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CARMONA OPENS PH'S FIRST FULLY-INTEGRATED PWD RESOURCE, RESIDENTIAL FACILITY



CARMONA CITY, Cavite (PIA) — The City Government of Carmona opened the country's first fully integrated resource center and residential care facility for Persons With Disabilities (PWD) as part of its continuous bid towards a more inclusive community.

On July 31, the Kalingyakap Integrated Shelter, Support, and Services for PWDs opened its doors to the public.

A program launched in partnership with the Delos

Santos Family Foundation, the Kalingyakap Shelter features PWD-friendly facilities, including classrooms and areas for speech, physical, and occupational therapies.

Having previously been recognized by the United Nations' Public Service Awards, Mayor Dahlia Loyola noted that the Kalingyakap Integrated Shelter was a 'dream' and a product of the support and involvement of stakeholders and community members in their city.

ang mga totoong nangyayari sa City of Carmona kung saan mayroong inclusive development [where] nobody is left behind. Ito po ay nangyari sa pamamagitan ng strong political will, sustained leadership, at involvement of many stakeholders."

As the first of its kind, the Kalingyakap Integrated Shelter, Support, and Services and its accompanying programs earned praises from the Department of Social Welfare and Development

(DSWD), Department of Education (DepEd), and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG). Secretary Rex Gatchalian lauded the city, which has long been a business-friendly community, for its PWD-centered governance.

"The true mark of a progressive city is how it takes care of its citizens, more so those who are poor, marginalized, and vulnerable. Dito sa Carmona, ipinamalas ng lungsod na hindi lang sila progresibo sa imprastraktura, ease of doing business, at sa iba't ibang larangan, kundi ipinakikita nila na pati ang kanilang number one agenda sa governance, [which] is taking care of People With Disabilities."

Gatchalian noted that the Kalingyakap Shelter is the first facility of its kind in the country, focusing on helping PWDs adapt to society by offering various livelihood packages and psychosocial support.

"The innovation of this Center lies not in the structure itself, kundi

doon sa community-based programs na fully integrated. Most of the Learning and Resource Centers sa buong Pilipinas normally ang point of view is always as an education facility."

Gatchalian added, "[But] Carmona took it a bit further and looked at it as part of the community-complete package of services na kasama ang livelihood, involvement ng mga magulang, [at] kasama pagtatala ng People with Disabilities sa community, and I think this is the only type of it [integrated shelter facility] right now."

Currently, the Kalingyakap program caters to 368 PWD learners, including college students, in partnership with the Cavite State University (CvSU). The Shelter is also caring for neglected and abandoned PWDs, and can accommodate up to 20 male and female residents. (PB-PIA CALABARZON)

BY PATRICIA BERMUDEZ

The Cavite Career Caravan (CCC) successfully brought employment opportunities closer to residents of Ternate, providing jobseekers with access to local and overseas employers as well as essential government services. A total of 61 registered jobseekers participated in the event, with 3 applicants hired on the spot.

The job fair featured 18 local employers and 1 overseas recruitment agency, collectively offering 7,013 job vacancies across various industries. This wide range of opportunities enabled applicants to explore career options suited to their skills and qualifications.

In addition to employment opportunities, the event also served as a one-stop shop for government services, benefiting 210 clients through participating national government agencies. The Cavite Career Caravan continues to support the Provincial Government's commitment to improving employment, strengthening workforce development, and making public services more accessible to every Caviteño. — **OPIO**

CAVITE CAREER CARAVAN CONNECTS TERNATE RESIDENTS TO EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES



REGIONAL LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON, ARESTADO NG GMA PULIS

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Matagumpay na naaresto ng mga tauhan ng General Mariano Alvarez Municipal Police Station ang isang Regional Level Most Wanted Person sa isinagawang manhunt operation bandang 9:30 ng gabi noong Agosto 4, 2026 sa Barangay Poblacion 5, General Mariano Alvarez (GMA), Cavite.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL ALEXANDER S ALVAREZ, Hepe ng General Mariano Alvarez Municipal Police Station, ang naarestong akusado na si alyas "Mar", 22 taong gulang at residente ng naturang lugar Barangay Poblacion 5, General Mariano Alvarez, Cavite.

Isinagawa ang operasyon ng Warrant Operatives ng GMA Municipal Police Station sa tulong ng Purok Leader at Bantay Bayan ng FVR, Barangay Poblacion 5, GMA, Cavite. Naaresto ang akusado sa bisa ng Warrant of Arrest kaugnay ng Service of Sentence para sa paglabag sa Section 11, Article II ng Republic Act No. 9165 (Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002).

Ang warrant ay inilabas at nilagdaan ng Presiding Judge ng Regional Trial Court, Fourth Judicial Region, Branch 109, Carmona, Cavite, noong Abril 28, 2026.

Matapos maaresto, ipinaalam sa akusado ang kanyang mga karapatan alinsunod sa batas. Ang warrant of arrest ay ibabalik sa hukuman na nagpalabas nito para sa kaukulang dokumentasyon at iba pang legal na proseso.

Pinuri ni PCOL ARIEL R RED, Provincial Director ng Cavite Police Provincial Office, ang matagumpay na operasyon ng GMA Municipal Police Station at ang pakikiisa ng komunidad na naging mahalagang bahagi sa pagkakadapik sa wanted person.

"Ang aktibong pakikipagtulungan ng komunidad at ng ating mga kapulisan ay mahalaga sa matagumpay na pagpapatupad ng batas. Patuloy nating palalakasin ang ating manhunt operations upang matiyak na ang lahat ng wanted person ay mahaharap sa hustisya at mapananagot sa kanilang mga paglabag sa batas," ani PCOL RED.

Patuloy ang Cavite Police Provincial Office sa walang humpay na kampanya laban sa mga wanted person sa pamamagitan ng mas pinaigting na law enforcement operations at pakikipag-ugnayan sa iba't ibang sektor upang mapanatili ang kapayapaan at kaayusan sa lalawigan.

RANK NO. 6 PROVINCIAL MOST WANTED PERSON SA MAMBURAO, OCCIDENTAL MINDORO, ARESTADO NG PROVINCIAL INTELLIGENCE UNIT

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Matagumpay na naaresto ng mga tauhan ng Cavite Provincial Intelligence Unit ang isang Provincial Level Most Wanted Person ng Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro sa isinagawang police operation bandang 5:45 ng hapon noong Agosto 4, 2026 sa Barangay Galicia 3, Mendez, Cavite.

Kinilala ang naarestong akusado na si alyas "Allen", 28 taong gulang at residente ng Barangay Balansay, Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro.

Isinagawa ang operasyon sa ilalim ng Simultaneous Anti-Criminality Law Enforcement Operation sa pangunguna ng Provincial Intelligence Unit, Cavite PPO, katuwang ang warrant personnel ng Mendez Municipal Police Station, Mamburao Municipal Police Station ng Occidental Mindoro, at PNP Cavite Maritime Group.

Naaresto ang akusado sa bisa ng warrant of arrest para sa kasong Statutory Rape under Article 266-A in relation to Article 266-B of the Revised Penal Code, as amended by Republic Act No. 11648. Ang warrant ay inilabas at nilagdaan ng Presiding Judge ng Family Court, Fourth Judicial Region, Branch 10, Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro, noong Nobyembre 25, 2025, na walang inirekomendang

piyansa.

Agad na ipinaalam sa akusado ang kanyang mga karapatan alinsunod sa batas. Sa kasalukuyan, ang akusado ay nasa kustodiya ng Mendez Municipal Police Station Custodial Facility habang hinihintay ang commitment order, at ang warrant of arrest ay ibabalik sa hukuman na nagpalabas nito para sa kaukulang dokumentasyon.

Pinuri ni PCOL ARIEL R RED, Provincial Director ng Cavite Police Provincial Office, ang matagumpay na operasyon at ang koordinasyon ng mga tanggapan ng pulisya mula sa Cavite at Occidental Mindoro sa pagtugis sa mga nagtatangkang umiwas sa batas.

"Ang pagkakaaresto sa mga wanted person, lalo na sa mga may mabibigat na kasong kinakaharap, ay nagpapakita ng ating patuloy na dedikasyon sa paghahatid ng hustisya. Sa pamamagitan ng mas pinaigting na koordinasyon at operasyon, patuloy nating titiyakin na walang kriminal ang makapagtatago sa kamay ng batas," ani PCOL RED. Patuloy ang Cavite PPO sa mas pinaigting nitong manhunt operations at pakikipag-ugnayan sa iba't ibang law enforcement units upang mapanatili ang kapayapaan, kaayusan, at seguridad sa komunidad.

RANK 6 REGIONAL LEVEL MOST WANTED SA KASONG RAPE, ARESTADO NG GENERAL TRIAS PULIS

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Isa na namang Regional Level Most Wanted Person ang nadakip ng mga tauhan ng General Trias Component City Police Station sa isinagawang manhunt operation bandang 12:55 ng tanghali noong Agosto 5, 2026 sa Barangay 151, Pasay City, Metro Manila.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL BISMARCK S MENDOZA, Chief of Police ng General Trias Component City Police Station, ang naarestong akusado na si alyas "Jessie", 49 taong gulang, na residente ng Barangay Pasong Kawayan II, General Trias City, Cavite.

Isinagawa ang operasyon sa pangunguna ng Warrant Personnel ng General Trias Component City Police Station sa ilalim ng direktang superbisyon ng kanilang pamunuan, katuwang ang Regional Intelligence Division 4A (RID 4A).

Naaresto ang akusado sa bisa ng mga Warrant of Arrest para sa pitong (7) bilang ng kasong Qualified Rape of a Minor. Ang mga warrant ay inilabas noong Agosto 3, 2026 at nilagdaan ng Presiding Judge, Family Court, Fourth Judicial Region, Branch 5, Trece Martires City, Cavite, na walang inirekomendang piyansa.

Matapos ang pag-aresto, ipinaalam sa akusado ang dahilan ng kanyang pagkakadapik at ang kanyang mga karapatang konstitusyonal.

Sa kasalukuyan, siya ay nasa kustodiya ng General Trias Custodial Facility sa Barangay Bagumbayan, General Trias City, habang hinihintay ang pagbabalik ng warrant sa hukuman at ang paglalabas ng commitment order.

Pinuri ni PCOL ARIEL R RED, Provincial Director ng Cavite Police Provincial Office, ang matagumpay na koordinasyon ng mga operatiba na nagresulta sa pagkakaaresto ng isa pang high-priority wanted person.

"Ang matagumpay na pagkakadapik sa isang Regional Level Most Wanted Person ay nagpapakita ng dedikasyon at mahusay na koordinasyon ng ating mga kapulisan sa pagpapatupad ng batas. Patuloy nating paiigtingin ang ating manhunt operations upang matiyak na ang mga nagtatago sa batas ay mahaharap sa hustisya at mapapanagot sa kanilang mga krimen," ani PCOL RED.

Muling pinagtitiyay ng Cavite Police Provincial Office ang walang humpay nitong kampanya laban sa mga wanted person at ang patuloy na pakikipag-ugnayan sa iba't ibang law enforcement units upang mapanatili ang kapayapaan, kaayusan, at seguridad ng mamamayan.

RANK NO. 6 MOST WANTED PERSON NG SOUTHERN LEYTE, ARESTADO NG KAWIT PULIS

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Matagumpay na naaresto ng mga tauhan ng Kawit Municipal Police Station ang Rank No. 6 Most Wanted Person ng Southern Leyte Province sa isinagawang manhunt operation bandang 9:00 ng gabi noong Agosto 4, 2026 sa Barangay Toclong, Kawit, Cavite.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL KRISTINE V PARAS, Hepe ng Kawit Municipal Police Station, ang naarestong akusado na si alyas

"Mel," 56 taong gulang, na kasalukuyang residente ng Barangay Sampaloc IV, Dasmariñas City, Cavite.

Isinagawa ang operasyon kaugnay ng OPLAN BANTAY DANGAL sa pangunguna ng Warrant Tracker Team ng Kawit Municipal Police Station bilang lead unit, katuwang ang Provincial Intelligence Team (PIT), Cavite RIU4A bilang intelligence packet provider, at Libagon Municipal Police Station, Southern Leyte Police Provincial Office.

Naaresto ang akusado sa bisa ng Alias Order of Arrest na inilabas at nilagdaan ng Presiding Judge ng Regional Trial Court, Eighth Judicial Region, Branch 39, Sogod, Southern Leyte, para sa dalawang bilang ng kasong Statutory Rape sa ilalim ng Republic Act No. 11648, na may petsang Hunyo 4, 2026. Ang naturang mga kaso ay may walang inirekomendang piyansa.

Matapos ang pag-aresto, ipinaalam sa akusado ang kanyang mga

karapatan alinsunod sa batas. Sa kasalukuyan, pansamantalang nasa kustodiya ng Kawit Municipal Police Station ang akusado para sa kaukulang dokumentasyon bago ito dalhin sa Libagon Municipal Police Station, Southern Leyte para sa pagbabalik sa hukuman na nagpalabas ng alias order of arrest.

Pinuri ni PCOL ARIEL R RED, Provincial Director ng Cavite Police Provincial Office, ang mahusay na koordinasyon ng mga

yunit ng pulisya na naging daan sa matagumpay na pagkakaaresto sa wanted person.

"Ang matagumpay na pagkakaaresto sa mga wanted person ay nagpapakita ng ating walang sawang pagtugis sa mga lumalabag sa batas. Sa pamamagitan ng mahusay na koordinasyon ng iba't ibang tanggapan ng pulisya, patuloy nating pinatitibay ang ating kampanya upang matiyak na ang hustisya ay maipatutupad at walang

kriminal ang makatatakas sa batas," ani PCOL RED. Patuloy na pinalalakas ng Cavite Police Provincial Office ang kampanya nito laban sa mga wanted person sa pamamagitan ng mas pinaigting na manhunt operations at pakikipag-ugnayan sa iba't ibang law enforcement agencies upang mapanatili ang kapayapaan, kaayusan, at kaligtasan ng publiko.

DIocese of Imus Backs Push for 'Genuine' Anti-Political Dynasty Law

MANILA – The Diocese of Imus has joined the growing call for the passage of a "genuine" anti-political dynasty law, backing a nationwide people's initiative seeking to address what advocates describe as Congress' longstanding inaction on the issue.

In Circular Letter No. 28-2026 issued Wednesday, Imus Bishop Reynaldo Evangelista expressed support for the campaign led by the multisectoral Dapat Isa Lang (D1L) Movement.

"The mission is to advance a genuine anti-political dynasty law through People's Initiative (PI) as a response to Congress' long inaction to this national issue," Evangelista said.

"This aims to break the cycle of dynasties, curb corruption, and create space for capable leaders to serve the common

good," he added.

Evangelista also said the diocese has organized signature campaign activities to help gather support for the initiative.

"We encourage our faithful in all parishes, schools, religious institutes, and communities to participate and vote for the end of political dynasties in our country through our signature campaigns," he said.

The D1L Movement launched its signature campaign in May, aiming to collect at least 7 million signatures to support the people's initiative.

Under the 1987 Constitution, a people's initiative requires the support of at least 10 percent of all registered voters nationwide to propose legislation, including an anti-political dynasty law. **(PNA) BY FERDINAND PATINIO**

SILANG MUSHROOMS GAIN Prominence After PBBM NOD

SILANG, Cavite (PIA) — Receiving a seal of approval from President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. himself, Silang town is slowly gaining prominence for producing commercial-scale enoki mushrooms that provide job and investment opportunities.

During recent his visit at Tan's Farm, Mayor Ted Carranza lauded the Salad Time processing facility as the country's first commercial-scale enoki mushroom production facility. Owned by Basic Necessity, Inc., the facility showcases agricultural innovation in the municipality.

"Isa itong patunay na patuloy na kinikilala ang [bayan ng] Silang bilang sentro ng inobasyon sa agrikultura at magandang lugar para sa pamumuhunan. Sa bawat proyektong dumarating sa ating bayan, mas maraming oportunidad sa trabaho at mas lumalakas ang ating lokal na ekonomiya."

Farmer-entrepreneur Lyndon Tan, with the

help of the Department of Agriculture (DA), developed the project in a bid to reduce the country's reliance in importing enoki mushrooms.

Spanning eight (8) hectares, this modernized facility is also cited as a center for agricultural innovation in Silang.

To recall, during his 2026 State of the Nation Address, President Marcos Jr. highlighted the enoki mushroom among the list of farm products that are gaining prominence in global export.

"We have also maintained export competitiveness for our indigenous farm products, such as ube, coconut, bananas, and other tropical fruits. And we have now ventured into new and viable ones, like enoki mushrooms."

Commonly growing in colder areas, enoki mushrooms grows best in temperature ranging between 10-18 °C. (PB-PIA CALABARZON/ with reports from Gen. Ted Carranza) **BY PATRICIA BERMUDEZ**

EDITORIAL

Ang Pagputol sa Nakakalasong Tali: Ang Halaga ng Respeto sa Pagkakaibigan

Ang pagkakaroon ng maayos na samahan ay mahalagang pundasyon ng mental at emosyonal sa bawat indibidwal.

Subalit, ang pananatili sa isang samahang puno ng crab mentality at kawalan ng respeto ay nagdudulot lamang ng labis na pasanin sa sarili.

Marapat lamang na matutunan ng bawat isa na maglagay ng malinaw na hangganan at kumalas sa mga kaibigang nagiging balakid sa personal na paglago.

Sa huli, ang tunay na pakikipagkaibigan ay nasusukat sa mutual na paggalang at suporta, at hindi sa tagal ng pagsasama na nagdudulot na lamang ng pinsala.

TAGAYTAY CITY GOV'T GRATEFUL FOR AERO GYMNASTICS ASIAN TOURNEY HOSTING

MANILA – The Tagaytay City government is grateful for hosting the 10th Aero Gymnastics Asian Championships presented by the Philippine Sports Commission.

Mayor Brent Tolentino thanked PSC chairman Patrick Gregorio and Gymnastics Association of the Philippines (GAP) president Cynthia Carrion for choosing Tagaytay.

"It helps us to raise our profile as a tourist destination, especially with foreigners. This is why we have been pushing strongly for sport tourism because we have world-class facilities and amenities to go with it," the son of Philippine Olympic

Committee president Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino said in a news release Wednesday.

He cited the UCI-certified Tagaytay CT Velodrome, the current site of the meet organized by the GAP and sanctioned by the Asian Gymnastics Union, and the Tagaytay Combat Center as two of the modern sports arenas the picturesque city south of Manila has to offer.

"We want to highlight these competition arenas as available venues for both top local and international events because staging them here is a major boost to our economy and our businesses," the mayor said.

"During Tagaytay's lean months, having sports events such as these also provide opportunities for our establishments and local industries so this (Asian meet) is a godsend," he added.

PSC Chairman John Patrick Gregorio said this was the reason why selecting Tagaytay City as the site of the 10th Aero Gymnastics Asian Championships was a "no-brainer".

"For one, who does not want to go to Tagaytay because of its accessibility to Metro Manila, a tourist's haven where one can relax, renew, and enjoy the beautiful scenery," Gregorio said.

"It also gives us the opportunity for our foreign visitors to sample a different ambiance outside of the Big City while providing opportunities for those engaged in the Tagaytay tourism industry. This is a win-win situation for all," he added.

The preliminaries in individual men and women, groups, mixed pair, trio, aerobic dance and aerobic steps across the senior (18-year-old and above), junior (15 to 17 years old), and youth (12 to 14 years old) began Wednesday.

Some of the finals are set for Thursday morning and afternoon. **(PNA) BY JEAN MALANUM**

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PALACE WELCOMES SLOWER INFLATION, STAYS ALERT TO GLOBAL, WEATHER RISKS

MANILA – Malacañang on Thursday welcomed the further easing of inflation in July, saying it reflects the administration's efforts to rein in price pressures while remaining watchful of risks posed by geopolitical tensions and adverse weather.

In a statement, Palace Press Officer Claire Castro said headline inflation slowed to 6.2 percent in July from 6.4 percent in June, driven mainly by slower non-food inflation while food inflation remained stable.

"This signals that overall price pressures are gradually moderating,"

Castro said.

"We welcome these encouraging developments, but we remain vigilant. The geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and the effects of El Niño continue to pose risks to food and energy prices."

The Palace noted that inflation in the National Capital Region eased further to 4.4 percent from 4.9 percent in June, reflecting slower increases in housing-related costs.

It also cited easing transport costs as fuel price pressures moderated, with slower inflation for diesel and

gasoline helping temper transportation expenses.

Malacañang likewise pointed to improving food prices, noting that pork and chicken became cheaper due to ample supply, while vegetable inflation eased as prices of eggplant, garlic, and onions continued to decline.

It added that rice prices have also continued to stabilize, saying month-on-month rice prices kept falling despite elevated annual inflation due to base effects. **(PNA)**

BY DARRYL JOHN ESGUERRA

DSWD HITS 5-M FOOD PACK STOCKPILE MILESTONE

MANILA – The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has reached a national stockpile of 5 million family food packs (FFPs), marking a milestone in the government's disaster preparedness efforts.

DSWD Assistant Secretary Leo Quintilla said Wednesday the achievement was made under the agency's Buong Bansa Handa (BBH) program.

"Under the Buong Bansa Handa (BBH) program, we are proud to announce that the DSWD has reached the 5 million mark of national stockpile, which reinforces the Marcos administration's commitment of ensuring that no Filipino family is left behind in times of crises," Quintilla said in a statement.

He said the milestone reflects the success of the BBH program, which expanded the country's disaster logistics network through additional hubs and spokes, upgraded warehousing facilities, automated food pack production, and strengthened partnerships with the private sector, **n o n - g o v e r n m e n t**

organizations, and civil society organizations.

"The DSWD's stockpile is strategically prepositioned nationwide. The inventory is continuously replenished to ensure the quality and availability of relief supplies throughout the year, allowing immediate deployment to disaster-hit areas," Quintilla said.

He added that the DSWD also uses a barcode-based inventory system to monitor the production, storage, distribution, and expiration of family food packs.

"Each food pack is assigned a barcode that contains information on its production and expiration dates. Through our inventory management system, we can easily track where the food packs are stored and ensure that those nearing expiration are prioritized for immediate distribution," he said.

He said the agency would continue strengthening its disaster response capabilities.

"We will continue to invest in innovation, modernize our disaster response systems, and strengthen our operational

capabilities to deliver faster, more efficient, and more responsive assistance to Filipinos affected by emergencies and calamities," Quintilla said. **(PNA)** **BY ZALDY DE LAYOLA**

DEPED, DILG SIGN IRR FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT

MANILA – To ensure quality early education for children, the Department of Education (DepEd) on Wednesday finally signed the implementing guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD).

This came after the DepEd signed the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of Republic Act 12199, or the ECCD System Act, in partnership with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) at the Quezon City Reception House.

In a statement, Education Secretary Juan Edgardo "Sonny" Angara said the formal guidelines will help advance early childhood programs in coordination with local government units (LGUs) nationwide.

"Kung seryoso tayong baguhin ang kinabukasan

SSS, BIR STRENGTHEN INTERAGENCY COOPERATION THROUGH LANDMARK PARTNERSHIP



QUEZON CITY – The Social Security System (SSS) and the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) on Friday formalized a landmark partnership to strengthen compliance with tax and social security laws, enhance data sharing, and improve public service delivery.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), signed by SSS President and Chief Executive Officer Robert Joseph M. De Claro and BIR Commissioner Atty. Charlito Martin R. Mendoza at the BIR National Office in

Quezon City, establishes a framework for stronger institutional coordination in carrying out the agencies' respective mandates.

The MOU also lays the groundwork for a Memorandum of Agreement that will govern specific collaborative initiatives, including the establishment of the Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) as a common and reliable identifier across the BIR and the SSS to enhance data integrity, strengthen compliance monitoring, and improve ease of doing

business.

PCEO De Claro said the MOU marks a significant step in aligning the mandates, expertise, and resources of the SSS and the BIR.

"We all recognize that taxes provide the resources that enable our government to deliver essential programs and services to the Filipino people. Likewise, the social security contributions are the lifeblood of SSS operations, allowing us to provide meaningful protection and financial security to millions of workers, pensioners and their families," De Claro said.

"By strengthening our collaboration between our agencies, we are creating a more coordinated and responsive government, one that makes compliance easier, improves service delivery and ultimately benefits every Filipino."

BIR Commissioner Mendoza said the MOU provides a strong foundation for sustained collaboration between the two agencies, adding that its success will ultimately be measured by "simpler processes, stronger coordination, better informed decisions and more effective public service."

"Our mandates may be different, but our work is closely connected. Government works best when institutions trust one another enough to share responsibility, information and expertise," Mendoza said. #

(This is where true nation-building begins)," Angara said.

The DepEd said the way to boost foundational learning is to start before a child enters formal schooling.

Complementary to this, expanded access to more established Child Development Centers (CDCs) in low-income LGUs was also highlighted.

To date, PHP741 million out of the PHP1 billion allocated for CDC establishments has been released to 247 beneficiary barangays, under the Local Government Support Fund – Financial Assistance to Local Government Units.

As of July, 14 CDCs are fully completed, while 113 are under construction and 106 are undergoing procurement. **(PNA)** **BY STEPHANIE SEVILLANO**

ng Pilipinas, kailangan nating magsimula sa ating mga pinakabatang kababayan (If we are truly serious about changing the future of the Philippines, we need to begin with our youngest fellow Filipinos)," he said.

This move adheres to the recommendations made during the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM 2).

Under the ECCD System Act, expanded access to healthcare, nutrition, and quality early learning will benefit children from birth to age 8.

With this in place, early literacy and numeracy alongside holistic development for children will be advanced from their early years.

"Dito nagsisimula ang tunay na nation-building



NAGBAGO ANG LAHAT DAHIL SA APAT NA PISO

Kilala bilang "Food Basket of Mindanao", ang Bukidnon ay nagsusuplay ng saging, pinya, tubo, at iba pang ani sa mga pamilihan sa buong bansa. Gayunman, para sa maraming magsasaka, nananatiling hamon ang pagkakaroon ng sapat na kabuhayan. Isa sa kanila si Ronald J. Okit, isang ama ng tatlong anak at agripreneur mula sa Valencia City, Bukidnon. Matapos ang ilang buwang pag-aalaga sa kanyang taniman ng saging, dinala ni Ronald ang kanyang ani sa pamilihan, umaasang makakakuha ng makatarungang kita. Ngunit ang presyong inalok sa kanya ay nagdulot ng matinding pagkadismaya.

"Nang bilhin ang aking mga produkto sa presyong hindi man lamang matumbasan ang ilang buwang paghihirap at pagtatrabaho, nagpasya akong huminto. Napakababa at hindi k a t a n g g a p - t a n g g a p ang kanilang presyo," paggunita niya.

Sa halip na patuloy na magbenta ng saging, naghanap si Ronald ng mas magandang paraan upang kumita mula sa kanyang ani. Nagsimula siyang gumawa ng banana chips, isang ideyang kalaunan ay kinilala bilang Manong Toto Chips, isang maliit na negosyong pampamilya na gumagawa ng iba't ibang flavored pasalubong chips mula sa mga lokal na pananim.

Mula sa opisina, pabalik sa bukid

Lumaki si Ronald sa pamilyang kung saan

ang pagsasaka ay bahagi na ng pang-araw-araw na buhay. Nagtatrabaho ang kanyang ina sa mga plantasyon ng saging, habang ang kanyang ama ay naglaan ng maraming taon sa pagtatrabaho sa mga tubuhan.

Pagkatapos ng hayskul, pumasok siya sa seminaryo. Sa pamamagitan ng iskolarship mula sa isang parokya, nakapag-aral siya ng kursong Sociology sa Ateneo de Cagayan.

Pagkatapos ng kolehiyo, nagtrabaho siya bilang researcher bago lumipat sa sektor ng bangko. Sa panahong ito niya nakilala ang kanyang asawa, na noon ay tinatapos ang kanyang on-the-job training.

Noong 2012, bumalik siya sa Bukidnon at nagsimulang magtanim ng kape at saging habang binubuo ang sarili niyang pamilya. Sa loob ng maraming taon, nagsaka siya ngunit nanatiling hindi tiyak ang kita dahil nakadepende ito sa galaw ng presyo sa merkado.

Ang mababang presyo ng saging ang tuluyang nagtulak sa kanya na subukan ang iba pang pagkakakitaan. Noong 2017, nagsimula siyang gumawa ng banana chips sa kanilang tahanan, na naging simula ng Manong Toto Chips.

Natutunan niya ang proseso sa pamamagitan ng paulit-ulit na pagsubok at pagkakamali, kasama ang aktibong pagtulong ng kanyang pamilya.

Negosyong nagsimula sa tahanan

Sa kasalukuyan, ang Manong Toto Chips ay DTI-registered at pinapatakbo ng buong pamilya.

Ang produksyon ay

isinagasawa sa kanilang bahay, kung saan may kanya-kayang tungkulin ang bawat miyembro ng pamilya. May nakaatas sa pagprito, habang ang iba naman ay tumutulong sa pagtitimbang, pag-iimpake, at pagseselyo ng mga produkto.

Mula sa banana chips, nagdagdag sila ng kamote at gabi o taro, na may mga flavor gaya ng sour cream, keso, plain, at sweetened. Ibinibenta ang mga ito sa halagang PHP 90 kada 200 gramo. Dinadala nila ang mga produkto sa mga lokal na pamilihan at piling pasalubong centers, kabilang ang product outlet ng Philippine Carabao Center sa Central Mindanao University (PCC at CMU) sa Maramag, Bukidnon.

Sa mga buwan ng mataas na benta, umaabot sa humigit-kumulang PHP 60,000 ang kanilang netong kita. Nakakatulong ito sa gastusin sa bahay, pangangailangan ng negosyo, at sa patuloy na pagpapatayo ng kanilang tahanan.

Pagharap sa mga hamon. Tulad ng maraming maliliit na negosyante, maraming pagsubok ding hinarap si Ronald.

Noong kasagsagan ng pandemya ng COVID-19, naapektuhan ng mga restriksiyon ang kanilang operasyon at ang paghahatid ng mga produkto. May mga produktong hindi naibebenta at kalaunan ay nag-e-expire, na nagdulot ng pagkalugi.

Upang maipagpatuloy ang negosyo, ipinagbili niya ang SUV ng kanilang pamilya, na ginagamit din niya sa paghahatid ng mga produkto.

Isa ring hamon ang kakulangan sa suplay. Kapag mababa ang lokal na ani, bumibili siya ng mga raw ingredient mula sa mga negosyante sa labas ng Bukidnon sa mas mataas na halaga.

Minsan ding nabagsakan ng malaking puno ang bubong ng kanilang outdoor production area. Ipinaayos niya ito at ipinagpatuloy ang operasyon.

Sa kabila ng lahat ng pagsubok, hindi sumuko si Ronald at ang kanyang pamilya. Sa halip, sama-sama nilang hinarap ang mga ito nang may tiyaga at determinasyon upang maabot ang isang matagumpay na buhay.

Suportang nagpalago sa negosyo

Habang lumalaki ang negosyo at nangangailangan ng dagdag na puhunan, ipinakilala siya ng kanyang pinsan sa CARD, Inc. (A Microfinance NGO).

Nakapag-avail siya ng paunang pautang na PHP 30,000 upang masuportahan ang kanyang negosyo. Matapos itong mabayaran nang maayos, tumaas ito sa PHP 100,000, na nakatulong sa iba't ibang pangangailangan ng negosyo, kabilang ang pagkukumpuni ng nasirang pasilidad.

Sa tagumpay ng negosyo, patuloy na pinamamahalaan ni Ronald ang Manong Toto Chips habang ginagampanan ang mga pang-araw-araw na responsibilidad sa produksyon at sa pamilya. Umaasa siyang makabibili ng panibagong sasakyang pang-deliver upang mapabuti ang distribusyon at mabawasan ang gastos sa transportasyon.

"Para sa amin, laging may hamon ang pagnenegosyo," aniya. "Ang mahalaga ay hindi ka tumitigil. May mga pagtaas at pagbaba, pero natututo kang harapin ang mga ito."

Nagsimula siya sa mga saging na minsang naibenta sa halagang 4 na piso kada kilo. Ngayon, pinatatakbo niya ang isang maliit na negosyo na nakabatay pa rin sa parehong pananim, ngunit ngayon ay napoproseso na bilang chips na ibinebenta sa mga lokal na pamilihan at pasalubong centers.

Ang kuwento ni Ronald ay paalala na ang tunay na halaga ng ani ay hindi lamang nasusukat sa presyo nito sa merkado, kundi pati na rin sa katatagan at pagpupursigi ng mga taong nasa likod nito.

COMELEC CITES MISINFORMATION AS BIGGEST CHALLENGE AHEAD OF BARMM POLLS

MANILA – Misinformation and disinformation remain the biggest challenges facing the Commission on Elections (Comelec) ahead of the Sept. 14 Bangsamoro Parliamentary Elections (BPE), according to its chairperson George Garcia.

In an interview in Davao City, Garcia said false information, including claims that the BPE will not push through, continues to circulate as the elections draw near.

"The biggest challenge in holding the Bangsamoro Parliamentary Elections is misinformation and disinformation," he said during the 2nd Bangsamoro Parliament Speakers Bureau on Tuesday.

Garcia said the Comelec expects more false information to emerge as election day in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) approaches.

"There is still misinformation circulating right now regarding whether or not the election will push through... and, as the election approaches, these are bound to increase," he said, reiterating that the elections will proceed as scheduled.

"There is no restraining order from the Supreme Court. Therefore, our BARMM Parliamentary Elections will definitely

push through on Sept. 14, 2026," the Comelec chief said.

Garcia urged the public to help combat fake news by reporting misleading or false information related to the BPE through the Comelec's Incident Report Portal at <https://tinyurl.com/i-report-COMELEC>.

Meanwhile, the Comelec en banc has cancelled the accreditation of the Moro Ako Party as a Regional Parliamentary Political Party (RPPP) for the 2026 BPE.

In a 17-page resolution, the commission granted the petition filed by Aladin Abdul on May 5 seeking the cancellation of the party's registration.

"Wherefore, premises considered, the Petition to Cancel the Registration as Regional Parliamentary Political Party of Moro Ako Party is hereby granted," the resolution stated.

"Accordingly, the Registration and Accreditation of Moro Ako Party as a Regional Parliamentary Political Party for purposes of the 2026 Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao Parliamentary Elections is cancelled," it added.

The Comelec said the cancellation stemmed from untruthful statements made by the Moro Ako Party in its application for accreditation.

"In sum, We find that Respondent failed to meet the requirement imposed under Sections 30 and 39 of Comelec Resolution No. 11203 and untruthfully made a statement confirming that it has established chapters in all the provinces and cities, and municipal chapters in the majority of the municipalities comprising the provinces within the BARMM," the resolution said. **(PNA) BY FERDINAND PATINIO**



Si Ronald J. Okit, 42 taong gulang mula sa Guinuyuran, Valencia City, Bukidnon, ay nakatayo sa tabi ng mga estanteng naglalaman ng Manong Toto Chips, ang kanyang produkto na gawa mula sa mga lokal na pananim.

MARCOS KEEPS REFORMS, REGIONAL GROWTH ON TRACK

MANILA — President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. spent the week reinforcing his administration's reform and development agenda, strengthening the country's diplomatic engagements, and bringing services closer to communities to sustain economic growth and improve the Filipinos' lives.

From high-level meetings at Malacañan Palace in Manila to inspections of public facilities in Ilocos Norte, Marcos' activities reflected his administration's commitment to advancing national development while ensuring that government programs translate into concrete benefits for the public.

The President started the week with a meeting with Japanese House of Representatives member and Japan Innovation Party Co-representative Fujita Fumitake at Malacañan.

The meeting reaffirmed the enduring partnership between the Philippines and Japan, one of the country's closest strategic allies and largest sources of official development assistance, trade, and investment.

After the courtesy call, Marcos held a private meeting before presiding over discussions on the country's preparations for upcoming Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) engagements.

The pre-ASEAN preparations highlighted the administration's resolve to ensure that the Philippines remains ready to advance regional cooperation on trade, investment, security, connectivity, digital transformation, and other shared priorities.

Expanding diplomatic reach

On Tuesday, Marcos welcomed four non-resident ambassadors who formally presented their credentials in separate ceremonies held at Malacañan.

The new envoys represented the Kingdom of Lesotho, the Dominican Republic, the Republic of The Gambia, and the

Gabonese Republic.

The presentation of credentials formally marked the start of their diplomatic missions to the Philippines and reflected Manila's continuing efforts to broaden its partnerships beyond traditional allies.

Strengthening diplomatic ties remains a key pillar of the Marcos administration's foreign policy, which seeks to promote trade, attract investments, expand tourism, and foster broader international cooperation.

Gov't-private sector collaboration

On Wednesday, Marcos convened members of the Education and Jobs Sector Group and the Digital Infrastructure Sector Group of the Private Sector Advisory Council (PSAC), reaffirming the crucial role of the business community in shaping policies that support economic growth and job creation.

During the meeting, PSAC recommended the creation of a National Artificial Intelligence (AI) Implementation Task Force to help the Philippines move faster in preparing workers, businesses, and the government for the threats and opportunities brought about by AI.

Established to provide strategic recommendations to the President, PSAC has become instrumental in providing an important platform for government-business collaboration, contributing policy proposals in agriculture, infrastructure, digitalization, education, healthcare, and employment.

Marcos has consistently emphasized that sustainable economic development requires strong partnerships between government and the private sector.

The administration has adopted several recommendations from PSAC, translating them into policy actions aimed at improving the country's competitiveness and investment climate.

Legislative priorities move forward

On Thursday, Marcos

chaired the fourth Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council (LEDAC) meeting at Malacañan to discuss about 24 priority legislative measures for the 20th Congress.

Among the priority measures were the Anti-Political Dynasty Law, Party-List System Reform Act, People's Freedom of Information/Right to Information Act, amendments to the Bank Deposits Secrecy Law, the Philippine Budgeting Code, and the proposed tax reforms.

The meeting brought together leaders from the executive and legislative branches to review and align priority measures needed to sustain economic expansion, improve governance, and strengthen public service.

The LEDAC continues to serve as a key mechanism for synchronizing legislative priorities and ensuring that key reform measures move forward in support of the administration's development goals.

Improved public service

The week's activities culminated on Friday with the President's visit to Ilocos Norte, where he shifted from policy discussions to field inspections and direct engagement with communities.

Marcos first conducted a private inspection of projects before attending the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) Ilocos Norte Mass Graduation in Laoag City.

Addressing the graduates, the President announced the allocation of nearly PHP19 billion for TESDA scholarship programs this year, the largest budget in the agency's history, to provide more Filipinos with access to skills training and better employment opportunities.

He reaffirmed support for expanding skills training programs as part of the administration's broader human capital development agenda.

Marcos also visited the Gov. Roque B. Ablan Sr. Memorial Hospital

(GRBASMH) in Laoag City to check on the implementation of government programs, particularly the Zero Balance Billing.

He also inspected healthcare facilities and assessed ongoing initiatives aimed at improving access to quality medical services.

The visit underscored the government's continuing investments in strengthening the country's public healthcare system through upgraded infrastructure, modern equipment, and enhanced service delivery.

Later in the day, Marcos inspected the fire-damaged Batac Public Market, where he met with local officials and stakeholders to assess the extent of the damage and discuss recovery efforts.

Keeping reforms on track

Marcos' engagements throughout the week reflected a governance approach that combines policymaking with on-the-ground implementation.

While diplomatic meetings sought to strengthen the Philippines' international partnerships, consultations with business leaders and lawmakers aimed to sustain the country's reform agenda and economic momentum.

Visits to educational institutions, healthcare facilities, and disaster-affected areas also reinforced the administration's focus on ensuring that national policies bring better services and opportunities for ordinary Filipinos.

(PNA) BY RUTH ABBEY GITA-CARLOS

TRB APPROVES TOLL COLLECTION FOR CALAX SUBSECTION 3

NEW CALAX TOLL FEES Effective August 9, 2026		
	Greenfield to Governor's Drive	Silang (Aguinaldo) to Governor's Drive
CLASS 1	P117.00	P35.00
CLASS 2	P234.00	P70.00
CLASS 3	P351.00	P106.00

After providing toll-free access for three (3) months, the Toll Regulatory Board (TRB) has approved the start of toll collection for the Cavite-Laguna Expressway (CALAX) Subsection 3, covering Silang (Aguinaldo) to Governor's Drive in General Trias, effective August 9, 2026.

Since its opening on May 4, 2026, the new segment has provided free passage to almost 9,000 motorists daily, offering a more convenient and efficient travel option for residents, workers, students, and businesses in Cavite.

The 7.88-kilometer CALAX Subsection 3 was built to provide a faster alternative route for commuters and businesses, bypassing heavily congested local roads along Cavite's growing industrial and residential corridors.

Starting August 9, motorists using the CALAX Subsection 3 from Silang (Aguinaldo) Interchange to Governor's Drive will be charged the following rates: P35 for Class 1, P70 for Class 2, and P106 for Class 3 vehicles.

Meanwhile, the following toll rates will apply for motorists traveling from Governor's Drive in General Trias, Cavite, and going straight to Greenfield in Laguna: P117 for Class 1, P234 for Class 2, and P351 for Class 3 vehicles.

The opening of CALAX Subsection 3 brings the operational length of CALAX to 26 kilometers, starting from the Greenfield-Mamplasan Entry in Biñan, Laguna. Once fully completed, the entire expressway network is projected to serve up to 65,000 vehicles per day, strengthening regional connectivity and supporting the movement of people, goods, and services across Cavite, Laguna, and Southern Metro Manila.

CALAX is a vital infrastructure project designed to reduce travel time, ease traffic congestion on major local roads, and support economic growth in one of the country's fastest-growing regions. ###

PGC'S MEDICAL AND DENTAL MISSION SERVES 477 RESIDENTS IN SILANG

The Provincial Government of Cavite conducted a Medical and Dental Mission on July 30, 2026, in Brgy. Malaking Tatyao, Silang, providing free medical consultations, dental services, fasting blood sugar (FBS) tests, ECG tests and medicines.

Health professionals from General Emilio Aguinaldo Memorial Hospital and the OPG Medical Mission Team led the activity, serving a total of 477 patients. Barangay Health Workers (BHWs) provided valuable assistance in ensuring the smooth

delivery of services.

Also present during the mission was 5th District Board Member Ivey Jayne Reyes. The mission reflects the Provincial Government's continued commitment to bringing accessible healthcare services closer to Caviteños.— OPIO

PH LOGS NEARLY 4-DECADE RECORD-HIGH PALAY HARVEST IN Q2 – DA

MANILA – The Department of Agriculture (DA) on Wednesday highlighted a record-high palay (unhusked rice) harvest for the second quarter, marking the highest volume in nearly four decades.

The Philippines logged a record 4.63 million metric tons (MT) of palay output from April to June, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). This is equivalent to a 5.7 percent year-on-year hike, which is considered the highest second-quarter harvest since 1987.

In a statement, DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said government intervention has helped advance stable supply and support to farmers.

This is in line with the directives of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. to ensure food security and profitability of Filipino food producers.

"The agency is applying lessons from the 2024 El Niño, shifting its strategy from crisis response to early preparation to safeguard both food supplies and farmer incomes," Tiu Laurel said.

In particular, an unprecedented 1.04 million hectares of harvested area contributed to the record-high second-quarter harvest.

This area helped lift overall production despite the slight drop in the average yield, equivalent to a 0.7 percent drop to 4.47 MT per hectare from 4.50 MT per hectare.

The high harvested area, which expanded by 6.5 percent, demonstrated the country's favorable growing conditions and improved market profitability, which have intensified farmers' cropping intention, as well as the sustained government support.

Tiu Laurel attributed the improved market conditions to the four-month rice import ban from September to December last year, prompting better earning opportunities for palay farmers.

The second-quarter harvest also offset the

weaker first quarter, resulting in a 9 million MT overall first-semester palay output.

Bracing for a strong El Niño

The agency assured preparations for the impact of the looming strong El Niño phenomenon, both for Filipino farmers and consumers.

This comes as the PSA projected a 13.3 percent drop in third-quarter palay output, based on the standing crops as of July 1.

According to the PSA, palay output may fall to 3.25 million MT by the third quarter, lower than 3.75 million MT in the same period last year.

"Food security means being proactive. We must keep farmers planting despite higher costs and the threat of El Niño," Tiu Laurel said.

For farmers, the agency vowed to strengthen domestic support through an expanded palay procurement under the National Food Authority (NFA).

About 500,000 metric tons of palay will be procured at a higher price, pegged at PHP21 per kg. for wet palay, and PHP25 to PHP27 per kg. for clean and dry palay.

On Tuesday, Tiu Laurel said the grains agency has about PHP20 billion in allocation for palay procurement, more than twice as high as last year's PHP9 billion funding.

Besides stronger NFA buying, the DA will sustain the provision of financial assistance, crop insurance, irrigation support, quality seeds, mechanization services, and intensified investments in drying, storage, and other post-harvest facilities.

Close monitoring, field validation, and remote sensing will also be in place to prepare for the impact of the strong El Niño.

Moreover, members of the vulnerable sector may also benefit from the sustained PHP20 per kg. rice under the Benteng Bigas Meron (BBM) Na in Kadiwa ng Pangulo (KNP)

PSEI SLIDES DESPITE SLOWING INFLATION; PESO STRENGTHENS VS US DOLLAR

MANILA – The Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi) ended Wednesday lower due to profit-taking despite a cooling domestic inflation rate last July, while the peso strengthened against the United States dollar.

The local bourse's main index dipped 0.16 percent to 6,286.31 points, while the broader All Shares index fell 0.07 percent to 3,412.82 points.

Most of the sectoral gauges also finished in the negative territory, led by Financials after it fell 0.33 percent.

It was trailed by Industrial, 0.31 percent; Property, 0.17 percent; Services, 0.09 percent; and Holding Firms, 0.06 percent.

Only the Mining and Oil counter gained during the day, rising 4.63 percent.

Volume rose to 1.35 billion shares amounting to PHP6.83 billion.

Advancers led decliners at 102 to 84, while 49 shares were unchanged.

In a market report, Regina Capital Development Corporation sales head Luis Limlingan said the PSEi dipped "despite a better-than-expected inflation print, as late-session profit-taking erased earlier gains and dragged the index into negative territory."

The Philippine Statistics Authority reported during the day that inflation eased to 6.2 percent in July from 6.4 percent the previous

sites and accredited outlets nationwide.

To ensure a stable supply of affordable retail rice nationwide, the DA also assured that no rice import ban will be imposed amid the wet harvest season.

Tiu Laurel earlier said rice stocks in local markets must remain adequate until April next year, or ahead of the dry-season harvest in 2027.

As of Aug. 2, rice import arrivals were logged at 3.5 million MT, according to the DA. **(PNA) BY STEPHANIE SEVILLANO**

month. This deceleration was driven by slower annual increases in the transport index, following a decline in fuel prices given the developments in the Middle East.

Average inflation for the first seven months of the year stood at 5 percent, exceeding the government's 2 percent to 4 percent target band but sitting below the 6.4 percent average projected by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

Meanwhile, the local currency appreciated against the United States dollar, finishing the day's trade at 60.75 from Tuesday's close of 61.16.

It opened the session at 60.99, slightly weaker than its previous opening of 60.95.

The peso traded between 60.64 and 61.05, bringing the average for the day to 60.85.

Volume reached USD2.17 billion, up from the previous session's USD1.65 billion. **(PNA) BY JOANN VILLANUEVA**

CHEMICAL, FOOD MAKER EYES HIGHER EXPORT GROWTH

MANILA – Publicly-listed food and plastic input manufacturer D&L Industries is firm on increasing its exports sales to drive further growth, following an 8-percent year-on-year rise in net income in the first half of 2026.

In an online briefing Wednesday, D&L Industries President and Chief Executive Officer Alvin Lao reported a first-half net income of PHP1.5 billion, with second-quarter earnings rising 10 percent to PHP786 million.

He said high-margin specialty products (HMSP)—such as customized food ingredients, specialty plastics, oleochemicals, and aerosols—accounted for 51 percent of total sales as of end-June, up from 46 percent last year.

Lao traced this jump to recovering margins in HMSP food ingredients. Gross margins rose 3.5 percentage points year-on-year, driven by normalized global coconut oil prices and portfolio optimization.

He said HMSP revenue

contribution peaked at 69 percent in 2019, dropped during the pandemic, and fell to 49 percent last year.

However, revenue contribution rebounded in the first half of the year, and Lao expressed optimism for sustained growth in the coming months.

To boost HMSP performance, Lao said the company is focusing on increasing export sales.

"We are continuing to reach out to our export clients, attend exhibitions, (and) conferences, to invest and try to keep growing our exports. We don't think it will go much lower. We are hopeful that exports will go back up again," Lao said.

"Our long-term goal really is to hit that 50 percent target of our revenues coming from exports," he said, adding "exports have much higher cross-profit margins at 18.5 percent versus domestic revenue, which is 12.5 percent." **(PNA) BY JOANN VILLANUEVA**

DOE AWARDS AIRBORNE GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY TO UK-BASED FIRM

MANILA – The Department of Energy (DOE) has awarded the one-year airborne geophysical survey for unexplored sedimentary basins in Mindanao to United Kingdom-headquartered geophysical firm Metatek.

DOE, in a news release Tuesday, said it formally awarded the year 1-Phase 1 of the Philippine Gradiometry and Seismic Survey Project (PGSSP) to Metatek during the day.

It explained that the four-year program will now officially start to "generate modern subsurface data to strengthen energy security, reduce exploration risks, and unlock the country's indigenous energy potential."

"By improving the

country's understanding of its subsurface geology, the project will support evidence-based exploration for oil, natural gas, native hydrogen, and geothermal resources while creating a stronger scientific foundation for long-term energy planning and investment," it said.

Under the contract, the geophysical firm will survey the "airborne gradiometry data over approximately 40,000 square kilometers of the Agusan-Davao Basin and Davao Gulf."

"This represents the first stage of the project's two-year airborne survey program, which will ultimately cover about 120,000 square kilometers before progressing to the acquisition, processing,

and interpretation of 2D seismic data during Phase 2.

"Energy security begins with knowing what we have. Through this project, we are replacing guesswork with scientific data so we can responsibly develop our own energy resources and strengthen the country's long-term energy future," Energy Secretary Sharon Garin said.

Garin said the program will help the country towards the bid to reduce dependence on imported fuel and ensure additional options for more secure, reliable and affordable domestic energy. **(JOANN SANTIAGO-VILLANUEVA/PNA)**



ALAS PILIPINAS ARRIVES IN CHILE FOR U17 WORLD GIRLS VOLLEYBALL

MANILA – After a grueling 32-hour trip, Alas Pilipinas has arrived in Santiago, Chile for the FIVB Volleyball Girls' U17 World Championship.

Philippine Ambassador to Chile Celeste Vinzon-Balatbat treated the squad to a hearty lunch and offered words of encouragement on Tuesday ahead of the tournament set Aug. 6-16.

Caera Celis, Jhaynna Love Bulandres, Irish May Mahinay and the rest of the Philippine team soaked in the warmth of the gesture as Balatbat, recalling her own student-athlete daughter, voiced confidence that these brave young ladies will grow into strong women.

"It's wonderful how sports is part of your life as young women. Sports help develop your character. It instills discipline in you. It instills grit in you. It helps you deal with setbacks in life because you know life is not all about wins. You also have to learn to have the grace to face defeat," Vinzon-Balatbat said in a news release Wednesday.

The squad includes Megan Yesha Hernandez, Xyz Ellen Rayco, Sharina Rhyza Lleses, Princess Khaira Manzano, Frances Dianne Ramos, Resty Jane Olaguir, Jello Andrea Mauricio, Nadeth Faye Herbon, Cristina Madela Gale, Jhenica Sadia and Taj Arkhea Teves.

"These experiences are absolutely valuable in forming who you will be in the future," said Vinzon-Balatbat, who vowed to cheer on the team.

"We will be there to cheer you on. I know your opponent is strong, but so was David's."

After the marathon journey from Manila, the team gets to rest and recover, then get a feel of the venue on Wednesday before the competition proper.

The Philippines will meet world No. 1 and defending champion China in the opener on Thursday at Liceo Mixto San Felipe, before facing Mexico, Peru, Tunisia and Venezuela in Pool B.

Three venues will host the 24-team tournament, with

Pool A and Pool C set in Santiago and Pool D in Los Andes.

Host Chile banners Pool A featuring Czechia, Egypt, Thailand, Turkiye and USA.

World No. 2 Japan heads Pool C, which has Argentina, Brazil, Croatia, Spain and Poland, as third-ranked Italy was drawn to play Pool D with Korea, Algeria, Dominican Republic, Puerto. **(PNA)**

BY JEAN MALANUM

MANILA – Terrafirma ended NLEX's six-game win streak, scoring an upset 114-109 win Friday in the PBA Governors' Cup at Ninoy Aquino Stadium in Manila.

Maverick Ahanmisi, Geo Chiu and Brent Paraiso conspired in a 9-0 run over the last two minutes that bailed the Dyip out of a 105-109 hole and into their third win in seven games to tie Converge for fourth in Group A.

"Siguro (Probably) this game swerte kami kasi (we were lucky because) we really, really want it," Terrafirma coach Ronald Tubid said.

Terrafirma's previous losses were decided by five points at most, including a 101-100 thriller by NLEX the first time they met July 12.

"Last few games medyo bitin 'yung energy saka endgame, du'n bumibigay (we lacked energy and we fold up in the endgame). So, this game pre-game pa lang sinabihan na namin na makaka-matchup kami sa (by pre-game I already told told them we should match up with) NLEX

EALA ADVANCES TO NATIONAL BANK OPEN THIRD ROUND

MANILA – Alexandra Eala defeated American Alycia Parks, 6-1, 4-6, 6-2, Thursday to kick off her campaign at the WTA 1000 National Bank Open in Toronto, Canada.

She is now 1-1 against Parks, who beat her 0-6, 6-3, 6-2, in the first round of this year's Australian Open.

The 21-year-old Filipino will next face American Caty McNally, who shocked No. 6 seed Czech Linda Noskova, 7-6 (5), 6-1.

Eala is coming off a title victory at Mubadala DC Open, improving to a career-best No. 20 in the WTA singles rankings.

Meanwhile, top seed Aryna Sabalenka downed Japanese Uchijima, 6-3, 6-3, to advance against China's Zhang Shuai who was leading 6-0, 4-0, when No. 26 Jelena Ostapenko retired.

Other winners were No. 2

Elena Rybakina over Daria Kasatkina, 6-3, 5-7, 6-4; No. 3 Jessica Pegula over Magdalena Frech, 3-6, 6-3, 6-2; No. 4 Coco Gauff over qualifier Kayla Day, 6-2, 7-5; and No. 5 Mirra Andreeva over Karolina Pliskova, 6-0, 6-2.

No. 11 Japanese Naomi Osaka, No. 12 Belinda Bencic, No. 13 Iva Jovic, No. 28 Ann Li, No. 29 Maria Sakkari, No. 30

Leylah Fernandez also made it to the third round.

In other matches, Taylor Townsend eliminated No. 21 Marie Bouzkova, 7-6 (4), 7-5; Liudmila Samsonova ousted No. 22 Barbora Krejckova, 6-1, 7-5; and Alina Korneeva stunned No. 23 Emma Navarro, 6-2, 6-2. **(PNA)**

BY JEAN MALANUM



Alexandra Eala (National Bank Open photo)

TERRAFIRMA HALTS NLEX SIX-GAME STREAK

although they are 6 and 0," Tubid added.

"Pero matchup-wise, makaka-matchup kami (But we can match up) so all we need to do is compete every possession."

It was a heartbreaker of a loss for NLEX as it led by 69-62 in the third period and even carried a 109-105 lead off a JB Bahio baseline jumper, with 3:11 to go. Then NLEX's usually smooth offense turned rough, which Ahanmisi pounced on.

The veteran guard first found Chiu for a lefty layup and, following his steal off Schonny Winston, again fed Chiu for the equalizing basket.

Paraiso took it from there, scoring on a layup and then turning his offensive board into a pair of charities that made it a 113-109 game before Ahanmisi closed the deal with a charity split, only 2.9 ticks left.

Justin Strings led all scorers with 28 points on top of 11 rebounds, with Juami Tiongson adding 20 and Paraiso 18 points.

Ahanmisi had his own double-double of 16 points and 10 assists, while

Chiu wound up with only eight points but snared 12 boards.

Robert Bolick and Bahio paced NLEX with 20 points each, with the latter adding a career-high 16 rebounds. DeQuan Jones threw in 19 points but only four in the entire second half. Winston netted 16 points, and LJay Gonzales came off the bench for 15 points.

Meanwhile, the second game between Magnolia and Meralco was delayed for about an hour after continuous rain caused a leak on the roof of the stadium.

The Hotshots were

leading, 71-70, after the third quarter when the game was stopped.

The scores:
First Game

TERRAFIRMA 114 – Strings 28, Tiongson 20, Paraiso 18, Ahanmisi 16, Bravo 16, Chiu 8, Eriobu 8, Hanapi 0, Mariano 0, Catapusan 0.

NLEX 109 – Bolick 20, Bahio 20, Jones 19, Winston 16, Gonzales 15, Gamboa 8, Alas 4, Nelle 3, Valdez 2, Capulong 2, Rodger 0.

Quarters: 34-30; 60-65; 88-86; 114-109 (With a report from **IVAN SALDAJENO, PBA MEDIA/PNA**)



(PBA Images)



ALAS IN CHILE. Ambassador Celeste Vinzon-Balatbat welcomes the Alas Pilipinas squad at the Philippine Embassy in Santiago, Chile on Tuesday (Aug. 4, 2026). The team will compete in the FIVB Volleyball Girls' U17 World Championship set Aug. 6-16. (Contributed photo)