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DICT'S NECSP TO DELIVER STRONGER EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS MECHANISMS BY 2028

TAGAYTAY CITY, Cavite (PIA) — Recognizing the critical need for seamless and continuous communication during disasters, the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) launched the National Emergency Communications Strategic Plan (NECSP) to mark the country's shift to an integrated communication architecture in all phases

of risk reduction and management.

Launched on August 10, NECSP serves as a national roadmap for identifying and strengthening mechanisms to ensure uninterrupted telecommunications services and enable rapid delivery of vital information during disasters and emergencies.

Sarah Maria Sison, DICT Undersecretary for Policy and Legal, highlighted the uncertainty

that communities face when key infrastructure such as roads and telecommunication lines fail during disasters.

"Sa panahon ng sakuna, ang unang nawawala kadalasan ay ang katiyakan—nawawalan ng kuryente, napuputol ang signal, hindi madaanan ang mga kalsada, hindi agad nalalaman kung sino ang ligtas, sino ang nangangailangan ng tulong, at saan dapat

rumesponde," she said.

Sison added that disruption in communication

gateways also affect government response and further exposes communities to danger.

"The quality of communication affects the quality of action, a delayed warning exposes a community to danger. [A delay] in instruction creates confusion, a disconnected command center slows down rescue. This is not a technical footnote to disaster response, it is disaster response," she noted.

Pablo Lorenzo, Undersecretary for Civil, Veteran, and Reserve Affairs of the Department of National Defense (DND), welcomed the NECSP, emphasizing its role in the country's shift toward an integrated national communication architecture.

"The successful formation of the NECSP 2028 is very much welcome in establishing a unified and technology-driven framework for emergency communications across [the Philippines]. At its core, it is a decisive shift towards an integrated national communication architecture that combines advanced technologies into

partner, the private sector has also expressed its support to the NECSP. Veronica Gabaldon, Executive Director of the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation, underscored the importance of technology in ensuring a seamless emergency response.

"Innovation does not require every institution to replace its systems or uses. Their practical role is interoperability. Technology should bridge national and local government, public and private networks and establish systems and new opportunities," Gabaldon said.

Currently in its early phases, the DICT is establishing systems and standards needed for the implementation of the NECSP through governance, standards and capacity-building initiatives. Within the next two years, the national framework will focus on strengthening systems, infrastructure and interoperability, leading to a resilient nationwide emergency telecommunications system by 2030. (PB-PIA CALABARZON) **BY PATRICIA BERMUDEZ**

ALFONSO LGU ASSURES INCLUSIVE RICE AID FOLLOWING STATE OF CALAMITY DECLARATION



ALFONSO, Cavite (PIA) — Reeling from the effects of tropical cyclones Luis, Maymay and the southwest monsoon (Habagat), the Municipal Government of Alfonso is providing residents with a much-needed rice assistance.

Last August 11, Mayor Randy Salamat announced the local government's plan to provide all households with rice assistance for their residents.

To recall, the entire province of Cavite was placed under a State of Calamity due to the widespread impacts of the succession of weather disturbances.

Salamat assured that all residents, regardless of their financial status, will receive aid from the local government.

"Ngayon pong nasa ilalim tayo ng State of Calamity, maglalaan po ang Pamahalaang Bayan ng Alfonso ng bigas para sa lahat. Wala po 'sana all' dahil para sa lahat po ito ng households, ano man po ang estado ng buhay at trabaho."

Although the municipal government will ensure that every household will receive rice relief, Salamat reminded the public that they will only set aside a portion of their fund, adding preparations for any emergency that may arise in the coming months.

"Hindi po natin lalahatin ang pondong nakalaan sa buong taon para sa kalamidad na dala ng Bagyong Luis, Maymay, at ng Habagat. Hindi po natin masasabi kung kailan lilitaw ang insidente kaya't mahalaga po na manatiling may nakalaan pa rin in case of other emergencies."

The Sangguniang Panlalawigan has earlier approved a declaration placing the Province of Cavite under a state of calamity following the onslaught of Habagat and tropical cyclones Luis and Maymay. (PB-PIA CALABARZON, with reports from Mayor Randy Salamat) **BY PATRICIA BERMUDEZ**



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MAHIGIT P356K NA HALAGA NG PINAGHIHINALANG SHABU, NASAMSAM; DALAWANG SUSPEK, NAARESTO NG DASMARINAS PULIS

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Matagumpay na naaresto ng mga tauhan ng Dasmariñas City Component Police Station ang dalawang suspek, kabilang ang isang High Value Individual, sa isinagawang buy-bust operation na nagresulta sa pagkakasamsam ng humigit-kumulang 52.4 gramo ng pinaghihinalang shabu bandang alas-1:30 ng madaling araw noong Agosto 13, 2026 sa Barangay Paliparan 2, Dasmariñas City, Cavite. Kinilala ni PLTCOL MAC ARTHUR S MERCADER, hepe ng Dasmariñas CCPS, ang mga naarestong suspek na sina alyas “Tin” na kinilalang High Value Individual; at alyas “Mike” na kinilalang Street Level Individual, na kapwa residente ng Dasmariñas City, Cavite.

Batay sa ulat, nagsagawa ng anti-illegal drugs operation o buy-bust operation ang mga tauhan ng Dasmariñas City Component Police Station. Nagresulta ang operasyon sa pagkakaaresto sa mga suspek matapos ibenta ang isang pakete na naglalaman ng puting mala-kristal na substansiyang hinihinalang shabu sa police officer na nagsilbing poseur buyer kapalit ng isang P500 bill na ginamit bilang marked money.

Bukod dito, narekober mula sa posesyon at kontrol ng mga suspek ang karagdagang limang pakete na naglalaman ng hinihinalang shabu na nagkakahalaga ng P356,320.00, anim na tig-P100 na perang narekober, isang digital weighing scale, isang itim na pouch, at isang pakete ng maliliit na transparent plastic sachet na ginagamit sa pag-iimpake.

Ang dalawang suspek ay kasalukuyang nakapiit sa Dasmariñas City Component Police Station Custodial Facility, habang ang mga nakumpiskang ebidensya ay dadalhin sa PNP Forensic Unit para sa kaukulang pagsusuri.

Inihahanda na rin ang mga

kaukulang dokumento para sa inquest proceedings sa Office of the City Prosecutor kaugnay ng paglabag sa Sections 5 at 11, Article II ng Republic Act No. 9165 (Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002).

Ayon kay PCOL ARIEL R RED, Provincial Director ng Cavite Police Provincial Office, “Ang pagkakasamsam ng higit 52 gramo ng hinihinalang shabu ay malaking hakbang sa ating patuloy na kampanya laban sa ilegal na droga. Patuloy nating paigingtingin ang mga operasyon at pagtutulungan ng ating mga yunit upang mapanagot ang mga sangkot sa ilegal na kalakalan ng droga at maprotektahan ang ating mga komunidad.”

50 GRAMO NG PINAGHIHINALANG SHABU, NASAMSAM; DALAWANG SUSPEK, NAARESTO NG CAVITE PROVINCIAL DRUG ENFORCEMENT UNIT

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Matagumpay na naaresto ng mga tauhan ng Provincial Drug Enforcement Unit ng Cavite Police Provincial Office at Dasmariñas City Component Police Station ang dalawang suspek sa isinagawang joint buy-bust operation bandang alas-6:00 ng gabi noong Agosto 11, 2026 sa Barangay Salawag, Dasmariñas City, Cavite.

Kinilala ni PMAJ SANDIE D CAPAROSSO, hepe ng Cavite Provincial Intelligence Unit, ang mga naarestong suspek na sina alyas “Gerald at Allan,” at residente rin ng Dasmariñas City, Cavite.

Batay sa ulat, nagsagawa ng joint buy-bust operation ang PDEU, Cavite PPO at Dasmariñas City Component Police Station, na nagresulta sa pagkakaaresto sa dalawang suspek at pagkakasamsam ng mga sumusunod na ebidensya: tatlong (3) pakete na

REGIONAL MOST WANTED PERSON SA KASONG PAGLABAG SA ILIGAL DROGA, NAARESTO NG CAVITE PROVINCIAL INTELLIGENCE UNIT SA QUIAPO, MANILA

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Matagumpay na naaresto ng mga tauhan ng Provincial Intelligence Unit ng Cavite Police Provincial Office, katuwang ang Silang Municipal Police Station at PNP Cavite Maritime Group, ang isang Regional Level Most Wanted Person bandang alas-9:00 ng gabi noong Agosto 11, 2026 sa Quiapo, Manila.

Kinilala ni PMAJ SANDIE D CAPAROSSO, hepe ng Cavite Provincial Intelligence Unit, ang naarestong akusado na si alyas “John” at residente ng Dasmariñas City, Cavite.

Batay sa ulat, nagsagawa ng police operation ang Provincial Intelligence Unit,

kasama ang mga warrant personnel ng Silang Municipal Police Station at PNP Cavite Maritime Group.

Nagresulta ang operasyon sa pagkakaaresto sa akusado sa bisa ng Warrant of Arrest para sa paglabag sa Sections 5 at 11, Article II ng Republic Act No. 9165 (Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002).

Ang warrant of arrest ay inilabas ng Regional Trial Court, Fourth Judicial Region, Branch 133, Tagaytay City, Cavite, na may petsang Hunyo 22, 2026 at walang inirekomendang piyansa.

Sa kasalukuyan, ang akusado ay ibalik at iturn-over sa Silang Municipal Police Station Custodial Facility para sa kaukulang kustodiya at dokumentasyon. Samantala, ang kopya ng warrant of arrest ay ibabalik sa hukuman na nagpalabas nito para sa kaukulang legal na proseso.

Ayon kay PCOL ARIEL R RED, Provincial Director ng Cavite Police Provincial Office, “Ang matagumpay na pagkakaaresto sa mga Most Wanted Person ay patunay ng ating tuloy-tuloy na koordinasyon at determinasyon sa pagpapatupad ng batas. Hindi hadlang ang distansya sa paghahatid ng hustisya. Patuloy nating tutugisin ang mga wanted person hanggang sa sila ay managot sa batas.”

Article II ng Republic Act No. 9165.

Ayon kay PCOL ARIEL R RED, Provincial Director ng Cavite Police Provincial Office, “Ang pagkakasamsam ng malaking halaga ng ilegal na droga ay malinaw na patunay ng ating patuloy na pagsisikap na sugpuin ang ilegal na droga sa Cavite. Hindi tayo titigil sa pagsasagawa ng mga operasyon upang maprotektahan ang ating mga komunidad at mapanagot ang mga sangkot sa ilegal na kalakalan ng droga.”

GENERAL TRIAS PNP ARRESTS PROVINCIAL LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON FOR DRUG CASE

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — The General Trias Component City Police Station intensified its manhunt operations against wanted persons following the arrest of a Provincial Level Most Wanted Person for violation of the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 at around 1:30 in the afternoon of August 11, 2026, in Brgy. San Agustin, Trece Martires City, Cavite. PLTCOL ARCHIMEDES L BAKING, Officer-In-Charge, identified the arrested accused as alis “Mark”, 36, a resident of Brgy. Canarom, Daraga, Albay.

Personnel of the General Trias Component City Police Station, conducted a manhunt operation resulting in the successful apprehension of the accused. He was arrested by virtue of a warrant of arrest for violation of Section 11, Article II of Republic Act No. 9165, or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, issued by the Regional Trial Court, Branch 130, Trece Martires City, Cavite, with

a recommended bail of P200,000.

The arrested accused was duly informed of the nature of the arrest and apprised of his constitutional rights. He is currently under custody at the General Trias Custodial Facility, pending the return of the warrant to the Court of Origin and subsequent issuance of a Commitment Order.

PCOL ARIEL R RED, Provincial Director, Cavite PPO, commended the operating personnel for the successful arrest, stressing that the intensified pursuit of wanted persons remains a priority of the Cavite Police.

“Our message is clear: wanted persons will be pursued wherever they may be. We will continue to bring fugitives before the courts and ensure that the rule of law prevails,” PCOL RED said.

The Cavite PPO continues to strengthen its intelligence-driven operations against wanted persons as part of its commitment to maintaining peace, order, and public safety throughout the province.

VALUCROPS, INC. ELEVATES FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY STANDARDS THROUGH TRAINING ON GOOD

To reinforce strict quality standards and elevate hygiene practices in food processing, personnel at Valucrops, Inc. participated in a comprehensive Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) Training held on August 12, 2026, at their facility in Barangay Bucal, Amadeo, Cavite.

The interactive workshop equipped participants with essential food safety protocols, proper sanitization routines, and contamination prevention measures required in commercial manufacturing.

Highlighting the training was the engaging GloGerm activity—an eye-opening, practical exercise that simulates

the spread of invisible bacteria. Trainees applied a lotion-like lotion to their hands before performing standard handwashing or processing tasks. Under the glow of a UV blacklight, any hidden “germs” left behind were instantly revealed, underscoring the critical importance of meticulous handwashing and sanitation.

By combining foundational GMP theory with vivid, hands-on learning, the training empowered the Valucrops, Inc. team to maintain peak operational hygiene, ensuring that every product leaving their facility meets the highest standards of consumer safety and quality. **DOST CAVITE**

DA BACKS INVESTMENT IN PH ENOKI MUSHROOM FACILITY IN CAVITE

MANILA— The Department of Agriculture (DA) on Tuesday expressed its support for the country's first-ever modern enoki mushroom facility in Silang, Cavite.

The department is advancing its "import substitution" policy by supporting the investment of the Filipino-owned and highly automated enoki mushroom facility under Basic Necessity Inc.

This is still in line with the directives of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. to help boost investments in the agriculture sector, citing enoki mushroom as one of the country's export potential commodities during his fifth State of the Nation Address.

In a statement, DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. underscored the need for local expansion with the significant volume of domestic demand.

For the domestic market alone, the Philippines has an annual enoki mushroom import volume of more than 6,000 metric tons.

"We have a large domestic market that is still supplied by imports. Once local demand is met, we see opportunities to export to markets such as Singapore and the Middle East," he said.

In 2025, the Philippines imported 6,536 metric tons of fresh mushrooms, while import dependence for formal commercial mushrooms stood at 95 percent.

For her part, Agriculture Undersecretary for High-Value Crops Cheryl Marie Caballero said import substitution through support in local enoki mushroom production can boost wider economic opportunities and job generation.

About 50 workers are expected to be employed while creating additional livelihood opportunities for farmers supplying agricultural biomass and other raw materials.

"This is not just about producing mushrooms. It is about building a local industry that creates

jobs, supports farmers supplying agricultural biomass, and transforms materials that previously had little economic value into productive inputs," she said.

About 5 tons of agrowastes from corn cobs and rice hulls are used per week as mushroom substrates.

Besides this, the company's investment also led to the affordability of the local enoki mushroom, which is now sold at PHP29.75 at retail, much lower than the previous PHP80 per 200-gram level.

To date, the Silang facility integrates controlled-environment cultivation, processing, packing, cold storage and refrigerated distribution.

Its production is distributed to supermarkets, restaurants, hotels, institutional buyers and online grocery platforms, which improves freshness, food safety and product traceability.

Enoki mushroom, which has an emerging local popularity alongside its demand in Korean, Japanese, Chinese and hotpot cuisine, is considered to be a low-calorie, nutrient-dense food that seeks to help address malnutrition and under nutrition.

Ube research

The University of the Philippines Los Baños, meanwhile, has highlighted 10 purple yams which stood out of the 188 greater yams (*Dioscorea alata*) accessions from farms and gene banks nationwide.

The institution has worked on the research as part of the country's efforts to boost the ube industry amid its emerging global presence.

Among the cited ones are Villasis 2 and Kinampay for their significant yield and flavor, respectively.

Villasis 2 is considered as the yield champion, which can produce over 60 tons per hectare, while Kinampay remains as the gold standard for flavor.

Other varieties excelled in aroma, color, or anthocyanins, the natural

MEDICAL AND DENTAL MISSION BRINGS ESSENTIAL HEALTH SERVICES TO PASONG KAWAYAN II

The Provincial Government of Cavite continued to bring accessible healthcare services closer to communities as a medical and dental mission was conducted on August 5, 2026, in Barangay Pasong Kawayan II, City of General Trias, benefiting a total of 573 residents.

The activity provided community members with essential medical and dental services through the of doctors and healthcare professionals from the General Emilio Aguinaldo Memorial Hospital

(GEAMH) and the AMIGA District Hospital, with the assistance of barangay health workers (BHWs).

The health mission offered residents an opportunity to avail medical consultations and dental services without having to travel far from their community.

Board Member Kerby Salazar was present during the activity, demonstrating support for initiatives that promote accessible and responsive healthcare services for Caviteños. — **OPIO**

DOST-ITDI CONDUCTS DATA AND TECHNICAL READINESS ASSESSMENT WITH EXISTING ULIMS AT DOST CAVITE

The Department of Science and Technology–Industrial Technology Development Institute (DOST-ITDI) led a Data and Technical Readiness Assessment of the existing Unified Laboratory Information Management System (ULIMS) at DOST Cavite today, August 13, 2026, as an initial engagement activity in preparation for the pilot testing of the DOST-wide OnePortal Framework.

The initial engagement aims to assess the readiness of existing data, systems, technical requirements, business processes, and operational

workflows in preparation for the pilot implementation.

With DOST CALABARZON delivering a broad range of laboratory, technical, and support services, the region provides an ideal environment for validating the OnePortal Framework under actual implementation conditions.

The pilot implementation is expected to generate valuable insights and recommendations that will further enhance the system prior to its nationwide rollout across DOST Regional and Provincial Offices.

The activity was attended by personnel of the DOST Cavite Water and Wastewater Testing Laboratory, together with Ms. Jenca Krystel Nueva, Provincial Information and Communications Technology Officer (PICTO), and 2 other on-the-job trainees.

Through this initiative, DOST continues to advance digital transformation and strengthen the delivery of efficient, integrated, and technology-enabled laboratory services. **DOST CAVITE**

EDITORIAL

Respeto Bago Komento

Hindi magandang asal ang pangungutya ng ibang kapwa. Imbis na sarili ang bigyan ng pansin, pinipili ng ibang tao na magbato ng mga salitang nakakapanakit gaya ng kumakalat ngayon sa social media ngayon tungkol sa isang guro mula sa ibang bansa na namahiya o nagbigay ng negatibong reaksiyon sa isang pilipinong guro dahil sa pagtuturo nito.

Walang masama nagbigay ng komento pero isipin din natin ang magiging epekto nito sa iba, kung ito ba ay nakakatulong sa kanila o pasakit lamang sa kanilang damdamin. Ang pamamahiya sa ibang kapwa ay hindi nakakapagpaangat sa sarili kundi naglalantad lamang ng sariling kawalan ng kumpiyansa.



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PNP LAUDS BRAVERY OF 3 COPS IN MUNTINLUPA ARMED ROBBERY RESPONSE

MANILA — Philippine National Police (PNP) Chief Gen. Jose Melencio C. Nartatez Jr. on Friday lauded three Muntinlupa City police officers for putting their lives on the line to stop an armed robbery suspect and protect the public.

He commended Master Sgt. Alvin Cordero, Staff Sgt. Lloyd Francisco, and Patrolman John Lee Macaraeg for their actions during the Aug. 11 incident along East Service Road in Barangay Sucat.

"I commend these police officers for their courage, composure, and commitment to protecting the public. At the same time, we remind all police personnel to exercise sound judgment and observe proper procedures while ensuring self-protection when dealing with armed and dangerous suspects," Nartatez said in a statement on Friday.

The three officers responded to a report of a robbery in the area, leading Francisco to pursue the suspect toward a footbridge, where he repeatedly urged him to surrender.

The suspect allegedly pointed a firearm at Francisco, prompting a struggle between them.

A gun went off during the confrontation, with a bullet hitting the suspect in the neck.

The suspect was then brought to a hospital by the Barangay Sucat rescue team. Police recovered from him an unlicensed .45-caliber Colt pistol, a magazine, three live rounds of ammunition, and the robbery victim's cellphone and wallet.

The victim positively identified the suspect as the person who took his bag and belongings.

The suspect later underwent inquest proceedings and faces charges for robbery, illegal possession of firearms, and direct assault.

Nartatez said the incident served as a reminder of the risks police officers face while carrying out their duties.

"Our police officers will continue to uphold their duty to protect lives, maintain peace, and ensure the safety of our communities," he said.

"We also encourage the public to immediately report crimes through 911 and cooperate with responding authorities," the PNP chief added.

(PNA) BY CHRISTOPHER LLOYD CALIWAN

DOLE LAUDS SMALL BIZ OWNERS FOR UPHOLDING NCR WAGE HIKE DESPITE TRO

MANILA—The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) on Thursday lauded small businesses that continued to voluntarily implement the recent PHP85 wage hike for minimum wage earners in Metro Manila despite its temporary suspension.

In a news release, Secretary Francis Tolentino noted that the establishments' decision to comply with the NCR wage order reflects their commitment to support workers' welfare while maintaining their operations.

"There are also companies that voluntarily complied with Wage Order No. 27. We thank them. This is Regasco, this is LPG (liquefied petroleum gas). There is a bulaluhan in Caloocan. There is Meals on Wheels. Those are five

small companies that even though there is a TRO (temporary restraining order), they still complied. So, we thank those who voluntarily complied," he said.

Among the establishments that voluntarily complied with the wage hike is Bulalohan sa 1st, a casual dining restaurant in Caloocan City, whose management decided to proceed with the pay raise because the workers deserve a fair wage and support.

Other businesses have likewise proceeded with the wage increase, including the distributor in the LPG industry, and several food stands in Metro Manila, including Meals in Minutes and ChizMozza, demonstrating a growing commitment among employers to provide better

BOI: KEY TERMS FOR PROPOSED CLARK AI HUB REMAIN UNSETTLED

MANILA — Key terms of the proposed Clark Advanced Manufacturing Park remain unsettled as the government continues to screen legal, environmental, and economic issues before entering formal negotiations on the project linked to the Pax Silica initiative, the Board of Investments (BOI) said Friday.

Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Undersecretary and BOI Vice Chairperson and Managing Head Ceferino Rodolfo told a Senate hearing that the planned AI-native industrial acceleration hub in New Clark City remains a "work in progress" despite the identification of a roughly 1,600-hectare site.

Rodolfo made the clarification after Senator Imee Marcos questioned a proposed framework containing provisions she said raised concerns over sovereignty, land ownership, jurisdiction, and compliance with the Constitution.

"It's a discussion paper. It's not even a negotiating document," Rodolfo said, adding that formal negotiations have yet to begin.

"Wala pa kami authority to negotiate (We don't have the authority to negotiate yet)," he said.

Marcos raised questions over provisions in the document involving a possible 99-year land arrangement, a joint oversight mechanism, and a proposed Pax Silica Court of Commerce in New York, among others.

Rodolfo said the government is reviewing the issues even before

compensation for their workers.

The PHP85 wage hike in Metro Manila was temporarily suspended on July 30, 2026, following the issuance of a TRO by the Pasig Regional Trial Court.

Earlier, Tolentino reaffirmed that DOLE will continue to support the Office of the Solicitor General in pushing for the implementation of the wage hike in a legal manner.

(PNA) BY FERDINAND PATINIO

negotiations so that provisions it cannot accept would no longer have to be discussed with the other party.

"To reassure you, kami mismo hindi kami papayag (we ourselves will not agree)," he said, adding that succeeding agreements would have to conform with Philippine laws.

He said the Philippine proposal currently being considered is anchored on the Export Development Act and the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) law and has undergone inter-agency review, including scrutiny of legal and constitutional issues.

Rodolfo also sought to separate the broader Pax Silica partnership from the Clark project, saying the former is a non-binding declaration of shared principles among 24 countries and economies, while the latter is a specific project being developed under the initiative.

The Clark Advanced Manufacturing Park, he clarified, is not intended to be a data center but an advanced manufacturing ecosystem that would produce equipment and components used in AI data centers and other AI-enabled electronic products.

The government envisions the project as a vehicle for moving the Philippines from predominantly lower-value semiconductor activities toward higher-value segments, such as chip design, wafer production, and fabrication.

But Rodolfo said its development would have to satisfy Philippine environmental and infrastructure requirements, with developers expected to build their own roads, bring their own power, and secure and reuse their own water.

He also said the master development and individual locators would still be required to obtain environmental compliance certificates.

BCDA President and Chief Executive Officer Joshua Bingang said power, water, logistics, and other requirements are still being studied to ensure that the

DBM BACKS OPEN BUDGET BICAM DELIBERATIONS ON 2027 BUDGET

MANILA — Acting Department of Budget and Management (DBM) Secretary Kim de Leon on Friday backed livestreaming the bicameral conference committee deliberations on the proposed PHP7.2-trillion national budget for 2027.

De Leon said opening the bicameral proceedings to public scrutiny would promote a "more transparent, accountable, and participatory budget process."

"As the proposed budget moves through Congress, there has also been considerable discussion about opening the bicameral conference committee deliberations to greater public scrutiny. The DBM welcomes and

planned industrial park would not place undue pressure on resources used by surrounding communities.

The Senate Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change is examining the environmental and social implications of Pax Silica amid concerns involving water and electricity requirements, indigenous peoples, farmers, and nearby communities.

Committee chair Senator Raffy Tulfo said the Senate would keep watch over commitments made by government agencies as the project develops, while Senators Bam Aquino, Francis Pangilinan, Marcos, and Senate President Sherwin Gatchalian raised separate concerns involving transparency, technology transfer, environmental protection, and constitutional safeguards.

Gatchalian described the project as a potential opportunity to lift the country into higher-value manufacturing but stressed that compliance with Philippine laws and the Constitution should not be compromised.

Rodolfo said with the project's final structure still being shaped, inputs from Congress, government agencies, and stakeholders could still influence the terms that the Philippines eventually brings to the negotiating table. **(PNA) BY WILNARD BACELONIA**

supports efforts towards greater transparency in the bicameral process," he said during an economic forum at the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Assembly Hall in Manila.

The 2027 National Expenditure Program (NEP) prepared by the Marcos administration seeks to fund its priorities in education, health, infrastructure and social protection.

De Leon said the proposed NEP is based on the latest macroeconomic assumptions approved by the Development Budget Coordination Committee.

He said transparent budget deliberations would help the public understand how taxpayers' money is spent and strengthen accountability and trust in government.

"For us, greater transparency strengthens, not complicates, the budget process. We have nothing to gain from making the budget difficult to understand," De Leon said.

"We are doing this at a time when Filipinos are demanding greater transparency and accountability in the use of public funds. We welcome that scrutiny. If public money is involved, public scrutiny should never be treated as an inconvenience," he added. In December 2025, the bicameral conference committee livestreamed its deliberations on the proposed 2026 national budget for the first time.

De Leon acknowledged that the decision to open the bicameral deliberations on the 2027 budget rests with Congress.

"We fully respect its constitutional authority, rules, and procedures. Should Congress move toward an open bicam, DBM stands ready to fully support it by providing the necessary technical information, budget documents, and clarifications to help ensure that the discussions are informed, accurate, and accessible to the public," he said.

The House of Representatives is targeting to approve the proposed 2027 national budget by Oct. 9. It will begin deliberations on the 2027 NEP on Aug. 17. **(PNA) BY RUTH ABBEY GITA-CARLOS**

48% OF WASTE GENERATED DAILY ENDS UP IN BODIES OF WATER, STREETS

MANILA—The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Thursday said at least 48 percent of the 65,000 tons of waste generated daily nationwide ends up in waterways, bodies of water and streets.

In a television interview, DENR Undersecretary Jonas Leones said the Philippines generates an estimated 61,000 to 65,000 tons of waste every day, but only about 52 percent is collected.

"Medyo seryoso yung ating problema sa basura. Base sa aming data, at least 52 percent of our generation, yun lang yung nakokolekta natin. But the rest, about 48 percent of our garbage generation, either napupunta sa waterways, napupunta sa water body, at yung mga iba naman nakakalat sa daan (Our problem with waste is quite serious. Based on our data, we collect only at least 52 percent of our generation. But the rest, about 48 percent of our garbage generation, either ends up in waterways, ends up in bodies of water, and the others are scattered on the streets)," he said.

In Manila Bay alone, Leones said there are 333 creeks connected to it, including 17 major tributaries, noting the seriousness of the problem.

He explained that every person in the country generates approximately 0.7kg of waste every day, based on conservative data, resulting in very high waste generation.

During the summer season, he said garbage doesn't flow with the water and mostly remains in the drainage or in bodies of water.

"But pagdating ng malakas na ulan at yung tubig talagang umaagos na, dala-dala na yung mga basura. So ganoon kaseryoso. Kung di talaga magkaroon ng magandang programa para dito, talagang magtutuloy-tuloy at magiging seryoso ito (when the heavy rain comes, and the water really starts to flow, it

carries away the trash. So that's how serious it is. If there really isn't a good program for this, it will definitely continue and become serious)," he said.

Long-term solutions

He said the DENR is pushing a mix of recycling, waste reduction, private sector participation, and possible waste-to-energy technologies as long-term solutions to the country's worsening garbage problem.

Leones said the shift from what he described as a "linear economy," where waste is discarded after use, to a circular economy that focuses on recycling and recovering materials is one of the long-term solutions.

He said many sanitary landfills are reaching their maximum capacity, with some already becoming large mounds of garbage.

To address this, he said the DENR is promoting the conversion of landfills into integrated facilities that can recover value from waste, instead of serving solely as disposal sites.

"Meaning, hindi na lang siya disposal (it is not just disposal), we are reintegrating it with facility that can recycle and repurpose or upcycle this solid waste, event plastics," he said.

The goal, Leones said, is to extend the life of landfills while reducing the volume of garbage that ultimately requires disposal.

Cutting at the source

Through the implementation of the Republic Act 11898 or Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) law, the DENR is also working with the private sector, specifically the manufacturing companies, to reduce waste before it enters the waste stream.

The EPR law requires companies to take a greater role in managing the waste generated by their products, particularly plastic packaging, including sachets.

The agency is also encouraging manufacturers to reduce the amount of plastic used in packaging to prevent

additional waste from accumulating.

Exploring waste-to-energy technology

During an inspection of the garbage-clearing operation at the Baclaran River in Parañaque City on Wednesday, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. thumbed down calls for stiffer penalties for improper waste disposal, saying that the government must first ensure that there are adequate garbage facilities.

Marcos said the administration is pursuing a waste-to-energy program that would process collected garbage and convert it into electricity, reducing the country's dependence on landfills.

Leones said countries like Singapore and the United States generate more waste than the Philippines, but noted that they have adopted technologies to address their solid waste.

"They adopt waste-to-energy technology and may facilities sila for effective recycling and recovery facilities. Dito sa atin kulang yon. So bagamat maliit ang ating generation per capita, pero yung atin medyo nalilimit (they have facilities for effective recycling and recovery facilities. Here, we lack that. So even though our generation per capita is small, ours is somewhat limited)," he said.

Leones also noted the need to revisit RA 9003, or the Solid Waste Management Act, to strengthen the country's approach to waste management.

With some groups raising concerns about compliance with the Clean Air Act (RA 8749 and the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, he said there are Supreme Court rulings that have clarified that waste-to-energy facilities may be allowed if they meet environmental standards.

"Ang sabi ng SC sa interpretation sa mga batas natin, (The SC said in the interpretation of our laws), for as long as the technology will not violate

our emission standards, may thresholds tayo dyan, pwede naman din, inallow (we have thresholds for that, it is allowed)," he said.

He added that the DENR, the Department of Energy (DOE), and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) are discussing possible policy measures and legislation that could help advance technologies that comply with environmental regulations.

Proper waste disposal

Leones emphasized that addressing the garbage problem in the country will also require changing public behavior.

He stressed that proper waste disposal habits should be developed at an early age and reinforced through education.

Leones said environmental awareness and proper waste management should be taught to children until it becomes their habit.

"Dapat ito talaga behavioral change. Even sabi nga ni Mayor (Francis) Zamora, talagang disiplin, magsisimula yan dapat sa kabataan pa lang (This should really be a behavioral change. Even Mayor (Francis) Zamora said, discipline should really start at a young age)," he said.

"So kailangan dito pa lang sa level ng kabataan sa ating curriculum, dapat na-instill na natin itong mga disiplin particularly sa mga environmental laws, itong pagdidispose ng mga waste. Dapat alam nila na may mga lugar na dapat pagtapunan at hindi basta-basta kung saan-saan lang tinatapon (So it is necessary that at the level of the youth in our curriculum, we should have already instilled these disciplines, particularly in environmental laws, waste disposal. They should know that there are designated places for disposal and that waste should not just be thrown anywhere)," he added. (PNA) **BY MARITA MOAJE**

MARCOS ADMIN BRINGS P339.8-M DEVELOPMENT FUNDS TO CEBU

MANILA — The Marcos administration has delivered around PHP339.8 million in development funds to Cebu province for infrastructure and social development projects.

Executive Secretary Ralph Recto led the distribution of development funds as part of government efforts to bring services closer to communities, according to a statement released by his office on Friday.

The Office of the Executive Secretary (OES) said around PHP265 million under the Local Government Support Fund (LGSF) was turned over to Cebu Governor Pamela Baricuatro on Thursday through a Special Allotment Release Order.

The allocation will be used to finance the province's critical projects in energy, healthcare, and farm-to-market road initiatives.

Recto also led the distribution of rice assistance to some 3,200 beneficiaries, including fisherfolk, solo parents, and senior citizens.

On top of the PHP265 million received by the provincial government, around PHP20 million

sourced from the LGSF was also given to the municipal government of Cordova to support its infrastructure projects.

Recto also turned over PHP54.8 million under the Socio-Civic Project Fund (SCPF) to nine local government units in Alcoy, Aloguinsan, Balamban, Daanbantayan, Danao, Medellin, Toledo, Pinamungajan, and Sogod.

He likewise met with the presidential scholars, who will each receive PHP20,000 in education assistance.

Through the SCPF, each village is allocated PHP200,000, with half of the amount allotted to support five presidential scholars and the remaining funds for its priority projects.

"While this assistance provides immediate relief, it's a small part of the services funded by the National Government," Recto said.

"Local and national governments are united, and we will work together so our countrymen here in Cebu will benefit," he added. (PNA) **BY RUTH ABBEY GITA-CARLOS**

AFP HAILS SWIFT CA CONFIRMATION OF 38 RANKING MILITARY OFFICIALS

MANILA — The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) on Friday said the swift confirmation by the Commission on Appointments (CA) of the ad interim appointments of 38 senior military officers, including its head Gen. Antonio Nafarrete, last Aug. 13, has "strengthened leadership stability and joint force readiness."

"Led by AFP chief of staff Gen. Antonio Nafarrete, the confirmed officers included senior leaders from the AFP's major services. The group comprised 19 officers from the Philippine Army, seven from the Philippine Air Force, nine from the Philippine Navy, and three from the Philippine Marine Corps," AFP public affairs office chief Col. Xerxes Trinidad said in a statement.

Nafarrete, a member of the Philippine Military

Academy Class of 1990, assumed the top AFP post last July 21, replacing Gen. Romeo Brawner Jr.

Before becoming AFP chief, Nafarrete was appointed to head the Philippine Army starting July 31, 2025, and commanded the Western Mindanao Command, 1st Infantry Division, Joint Task Force Zampelan, and the AFP's J-3, or the operations staff.

The newly confirmed officers, Trinidad said, are expected to play key roles in advancing joint operations, strengthening professional military development.

Trinidad said the confirmation is important as this supports the "AFP's mandate to safeguard national security and protect the Filipino people." (PNA) **BY PRIAM NEPOMUCENO**

MEKENI BRINGS FILIPINO FLAVOR AND INNOVATION TO WOFEX 2026



MANILA, Philippines — Homegrown Filipino food brand Makeni Food Corporation strengthened its commitment to bringing quality Filipino-made products closer to consumers and business partners as it participated in the recently concluded World Food Expo (WOFEX) 2026 at the World Trade Center Manila.

Held from July 29 to August 1, WOFEX 2026 brought together food manufacturers, distributors, retailers, foodservice professionals, and industry stakeholders, providing a platform for brands to showcase their products and connect with potential business partners.

Makeni made its presence felt throughout the four-day exhibition, featuring its diverse portfolio of well-loved products designed for Filipino families and foodservice businesses.

Among the products highlighted at the Makeni booth were its growing sausage portfolio, including the Makeni Specials 4Cheese Sausage, Hungarian Sausage with Cheese, and Breakfast Sausage, offering consumers a variety of flavors and options for everyday meals and occasions.

Beyond product showcasing, the event also provided Makeni an opportunity to engage

directly with consumers, retailers, distributors, and industry partners, reinforcing the company's position as a homegrown Filipino brand with a growing presence in both domestic and international markets.

"WOFEX gives us a valuable opportunity to connect with our consumers and partners while showcasing the quality, innovation, and Filipino pride that continue to define Makeni," said Pruds Garcia, Makeni President.

The company's participation also reflects its continuing efforts to expand its market presence, strengthen business partnerships, and introduce its products to more consumers through meaningful industry engagements.

As Makeni celebrates its 40th year, its participation in WOFEX 2026 forms part of the company's broader anniversary journey under the theme "May Kwento sa Bawat Timpla," celebrating four decades of stories, flavors, and shared moments with Filipino families.

With another successful WOFEX participation, Makeni looks forward to bringing its products to more homes, businesses, and communities while continuing to tell its story through food.

SSS, CFO STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIP TO EXPAND SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR OVERSEAS FILIPINOS

The Social Security System (SSS) and the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) have strengthened their partnership to expand access to social security protection for Overseas Filipinos (OFs) and their families through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

SSS President and Chief Executive Officer Robert Joseph Montes de Claro and CFO Chairperson Secretary Dante "Klink" Ang II led the signing ceremony, reaffirming both agencies' shared commitment to advancing the welfare and interests of Filipinos overseas through stronger inter-agency cooperation.

Under the MOU, SSS and CFO will collaborate on information, education, and communication (IEC) initiatives to increase awareness among OFs on SSS membership, benefits, loan programs, and the MySSS Pension Booster. The partnership also aims to enhance access to social security services and empower Filipinos abroad to make

informed decisions in securing their financial future and protecting their families.

"This MOU marks another significant step in strengthening the partnership between SSS and CFO," de Claro said. "Through this collaboration, we aim to reach more Overseas Filipinos and provide them with the knowledge they need to access SSS programs and services that support their financial security and well-being."

The agreement builds on the agencies' existing collaboration since 2025 through the KaSSSangga Collect Program, which supported the expansion of SSS coverage among the Job Order and Contract of Service workers of CFO.

Through this strengthened partnership, SSS and CFO will continue to work together in promoting social protection programs and ensuring that more Overseas Filipinos and their families can benefit from enhanced access to social security services. #

LGSF PROJECT REVIVES PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN CARMONA CITY

CARMONA CITY, Cavite (PIA) — At a time when spaces that promote reading are increasingly rare, the City Government of Carmona built its very own public library and resource center.

A milestone project funded under the Local Government Support Fund-Financial Assistance to Local Government Units (FALGU), the four-storey Carmona City Public Library and Learning Resource Center serves as a hub for audio-visual presentations, community activities and exhibitions aimed at increasing the city's literacy rate.

Completed in 2023, the LGSF-FALGU-funded project cost around P50 million and has served more than 3,026 residents, including students and remote workers.

Located directly across the Department of Education-Carmona's Schools Division Office and Carmona Elementary School, the city library provides convenient access to all students. Given its strategic location, the local government emphasizes that reading materials and learning resources should be readily available to every

child in their city.

City Librarian Morena Arellano noted the DepEd's support in driving a strong foot traffic, especially among students.

"Most po ng aming clients ay nasa elementary and high school since dalawang schools sila na magkatabi. After nila mag-lunch, nagpupunta sila dito. Minsan nag-a-announce kami ng time para maiwasang ma-late sila dahil sa library."

Jodi is one of the top borrowers of learning materials at the Carmona City Public Library. With her school just across the street, she considers a space where she and her classmates can stay and study during their free time a blessing.

"Nakatulong po siya sa pagre-research ko po ng assignments at [sa pagbabasa ng] mga aklat na nakakalibang. Maganda po na mayroong ganitong public library na tahimik."

Beyond promoting a love of reading among children, the public library serves as a safe space for students outside of class hours, Arellano said.

"Mayroon kaming collaboration since mayroon kaming program na Sa Likod ng mga Pahina library orientation. Bale library tour kung saan in-invite namin si SDO Carmona."

Through this collaboration, DepEd Carmona and the Carmona City Public Library launched the Sa Likod ng mga Pahina library orientation program which offered guided tours to help students visit and explore their collection. (PB-PIA CALABARZON)

BYPATRICIA BERMUDEZ

nor the capacity to commit violations, much less in the scale perpetuated by Chinese nationals in the Philippines.

"The fact that the Chinese government is actively covering up for these individuals is the best evidence of their complicity in the nefarious acts of these people," he said. (PNA) **BY PRIAM NEPOMUCENO**

TEODORO SCORES IMMIGRATION 'CRACKDOWN' VS 100 FILIPINOS IN HK, MACAU

MANILA — Department of National Defense (DND) Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. on Thursday said China's reported immigration actions against 100 Filipinos suspected of illegally working and living in China is "plain and simple extortion and blackmail."

"The action against 100 Filipinos is plain and simple extortion and blackmail. We strongly condemn both the attempt by China to interfere in our law enforcement processes and the blatant blackmail against Filipinos," he added in a statement.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry earlier said its immigration officials have

taken "actions" against over 100 Filipinos for illegally working or living in Macau and Hong Kong.

It added that its immigration staff "acted in a standard and civil manner and ensured the protection of the rights and interests of the foreign nationals concerned."

Earlier reports claimed that the Chinese action against the Filipinos is an offshoot of the DND chief's anti-China approach, which include the arrest of Chinese nationals last May at the Sanjia-Steel Corporation in Misamis Oriental over their handling of "potentially hazardous materials."

"The law enforcement

efforts against the Chinese nationals that are referred to in a recent report were done on the basis of search warrants issued by the proper courts. The individuals arrested by the authorities were the principals of these illegal enterprises.

Chinese authorities stress the issue of the work visas and passports of these individuals while refusing to address the illegal activities that they perpetuated. This is an admission by them that, indeed, the acts of these individuals were illegal under Philippine law," Teodoro added.

Likewise, the DND chief said "Filipinos in China have neither the intent

DOE COMMITTED TO BOOSTING WASTE-TO-ENERGY PROGRAM

MANILA — Following President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s commitment to strengthening the government's waste-to-energy program, the Department of Energy (DOE) on Thursday underscored the importance of the ongoing process towards the special auction round for this technology.

The DOE, in a news release, said about 400 megawatts (WM) of waste-to-energy capacity have been included in the Green Energy Auction (GEA) program, with the auction set for Oct. 13.

Proponents of the winning projects are expected to achieve mechanical completion by the end of 2028 and the power plants are expected to start delivering power by the end of 2029.

"The President has underscored the need for a more integrated approach to addressing our waste challenges. Waste that can no longer be reused or recycled should not simply end up in landfills or waterways. Subject to strict environmental safeguards, appropriate residual waste can be converted into useful energy and contribute to our power supply," Energy Secretary Sharon Garin said.

The DOE said about 9,000 metric tons of municipal solid waste are generated in Metro Manila daily, and this volume is estimated to produce 200 megawatts of power.

However, it noted that the waste-to-energy (WTE) program is "intended to complement, not replace waste reduction, segregation, reuse, recycling, and material recovery under the country's solid waste management framework."

"Only acceptable residual wastes should be considered as feedstock for WTE facilities," it said.

"We are moving WTE from policy into implementation. The President's renewed push gives further momentum to that work. Our task now is to identify

viable projects, uphold the necessary environmental and technical standards, and move qualified facilities toward construction and eventual delivery of electricity to the grid," Garin added.

Nuclear energy

Meanwhile, the DOE said the government's nuclear energy program is posting improvements in terms of policy, regulation, international cooperation, site assessment, financing preparations, and public acceptance.

Marcos, in his 5th State of the Nation Address in July, highlighted the need to revisit the option to use nuclear energy to bolster domestic power supply and help reduce electricity costs.

DOE Undersecretary Giovanni Carlo Bacordo, as quoted in a press release Thursday, underscored the need to fully work on this bid to ensure that necessary measures are put in place.

"Nuclear energy is not simply about deciding to build a power plant. We must build the institutions, the regulatory system, the technical capability, the financing framework, and the public confidence to support it. Our progress shows that the Philippines is putting those foundations in place," he said.

The DOE earlier said the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has noted the Philippines' progress on addressing the international body's recommendations, with the country addressing 9 of the 14 recommendations and 10 out of the 13 suggestions.

It said the Philippines is now done with Phase 1 of the IAEA Milestones Approach, which covers the considerations to commit to a nuclear program, and is now preparing for Phase 2, which requires the development of the necessary infrastructure to invite investors and the financing pathways for the power projects.

Phase 3, in turn, is about the infrastructure for

CONVERGE ALLOTS OVER 50% OF '26 CAPEX FOR VISAYAS, MINDANAO

MANILA — Over 50 percent of Converge ICT Solution's capital expenditures (capex) for 2026 has been allocated for the firm's expansion in the Visayas and Mindanao, a company executive said Thursday.

In an online briefing, Robert Yu, Converge ICT Solutions chief finance officer, declined to give specifics on their target number of clients in the Visayas and Mindanao for this year but said "a significant portion, above 50 percent of our capex budget" is intended for the central and southern Philippines.

"If you can just do the math, we target 900,000 ports. If it's above 50 percent, so roughly 500,000 ports will

be rolled out in VisMin for the year," he said.

The company revised its 2026 guidance, with capital expenditure now between PHP17 billion and PHP20 billion from PHP18 billion to PHP23 billion earlier, vis-a-vis the impact of current economic developments.

Yu said most of the financing will be for network-related expenses. In the first six months of the year, the company posted a 3.1 percent annual rise in revenues to PHP22.4 billion, the bulk of which is accounted for by residential revenues at PHP18.5 billion, and the balance of PHP3.9 billion is that of enterprise revenues.

Net income after tax reached PHP5.5 billion, lower than year-ago's PHP5.9 billion.

Yu said they expect inflationary pressures to affect the residential segment primarily; thus, they cut their guidance for the year and strengthened investments in the enterprise segment.

"We tapered expectations for the rest of the year, given the inflationary issues that we are facing. And we do expect to get back on track next year, hopefully," he added. (PNA) **BY JOANN VILLANUEVA**

the commissioning and operation of the power plants.

"The objective is clear: to make sure that when the Philippines moves forward, we are institutionally, technically, financially, and regulatorily ready to do it safely and responsibly," Bacordo said.

The government has completed, with the help of South Korea, the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP) feasibility study.

Aside from Bataan, other areas being looked into as possible nuclear power plant sites are Palawan, Masbate, Pangasinan, and Camarines Norte.

National Power Corp. (NAPOCOR) President and Chief Executive Officer Jericho Jonas Nograles, in a news release, said the agency is capable of providing training for the people on nuclear power plant operations.

The NAPOCOR has been the custodian of the BNPP's structural integrity for decades.

"The Filipino can do nuclear. But if nuclear is going to become part of the Philippine energy mix, we cannot wait for a new nuclear power plant to be under construction before we start developing our people," he said. (PNA) **BY JOANN VILLANUEVA**

STOCKS, PESO DOWN ON MIDDLE EAST, ECONOMIC WOES

MANILA — Profit-taking resulted to the drop of the Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi) on Thursday and the Philippine peso weakened against the U.S. dollar.

The local bourse's main index shed 1.23 percent to 6,288.25 points, and the broader All Shares by 0.77 percent to 3,437.23 points.

Most of the sectoral indices also finished on the red, led by the Property after it fell 3.74 percent.

Mining and Oil followed with a drop of 2.70 percent, along with the Services, 1.26 percent; Holding Firms, 1.09 percent, and the Industrial, 0.02 percent.

Only the Financials index gained during the day with a jump of 0.13 percent.

Volume reached 1.34 billion shares amounting to PHP14.25 billion.

Decliners led advancers at 96 to 89 while 63 shares were unchanged.

WHOLESALE CONSTRUCTION PRICES IN NCR UP IN JULY

MANILA — The wholesale prices of construction materials in the National Capital Region (NCR) recorded a faster increase in July, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

Data released by the PSA on Wednesday showed that the construction materials wholesale price

index (CMWPI) in the NCR rose by 3.5 percent in July from 2.9 percent in the previous month.

The PSA attributed the uptrend to concrete products, which experienced an accelerated price increase of 5.2 percent in July, compared to 4.1 percent in June.

Higher annual growth rates were also recorded in the indices of sand and gravel, cement, tileworks, doors, jambs, and steel casement, painting works, and polyvinyl chloride pipes.

Slower annual increases, however, were seen in commodity groups, such as hardware, lumber, GI sheet, reinforcing steel, electrical works, plumbing fixtures and accessories, and fuels and lubricants.

The PSA said the CMWPI is one of the most important economic indicators designed to measure changes in the average wholesale prices of selected construction materials.

It is also used to compute the price escalation of construction materials for various government projects as indicated in Presidential Decree 1594. (PNA) **BY ANNA LEAH GONZALES**

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It is also used to compute the price escalation of construction materials for various government projects as indicated in Presidential Decree 1594. (PNA) **BY ANNA LEAH GONZALES**

P2.9-M UP FOR GRABS IN PAGCOR NATIONWIDE LINKED BINGO

MANILA — The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) said PHP2.9 million in tax-free prizes will be up for grabs in the third leg of its PHP1K-for-PHP2 million Nationwide Linked Bingo Games on Sept. 13.

In a statement Thursday, PAGCOR said players will receive four bingo cards per game for PHP1,000.

This will be valid for all 10 games, giving multiple chances to win.

Casino Filipino Angeles will serve as the main venue but this will also be played simultaneously at Casino Filipino branches in Bacolod, Cebu, Grand Regal, Ilocos Norte, Iloilo, Olongapo and Tagaytay,

linking players across the country.

Participating bingo beneficiary venues will also join the event, including Bingo Bee Malabon, NUSTAR Resort and Casino, Okada Manila, and Winford Resort and Casino Manila, further expanding its reach.

PAGCOR said the event is part of its efforts to responsibly manage gaming activities for bingo patrons while fostering a shared gaming experience across multiple venues.

Interested players may call 0906-574-1935, 0927-804-0304, or 0917-843-0970 for ticket inquiries and reservations. (PNA) **BY ANNA LEAH GONZALES**



NU, CSB, FEU HEADLINE V-LEAGUE MEN'S COLLEGIATE CHALLENGE

MANILA – Defending UAAP champion National University (NU), reigning NCAA champion College of Saint Benilde (CSB), and last year's V-League champion Far Eastern University (FEU) banner the men's field in the 2026 V-League Collegiate Challenge, which kicks off at the newly constructed Gameville Central Park in Mandaluyong City on Saturday.

For the past 22 years, the tournament has served as an early test for varsity squads preparing for their respective collegiate tournaments.

The University of Santo Tomas (UST), De La Salle University, Colegio de San Juan de Letran, Mapua University, and Arellano University complete the men's field.

Meanwhile, University Athletic Association of the Philippines (UAAP) semifinalists UST Golden Tigresses and the Adamson University

Lady Falcons, along with National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) champion Letran Lady Knights and runners-up CSB Lady Blazers, headline the women's division.

Also joining are the University of the East Lady Warriors, Perpetual Help Lady Altas, San Beda Lady Red Spikers, and Arellano Lady Chiefs.

The preliminary round will see all teams compete in

a round-robin format, with two men's games and two women's games played on every playdate.

The top four teams in each division will advance to the best-of-three semifinals, with the top seed facing the fourth-ranked team while the second- and third-placed squads square off.

The finals will also be a best-of-three series, while the battle for bronze will be decided in a winner-take-all match. **(PNA)**



V-LEAGUE. The National University (NU) Bulldogs celebrate after securing their sixth straight UAAP crown on May 9, 2026. NU is one of the participants in the 2026 V-League Collegiate Challenge, which kicks off at the newly constructed Gameville Central Park in Mandaluyong City on Saturday (Aug. 15, 2026). (UAAP photo)

DELOS SANTOS WINS 3 GOLDS IN ASIAN WEIGHTLIFTING

MANILA – Albert Ian Delos Santos displayed his brilliant form at the Asian Youth and

Junior Weightlifting Championships, winning three gold medals for Team Philippines in Tashkent,

Uzbekistan on Wednesday. The Zamboanga City pride lifted 141kg (snatch) and 180kg (clean and jerk), for a total of 321kg in the Junior men's 70kg division, on his 20th birthday.

Delos Santos, son of former national athletes Alvin and Diwa, also set new Junior Asian and World records in the clean and jerk, and in total.

Zamboanga City Mayor Khymer Olaso congratulated Delos Santos for his stunning performance.

"As your city mayor, I am very, very proud of you... since I met you in Thailand last year and until now, you

PH TEQBALL TEAM'S IMPRESSIVE SHOWING IN CHINA BOOSTS ASIAN GAMES STINT

MANILA – The future is bright for Filipino teqball athletes who are gearing up for the Asian Games.

Last week, the Philippines won a silver and a bronze at the Beach Teqball International Cup in Rushan, China, an achievement that boosted the players' morale.

Anel Pacis Jr. and Prince Agustin advanced to the finals but lost to Hungarian Adam Bako and Polish Bartlomiej Franczuk, 3-12, 7-12, to settle for silver.

Pacis and Agustin, both 14, are Grade 9 students of the Buttong Integrated School in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte. They are the youngest players in the tournament.

Jhoana Abulencia and Rizzalyn Amolacion, playing in their first international tournament, settled for the bronze after bowing to Chinese pair Yanbing Ning and Cuiyangyi Zhan, 8-12, 12-11, 8-12, in the semis.

"A bronze medal and a journey we'll never forget. It was our first time playing women's doubles," Abulencia said in an interview Friday.

"The first time we tried teqball, we fell in love with the sport, and we brought home a medal for the Philippines," added Abulencia, who graduated with a bachelor's degree in Technology and Livelihood Education (BTLEd) major in Industrial Arts magna cum laude at Lyceum Northern Luzon in



Urdaneta, Pangasinan.

"We are deeply grateful to everyone who believed in us and supported us throughout this journey. Thank you to our Philippine Teqball Federation (PITEQ) president Vic Yap, secretary general Peter Paul Soliman, coach Jovy Mamawal, and, of course, coach George for always supporting us, trusting us, and giving us this opportunity. We wouldn't have made it this far without you. This is only the beginning, and we will continue working harder to make our country proud," added Amolacion, a tourism student also from Lyceum Northern Luzon.

National coach George Balanay praised his athletes for their impressive performance in China.

"As a coach, I cannot express how proud I am of them – Rizzalyn and Jhoana, and especially Anel and Prince, who, at just 14 years old, are the youngest players in the tournament; yet, they held their own against – and even defeated – veteran players from various countries, many of whom were in their 30s and 40s," said Balanay, who also teaches sepak takraw.

"Bringing home the silver medal proves that

age is no barrier when accompanied by hard work, discipline, courage, and self-confidence. Thank you so much for your dedication and the heart you displayed in every match. You have a bright future ahead, and I believe this is just the beginning of even greater success for Philippine teqball," he added.

The players are back in training for the Asian Games scheduled to be held in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan from Sept. 19 to Oct. 4.

Joining the team is 2025 SEA Games veteran Dailan Christoffe Montenegro, who will play doubles with Pacis, while Agustin will compete in the singles and mixed doubles with Abulencia.

"We're hoping for the best. Our athletes will be facing a tougher challenge. There are many countries which are good in teqball," Balanay said.

China, Thailand, and Iran were the Top 3 in the overall medal standings at the 6th Asian Beach Games in Sanya, China, where teqball debuted as a medal sport.

Teqball is a fast-rising European spectator sport, entertaining its fans with soccer and sepak takraw agility skills played on a similar but slightly curved ping-pong table.

It was a demonstration sport at the 2023 Cambodia SEA Games and a medal sport in the 2025 edition.

Teqball has been included as a regular sport at the Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games (AIMAG) in Saudi Arabia this December. **(PNA) BY JEAN JEAN MALANUM**



AMAZING FEAT. Albert Ian Delos Santos of Zamboanga City reacts after his record-breaking performance at the Asian Youth and Junior Weightlifting Championships in Tashkent, Uzbekistan on Wednesday (Aug. 12, 2026). He won three gold medals in the Junior men's 70kg division. (Asian Weightlifting Federation photo)