

CAVITE GAZETTE

P U B L I S H I N G

VOL.2 NO.16

July 7-13, 2026

P20.00

CALABARZON REGIONAL ECOLOGY CENTER PUSHES FOR INTER-AGENCY SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT EFFORT

TAGAYTAY CITY, Cavite (PIA) — The Regional Ecology Center (REC) in the CALABARZON region is pushing for a multisectoral approach in promoting waste management and environment conservation policies.

Following a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signing led by the Environment Management Bureau (EMB) last June 30, the REC will become the hub for the region's best practices in ecological solid waste management. The project will enlist government agencies specializing in law enforcement, policy recommendation, public health, education, and grassroots communication,

among others.

Forester Corazon Gasapos, Environmental Monitoring and Enforcement Division chief for EMB CALABARZON, emphasized the importance of unified actions in addressing Solid Waste Management challenges.

"Solid Waste Management is not only a technical challenge, [but it also] challenges leadership and our goal towards a concerted action and concern for future generations."

Gasapos also acknowledged the unique expertise that each partner-agency will provide to the foundation of the REC.

Environmental protection

is linked to public safety and disaster management—both key issues that the Department of Health (DOH) continues to address.

Voltaire Guadalupe, Regional Director for DOH Center for Health Development-CALABARZON, noted the connection of public health and climate resilience.

"Our commitment to environmental protection, pollution prevention, climate resilience and [the] responsible management of our natural resources is a significant contribution to the health and well-being of every Filipino. We continue to face an evolving environment and public health challenge,

CARMONA CITY, Cavite (PIA) — Driving forward its transformation into a smart city, the City Government of Carmona hosted its second ICT Quiz Bee to promote digital literacy, technological awareness, and excellence in Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

The 2nd Carmona ICT Quiz Bee rounded up the city's future innovators and digital leaders last June 27, in partnership with the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT)—Cavite through its Office of the City Information Technology Officer (OCITO) and Community Affairs and

Youth Development Office (CAYDO).

The quiz bee showcased inclusivity across various ICT disciplines, bringing together participants across four categories: Elementary, Junior High School, Senior High School, and Teachers.

In a statement, DICT CALABARZON emphasized that the competition covered a wide range of topics, including computer fundamentals, internet and cybersecurity, digital citizenship, emerging technologies, and current ICT trends.

"Participants and challenged on topics such as computer fundamentals, internet and cybersecurity, digital citizenship, emerging technologies and current ICT trends, encouraging critical thinking, continuous learning, and a deeper appreciation of technology."

By partnering with the local government, the DICT CALABARZON reaffirmed its commitment to empowering the youth, strengthening digital competencies, and advancing inclusive digital transformation as Carmona delivers its vision of a smart and technology-driven city. (PB-PIA Cavite with reports from DICT CALABARZON, City Government of Carmona/ Facebook) **BY PATRICIA BERMUDEZ**

Capital Region (NCR) which generates around 9,369 tonnes of waste per day.

The National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC), the government's policy-making body on waste management, identified online shopping packaging as a primary driver behind the massive surge in daily waste collection during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Stakeholders have likewise pointed out that many online micro-sellers lack education regarding sustainable shipping, resulting in oversized packaging where small, non-fragile items are heavily over-wrapped in layers of unneeded plastic. (PB-PIA CALABARZON) **BY PATRICIA BERMUDEZ**



ACCEPTING ADS, PLEASE CALL : 09387342688/cavitegazette@gmail.com

GMA PNP ARRESTS PROVINCIAL MOST WANTED PERSON FOR BOUNCING CHECKS CASES

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite

— The Cavite Police Provincial Office, under the leadership of PCOL ARIEL R RED, Provincial Director, intensified its campaign against wanted persons with the successful arrest of a Provincial Level Most Wanted Person during a warrant operation conducted at about 6:30 P.M. on July 1, 2026, at Armstrong Subdivision, Brgy. Salawag, Dasmariñas City, Cavite. The accused, identified as alias "Elvie", a 67-year-old Filipino female, married, real estate agent, and a resident of General Mariano Alvarez, Cavite, was arrested by personnel of the Warrant Section of the General Mariano Alvarez Municipal Police Station under the supervision of PLTCOL ALEXANDER S ALVAREZ, Acting Chief of Police.

The accused was apprehended by virtue of warrants for the Service of Sentence in connection with four (4) counts of Violation of Batas Pambansa Blg. 22 (The Bouncing Checks Law), issued by the Presiding Judge of the Municipal Trial Court, Fourth Judicial Region, General Mariano

Alvarez, Cavite, dated April 15, 2026. After her arrest, the accused was informed of the nature of her arrest and was duly apprised of her constitutional rights under the Miranda Doctrine. She is currently detained at the General Mariano Alvarez Municipal Police Station Custodial Facility pending the return of the warrants to the court of origin.

"The arrest of wanted persons, regardless of the nature of their offenses, demonstrates our unwavering commitment to the rule of law. We will continue to intensify our efforts to ensure that individuals with standing warrants are brought before the courts and held accountable for their actions," said PCOL ARIEL R RED, Provincial Director, Cavite PPO.

The Cavite Police Provincial Office remains steadfast in implementing intelligence-driven manhunt operations and warrant enforcement activities in support of the Philippine National Police's intensified anti-criminality campaign, ensuring that justice is served and public confidence in law enforcement is strengthened.

GENERAL TRIAS PNP ARRESTS PROVINCIAL MOST WANTED PERSON FOR ILLEGAL DRUGS CASE

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite

— The Cavite Police Provincial Office, under the leadership of PCOL ARIEL R RED, Provincial Director, intensified its campaign against wanted persons through the successful arrest of a Provincial Level Most Wanted Person during the conduct of a Simultaneous Anti-Criminality Law Enforcement Operation on July 1, 2026, at Brgy. Bagumbayan, General Trias City, Cavite.

The accused, identified as alias "Ninio", a 61-year-old Filipino, married, unemployed, and a resident of General Trias City, Cavite, was arrested by personnel of the General Trias Component City Police Station by virtue of a Warrant of Arrest.

The warrant of arrest was issued on September 26, 2016, by the Presiding Judge of the Regional Trial Court, Fourth Judicial Region, Branch 23, Trece Martires City, Cavite, for Violation of Section 11, Article II of Republic Act No. 9165 (Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002), with a recommended bail of Php120,000.00. After his arrest, the

accused was informed of his constitutional rights under the Miranda Doctrine in a language known to him. He is currently under the custody of the General Trias Custodial Facility in Brgy. Bagumbayan, General Trias City, Cavite, pending the return of the warrant to the issuing court and the subsequent issuance of a commitment order.

"Our intensified campaign against wanted persons remains relentless. We will continue to locate and arrest individuals who attempt to evade justice and ensure that they are held accountable before the courts," said PCOL ARIEL R RED, Provincial Director, Cavite PPO.

The Cavite Police Provincial Office remains committed to the Philippine National Police's intensified campaign against wanted persons through intelligence-driven operations and strengthened law enforcement efforts, in line with the PNP Focus Agenda and the administration's commitment to maintaining peace, order, and public safety throughout the province.

RANK NO. 1 CITY LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON, NAARESTO NG TRECE MARTIRES PNP

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite

— Naaresto ng mga tauhan ng Trece Martires Component City Police Station ang City Level Most Wanted Person Rank No. 1 sa isinagawang operasyon sa Brgy. San Agustin, Trece Martires City, Cavite bandang alas-12:10 ng madaling araw noong Hulyo 1, 2026.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL BRYAN D MERINO, Chief of Police ng Trece Martires Component City Police Station, ang naarestong akusado na si alyas "Eman", 26 taong gulang, at residente ng Brgy. San Agustin, Trece Martires City, Cavite.

Batay sa ulat, nagsagawa ng operasyon ang Warrant Section ng Trece Martires Component City Police Station at matagumpay na naaresto ang akusado sa bisa ng Warrant of Arrest kaugnay ng kasong Statutory Acts of Lasciviousness sa ilalim ng Article 336 ng Revised Penal Code kaugnay ng Section 5(B) ng Republic Act No. 7610 o Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act.

Ang warrant ay inisyu at

nilagdaan ng Presiding Judge ng Regional Trial Court, Branch 207, Muntinlupa City, noong Mayo 20, 2026, na may inirekomendang piyansa na ₱108,000.00.

Ipinaalam sa akusado ang dahilan ng kanyang pagkakaaresto at ang kanyang mga karapatang konstitusyonal sa wikang kanyang nauunawaan.

Matapos ang pag-aresto, siya ay dinala at kasalukuyang nnasa ilalim ng kustodiya ng Trece Martires Component City Police Station Custodial Facility habang ang kopya ng Warrant of Arrest ay ibabalik sa hukuman na nagpalabas nito para sa kaukulang disposisyon.

Sinabi ni PCOL ARIEL R RED, Provincial Director ng Cavite Police Provincial Office, "Hindi natin bibigyang puwang ang mga indibidwal na nagtatago sa batas, lalo na ang mga sangkot sa mga kasong may kinalaman sa pang-aabuso sa mga kabataan. Ang tuluy-tuloy na manhunt operations ng Cavite PPO ay nagpapakita ng ating matatag na paninindigan na pairalin ang hustisya at tiyakin ang kaligtasan ng bawat mamamayan sa ating lalawigan."

SILANG PNP ARRESTS PROVINCIAL MOST WANTED PERSON FOR FRUSTRATED MURDER

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite

— The Cavite Police Provincial Office, under the leadership of PCOL ARIEL R RED, Provincial Director, intensified its campaign against wanted persons with the successful arrest of a Provincial Level Most Wanted Person during the conduct of a Simultaneous Anti-Criminality Law Enforcement Operation at around 4:00 PM on July 1, 2026, in Sitio Manggahan, Brgy. San Carlos, Binangonan, Rizal.

The accused, identified as alias "Jack," a 50-year-old Filipino male, single, driver,

and a resident of Sitio Manggahan, Brgy. San Carlos, Binangonan, Rizal, was arrested by warrant personnel of the Silang Municipal Police Station under direct supervision of PLTCOL JOSEPH D MACATANGAY, Chief of Police of Silang MPS, during the implementation of a warrant of arrest.

The accused was apprehended by virtue of a Warrant of Arrest for Frustrated Murder, issued on November 19, 2014, by the Presiding Judge of the Regional Trial Court, Branch 18, Tagaytay City, Cavite, with

bail recommended in the amount of Php200,000.00. After his arrest, the accused was informed of the nature of his arrest and was duly apprised of his constitutional rights under the Miranda Doctrine. He is currently under police custody pending the return of the warrant to the court of origin.

"We remain relentless in our pursuit of wanted persons who continue to evade justice. Through sustained manhunt operations and close coordination among police units, we will ensure that individuals facing criminal

charges are located, arrested, and brought before the courts," said PCOL ARIEL R RED, Provincial Director, Cavite PPO.

The Cavite Police Provincial Office remains steadfast in supporting the Philippine National Police's intensified campaign against wanted persons through intelligence-driven operations and effective warrant implementation, in line with the PNP Focus Agenda and its commitment to maintaining peace, order, and public safety across the province.

PGC'S MDM TEAM DROVE DOWN TO THE MUNICIPALITY OF MENDEZ

Another round of health outreach activity was brought to Asis III Covered Court in Mendez by the Provincial Government of Cavite's MDM mission team on June 26, 2026, bringing essential medical and dental services to the residents.

A total of 483 patients took the chance to converse with the medical professionals for their health concerns, while 63 residents availed the dental check-up and tooth extraction for their

oral health and hygiene. Diagnostic procedures, including ECG and FBS, were also provided during the activity.

Thereafter, residents received free medicines and vitamin supplements handed out by the Office of the Provincial Governor staff.

The medical and dental mission team continues with their endeavour to bring accessible healthcare service closer to the constituents of Cavite province. — **OPIO**

OPPEM, MAGSAYSAY MARITIME HOLD SPECIAL RECRUITMENT ACTIVITY

The Provincial Government of Cavite, through the Office of the Provincial Public Employment Service Manager (OPPEM), successfully facilitated a Special Recruitment Activity (SRA) in partnership with Magsaysay Maritime Corporation on June 29, at the New Provincial Government Center in Trece Martires City, providing Caviteños with direct access to thousands of local and overseas employment opportunities. A total of 683 jobseekers from different municipalities and cities across and outside the province flocked to the recruitment activity to explore career opportunities offered by Magsaysay Maritime Corporation. Applicants applied for various positions in the hospitality, shipyard construction, healthcare, agriculture, transportation and logistics, industrial and manufacturing, and aviation sectors. Thousands of job vacancies were made available during the one-day recruitment event, reflecting the company's continued commitment to connecting skilled Filipino workers with reputable employers both locally and abroad. Magsaysay has long been recognized as one of the

country's leading human resource and manpower providers, offering employment opportunities in the maritime, cruise, hospitality, healthcare, engineering, construction, tourism, and other global industries through its extensive network of international partners. Throughout the activity, OPPEM personnel worked closely with the recruitment team of Magsaysay Maritime Corporation to ensure the orderly processing of applicants, from registration and document verification to interviews and initial assessments. The initiative forms part of the Provincial Government of Cavite's continuing efforts to strengthen employment facilitation services and bridge the gap between jobseekers and industry partners. The successful conduct of the Special Recruitment Activity underscores the Provincial Government's commitment to generating more employment opportunities, improving workforce accessibility, and empowering Caviteños through meaningful and sustainable livelihood opportunities in collaboration with trusted private sector partners. — **OPIO**

PGC BRINGS ESSENTIAL HEALTHCARE SERVICES TO MARAGONDON COMMUNITY

The Provincial Government of Cavite (PGC) brought essential healthcare services closer to residents of Brgy. Poblacion I-A, Maragondon through a Medical and Dental Mission held on June 29, benefiting a total of 389 residents. The outreach activity was carried out by the healthcare professionals from the General Emilio Aguinaldo Memorial Hospital (GEAMH), personnel from the Office

of the Provincial Governor (OPG), the Rural Health Unit of Maragondon, and dedicated Barangay Health Workers (BHWs). The mission provided 316 medical consultations, 51 dental services, 5 electrocardiogram (ECG) procedures, and 17 fasting blood sugar (FBS) tests. The Medical and Dental Mission reflects the Provincial Government of Cavite's continued commitment to making

OPHO CONDUCTS NEWBORN SCREENING CARAVAN TO PROMOTE EARLY DETECTION AND LIFELONG HEALTH

The Office of the Provincial Health Officer (OPHO), in partnership with the Department of Health–Center for Health Development (DOH-CHD) CALABARZON, and Trece Martires City Health Office (CHO), successfully conducted the Newborn Screening Caravan on June 24, 2026 at the General Emilio Aguinaldo Memorial Hospital (GEAMH) and SM City Trece Martires to strengthen awareness and accessibility of newborn screening services for Caviteños. The activity aimed to educate parents, caregivers, and healthcare workers on the importance of newborn screening in the early detection of congenital disorders that may not be immediately apparent at birth. Through timely diagnosis and intervention, affected infants can receive appropriate treatment to prevent severe health complications, intellectual disability, and even death. One of the highlights of the caravan was the lecture on the Overview of the Newborn Screening Continuity Clinic, which emphasized the significance of continuous monitoring, confirmatory testing, medical management, and long-term follow-up for newborns with positive screening results. Participants also learned about the crucial role of the Continuity Clinic in ensuring that infants diagnosed with metabolic and other inherited disorders receive the necessary care and support throughout their development. Following the lecture, newborn screening specimen collection and other related health quality healthcare services more accessible and promoting the health and well-being of communities across the province. — **OPIO**

services were facilitated by healthcare professionals from the DOH-CHD CALABARZON, OPHO, and the Trece Martires CHO, making these essential services more accessible to families in Cavite. The activity was graced by Trece Martires City Mayor Gemma Lubigan and Vice Mayor Bobby Montehermoso, who expressed their support for programs that promote maternal and child health and ensure that every newborn receives quality healthcare services from the very beginning of life. The caravan forms part of the Department of Health's continuing efforts to strengthen the implementation of the National Newborn Screening Program and expand the reach of Newborn Screening Continuity Clinics across the CALABARZON Region. The program underscores the government's commitment to ensuring that every Filipino newborn is given the opportunity to live a healthier and more productive life through early detection, prompt intervention, and sustained medical care. The June 24 caravan likewise complemented the free newborn screening initiative conducted in partnership with the GMA Kapuso Foundation, prioritizing newborns from Trece Martires City, General Trias City, and Tanza while remaining open to eligible infants from other areas in Cavite. Initiatives such as the Newborn Screening Caravan reflect the Provincial Government of Cavite's continued commitment, through the Office of the Provincial Health Officer, to promoting maternal and child health by bringing essential healthcare services closer to communities and ensuring that every newborn receives the best possible start in life. — **OPIO**

EDITORIAL

Pantay na Pagtingin

Ang pangungutya sa mga taong may kapansanan ay isa sa pagpapakita ng kakulangan sa kamalayan o itinatawag na closed minded. Sa halip na sila ay ituring normal, ang ganitong marahas na pag-uugali ay nagpapalalim lamang sa diskriminasyon at nag-iiwan sa kanila ng masakit na damdamin. Hindi kailanman dapat gawing katatawanan o basehan ng mababang pagtingin ang pisikal o mental na kalagayan ng isang indibidwal. Tungkulin nating linangin ang kultura ng tunay na paggalang at pag-unawa. Maging bukas ang ating kaisipan o maging sensitibo tayo pagdating sa kanilang damdamin.

CAVITE
GAZETTE
PUBLISHING

Ang CAVITE GAZETTE PUBLISHING ay inilalathala tuwing araw ng Martes na may tanggapan sa 217 Ligas 1, Bacoor City Cavite.
Contact #: 09387342688
Email: cavitegazette@gmail.com



ANABELLE K. DUMALI
Publisher / Editor in Chief

JOHN RENNIEL K. DUMALI
Circulation Manager

BRYAN V. DE LUNA
Editor Consultant

JO-ANN K. ALCANTARA
Lay Out Artist/Special Project Coordinator

PAUNAWA: Ang dyaryong ito ay natanggap ng kontribusyon na balita , artikulo sariling pananaw o opinyon ng mga kolumnista ang nilalaman ng kanilang mga artikulo ay wala pong kinalaman at pananagutan dito ang pamunuan ng publishing

ADVERTISING RATES

COMMERCIAL -----P200/col.cm

LEGAL NOTICES --- P160/col.cm

LOCAL, FOREIGN TRAINING BOOSTS PAF DEFENSIVE CAPABILITIES

MANILA – Exercises and drills with its local and foreign counterparts are providing the Philippine Air Force (PAF) with much-needed capabilities in defending the country's airspace, its spokesperson said on Thursday.

"We have training, hindi lang lokal (not only local), but also bilateral and multilateral exercises like the Balikatan, (and) Cope Thunder, which is with the United States, and we also have with our other branches of service -- yung (the) Kamandag, with the Marines," PAF spokesperson Col. Ma. Christina Basco said in an interview with PTV's "Bagong Pilipinas Ngayon".

Balikatan (shoulder to shoulder) is the most prominent annual military exercise between the Philippines and the US, while Cope Thunder is a major annual bilateral air exercise that seeks to enhance interoperability between participating Filipino and American air units.

Kamandag (venom), in turn, is the annual exercise between the Philippine Marine Corps and its US counterparts.

Basco said PAF units will also be taking part in Australia's "Pitch Black", the Royal Australian Air Force's premier biennial exercise, which will be held from end-July to the first week of August this year.

"Ito pong mga training na ito, makapag-sharpen ng capacities ng ating mga airmen and airwomen. At the same time, it develop(s) interoperability with our allies and partners. Napakalaking bagay po ito para maging top notch po ang ating Air Force and natugunan po natin ang ating trabaho sa pagdedepensa ng ating territory (These trainings will sharpen capacities of our airmen and airwomen. At the same time, it develops interoperability with our allies and partners. This is a big factor in making our Air Force top-notch and help us in our job to protect our territory)," she said.

Likewise, Basco said the PAF's interoperability with its allies is very important since it will allow efficient coordination in joint patrolling and humanitarian assistance and missions.

"Dapat meron din po tayong kapasidad (we should also have the capability) to be at par with them and also assist them," she added.

Earlier, PAF commander Lt. Gen. Arthur Cordura said the Air Force is committed to being an effective force provider to the Unified Commands and the Joint Force, advancing the objectives of the Comprehensive Archipelagic Defense Concept, and strengthening cooperation with allies and partners across all domains.

"Through joint air control operations, air intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions, close air support, battlefield air interdiction, HADR (humanitarian assistance and disaster relief) and other operational activities, the PAF demonstrated what it can do with what it has, delivering operational effects that strengthened national defense, supported joint force objectives, and protected the interests of the Philippine people," he said. **(PNA) BY PRIAM NEPOMUCENO**

MANILA – Following the approval of the historic PHP85 increase in daily wages in the National Capital Region (NCR), the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) on Thursday said the adjustment will have a positive effect to workers.

In a statement, Labor Secretary Francis Tolentino explained that the salary hike does not only raise the daily take-home pay of minimum wage earners but will also affect several wage-related monetary benefits mandated under Philippine labor laws.

P250-M FUND FOR RESERVE FACILITIES TO BOOST SEED INDUSTRY IN PH – DA

MANILA – The Department of Agriculture (DA) on Thursday said it has about PHP250 million in funds to help boost the seed industry in the Philippines.

This comes after Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. led the inauguration of the refurbished National Seed Reserve Facility at the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) compound in Quezon City, with a capacity of 9,000 bags that can cater to regions across Luzon.

In an interview, the agriculture chief said the budget will help complete the establishment of solar-powered seed reserve facilities in select areas in the country.

"Alam ko (I know it's) PHP250 million, if I remember correctly," Tiu Laurel said, citing funding for the current year.

"The seed storage system will ensure that we have ample supply of seeds and buffer stock so that we are prepared for everything."

Under the 2026 seed reserve funding, bigger and modernized facilities are being built in Bicol and Iloilo.

An even higher budget is eyed to further increase the number of solar-powered seed reserve facilities in the country in 2027, he said.

"Next year, we're putting PHP300 million kasi 'yun kailangan noon pati

bagong building, bagong insulation, bagong panels, may racking system pa iyan (because that's what needed there including the new building, new insulation, new panels and there's even racking system)," Tiu Laurel said.

The DA chief added that seed reserves are crucial in supporting food systems and backing planting cycles of local farmers, especially in times of calamities.

"Kung sakaling may ma-washout man o ma-damage, naka-ready dapat ang national government na ma-provide 'yung seeds needed para nga hindi maputol 'yung supply nang ganun katagal o ganun kalaki at hindi mag-spike ang presyo (In case plantations have been washed out or damaged, the national government must be ready to provide the needed seeds to prevent the supply halt for a long period or for a large volume, to avoid spiking prices)," Tiu Laurel said.

In the long run, the government plans to put up seed facilities in all regions to ensure protection to both local farmers and consumers.

For its part, the BPI said it is also eyeing to enhance its seed system facilities in its BPI Centers in Baguio, Los Baños, Guimaras, Lagranja and Davao. **(PNA) BY STEPHANIE SEVILLANO**

DOTR INVITES MRT-3 PPP INVESTORS FROM JAPAN

MANILA – The Department of Transportation (DOTr) has invited companies from Japan to invest in a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) for the improvement project of the Metro Railway Transit Line 3 (MRT-3).

In a news release Thursday, DOTr Acting Secretary Giovanni Lopez said at least 26 reputable companies from Japan have so far expressed interest in the project.

The invitation is in line with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s order to prioritize the modernization of the MRT-3, given its critical role in ensuring fast passenger mobility in Metro Manila.

"The MRT-3 PPP is more than an investment opportunity — it is an invitation to potential investors to help reshape how millions of Filipinos can swiftly move every single day," Lopez said.

"We are committed to building a railway system our people rightfully deserve, and we look forward to partnering with the private sector to help make this vision a reality," he added.

The project, titled MRT-3 Capacity Expansion, Operations and Maintenance PPP, was presented to Japanese companies during a

market sounding activity by the DOTr and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in Tokyo, Japan, on June 23.

During the event, DOTr Assistant Secretary for Railways Eduardo Danilo Macabulos said the Philippines remains the most congested country in Asia, a problem that can be addressed by creating a pipeline of opportunities for private companies.

"At the end of the day, our goal is actually very simple: to help people save precious time. It may sound like a simple objective, but if we can give millions of Filipinos even one or two hours back in their day, the impact on their lives can be enormous," Macabulos said.

He noted that the MRT-3 PPP project is one of a growing number of opportunities for the private sector to "help shape the future of Philippine transportation."

The other PPPs include the operations and maintenance of the 147-km. North-South Commuter Railway (NSCR) and the 33-km. Metro Manila Subway Project (MMSP), an upcoming Light Rail Transit-2 (LRT-2) project, and the Philippine Automated Fare Collection System PPPs.

"This is not just about a single project, but part of a broader effort to transform rail and mobility in the Philippines. Again, ultimately, the goal is simple: to give Filipinos back their time," he said.

These projects are part of the DOTr's 30-year Railway Master Plan, which envisions a more connected, efficient, and sustainable railway network in the Philippines. **(PNA) BY RAYMOND CARL DELA CRUZ**

related benefits, the public may contact the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board - National Capital Region at rbncr@nwpc.dole.gov.ph or call the DOLE Hotline 1349. **(PNA) BY FERDINAND PATINIO**

DOLE: NCR WAGE HIKE MEANS BIGGER PAY, BENEFITS FOR WORKERS

"Their current earnings stand at PHP18,127. For those working six days a week — such as security guards — this figure will rise to PHP19,692 by July 19, and subsequently to PHP20,345 by January 20, 2027," he said.

He noted that workers may also receive increases in monetary benefits that are computed based on the applicable basic wage.

These include holiday pay, overtime pay, premium pay for work on rest days and special days, night shift differential, service incentive leave pay, 13th-

month pay, separation pay, retirement pay, and other wage-related benefits provided under existing labor laws and regulations.

"Overtime pay and night shift differentials will also increase, as will other benefits. For instance, work performed on a holiday is compensated at double the rate. Thus, there are ripple effects on various benefits that will be felt by — and provide assistance to — workers in Metro Manila," the DOLE chief added.

The DOLE urged NCR employers to comply with the new wage order within

the prescribed period, and to ensure the accurate computation of all wage-related benefits.

Tolentino also assured workers of ongoing wage assessments outside NCR, following President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s directive to review and conduct public consultations within 60 days prior to the anniversary dates of their latest wage orders.

For inquiries regarding the implementation of the new wage order and the computation of wage-

SURVEY: MOST FILIPINOS WANT AFFORDABLE SOLAR POWER

MANILA – A recent Pulse Asia survey showed that 93 percent of Filipinos believe that rising electricity demand makes affordable rooftop solar necessary.

"Nearly all Filipinos agree that the government should make rooftop solar more affordable," Pulse Asia said in a news release on Thursday.

The survey results showed strong public support for policies that can help make renewable energy more accessible, lower electricity costs, and strengthen the country's energy security, it added.

Nearly all, or 97 percent, of respondents said they are concerned about current energy challenges, while 77 percent recognized the country's dependency on imported oil, coal and natural gas.

Over half, or 66 percent, of respondents identified expanding renewable energy as the most

effective approach, with making rooftop solar affordable, emerging as the highest priority among renewable energy measures.

The survey also showed that affordability is the biggest hurdle to wider adoption.

"While public support for rooftop solar is high, Filipinos believe that lower costs, better access to information, and affordable financing are needed to make the technology accessible to more consumers," Pulse Asia said.

Among the respondents, 91 percent said widespread adoption is viable if affordable financing options are made available.

The majority, or 85 percent, of respondents also view rooftop solar as a necessity rather than a luxury, the survey added. **(PNA) BY MA. CRISTINA ARAYATA**

DOJ TO EVALUATE RAPS VS. RESPONDENTS IN STUDENT-ATHLETES' DEATHS

MANILA – The Department of Justice (DOJ) on Thursday said it will consolidate all the criminal charges filed by the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) for initial evaluation to see if a preliminary investigation is warranted for individuals implicated in the drowning incident that led to the deaths of the Ateneo de Manila University's student-athletes Rene Baterbonia and Divine Adili in Dipaculao, Aurora.

In a press briefing, DOJ Undersecretary Ian Dato said they received a supplemental referral from the Philippine National Police (PNP)-CIDG, recommending additional charges of homicide and/or reckless imprudence resulting in homicide against the Ateneo coaching staff led by Tab Baldwin.

"Both the original and

supplemental referrals are presently undergoing review by the Department," Dato said.

"Until that evaluation is completed, it would be inappropriate for us to disclose the identities of the respondents or discuss the evidence in greater detail," he added.

In a statement, Ateneo said it will continue to provide assistance and support to members of its community affected by the recent CIDG recommendation, "as they exercise their rights to defend themselves through the appropriate legal processes."

Aside from Baldwin, those recommended to be charged were strength and conditioning coaches Grant Dearn and Caesar Vincent Elumba; assistant coaches Dean Caesar Castañon, Sandro Nicholas Soriano, and Reynaldo Jacinto Jr.; student managers Paolo Manuel

DEPED COLLABS WITH PNP, DICT VS. ONLINE TERRORIST GROOMERS

MANILA – The Department of Education (DepEd) on Thursday said it is working with other government agencies to protect learners from possible schemes of online terrorist groomers.

This comes following consecutive reports of violence in the country's public schools.

In particular, the DepEd sought the assistance of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) to handle modern cyber threats.

In an interview, Education Secretary Sonny Angara said these agencies can monitor the large-scale online risks against learners.

"Wala kaming (We don't have the) capacity to really monitor the concerted action of terrorist groups, of online groomers, 'yung mga ganyan. So, nagpapatulong kami diyan sa (things like that. So, we are asking for help from the) PNP and DICT," he said at the sidelines of EdConnect Higher Education EdTech Summit 2026 in Quezon City.

"They're on top of it. In fact, we got a briefing from them last week. Sinabihan kami na may mga groups talaga active (We were warned that there are really active groups)," he added.

The education chief urged parents to closely watch their children's online engagements, especially during off-school hours.

"Nananawagan din kami sa mga magulang na bantayan 'yung online screen time ng mga bata (We are calling on parents to look after their children during their online screen time)," Angara said, citing that children only spend eight hours in campuses.

An initial assessment

Adevoso and Andrew Lorenzo Salud; physical therapist John Eric Rueca; and utility workers/ball boys Aris Ponce and Joel Rapa. **(PNA) BY BENJAMIN PULTA**

revealed that some active terrorist groomers are utilizing online gaming platforms to recruit youth.

"Doon nila nakakasalamuha 'yung mga ganoong elemento, na hindi nila aware na ni-recruit na pala sila. Kala nila bata yung kausap nila sa Roblox. Iyon pala, terrorist groomer na pala (That's where they encounter those elements, that unknowingly they are being recruited. They thought they were talking with fellow kids in Roblox. But they are already terrorist groomers)," Angara said.

Critical offenses

The DepEd, meanwhile, imposed streamlined guidelines to address critical offenses as part of its safety measures under DepEd Order (DO) 006, series of 2026, or the Guidelines on Ensuring a Safe and Motivating Learning Environment (ESMLE).

In particular, the agency classifies bomb threats or jokes and carrying and concealing deadly weapons such as firearms, ammunition, explosives, and bladed weapons as third-level offenses, subject to the most severe disciplinary classification.

All public schools are ordered to immediately refer these grave cases to law enforcement authorities and social welfare agencies for appropriate handling and interventions.

Other third-level offenses include joining street gangs, cheating during exams, inflicting serious physical injuries, whether inside or outside the school, bringing illegal drugs and liquor, acts of lasciviousness, and sharing demeaning and sexual videos of oneself or other learners and school personnel.

Erring learners will be subject to maximum administrative penalties, non-readmission or exclusion, alongside automatic referral to law enforcement and other appropriate agencies, and provision of interventions.

PH, FINLAND BOOST COOPERATION ON JOBS, WORKER PROTECTION

MANILA – The Philippines, through the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), and Finland are strengthening cooperation to create more job opportunities for Filipinos, enhance skills development and improve protection for overseas Filipino workers (OFWs).

During his courtesy call on Thursday, Finland Ambassador to the Philippines H.E. Saija Nurminen discussed with Labor Secretary Francis Tolentino possible collaboration in skills training, ethical recruitment and emerging industries where Filipino workers are

Under non-readmission, the erring learner is prohibited from being admitted for the following school year, but is allowed to complete the current school year.

A learner, however, is immediately dropped from the class list of the school under the penalty of exclusion, with learning continuity allowed only through appropriate educational interventions.

Moreover, other offenses will be dealt with according to severity under the ESMLE.

Second-level offenses cover severe or repeated behaviors that go beyond minor infractions, including stalking, inflicting slight physical injuries, theft, intimidation, and harassment.

Penalties include mandatory suspensions on the first offense, non-readmission on the second offense, and exclusion on the third offense.

First-level offenses, meanwhile, involve minor infractions.

These involve uttering profanities or swear words inside school premises, simple vandalism, disruptive behavior, and sharing false information that can create confusion or commotion in the school, which subjects violators to a written reprimand, a summons to parents, and suspension. **(PNA) BY STEPHANIE SEVILLANO**

in demand.

The two officials explored opportunities in renewable energy, maritime technology, artificial intelligence and other industries expected to generate more jobs in the coming years.

They also discussed scholarship, training and exchange programs that would equip Filipino workers with skills needed in these sectors while allowing trainers and students to learn from Finland's internationally recognized vocational education system.

The DOLE also expressed interest in learning from Finland's labor migration model, which matches skilled foreign workers with employers while promoting fair recruitment, faster processing, and strong worker protection.

Meanwhile, Tolentino highlighted the Philippines' efforts to prepare workers for the transition to a greener economy through the Philippine Green Jobs Act and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority's Green TVET program.

He also cited opportunities for partnerships in renewable energy, waste management and other sustainable industries.

The DOLE likewise thanked Finland for its continued support for the ongoing Philippines-European Union Free Trade Agreement negotiations, where the department leads discussions on labor provisions promoting decent work and protecting workers' rights.

From 2024 to April 2026, a total of 1,299 newly hired OFWs were deployed to Finland, mostly in healthcare, hospitality, skilled trades and other occupations facing labor shortages.

Finland is also home to around 12,770 Filipinos, up from just 302 in 2016.

Meanwhile, 39 Finnish companies are operating in various industries in the Philippines. **(PNA) BY FERDINAND PATINIO**

TAGUMPAY NA HINUBOG SA TAHANAN

Sa Cagayan de Oro, hindi lamang pinagkakakitaan ang itinayo nina Jaime at Candelaria Bedro kundi isang buhay na nakaugat sa sipag, tiyaga, at matibay na pagpapahalaga sa pamilya.

Tubong Cebu si Jaime at maaga niyang naranasan ang hirap ng buhay. Dahil sa limitadong kita ng kanilang pamilya, hindi niya natapos ang kanyang pag-aaral. Sa kabila nito, nanatili siyang determinado na makatulong sa paghahanapbuhay ng kanilang pamilya.

Ang pagsisimula ng kuwento

Dahil isa sa kanyang mga kapatid ay nagtatrabaho sa paggawa ng longganisa, nagsimula si Jaime bilang katulong sa produksyon at kalaunan ay natutuhan niya mismo ang buong proseso ng paggawa nito. Habang tumatagal at nadaragdagan ang kanilang kaalaman at kakayahan, natuto rin silang gumawa ng iba pang produktong pagkain gaya ng chicharon.

Sa paghahanap ng mas magandang oportunidad at bagong simula, lumipat si Jaime at ang kanyang pamilya sa Cagayan de Oro noong 1982. Habang sila ay naninirahan sa kanilang bagong tahanan, ginamit nila ang kanilang kakayahan sa paggawa ng lutong-bahay na pork longganisa na kanilang ibinebenta sa kanilang komunidad, mga kalapit na mall, at pribadong tanggapan.

Makalipas ang ilang taon ng pagsisikap, nakilala ni Jaime si Candelaria, isang residente sa Cagayan de Oro na kalaunan ay naging kanyang asawa. Ikinasal sila noong 1987 at magkasamang nagsimula ng kanilang sariling negosyo ng longganisa.

Upang makatulong sa lumalaking pangangailangan ng kanilang pamilya, nagtayo rin sila ng maliit na sari-sari store sa kanilang tahanan na nagsilbing dagdag na pinagkukunan ng kita para sa kanilang pang-araw-araw na pangangailangan. Habang lumilipas ang

panahon, hindi sila nakuntento sa kanilang kinikita at patuloy na naghanap ng iba pang mapagkukunan ng kabuhayan. Noong 1998, nagsimula silang gumawa ng pork chicharon na kanilang ibinebenta sa mga tindero sa palengke at mga may-ari ng tindahan sa kanilang komunidad, partikular sa Cogon Market at Bulua Public Terminal.

Nanatiling buhay ang kanilang pagmamahal sa paggawa ng longganisa. Bawat linggo, maingat silang gumagawa ng tatlo hanggang apat na batch ng longganisa gamit ang sariwa at lokal na karne ng baboy. Sa kanilang mahabang karanasan, natutuhan nilang mahalaga ang kalidad upang mapanatili ang kasiyahan ng mga mamimili at ang masarap na lasa ng kanilang produkto.

“Sa ganitong business, ang major na challenge namin ay ang mga imported na karne ng baboy. Masusi naming tinitingnan kung local at fresh ba ang karne dahil hindi maganda ang kalidad ng longganisa kapag imported pork ang ginagamit,” ani Jaime.

Samantala, hindi rin naging madali ang pamamahala sa kanilang negosyo ng chicharon. Karaniwan silang gumagawa nito nang dalawang beses sa isang linggo at nangangailangan ito ng mahabang proseso. Mula sa paghahanda at pagpapatuyo ng balat ng baboy hanggang sa tamang pagprito nito, bawat hakbang ay nangangailangan ng tiyaga at pagiging maingat. Bukod sa pagtaas ng presyo ng

mga hilaw na materyales, isa rin sa kanilang pinakamalaking hamon ang pabago-bagong panahon. Kapag tag-ulan, mas matagal matuyo ang balat ng baboy na nagiging sanhi ng pagkaantala sa produksyon at nakaaapekto sa kanilang regular na iskedyul.

“Sa chicharon business naman, nakadepende sa quality ng pork skin o rinds ang dami ng magiging finished products mo, kaya hindi pare-pareho ang benta at kita,” paliwanag niya.

Sa kabila ng lahat ng ito, hindi sila sumuko at patuloy na nagsikap upang mapanatili ang kanilang kabuhayan.

Isang bagong pagkakataon sa Kasabay ng paglago ng kanilang negosyo ay ang paglaki rin ng pangangailangan ng kanilang pamilya. Nang mangailangan sila ng karagdagang puhunan, ipinakilala ng isang kapitbahay si Candelaria sa CARD noong 2012. Matapos malaman ang tungkol sa mga produkto nitong pantang at insurance, nagpasya siyang maging kliyente.

Nagsimula siya sa halagang PHP 5,000 na loan at unti-unting tumaas ito sa paglipas ng mga taon hanggang umabot sa PHP 100,000. Malaki ang naitulong ng karagdagang puhunan upang mapalakas ang kanilang negosyo at matugunan ang mga gastusin ng kanilang pamilya. Nang makita ang positibong epekto nito sa kanilang kabuhayan, nagpasya rin ang kanyang asawa na maging kliyente

noong 2020.

Ginamit ng mag-asawa ang kanilang loans nang responsable at maayos upang mapalago ang kanilang negosyo. Sa pamamagitan ng disiplina, sipag, at tiyaga, unti-unti nilang napabuti ang kanilang kalagayan sa buhay habang patuloy na sinusupportahan ang edukasyon at pang-araw-araw na pangangailangan ng kanilang mga anak.

“Bukod sa aming negosyo at suporta ng aming pamilya, malaki rin ang pasasalamat namin sa CARD SME Bank dahil nabigyan kami ng oportunidad na magkaroon ng mapagkukunan ng dagdag na puhunan para sa aming negosyo. Sa 14 years ko bilang client, napaayos namin ang aming bahay at nasupportahan ang pangangailangan ng aming apat na anak. Isa pa sa aming ipinagpapasalamat ay ang pagiging CARD scholar ng aming bunsong anak,” pagbabahagi ni Candelaria.

Sa kabila ng tumitinding kompetisyon sa kanilang mga negosyo, patuloy na nagsisikap sina Jaime at Candelaria. Higit pa sa paghahanapbuhay, ibinahagi rin nila ang kanilang kaalaman at kasanayan sa kanilang mga kamag-anak, at ilan sa mga ito ay nagsisimula na rin ng sarili nilang mga negosyo.

Ang kanilang mga sakripisyo ay nagbukas din ng mas magandang oportunidad para sa kanilang mga anak. Sa kasalukuyan, dalawa sa kanila ang nagtatrabaho na sa Manila at mayroon nang sariling pamilya. Ang isa naman ay tumutulong sa pamamahala at pagpapatuloy ng kanilang negosyo, habang ang kanilang bunsong anak ay kasalukuyang kumukuha ng kursong Bachelor of Science in Marketing Management sa Cagayan de Oro College bilang CARD scholar.

Sa maraming taon ng pagsisikap, nakapagpatayo sila ng sariling bahay, nakabili ng bahay at lupa, napalawak ang kanilang sari-sari store, at napanatili

SSS OPENS FIRST CAMPUS-BASED OFFSITE E-CENTER IN LAGUNA



Social Security System (SSS) Sta. Cruz Branch Head Eleanor Ebreo (left) and Laguna University President III Dr. Charlemagne G. Laviña (right) lead the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the newly established Offsite e-Center at Laguna University in Sta. Cruz, Laguna.

STA. CRUZ, Laguna — The Social Security System (SSS) Sta. Cruz Branch has inaugurated its first campus-based Offsite E-Center at Laguna University, bringing vital services closer to more than 6,700 students, 250 faculty and staff, and nearby communities.

ang kanilang negosyo sa kabila ng maraming hamon na kanilang pinagdaanan. Sa hinaharap, nananatiling determinado sina Jaime at Candelaria na lalo pang palaguin ang kanilang kabuhayan. Plano nilang palawakin ang kanilang merkado at higit pang palakasin ang kanilang brand presence. Bilang bahagi ng kanilang pangmatagalang layunin, nais din nilang opisyal na mairehistro ang kanilang mga produktong longganisa sa Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) at makasunod sa iba pang kaugnay na ahensiya ng pamahalaan upang higit pang maging pormal at mapalawak ang kanilang operasyon.

Sa mahabang panahon ng pagtutulungan, pinatunayan nina Jaime at Candelaria na ang simpleng simula, kapag pinatibay ng tiyaga at pagmamahal sa pamilya, ay maaaring humantong sa pangmatagalang tagumpay. **EDRIAN BANANIA**, Senior Writer - Oic

SSS Sta. Cruz Branch Head Eleanor Ebreo said the facility serves as a dedicated hub for faster and more efficient online services, including membership assistance, online verification of records, filing of benefits and claims, and other essential online transactions.

“By establishing this facility inside Laguna University, we aim to strengthen our partnership with academic institutions and promote greater social security awareness among the youth, preparing them to become responsible, future-ready members of society,” Ebreo said.

Laguna University President III Dr. Charlemagne G. Laviña underscored the university’s commitment to student-centered service, noting that initiatives like the SSS E-Center support accessible and responsive assistance for students. “In Laguna University, we listen with our hearts. Serving our students is the main priority,” he said.

The initiative forms part of SSS’ ongoing efforts to expand service delivery channels and strengthen partnerships with academic institutions while promoting social security awareness among future members. ###



Sa loob ng kanilang maliit na tindahan sa Macabalan, Piaping Puti, Lungsod ng Cagayan de Oro, buong pagmamalaking ipinakita nina Jaime at Candelaria ang kanilang sariling gawang longganisa na sumasalamin sa kanilang payak ngunit makabuluhang paglalakbay sa buhay.

SSS, SAUDI-BASED FILCOM ORGANIZATION TO BOOST SSS COVERAGE AMONG OFWS

QUEZON CITY - The Social Security System (SSS) and OFW Council of Leaders signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on 22 June 2026 to promote social security coverage among Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in Saudi Arabia and their families, as part of the SSS' efforts to expand membership among OFWs in the Middle East.

OFW Council of Leaders Director-General Mofiedah R. Daknash (3rd from left) and SSS Vice President for Asia, Americas and Pacific Operations Division Paul Erik D. Manalo (4th from left) led the signing of the MOU, which mobilizes more than 100 Filipino group leaders in Saudi Arabia to encourage migrant workers to become SSS members and secure social protection

for themselves and their families.

Also present during the MOU signing were OFW Council of Leaders Member Ruby Dizon (2nd from left), together with other SSS officials Acting Executive Vice President for Branch Operations Sector Antonio S. Argabioso (6th from left), Acting Vice President for Middle East and Europe Operations Division Roberto V. Roldan (1st from left), and Overseas Filipino Workers Management Department Manager III Francis Paolo P. Lazaro (5th from left).

Manalo said the MOU signing marks a milestone, as the OFW Council of Leaders is the first Filipino community group network in the Middle East to enter a formal partnership with the SSS to promote its programs and services.#



EXEC UPBEAT ON MANUFACTURING EXPANSION AMID EXTERNAL RISKS

MANILA – A manufacturing sector executive on Wednesday expressed optimism for the continued expansion of the country's manufacturing sector amid challenges due to external developments and their impact on the domestic economy and the wage hike.

In a statement, Federation of Philippine Industries (FPI) chairperson Elizabeth Lee underscored the expansion of the S&P Global Philippines Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) for the second month in a row in June to the 50.9 level from the previous month's 50.8 level.

"We have two months of expansion and we are looking forward to a stronger positive trend given that the production volume also was relatively resilient with a positive 12

percent growth in April," he said.

Lee said "new orders and output grew, export order declines eased, and input cost inflation moderated" but cited that "still, business confidence is at a relatively low level given global uncertainties affecting supply chain disruptions and rise in input costs."

"Businesses are weighing the cumulative toll of recent cost pressures," she added.

On Tuesday, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) announced the approval by the National Capital Region (NCR) Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board (RTWPB) of the PHP85 increase in daily minimum wage to PHP780.

The wage hike will be implemented in two tranches – PHP60 effective July 19 and the additional

MANILA – The government's bid to further improve internet connectivity in the Philippines, along with its digitalization and digitization programs, are primary factors for the easier artificial intelligence (AI) adoption among Filipinos.

Gibu Mathew, Managing Director of Texas-based technology firm Zoho APAC, in a briefing Thursday, said there are several aspects of AI to become widely-used and powerful, initially through digitization, familiarization on the use of devices such as laptops among the population, as early as school-aged children; and a good internet connection.

"I think [the] Philippines already has those good, positive, aspects already," he said.

Another important factor is user education, he said, citing the need among individuals and businesses to have the understanding on how to adopt the technology and eventually utilize it to improve their services and processes.

"Definitely, you will start seeing value faster than before, because AI is doing something very interesting. It is reducing that barrier for humans to actually

interact with technology, with voice, video, and other smart technologies. And I feel that each human's productivity will definitely see a big boost," he said.

The government bids to increase the share of digital economy to 12 percent of the country's annual output and the Philippines' chairship of this year's Association of Southeast Asian (ASEAN) plays a big role in achieving this goal, he said.

Mathew said businesses continue to invest in technological innovations, and without giving any figure he expressed optimism for sustained rise of allocation for tech-related expenses.

He said the Philippines is among Zoho's top three markets in the Asia Pacific, led by Singapore, and he expressed a belief of sustained growth, as more domestic firms and local offices of major business process outsourcing companies take advantage of technology to boost their operations and bottomline.

"AI actually helps you do more work so definitely I'm sure organizations have found the value already and they are adopting those technologies," he added. (PNA) BY JOANN VILLANUEVA

PH UPGRADE TO UPPER MIDDLE-INCOME ECONOMY LIFTS PSEI, PESO

MANILA – The upgrade of the Philippines to an upper middle-income economy lifted investors' sentiment, further boosting the Philippine Stock Exchange

costs businesses face as each adjustment cannot be viewed in isolation.

"We welcome the staggered implementation as a reasonable way to ease the transition, and we urge continued dialogue grounded in data, mindful of regional differences, and attentive to employment impact," Lee said.

"June's PMI uptick shows Philippine manufacturing can still grow under pressure. However, sustaining that growth means supporting workers while preserving businesses' ability to invest, employ, and compete. We cannot treat one factor in isolation." (PNA) BY JOANN VILLANUEVA

MANILA – Government reforms to strengthen the country's economic fundamentals helped the Philippines achieve its upper-middle income country (UMIC) status, Finance Secretary Frederick Go said, noting that the government will continue its efforts to improve Filipinos' lives.

"The Philippines' transition to an upper middle-income country is an affirmation of the reforms and policies that the government has consistently pursued to strengthen our economic fundamentals and create more opportunities for our people," Go said in a statement Thursday.

"Now, we must continue to build on these gains so that the benefits of economic development reach more Filipinos," he added.

In its latest income assessment released late Wednesday, the World Bank said that the Philippines' gross national income (GNI) per capita was at USD4,850, exceeding the USD4,636 (UMIC) threshold.

The World Bank defines UMIC economies as those with GNI per capita ranging between USD4,636 and USD14,375 for fiscal year 2027.

GNI per capita measures the economic output per

citizen, encompassing both domestic and international earnings.

A higher GNI per capita is one indication of greater economic prosperity and a higher standard of living.

In a separate statement, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Governor Eli Remolona Jr. said the Philippines' move to upper middle-income status is an important milestone that reflects years of steady economic progress.

"It signals that the country's productive capacity and incomes have improved over time," he said.

Remolona said the move underscores the importance of the efforts to preserve macroeconomic stability and sustain structural reforms by the National Government.

"On the part of the BSP, it underlines the importance of managing inflation to encourage investment and protect the purchasing power of Filipino households; maintaining adequate international reserves to ensure confidence; ensuring banks are solid and able to support economic growth; and payment systems are modernized to provide businesses and consumers fast and safe transfers," Remolona said. (PNA) BY ANNA LEAH GONZALES

index (PSEi) Thursday and helping the Philippine peso recover against the greenback.

According to the World Bank (WB), the broad-based expansion of the domestic economy increased its gross national income (GNI) per capita to USD4,850, surpassing the USD4,636 threshold.

The local bourse's main index rose 0.93 percent to 6,125.72 points, and the broader All Shares by 0.55 percent to 3,343.03 points. Most of the sectoral gauges also inched up during the day, led by Mining and Oil after it rose 2.45 percent.

It was trailed by Services, 1.16 percent; Financials, 0.93 percent; Holding Firms, 0.82 percent; and Property, 0.80 percent.

Only the Industrial index declined during the day, down by 0.11 percent.

Aside from the impact of the WB report, Philstocks

Research, in a report, said, "The local market also gained support from the slight improvement of the S&P Global Philippines' Manufacturing PMI (Purchasing Managers' Index) from 50.8 to 50.9 (last June)."

An index above 50 indicates expansion, while an index below 50 shows otherwise.

The positive sentiments in the local equities market benefited the local currency, which gained against the US dollar after days of decline, ending the day's trade at 61.56 from the previous session's 61.62.

It started the day weaker at 61.60 from the previous session's 61.55, trading between 61.65 and 61.53 and bringing the day's average to 61.59.

Volume went down to USD1.27 billion from Wednesday's 1.58 billion. (PNA) BY JOANN VILLANUEVA



GILAS 3X3 PROSPECTS DIOUF, MEANS SECURE PH PASSPORTS

MANILA – Malick Diouf and Elizabeth Jeanette Means have officially become Filipino citizens after securing their Philippine passports, boosting the country's basketball 3x3 program.

"Filipinos, finally!" the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas (SBP) said in a social media post Wednesday night, confirming that the two basketball standouts had completed the process of acquiring Philippine citizenship.

The development marks a major boost for the country's 3x3 basketball program, with Diouf being eyed for the Gilas Pilipinas men's 3x3 pool and Means considered a prospect for the Gilas Pilipinas

Women's 3x3 team.

"The SBP thanks the Office of the President, the Senate of the Philippines, and the House of Representatives for making this possible," the federation said.

Diouf, a 6-foot-11 center born in Dakar, Senegal, rose to prominence during his collegiate career with the University of the Philippines Fighting Maroons, helping the school capture the UAAP Season 84 men's basketball championship before winning the Most Valuable Player award in Season 85.

Means, meanwhile, is a 6-foot player from Folsom, California, whose family traces its roots to the Philippines through her grandfather, who was born

in Naga City, Camarines Sur.

Republic Acts No. 12318 and 12319, which granted Philippine citizenship to Diouf and Means, respectively, lapsed into law on May 18, 2026.

READ: Diouf, Means get PH citizenship, now eligible for Gilas duties

"This is an important step in the right direction for Gilas Pilipinas 3x3," the SBP said.

The acquisition of Philippine passports completes a key requirement for both players as the national federation continues to strengthen its talent pool for future international 3x3 competitions. (PNA)

BY DARRYL JOHN ESGUERRA

PH BEATS IRAN TO KICK OFF POOL PLAY IN AVC GIRLS' U18 IN THAILAND

MANILA – The Philippines defeated Iran, 29-19, 19-25, 25-23, 25-18, for its first victory in Pool C Wednesday in the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC) Girls' U18 Championship at the Terminal 21 Hall in Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand.

Xyz Ellen Rayco topscored with 19 points on 14 attacks, three blocks and two aces, followed by Ma. Ellanie Lorraine Gonzalvo with 15 points on 12 attacks and two aces in the one hour and 50-minute match.

Jhayna Love Bulandres and Adelaine Terese Agustin chipped in nine points for the team, which clinched the bronze medal in the Princess Cup.

Sana Naghipour led the Iranians with 15 points, 13 on attacks, followed by Setayesh Nasr Esfahani with 15 points on eight points and two aces.

"We had expected Iran to play well, they beat us in the semifinal at the Asian Youth Games in Bahrain," said head coach Rey Karl Dimaculangan, who is assisted by Keenan Quitco and Marco Ely Maclang.

The Philippines—sent to the tournament through the Philippine Olympic Committee and supported by the Philippine Sports Commission, Boysen and

Monolith—will next face Japan at 10 a.m. Thursday and Indonesia at 4 p.m. on Friday.

Dimaculangan stressed the importance of mindset.

"We need to be more focused on the game and be more aggressive, especially on the floor," he said.

Most of the players are members of the 2026 Palarong Pambansa champion National University, while Lleses is a player of King's Montessori of Quezon City, while Gonzalvo is with the Adamson University.

Six of the players—

Rayco, Bulandres, Lleses, Princess Khaira Manzano, Irish May Mahinay and Frances Dianne Ramos—are part of the national team that qualified for the FIVB World Girls' U17 in Chile from Aug. 6 to 16.

Kazakhstan defeated Hong Kong, 25-3, 25-23, 25-15, in Pool B at the Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University gym.

The semifinalists in the championships will qualify for the U19 world championships next year—the FIVB has yet to announce the venue. (PR)



Ma. Ellanie Lorraine Gonzalvo (Contributed photo)

EALA REACHES WIMBLEDON THIRD ROUND VS REIGNING CHAMPION SWIATEK

MANILA – Filipina tennis star Alex Eala bounced back from a first-set loss

to beat Australia's Maya Joint, 3-6, 6-2, 6-0, to advance in the third round of Wimbledon on Thursday night (Manila time).

Eala wrapped up the match with back-to-back aces to the delight of the Filipino crowd at the All England Club Court 3.

The 21-year-old No. 29 seed also avenged her loss to Joint in the Eastbourne final in June last year.

She will face defending champion Iga Swiatek of Poland for a spot in the Round of 16 on Saturday.

Swiatek needed only 70 minutes to oust Karolina Pliskova, 6-1, 6-3.

Eala upset Swiatek, 6-2, 6-5, in the Miami Open quarter-final on March 27, 2025, but the Polish tennis star took revenge when they met again in the Round of 64 of the Madrid Open on April 24, 2025. (PNA)

PH FAILS TO SECURE AVC GIRLS Q'FINAL SEAT AFTER LOSS TO INDONESIA

MANILA – The Philippines failed to advance to the quarterfinals after a 22-25, 13-25, 26-28 loss to Indonesia in the Asian Volleyball Confederation

(AVC) Girls' U18 Championship in Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand on Friday.

Ma. Ellaine Lorraine Gonzalvo scored 12 points

on 12 attacks and two aces, while Xyz Ellen Rayco chipped in 10 points on nine attacks and one block for the Filipinos, who put up a strong challenge in the one-hour and 32-minute encounter.

Sharina Rhayza Lleses and Adeleine Terese Agustin contributed eight and six points, respectively, for Alas Pilipinas that beat Indonesia for the bronze medal in the Princess Cup.

"I can say that we played good today but Indonesia played better. We have to move on from this loss and focus on our next game," coach Ray Karl Dimaculangan said in a news release.

The Philippines ranked third in Pool C with a 1-2

slate, followed by Iran (0-3).

Indonesia (2-1) will join Japan (3-0) to the next round.

"I'm sure the girls felt bad because they played against Indonesia in the Princess Cup. The Indonesians really prepared to beat us," team manager Carmela Gamboa said.

The Philippines beat Indonesia, 27-25, 27-29, 18-25, 25-22, 15-11, in the Princess Cup, also known as the Southeast Asian Girls' U18 Volleyball Championship, on June 28.

Thailand claimed the championship over Vietnam.

Khanza Putri Yanzi



NO Q'FINAL SLOT. The Philippines' Ma. Ellanie Lorraine Gonzalvo dives for the ball in their game against Indonesia in the Asian Volleyball Confederation Girls' U18 Championship at Terminal 21 Hall in Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand on Friday (July 3, 2026). The Philippines failed to secure a quarterfinal berth after a 22-25, 13-25, 26-28 loss. (Contributed photo)