two were medium enterprises.

Beneficiaries included cooperatives, agribusiness

companies, food manufacturers, coffee shops, service providers, and learning institutions. DOLE said the AMP interventions helped firms retain workers, stabilize income streams, and enhance productivity through support for equipment, raw materials, and operational needs, contributing to employment preservation and local economic resilience.

OIC Regional Director Raymond Fel Sajor said the program is part of the government's broader labor and employment recovery and sustainability initiatives, aimed at keeping enterprises viable while safeguarding workers' welfare.

DOLE-12 reiterated its commitment to continue rolling out responsive labor and employment programs that promote decent work, enterprise recovery, and long-term economic stability in the region. (FERDINAND PATINIO/PNA)

PNP VOWS JUSTICE FOR SLAIN OFFICER, INJURED COPS IN QUEZON CLASH

MANILA — The Philippine National Police (PNP) on Monday vowed to hunt down the members of a gun-for-hire syndicate tagged in the killing of a police officer and wounding of two others during a skirmish in Candelaria, Quezon.

Pat. Ron Jay Chavez of the First Quezon Provincial Mobile Force Company (First QPMFC) was killed, while his teammates, M/ Sgt. Sonny Caringal and Pat. Kim Kenneth Averia were wounded, when an armed group opened fire on their routine mobile patrol in Sitio Pulyok, Barangay San Isidro on Dec. 19.

"This incident reminds us of the risks our police officers face every day in the performance of their duty. We mourn the loss of Patrolman Chavez, whose service and bravery will not be forgotten, and we assure his family and our wounded personnel that the PNP stands with them," PNP acting chief Lt. Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez said in a statement.

Nartatez and other PNP officials personally visited the wounded officers at the United Candelaria Doctors Hospital on Sunday.

During the visit, Nartatez awarded them the Medalya ng Sugatang Magiting and the Medalya

ng Kadakilaan to recognize the officers' courage and sacrifice in the line of duty, and extended financial assistance to support their recovery.

He then directed PRO4A and the Quezon Police Provincial Office to sustain intelligence-driven operations against gun-for-hire syndicates and other organized armed groups operating in the region. He stressed that those responsible for the death of Chavez shall be held accountable.

According to reports, the three officers noticed suspicious individuals near a banana plantation during a routine patrol and approached them. The suspects, carrying M16 rifles and a pistol, opened fire on the approaching police officers.

The alleged leader of the group, alias Mark, was killed in a follow-up operation by the Quezon Police Provincial Office. Police recovered firearms and an abandoned vehicle while operations continue to track down the remaining suspects.

Nartatez also assured that the PNP will continue providing financial, psychological, and logistical support to the families of the slain and wounded officers. (PNA)

BY CHRISTOPHER LLOYD CALIWAN

PNP VOWS SWIFTFORCEMENT OF RESOLUTIONS ON CASES VS. ERRING COPS

MANILA — The Philippine National Police (PNP) on Monday vowed to enforce the resolutions of the National Police Commission (Napolcom) on pending cases involving erring police officers.

"We are serious in upholding discipline and the integrity of the PNP as an organization. There are cases that are purely harassments in nature against our personnel who are just doing their job, and we assure our support to them. But to the criminal-minded and those who abuse their authority as

police officers, you have no place in the PNP and we will make sure that you will be stripped of the uniform and badge," PNP acting chief Lt. Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. said in a statement.

This came after the Napolcom reported that it had successfully resolved pending cases against erring police officers, including backlogs that had accumulated for more than 25 years.

Napolcom Vice Chairperson and Executive Officer Rafael Vicente Calinisan described

DOTR TO FINISH 16,575 HOUSING UNITS FOR NSCS-AFFECTED FAMILIES BY 2026

MANILA—The Department of Transportation (DOTr) is speeding up the completion of 16,575 housing units for families affected by the North-South Commuter Railway (NSCR) System by end of 2026.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has directed the DOTr to ensure the timely completion of the housing units and to see to it that affected families are guaranteed of available houses in time for the operations of the NSCR.

Transportation Secretary Giovanni Lopez said the DOTr and other concerned agencies are ensuring the speedy completion of the housing units for the affected families.

"Kabilin-bilinan ng Pangulo dapat madaliin na ang mga housing units para matirhan na agad ito ng mga kababayan nating apektado ng NSCR. Nakikipagtulungan tayo sa mga ahensyang responsable para sa housing units para matapos agad ito (The President has ordered that housing units be completed so that our countrymen affected by the NSCR can live in them immediately. We are working with the agencies responsible for the housing units to complete them immediately)," Lopez said as quoted in a news release on Monday.

In the NSCR's south segment, the DOTr

is working with the Social Housing Finance Corporation (SHFC) to deliver units in Laguna, providing in-city and near-city housing developments in San Pedro, Biñan, Santa Rosa, Calamba and in Naic, Cavite.

These include Sining Residence II (1,920 units), Sining Residence I (528 units), The Meadows (2,030 units), Rizal Ville (2,130 units) and Naic in Cavite (5,452 units).

In the north segment, the DOTr is partnering with the National Housing Authority for three relocation sites in Pampanga and one in Bulacan, targeting 4,515 informal settler families to be relocated in Angeles City, City of San Fernando and Calumpit in Bulacan.

Transportation Assistant Secretary for Right of Way and Site Acquisition (ROWSA) IC Calaguas and SHFC Engineer Renalyn Nacpil conducted site inspections to ensure the timely completion of the projects.

The 147-kilometer NSCR System will traverse from Clark International Airport (CRK) in Pampanga to Calamba in Laguna, reducing travel time from CRK to Calamba to less than 2.5 hours from the current four hours via land travel.

It will feature the country's first Airport Express Service, which will connect CRK to Makati in less than an hour and will connect CRK to Alabang in less than one hour and 15 minutes. It will also feature the country's first Through Train Interoperations with the Metro Manila Subway.

The 35-station rail system is expected to generate 350,000 jobs during construction and operations, while serving almost 1 million passengers daily at full operations. (PR)

action demonstrates the seriousness of both Napolcom and the PNP in internal cleansing and in holding erring officers accountable. (PNA) **BY CHRISTOPHER LLOYD CALIWAN**

PH RE-ELECTED AT INT'L DEV'T LAW ORGANIZATION

MANILA – The Philippines has been re-elected by consensus as an ad hoc member of the Standing Committee of the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) for 2025-2027, the Philippine Embassy in Italy said.

In a statement on Saturday, the embassy said this re-election to an international body that advances rule of law reaffirms Manila's "active role and sustained commitment to advancing rule of law and access to justice."

Ambassador and Philippine Permanent Representative Neal Imperial, who represents the Philippines at the Committee, reaffirmed the country's strong support for IDLO's mandate to promote effective justice systems and build strong, lasting institutions as foundations for sustainable development.

During the session, the Philippines expressed its appreciation to IDLO and its donors and partners, particularly the United States and the European Union, for the significant progress achieved in expanding access to justice, modernizing legal frameworks, and strengthening the Philippine justice sector capacity.

The Philippines also underscored the importance of enhanced burden- and responsibility-sharing to enable IDLO to continue delivering results amid ongoing funding shortfalls.

Meanwhile, the country emphasized the urgent need to strengthen the rule of law, ensure accountability, and protect human rights.

"We must be candid: Sustainable Development Goal 16 – peace, justice and inclusive institutions – remains far from being achieved in the foreseeable future. Conflict and geopolitical tensions persist and have even exacerbated," Imperial said.

"To many, access to justice remains limited. Even

where progress is made, vulnerable groups and marginalized communities, especially women and girls and Indigenous Peoples, continue to be left behind." He also reiterated the Philippines' continued call for "consistent adherence to a rules-based international order," including respect for the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), its dispute settlement mechanisms, and the just and sustainable governance of oceans.

"As a maritime nation, international law, particularly in maritime spaces, is essential to our future. The rule of law is the heartbeat of Philippine democracy, enshrined in its Constitution. It guides our pursuit of justice, equality, and accountable governance," he said.

"While challenges remain, we have seen how the rule of law protects our people and strengthens our institutions."

In her report to the Assembly on the Organization's achievements, challenges, and strategic priorities for 2025, IDLO Director-General Jan Beagle said multilateralism remains "indispensable."

"I remain more convinced than ever that whether the goal is to reduce conflict and violent extremism; to eradicate poverty; to protect human rights; to combat corruption and illicit financial flows; to manage migration more effectively; or to foster stable environments for trade, investment, and innovation – the rule of law is a critical part of the solution," she said.

The election took place on Dec. 12 at the Consiglio Nazionale dell'Economia e del Lavoro (CNEL) in Rome, Italy, during the 2025 Annual Meeting of the IDLO Assembly of Parties.

The IDLO is an intergovernmental organization composed of 40 Member Parties and governed by the Assembly of Parties, the Standing Committee, and the Audit and Finance Committee.

NGCP TAKES OVER CATICLAN-UNIDOS 69KV LINE

MANILA – The National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP) on Friday said it has taken over the ownership, operations and maintenance of the Caticlan-Unidos 69kV line, which is near the Caticlan Airport, formerly managed by the Aklan Electric Cooperative (AKELCO).

This, after the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC), in a Nov. 21, 2024 decision, reclassified the said line as a transmission facility from being a sub-transmission asset.

NGCP said this shift, "means, upon the completion of the Nabas-Caticlan-Boracay 138kV Line, the existing 69kV line will also have a transmission function and will be transferred to NGCP".

The said transmission has suffered from corrosion due to water wave splash and salt spray, which has resulted in power failures in its service areas.

A certificate of turnover for the takeover was signed on Nov. 21, 2025, but NGCP has yet to issue a certificate of acceptance

due to reservations because of lines and poles for replacement, and a lack of right-of-way (ROW) documents, among others.

Prior to the management transition, NGCP said it had implemented corrective measures such as establishing a bypass line to temporarily fix the damaged transmission line, and is also expediting the completion of the Nabas-Caticlan-Boracay 138kV Transmission Line project, aimed to be the new backbone line.

"We fully recognize the challenges associated with the condition of the inherited asset, underscored by the brownouts experienced earlier this month," NGCP said.

"With the line now under NGCP, we are mobilizing our full technical and financial resources to implement immediate, medium-term, and long-term solutions. Our teams are working around the clock to ensure reliable power for the province." (With a report from **JOANN VILLANUEVA/PNA**)

DA EXTENDS SUGAR IMPORT BAN, READIES MOLASSES IMPORT RULES

MANILA – The Department of Agriculture (DA) on Friday confirmed the extension of the moratorium on sugar imports until the end of the harvest season, citing stable and strong domestic raw sugar production and the need to prioritize local consumption.

In a statement, Agriculture

Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said the DA, through the Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA), will closely monitor actual domestic output to keep an accurate accounting of refined sugar stocks.

"I have instructed SRA Administrator Pablo Azcona to closely monitor local sugar refinery production and provide regular updates, so we maintain an accurate picture of our standard and premium grade refined stocks," Tiu Laurel said. Last Oct. 15, the agriculture chief first announced the import ban, citing possible extension through the end of the milling season or December. The DA and SRA, meanwhile, are gearing up for the proposed rules on the importation of molasses

to ensure protection of local producers.

"This ensures local supply is prioritized before any imports are considered," Azcona said.

With the regulatory framework in place, users of molasses are required to buy and withdraw domestic molasses first before being allowed to import at a predetermined ratio, subject to SRA's approval. The DA also announced a buying program of raw sugar to secure a 90-day buffer stock.

"We've seen over the past two years that when a buying program is implemented, prices recover. SRA has long been ready, so we are moving forward," Tiu Laurel said, citing that the move will help stabilize prices and support farmers.

Under the new program,

PLDT REPORTS DROP IN CABLE THEFT IN 2025

MANILA – Telecommunications company (telco) PLDT on Thursday reported a drop in cable and telco equipment theft in most of 2025 and attributed it to stronger partnerships with local government units (LGUs), police and communities nationwide.

In a statement, PLDT and its wireless subsidiary Smart (PLDT-Smart) highlighted their collaboration with barangays through the intensified rollout of the asset protection project dubbed "Bayanihan." As part of the project, PLDT-Smart's Asset Protection and Security Governance (APSRG) group conducted collaboration sessions with barangays in Makati, Dagupan, Davao City, Liloan, Calamba, General Santos, Quezon City, Rodriguez in Rizal, Pasay, Cagayan de Oro and Dasmariñas, Cavite in 2025.

"Our intensified collaboration with barangays this year highlights the importance of bringing communities into the conversation when

it comes to protecting our network," PLDT-Smart vice president and head of property Leo Gonzales said.

He added that every cable of equipment safeguarded from theft helps ensure uninterrupted connectivity for their customers.

"By working hand in hand with local leaders and residents, we are not simply preventing theft, we are also ensuring that digital services remain accessible and reliable for millions of Filipinos," Gonzales said.

PLDT-Smart Security and Central Command head, retired Col. Romeo Basco, said such partnerships make a "real difference" on the ground.

"When barangays and local authorities actively help monitor, report incidents, or apprehend thieves, we can respond faster and prevent bigger disruptions. This shared sense of responsibility empowers communities to protect the infrastructure that keeps them connected," Basco said.

In 2024, PLDT-Smart logged almost 1,000 loss incidents, mostly involving copper cables.

In certain areas in Manila, such thefts occurred as often as every three days.

Since then, PLDT-Smart logged a 34 percent drop in apprehension incidents and a 24 percent decrease in apprehended suspects from January to November of this year compared to the same period last year.

"This underscores the effectiveness of the Group's strengthened security measures, which include efforts to deter theft before it occurs. These results mark a critical milestone in the Group's mission to curb losses, maintain service reliability, and uphold public trust," he said. (PNA) **BY RAYMOND CARL DELA CRUZ**

buyers will procure up to 400,000 metric tons of raw sugar, which will support 100,000 MT allocation of raw sugar export quota to the United States. (PNA)

BY STEPHANIE SEVILLANO

CEBU LAUNCHES TUBURAN SKY TOUR TO BOOST VISITS, JOB CREATION

CEBU CITY, Cebu (PIA) — Local officials, tourism authorities, and private partners have launched a new “aerial tourism” offering aimed at strengthening Tuburan’s position as an emerging tourist destination in Cebu while generating jobs and livelihood opportunities for local communities.

Launched on December 12, the Tuburan Sky Tour Experience offers helicopter tours connecting Mactan, Tuburan, and Bantayan Island.

Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco, who attended the launch, said the new offering adds to Cebu’s diverse tourism portfolio and is expected to attract more domestic and international visitors.

“This is a brand-new product for tourism for Cebu, which adds to its already very diversified landscape, and this will translate to more interest from both international and local tourists,” said Frasco. She added that increased visitor arrivals would help generate employment and business opportunities in host communities.

Frasco also assured visitors of national government support for the initiative, describing it as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen local tourism development across the province.

“The national government, through the Department of Tourism, extends its full support to this very innovative project, which is the first of its kind here in Cebu,” she said.

Tuburan Mayor Christian Daniel Diamante said the tour packages allow travelers to fly from Mactan to Tuburan and Bantayan Island, and back to Mactan, offering aerial views of Cebu’s urban areas, mountain ranges, seas, and key tourist destinations.

The aerial tour operates four dedicated helicopters for three routes: Mactan to Tuburan, Mactan to Bantayan, and Bantayan to Tuburan to Mactan. Tour rates start at P30,000 for up to three passengers for a Mactan-to-Tuburan flight.

The most expensive

package, covering Mactan, Tuburan, and Bantayan Island, costs about P115,000 for up to five passengers.

A short five-minute helicopter tour is also available at P30,000, with a minimum booking of 10 persons.

Diamante invited tourists to visit Tuburan and try the new aerial tour, which complements existing attractions in the town.

“To our travelers and tourists, we invite you to visit our town and experience the activities. I encourage you to try our newly opened Heli Tour for you to have that unique travel experience,” said Diamante.

Tuburan is a second-class municipality located on Cebu’s northwestern coast, about 90 kilometers from Cebu City.

The town is known for its coffee industry, agricultural products, and natural attractions, and has been developing tourism sites that showcase its mountainous terrain and coastal views.

Louise Potencioso, chairperson for the Tuburan Municipal Tourism, Culture, and Heritage Committee, said the initiative is expected to benefit residents by creating jobs and income opportunities, particularly for local entrepreneurs offering goods and services to tourists.

“With the launching of the Tuburan Sky Tour Experience, more tourists will visit our tour destination, and if there’s a tourism spot in a place, the people who live in that spot will be able to make a living out of it,” Potencioso said. She added that the local government is planning additional leisure activities to complement the sky tour and further strengthen Tuburan’s image as a tourist destination.

Aside from aerial tours, Tuburan also offers other tourism activities, including all-terrain vehicle rides, the Bambu Tunnel, and panoramic viewing areas showing Cebu’s mountainous and coastal landscapes. (RGC/PIA7 Cebu) **BY ROBINSON CABARDO JR.**

DTI CONFIRMS STABLE PRICES, AMPLE SUPPLY IN ILOCOS NORTE

LAOAG CITY, Ilocos Norte (PIA) — As the holiday season nears, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Ilocos Norte assures the public that prices of basic and prime holiday commodities remain fair and stable through continuous market monitoring.

DTI Ilocos Norte Trade Industry Specialist Frances Marie Tumamao-Paguirigan said the office has intensified its price and supply monitoring. This ensures retailers comply with the Suggested Retail Price (SRP) of goods, especially holiday staples.

She noted that of the 256 Stock Keeping Units (SKUs) listed in the 2025 Noche Buena Price Guide, prices remained unchanged for about 50 percent, or 129 items. Meanwhile, prices for 95 items (37 percent) increased by one to six percent, while two items recorded a price decrease of two percent.

Based on the latest monitoring report from Dec. 8 to 9, 2025, Tumamao-Paguirigan noted that all groceries in the province are compliant with the SRPs, with no recorded violators so far.

“We have monitored groceries and major retail

stores in Laoag City, Batac City, and San Nicolas, and other parts of the province. Supply is also adequate to meet the expected holiday demand,” she added.

Paguirigan encouraged consumers to refer to the price guide when shopping to make informed decisions and avoid overpriced products.

Consumers can access and download the 2025 price guide through the online document provided by the DTI: <https://tinyurl.com/24648vz9>.

Those who find establishments selling goods beyond the SRP are advised to report the incident to the DTI provincial office at P. Acosta cor. D. Samonte St, Laoag City or through the agency’s official Facebook page.

The DTI officer added that establishments found violating the SRP will receive a letter requiring them to explain the overpricing. Following this, they will be directed to immediately comply with the prescribed prices.

DTI Ilocos Norte urges the public to remain vigilant, reaffirming its commitment to protect consumers and ensure a fair and affordable holiday season for every Ilokano. (CCMT/EJFG, PIA ILOCOS NORTE) **BY EMMA JOYCE F. GUILLERMO**

GOV'T TO ROLL OUT INFRA AUDIT TEAMS, LEARNING HUBS IN MIMAROPA

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro (PIA) — The Regional Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (RDRRMC) MIMAROPA is set to implement an infrastructure audit program, establishing dedicated teams and learning hubs across the region.

Based on the implementation structure presented during the 4th Quarter RDRRMC Full Council Meeting in Manila on December 11, the program will be rolled out through the creation of Local Infrastructure Audit Teams (LIAT) in local government units (LGUs) and a Local Infrastructure Learning Hub (LILHub) at the regional level.

“The LIATs will be responsible for leading the actual conduct of infrastructure audits at the LGU level to ensure structural safety. The composition of these local teams will include provincial or municipal engineers, planning and development officers, DRRMOs, building officials, and representatives from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs),” said Engr. Il Jienrich Marckoe R. Molbog of the Department of the Interior and Local

Government (DILG) MIMAROPA. Supporting these ground teams is the LILHub, designed as a regional support system that LIATs can tap into during actual audits. The hub is also tasked with training future auditors on the use of audit tools.

The LILHub will be headed by the DILG Regional Office. Its membership includes regional offices of national agencies such as the Department of Public Works and Highways, Department of Education, Department of Science and Technology, Department of Health, Office of the Civil Defense, and Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology; local chapters of engineering associations and Higher Education Institutions with Civil Engineering and Architecture programs.

Molbog said that a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) has already outlined the diverse stakeholders joining the LILHub, incorporating academic institutions such as Marinduque State University, Romblon State University, Palawan State University, and Occidental Mindoro State College alongside government line agencies.

“This infrastructure audit mechanism is a key component of the upcoming Regional Disaster Preparedness (RDP) Framework, which aims to unify agency mandates into a single regional direction and standardize preparedness milestones per quarter,” he added.

Meanwhile, DILG affirmed that the comprehensive framework is designed to strengthen LGU guidance and ensure disciplined, coordinated action during high-risk periods. (AS/JBG/PIA MIMAROPA-Oriental Mindoro) **BY ACE SAPIT**

product enhancement, technical consultancy, and human resource development. Through the program, DOST aims to help local enterprises become more productive, competitive, and resilient. (MLE/JPA/PIA9-Zamboanga Sibugay) **BY JOCELYN P. ALVAREZ**

DOST BOOSTS MSME MANUFACTURING CAPACITY WITH MODERN MACHINES

IPIL, Zamboanga Sibugay (PIA) — A local metals and engineering fabricator in Zamboanga Sibugay is set to increase production efficiency, improve product quality, and gets ready to better serve the growing construction sector, following technology upgrading support from the Department of Science and Technology (DOST).

Duque Roofing Center has received funding assistance under DOST’s Small Enterprise Technology Upgrading Program (SETUP), enabling the firm to modernize its manufacturing operations. The support directly benefits the company by strengthening its production capacity while ensuring more consistent

and durable roofing materials for clients across the province and nearby areas.

Through the acquisition of advanced roll forming technologies—including a decking roll forming machine and a roller shutter roll forming machine—the firm is expected to significantly reduce production time, minimize material waste, and standardize product dimensions. These improvements will allow the company to respond more efficiently to increasing market demand without compromising quality. The assistance forms part of the second phase of Duque Roofing Center’s partnership with DOST, with the turnover marking the release of

the first tranche of funds for the implementation of its SETUP-supported technology upgrading project. The intervention reflects DOST’s continuing support for enterprises seeking to scale up through science- and technology-based solutions.

As construction activities continue to expand in the region, the technology upgrade positions the firm to compete more effectively while contributing to local economic activity and job generation.

The support is part of the broader implementation of SETUP, a flagship DOST program that assists micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) through innovation-driven interventions such as process improvement,

BSP: EXCHANGE OF 'UNFIT' BANKNOTES FREE OF CHARGE

MANILA – The public can exchange unfit banknotes without any charge, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) said Monday.

"The public is encouraged to transact with BSP-authorized banks for currency exchange to avoid 'service fees' imposed by individuals or other parties," it said in a statement.

It also assured the public that "the BSP continues to produce fresh banknotes and coins to make these available in banks in anticipation of the expected

surge in currency demand during the Yuletide season."

Along with this assurance is the call for people "to use digital or e-money as cash gifts to their godchildren, family, and friends" instead of giving actual cash in envelopes.

"Using e-wallets and online banking offers a safe and more convenient way to send cash gifts during the Christmas season," it added. **(JOANN VILLANUEVA/PNA)**

ADD'L POWER CHARGES IN '26 TO BOOST CAPACITY – ERC CHIEF

MANILA – The additional charges that will be collected from power consumers starting January 2026 may seem to be a burden, but an official of the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) said it is aimed to encourage more players, which will further boost supply.

Last week, the ERC announced, among others, the collection of Green Energy Auction Allowance (GEA-All) charge amounting to PHP0.0371 per kilowatt-hour starting next month for all power consumers connected to power grids nationwide.

The new charge will fully fund power plants included in the Department of Energy's (DOE) green energy auction, or power plants that produce renewable energy (RE). ERC Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) lawyer Francis Saturnino Juan, in an interview over

Bagong Pilpinas Ngayon on Thursday, said this fee aims to entice more players to put up power plants.

"Kailangan na ma-sustain natin iyong pagkakaroon ng mga karagdagang puhunan dito sa ating power sector dahil pataas nang pataas iyong ating demand so kailangan talaga na mayroong cost recovery para doon sa mamumuhunan para tuluy-tuloy ang pagtatayo ng mga bagong planta. (We need to sustain the presence of additional capital for our power sector since demand is rising, so there is a need for cost recovery for investors to put up more power plants)," he said.

Asked about how the ERC would ensure that the funds would be used for the delivery of efficient service, Juan said the power plant investors will not put up the facilities if they won't produce the product and earn. **(PNA) BY JOANN VILLANUEVA**

DECEMBER TRANSMISSION RATE DECLINES

MANILA – The effective transmission rate for December slipped to PHP1.35 per kilowatt hour (kWh) from last month's PHP1.51/kWh, driven by changes in consumption, officials of the National Grid Corp. of the Philippines (NGCP) said Wednesday.

In a briefing, Julius Ryan Datingaling, NGCP Assistant Vice President and head of the Revenue Management Development, said the rate adjustment in the Luzon grid is a drop of PHP0.22/kWh due to an increase in energy consumption.

On the other hand, the Visayas grid posted a PHP0.22/kWh increase in rate due to a decrease in energy consumption, and the Mindanao grid by PHP0.4/kWh because of an increase in the ancillary service (AS) rate, which is based on the electricity purchased for support of the capacity and is priced per megawatt.

In the same briefing, NGCP spokesperson Cynthia Alabanza explained that

the NGCP does not gain from these rate movements because its collections are capped, and these rates depend on the distribution utilities.

She said the transmission rates are driven by consumption, not the rate of service.

Because of these intricacies, Alabanza underscored the need to unbundle these rates to make them transparent.

"Over the last year, we saw the contribution of the ancillary services on the movement in prices, which is a pass-through cost and does not go to NGCP. So, people would know that if there are rate upticks, it's not solely because of NGCP," she said.

Calamity-hit facilities

Meanwhile, Alabanza said they have fully restored transmission facilities across the country destroyed during the recent calamities.

"It never takes NGCP more than a few weeks to finish restoration," she said, attributing this to the need to immediately address the situation by putting up bypass lines "constructed using what we call ERS, emergency restoration systems."

Alabanza said the ERS are prefabricated tower parts that their linemen can easily configure, depending on the needs of the affected transmission lines.

She said the ERS can also be set up without the need for any heavy equipment, although for remote areas, they use helicopters to transport the parts.

"So that makes it easier and more expedient for NGCP to create that bypass line and restore transmission services immediately, pending the process that it will take for us to do the permanent restoration," she added. **(PNA) BY JOANN VILLANUEVA**

PH'S 2026 UPPER MIDDLE-INCOME ECONOMY TARGET REMAINS – DOF CHIEF

MANILA – The Philippine government's goal to elevate the country to middle-income status by 2026 is still up, Finance Secretary Frederick Go said, citing measures to boost economic growth. Go, in an interview with journalists on Thursday, explained that the middle-income economy is defined by the World Bank based on per capita income, or the average income per person in a country.

Under the WB definition, an upper middle-income economy has a per capita income of between USD4,496 and USD13,935.

To date, the Philippines is classified as a lower middle-income economy, which, under the WB rule has a per capita income of between USD1,136 and USD4,495.

WB data released last July show that the country's gross national product income per capita in 2024 is at USD4,470, short of USD26 to meet the benchmark for upper

middle-income countries.

As part of the bid to elevate the country's classification, Go said the economic team aims "to grow the economy, and make sure that the people, again, we go back to jobs, are earning at that per capita number."

"So, our strategy is to grow the economy and make sure that no one is left behind. Then, when you hurdle that rate, you become an upper-middle income economy," he said. Go said they are keeping the target to achieve this goal by 2026, amidst the challenges.

"You know, one of the problems is, it's defined in dollars. So even if we grow in pesos, if the foreign exchange rate works against us, that's the problem. But to answer your question directly, yes, I am hopeful. Because I believe our economy will grow and I shouldn't make foreign exchange predictions," he added. **(PNA) BY JOANN VILLANUEVA**

DOE, LANDBANK INK PACT FOR GEOTHERMAL EXPLORATION DE-RISKING FACILITY

MANILA – Power sector industry players intending to explore geothermal power in the Philippines can tap USD170-million (around PHP10 billion) de-risking facility starting in the first quarter of 2026.

This, following the signing of a memorandum of agreement (MOA) between Department of Energy (DOE) Secretary Sharon Garin and Land Bank of the Philippines (LandBank) President and Chief Executive Officer Ma. Lynette Ortiz during the Sustainable Energy Awards 2025 in Makati City on Tuesday.

The MOA operationalizes the Philippine Geothermal

Resource De-Risking Facility (PGRDF), and the funding will come from the Manila-based Asian Development Bank (ADB), through a sovereign loan to the national government.

"This partnership represents a significant step toward accelerating geothermal development and reducing investment risks in the sector," Garin said in her speech.

In an interview with journalists, the DOE chief said the government intends to bring back the Philippines' position as second in the world in terms of geothermal power, since it has slid to third or fourth already, after

investors' interests have dwindled due to the high cost of exploration, as well as in terms of government policies.

Funding that will be availed by power sector players from the facility will be considered their obligations if the exploration activities provide strong opportunities, but if not, it will be considered a grant, she said.

"We're hoping that with this facility, there will be more projects on geothermal," she said, adding that successful projects will help ensure available renewable energy capacity in the country. **(PNA) BY JOANN VILLANUEVA**



WRESTLER DINETTE DELIVERS GOLD MEDAL IN SEA GAMES

MANILA – The Philippines secured a gold medal in wrestling, courtesy of Gabriel Thomas Dinette, at the 33rd Southeast Asian Games in Thailand on Friday.

Dinette defeated Singapore's Weng Luen Gary Chow, 4-0, and then Thailand's Chiranuwat Chamnanjan, 4-0, in the men's 86kg freestyle

division at the Pacific Park Shopping Center Sriracha in Chonburi.

Earlier this year, he won the 86kg and the Greco-Roman 82kg divisions in the Philippine Wrestling National Championships. Hayden Tyler Ancheta and Ronil Tubog bagged silver medals on the final day of competition.

Other medalists in

freestyle were Arian Carpio (women's 62kg) and Aliah Rose Gavalez (women's 50kg), silver; and Rea Cervantes (women's 53kg) and Michael Andre Dargani (men's 74kg), bronze.

Jason Baucas (77kg) and Callum Roberts (97kg) bagged the bronze medals in the Greco-Roman category. (PNA) **BY JEAN MALANUM**

PH DOMINATES SEA GAMES BASKETBALL

MANILA – The Philippines proved its supremacy in basketball at the 33rd Southeast Asian Games after beating host Thailand in the men's and women's divisions at the Nimibutr Stadium in Bangkok Friday night.

Gilas Pilipinas relied on a 13-0 run in the fourth quarter, anchored by Jamie Malonzo, to prevail, 70-64, and retain the men's basketball title.

"Right now, it's No. 1 in my books," coach Norman Black said, comparing the hard-fought triumph to his titles in the PBA and UAAP, and his role in the Philippines' run to the gold in the 2011 Games in Indonesia.

Malonzo finished with 17 points, 12 rebounds, three assists, and five steals.

Thailand's decision to impose a ban on naturalized players and those who failed to receive a passport before the age of 16 prompted Gilas to tap five PBA players in Robert Bolick, Poy Erram, Dalph Panopio, Abu Tratter, and Von Pessumal, plus

Adamson center Cedrick Manzano and free agents Jamie Malonzo and Justin Chua.

"I never thought I would be included. We would have liked to have seen Remy Martin, Mike Phillips, (Justin) Brownlee. We wanted to see that in the Philippines, but it didn't happen because of circumstances. They (Thailand) thought if we were the only ones, it would be easy, but we were ready," Bolick said.

Bolick, who scored 10 points, joined hands with Matthew Wright and Malonzo to put Gilas ahead in the third quarter, 41-38, from a 29-38 halftime deficit.

Led by Chanato Jakwaran and Emmanuel Chinedu Ejesu, Thailand wrested the upper hand at 55-54 in the fourth quarter.

Gilas fought back to regain the lead at 67-55, 4:14 remaining, but Thailand rallied to within 68-64, when Jainasuk Nakom hit three free throws off a Thirdy Ravena foul, 47.8 seconds to go.

The Gilas women's team, meanwhile, was led by veteran skipper Afril Bernardino, who delivered 19 points and 12 rebounds en route to a 73-70 victory. Kacey Dela Rosa chipped in 17 points and 16 rebounds, while Sophia Dignadice had 10 points and two assists.

Supavadee Kunchuan finished with 17 points and six rebounds for Thailand, which held a 7-0 run to move within 72-70. Chuck Cabinbin's free throw made it 73-70 in the last 16.9 seconds.

"I can't say anything about the girls. I'm so proud of them. They gave their all. I also like to thank Thailand for playing a good game today. It's been a hard battle going for the gold," head coach Patrick Aquino said.

"It's sweeter because we're not in the Philippines. This is what they really worked hard for. It was a tough game. It was just luck," added Aquino, who also steered the team to the title in Manila (2019) and in Hanoi (2022). (PNA) **BY JEAN MALANUM**

FILIPINAS SET SIGHTS ON COMING BIG BATTLES

MANILA – The Philippine women's national football team, the newly crowned Southeast Asian (SEA) Games champion, is setting its sights on the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Asian Cup set for March next year in Australia.

The Asian Cup serves as a pathway to the 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup in Brazil.

"We'll enjoy this one, we have to enjoy this one because it's been a long time coming for this country to win the SEA Games. We'll rest a little bit and then we have to get ready for the Asian Cup,"

coach Mark Torcaso said in a news release Friday.

The Filipinas made history after a stunning 6-5 victory over eight-time champion Vietnam on Thursday. Torcaso is optimistic that the Filipinas will perform well in their next tournament.

"We saw how disciplined our girls can be against good teams and I truly believe that we can do that against Australia or South Korea and Iran and I truly believe that we can do something special there as well and go to another World Cup," he said.

The Philippines has to finish in the Top 2 against

host Australia, South Korea, and Iran in Group A to reach the quarterfinal round where the four winners will advance to the World Cup and the four losers will contest two other spots in the play-in matches.

"The most pleasing thing for me in this competition (SEA Games) was we showed that we've got a group of players here, both experienced and young players that are ready to fight for our country right from the start of the game to the end of the game, even penalty shootouts," Torcaso said. (PNA) **BY JEAN MALANUM**

PSC, BCDA SEAL LANDMARK DEAL FOR NEW CLARK CITY TRAINING HUB

MANILA – The Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) and the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) have signed a landmark agreement giving national athletes long-term access to the facilities at the New Clark City in Capas, Tarlac.

The New Clark City, which features a world-class athletics stadium and aquatics center, and an Athletes Village, was built for the country's hosting of the Southeast Asian Games in 2019.

The Athletes Village has 100 fully furnished, air-conditioned rooms designed for triple sharing. "This partnership is both logical and inevitable: to provide world-class facilities for world-class athletes," said PSC Chairperson Patrick Gregorio in a news release on Wednesday.

"We are grateful for the strong alignment

with BCDA, the ideal partner in recognizing that investments in sports infrastructure and athletes drive economic development as much as national pride," said Gregorio.

BCDA President and CEO Joshua Bingcang highlighted the synergy between the two agencies. "We will continue unlocking the full potential of BCDA properties so every training ground becomes a launchpad for future world-class Filipino athletes. By bringing together BCDA's development engine and PSC's commitment to Philippine sports, we are turning land into competitive advantage and facilities into platforms for future wins," said Bingcang, underscoring the shared commitment to maximize government-built facilities for athlete excellence, accountability, and measurable returns on

public investment.

Also present during the MOA signing were PSC Commissioner Edward Hayco and BCDA OIC Senior Vice President for Conversion and Development Mark Torres. "This is truly a partnership made in heaven. BCDA develops and manages high-value land and infrastructure, while PSC ensures these facilities are maximized for the training and development of our national teams," said Gregorio.

This is the second collaboration between PSC and BCDA in recent months. The Camp John Hay multi purpose sports facility in Baguio, jointly undertaken by the two government agencies, will be completed within 18 months, starting in the first quarter of 2026. (PNA) **BY JEAN MALANUM**

EALA WINS PH'S 1ST WOMEN'S SINGLES GOLD IN 26 YEARS

MANILA – Filipino Alexandra Eala lived up to her billing as the tournament top seed, beating Thailand's Mananchaya Sawangkaew, 6-1, 6-2, Thursday in the women's singles final of the 33rd Southeast Asian Games tennis tournament at the National Tennis Development Centre in Bangkok, Thailand.

The World No. 53 Eala conquered Malaysia's

Shihomi Leong, 6-3, 6-1, in the quarterfinal and Thailand's Thasaporn Naklo, 6-1, 6-4, in the semifinals.

"It's so special. I've said many times before that Pinoys are so family-oriented. I think that's a part of our culture and you know, SEA Games is something-- I think, it's very different than the WTA Tour because it's very personal to us, personal to the

Southeast Asian countries and it's special in that way," commented the 20-year-old Eala, who delivered the country's first gold medal in the women's singles since Maricris Fernandez at the 1999 Brunei SEA Games.

Eala is also the first to reach the championship match after Clarice Patrimonio, who settled for the silver medal at the 2017 edition held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. (PNA) **BY JEAN MALANUM**