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SILANG TOWN TOUTS HEALTH PROGRAMS IN STATE OF THE MUNICIPALITY ADDRESS

SILANG, Cavite (PIA) – With a stronger push for inclusive and affordable health services, the Municipal Government of Silang touted its policies and reforms that ensured equal access to healthcare.

In his very first State of the Municipality Address (SOMA) last August 17, Mayor Edward Carranza revealed that the passage of the Carranza Bill has been the highlight of this first year as local chief executive, which

resulted to equitable access to healthcare services especially during emergencies.

In an interview, Carranza noted that the Municipality of Silang is pushing for services where indigent patients no longer need to secure guarantee letters to receive care from healthcare facilities.

“Ang very proud ako is ‘yung Carranza Bill kung saan walang Silangueno na may emergency cases ang maiwan at

hindi magagamot. Hindi ‘nyo na rin kailangang hanapin ang mga pulitiko para gamutin kayo sa pribadong ospital sa bayan ng Silang. Ayokong may mga kababayan tayong hindi ginagamot dahil sa kahirapan.”

Since its passage in 2022, the Carranza Bill has provided Php 10,000 deposit in local hospitals as a subsidy for residents needing emergency treatment. Currently, this program is

being patronized in Silang Specialist Medical Center, Velazco Hospital, Estrella Hospital, and St. Mazenod Hospital.

“Sa ilaim ng programang ito, nagbibigay ang ating pamahalaan ng Php 10,000 hospital deposit assistance upang hindi maantala ang agarang pagpapaga mot ng ating mga kababayan sa oras ng emergency. Hindi natin kayang pigilan ang aksidente o karamdaman ngunit kaya nating tiyakin na walang mawawalan ng pag-asakang mabuhay dahil lamang sa kakulangan ng perang pang-deposito.”

Aside from its services, the Municipality also provided training for Barangay Health Workers and Barangay Nutrition Scholars as part of their efforts towards a stronger community-based anti-dengue drive.

In the coming years, the residents will also receive a wider range of services upon the completion of the Silang Public Hospital, which is currently in its third phase. **(PB-PIA CALABARZON) BY PATRICIA BERMUDEZ**



SSS CONTINUES SUPPORT TO THE LOCAL MARKET AS PART OF NATION BUILDING WHILE EXPLORING INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENTS TO BALANCE PORTFOLIO

QUEZON CITY, – The Social Security System (SSS) announced today its plan to expand its investment portfolio in foreign markets while continuing to actively participate in the domestic capital markets, as part of its strategy to diversify assets, enhance returns,

and strengthen the long-term sustainability of the pension fund.

SSS President and Chief Executive Officer Robert Joseph M. de Claro said the SSS’ improved financial position provides greater capacity to pursue investment opportunities while continuing to contribute to nation-building through investments in the domestic market.

“We are very conservative, but at the same time, we are also in a very good position now because of our surplus, that for the first time, we have an opportunity to help in nation-building,” de Claro said.

As of 30 June 2026, SSS had ₱1.27 trillion in consolidated investments, distributed across various asset classes in the domestic market. These include ₱629.05 billion in government securities, ₱179.44 billion in equities, ₱154.56 billion in property, ₱151.90 billion in member loans, and ₱96.34 billion in corporate notes and bonds, among others.

The diversified portfolio generated ₱27.16 billion in actual investment income as of 30 June 2026, equivalent to an annualized return on investment of 4.53 percent. The figures exclude realized gains from the sale of equity securities classified as fair value through other comprehensive income

(FVTOCI).

SSS remains an active institutional investor in the Philippine capital market through investments in equities, government securities, and other financial instruments allowed under its investment policies. Its exploration of international investments is intended to complement, not replace, its existing domestic investments, providing greater diversification across markets and asset classes.

The planned overseas expansion will allow SSS to explore additional investment opportunities while maintaining its role in supporting the local capital market.

He emphasized that exploring overseas investments does not mean reducing SSS’ participation in the Philippine market. Rather, the initiative is intended to complement its existing domestic investments by providing greater diversification across markets and asset classes.

SSS aims to grow its reserve fund to ₱2 trillion by 2030, supporting its capacity to provide meaningful and sustainable social security protection to current and future generations of members and pensioners. #

RICE DISTRIBUTION IN CAVITE CITY

The Provincial Government of Cavite continues the rollout of the Food Assistance–Rice Distribution Program (AIIF-FA-RDP) today, August 18, 2026, in Cavite City, in partnership with the City Government of Cavite headed by Mayor Denver Chua.

The activity forms part of the national government’s Assistance to Indigent Individuals or Families

through Food Assistance–Rice Distribution Program (AIIF-FA-RDP) under the Bagong Pilipinas agenda, funded through the Local Government Support Fund (LGSF-FA).

Through the program, families in need are provided with essential food assistance to help strengthen food security and ease the effects of rising living costs. **OPIO**

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REGIONAL LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON ARRESTED BY CARMONA CITY PNP

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, City of Imus, Cavite - In an intensified campaign against wanted person, a Regional Level Most Wanted Person was arrested during an operation on August 19, 2026, in Carmona City, Cavite.

PLTCOL RENE JOY L MOSQUIZA, Officer-in-Charge of Carmona Component City Police Station, identified the accused as alias RJ, 44 and presently residing in Carmona City, Cavite.

Personnel of the Carmona Component City Police Station conducted the operation that led to the arrest of the accused. He was apprehended by virtue of a warrant of arrest for violation of Republic Act 9165, or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002. The warrant was issued by the Presiding

Judge of the Regional Trial Court, Branch 152, Biñan City, Laguna, dated September 10, 2024, for the service of sentence.

The warrant of arrest will be returned to the issuing court for proper disposition.

PCOL ARIEL R RED, Provincial Director, said that the successful arrest reflects the importance of consistent efforts in locating wanted persons, even when the warrant has been pending for some time.

He commended the Carmona CCPS personnel for their patience, coordination, and proper handling of the operation. He also reminded police personnel to always observe due process and respect the rights of every person in their custody while carrying out their responsibility to enforce the law.

GMA PNP APPREHENDS A REGIONAL LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, City of Imus, Cavite - The personnel of GMA Municipal Police Station arrested a Regional Level Most Wanted Person during an operation on August 19, 2026, at General Mariano Alvarez, Cavite.

PLTCOL ALEXANDER S ALVAREZ, Acting Chief of Police of GMA Municipal Police Station, identified the accused as alias TONYO, Arrested was Anthony Cabrera y Antonio and presently residing in GMA, Cavite.

The accused was apprehended by virtue of warrants issued by the Regional Trial Court, Fourth Judicial Region, Branch 109, Carmona, Cavite for violations of Sections 5 and 11 of Republic Act 9165, or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 for service of

sentence.

The warrant of arrest will be returned to the Court of Origin for proper disposition. The accused is currently under the custody of the General Mariano Alvarez Municipal Police Station.

Provincial Director PCOL ARIEL R RED, commended the Warrant Section personnel for their determination in locating and apprehending the wanted person. He emphasized that serving warrants is not only about making an arrest, but also about supporting the proper administration of justice and ensuring that court orders are respected. He likewise reminded police personnel to remain patient, professional, and committed in carrying out their duties, while maintaining respect for the rights of every person they encounter.

NAIC PNP ARRESTED CITY LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON IN PARANAQUE CITY

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, City of Imus, Cavite— A joint operation of Naic Municipal Police Station with the Regional Mobile Force Battalion—National Capital Region Police Office resulted to the arrest of a City Level Most Wanted Person in Paranaque City on August 20, 2026.

PLTCOL LOUIE DC GONZAGA, Chief of Police of Naic MPS, identified the accused as alias JAN, 30 years old, and presently residing in Paranaque City. The accused was arrested by virtue of a Warrant of Arrest issued by the Executive Judge of Regional Trial Court Branch 129, Dasmariñas City, Cavite, dated September 6, 2025, for violation of Republic Act No. 9165, or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, Article II, Section 11, or Possession of Dangerous Drugs with bail recommended at PHP200,000.00.

Upon arrest, the accused was apprised of his constitutional rights and brought to the RMFB-NCRPO, Camp Bagong Diwa, Lower Bicutan, Taguig City, for

documentation and proper disposition.

PCOL ARIEL R RED, Provincial Director, commended the operating personnel for their successful coordination and persistence in locating and apprehending wanted persons, emphasizing the importance of close coordination among police units in bringing fugitives before the courts.

“This arrest shows that our police personnel remain committed to locating wanted individuals wherever they may be. Through proper coordination and determined police work, we will continue to bring persons with standing warrants before the courts, while ensuring that every arrest is conducted lawfully and with respect for their constitutional rights,” PCOL Red said.

The Cavite PNP continues to strengthen its coordination with other police units and regional offices in tracking down wanted persons and ensuring that individuals with outstanding warrants are brought before the proper courts to face the charges against them.

GENERAL TRIAS POLICE ARREST FIVE IN SEPARATE BUY-BUST OPERATIONS, CONFISCATE 55.58 GRAMS OF SUSPECTED MARIJUANA KUSH

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, City of Imus, Cavite — Five individuals were arrested in separate anti-illegal drug buy-bust operations conducted by the personnel of General Trias Component City Police Station on August 20, 2026 in General Trias City, Cavite resulting in the confiscation of a total of 55.58 grams of suspected marijuana kush, along with

vape devices containing suspected liquid marijuana. PLTCOL ARCHIMEDES L BAKING, Officer-in-Charge of General Trias CCPS, identified the arrested individuals on the first operation as alias MJ, 25; alias LA, 24; alias Mark, 18; and alias JM, 19. The said operation also led to the confiscation of more or less 27.40 grams

of suspected marijuana kush, five vape devices containing suspected liquid marijuana, and other evidence related to the drug transaction.

While the other buy-bust operation in the same barangay, resulted in the arrest of alias Ruel, 24, and a resident of Tanza, Cavite. Recovered from his possession were approximately 28.18 grams of suspected marijuana kush and other pieces of evidence.

The confiscated drug-related evidence will be submitted to the Provincial Forensic Unit in Imus City, Cavite for laboratory examination. Appropriate documents are likewise being prepared for the filing of charges and inquest proceedings

PHP70,000 WORTH OF CIGARETTES SEIZED; MOTORIST ARRESTED BY MAGALLANES PNP

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, City of Imus, Cavite - The personnel of Magallanes Municipal Police Station seized more or less PHP70,000 worth of cigarette products and arrested a 44 year old motorist after he allegedly failed to obey a lawful police signal during an Oplan Sita operation in Magallanes, Cavite, on August 19, 2026.

At around 7:50 AM, personnel of Magallanes MPS were conducting a routine inspection along the Maragondon–Magallanes Road when they attempted to flag down a white Utility Vehicle Van. The motorist allegedly ignored the police signal and continued driving, prompting the officers to pursue and intercept the vehicle a short distance away.

PMaj MELVIN B ISIDRO, Officer-in-Charge of Magallanes Municipal Police Station, identified the arrested individual as alias JM, 44 years old and a resident of Nasugbu, Batangas.

During the inspection, the officers found several boxes of cigarette products inside the

vehicle. He was asked to present the necessary documents authorizing the possession, transport, or distribution of the products but failed to provide the required documents.

Police authorities recovered One (1) Utility Vehicle Van (UVV), 2024 model, and 125 different reams of Cigarettes. All the cigarette products were found without the prescribed Graphic Health Warnings required under Republic Act No. 10643, or the Graphic Health Warnings Law of the Philippines.

The arrested individual was informed of the nature of the violations and apprised of his constitutional rights under the Miranda Doctrine in a language known and understood by him. He is currently under the custody of the Magallanes MPS while the necessary documents are being prepared for inquest proceedings before the office of the Provincial Prosecutor.

PCOL ARIEL R RED, Provincial Director commended the personnel for their alertness during the routine inspection, which led to the discovery of the cigarette products. He emphasized that police visibility and proper enforcement can help uncover violations that may otherwise go unnoticed. He likewise reminded motorists to respect lawful police instructions and encouraged the public to comply with regulations governing the transport and sale of tobacco products.

within the bounds of the law. Our people deserve safe communities, and we will continue doing our part to protect them,” PCOL Red said.

Cavite PNP reiterated its commitment to sustaining intelligence-driven and lawful anti-drug operations in coordination with partner agencies and local communities. The public is encouraged to remain vigilant and report information on illegal drug activities to the nearest police station or through proper authorities.

MULA SA KALAMAY, BINUO ANG MAS MATAMIS NA BUKAS



Sa loob ng mahigit tatlong dekada, pinagyaman ni Evangeline Caballero mula sa Pagsanjan, Laguna ang kaniyang kakayahan sa paggawa ng kalamay. Sa pamamagitan ng sariling recipe na kaniyang hinubog at pinino sa loob ng maraming taon, nakalikha siya ng produktong patuloy na tinatangkilik at binabalik-balikan ng kaniyang mga suki.

Isa ang kalamay sa mga pinakapaboritong kakanin ng mga Pilipino. Gawa ito sa malagkit na bigas, asukal na pula, at gata ng niyog. Dahil sa masusing proseso ng pagluluto nito, karaniwan lamang itong inihahanda noon sa mga espesyal na okasyon. Ngunit sa paglipas ng panahon, naging bahagi na rin ito ng pang-araw-araw na meryenda at handaan ng maraming Pilipino.

Pagbuo ng sariling recipe Tubong Quezon si Evangeline ngunit lumipat siya sa Laguna sa paghahanap niya ng mas magandang kinabukasan. Dito rin niya nakilala ang kaniyang napangasawa at naglaon ay bumuo na rin sila ng sariling pamilya. Habang lumalaki ang kanilang mga anak, naghanap siya ng paraan

upang makatulong sa gastusin ng pamilya. Isa sa mga sinubukan niya ang paggawa ng kalamay kahit wala siyang anumang karanasan sa pagluluto nito. Sa pamamagitan ng masusing pagmamasid sa mga kakilala niyang gumagawa ng kalamay, unti-unti niyang natutuhan ang mga teknik at proseso hanggang sa magkaroon siya ng sapat na kaalaman upang magsimula ng sariling hanapbuhay.

“Kung kaya nila, kaya ko rin,” masaya niyang pagbabahagi. Sa pamamagitan ng walang sawa niyang pagsubok at pag-e e k s p e r i m e n t o , natuklasan na rin niya ang tamang timpla at lasa na nais niyang maihain sa kaniyang mga mamimili. Mula rito ay nabuo ang recipe na naging pundasyon ng kaniyang negosyo sa loob ng maraming taon.

Nagsimula ang kanilang negosyo sa isang maliit na puwesto sa gilid ng kalsada. Sa tuwing may clearing operation, mabilis nilang inaayos ang kanilang mga paninda at naghahanap ng ibang lugar na mapagbebentahan. Halos dalawang dekada nilang hinarap ang ganitong sitwasyon

bago siya nabigyan ng permanenteng puwesto sa pampublikong pamilihan noong 2010 sa pamamagitan ng programa ng lokal na pamahalaan para sa mga street vendor.

Malaki ang naging epekto ng pagkakaroon ng sariling puwesto sa paglago ng kaniyang negosyo. Naging mas maayos ang kaniyang operasyon at mas napamahalaan niya ang kaniyang oras. Sa kasalukuyan, mayroon na siyang dalawang tauhang magkakasunod sa pagbabantay ng tindahan upang higit niyang matutukan ang paggawa ng kalamay. Umaabot sa 12 kilo ng kalamay ang kaniyang naluluto kada araw tuwing peak season, habang anim na kilo naman sa mga karaniwang araw.

Puhunan para sa mas malaking pangarap

Sa kasalukuyan ay mayroon siyang loan na nagkakahalaga na PHP 95,000 mula sa CARD MRI Rizal Bank, Inc. (CARD RBI) na ginagamit niya upang patuloy na masuportahan ang paglago ng kaniyang negosyo.

Una siyang naging kliyente ng CARD, Inc. noong 1996. Habang lumalawak ang kaniyang negosyo at tumataas ang pangangailangan sa

puhunan, lumipat siya sa CARD RBI upang magkaroon ng mas angkop na suportang pinansyal para sa pagpapalago ng kaniyang kabuhayan at pagtupad sa mas malalaking mithiin para sa kaniyang pamilya.

May mga pagkakataong mahina ang bentahan, ngunit para kay Evangeline, likas na bahagi na ito ng pagnenegosyo. Sa halip na panghinaan ng loob, ginagawa niya itong inspirasyon upang magpatuloy at pagbutihin pa ang kaniyang ginagawa.

“Hindi uunlad ang negosyo kung walang tiyaga. Laging panatilihin ang positibong pag-iisip kahit hindi naaayon sa plano ang mga nangyayari dahil darating ang panahon na muli kang babangon at mas magiging matatag pa,” aniya.

Para kay Evangeline, ang tagumpay ay hindi lamang nasusukat sa dami ng naibebenta, kundi sa kakayahang magpatuloy sa kabila ng mga pagsubok. Sa bawat kalamay na kaniyang niluluto, patuloy niyang pinatutunayan na sa sipag, tiyaga, at paniniwala sa sariling kakayahan, unti-unting natutupad ang mga pangarap at nabubuo ang mas matamis na kinabukasan.

JOSEPHINE RAMOS,
JUNIOR WRITER



Maingat na inihahanda ni Evangeline Caballero ang kaniyang sariling gawang kalamay, isang tradisyunal na kakaning nagsilbing pangunahing pinagkukunan ng kabuhayan ng kanilang pamilya sa loob ng maraming taon. Sa bawat timpla at pagluluto, dala niya ang mga aral ng sipag at tiyaga na naging susi sa unti-unting pag-unlad ng kanilang buhay.

EDITORIAL

Baha at Pananagutan

Ang sunod-sunod na mga naging bagyo nung mga nakaraan ay nagdulot ng malaking pinsala sa ilang parte ng Pilipinas.

Matinding baha at trahedya ang naganap, dito nasusubok kung naging epektibo ba talaga ang ilang sa mga isinagawang flood control project.

Tuluyan na nga ba tayong nakalimot sa tunay na naging sanhi ng baha? Pananagutan ang nais at panawagan ng mga mamamayan para sa problema sa baha.

Sana mabigyan ito ng pansin at solusyon lalo na at marami ang naapektuhang mamayanan.



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RICE DISTRIBUTION IN AMADEO

The Provincial Government of Cavite is facilitating the ongoing Food Assistance–Rice Distribution Program (AIF-FA-RDP) today, August 18, in Amadeo, Cavite.

The initiative is part of the national government's Assistance to Indigent Individuals or Families through Food Assistance–Rice Distribution Program (AIF-FA-RDP) under the Bagong Pilipinas agenda and is funded through the Local Government Support Fund (LGSF - FA).

The program aims to strengthen food security and help ease the impact of rising living costs by providing essential food assistance to families in need.

Joining the activity is Mayor Jose “Jojo” Domingo Jr., as the Provincial Government of Cavite continues to work with local partners in bringing government assistance closer to Caviteño communities.
OPIO

SSS OFFERS EXISTING EMERGENCY LOAN PROGRAM TO MEMBERS AFFECTED BY TROPICAL STORM MAYMAY, HABAGAT

QUEZON CITY, – The Social Security System (SSS) announced that members affected by Tropical Storm Maymay and the enhanced Southwest Monsoon (Habagat) may avail themselves of the existing Emergency Loan Program (ELP) to help address their financial needs arising from the calamity.

SSS President and Chief Executive Officer Robert Joseph M. de Claro said the ELP remains available to qualified members nationwide and serves as a readily accessible source of financial assistance for those experiencing financial hardship due to calamities and other emergency situations.

"The ELP is part of SSS' continuing commitment to provide immediate financial relief to members affected by unforeseen events. Through the ELP, qualified members affected by Tropical Storm Maymay and the enhanced Southwest Monsoon may access much-needed financial assistance under more flexible eligibility requirements," de Claro said.

"Under the ELP, which has

been in effect since 01 May 2026, the required number of monthly contributions has been reduced from 36 to 18, provided that the member has at least six posted contributions in the last 12 months," de Claro said.

He added that self-employed, voluntary, non-working spouse, and land-based Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) members must have at least six-monthly contributions under their current membership type before the month of loan application.

Other eligibility requirements are as follows:

- Have 65 years old at the time of loan application;
- Have a valid Philippine home address on SSS records;
- Have an updated contact information in the SSS database;
- Have no past-due emergency, calamity, salary, Educational Assistance Loan, or other short-term or long-term member loans;
- Have no outstanding restructured loan;
- Have not been disqualified due to fraud

committed against the SSS;

- Have not been granted any final benefit like retirement or permanent total disability benefits; and
- Have an active disbursement account enrolled through the Disbursement Account Enrollment Module (DAEM) in the My.SSS Portal.

Qualified members may borrow up to ₱20,000 at an interest rate as low as 7% per annum. The loan is payable over 30 months, inclusive of a six-month moratorium period.

"Members are not required to make monthly amortization payments during the first six months from the date of loan approval. No penalties will be imposed during this period. Regular monthly amortization payments will begin in the seventh month," de Claro explained.

De Claro added that members affected by the tropical cyclone may also apply for an SSS salary loan at the same time, subject to the eligibility requirements.

Members may apply online for both the ELP and the salary loan through the My.SSS Portal at www.sss.gov.ph. #

LAWMAKER URGES DA TO RELENTLESSLY PURSUE ERRANT FERTILIZER FIRMS

MANILA – The Department of Agriculture (DA) should continue to pursue companies that profit off the sale of substandard fertilizers to serve as a deterrent to others, a member of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food said Friday.

"We must be relentless in putting to justice those who seek to hoodwink the government and our farmers by violating fertilizer regulations and selling questionable fertilizer products," Abra lone district Rep. JB Bernos said in a statement. "Hangga't hindi nakukulang ang mga manlolokong ito, patuloy ang walang habas na pang-aabuso ng sistema at pangdedehado sa ating pamahalaan at mga magsasaka (As long as these crooks are not put in prison, they will continue to abuse the system and defraud the government and farmers with wanton disregard)," he said.

Bernos' statement comes

on the heels of a criminal complaint by the DA's Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA) against Davao-based enterprise DO's Asia Chemical Trading Corp. and its president in connection with a PHP25.67-million government procurement contract for inorganic fertilizers for farmers in Caraga.

The FPA said the company allegedly conducted fertilizer dealership activities in Caraga without the required authorization, despite holding licenses to operate only in the Davao region.

The company also allegedly used the prohibited "spinning palanggana" fertilizer production method, an illegal process of mixing different fertilizer grades inside a large basin by hand. The method has been banned as it cannot consistently ensure fertilizer quality and uniformity.

DO's Asia was further alleged to have supplied a fertilizer product registered under another manufacturer's name without first obtaining the required Third-Party Authorization from the FPA.

The FPA also previously sued the owner of DQB Green Agricultural Products Trading for allegedly manufacturing regulated fertilizer products without a license in North Cotabato.

Bernos lauded the FPA and the DA for "their bravery and diligence" in investigating and eventually filing cases against erring companies.

"We have to be firm in ensuring that the products that consumers and farmers use pass regulations. Not out of undue strictness, but because these could spell the difference between public safety and harm; effectiveness versus inutility," he said. (PNA) BY JOSE CIELITO REGANIT

FROM FLOOD CONTROL TO GROWTH AGENDA, MARCOS KEEPS GOV'T ACTION MOVING

MANILA – President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. kept the government's action-oriented agenda moving this week, with flood control and disaster resilience taking center stage alongside efforts to support communities, strengthen infrastructure, and attract investments.

The President's convening of a situation briefing on Wednesday and inspection of the Tripa de Gallina Pumping Station in Pasay City on Thursday underscored the administration's continuing efforts to improve the country's flood control and drainage systems, particularly in flood-prone areas.

The activities highlighted the government's intensified measures to address the effects of heavy rains and flooding, including the mobilization of assistance for affected communities and the review of longer-term measures to improve the country's capacity to manage floods.

Intensifying flood response Marcos presided over a situation briefing at the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority's Communications and Command Center in Pasay City to assess the condition of affected areas, the government's ongoing response, and measures being undertaken to mitigate the effects of flooding.

He acknowledged that "a lot of work (still) needs to be done," as his administration pursues short-, medium- and long-term actions to address flooding, especially in low-lying areas.

He also directed government agencies to ensure swift response to affected communities.

Marcos also inspected the Tripa de Gallina Pumping Station in Pasay City, highlighting the administration's push to improve the country's flood control network, especially in Metro Manila.

The government has been pursuing various measures to improve flood management, including the monitoring of flood control projects and the identification of at least 39 sites across Metro Manila

for possible floodwater storage and retention projects.

Aid for affected communities

While strengthening defenses against floods, the Marcos administration continued to mobilize assistance for communities affected by recent flooding and severe weather.

Government assistance had reached PHP800 million as Marcos convened Cabinet officials to discuss flood measures and the continuing response to affected communities.

For the President, disaster response is not only about strengthening flood control infrastructures but also efforts to protect livelihoods, businesses, public services, and communities.

His flood control agenda complemented his broader push to ensure that government services and development programs reach Filipinos wherever they are.

Bringing assistance to the countryside

The President's week was not confined to flood control, as he traveled to Negros Oriental on Monday to lead the rollout of the Bawat Bayan Makikinabang Program.

During the launch of the program, Marcos led the distribution of 10-kg. rice allocations to about 2,230 beneficiaries in Dumaguete City, as the national government expanded services and assistance nationwide.

The initiative provides direct assistance to qualified beneficiaries, including vulnerable sectors and low- and middle-income families, helping ease household expenses amid elevated costs of basic commodities.

Marcos also visited the Baslay Highland Agriculture Cooperative in Negros Oriental, highlighting the administration's support for farmers and community-based economic activities.

The visit provided an opportunity to recognize the role of farmers and local enterprises in strengthening rural economies and ensuring that economic growth is felt beyond major urban areas.

Strengthening local partnerships

Marcos' activities also showed that the administration's development agenda extends beyond immediate relief and social assistance.

On Tuesday, Marcos led the oath-taking of newly elected national, regional, and provincial officers of the Philippine Councilors League at Malacañan Palace in Manila.

The engagement emphasized the role of local government units as partners of the national government in implementing programs and responding to emergencies.

Looking beyond immediate needs

The President also received a briefing on Siklab: Building Industrial Space Launch System, signaling the government's continuing interest in developing new areas of industrial and technological capability.

The initiative reflects a broader economic agenda that looks beyond immediate concerns by exploring opportunities in emerging industries capable of generating investments, jobs, and technological innovation.

Such efforts broaden the week's narrative beyond flood control and disaster response.

Engaging the private sector

Marcos also received the US-ASEAN Business Council Philippine Business Mission at Malacañan, providing another avenue for engagement with the private sector and international business community.

He also met with the Private Sector Advisory Council on Infrastructure as the government aims to address existing infrastructure gaps and prepare communities for increasingly disruptive weather events.

This week's schedule demonstrated the administration's sustained efforts to balance urgent national concerns with long-term development priorities. (PNA) BY RUTH ABBEY GITA-CARLOS

NCAP VIOLATIONS SEARCH EASIER WITH NEW PORTAL FEATURE

MANILA – The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) will add a new search option on its MayHuliKa portal starting Aug. 24, allowing motorists to check all violation records of a vehicle under the No Contact Apprehension Policy (NCAP).

In an advisory on Friday, the MMDA said motorists may search using either plate number and ticket number, or plate number and motor vehicle file number.

The first option is for those who have received a notice of violation or traffic ticket, while the second allows users to view all

NCAP violation records of a vehicle.

The agency said the new feature makes verifying traffic violations easier, more secure and more accessible.

The MMDA reminded the public to be wary of fake text messages, emphasizing that "MMDA_NCAP" is the official and legitimate sender of text notifications.

"Legitimate messages do not contain links. Any text message with a link is a scam," it said.

Evidence of NCAP violations can only be viewed on the web portal mayhulika.mmda.gov.ph or through the eGovPH app by searching for MMDA.

In July, the MayHuliKa online violation-checking system logged more than 15 million site visits and 2.7 million unique users. It has since been integrated into the eGovPH Super App.

The integration, launched by the MMDA and the Department of Information and Communications Technology, provides motorists with a centralized platform to check and settle traffic violations.

Unresolved violations are flagged in a motorist's record with the Land Transportation Office and can prevent the renewal of vehicle registration. **(PNA) BY RAYMOND CARL DELA CRUZ**

BOC MODIFIES ORDER ON ACCOUNTING, INSPECTION OF FIREARMS

MANILA – The Bureau of Customs (BOC) has modified the inspection and accounting of issued firearms to its personnel from quarterly to monthly, amid Tuesday's shooting incident inside the Ateneo de Zamboanga University, wherein the suspect, the son of a bureau official, supposedly used a BOC-issued firearm.

In a memorandum dated Aug. 18, Customs Commissioner Ariel Nepomuceno ordered the Enforcement Group (EG) and Intelligence Group (IG) deputy commissioners to conduct a monthly physical accounting and inspection of all firearms issued to its personnel.

"In line with existing directives on gun safety and the full accounting and inventory of all firearms of the Bureau of Customs, the Deputy Commissioners – EG and IG are hereby directed to institutionalize the conduct of a monthly physical accounting and inspection of all firearms duly covered by Memo Receipts/Licenses/Letter Orders issued to, assigned to, or under the custody of BOC personnel, and/or authorized to be carried pursuant to a valid Mission Order (MO) or Letter of Authority (LOA)," it said.

"The Deputy Commissioners – EG and IG shall instruct their respective District commanders and heads of concerned offices or units to cause the actual presentation and physical inspection of all covered firearms within the first five working days of every month. A paper-based inventory without the actual presentation of the firearm shall not be sufficient. Personnel on official deployment shall be inspected at their place of assignment or immediately upon their return."

It noted that the monthly accounting and inspection shall include the verification of the following:

- Full name, office, assignment, and other

relevant details of the firearm holder;

- MO number, date of issuance, period of validity, authorized purpose or area of operation, and issuing office;

- Make, model, or type, caliber, serial number, and other identifying marks of the firearm, as matched against the corresponding registration and records;

- The corresponding Memo Receipt, License, or Letter Order covering each firearm,

- including the name of the registered owner or accountable officer, document number, date of issuance, and period of validity, when applicable;

- Quantity and description of issued magazines, ammunition, and accountable accessories, when applicable;

- Physical condition, completeness, and serviceability of the firearm, including any loss, damage, defect, alteration, or discrepancy in its serial number or identifying marks;

- Validity of the required Neuro-Psychiatric Test or Evaluation, License to Own and Possess Firearms (LTOPF), Permit to Carry Firearms Outside of Residence (PTCFOR), Gun Safety Seminar certification, and other supporting documents, as applicable; and

- Proof of compliance with existing BOC policies and issuances on gun safety, storage, safekeeping, transport, handling, and the prohibition against unauthorized access, transfer, or use.

At the same time, Nepomuceno noted that the occurrence of any of the following circumstances shall warrant the immediate cancellation of the Memo Receipt, License, Letter Order, MO, or LOA:

- Failure of the firearm holder to present the same for inspection within the reglementary period;

- The issued firearm is covered by an expired, deficient, or terminated

Memo, Receipt, License, Letter-Order, Mission Order, or Letter of Authority;

- Identifying marks or serial numbers of the firearm do not correspond with the information on record;

- Firearms which are lost, damaged, altered, unserviceable or improperly secured; and

- Other similar or analogous circumstances.

It also noted that upon determination of any of the foregoing circumstances, the respective District Commanders shall immediately cause the surrender of the firearm to the proper custodian, as applicable, and report the incident through the appropriate chain of command.

They are also required to submit a monthly Firearms Accounting and Inspection Report, duly signed and certified as complete and correct by the concerned District Commander or head of office, to the respective Deputy Commissioner not later than the seventh working day of every month.

The report shall indicate the total number of firearms due for inspection, the number actually inspected, all unrepresented firearms and discrepancies noted, and the corresponding corrective actions undertaken, if any.

The Deputy Commissioners – EG and IG shall thereafter submit their respective consolidated reports, together with their findings and appropriate recommendations, to the Office of the Commissioner not later than the tenth working day of every month.

The memorandum supersedes and replaces the quarterly compliance reports required under the earlier Memorandum on Basic Rules on Gun Safety dated June 29, 2026, which was issued after the shooting incident at the San Jose National High School in Tacloban. **(PNA) BY FERDINAND PATINIO**

MMDA: FASTER FLOOD SUBSIDENCE SIGN OF IMPROVED MITIGATION PROGRAMS

MANILA – The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) said floodwaters in the National Capital Region now subside faster than before -- a measurable evidence of effective mitigation efforts.

In a Radyo Pilipinas interview on Friday, MMDA General Manager Undersecretary Nicolas Torre III cited Aurora Boulevard corner Katipunan Avenue in Quezon City as an example, where floods that previously took 18 to 24 hours to subside now clear in about five.

"Nitong nakaraang pag-ulang na umapaw 'yan, 2 p.m. tumigil ang ulan, 7 p.m. passable na uli ang kalsada sapagkat wala na 'yong tubig (During the recent rain that caused flooding there, the rain stopped at 2 p.m., and by 7 p.m., the road was already passable because the water was gone)," Torre said.

He said the MMDA uses three parameters to measure the effectiveness of its flood control measures: extent of flooding, which should be reduced; depth of standing floodwater, which should

not deepen and should allow roads to remain passable; and speed at which floodwaters recede.

Torre said areas such as Camanava (Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas, Valenzuela), which used to experience severe flooding, have also shown improvement based on assessments acknowledged by local government units.

He attributed the improvement to MMDA's coordination with other agencies, particularly the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), which examined the design of existing waterways, drainage systems and pumping stations to ensure rainwater is properly channeled to major waterways and eventually to Manila Bay and Laguna Lake.

Torre said the MMDA, DPWH and local government units also revisited the region's drainage master plan during a Metro Manila Council meeting on Wednesday, aiming to harmonize improvements and anti-flood mitigation measures across the region.

He said DPWH Secretary Vince Dizon ordered a reassessment of the drainage master plan, noting that many existing systems are outdated and may need to be expanded, along with additional pumping stations in areas where these are lacking.

During the same radio show, San Juan City Mayor and Metro Manila Council Chairperson Francis Zamora said they also discussed harmonizing local solid waste management programs, noting that upgraded drainage systems and pumping stations would be rendered ineffective if waterways remain clogged with garbage.

"Kung puro basura rin po ang makikita natin na nakabara rito, hindi rin po talaga dadaloy ang tubig (If all we see blocking these waterways is garbage, the water really will not flow properly)," Zamora said.

Zamora called on residents to be more disciplined in disposing of their waste and to stop treating rivers, creeks and waterways as dumpsites. **(PNA) BY RAYMOND CARL DELA CRUZ**

ABRA RESIDENTS GET SUPPORT FOR MEDICAL, DAILY NEEDS THRU UPLIFT

SAN JUAN, Abra (PIA)

— “Agyaman kami ta adda tulong nga nagapu ti gobyerno. Daytoy ket igatang ko ti pang-maintenance ken inaldaw nga kasapulan mi ni baket ko,” said Alfredo B. Ingaw from the far-flung village of Alaoa, Tingeg in Abra.

(Thank you for this assistance from the government. I will use this to buy my maintenance medicines and our daily needs with my wife.)

Ingaw is among the near-poor beneficiaries who received P2,000 under the Unified Package for Livelihoods, Industry, Food, and Transport (UPLIFT) program of the government through the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

Like Ingaw, Rosalina M. Brioso from Culiong, San Juan, said she is thankful for the support especially for the medicines she needs due to her weak heart.

“Agyaman kami unay ta adda met pagatang mi ti masapul mi ken daytoy agas ko ta agme-maintenance-ak,” she shared.

(We are very thankful we have some money to buy what we need and for maintenance medicine.)

The cash aid of P2,000 that will be distributed from July to December 2026 aims to support poor and low-income households in coping with the impact of high prices of fuel and commodities.

“Ti madama nga mapay-out-an tatta ket dagitoy group 2 or dagitoy non-4Ps nga maibaga tayo nga near-poor to poor households nga base iti resulta ti proxy-means test nga inubra ti DepDev nga base metlaeng idia y datos nga nakolekta ti PSA idi CBMS survey iti tawen 2023-2024,” explained DSWD-Cordillera Regional Executive Assistant Climson Balangue.

“We are currently conducting payout for Group 2 beneficiaries, or the non-4Ps, who are near-poor to poor households based on the result of proxy-means test done by the DepDev based on the data collected by the SA during the CBMS survey for years 2023-2024.”

Balangue added that from the initial manual payout for

the first month, succeeding payouts will shift to digital distribution using e-wallets via G-Cash, Landbank, and other banks.

“Tatta medyo na-proseso lang ta manual payment ngem ti sumarsaruno nga bulan ket digital payment-en tapno maiwasan diay gastos ti beneficiaries tayo nga usaren da nga mapan agal-ala ti assistance,” he said.

The payout is led by the DSWD in partnership with the local government unit of San Juan and other stakeholders.

UPLIFT is among the initiatives of the government under President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. to protect vulnerable sectors from the fluctuating prices of commodities. (JDP/JJMT-PIA-CAR, Abra) **BY JAMIE JOIE M. TUBADEZA**

200 AFFECTED STEEL PLANT WORKERS SEEK HELP FROM DAVAO CITY LGU

DAVAO CITY — About 200 workers at the recently raided Mighty Steel plant in Bunawan, Davao City, trooped to the City Hall on Monday (August 17) to seek assistance after their workplace closed following the raid, leaving them unemployed.

The workers were met by Davao City First District Councilor Pamela Librado, the current chairperson of the City Council Committee on Labor and Employment Opportunities.

“Niadto ni atong kahigsuonan na mga workers diri sa atong opisina aron magpadayag sa ilang concern kabahin sa aning pagsarado sa nahitabong companya, sa karon naa pa ta sa proseso sa pagpangayo ug detalye sa ilaha unsa ba dyud ang tinood na nahitabo,” Librado said.

(Our brethren workers went to our office to express their concerns regarding the closure of their company. For now we are getting the details from them on what really happened.)

Librado says they are asking the City Government if the office could provide assistance to the workers who have not received salaries after the raid. Receiving the workers

SWINE-RAISING KITS GIVE SIQUIJOR FAMILIES ALTERNATIVE INCOME UNDER DOLE PROGRAM

ENRIQUE VILLANUEVA, Siquijor (PIA) — Corazon Dabodabo, 40, received livelihood assistance from the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) to start a swine-raising venture for her family.

Dabodabo, whose husband works as a carpenter, is among the beneficiaries of DOLE's livelihood intervention for families of child laborers in Siquijor. Her son, 14, was identified as a child laborer after gathering and selling firewood to cover personal and school expenses.

DOLE provided the family with P30,000 worth of livelihood starter kits under the DOLE Integrated Livelihood Program (DILP). The assistance consisted of two piglets, a male and a female, along with feeds, vitamins, and deworming supplies.

“Nagpasalamat ko kay usa mi sa natabangan sa DOLE. Wala gyud ko magdahom nga maapil mi. Dako na kaayong tabang para sa akong pamilya ang among nadawat” (I am grateful to be one of those given assistance by DOLE. I never expected that we would be included. What we received has been a great help to my family), Dabodabo said.

The two piglets have since grown to nine.

Dabodabo said the growth of the livelihood is a welcome development for the family, which she hopes will help support her son's schooling.

DILP is a DOLE flagship program that provides livelihood grant assistance and capacity-building support to help workers start or expand entrepreneurial ventures, individually or collectively.

It supports the Marcos administration's goal of strengthening the livelihood capacity of Filipinos.

Addressing child labor through livelihood

DOLE Community Facilitator Elizabeth Solicar presented the child labor situation in the province and the agency's interventions during a Barangay Information Outreach Network (BION) activity in Larena organized by the Philippine Information Agency.

Solicar said DOLE livelihood assistance is guided by outcome profiling results, which the agency uses to identify families needing support and determine appropriate interventions.

“Ang DOLE muhatag gyud ug interventions which is livelihood nga nagbase sa outcome profiling (DOLE provides interventions, particularly livelihood assistance, based on the results of outcome profiling),” Solicar said.

The profiling data Solicar presented showed that Siquijor recorded 25 child laborers in 2018, all male, and 440 in 2019, consisting of 388 males and 52 females.

The 2022 round recorded 560, consisting of 350 males and 210 females.

The 2025 round recorded 254, consisting of 168 males and 86 females.

been closed ever since. (PIA/RGA) **BY RUDOLPH ALAMA**

KALINGA HEALTH AUTHORITIES REITERATE CALL FOR PARENTS TO SUPPORT MR-SIA

TABUK CITY, Kalinga (PIA) — Local health authorities call on parents and guardians to bring their children aged 6 to 59 months old (4 years and 11 months) to rural health units or health centers for free measles-rubella vaccination as the immunization campaign is ongoing.

In Tabuk City, the City Health Services Office (CHSO) and local officials launched the Measles-Rubella Supplemental Immunization Activity (MR-SIA) with the ceremonial vaccination of several children of health care workers during the city government's Monday flag-raising ceremony at the Tabuk People's Gym.

The initiative aims to show that the vaccine is safe and effective and is essential to protect children against measles (tigdas) and rubella (tigdas-hangin), which are highly contagious diseases that can lead to severe complications and even death.

“Ang measles o tigdas ay isang lubhang nakakahawang sakit na nagreresulta sa mataas na lagnat, pagkakaroon ng ubo, pamamaga ng mata, at pagkakaroon ng butlig-butlig o rash sa katawan. Ang rubella ay tigdas hangin, ang pagkakaiba niya ay mas malalaki ang kaniyang butlig na may lamang tubig,” said Jandel

In 2025, DOLE provided livelihood interventions to 53 parents and child laborers in Siquijor, Solicar said.

Poverty incidence in Siquijor's municipalities ranged from 6.46% to 9.57% in 2021, based on the Philippine Statistics Authority's city and municipal-level poverty estimates released in April 2024.

Maria recorded the highest at 9.57%, followed by Lazi at 9.41%, Enrique Villanueva at 9.04%, San Juan at 7.67%, and Larena at 6.46%.

The intervention forms part of DOLE's effort to address child labor by protecting children and helping their families become more economically capable.

(RAC/PIA **SIQUIJOR, WITH REPORTS FROM CYNTHIA A. GUILLEPA**) **BY RIZALIE ANDING CALIBO**

Taguam, health education and promotion officer of the CHSO.

“Sa mga bata ngayon, binibigyan natin ng libreng bakuna laban sa measles at rubella, so kailangan po nating maabot yung 95% na immunization coverage para maprotektahan ang ating komunidad,” he added.

Safe and effective

The Provincial Health Office (PHO) reiterated that the measles-rubella vaccine is safe and effective, citing its good track record that spans decades.

“Maganda ang record ng bakunang ito. Ginagamit talaga ito ng mga doktor, mga lider sa gobyerno, at ilang henerasyon ng pamilya. Uray siyak ket nabakunanak dito. Strikto rin ang quality check sa expiration date at bisa ng bakunang ito, kaya 100 percent naligtas at epektibo ito sa katawan. Han met seguro nga irecommend ti doktor daytuy nu han nga effective,” said Alona Bagtang, HEPO II of the PHO.

She added that measles and rubella do not have a specific medical cure, and vaccination is the only way to provide protection.

“Iba ang tigdas at tigdas-hangin, hindi ito kaya ng simpleng resistansya lang dahil nakakamatay ito. Ang bakuna ang tanging proteksyon. Kapag pinatagal na hindi bakunado ang bata, delikado siya sa tigdas at tigdas-hangin, bukas ang katawan niyang mahawa anumang oras, at delikado ito sa buhay niya,” Bagtang said.

She emphasized that side effects are rare, but if pain and fever are experienced, they are only mild and temporary.

“Mostly ket awan ti side effect na daytuy pero kung sakali na may side effects, simpleng kirot o lagnat lang, kung sakali na kailangan niyo ng assistance, makipag-ugnayan lang po tayo sa health centers natin ken dagiti doctors ti RHUs,” Bagtang said.

The MR-SIA will run until August 28, 2026, with the vaccine available at health centers or rural health units in the province. (JDP/IOS-PIA CAR, Kalinga) **BY IRYLL O. SICNAO**

BIR FLAGS 25 LUZON GAS STATIONS IN FUEL MARKING DRIVE

MANILA – The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) flagged 25 out of 65 gasoline stations during the first three days of its large-scale fuel marking enforcement drive across Luzon.

In a statement Thursday, BIR said it launched a multi-week fuel marking operation on Aug. 17 to detect possible tax non-compliance by field-testing gasoline, diesel, and kerosene.

Petroleum products that fail field tests are subjected to immediate inventory, sealing or padlocking, and confirmatory testing.

"We are making fuller use of fuel marking and our other enforcement tools to identify revenue leakages, act on them quickly, and protect compliant businesses from unfair competition in the petroleum sector," BIR Commissioner Charlito Martin Mendoza said.

"This is not a one-time operation. We will continue using fuel marking and our other enforcement tools wherever the risk of tax leakage is high, and we will expand these operations to other parts of the country."

Under the fuel marking enforcement drive, if non-compliance is confirmed, the BIR will assess and collect all applicable taxes and penalties under existing laws and regulations.

Taxpayers can request corrective fuel marking and the lifting of seals once they settle their liabilities and meet all compliance requirements.

The fuel marking operations are further backed by other BIR enforcement and compliance activities, including inventory stock-taking, registration and invoice verification, and Tax Compliance Verification Drives. **(PNA) BY ANNA LEAH GONZALES**

DOE EYES MORE SOLAR INSTALLATIONS AMIDSTREAMLINED PROCESSES

MANILA – The installation of solar power systems is now easier for households, small businesses, and medical facilities, as the Department of Energy (DOE) has reduced regulatory requirements and simplified the application processes.

In a news release on Thursday, the DOE said Department Circular DC2026-08-0017 covers two categories of own-use solar installations – the Self-Generating Facility Zero-Export Solar Systems (SGF ZESS) and the Micro-Solar Systems (MSS).

The SGF ZESS covers solar photovoltaic systems connected to a household or facility's electrical system and equipped with safeguards that prevent excess electricity from being exported to the distribution grid.

The MSS, meanwhile, are for "smaller, consumer-grade plug-and-play solar systems of up to

one kilowatt designed for direct connection to a consumer's electrical system, subject to applicable technical and safety requirements."

Following the issuance of the DOE circular, applicants for MSS will not be required to present building permits or certificates of compliance (COC) from the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC). Instead, they will be "subject to a notification process with their distribution utility (DU)."

For those with SGF ZESS, both the COC requirement and the building permit are no longer required, as the DOE noted that a building permit has already been secured before building construction.

DUs are also mandated to "remove unnecessary pre-installation clearances, technical permits, and inspection charges as conditions for

PDIC TO SELL 70 PROPERTIES VIA E-BIDDING SEPT. 23-24

MANILA – The Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC) will auction 70 properties across Luzon via electronic public bidding (e-bidding) on Sept. 23 to 24.

In a statement, PDIC said the e-bidding features 51 residential, 17 agricultural and one mixed residential/agricultural property.

These properties are located in Albay, Batangas, Camarines Sur, Isabela, Laguna, Palawan, Pangasinan, Romblon and Sorsogon.

A prime 240-square-meter commercial lot along the Western Nautical Highway in Naujan, Oriental Mindoro banners the

auction with a minimum bid price of PHP3.1 million.

The PDIC said online bid submissions will open from 9 a.m. on Sept. 23 until 1 p.m. on Sept. 24, followed by the opening of bids at 2 p.m.

Prospective buyers can join the e-bidding through a one-time registration on the portal at <https://assetsforsale.pdic.gov.ph/Account/Register> or access the portal by clicking the "Assets for Sale" icon in the PDIC website's homepage at www.pdic.gov.ph. **(ANNA LEAH GONZALES/PNA)**

STOCKS REBOUND ON RENEWED RISK APPETITE AS PESO GAINS

MANILA – Bargain-hunting snapped a three-day losing streak on

Thursday as the Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi) rallied on renewed risk appetite, while the peso strengthened against the greenback.

The local bourse's main index rose 1.30 percent to 6,238.46 points, while the broader All Shares index climbed 1.14 percent to 3,435.23 points.

Mining and Oil led the sectoral gauges with a 5.04 percent jump. This was followed by Services, up 2.61 percent; Holding Firms, 1.29 percent; Industrial, 0.65 percent; Property, 0.34 percent; and Financials, 0.27 percent.

Volume reached 3.5 billion shares amounting to PHP8.78 billion.

Advancers outpaced decliners at 113 to 67, while 66 shares were unchanged.

"Buying interest lifted market sentiment, with investors taking advantage of lower valuations after the recent decline. The recovery reflected renewed risk appetite after (the) global market also traded in green, although participants remain

BILLEASE, PNB INK P1-B CONSUMER CREDIT DEAL

MANILA – Consumer finance platform Billease signed a PHP1-billion credit facility with Philippine National Bank (PNB) on Thursday to expand financing options and credit access for Filipino consumers.

In a statement, Billease said the facility utilizes the Personal Property Security Registry (PPSR) to provide PNB a secured interest over Billease's high-quality consumer loan receivables, ensuring the bank is protected.

To secure the facility, Billease pledges a regularly refreshed pool of active customer loans worth more than the borrowed amount, instantly replacing any repaid or delinquent accounts.

Customer repayments are also channeled into a structured payment priority where PNB is paid first, offering the bank a safe, efficient way to expand its exposure to retail consumer credit.

"We are deliberately expanding our local funding base here at home, with the country's

watchful for fresh catalysts to sustain the upside," Luis Limlingan, Regina Capital Development Corporation head of sales, said.

The local currency ended the day at 61.67 against the greenback, stronger than Wednesday's 61.81 close.

It opened at 61.70, an improvement from the previous session's 61.85 start.

The peso traded between 61.49 and 61.70, bringing the day's average to 61.60.

Volume reached USD2.1 billion, up from the USD1.89 billion recorded in the previous session. **(PNA) BY JOANN VILLANUEVA**

leading banks, because that allows us to keep serving more Filipinos with affordable, responsible credit," Billease co-founder and chief executive officer Georg Steiger said.

"PNB coming on board is a strong signal, it says the largest institutions in the market are ready to fund this kind of lending when it is done with discipline. We have built a profitable business that scales without compromising on underwriting standards, and relationships like this let us fund that growth locally, on improving terms."

In fiscal year 2025, Billease grew its revenues by 80 percent to PHP8.7 billion, generating a PHP782 million net profit and driving its gross loan book to PHP12.5 billion.

The platform now sustains this growth by onboarding over 200,000 new customers and disbursing more than PHP5 billion every month.

"Billease has demonstrated strong portfolio quality across different market cycles. This track record gave us confidence to establish this relationship at a meaningful scale. We see this as the beginning of a broader partnership and look forward to exploring additional opportunities to work together," PNB Executive Vice President and Head of Institutional Banking Sector Roberto Fo Abastillas said.

Billease said the PNB facility advances its strategy of increasingly funding growth through local partners and aligns with its entry into banking.

The company earlier acquired a rural bank, which is expected to broaden the products offered to customers, including savings and deposits. **(PNA) BY ANNA LEAH GONZALES**



PSC EMPOWERS YOUNG LIFTERS IN ZAMBOANGA CITY

MANILA – Grassroots athletes in weightlifting now have access to world-class equipment at the Hidilyn Diaz gym in Mampang, Zamboanga City.

The gym, established by Tokyo Olympic gold medalist Hidilyn Diaz-Naranjo in 2017, received a set of new equipment from the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) last Wednesday.

PSC chairman John Patrick Gregorio said the equipment delivery was more than a logistical act. "It was a promise kept. This is about building dreams. By equipping the home of our local weightlifting community, we are laying the foundation for the next generation of Olympic icons," he said in a news release Thursday.

Diaz-Naranjo has expressed her joy at seeing young lifters benefit from the upgrade.

"Thanks to this weightlifting equipment, the athletes of the Mampang Weightlifting Club can continue their training at the gym I had built in 2017," said Diaz-Naranjo.

"I am happy to see many young people trying out weightlifting and dreaming of becoming medalists," added the 2016 Rio Olympics silver medalist.

Present during the turnover ceremony were PSC officials led by Executive Assistant Lito Cinco from the Office of Commissioner Matthew Gaston, Zamboanga City Councilor Elbert Bong Atilano and Sports Development Officer Cecilia Atilano, national coaches Allen Jayfrus Diaz and Emelita Diaz, and Asian Youth and Junior medalists Alexsandra Ann Diaz and Jhodie Peralta.

The turnover was a big boost for Zamboanga's

weightlifting community, ensuring that young athletes have access to international-standard equipment and a nurturing environment.

The project is a collaboration between the PSC and the Department of Education, led by Secretary Sonny Angara, following President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s instruction for both government institutions to work together to develop sports programs across the country.

"Grassroots development is the lifeblood of Philippine sports. Every barbell lifted here is a step closer to producing champions who will one day carry our flag on the world stage," Gregorio said.

For the PSC, it reaffirms its mission to empower grassroots athletes and strengthen the pipeline of future champions. **(PNA) BY JEAN MALANUM**

GM ANTONIO EYEING FIDE WORLD SENIOR GLORY

MANILA – Grandmaster Rogelio "Joey" Antonio Jr. is looking forward to another successful campaign at the FIDE World Senior Chess Championships scheduled in Vrnjačka Banja, Serbia on Nov. 2 to 15.

The native of Calapan, Mindoro delivered five medals in the 24th ASEAN+ Age-Group Chess Championships, which concluded in Singapore on Sunday.

Antonio won three golds in Standard Team, Blitz Individual, and Blitz Team (with GM Jayson Gonzales and International Master Angelo Young) and snared two silvers in Standard Individual and Rapid Team (with Gonzales and

National Master Edmundo Gatus).

"I am happy to bring home medals. It is a great honor to once again represent and fight for the Philippine flag," Antonio said in an interview Tuesday.

The Singapore tournament was part of Antonio's preparation for the bigger

challenge in Serbia.

"I expect tougher opponents, so I really need to train harder. I hope that my campaign in Serbia would be successful, just like what I did in Singapore," the 13-time Philippine Open champion said. **(PNA) BY JEAN MALANUM**



Grandmaster Rogelio "Joey" Antonio Jr. (Contributed photo)

PH SPEEDCUBERS MAGALLANES, WONG WIN MEDALS IN MALAYSIA

MANILA – Filipinos have a bright future in speedcubing, a sport of solving twisty puzzles like the Rubik's Cube as fast as possible.

Juan Miguel "Uno" Magallanes and Brenton Angelo Lo Wong made the country proud by winning medals at the Malaysia National Speed Cubing Open held at Sunway Velocity Mall in Kuala Lumpur on Aug. 15.

The 12-year-old Magallanes topped the 2x2 (1.06s best/ 1.47s average) and placed second in 3x3 (4.48s best/6.45s average) and 3x3x3 One-Handed (11.06s best/12.26s average).

He also won the relay gold medal as a member of Team BTJ, along with Brenton Angelo Lo Wong and Malaysian Tee Kai Yang.

"When I started cubing almost three years ago, I was just happy getting sub-20 in 3x3 and sub-5 in 2x2," Stellar Cube-sponsored Magallanes said in a news release Thursday.

"One of the biggest lessons cubing has taught me is that you don't always realize how far you've come

until you stop and look back at where you started. What once felt impossible can slowly become reality when you keep practicing, keep learning, and, most importantly, keep showing up."

Aside from the relay gold medal, Wong finished third in 3x3 (5.36s best/5.54s average).

"I'm very thankful for God's guidance and for the support of my parents and sponsors," said the 20-year-old Wong, a junior marketing student from Ateneo de Manila University.

The two-time national speed cubing champion

said he hopes the medals they won in Malaysia would inspire the youth to join mind games and compete abroad.

"Under the newly formed National League of Mind Sports in the Philippines, I firmly believe that we can produce more players," said Wong, who, together with MnM Cube Shop, will continue holding seminars in Manila and the provinces.

The Filipinos are setting their sights on the inaugural Asian Speed Cubing Championships next year. **(PNA) BY JEAN MALANUM**



CHAMPION. Team BTJ members Malaysian Tee Kai Yang and Filipinos Juan Miguel "Uno" Magallanes and Brenton Angelo Lo Wong (left to right) win the relay event in the Malaysia National Speed Cubing Open held at Sunway Velocity Mall in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Aug. 15, 2026. The tournament was organized by the Asian Mind Sports Association (AMSA) and the Malaysia Cube Sports Association. (Contributed photo)

EALA ENDS WTA 1000 CINCINNATI OPEN CAMPAIGN

MANILA – Filipino tennis star Alexandra Eala bowed out of the WTA 1000 Cincinnati Open after absorbing a 6-4, 4-6, 2-6 loss to American Amanda Anisimova in their third-round match Monday at the Lindner Family Tennis Center P&G Center Court.

The 9th-seeded Anisimova will next face No. 6 Linda Noskova, a 7-6(3), 6-2 winner over Danish Carla Tauson.

Eala captured her first WTA 500 title at the Mubadala DC Open two weeks ago. She also won the Guadalajara 125 Open in Zapopan, Mexico.

Meanwhile, No. 2 Erina Rybakina of Kazakhstan downed Magdalena French of Poland, 6-4, 7-6 (3), to advance against No. 14 Diana Shnaider, who won over Polish Maja

Chwalinska, 6-2, 7-6 (3). American No. 3 Jessica Pegula and Polish No. 3 Iga Swiatek also secured Round of 32 berths.

Pegula downed compatriot Emma Navarro, 7-5, 6-2, to advance against Romanian No. 15 Sorana Cirstea, who prevailed over No. 18 Anna

Kalinskaya, 6-7(4), 6-1, 5-0 (ret.).

Swiatek, on the other hand, conquered Greek Maria Sakkari, 4-6, 6-1, 6-1, to set up a duel with French Diane Parry, who beat compatriot Lois Boisson, 4-6, 6-4, 6-3. **(PNA) BY JEAN MALANUM**



Alexandra Eala (Contributed photo)