

ALL SET FOR SHOPWISE BIKEFEST ON MAY 18 IN CAVITE

MANILA – All is set for the Shopwise Bikefest scheduled on May 18 at the Vermosa Sports Hub in Imus, Cavite with organizers eyeing at least 2,800 riders, surpassing last year’s turnout of 2,443. The competition, which promotes a healthy

lifestyle, is open to all ages and skill levels, from toddlers to corporate cyclists. The race distances are 30 km., 45 km. and 60 km., while participants between 2 to 15 years old will enjoy specially tailored rides. Shopwise general manager Kerwin Legarde has expressed their excitement to offer a platform “where people can bond, move and make memories together”.

keep the race fair and streamlined. Eligible bikes include road, BMX, mountain, gravel and foldable types. Princess Galura of organizing partner Sunrise Events Philippines stressed that the scale and planning behind the cycling event reflect international standards.

Road closures and full race support will ensure the safety of the riders while strict bike rules -- excluding fixies and e-bikes --

“With this kind of response and community enthusiasm, the bikefest is poised to become a staple in the Philippine sporting calendar,” she said in a statement. **(PNA)BY JEAN MALANUM**

DOLE PARTNERS WITH PRIVATE SECTOR TO UPHOLD WORKERS’ RIGHTS

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna (PIA) — The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) in Calabarzon has strengthened its partnership with key private sector players in an effort to promote and uphold workers’ rights.

“DOLE Calabarzon is actively coordinating with private companies in various ways to ensure that our workers are given the correct and lawful benefits. This includes regular labor inspections and Technical and Advisory Visits where we assist micro-enterprise proprietors in understanding and properly implementing labor laws—covering correct wage computation, statutory benefits like SSS, PhilHealth, Pag-IBIG, and compliance with Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) standards,” said DOLE Calabarzon Regional Director Erwin N. Aquino.

He emphasized that the Labor department remains hands-on in ensuring that employees across the region receive fair wages, lawful benefits, and a safe working environment.

As part of these efforts, the agency marked the World Day for Safety and Health at Work on April 28, bringing together over 200 representatives from labor and management sectors.

The event highlights the importance of a strong enforcement of occupational safety and health rules, not just as a legal obligation but as a vital element in building productive, safe, and sustainable work environments.

Aquino said that they continue to observe the Single Entry Approach (SENA) as a standout mechanism for dispute resolution and in addressing labor complaints without the need for costly and time-consuming litigation. “When there are complaints [from the workers], we immediately mediate or conciliate conferences to resolve issues quickly and properly through Single Entry Approach or SENAs,” Aquino said.

“It can also be done online, before filing a case in court or with a labor

arbiter, it is first discussed through a conciliation-mediation conference. The goal of SENAs is to resolve issues within just 30 days, without the need for a long process and costs,” the director explained.

He added: “Through these programs, we ensure that workers’ rights are protected, and at the same time we strengthen labor-management relations for a stronger industry.” **(AM, CA/PIA-4A) BY ANNA MOLE**



HIGH-VALUE TARGET ARRESTED, P544K WORTH OF SHABU SEIZED IN CAVITE

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, City of Imus, Cavite – In a successful anti-illegal drugs operation conducted joint operatives of the Provincial Drug Enforcement Unit (PDEU) of Cavite Police Provincial Office and Imus City Component Police Station, and coordination with PDEA arrested a High-Value Individual (HVI) at around 6:30 PM on May 7, 2025, in Brgy. Malagasang 2G, Imus City, Cavite.

PLTCOL Chester Noel Borlongan, Chief of the Police Intelligence Unit (C, PIU), identified the arrested individual as alias "PIS", and a resident of Brgy. Malagasang 2, Imus City. The suspect was apprehended during a buy-bust operation after being confirmed to be involved in the illegal drug trade.

Confiscated from the suspect were the following items: Five (5) heat-sealed transparent plastic sachets containing white crystalline substance suspected to be shabu, weighing more or less 80 grams, with a standard drug price value of Php 544,000.00.

The entire operation was properly documented using an Alternative Recording Device,

and witnessed by Mr. Ralph Regin Nilooban (media representative) and Hon. Armando Fauni (elected official), ensuring transparency and compliance with operational protocols.

The suspect will be facing charges for Violation of Sections 5 and 11, Article II of Republic Act 9165, also known as the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002.

Cavite PPO Acting Provincial Director, PCol Dwight E Alegre, commended the diligent efforts of the operating units for the successful operation that led to the arrest of a high-value drug suspect and the seizure of illegal drugs worth ₱544,000.00.

"This accomplishment sends a strong message that the Cavite PNP remains steadfast in its campaign against illegal drugs. We will relentlessly pursue and apprehend those involved in drug trafficking and other criminal activities to ensure the safety and security of our communities," he stated.

This accomplishment marks another significant step in the Cavite PPO's relentless campaign against illegal drugs and its commitment to safeguarding the community.

POLICE ASSISTANCE TO A PREGNANT WOMEN

At about 2:40AM of May 07, 2025, at Filipinas Farm, Brgy. Iruhin West, Tagaytay Vity, Cavite, personnel of this station, under the direct supervision of PLTCOL JEFFERSON ISON, OIC, while conducting patrolling rendered immediate and selfless assistance to a

pregnant woman gave birth and in urgent need of medical care was successfully transported onboard of a police mobile car (C6-01) and brought to Ospital Ng Tagaytay, where she was immediately taken to the emergency room and given the necessary medical attention.

TOP 1 MOST WANTED PERSON MUNICIPAL LEVEL ARRESTED IN TAGAYTAY CITY

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, City of Imus, Cavite – The warrant personnel of Mendez Municipal Police Station conducted a police operation at around 4:00 PM on May 8, 2025 that resulted to the arrest of Top 1 Most Wanted Person Municipal Level at Barangay Kaybagal South, Tagaytay City, Cavite.

PMAJ IAN JASPER M MONTOYA, Acting, Chief of Police, Mendez Municipal Police Station identified the suspect as alias ELIZE, and resident of Barangay Kaybagal South, Tagaytay City, Cavite.

The suspect was arrested by virtue of a Warrant of Arrest for violation of Section 10(A) of Republic Act 7610, also known as the "Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act." The warrant was issued by the Presiding Judge of RTC Branch 15, Naic, Cavite, on March 21, 2024, under Criminal Case No. NC-

4664 with a recommended bail of Php80,000.00.

The arrested person was brought to Mendez Municipal Police Station for proper disposition, and the Warrant of Arrest will be returned to its court of origin.

In his message, PCOL DWIGHT E ALEGRE, Acting Provincial Director of Cavite Police Provincial Office, commended the operating team for their diligence and commitment to public safety. He emphasized, "This arrest demonstrates our unwavering resolve to bring justice to victims of crimes, particularly those affecting children. The Cavite Police will continue to work tirelessly to ensure that those who violate the law are held accountable. We thank the community for their continued support and cooperation."

The Cavite PPO remains steadfast in its mission to uphold the rule of law and protect the most vulnerable sectors of society.

HIGH-VALUE DRUG PERSONALITY ARRESTED; P142K WORTH OF SUSPECTED SHABU SEIZED BY GENERAL TRIAS PNP

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, City of Imus, Cavite – In its continued efforts to curb illegal drug activities in the province, the City Drug Enforcement Unit (CDEU) of the General Trias Component City Police Station, in coordination with PDEA (Control No. 10005-052025-0130), successfully arrested a High-Value Individual (HVI) during a buy-bust operation conducted at around 12:15 A.M. on May 8, 2025, in Brgy. San Francisco, City of General Trias, Cavite.

The arrested suspect was identified by PLTCOL Jaymar B Marbella, Chief of Police, General Trias CCPS as alias "Atoy", and a resident of Brgy. Malagasang 2A, Imus City, Cavite.

Seized from the suspect during the operation were

the following items: Three (3) heat-sealed transparent plastic sachets containing white crystalline substance suspected to be shabu, with a total estimated weight of 20.97 grams and a standard drug price of ₱142,596.00.

To ensure operational integrity and adherence to prescribed procedures, an Alternative Recording Device was utilized throughout the operation. The suspect will be facing charges for Violation of Sections 5 and 11, Article II of Republic Act 9165, also known as the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002.

The Cavite Police Provincial Office, under the leadership of Acting Provincial Director PCol Dwight E Alegre, reaffirms its unwavering commitment

MOST WANTED PERSON REGIONAL LEVEL, NAARESTO NG PULIS IMUS

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Lungsod ng Imus, Cavite — Sa patuloy na pagpapatupad ng agresibong kampanya laban sa mga Most Wanted Persons, matagumpay na naaresto ng Imus Component City Police Station ang isang Regional Level Most Wanted Person sa isinagawang operasyon dakong 12:45 ng tanghali ng Mayo 07, 2025, sa Barangay Carsadang Bago 2, Imus City, Cavite.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL CHEY CHEY I SAULOG, Acting Chief of Police ng Imus CCPS, ang naarestong suspek na si @DINGDONG, naninirahan sa Barangay Carsadang Bago 2, Imus City, Cavite.

Ang operasyong ito ay isinagawa ng Warrant Section ng Imus CCPS katuwang ang mga tauhan ng 401st A Maneuver Company RMFB4A laban sa akusado gamit ang Body Worn Camera (BWC) at Alternative Recording Device (ARD), na nagresulta sa kanyang pagkakaaresto batay sa kasong paglabag

sa Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 – Paglabag sa Seksyon 5 at 11 ng Article II ng RA 9165, sa ilalim ng Criminal Case Nos. 21699-19 at 21700-19. Ang nasabing Bench Warrant of Arrest para sa Service of Sentence ay inisyu noong Setyembre 13, 2024 ng Fourth Judicial Region, Regional Trial Court, Branch 120, Imus City, Cavite.

Isinagawa ang operasyon na may mahigpit na pagsunod sa umiiral na PNP operational procedures at mga alituntunin sa karapatang pantao. Naipabatid sa akusado ang kanyang mga karapatang konstitusyonal sa paraang malinaw at nauunawaan niya.

Sa kasalukuyan, ang akusado ay nasa kustodiya ng Imus City Custodial Facility habang isinasagawa ang kaukulang proseso. Ang Warrant of Arrest ay agad na isasauli sa korte ng pinanggalingan para sa tamang dokumentasyon.

Ayon kay PCOL DWIGHT E ALEGRE, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite PPO, "Patuloy na pinaigting ng ating mga kapulisan ang kanilang pagtugis sa mga taong nagtatago sa batas. Nararapat lamang na makamit ng mga biktima ang nararapat na hustisya. Kaya't kami ay patuloy na humihingi ng tulong at suporta mula sa ating komunidad sapagkat sa Bagong Pilipinas, ang gusto ng Pulis — Ligas ka!"

Ang tagumpay na ito ay bunga ng malinaw na direktiba at matatag na pamumuno ni PGEN ROMMEL FRANCISO D MARBIL, Chief of the Philippine National Police, na patuloy na nagsusulong ng mas agresibong operasyon laban sa kriminalidad.

Sa kanyang pamumuno, muling pinatitibay ang paninindigan ng bawat pulis na itaguyod ang batas, protektahan ang mamamayan, at ipaglaban ang hustisya — tungo sa isang ligtas, maayos, at disiplinadong Bagong Pilipinas.

This notable accomplishment stands as another milestone in Cavite PPO's sustained and determined campaign against illegal drugs and its mission to protect the community from the harmful effects of drug-related crimes.

PH'S FIRST E-JEEPNEY FACTORY OPENS IN BATANGAS

LIPA CITY (PIA) — The country's first electric jeepney (e-jeepney) assembly plant has opened in Lima Park in Lipa City, Batangas.

Owned by the LCS Group of Companies and its South Korean partner Electric Mobility ON (EMON), the factory aims to produce low-cost, environmentally friendly electric jeepneys to help drivers and operators cope with the high costs of other modernized vehicles. Each modern e-jeepney unit is priced at ₱1.2 million which is lower than the usual ₱2.5 million to ₱3 million price range in the market.

This initiative is a result of the collaboration between the LCS Group and EMON, which designed the 27-seater e-jeepney, combining modern technology with the iconic Filipino jeepney design.

With this lower cost, the LCS Group said, drivers are expected to recover their investment within two to three years. The company added that it targets to produce 500 units monthly, with plans to scale up based on demands.

The plant is also expected to provide jobs and livelihood opportunities to around 80 workers, with future expansion planned in the Visayas and Mindanao regions.

The factory is currently awaiting franchise approval from the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) to officially deploy e-jeepneys for public transport services.

In an interview with Maj. Gen. Rudolph Dimas, regional director of LTRB IV-A, the establishment of the assembly plant will create a nice atmosphere and good competition between companies offering e-jeepney.

"This is the first manufacturing company in the Philippines. It is eco-friendly and cheaper for the price of ₱1.2 million each unit compared to the ₱2.5-₱4 million worth from others offering the same. It is very advantageous to the operators since the said company noted that in two or three years time they will be able to get back their capital," Dimas noted. He also mentioned that they have conducted initial coordinations and meetings with the company and requested that a unit of this e-jeepney be tested in Tagaytay with the operators to see if the units produced can traverse high slopes or terrain.

The LCS Group and EMON are engaging with different banks for possible tie-ups on the processing of loans of operators. **(MPDC-PIA BATANGAS)**
BY BHABY DE CASTRO

NEW SOLAR-POWERED IRRIGATION SYSTEM IN QUEZON TO BOOST FARMERS' INCOME

Water remains a vital resource for agriculture as it supports healthy plant growth and boosts crop yields.

In Quezon Province, the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) recently achieved another milestone following the directive and mandate of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. of instituting development programs for agriculture.

The official turnover of the Castañas Centro Communal Irrigation System Solar Pump Irrigation Project is expected to transform the lives of 33 farmer-beneficiaries by irrigating 50 hectares of agricultural land in Sariaya town.

For Edgardo Valdoria, a 46-year-old farmer from Barangay Castañas and president of the local irrigators association, farming has been his livelihood and main source of income since childhood, which is why he often laments reduced earnings due to fluctuating diesel prices used in traditional irrigation systems.

The Solar Pump Irrigation Project is expected to help farmers, including Valdoria,

save up to approximately Php80,000 in operating costs per cropping season.

"I hope we will earn more now through the project, unlike before when we used to spend around P40,000 to P50,000 just on diesel, not including the amount we paid someone to help deliver the irrigation water to us. Even after harvesting, there was very little left for our family," Valdoria explained.

Meanwhile, Frederico Alday, a local farmer and also an IA President in neighboring Barangay Castañas, the solar-powered irrigation system will inspire more farmers to rekindle their passion for agriculture and dream again for a better life.

Alday stated: "Little by little, I see the enthusiasm of our farmer returning back to life. We're not just working hard to survive anymore; we're beginning to hope and dream again."

The irrigation project, funded through the Fiscal Year Establishment of Pump Irrigation Project (EPIP) with a budget of Php50 million, is seen as a viable offer reliable and renewable water source, crucial for areas with limited supply.

With Quezon Province being one of the major agricultural producers in the country, NIA plans to venture into solar powered irrigation projects and establish additional 20 irrigation projects in the province, as part of its efforts of attaining national food security and improve the lives of local farmers with the help of modernization and innovation. **(CO/PIA-4A)**
BY CHARMAINE ODONG

and some are still awaiting deployment.

In a statement, the DMW said the closure operation aligns with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s directive to safeguard overseas Filipino workers from illegal recruitment and syndicates. **(KA, PIA4A)**

BY KRISTIANNE ANDRADE

EDITORIAL

Pananagutan sa pagpapakalat ng false contents, iginigiit ng mga Kongresista

Sa pagpapatuloy ng pagharap ng parent company ng Facebook na meta sa house probe sa fake news ay iginigiit ng ilang mga kongresista ang dapat na mas malaking pananagutan ng mga social media platforms sa pagpapakalat ng false contents at dapat na pagpapatupad ng regulasyon at proteksyon para sa mga Pilipinong gumagamit ng social media.

Ngayon makabago na ang panahon ay madali na lamang makaaccess ang mga tao sa iba't-ibang social media platforms online, dahil dito ay lagapan din ang paglaganap ng mga false contents na kadalasa'y pinaniniwalaan ng mga tao. Ngunit para sa akin ay hindi lang ang mga social media platforms ang dapat na managot kung may kumalat man na mga false contents. Bagama't ang mga kompanya ang may hawak sa bawat platforms, mula sa masa ang mga impormasyong lumalabas at tayo rin ang may dahilan upang lumaganap ang mga ito kaya naman dapat na ang maging trabaho ng mga social media platforms ay tukuyin kung saan nagmula ang mga impormasyong lalaganap at pigilan itong makarating pa sa mas malaking porsyento ng gumagamit ng midyang ito.

Dapat na pinagtutuunan ng pansin ay ng paghigpit ng mga alituntunin bago makapagpost ng isang content sa isang social media platform at hindi ang pag-giit ng pananagutan ng mga kompanya ng mga midyang ito dahil sa pagpapakalat ng mga making impormasyong dahil mula sa mga masa ang mga bagay na nababasa online at sa masa rin nagsisimula kung bakit ito tinatangkilik.

DMW WARNS PUBLIC VS ILLEGAL RECRUITERS

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna (PIA) — The Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) has warned Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and job seekers to be vigilant in dealing with recruitment agencies, following an incident of illegal recruitment in Baras, Rizal.

In an interview with the Usapang PIA radio program, Assistant Regional Director Karen M. Quilao emphasized the importance of validating an agency's legitimacy through the DMW website and official platforms.

"If OFWs or job seekers applying abroad want to know if a recruitment agency has a license or a valid job order, they may visit our official websites, all updates are there," Quilao explained.

She also reminded job applicants to avoid recruiters who immediately ask for a placement fee without issuing an official receipt or who promise quick deployment through a tourist visa.

Quilao emphasized: "If you're applying abroad, make sure you have an Overseas Employment Certificate (OEC), a legal employer, and the correct exit permit and clearance." She encouraged victims of illegal recruiters to seek help at any DMW office to receive the necessary assistance.

"If you are not available to visit in person, you can send an email, and DMW personnel will immediately contact you to provide assistance and the legal advice needed."

Following the illegal

recruitment incident in Rizal, Quilao said that they will expand the anti-illegal recruitment drive to strengthen public awareness and ensure safety against illegal recruiters.

Last April 28, the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) and DMW officials conducted an entrapment and closure operation at a church involved in the illegal recruitment of workers in Baras, Rizal.

According to the NBI, the illegal recruiter charged victims P50,000 each for processing fees and documents and promised jobs in Japan, Korea, and Papua New Guinea, with salaries ranging from P36,000 to P120,000.

The NBI added that some victims were offloaded, others were deployed,

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DOJ, PNP TO SEEK MORE TIME TO ANSWER OMBUDSMAN OVER DUTERTE ARREST

MANILA – Justice Secretary Jesus Crispin Remulla met with Philippine National Police Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (PNP-CIDG) officials led by Maj. Gen. Nicolas Torre on Friday to map out their reply to the charges filed before the Office of the Ombudsman in connection with the arrest of former president Rodrigo Duterte.

In an interview with reporters, Remulla said they plan to ask the Ombudsman for more time to answer the charges.

He said among the matters they plan to bring up are the pending cases before the Supreme Court (SC) which may pose a prejudicial question on the Ombudsman cases.

“We just agreed that we’ll adopt, we’ll just have one answer for all procedural issues, aside from the other allegations that are individual. Then we have an answer for everyone for

the commonly held issues,” Remulla said.

“Separate submissions, but we will have a general answer for procedural issues. We might have to get an extension because 10 days is not enough.”

Remulla said it is difficult to answer something that is sub judice, or pending in a court of law.

Court rules disallow lawyers from taking part in the public discussion of a pending case that tends to sway the tribunal to rule and side with a party of the case.

Following Duterte’s arrest and transfer to the Netherlands, a number of petitions have been filed by his children and others before the Supreme Court.

“It’s sub judice. Wala pa ngang determination ang Supreme Court sa nangyari (The SC has no determination yet on what transpired),” Remulla said. **(PNA) BY BENJAMIN PULTA**

CFO TO FILIPINOS: AVOID INDIA-PAKISTAN BORDER AMID RISING TENSION

MANILA – The Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) advised Filipinos to avoid areas near the India-Pakistan border, following India’s recent missile strikes on Pakistan-administered Kashmir in retaliation for a deadly terror attack in April.

CFO Chairperson Dante Ang II on Friday said there are at least 371 permanent Filipino migrants across India and 77 in Pakistan.

In a Facebook post, the CFO warned travelers and residents in Pakistan, particularly in border provinces, to steer clear of high-risk areas as tensions escalate between the two nuclear-armed nations.

“All Filipinos traveling to and within Pakistan were told to exercise caution and avoid areas near the India-Pakistan border as New Delhi mounts a missile attack in several Pakistani-administered areas in

Kashmir on Wednesday,” the post read.

The Philippines Embassy in New Delhi, in an earlier post, advised Filipinos to avoid travel to Bhimber City, Azad Kashmir, the Sialkot Line of Control, and anywhere within five miles of the India-Pakistan border.

Filipinos residing in said areas are also advised to stay indoors and monitor official updates, be vigilant, and avoid the border zones and public gathering sites.

They were likewise reminded to keep emergency supplies and important documents, including identification cards, and keep communication devices ready.

They should also maintain contact with employers, coordinators, the Philippine Embassy, Assistance-to-Nationals (hotline +92 333 5244 762).

The advisory followed India’s Operation Sindoor, a coordinated air strike targeting alleged militant sites in Pakistan-administered Azad Kashmir, following an April 22 terror attack that killed 26 people in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir.

India and Pakistan have fought multiple wars and skirmishes over the disputed Kashmir region. The region has seen renewed unrest in recent years, and the current strikes mark one of the most serious escalations since the 2019 Pulwama crisis.

The CFO assured continuous close monitoring of the situation, together with the Department of Foreign Affairs.

In a Radyo Pilipinas interview on Thursday, Philippine Ambassador to India Josel Ignacio assured readiness to assist Filipinos in case the situation worsens.

“Meron tayong mga contingency plan na nasa lugar at ‘yan ay aming nire-revisit sa ngayon kasama

AIRPORT EXEC: NO ADVERSE FINDINGS AGAINST NAIA BOLLARDS PROJECT

MANILA – The fatal crash at Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 1 that killed two people and injured four others on May 4 triggered renewed scrutiny of the airport’s bollard system, the protective barriers meant to prevent vehicles from breaching critical areas.

The PHP8-million project, completed in 2019, failed to stop the vehicle that crashed into the departure area, raising questions about the effectiveness and integrity of the installation.

Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) General Manager Eric Ines, in an interview with the Philippine News Agency, traced the origins of the project to international security audits.

In 2017, the United Kingdom’s Department for Transport flagged the absence of “hostile vehicle mitigation measures” at NAIA, including bollards or concrete planters, citing risks of vehicle-borne attacks.

The audit came amid then-active flights between Manila and London operated by Philippine Airlines.

Despite the warning, bollards were not installed until 2019, following a second audit held 2018 by Australian Homeland Security which echoed the same concerns across all NAIA terminals.

That year, Kontrak Enterprises was awarded the project to install bollards at Terminals 1 to 4.

Ines said he no longer has

ang ating defense attaché dito upang nakahanda tayo kung sakali mang kailangang i-trigger (We have contingency plans in place, and we are revisiting those right now with our defense attaché here so that we are prepared in case we need to trigger them),” he said. **(PNA) BY MARITA MOAJE**

access to full procurement documents but presented disbursement and completion certificates showing the work was done between April and July 2019.

He emphasized that government procurement does not prioritize the lowest bid, but rather qualifications and capacity to deliver.

Following the deadly crash, MIAA’s engineering team, led by Assistant Manager Antonio Mendoza, concluded that the bollards installed at Terminal 1 were not embedded deeply enough into the ground.

However, engineers warned that digging deeper could have compromised the structural integrity of the arrival area beneath.

“There’s no way for me to conduct a crash test now,” Ines admitted. “I also can’t place blame. Many of those involved in the project have either retired or passed on. This went through a proper bidding process and without proof, I cannot speculate.”

Pressed on accountability, Ines declined to second-guess decisions made by his predecessor, former MIAA General Manager Ed Monreal.

“I can’t say, ‘It should have been done differently,’ without evidence,” he said. In the wake of the incident, the airport’s current operator, New NAIA Infra Corp. (NNIC), began implementing corrective measures.

These include reinforcing bollard foundations and modifying the Terminal 1 drop-off layout from diagonal to parallel to enhance pedestrian and passenger safety.

“They are also evaluating other options to strengthen bollard performance,” Ines said.

In a statement released May 6, NNIC said the changes, including increased police presence, are part of a broader effort to provide “an added layer of protection” for travelers, airport staff and visitors. **(PNA) BY MA. CRISTINA ARAYATA**

NAPOLCOM EYES ZERO CASE BACKLOG BY DECEMBER 2025

MANILA – The National Police Commission (Napolcom) said Friday it targets to clear its case backlog against erring police officers by December this year.

In a press conference at the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) main office in Quezon City, Napolcom Vice Chairperson and Executive Officer (VCEO) Rafael Vicente Calinisan said another 39 cases this week added to the thousands of pending cases before the commission.

“Lilininis natin lahat yan. Ang instruction natin i-zero backlog natin, lahat ng kaso, by December 2025. Hindi na maaari at hindi na pupwede na mabagal ang takbo ng kaso sa Napolcom. Walang maniniwalang taumbayan (We will clear them all. The instruction for us is to have a zero backlog by December 2025. A slow resolution and processing of cases before the Napolcom is unacceptable.

The people will not believe us anymore if that is the case),” Calinisan said.

While the agency has yet to complete its inventory of cases, Calinisan said cases filed before the commission must be resolved within 60 to 90 days from filing.

Calinisan said they are looking to hire more lawyers, set tight deadlines and hold lawyers accountable for delays in cases.

“It’s just a matter of planning and discipline. Ang pinakaimportanteng (The most important) word, if ever, is accountability not just for those being sued but also for those who are handling those cases,” he said.

Calinisan also called for a more stringent application process for aspiring police officers to prevent misfits from joining the ranks.

“We have also look on the recruitment process of the PNP maybe, there’s something that we are missing so what we are looking into of two things

--psychological problem, neuro psychological problem,” he added.

Meanwhile, Calinisan reiterated that there is no place for rogue cops in the PNP.

He also announced that Napolcom is set to confer the Police Executive Service Eligibility (PESE) Certificate on 209 Police Commissioned Officers (PCOs) from various police offices and units.

The PESE is a requisite eligibility for appointment to the third level ranks of Police Colonel, Police Brigadier General, Police Major General, Police Lieutenant General, and Police General as provided under Napolcom Resolution No. 2006-082.

The program is designed to evaluate the analytical, leadership, and values-based competencies of senior police officers, ensuring a pool of qualified candidates for executive positions within the PNP. **(PNA) BY CHRISTOPHER LLOYD CALIWAN**

BI NABS 31 FOREIGNERS IN MAKATI SCAM HUB RAID

MANILA – The Bureau of Immigration (BI) on Friday reported the arrest of 31 foreign nationals, most of them Chinese, suspected of engaging in online scam operations following a raid in Makati City earlier this week.

In a statement, BI intelligence division chief Fortunato Manahan Jr. said the raid took place Monday evening on the 11th floor of a commercial building along Ayala Avenue.

He said operatives discovered dozens of foreigners manning computer workstations allegedly used for fraudulent activities targeting individuals abroad.

To hide its illegal operations in the building, the company allegedly displayed the name of a popular insurance firm on its entrance.

Of the arrested foreign nationals, 24 were Chinese, two were Taiwanese, three were Malaysian, and two were from Myanmar. All were found to be working

without the necessary permits in violation of the conditions of their stay, and have been tagged as undesirable.

The suspects are now detained at the Bureau's Warden Facility in Camp Bagong Diwa, Taguig City, pending investigation and deportation proceedings.

The BI said the operation is aligned with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s directive to safeguard national security and protect the country from becoming a base of operations for international cybercrime syndicates.

Commissioner Joel Anthony Viado said these arrests send a strong signal to criminal elements that the Philippines will not be used as a safe haven for foreign-led cybercrime operations.

"This operation reflects our firm commitment to Marcos' directive to secure our borders and uphold the rule of law," he said.

"Foreign nationals who exploit our systems, abuse our hospitality, and engage in illegal acts will be dealt with decisively." (PNA) BY FERDINAND PATINIO

TEODORO WANTS TO SEE EXERCISE LINE-UP, TERRAIN FOR 'BALIKATAN' 2026

MANILA – Department of National Defense (DND) Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. said he wants to see the choices of exercises and terrain for next year's 'Balikatan' drills, as the annual exercise between Filipino and American military forces formally concluded Friday.

"Now, this being the 40th iteration which culminated in the full battle exercise, what the President (Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.), (National Security Adviser) Secretary (Eduardo) Año, and I would want to see is not only the execution of next year's exercises, but more importantly the choice of exercises, what you are going to be doing and where you are going to be doing them, what terrain you are going to operate in, what environments you are going to operate in," he said in his speech during the exercise's closing rites at Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

Aside from this, Teodoro also wants to see how "Balikatan" 2026 will

interact with the civil infrastructure works, supply routes, and other civilian infrastructure.

He added that this is necessary to determine whether the exercises are aligned with the needs of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the plans of the Philippine government for the institution next year.

"So, next year will not merely be an exercise in execution and choice of exercises, but we will go deep down into the assumptions on why you are training shoulder-to-shoulder to do a particular activity. And I think that will enhance our interoperability, not only (on) the tactical level, but more importantly on the operational and of course, on the strategic levels too," the DND chief stressed.

Deterrence capabilities boosted

As this developed, I Marine Expeditionary Force commander Lt. Gen. Michael Cederholm said the just-concluded "Balikatan" exercises have advanced the Philippines and US' capability to "deter, respond, and prevail."

"From live-fire drills to humanitarian missions, from maritime security in Palawan and Northern Luzon to sea denial in the Luzon Straits with the deployment of NMEMSIS (Navy-Marine Expeditionary Ship Interdiction System) to the (Batanes) Island, we advanced our capability to deter, respond, and prevail," he added.

Aside from this, Cederholm said the US also integrated cutting-edge air and missile defense systems like MADIS (Marine Air Defense Integrated System), Avenger (Air Defense System) and Spyder (Philippine ground air based defense system), strengthening the ability of the two nations to survive and win in contested environments.

"Together with the AFP, we put the D in deterrence, defense, and don't mess with us. It's important to highlight (that) 'Balikatan'

EU WANTS TO SPEED UP FTA WITH PH AMID TARIFF UNCERTAINTIES

MANILA – The European Union (EU) is interested in fast-tracking a free trade agreement (FTA) with the Philippines in the wake of global trade uncertainties fueled by the new tariff policies of the United States.

EU Ambassador to the Philippines Massimo Santoro on Thursday night said both the Philippines and the bloc have a "political wish" to speed up talks on the deal, which is seen to blunt the possible impact of the Trump administration's new tariffs imposed on its partners.

"It's not the tariffs in itself that are impacting the negotiation, but it's the fact that when all those countries in the world, like us, the Philippines and many others, see that somebody wants to bring in tariff, etc.— what we consider obstacles to international free trade— it comes as a normal political response that we have even a stronger wish to have this FTA done faster," he told reporters at the Europe Day 2025 reception in Makati City.

"It's a way for us to protect our markets. The best way to protect markets is to make them free. This is the quintessence of our

thinking," he added.

In a separate interview, Foreign Affairs Acting Secretary Ma. Theresa Lazaro said the Philippine side hopes to have the FTA by "next year".

"Of course, it has its own pace... An FTA is not easy to negotiate but I think there's already an intention as well as the commitment to come up with an FTA," she said.

The two sides finished two rounds of negotiations in October and February, with the next meeting scheduled for the third week of June in Brussels, Belgium.

Santoro, for his part, expressed optimism that this next set of talks would be "as fruitful as the previous ones".

"What we, but also the Philippine side, want is to have something which is good in content for both sides, strong, fruitful and at the same time, possibly quick," he said.

"We do not put artificial deadlines, but I must also observe that it is with the current (Marcos) administration that these negotiations are particularly fruitful. We have still, of course, some rounds to go," he added.

The first negotiation for a Philippine-EU FTA was launched in December 2015, with the first round in May 2016 and the second in February 2017.

This was stalled after the EU raised concerns on humanitarian issues in the Philippines during those years.

The two sides' working-level experts concluded a series of stock-taking discussions in December 2023 after the Manila visit of European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, where she and President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. announced their intention to re-launch the FTA negotiations.

The Philippines and the EU formally announced the resumption of negotiations in Brussels on March 18, 2024. (PNA) BY JOYCE ANN L. ROCAMORA

DND CHIEF SEES MORE AGGRESSION FROM CHINESE NAVAL FORCES IN WPS

MANILA – Department of National Defense (DND) Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. said he expects an increased aggression from Chinese maritime forces toward Filipino naval vessels patrolling Scarborough Shoal (also known as Bajo de Masinloc) and other parts of the West Philippine Sea. "We have to expect more of the same," he said in an ambush interview shortly after the closing ceremonies of this year's "Balikatan" drills held at Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City on Friday.

The DND chief's remarks came following the May 5 incident where Chinese frigates and coast guard vessels conducted "aggressive and unsafe" actions against the offshore patrol vessel BRP Emilio Jacinto (PS-35), which was then conducting a routine maritime patrol some 11.8

nautical miles southeast of Bajo de Masinloc.

Teodoro, however, said Manila remains undeterred by these acts of Beijing, stressing that Filipino naval forces will continue patrolling the area as it is part of the country's jurisdiction.

"We have to expect those things to happen. Sinasabi ko kanina, there is a price to pay for freedom. Ngayon, ano ang price? Kung magdesisyon tayo na madali, appease, capitulate. Ngayon, kung tinatawag natin ang sarili natin na republika at makasarinlan, stand up, nasa stand up tayo, ang cost nun mangyayari to (Like what I said earlier, there is a price to pay (for) freedom. Now, what is the price, if we decide to do the easy part, we can appease and capitulate. Now, if we call ourselves a Republic and a sovereign one, we

stand up, we are standing up right now)," the DND chief said.

"Sila (China) ba (ang) nagdidikta ng batas ng mundo? (Are they the ones dictating the laws for the whole world?)," he quipped.

Teodoro, however, refused to comment on whether the Philippine military will make adjustment amid China's actions, saying it is an operational matter. National Security Adviser (NSA) Eduardo Año earlier said "security challenges" in the South China Sea are unlikely to be reduced anytime soon.

Año attributed the tensions to China's baseless, excessive, and expansive territorial claims, militarization, and confrontations with its neighbors, which he said cannot be disregarded. (PNA) BY PRIAM NEPOMUCENO

is also about relationships. Months of planning with local communities laid the foundation for meaningful civic engagement. Together, we have improved lives across five project sites, providing more than 1,600 medical and dental exams and invested USD2.5 million into schools, clinics, and health facilities, directly impacting 75,000 Filipino citizens," he added.

This year's "Balikatan" started last April 21 and ended on May 9.

Around 14,000 Filipino, American and other allied troops took part in the activities. (PNA) BY PRIAM NEPOMUCENO

ILOCOS SPURS COMMUNITY GROWTH WITH P11.6-B GOV'T PROJECTS

SAN FERNANDO CITY, La Union (PIA) – The government continues to improve the lives of people in the Ilocos Region through P11.62 billion worth of public projects in 2024, boosting infrastructure, health services, education, and livelihoods.

These projects, monitored by the Department of Economy, Planning, and Development (DepDev) in Region 1 through the Regional Project Monitoring and Evaluation System (RPMES), reached a 98.68 percent completion rate.

A total of 138 projects were tracked in 2024, with 102 completed and 36 still ongoing.

The social sector received the largest share of funds, with P8.15-billion, primarily for school buildings, health centers, classrooms, medical equipment, and social aid programs.

This sector includes agencies like the Department of Education (DepEd), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and Commission on Higher Education (CHED). The infrastructure sector, with agencies such as the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), disbursed P2.28 billion.

These projects include roads, bridges, irrigation systems, and flood control structures.

The economic sector, which includes the Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), disbursed P1.08 billion.

Projects in this area helped support farming, job training, small businesses, and cooperatives, comprising the bulk of the 8,206 jobs reported in the region.

The environment sector, led by agencies like the Department of Environment and Natural

Resources (DENR), with P17.32 million in funding, was used for forest protection, tree planting, and environmental clean-ups.

The governance sector, which includes the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), used P85.65 million for projects to help improve local government operations and transparency.

Of those employed through these projects, 85 percent (7,004) were male and 15 percent (1,202) were female.

These jobs helped families earn income and gain experience, especially in rural areas.

DepDev Region 1 Director and Regional Project Monitoring Committee (RPMC) Chairperson Stephanie Christiansen emphasized that these results are part of a bigger effort to involve both government and citizens in development.

"Online dissemination of RPMES reports is important in apprising our stakeholders and development partners on the status of implementation of priority programs and projects in the region," Christiansen said.

Glenda Costales, a sari-sari store owner from Magsingal, Ilocos Sur, praised the government's transparency.

"It is good that they use the report to show where taxpayers' money is spent. I hope they continue doing it," she said.

As the government ramps up efforts to ensure transparency and community engagement, residents are encouraged to take part in monitoring these projects and providing reactions through the RPMES Client Feedback Survey, which can be accessed at <https://tinyurl.com/CY2024-Q4-RPMC>.

This partnership between public institutions and citizens is seen as key to sustainable regional development. **(AMB/CCMT, PIA LA UNION) BY CHESTER CARLO M. TRINIDAD**

DIOCESE OF DUMAGUETE CONGRATULATES POPE LEO XIV

DUMAGUETE CITY, Negros Oriental (PIA) — The Diocese of Dumaguete has expressed their congratulations to Pope Leo XIV on his election as the new head of the Catholic Church.

Dumaguete Bishop Rev. Julito Cortes issued a statement on May 9 following the announcement of Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost as the new Catholic supreme pontiff.

Cardinal Prevost, 69, took the name of Leo XIV for his papal name.

"As Pope Leo XIV begins his pontificate, we pray that he may be guided by the Holy Spirit in his mission to shepherd the Church and to promote the teachings of Christ in a world that is ever-changing and often challenged by division and uncertainty," Cortes said in the statement.

"His dedication to social justice, interfaith dialogue,

care for creation, and the promotion of peace resonates with our calling to be true witnesses of Christ's love in our own communities and to the world," he added.

Cortes also urged the Catholics in Negros Oriental to pray for the new pope as he navigates his responsibilities as the new head of the Catholic Church, at a time when compassion, unity, and sensitivity to those who are in the peripheries are needed.

Cortes also invited parishes under the supervision of the diocese to offer special prayers and masses for the new pope.

Leo, the first pope from the United States, is the 267th head of the Catholic Church, succeeding Pope Francis who died last month. **(RAL/PIA7-NEGROS ORIENTAL) BY ROI LOMOTAN**

KADIWA NG PANGULO IN BUKIDNON GENERATES P1.59M SALES

MALAYBALAY CITY (PIA) — The Kadiwa ng Pangulo (KNP) event in Bukidnon recorded P1,591,125 in total sales over three days, supporting local producers and offering low-cost goods to residents.

The event was held at the Capitol Grounds in Malaybalay City, organized by the Bukidnon provincial government, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and other national agencies.

A total of 5,917 consumers, including local government employees and Kaamulan Agri-Fair visitors, purchased goods supplied by local producers and manufacturers.

The KNP, launched nationwide on July 17, 2023, under President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s administration, connects farmers, fisherfolk, and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) directly to buyers. The

program aims to increase producers' income and improve access to food and other essentials.

In Bukidnon, the KNP is held twice a month with support from DTI, the Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and other agencies.

Thirty-five MSMEs participated in the event, offering various local products.

DTI-Bukidnon also organized a Diskwento Caravan to complement the KNP, offering discounted basic goods. Participants included Puregold-Valencia, Virginia Foods, Inc., Philippine Spring Resources, Inc., NML Marketing, 7K's Food Products, and NM Food Products.

LEYTE WATER DISTRICT TO HEED MOUNTING CALLS TO END CONTRACT WITH PRIMEWATER

TACLOBAN CITY (PIA) — Several local government units (LGUs) and water districts in the Philippines have recently taken steps to terminate or reconsider their joint venture agreements (JVAs) with PrimeWater Infrastructure Corp. due to mounting complaints about poor service quality.

Among them is the Leyte Metropolitan Water District (LMWD) in Tacloban City which is in full agreement to the Local Water Utilities Administration-led investigation into the allegedly poor water services of the Villar-owned Prime Water.

LMWD General Manager Ronnie Cornico said they have just recently concluded a detailed review, five years into the contract, and the review team found out several undelivered required agreements which were specifically stipulated in the contract.

"They have not delivered what were expected of them based on the contract. On top of that are the persistent issues which have been mounting," Cornico said.

He pointed to an aging infrastructure, with many of the pipelines leaking resulting to non-revenue water, and the lack of long-term investment.

PrimeWater, which operates over 70 water districts nationwide,

The National Irrigation Administration (NIA) also sold Bagong Bayaning Magsasaka (BBM) rice at P29 per kilo, with a 10-kilo limit per buyer. Priority was given to solo parents, persons with disabilities, senior citizens, and 4Ps beneficiaries who presented valid IDs. The initiative forms part of the BBM rice program for vulnerable groups. **(DTI BUKIDNON/PIA-10/BUKIDNON) BY DTI BUKIDNON**

had promised improved infrastructure and more efficient service – but for many LGUs, including those serviced by the LMWD, the reality hasn't met expectations.

PrimeWater is servicing the towns of Palo, Tanauan, Tolosa, Dagami, Pastrana, Sta. Fe, Babatngon, and the City of Tacloban in Leyte.

Among the continuous complaints of concessionaires are the inconsistent and low water supply in majority of the areas in Tacloban City. Feeling the brunt, the slow-to-none water flow is the city's downtown area and northern barangays.

Across many areas in the LMWD coverage, residents are experiencing daily disruptions. Some stay late into the night just to catch a trickle from the tap and bring to a full a pail or two. Others have resorted to buying expensive refilled water or relying on deep wells, which aren't always safe.

Lorna Sabusap, who lives in a unit inside the Kapuso Village in the city's northern barangay together with seven of her family members, said most of the time they do not have water supply, yet they are paying a monthly bill which they think is more than they have consumed. Sabusap is in full agreement with the recent order of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. to investigate into the services of PrimeWater.

Water, she said, is a fundamental human right, essential not only for drinking and hygiene but for sustaining livelihoods.

The Palace earlier emphasized that the investigation is a government obligation to address public grievances regarding water services. **(ACR/PIA LEYTE) BY AHLETTE C. REYES**

PH TO BECOME \$2-T ECONOMY BY 2050

MANILA – The Philippines sustained its strong economic growth momentum and will likely become a USD2 trillion economy by 2050 barring external shocks, according to Department of Economy, Planning, and Development (DEPDev) Secretary Arsenio Balisacan.

Speaking at the Philippine Economic Dialogue in Milan, Italy, on Tuesday, Balisacan presented the country's robust economic performance, investor-friendly policies, and long-term vision to European business leaders and financial stakeholders.

Balisacan highlighted the economy's desirable market features, citing its USD392 billion economic size, remarkable progress as a rising middle-income country, and a population of 114 million with a median age of 27.

"At our current growth trajectory—and barring significant external shocks—we anticipate reaching a USD2 trillion economy by 2050," he said.

Balisacan said the transformation of the economy will be driven by initiatives that foster new growth drivers while strengthening existing sectors, private sector participation, especially in infrastructure, and investments that generate lasting impact and shared prosperity.

He also mentioned the key policy advancements, such as the Philippines-Korea Free Trade Agreement, the Ease of Paying Taxes

Act, the CREATE MORE Act, and the establishment of green lanes for strategic investments, along with measures to expedite infrastructure development and reduce the cost of doing business.

Balisacan invited investors to explore opportunities within the Luzon Economic Corridor, a government initiative that aims to boost trade and investment across the region.

"The Luzon Economic Corridor connects Subic, Clark, Manila, and Batangas through coordinated investments in logistics, energy, and infrastructure. This corridor supports key sectors, such as agribusiness, semiconductors, manufacturing, and finance — serving as a launchpad into Asian and global markets," said Balisacan.

"Strong macroeconomic fundamentals, reform momentum, a skilled and young workforce, and a strategic location position the Philippines as your ideal partner of choice in Asia and globally. The right time is now. The right place is the Philippines," Balisacan added.

The Philippine Economic Dialogue, conducted on the sidelines of the 58th Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in Milan, Italy was attended by around 90 participants from the European business and financial communities as well as delegates from the ADB Annual Meeting. **(PNA) BY ANNA LEAH GONZALES**

CEBU PACIFIC OPTIMISTIC OF CONTINUED GROWTH, PH AVIATION

MANILA – Gokongwei-led airline Cebu Pacific (CEB) on Thursday expressed optimism for continued expansion as well as the long-term growth potential of Philippine aviation.

In a news release, CEB shared that during the annual stockholders' meeting, CEB chairman Lance Gokongwei highlighted the importance of the company's continued commitment to excellence, expansion of its network, and strategic investment in aircraft.

"Our work over the past couple of years have placed Cebu Pacific in a position to take advantage of the Philippine growth story, and we are confident that our airline will continue to reach new highs —on the back of the outstanding work of the organization, other stakeholders, and of course, your unwavering support," Gokongwei was quoted as saying.

The airline reported a significant growth in revenues through record-breaking passenger numbers and a consistently strong seat load factor in 2024.

To support its growth and ensure operational resilience amid industry challenges, CEB took delivery of 17 aircraft last year and pushed forward with the development of hubs across the country.

CEB chief executive officer Michael Szucs underscored how these strategic investments in

hubs and aircraft have been key catalysts to CEB's growth.

"By seizing these opportunities, we have not only outpaced competition but also solidified our position as industry leader," Szucs said in a statement. Szucs expressed confidence about CEB's continued growth in 2025, noting how the early months of 2025 show that the market is already absorbing the additional capacity and how this will also strengthen the company's overall financial position.

He also expressed his optimism in the long-term growth potential of Philippine aviation, driven by the country's economic, geographic, and demographic advantages. Underpinning this view is CEB's historic order for up to 152 aircraft signed in 2024, showing its commitment to supporting the Philippines' continued growth and development.

On Thursday, the Philippine Statistics Authority said the Philippine economy continued to grow in the first quarter, registering 5.4 percent, which is slightly higher than the 5.3 percent in the fourth quarter of last year.

While growth slowed from the 5.9 percent expansion in the first quarter of 2024, the gross domestic product (GDP) expansion during the period surpassed other major economies in the region. **(PNA) BY MA. CRISTINA ARAYATA**

IFPB TO REVIEW THE ANNUAL BLOCK GRANT FORMULA FOR BARMM

MANILA – The Intergovernmental Fiscal Policy Board (IFPB) has resolved to commence the review of the Annual Block Grant (Block Grant) formula for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). In a statement on Friday, the Department of Finance (DOF) said the move would promote greater fiscal autonomy and development in the region. The IFPB is co-chaired by Finance Secretary Ralph Recto for the national government and Minister of Finance, Budget and Management Ubaida Pacasem for the Bangsamoro government.

The review is in accordance with Section 22, Article 12 of Republic Act 11054 or the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), which requires the review of the Block Grant formula every five years.

The Block Grant is equivalent to 5 percent of the net national internal revenue tax collection and the net collection of the BOC from the third fiscal year immediately preceding the current fiscal year.

The IFPB is tasked to review the ABG formula five years after its effectivity, and every five years thereafter, to consider, among others, the fiscal needs of the Bangsamoro government and the actual revenue it shall be able to generate to ensure that all

block grant expenditures are transparent and performance-based.

Consultations will be held with development partners and ASEAN countries with valuable knowledge and expertise in the administration, management, and implementation of block grants or similar fiscal transfer mechanisms.

The IFPB aims to conclude the review by the first quarter of 2026 to ensure that the ABG amount, based on the agreed computation, will be included in the preparation for the 2027 national budget.

"I am optimistic that this review will result in a more responsive and effective Block Grant formula that will further strengthen the BARMM towards a just and lasting peace as well as inclusive development in the Bangsamoro region," Recto said.

In 2024, the Bangsamoro government received a total of PHP70.51 billion as Block Grant from the national government.

From 2020 to 2024, the total Block Grant received by the Bangsamoro government amounted to PHP337.53 billion.

The DOF said Minister Pacasem welcomed the joint review and expressed his appreciation for the national government's proactive approach. **(PNA) BY ANNA LEAH GONZALES**

PH SHARES SOLD ON PROFIT, PESO ENDS WEAKER

MANILA – Local shares were sold on profit on Thursday while peso ended the day weaker.

After gaining for two straight days, the Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi) declined by 1.17 percent to 6,389.49, with All Shares also decreasing by 0.74 percent to 3,740.35.

"Philippine investors sold on profit as the first quarter of 2025 gross domestic product came out at 5.4 percent, while other investors digested the implications of the latest FOMC (Federal Open Market Committee)

meeting," Regina Capital Development Corp. head of sales Luis Limlingan said.

All counters closed in the red territory, with biggest losses from Holding Firms, down by 2.02 percent; followed by Mining and Oil, 1.98 percent to 9,528.96; Property, 1.64 percent to 2,255.17; Financials, 0.82 percent to 2,465.78; Industrial, 0.65 percent to 9,053.09; and Services, 0.08 percent to 2,070.80. Decliners outnumbered advancers at 113 to 75, leaving 54 counters unchanged.

Meanwhile, the Philippine peso closed weaker at 55.63 to the US dollar from a 55.40-finish on Wednesday.

It opened the day at 55.50 to the dollar before trading between a low of 55.46 and a high of 55.68 to the dollar.

The average level for the day stood at 55.57 to the greenback.

Volume of trade dropped to USD1.7 billion from USD2 billion in the previous day. **(PNA) BY KRIS CRISMUNDO**

LOCAL SHARES, PESO FINISH STRONG

MANILA – The local stock market and currency closed stronger on the last trading day of the week.

The Philippine Stock Exchange (PSEi) gained 1.08 percent to 6,458.20 while All Shares also rose 0.60 percent to 3,762.85.

Except for Mining and Oil, which declined by 1.55 percent, all Sectors closed in the green, led by Holding Firms, which went up by 2.75 percent.

"Philippine shares rose

following President Donald Trump's unveiling of a trade deal framework with the UK (United Kingdom), the first significant agreement since the U.S. imposed preemptive tariffs," Regina Capital Development Corp. head of sales Luis Limlingan said.

"The deal, which includes a 10% baseline tariff, also signaled the possibility of higher tariffs for other nations with large trade surpluses."

Advancers led decliners at 105 to 84, leaving 56 counters unchanged.

Meanwhile, the peso closed stronger at 55.51 to a dollar from its 55.625 finish on Thursday.

It opened at 55.7 and traded between 55.395 to 55.82, bringing the day's weighted average to 55.625.

Volume of trade slightly declined to USD1.64 billion from USD1.70 billion. **(PNA) BY ANNA LEAH GONZALES**



NU BEATS UST, FORGES TITLE DUEL WITH FEU IN UAAP MEN'S VOLLEYBALL

MANILA – National University (NU) defeated University of Santo Tomas (UST), 25-23, 25-23, 25-23, Wednesday in the semifinal round of the UAAP Season 87 men's volleyball tournament at the Smart Araneta Coliseum.

Starring Leo Ordiales and Jade Alex Disquitado, the Bulldogs rebounded from last Saturday's loss to forge a title showdown with Far Eastern University (FEU).

The best-of-three championship series will start on Sunday at 1 p.m., also at the Big Dome.

"Last night, I really had trouble sleeping because I had so many things on my mind. I just kept thinking positively so I wouldn't

have a hard time during the game. I was excited, but I tried to stay calm, and thankfully, I was able to bring out my true game," Ordiales, who led the Bulldogs with 20 points, said.

Both teams fought hard in the third set, which saw two deadlocks, 21-all and 23-all, but the Bulldogs proved steadier and marched to finals for the 10th straight season.

"I'm really thankful for the win my players gave me. We did a great job. I think we were able to take this game because of our careful planning on what needed to be done, especially with the matchups, since that's where we had trouble in our first game against

UST," NU head coach Dante Alinsunurin said.

Disquitado chipped in 14 points and 11 receptions, while Michaelo Buddin, who returned from a two-game absence due to a right ankle sprain, added seven points and nine receptions.

Josh Ybanez finished with 13 points, 13 receptions, and five excellent digs for UST, which was eliminated by NU for the third consecutive year.

Rey Miguel De Vega capped off his Season 87 stint with 11 points and 16 receptions while Trevor Valera and Jay Rack De La Noche contributed nine and eight points, respectively. **(PNA) BY JEAN MALANUM**

BALANGAUAN, NAILGA TRIUMPH IN JPGT MACTAN

MANILA – Cebuana Tashanah Balangauan debuted in the ICTSI Junior JPGT Championship with a title victory in the girls' 15-18 division at the Mactan Island Golf Course in Cebu on Wednesday.

The 15-year-old Balangauan had back-to-back rounds of 73 to post a seven-shot lead and delivered a final-round 78 under overcast skies to win the title with a total score of 224.

She also gained 15 valuable ranking points to boost her chances of securing a slot in the North vs. South Elite Junior Finals.

"I'm happy and grateful to win in my first JPGT tournament. This experience gave me valuable insights into what I need to improve for my next tournaments," the

St. Benedict Childhood Education Center student said.

Precious Zaragosa placed second with a 77, finishing with a total of 231; Crista Miñoza was third after scoring an 80 for a 233 total; while Lois Laine Go ranked fourth with a 79, ending at 235.

In the boys' division, Alexis Nailga of Bukidnon registered a two-under-par 66 to win the title. Nailga had a 54-hole total of eight-over 212, highlighted by a second-round 69. He made back-to-back birdies starting from No. 4, had another birdie on the seventh and scored two more birdies on Nos. 14 and 15.

Cebuano Nyito Tiongko closed with a 71 to finish at 222 followed by Zeus Suzara with a 237 after a final-round 75.

Other winners are Bukidnon's Ralph Batican (boys' 11-14), South Cotabato's Brittany Tamayo (girls' 11-14), Davao's Ethan Lago (boys' 7-10) and Cebu's Denise Mendoza (girls' 7-10).

The seven-stage Visayas-Mindanao Series, organized by Pilipinas Golf Tournaments, Inc., resumes at the Negros Occidental Golf and Country Club on May 14-16, followed by the Bacolod leg on May 19-21. The Mindanao swing begins at the Del Monte Golf Club on June 25-27.

Players must join at least three tournaments to qualify for the national finals. The top four players in each age-group category will make up the Vis-Min team that will compete against the top performers from the Luzon series

AKARI'S SOYUD TO BE FETED IN PVL PRESCORPS AWARDS NIGHT

MANILA – Akari opposite hitter Eli Soyud is among the top performers to be honored in the first-ever Pilipinas Live PVL Press Corps Awards Night on May 28 at the Novotel in Quezon City.

The 5-foot-10 player from Bago City, Negros Occidental will receive the Most Improved Player award after getting 5.4 media votes and 4.8 team votes to beat Creamline's Bernadeth Pons and Bea De Leon.

Soyud played a key role in the Chargers' bronze medal finish in the 2024-2025 All-Filipino Conference. She scored a career-high 34 points in a five-set win over Choco Muchi in the semifinals.

Libero Alyssa Eroa of Galeries Tower and Petro Gazz setter Chie Saet will also be feted following their brilliant performances in the country's first and only women's professional volleyball league.

The 4-foot-11 Eroa, a product of San Sebastian College-Recoletos, earned the Comeback Player of the Year honors with 8.8 total votes over ZUS Coffee's Jovelyn Gonzaga, who garnered 8.2 votes.

Three years after her last stint with PLDT during the bubble season in Bacarra, Ilocos Norte, Eroa returned to the PVL in 2024 through Galeries Tower, and was named Best Libero in the Reinforced Conference.

The 40-year-old Saet, on the other hand, was named Miss Quality Minutes for helping the Angels in their 2024-2025 All-Filipino Conference championship run.

She had a total of 14.4 votes, 8.4 from the media and 6.0 from the teams, to beat Cignal's Judith Abil and Choco Mucho's Royle Tubino for the award. **(PNA) BY JEAN MALANUM**

in the season-ending championship at The Country Club in Laguna on Sept. 30 to Oct. 2. **(PNA) BY JEAN MALANUM**

BUGNA EYES MORE SUCCESS IN LAPU-LAPU JUNIOR TENNIS

MANILA – The Lapu-Lapu City National Junior Tennis Championships kicks off May 12 in Cebu with nearly 200 players competing across nine age-group categories for boys and girls.

Kathryn Bugna of La Carlota City, Negros Occidental is seeking more titles after securing the girls' U14 and U16 crowns during the Vistec Roxas National Tennis Championships in Capiz last month.

A member of the Batang Onay Tennis Club, she will face stiff challenge in the U14, led by top seed Etha Nadine Seno, Theriz Zapatos, Sabrina Aldeguer, Abby Joy Castigador, Kate Chavez and Ninna Orlanes.

Seno, Castigador, Chavez and Loren Nocos are also competing in the U12 category.

Isobel Alipo-on, Besper Zapatos, Clodyn Co

and Cyndea Manalo are the top four seeds in the U16 category while the girls' U18 category has standouts Gesellyn Constancio, Besper Zapatos, Mae Parangan and Lisbeth Calva.

Meanwhile, the boys' U18 category features Antonio Ng Jr., Rizzjun Labindao, Chad Cuizon and Paul Verallo.

Labindao has also entered the U16 category, which includes Anthony Espinosa, Kenji Kua, and Andrian Rodriguez.

Kenji Kua, Phine Billones, Chris Villarín, and Ciaran Alipo-on banner the boys' U14 category, while Joshua Ausan, Blaze Sotto, Anselm dela Cruz, and Blake Aroma are the title contenders in the boys' U12 category.

Ausan and Niño Jopia are also playing in the U10 category. **(with a report from JEAN MALANUM/PNA)**

FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT FOR ATENEO'S RICAFORTE

MANILA – Ateneo de Manila University's Russel Je Ricaforte had been looking forward to this year's ICTSI Philippine Athletics Championships, eager to prove he's the country's top discus thrower.

And that's exactly what he did in the tournament, held at the New Clark City Athletics stadium in Capas, Tarlac from May 1 to 4, which served as one of the qualifiers for the country's representatives in the 33rd Thailand Southeast Asian Games in December.

The Davao City-born Ricaforte registered 47.17 meters to beat national athlete Ed Delaña (47.07) and Malaysia University's Kamal Farhan bin Abdul Rahman (46.42).

"I was really prepared coming to the competition. Although I was set back for three weeks because of a right foot injury, I was still able to piece it all together and find a way to win," the 24-year-old Ricaforte said in an interview Wednesday. He set a personal best of 47.80 meters during the UAAP Season 87 track and field tournament also held at the NCC.

Ricaforte, whose father used to join marathons,

is the younger of two siblings. His brother, Abe Sheen, saw action in the 1,500-meter event at the Palarong Pambansa qualifier.

"I want to be a member of the national team," the 5-foot-10 thrower said when asked about his goal. "If given a chance, I would like to join the PH Open next year to defend my title," said Ricaforte, who is taking up his master's degree in Business Administration at Ateneo. He is a physical education graduate from the University of Perpetual Help in Las Piñas.

Arniel Ferrera, a four-time gold medalist and three-time record-holder in hammer throw at the Southeast Asian Games, has been mentoring Ricaforte since 2023.

"I see a bright future for Russel, he has a big potential and if given a chance to compete abroad, he can bring honor to the country," Ferrera, a former member of the national coaching staff, said. "His work ethic is commendable, he's willing to learn and I admire his mental toughness." **(PNA) BY JEAN MALANUM**