

CAVITE GAZETTE

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DEPED TO GRANT INCREASED

POLICE VISIBILITY IN CAVITE SCHOOLS

TRECE MARTIRES CITY, Cavite (PIA) —

Law enforcers will be allowed to enter school premises in Cavite Province especially during peak hours in a bid to strengthen security in learning institutions.

Following their coordination meeting with the Department of Education-Schools Division Office Cavite

Province, the Cavite Provincial Police confirmed that they will increase police visibility in school premises, including classrooms, particularly during safety inspections.

Police Colonel Ariel Red, Director for Cavite Provincial Police, in a statement noted that the move to increase police visibility in schools will focus on security

coordinated safety operations.

“This measure is seen as part of a proactive approach to risk prevention and rapid response in case of emergencies.”

To recall, two separate incidents of school violence were reported in the province prompting the PNP to conduct a full investigation and

inspections, threat assessments, and

coordination with school authorities.

Barangay tanods, or community peacekeepers, will also help maintain peace and order around school facilities by monitoring school perimeters including entry points and surrounding communities especially during school days and special events.

The initiative also explored possible investments in additional security infrastructure, such as assessment and installation of metal detectors in selected local schools to detect and prevent the entry of weapons and other prohibited items in schools.

“A thorough assessment will be conducted to determine priority areas based on security risk evaluation and school requirements.”

Police visibility in educational institutions used to be limited to school premises. In its DepEd Order No. 2, series of 2019, schools were cited as “Zones of Peace” which limited the presence of armed combatants and government forces to school perimeters and not inside school premises. (PB-PIA Cavite, Cavite Police Provincial Office/Facebook) **BY PATRICIA BERMUDEZ**



CARMONA CITY LGU'S KALINGYAKAP SHELTER GETS UN NOD



CARMONA CITY, Cavite (PIA) — By providing specialized facilities and services catering to Persons With Disabilities (PWD), the City of Carmona's KALINGYAKAP Integrated Shelter, Support and Services for Persons With Disabilities earned recognition from the 2026 United Nations Public Service Awards (UNPSA).

The KALINGYAKAP Integrated Shelter, which opened to the public last February, is part of the city government's support to PWDs. The two-storey facility, which includes facilities such as classrooms, administrative office, shower rooms, comfort rooms, dormitory rooms, infirmary, consultation room, and many others aim, provides key services for PWDs under one roof.

The KALINGYAKAP Integrated Center was chosen among 700 nominations from around the world under the “Delivering Inclusive and Equitable Services to Leave No One Behind” category.

Mayor Dahlia Loyola, in a statement, noted the recognition as a milestone in the city's bid towards innovation, good governance, and people-centric public service.

“Isang mahalagang kasaysayan at milestone ito ng ating progresibong lungsod na sumasailalim sa ating dedikasyon

tungo sa innovation, good governance, at people-centric public service.”

Loyola also recognized the Office of the Persons with Disability Affairs Officer for its responsive programs which have been key to the city's bid towards inclusivity.

“Taos-pusong pagbati sa Office of the Persons with Disability Affairs Officer para sa walang sawa nilang pagsulong ng mga programa tungo sa mas inklusibong komunidad para sa mga PWDs.”

As one of the winning initiatives, Carmona's Kalingyakap Center was also recognized for integrating information and communication initiatives, artificial intelligence and digital governance.

The UN Public Service Awards gives recognition to ground-breaking initiatives from 62 countries that advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

This year, the award-giving body recognized initiatives that responded to multiple challenges and enhancing the capabilities of public administrations while advancing the SDGs. (PB-PIA Cavite, with reports from City Government of Carmona/FACEBOOK and United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs) **BY PATRICIA BERMUDEZ**

SUSPEK SA CARNAPPING, ARESTADO NG TANZA POLIS

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Agad na naaresto ang isang suspek matapos tangkaing tangayin ang isang motorsiklo sa loob ng isang nakabakod na residential compound sa Brgy. Julugan 7, Tanza, Cavite bandang alas-10:00 ng umaga noong Hunyo 25, 2026.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL CHESTER NOEL R BORLONGAN, hepe ng Tanza MPS, ang naarestong suspek na si alyas “Ben” na residente ng Tanza, Cavite.

Batay sa ulat, dahan dahan itinakas ng suspek ang isang motorsiklo na nagkakahalaga ng humigit-kumulang Php40,000.00. Ang motorsiklo ay nakaparada sa harap ng apartment ng biktima sa loob ng isang nakabakod na compound sa Tanza, Cavite.

Ang insidente ay nangyari habang napansin diumano ng live-in partner ng biktima ang isang hindi kilalang lalaki na sakay ng naturang motorsiklo palabas ng compound. Agad niyang hinarang at

pinigil ang suspek, isinara ang gate upang hindi ito makatakas, at humingi ng tulong sa mga residente at barangay personnel sa lugar.

Dahil sa maagap na aksyon ng mga sibilyan at barangay tanod, naaresto ang suspek agad dinala sa Tanza Municipal Police Station para sa kaukulang disposisyon at pagsasampa ng kaso.

Kasalukuyang ay nasa kustodiya ng Tanza MPS ang suspek habang inihahanda ang mga kinakailangang dokumento para sa pagsasampa ng kaukulang kaso at inquest proceedings.

Sinabi ni PCOL ARIEL R RED, Provincial Director ng Cavite Police Provincial Office, “Pinupuri natin ang maagap na pagtugon ng mga mamamayan at barangay personnel na naging daan upang agad na maaresto ang suspek. Ang pagkakaisa ng komunidad at kapulisan ay mahalaga sa pagpigil at paglaban sa kriminalidad upang mapanatiling ligtas ang ating mga pamayanan.”

REGIONAL LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON SA KASONG MURDER, ARESTADO NG GMA POLIS

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Matagumpay na naaresto ng mga operatiba ng GMA Municipal Police Station ang isang Regional Level Most Wanted Person sa isinagawang police operation sa Brgy. Poblacion 1, GMA, Cavite bandang alas-12:15 ng tanghali noong Hunyo 25, 2026.

Kinilala ni Alexander S Alvarez, hepe ng GMA MPS, ang naarestong akusado na si alyas “Top” na residente ng GMA, Cavite.

Batay sa ulat, nagsagawa ng operasyon ang Warrant Personnel ng GMA Municipal Police Station laban sa wanted person na nagresulta sa pagkakaaresto ng akusado sa bisa ng Warrant of Arrest na inisyu ng Regional Trial Court, Fourth Judicial Region, Branch 19, Bacoor

City, Cavite para sa kasong Murder. Ang naturang warrant ay may petsang Mayo 18, 2026 at walang inirekomendang piyansa.

Matapos ang pagkakaaresto, ipinaalam sa akusado ang kanyang mga karapatang konstitusyonal sa wikang kanyang nauunawaan. Inihahanda na rin ang pagbabalik ng Warrant of Arrest sa hukuman na nagpalabas nito para sa kaukulang dokumentasyon at disposisyon ng kaso.

Sinabi ni PCOL ARIEL R RED, Provincial Director ng Cavite Police Provincial Office, “Ang matagumpay na pagkakaaresto sa mga wanted person ay patunay ng patuloy na dedikasyon ng ating kapulisan sa pagpapatupad ng batas at paghahatid ng hustisiya. Patuloy nating palalakasin ang ating operasyon upang matiyak na mananagot

TOP 1 STATION MOST WANTED PERSON SA KASONG CARNAPPING, ARESTADO SA MAYNILA

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Matagumpay na naaresto ang Top 1 Most Wanted Person sa Station Level sa isinagawang police operation ng mga operatiba ng Trece Martires Component City Police Station at Sta. Mesa Police Station bandang alas-5:15 ng hapon noong Hunyo 24, 2026 sa Custodial Facility ng Sta. Ana Police Station sa Maynila.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL BRYIAN D MERINO, hepe ng TMCCPS, ang naarestong akusado na si alyas “May” na kasalukuyang residente ng Pasay City.

Batay sa ulat, nagsagawa ng operasyon ang mga operatiba ng Warrant Section ng Sta. Mesa Police Station, katuwang ang mga tauhan ng Warrant Section ng Trece Martires Component City Police Station. Nagresulta ang operasyon sa pagkakaaresto sa akusado sa bisa ng Warrant of Arrest para sa paglabag sa Republic Act No. 10883 o New Anti-Carnapping Act of 2016.

Ang nasabing warrant

ay inisyu at nilagdaan ng Regional Trial Court, Branch 209, Mandaluyong City, noong Hulyo 27, 2020, na may inirekomendang piyansa na Php300,000.00. Naipabatid sa akusado ang dahilan ng kanyang pag-aresto at ang kanyang mga karapatang konstitusyonal sa wikang kanyang nauunawaan.

Sa kasalukuyan, ang akusado ay nakapiit sa Sta. Ana Police Station habang inihahanda ang pagbabalik ng warrant sa hukuman na nagpalabas nito para sa kaukulang disposisyon ng kaso.

Sinabi ni PCOL ARIEL R RED, Provincial Director ng Cavite Police Provincial Office, “Patuloy nating pinalalakas ang ating kampanya laban sa mga wanted person upang matiyak na ang mga indibidwal na may kinakaharap na kaso ay mananagot sa ilalim ng batas. Ang matagumpay na operasyong ito ay patunay ng ating matatag na koordinasyon at dedikasyon sa pagpapanatili ng kapayapaan at kaayusan sa ating mga komunidad.”

REGIONAL LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON SA KASO NG ILIGAL NA DROGA, ARESTADO NG SILANG POLIS

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Matagumpay na naaresto ang isang Regional Most Wanted Person ng PRO4A CALABARZON sa isinagawang operasyon sa Barangay Kanluran, Binakayan, Kawit, Cavite bandang alas-9:00 ng gabi noong Hunyo 24, 2026.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL JOSEPH D MACATANGAY, hepe ng Silang MPS, ang naarestong akusado na si alyas “Eva” na residente

sa batas ang mga taong may kinahaharap na kaso at mapanatili ang kapayapaan at kaayusan sa ating lalawigan.”

ng Kawit, Cavite.

Batay sa ulat, nagsagawa ng operasyon ang Warrant Personnel ng Silang Municipal Police Station sa ilalim ng Simultaneous Anti-Criminality Law Enforcement Operation, na nagresulta sa pagkakaaresto sa akusado sa bisa ng Warrant of Arrest para sa kasong Violation of Section 5, Article II of Republic Act No. 9165 (Dangerous Drug Act of 2002).

Ang nasabing warrant ay inisyu noong Pebrero 18, 2016 ng Regional Trial Court, Branch 18, Tagaytay City, Cavite, na walang nirerekomendang piyansa. Naipabatid sa akusado

TATLONG INDIBIDWAL ARESTADO; MAHIGIT P158,500 HALAGANG HINIHALANG MARIJUANA KUSH AT LIQUID MARIJUANA NASAMSAM SA DASMARINAS CITY

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite

— Tatlong indibidwal ang naaresto sa isinagawang buy-bust operation ng Drug Enforcement Unit ng Dasmariñas Component City Police Station sa Barangay Salawag, Dasmariñas City, Cavite bandang alas-6:00 ng gabi noong Hunyo 24, 2026.

Kinilala ang mga naaresto na sina alyas “Al,” “Ron,” at “Mark,” na pawang mga residente ng Dasmariñas City, Cavite.

Batay sa ulat, nagsagawa ng buy-bust operation ang Drug Enforcement Unit ng Dasmariñas CCPS. Nagresulta ang operasyon sa pagkakaaresto ng mga suspek para sa paglabag sa Sections 5, 11, at 26 ng Article II ng Republic Act No. 9165 (Dangerous Drug Act of 2002), habang si alyas “Mark” ay nahaharap sa kasong Obstruction of Justice.

Nakumpiska sa operasyon ang isang maliit

na pakete na naglalaman ng hinihinalang Marijuana Kush na may timbang na humigit-kumulang 14.00 gramo na tinatayang n a g k a k a h a l a g a ng Php21,000.00; limampu’t limang piraso ng hinihinalang Liquid Marijuana na may kabuuang timbang na humigit-kumulang 55.00 gramo na tinatayang nagkakahalaga na Php137,500.00; isang eco bag; at isang tunay na Php500.00 bill kasama ang dalawang pekeng Php1,000.00 bill na ginamit bilang boodle money.

Ang mga nakumpiskang drug-related evidence ay isusumite sa Cavite Provincial Forensic Unit para sa laboratory examination. Samantala, inihanda na ang mga kinakailangang dokumento para sa pagsasampa ng kaukulang kaso at inquest proceedings sa Office of the City Prosecutor. Naisumite na rin ang Intelligence Report sa Provincial Intelligence Unit para sa kaukulang monitoring at documentation.

Sinabi ni PCOL ARIEL R RED, Provincial Director ng Cavite Police Provincial Office, “Patuloy nating paiigtingin ang kampanya laban sa ilegal na droga upang mapanatili ang kapayapaan at kaayusan sa ating mga komunidad. Hindi tayo titigil sa pagsasagawa ng mga operasyon laban sa mga sangkot sa ilegal na gawain upang maprotektahan ang bawat mamamayan ng Cavite.”

dedikasyon ng ating mga kapulisan sa pagpapanatili ng kapayapaan at kaayusan sa buong lalawigan ng Cavite.”

480 TRECEÑOS BENEFIT FROM PGC MEDICAL AND DENTAL MISSION

Residents of Brgy. Lapidario, Trece Martires City gained access to free healthcare services through a Medical and Dental Mission conducted by the Provincial Government of Cavite (PGC) on June 23, 2026. The community outreach initiative benefited a total of 480 residents, reflecting the provincial government's continuing commitment to improving public health and bringing essential services closer to local communities.

Medical and dental professionals, alongside dedicated personnel from the Office of the Provincial Governor (OPG), worked collaboratively to ensure the efficient delivery of medical care and health interventions to residents. The mission recorded 333 medical consultations and

52 dental services, while 29 patients underwent electrocardiogram (ECG) procedures and 66 beneficiaries received fasting blood sugar (FBS) testing, supporting the early detection and monitoring of various health conditions. The outreach program was attended and supported by City Mayor Gemma B. Lubigan, Vice Mayor Bobby L. Montehermoso, 7th District Board Member Aldrin Anacan, and other City Councilors, whose presence underscored the strong partnership between the provincial and local governments in advancing public health initiatives. Their participation reflected a shared commitment to making quality healthcare more accessible and enhancing the overall health and well-being of Treceños. — *OPIO*

CAVITE PNP, DEPED CAVITE STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIP FOR SAFER LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, City of Imus, Cavite - Strengthening the partnership between law enforcement and the education sector, Provincial Director PCol Ariel R Red, through his representative, PLtCol Jonathan A. Asnan, Deputy Provincial Director for Operations (DPDO), participated in the Ikaapat na Pulong Lupon of the Schools Division Office (SDO) of Cavite Province on June 25, 2026, at Montvida Garden and Events Place, Amadeo, Cavite.

The meeting, presided over by Dr. Rosemarie D. Torres, CESO V, Schools Division Superintendent, convened key officials of the Department of Education (DepEd) Cavite and school leaders from across the province to discuss priority educational concerns and collaborative initiatives aimed at promoting the welfare of learners and school personnel. During the activity, PLtCol Asnan presented updates on the security and safety measures being implemented by the Cavite Police Provincial Office to support educational institutions, particularly

in response to recent incidents affecting schools. He highlighted various police programs and interventions designed to ensure the safety and protection of learners, teaching and non-teaching personnel, and school facilities. He also underscored the importance of sustained collaboration, timely information sharing, and proactive coordination between the Philippine National Police and the Department of Education in addressing safety and security concerns within school communities. Meanwhile, PMaj Mariz Datiles-Caraan, Team Leader of the Provincial Anti-Cybercrime Unit of Cavite PPO, discussed emerging cybercrime threats affecting the education sector and emphasized the importance of cybersecurity awareness among learners, teachers, and school personnel. She likewise provided updates on the Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism (PCVE) Program and discussed bomb awareness, preparedness measures, emergency response protocols, and contingency

STRENGTHENING INDUSTRIAL RESILIENCE: DOST CAVITE HOSTS WALASTECH SEASON 2 EPISODE 3: "UNDERSTANDING RISK MANAGEMENT IN MANUFACTURING"

The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Cavite successfully aired the third episode of WALASTECH Season 2, titled "Understanding Risk Management in Manufacturing," on June 25, 2026, via Zoom and Facebook Live. The webinar gathered local enterprises and stakeholders to explore strategies for building resilience and sustaining competitiveness in an increasingly complex manufacturing environment. In her opening message, DOST Cavite Provincial Director Ms. Gilda S. De Jesus underscored the broader impact of risk

management, emphasizing that it protects not only organizations but also communities and future generations. She encouraged participants to view challenges as opportunities for growth and to cultivate resilience as a core organizational value. The session featured Dr. Almira G. Magcawas, Vice President for Business and Resource Generation of Cavite State University – Main Campus, who shared valuable insights on navigating risk, uncertainty, and crisis. She stressed that risk management is a continuous process that creates value, supports informed decision-making, strengthens organizational resilience, and enhances competitiveness.

Closing the event, Supervising Science Research Specialist Ms. Anna Marie S. Daigan reminded participants that risk management is more than a compliance requirement—it is a strategic tool for anticipating disruptions and uncovering opportunities. Echoing DOST Cavite's commitment to proactive action, she concluded with a timeless message: "Prevention is better than cure." *DOST CAVITE*

HEALTH AND WELLNESS FOR THE PEOPLE OF DASMARINAS

The Provincial Government of Cavite extended healthcare services to a total of 736 residents of Brgy. San Juan, City of Dasmariñas through its medical and dental mission conducted on June 19. Healthcare professionals from the Office of the Provincial Health Officer provided free medical consultations, dental check-ups, and tooth extractions to residents. Electrocardiogram (ECG) and fasting blood sugar (FBS) procedures were likewise conducted to support further assessment

and management of health concerns. In addition, the Office of the Provincial Governor – Medical Mission Team distributed prescribed medicines and vitamins to complement the healthcare services rendered and support the residents' overall well-being. The Provincial Government of Cavite remains steadfast in bringing accessible healthcare services to every Caviteño as part of its continuing commitment to building a healthier province. — *OPIO*

EDITORIAL

Pananagutan o Pagbabago

Ang mga menor de edad na nagkakasala gaya ng pagkitil sa buhay ng iba ay dapat nga ba mahatulan ng pagkakakulong?

Ang tumitinding kaso ng mabibigat na krimen na kinasangkutan ng mga menor de edad, partikular na ang pagkitil sa buhay ng kapwa, ay nag-iiwan ng malalim na sugat sa pamilya ng mga biktima at hamon sa ating batas. Hindi maikakaila na ang buhay ay sagrado, kaya't ang sinumang kumuha nito ay dapat maharap sa kaukulang pananagutan. Gayunpaman, sa batas, hindi basta mapapatawan ng pagkakakulong ang mga menor de edad sapagkat wala pa sila sa wastong gulang. Sa ating pananaw, dapat nga ba babaan ang edad sa pagpataw ng kaparusahan.

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MERALCO LAUNCHES BIDDING FOR 900-MW POWER SUPPLY STARTING 2028

MANILA – Pangilinan-led Manila Electric Company (Meralco) on Wednesday announced the start of a competitive selection process (CSP) to secure 300 megawatts (MW) of power supply by February 2028 and an additional 600 MW by February 2029, subject to regulatory approvals.

In a statement, the distribution utility said the capacity requirements will be covered by a 15-year power supply agreement recently approved by the Department of Energy (DOE).

Meralco said it recently received a certificate of conformity from the DOE following a review process that took more than a year.

The company added its bids and awards committee will accept expressions of interest

from power generation companies until July 14, 2026. A pre-bid conference is scheduled for July 28, while the deadline for bid submissions is Sept. 1.

"The CSP will be technology-neutral and all generation technologies that meet the technical and commercial requirements will be allowed to submit an offer, in accordance with the Terms of Reference (TOR) and Invitation to Bid (ITB) and subject to the DOE's Energy Mix Policy under Department Circular No. DC2026-02-0005," Meralco said.

The company said the CSP policies "will ensure that power supply requirements of Meralco are procured through open and competitive bidding based on least-cost parameters, which will be beneficial for customers in terms of rate

HONTIVEROS EYES GERMAN EMBASSY HELP TO BRING GOREBOX TO SENATE PROBE

MANILA – Senator Risa Hontiveros will seek the help of the German Embassy in the Philippines after the Germany-based developer of GoreBox declined to attend the Senate inquiry into the Tacloban school shooting linked by authorities to the online game.

Hontiveros, chairperson of the Senate Committee on Women, Children,

and supply reliability."

"This CSP forms part of Meralco's continuing commitment to securing reliable, adequate, and competitively priced power supply for customers through a transparent and competitive procurement process," Meralco's Bids and Awards Committee for Power Supply Agreements (BAC-PSA) head Lawrence Fernandez said. (PNA)

Family Relations, and Gender Equality, said on Friday that developer Felix Filip informed the panel's secretariat through email that he would not join the July 1 hearing, either in person or via Zoom.

"Nakakadismaya na pinili ni Mr. Filip na huwag dumalo sa darating na hearing namin lalo na't marami sana akong gustong malaman mula sa kanya mismo (It is disappointing that Mr. Filip chose not to attend our upcoming hearing, especially because there are many things I wanted to ask him directly)," she said.

"My committee remains open to facilitate his attendance and participation in our investigation in case he changes his mind. Hindi dito nagtatapos ang aming pagnais na marinig siya (Our desire to hear him does not end here)."

Filip has identified himself as a Germany-based independent game developer.

Hontiveros said the Senate panel wanted to ask him directly about GoreBox's safeguards, particularly its age restrictions, content moderation policies, and possible exposure of young users to harmful online communities or violent behavior.

One of the suspects in the June 22 Tacloban school shooting was apparently an avid player of the mobile game.

Following the shooting, the Cybercrime Investigation and Coordinating Center issued a temporary ban against GoreBox.

Hontiveros said the inquiry is not meant to pin the June 22 tragedy on one mobile game alone, but to examine whether online spaces may have played a role in shaping or reinforcing violent behavior among minors.

"Hindi natin sinasabing isang laro lang ang dahilan ng trahedyang ito. Pero kung may online environment na maaaring naging bahagi ng pagkakalantad ng mga bata sa karahasan,

PBBM: NEW NKTI HEMODIALYSIS CENTER OPERATIONAL BY EARLY 2028

MANILA – The 13-story hemodialysis center that will soon rise at the National Kidney and Transplant Institute (NKTI) will be fully operational by early 2028, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. said Friday.

After inspecting the ongoing construction of the Mega Hemodialysis Legacy Building at the NKTI compound in Diliman, Quezon City, Marcos noted the project's steady progress, stressing that the timeline for its full operation is designed to ensure the facility is ready to serve patients with chronic kidney disease (CKD).

Marcos said the facility is designed to address the prevalence of CKD in the Philippines, which affects over 11 percent of the population.

"By the beginning of 2027 ay magsisimula na 'yung pagdadala, dadalhin 'yung mga gamit dito (we will start bringing in the equipment here). And when will you think it will start operation? A year after that, matatapos na, pwede nang tumanggap ng pasyente ito (it will be completed and will be ready to accept patients)," Marcos said.

"Nandito 'yung mga picture kung ano 'yung magiging pasilidad kapag tapos na, at siguro 'yun na nga ang ating tinitingnan na schedule, early 2028 makapag-operate na itong dialysis center (Here are the images showing what the facility will look like once it is completed, and

tungkulin nating siyasatin iyon (We are not saying that one game alone caused this tragedy. But if there is an online environment that may have contributed to children's exposure to violence, it is our duty to investigate it)," she said.

The July 1 hearing is expected to look into the broader chain of failures that may have contributed to the shooting, including possible grooming, radicalization, and normalization of violence in online platforms. (PNA) **BY WILNARD BACELONIA**

that is likely the timeline we are looking at—that this dialysis center will be operational by early 2028," he added.

Marcos said funding and processes have been optimized to ensure the facility's structural integrity and operational readiness when the center becomes fully functional.

The 13-story facility will house 200 state-of-the-art hemodialysis machines and provide comprehensive services to CKD patients.

The first phase of the project was completed on July 26, 2025, covering construction from the ground to the fourth floor and establishing the foundation and structural framework.

As of June 24, 2026, the second phase of the project, covering the fifth and sixth floors, was 70.5 percent complete, further enhancing the facility's capacity to deliver quality healthcare.

The project's full completion is targeted for March 2028.

Marcos said the project is poised to become the largest dialysis center in Southeast Asia.

He also cited key advancements in healthcare services, including the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation's (PhilHealth) expanded benefits, which increased the allowable number of dialysis sessions from 90 to 150 annually and raised the dialysis benefit package for both hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis.

"Napag-uusapan namin kung paano ang maaari nating gawin upang maiwas, na makaiwas ang ating mga kababayan sa chronic kidney disease. Kaya't marami pa tayong kailangan gawin (We have been discussing what more we can do to help our fellow Filipinos prevent chronic kidney disease. That is why we still have much work to do)," Marcos said.

Currently, there are 904 dialysis centers nationwide. (PNA) **BY RUTH ABBEY GITA-CARLOS**

72 AGENCIES TO JOIN NATIONAL SINGLE WINDOW BY 2028

MANILA – A total of 72 trade-related and other government agencies are set to be onboarded to the National Single Window-Integrated Trade Facilitation Platform (NSW-ITFP) to improve the ease of doing business in the country, the Department of Finance (DOF) said Tuesday.

The NSW-ITFP is a centralized digital platform that enables the submission, processing, and exchange of trade-related permits and regulatory documents through a single electronic gateway.

Developed under a Build-Operate-Transfer Public-Private Partnership framework with TradeX Network Inc., the NSW-ITFP is implemented by the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), with the DOF serving as the lead policy and oversight body for trade facilitation reforms.

As part of the initial

rollout, the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) and the National Tobacco Administration (NTA) successfully completed User Acceptance Testing for the onboarding of the Authority to Release Imported Goods (ATRIG) and Import Commodity Clearance (ICC).

Both agencies began live operations with selected pilot clients on June 22, 2026.

"The National Single Window will reduce red tape, lower costs, and speed up trade transactions. By digitalizing regulatory processes, we are making it easier to do business in the Philippines and strengthening our competitiveness in the global economy," Finance Secretary Frederick Go said in a statement.

In a separate statement, BIR Commissioner Charlito Mendoza said the NSW-ITFP will help make government transactions easier and more efficient for businesses.

"President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has directed government agencies to streamline services, reduce bureaucratic delays, and accelerate digital transformation. Integrating eATRIG into the National Single Window helps us do exactly that under the Digital and Data Transformation pillar of the BIR DARES Reform Agenda and supports our ongoing efforts to make compliance simpler and government services more efficient," he said.

Mendoza added that eATRIG is one of the bureau's priority digitalization projects for 2026 "because of its direct impact on importers, manufacturers, logistics providers, and other businesses involved in international trade."

"Through the NSW-ITFP, eATRIG will help replace the manual ATRIG process with a more efficient, standardized, and secure digital workflow," he said. (PNA) **BY ANNA LEAH GONZALES**

MULING PAGBABALIK SA PAGHAHABI AT SA BUHAY NA KINALAKHAN

Sa tahimik na bayan ng Luisiana, Laguna, may isang simpleng babae na buong ingat na naghahabi ng mga dahon ng pandan upang maging mga bayong, basket, at katutubong bag. Si Luzviminda R. Esperanza, o mas kilala sa tawag na "Lucy," ay matagal nang nahilig sa paghahabi sa kanilang munting tahanan. Bata pa lamang si Lucy ay kabisado na ng kaniyang mga kamay ang sining ng paghahabi. Natutuhan niya ito sa pagmamasiid sa kaniyang mga magulang habang gumagawa ng banig at bag mula sa pandan. Kalaunan, ang simpleng kasanayang ito ay naging paraan niya upang kumita at makatulong sa pang-araw-araw na pangangailangan ng pamilya.

Ngunit habang siya ay lumalaki, kinailangan niyang harapin ang mas mabigat na responsibilidad sa buhay. Bilang isang dalagita, nakipagsapalaran siya sa Maynila upang magtrabaho. Naging tintera siya, nagtrabaho sa mga kainan, at nagbigay rin ng serbisyo sa pagpapaganda tulad ng pag-aayos ng buhok at makeup. Napalitan ng mabilis na takbo ng buhay sa siyudad ang payapang buhay ng paghahabi na kaniyang kinagisnan.

Noong 1983, nang magsimula ng magkaroon ng sariling pamilya ang kaniyang mga kapatid, nagpasya si Lucy na bumalik sa Luisiana upang alagaan ang kaniyang tumatandang mga magulang. Hindi niya inaasahan na ang kaniyang pag-uwi ay magiging simula rin ng bagong yugto ng kaniyang buhay. Doon niya nakilala ang lalaking magiging katuwang niya. Makalipas ang isang taon, sila ay ikinasal at . Noong 2016, matapos maimbitahan ng ilan sa mga unang kliyente sa kanilang lugar, naging kliyente si Lunagsimulang bumuo ng sariling pamilya.

Habang namamasada ng traysikel ang kaniyang asawa, ipinagpatuloy naman ni Lucy ang pagbibigay ng cy ng CARD MRI Rizal Bank, Inc. (CARD RBI), isang rural bank na nakatuon sa

microfinance. Sa tulong nito, nagsimula siyang mag-ipon at kumuha ng iba't ibang insurance services sa ilalim ng CARD MRI.

Dumating ang isang mabigat na pagsubok noong 2019 nang pumanaw ang kaniyang asawa. Dahil dito, tumira muna siya sa isa niyang anak sa Batangas City at sinubukang ipagpatuloy doon ang pagbibigay ng beauty services. Ngunit kahit kasama niya ang pamilya, hindi pa rin siya naging komportable sa buhay at init sa lungsod.

Kalaunan, muli siyang bumalik sa tahimik na pamumuhay sa Luisiana. Dahil may sarili nang buhay ang kaniyang dalawang anak, isa sa Batangas at isa naman sa Cabuyao, Laguna, nagpasya siyang ituan na lamang ang kaniyang oras sa paghahabi. Sa mismong lugar kung saan niya unang natutuhan ang gawaing ito, muli niyang natagpuan hindi lamang ang kaniyang kabuhayan kundi pati na rin ang kapanatagan ng loob.

Sa pamamagitan ng loan services ng CARD RBI, nagkaroon siya ng dagdag na puhunan para maipagpatuloy ang kaniyang weaving business. Bukod sa savings at loans, malaking ginhawag rin para kay Lucy ang pagkakaroon ng insurance mula sa mga institusyon ng CARD MRI. Nagbibigay ito sa kaniya ng kapanatagan dahil alam niyang may masasandalan siya sa panahon ng pangangailangan. Higit sa lahat, panatag siya na may maaasahang proteksiyon

para sa kaniyang pamilya sa oras ng pagsubok.

Sa kasalukuyan, maingat na bumibili si Lucy ng mga dahon ng pandan na kaniyang ginagawang basket at bag gamit ang mga kamay na sanay na sanay na sa proseso ng paghahabi. Ito na ngayon ang pangunahing pinagkukunan niya ng kabuhayan. Nakagagawa siya ng isang basket sa loob ng halos 15 minuto at umaabot sa 10 piraso kada araw habang nagagawa pa rin ang mga gawaing bahay.

Maging ang kaniyang mga kapitbahay na naghahabi rin ay dinadala ang kanilang mga natapos na produkto sa bahay ni Lucy, kung saan dito kinukuha ng mga distributor para ibenta sa merkado.

Hinihikayat din ni Lucy ang kapwa niya mga kliyente na patuloy na mag-ipon at kumuha ng insurance para sa kanilang kinabukasan. "Sila ay maghulog para may aasahan sila balang araw," payo niya.

Ngayon, ang tunay na kaligayahan ni Lucy ay makita ang kaniyang mga anak at apo na nasa maayos na kalagayan, habang patuloy niyang nagagawa ang trabahong tunay niyang mahal. Tulad ng mga hibla ng pandan na dahan-dahan niyang hinahabi, mahinahon ding hinubog ng panahon ang kaniyang buhay. Hindi man marangya, pinili ni Lucy ang payak ngunit makabuluhang pamumuhay na unti-unting nahabi mula sa mga karanasan at aral na kaniyang natutuhan sa paglipas ng mga taon.



Masayang hinahabi ni Luzviminda R. Esperanza, 68, mula sa Luisiana, Laguna, ang mga dahon ng pandan upang gawing mga bag na gawa mismo ng kaniyang malikhaing mga kamay. Sa bawat habi, naipapasa niya ang husay at tradisyong nagbibigay-kabuhayan at inspirasyon sa kanilang komunidad.

SEC REVOKES LENDING FIRM'S REGISTRATION OVER MULTIPLE VIOLATIONS

MANILA – The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has revoked the corporate registration of Delisha Lending Investors and Trading Corp. for multiple violations of lending regulations and SEC rules.

In a news release Tuesday, the SEC said its Financing and Lending Companies Department found that the company failed to comply with the implementing rules and regulations of Republic Act 9474, or the Lending Company Regulation Act, as well as several SEC issuances.

Among the violations cited were the firm's failure to submit reportorial requirements for several years, including its general information sheets, audited financial statements, special forms and interim

semi-annual financial statements.

The company also allegedly failed to pay annual fees required of lending firms from 2014 to 2025.

The SEC likewise found that Delisha Lending failed to disclose the operation of several online lending platforms, including Peso Cow – Mabilis Pera Loan, Peso Cow, Bingo Peso: Philippine Cash Loan, and Kapit Cash – Online Quick Loan.

The company was also cited for operating undisclosed lending applications despite the moratorium on new and unrecorded online lending platforms, failing to provide updated contact information to the SEC, and failing to submit its impact evaluation reports for 2023 and 2024, as well

as its 2022 business plan.

The SEC said seven officers and directors were held liable for the violations and were ordered to pay administrative fines of PHP50,000 each.

"In view of the multiplicity, duration, seriousness, and continuing character of [Delisha Lending's] violations, and in light of its failure to heed the Commission's notices and directives, the [SEC] finds that revocation is not only authorized by law but compelled by the circumstances," the SEC order read.

"The violations are substantial, systemic, and deliberate. The record shows no genuine effort at correction, only repeated default and regulatory defiance," it added. **(Joann Santiago-Villanueva/PNA)**

BSP GRANTS TEMPORARY RELIEF TO BANKS, QUASI BANKS

MANILA – The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) has issued a memorandum granting temporary regulatory relief to banks and quasi-banks to help cushion the impact of market volatility caused by the Middle East conflict.

In a statement Tuesday, the BSP said Memorandum 2026-027 allows banks and quasi-banks to temporarily exclude from the computation of their regulatory capital certain unrealized losses, also known as paper losses, on peso government securities resulting from

market volatility.

Unrealized losses refer to declines in the market value of securities that have not been sold but whose change in value is required to be reflected in the banks' regulatory capital.

These are deducted from Common Equity Tier 1, the highest-quality capital that a bank holds to absorb losses and a key component in computing the Capital Adequacy Ratio.

"The time-bound relief is aimed at preventing transitory market

movements from unduly affecting the reported capital strength of banks and quasi-banks," the BSP said.

"Banks and quasi-banks availing themselves of the relief must continue to disclose all unrealized losses in financial reports to the BSP and in their financial statements."

The temporary relief will be effective from April 1 to Dec. 31 this year.

The BSP said that beginning January 2027, the usual capital rules will again apply. **(PNA) BY ANNA LEAH GONZALES**

22 CONTAINERS OF ILLICIT CIGARETTES SEIZED IN NORTH HARBOR

MANILA – The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) seized a total of 22 container vans believed to be carrying illicit cigarettes at the container yard of Carlos A. Gothong Lines, Inc. in North Harbor in Tondo on Monday.

In a statement late Monday, the BIR initially estimated the volume involved at approximately 30,800 master cases of illicit cigarettes.

Of the 22 container vans seized, 10 have been inspected and found to contain unstamped

cigarettes, while the remaining containers are subject to inspection, verification, and inventory.

Some of the brands seized include Modern cigarettes, Dani, Nise Baisha, H&P Aqua Blue, H&P Gold, H&P Red, BRO Red, and D&J Premium, according to the BIR.

BIR Commissioner Charlito Martin Mendoza said the operation is part of their continuing enforcement against illicit cigarettes and other unlawful excisable goods.

"We will continue to intensify enforcement

operations and work closely with the NBI, the Bureau of Customs, and other partner agencies to stop the illicit cigarette trade. These coordinated efforts are necessary to protect revenues, support legitimate businesses, and uphold compliance with our tax laws," Mendoza said.

In coordination with the Bureau of Customs, the container vans will be constructively sealed and secured in a designated area pending further verification and inventory. **(PNA) BY ANNA LEAH GONZALES**

WALTERMART SUPPORTS THE LOVE FOR LEARNING WITH BRIGADA ESKWELA 2026

Walmart recently concluded its participation in this year's Brigada Eskwela, joining the Department of Education's nationwide initiative to prepare public schools for the new academic year. Through customer contributions, employee volunteerism, and education assistance for its employees, the company reinforced its long-standing commitment to education across the communities it serves.

Walmart's support for Brigada Eskwela began in 2010 as a simple volunteer cleaning drive in a handful of partner schools. It

expanded in 2021 to include the distribution of school kits, growing into a mall-wide campaign that now supports over 1,100 schools and 30,000 students nationwide. This year's campaign was held in partnership with 150 schools across North Luzon, South Luzon, and Metro Manila.

School kits were distributed this year through mall-led and community-based events with partner schools, providing each Grade 1 student a kit made possible by customer support, with additional contributions from partner brands Nagaraya, CDO,

Nissin, Presto, Alaska Milk, Similac, Monde Nissin, and Surf. As a gesture of appreciation, customers received a Brigada Eskwela Thank You Card with exclusive vouchers from Walmart Supermarket, Walmart Department Store, World of Fun, and Fun Time.

Walmart teams also led school clean-up activities across partner communities, working alongside teachers, parents, and volunteers to prepare classrooms ahead of the school year, with cleaning supplies provided by partner brands Zonrox, Mortein, and Domex. Walmart also installed pedestrian crossing signages, "Happy Back to School" signages, and safety bollards in participating schools for a safer return to class.

These are just some of the many ways Walmart supports the community through education, alongside the everyday service it provides through its Supermarket bringing fresh grocery essentials to every household, its Community Malls offering spaces for good food and good times, its Department Store helping every Filipino look and feel their best, and its Grocery Delivery bringing the supermarket closer to home.



NEW SCHOOL BUILDINGS END CLASSROOM SHIFTING IN SILANG, CAVITE

SILANG, Cavite (PIA) — Students in the Municipality of Silang, Cavite will no longer have to adopt class shifting schemes following the inauguration of new buildings in key local schools.

Last June 23, the Municipal Government led the simultaneous inauguration of school buildings across the municipality as part of its ongoing efforts to address classroom shortage.

Milano Garzon, school head of BLISS Elementary School noted that the newly opened classroom building will help end class shifting, a practice that has been adopted by several public schools in an effort to address the lack of

teaching facilities.

"Sa bagong school building, natuldukan na ang shifting classes."

With its additional classrooms, Garzon noted that classes can now end by one o'clock in the afternoon for Grades 1 and 2, while Grade 3 pupils will end their classes two o'clock in the afternoon. Older students, including Grades 4 through 6 will end their classes by three o'clock in the afternoon.

BLISS Elementary School currently serves 525 pupils from Kindergarten through Grade 6.

Teachers at Gen. Vito Belarmino Integrated National High School, Pulong Bunga Elementary School, Brgy. Munting Ilog

Elementary School, and Brgy. Balite II Elementary School, who also inaugurated their own six-classroom buildings also welcomed the additional infrastructure.

Mayor Ted Carranza, in a statement, emphasized the school infrastructure program in the local government's continuous efforts to address classroom shortage. With a more conducive learning environment, Carranza assured their commitment to invest in school infrastructure.

"Through these initiatives, the Municipal Government of Silang moves closer to its goal of completely eliminating class shifting and providing every

student with access to quality education in a safe and conducive learning environment."

In partnership with local government units all over the country, the Department of Education (DepEd) launched its localized school building program in a bid to decentralize infrastructure development especially in public schools. Under this program, LGUs became a partner of the education sector in fast-tracking classroom construction and rehabilitation. (PB-PIA CALABARZON, Municipal Government of Silang) **BY PATRICIA BERMUDEZ**

SSS PENSION BOOSTER DELIVERS 6.2% RETURN FOR MEMBERS AMID ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

QUEZON CITY, — The Social Security System (SSS) announced that its Pension Booster Program, also known as the Voluntary Provident Fund, continues to deliver strong financial performance in 2026, posting an average return on investment (ROI) of 6.2 percent from January to May this year despite prevailing economic challenges.

The program remains a reliable retirement savings option for Filipino workers. While slightly lower than the previous year's performance due to changes in interest rates implemented by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the return remains competitive and continues to exceed market benchmark rates. Finance Secretary and Social Security Commission ex-officio Chair Frederick D. Go said the program reflects the government's commitment to strengthening retirement security. "The continued strong performance of the SSS Pension Booster underscores our commitment to protecting the financial future of Filipino workers. Through prudent management of

members' funds, we are helping build a more secure and dignified retirement for every Filipino," Go said. SSS noted that the 2026 performance follows the 6.83 percent return in 2025, surpassing the prevailing 91-day treasury bill rate which has a year-to-date average of approximately 4.77 percent. In 2025, contributions rose to 21.8 percent to P699 million from P574 million in 2024, reflecting growing member confidence in the program.

To maximize members' earnings, SSS waived the one percent management fee on the total balance of Pension Booster accounts from 2025 to 2028, allowing members to fully enjoy investment gains. SSS President and Chief Executive Officer Robert Joseph M. de Claro said the program reflects prudent investment management and long-term value creation. He added that members may now conveniently monitor the monthly compounding growth of their Pension Booster savings through their My.SSS accounts, allowing them to track the progress of their retirement funds and make more informed decisions in planning for their future.

"The strong performance of the Pension Booster demonstrates disciplined and professionally managed savings. We remain committed to providing members greater financial security during retirement," de Claro said.

The Pension Booster is open to all SSS members to build additional savings for their retirement. It allows individuals to save starting at P500, with no maximum contribution limit. Contributions are pooled and invested in government securities, corporate bonds, fixed-income instruments, equities, and money market instruments, with tax-free earnings credited proportionately to members' accounts.

De Claro urged members to start early and stay invested longer to maximize returns, citing the benefits of compound growth. "Planning and saving for retirement should begin early. The longer the members stay invested, the greater their potential returns," he said. Interested SSS members may enroll in the Pension Booster Program online through their My.SSS account. #

SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM PENSION BOOSTER DELIVERS 6.2% RETURN FOR MEMBERS AMID ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

"The continued strong performance of the SSS Pension Booster underscores our commitment to protecting the financial future of Filipino workers."

Through prudent management of members' funds, we are helping build a more secure and dignified retirement for every Filipino."

SEC. FREDERICK D. GO
Social Security Commission (SSC)
Ex-Officio Chairperson

SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
Segurado ang Bukas

SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
Segurado ang Bukas

Social Security System Pension Booster delivers 6.2% return for members amid economic challenges

SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
Segurado ang Bukas

WORK | SAVE | INVEST | PROSPER
MYSSSPH

BARGAIN HUNTING LIFTS PSEI ABOVE 6,000; PESO REBOUNDS

MANILA – Bargain hunting pushed the local stock market's main index back above the 6,000 level on Thursday, while the Philippine peso recovered against the US dollar.

The Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi) rose 1.33 percent to 6,071.06 points, while the broader All Shares index gained 0.47 percent to 3,331.09 points.

Sectoral indices ended mixed, although most tracked the main index's upward movement.

Services posted the biggest gain, climbing 3.71 percent, followed by Holding Firms at 0.88 percent, Property at 0.57 percent, and Industrial at 0.33 percent.

Meanwhile, Mining and Oil declined by 4.82 percent, while Financials slipped by 1.48 percent.

Trading volume reached 889.22 million shares valued at PHP8.3 billion. Decliners outnumbered

advancers, 103 to 79, while 61 issues were unchanged.

"The local market bounced back from yesterday's losses as investors hunted for bargains primarily on the index's heavyweight ICT (information and communications technology). The decline in global oil prices helped in today's session," Philstocks Financial, Inc. said in a report.

The peso, meanwhile, snapped its recent losing streak and closed at 61.29 against the US dollar, improving from 61.55 in the previous session.

The local currency opened weaker at 61.53 from the previous day's 61.40. It traded between 61.60 and 61.29, with an average rate of 61.38.

Dollar trading volume declined to USD1.63 billion from USD1.76 billion a day earlier. (PNA) **BY JOANN VILLANUEVA**

VEHICLE SALES UP IN MAY AMID FUEL PRICE CONCERNS –CAMPI

MANILA – An automotive industry executive on Thursday underscored an improving outlook for vehicle sales despite fuel supply concerns, citing higher sales in May 2026 compared to the previous month.

Data from the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines, Inc. (CAMPI) and the Truck Manufacturers Association (TMA) showed total vehicle sales of about 33,532 units in May, up 23.8 percent from 27,089 units in April.

However, this was lower than the 39,775 units sold in May 2025.

Year-to-date sales from January to May reached 167,324 units, down from 190,429 units in the same period last year.

Of the total May sales, passenger cars accounted for 6,692 units, while commercial vehicles reached 26,840 units.

Electric vehicle (EV) sales reached 24,356 units in the

first five months of the year, up from 10,431 units in the same period in 2025.

In May alone, EV sales reached 6,297 units, slightly higher than April's 6,027 units.

CAMPI President Jose Maria Atienza, in a statement, attributed the growth in EV sales to consumers' push for energy efficiency.

"Our overall market outlook has improved with actual vehicle sales performing better than previously expected despite the fuel crisis," he said.

Atienza earlier projected an 8 to 10 percent decline in car sales this year due to the impact of geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, particularly on fuel prices.

He later revised the forecast to a 5 percent to 8 percent decline, following improvements in the situation in the region. (PNA) **BY JOANN VILLANUEVA**

BOUNTY FRESH EXEC CITES GAINS FROM PROPOSED CORN IMPORTS MAV HIKE

MANILA – The government's food security bid will further get a boost from the Department of Agriculture's (DA) proposal to increase the minimum access volume (MAV) for corn imports to 500,000 metric tons (MT) from 216,940 MT to date.

Kenneth Cheng, Bounty Fresh Group Holdings Inc. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Fresh Group President, in a briefing in Taguig City on Thursday, expressed support for the proposal.

"Philippine consumption is increasing every year and it is (important that we review if the production is enough and then we augment this by increasing or decreasing MAV," he said.

To help cushion the impact of the elevated rate of price increases on consumers, Cheng said making feeds

cheaper is also important.

"I am happy that we increased it because we need to review consumption. And this year, where our inflation is going up, we really need to make our food cheaper," he said.

Monetary officials have raised their average inflation forecast for this year to 6.4 percent, well above the upper end of the 2 to 4 percent target range, given the impact of international developments.

The 2027 forecast is around 4.5 percent.

Cheng also noted that reallocating the MAV to companies that actually produce chicken will greatly help the poultry sector.

He said there is a need to protect the sector, as failing to do so will affect the food supply. (PNA) **BY JOANN VILLANUEVA**

MSMES SHOULD TAP AI TO BOLSTER THEIR BIZ – TECH FIRM EXEC

MANILA – Even with limited capital resources of many micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), they can harness artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance operational efficiency and boost profitability.

This was stressed by Ambe Tierro, Country Managing Director and Technology Lead of global professional services and technology firm Accenture in the Philippines, on Wednesday.

She said there are free services that MSMEs can utilize to benefit their core business.

"There are a lot of technologies now that are very specific, very niche. Depending on whether it's sales, using AIR for their marketing, using AI for their supply chain, it can already help," she said.

MSMEs account for around 99 percent of business establishments in the Philippines and employ around 65 percent of the workers.

However, their share in the country's annual domestic output remains low at around 35 percent.

Thus, the government measures to provide capitalization and other ways to help expand their operations and their contribution to gross domestic product (GDP).

One of these measures is the National AI Strategy Roadmap 2.0, implemented by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

Tierro said the program is being implemented partly based on the recommendations shared by the Private Sector Advisory Council, a government body established in 2022 by President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. to help the government with strategic, real-world ideas to help drive the domestic economy, accelerate infrastructure, create employment opportunities, and ensure a sustainable

BIR RENEWS PARTNERSHIP WITH BUSINESS GROUPS TO ADVANCE TAX REFORMS

MANILA – The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) has signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with business groups, professional organizations, foreign chambers, and industry associations to renew its multi-sectoral consultative mechanism aimed at strengthening tax administration reforms.

In a statement Wednesday, the BIR said the agreement, signed Tuesday, renews its Partnership with the Multi-Sectoral Group (BIR-PMSG), a platform for dialogue and collaboration between the tax agency and private sector stakeholders.

The renewed agreement expands the BIR-PMSG's membership from 12 to 15 organizations, with the inclusion of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce in the Philippines (FICCI), the Philippine Institute of Petroleum (PIP), and the Swiss Chamber of the Philippines (SwissCham).

Aside from the three, the PMSG is also composed of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI), Management

Association of the Philippines (MAP), Tax Management Association of the Philippines (TMAP), Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants (PICPA), Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines (FINEX), Association of Certified Public Accountants in Commerce and Industry (ACPACI), Association of Certified Public Accountants in Public Practice (ACPAPP), Philippine Exporters Confederation Inc. (PHILEXPORT), Joint Foreign Chambers of the Philippines (JFC), Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry Inc. (FFCCCII), Makati Business Club (MBC), and Alliance of Tech Innovators for the Nation (ATIN).

Established in 2023, the BIR-PMSG serves as a structured venue for discussions on tax administration issues, taxpayer services, compliance concerns, and proposed reforms.

BIR Commissioner Charlito Martin Mendoza said the renewed partnership builds on the group's active role in helping shape reforms under BIR DARES, the bureau's five-point priority reform agenda.

Under the renewed MOA, the BIR and its private sector partners will continue working together on tax administration reforms, taxpayer services, compliance issues, digitalization, ease of paying taxes, and ease-of-doing-business initiatives.

"When we began working on one of the most important reforms under BIR DARES – our audit reforms – it was to the PMSG that we turned. You helped us stress-test our proposals, challenge our assumptions, and refine them before they were implemented," Mendoza said.

"Many of the reforms we have rolled out during the first six months of BIR DARES are stronger and better received by taxpayers because of that engagement."

Mendoza assured stakeholders that the BIR would continue to engage with the private sector, address concerns before they escalate, and subject major reforms to thorough review before implementation. (PNA) **BY ANNA LEAH GONZALES**

business environment.

She explained that with AI, MSMEs will be equipped to successfully manage their operations given their numbers nationwide.

"It becomes an instrument for diffusion. So, rather than AI being concentrated in NCR (National Capital Region) or on the big enterprises then if you have more SMEs participating, using, applying it, then you can use the technology. So, it's not exclusive," she said.

"If more people can use it, first of all, you demystify it because if you know AI, you know it cannot do everything. Because sometimes, there's this notion that AI will solve everything, will do anything. Of course, it can't. So, you kind of demystify it. So, everybody gets more fluent. That's also part of the literacy," she added. (PNA) **BY JOANN VILLANUEVA**



EALA, WILLIAMS REACH BAD HOMBURG OPEN DOUBLES QUARTERFINALS

MANILA — Filipino Alexandra Eala and American Venus Williams marched to the doubles quarterfinals after beating American Alexandra Osborne and Australian Catherine Harrison in the first round, 6-3, 6-4, Wednesday night at the Bad Homburg Open in Germany.

Eala and Williams, teaming up for the first time, will next face the second-seeded pair of Slovakian Tereza Mihalikova and British Olivia Nicholls.

Mihalikova and Nicholls, both ranked No. 29 in the doubles, defeated Chinese duo Xinyu Jiang and Yifan Xu, 6-2, 6-3.

Meanwhile, Slovenian pair Andreja Klepac and Nika Radisic ousted the top-ranked pair of American Nicole Melichar-Martinez and New Zealander Erin Routliffe, 6-4, 4-6, 10-2.

Klepac and Radisic will be up against Indonesian Aldila Sutjiadi and Vera Zvonareva, who pulled off a 6-4, 4-2, 10-8 victory over Belgians Magali Kempen

and Alexandra Panova. German Tamara Korpatsch and British Emily Webley-Smith also ousted the No. 4 pair of Ukrainian Lyudmila Kichenok and American Desirae Krawczyk, 3-6, 7-5, 10-8, to set up a quarterfinal duel with Chinese tandem Su-Wei Hsieh and Xinyu Wang, 6-4, 7-5 winners over Norwegian Ulrikke Eikeri and American Quinn Gleason.



DREAM TEAM. Filipino Alexandra Eala (right) and American Venus Williams defeated American Alexandra Osborne and Australian Catherine Harrison, 6-3, 6-4, Wednesday (June 24, 2026) night to reach the Bad Homburg Open quarterfinals in Germany. Eala and Williams are sharing the same court as doubles partners for the first time. (WTA photo)

MESSI SETS WORLD CUP SCORING RECORD WITH 18TH TOURNAMENT GOAL

WASHINGTON — Lionel Messi became the outright leading scorer in World Cup history with his 18th tournament goal after scoring twice in reigning champion Argentina's 2-0 victory over Austria on Monday.

Messi opened the scoring in the 38th minute after failing to convert an early penalty, with his left-footed attempt in the ninth minute drifting just wide of the right post.

The Argentina captain sealed the win deep into stoppage time, netting his second goal in the fifth minute of added time (90+5) to extend his all-time World Cup scoring record to 18 goals.

The brace also extended Messi's scoring run to six consecutive World Cup matches, equaling an achievement previously reached by France's Just Fontaine and Brazil's Jairzinho.

Messi had matched Germany's Miroslav Klose on 16 goals after netting a hat trick in Argentina's 3-0 Group J win over Algeria last week in Kansas City.

His two goals against Austria moved him clear at the top of the tournament's all-time scoring chart.

Monday's match also marked Messi's FIFA-record 28th World Cup appearance, his sixth tournament overall. **(Anadolu)**

FILIPINO BET MISSES GOLD IN ASIAN SAMBO FINAL

MANILA — The Philippines came close to striking gold right on Day 1 of the Asia-Oceania Sambo Championships as Sophia Novino settled for silver in the youth women's -47kg division.

Novino fell short in the final against Kazakh opponent Karakat Rakhybay, 8-1, on Thursday night at Ninoy Aquino Stadium in Manila.

Despite competing in a major sambo tournament for the first time, the 17-year-old University of the East senior high school judo standout proved her worth by scoring a takedown against Rakhybay to tie at 1-1.

However, Rakhybay showed why she was the silver medalist in last year's World Youth and Junior Sambo Championships, reasserting her might with a go-ahead takedown that led to her first armbar submission attempt.

Novino got out of the armbar initially, but Rakhybay set up another armbar in her next

takedown, and the Filipina bet tapped out with 20 seconds left.

Novino was proud of her accomplishment as she continues to work on her sambo game.

"Alam ko naman na marami pa akong ma-improve (I know that I still have a lot to improve on)," Novino said. "Big learning din ito (This is also a big learning) for upcoming tournaments."

The home team amassed four total medals in Day 1 as three more female bets, Jennelyn Tufiacao, Tess

Polistico and Princess Boyore, snagged a bronze each in the -72kg, -59kg, and -54kg weight classes.

"This is a good beginning for us in this tournament because the Asia-Oceania Sambo Championships is a tough competition and next only to the worlds," national sambo team coach Ace Larida said.

"We can only look forward to doing better once we start competing in the senior division," Larida said. **(PNA) BY IVAN STEWART SALDAJENO**



SILVER FINISH. Filipino Sophia Novino (red) tries to take down eventual champion Karakat Rakhybay of Kazakhstan in the youth women's -47kg final of the 11th Asia-Oceania Sambo Championships at Ninoy Aquino Stadium in Manila on Thursday (June 25, 2026). Novino settled for the silver medal. (Photo courtesy of PSC-POC Media Pool)

LAGAC ADVANCES TO LUCENA CITY-PHILTA JUNIORS BOYS' U18 SEMIS

MANILA — Top seed Miguel Ricardo Lagac III and third seed Marwin Plata will clash in the boys' U18 semifinals of the Lucena City-Philta Age Group Championships in Quezon (WHEN PO?).

Lagac, who won the U18 and U16 titles at the Mayor's Cup Juniors in Sta. Rosa, Laguna last week, advanced by double default, while Plata pulled off a 7-5, 6-3 victory over Seth Torrecampo Friday.

Playing in the other semis match are No. 2 Rama Monte de Ramos, a 6-1, 6-0 winner over Ezekiel Austria, and No. 4 Yuichi Okano, who survived Prince Dan Alano, 4-6, 7-5, 10-2.

In the girls' U16 division, second seed Maria Isabel Ataiza ousted second seed Jasmin Sardona, 3-6, 6-0, 10-4, to set up a semis duel with Claire Candance Alcala, who prevailed over Micaiah Katriel Cena, 4-6, 6-2, 10-7.

Top seed Ava Banson

scored a 6-4, 6-1 victory over Jana Simplice Bermejo to advance against third seed Maristella Torrecampo, who clobbered Marie Bernarde Parlade, 6-1, 6-0.

Also moving to the Final Four in the boys division were No. 1 Nicholas Emmanuel Andal, No. 3 Vivaan Garg, No. 4 Akio Kenji Kue and Ole Paulsen (U16); No. 1 Villeno, No. 2 Tyronne Grey Caro, Jay Pante and David Rabina (U14); and No. 2 Noel

Andre Zachary Zoleta, No. 3 Rafael Benigno Cablitias, Lance Alexander Recto and Raven Licayan (U12).

The other semifinalists in the girls divisions were No. 1 Kyla Caguioa, No. 2 Elythia Comia, No. 3 Misty Mae Principe and No. 4 Chloe Madeline Biglete (U12), and No. 1 Ella Mae Paglalunan, No. 2 Shaner Gabaldon, No. 3 Anica Gabrielle Palacio and No. 4 Zopiya Alexa Morales (U14). **(PNA) BY JEAN MALANUM**



Miguel Ricardo Lagac III (Philta photo)