

DTI-Rizal Participates in the launching of Kabalikat sa Kabuhayan on Sustainable Agriculture Program



Antipolo City, May 19, 2023 - The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)-Rizal proudly took part in the momentous program launching of the Kabalikat sa Kabuhayan (KSK) Batch 254, a sustainable agriculture initiative by SM Foundation. The event was held on May 19, 2023, at the Trinity Bible Baptist Church in Cabading, Barangay Inarawan, Antipolo City.

The representatives from DTI-Rizal in attendance were Business Development Division Chief Sharon F. Dioco, Senior Trade and Industry Development Specialist Marlene De Luna, and Negosyo Center-Antipolo Business Counselor Daryl Andres. Their presence underscored the agency's commitment to supporting and empowering local communities through sustainable livelihood programs. Representing



During the event, BDD Chief Sharon F. Dioco delivered an inspiring message to the KSK beneficiaries, emphasizing the importance of sustainable agriculture in enhancing their livelihoods and positively impacting the community. Her words of encouragement resonated deeply with the participants, igniting a sense of purpose and determination among them.

The Kabalikat sa Kabuhayan (KSK) on Sustainable Agriculture program is one of SM Foundation's flagship initiatives, aimed at empowering marginalized communities by providing them with the necessary skills, resources, and support to engage in sustain-

able farming practices. By collaborating with various government agencies and partners, SM Foundation seeks to create a comprehensive and holistic approach to community development, promoting economic growth and social progress.

DTI-Rizal's active participation in the program launching of KSK Batch 254 highlights the agency's unwavering commitment to fostering sustainable livelihood opportunities and driving inclusive economic development in the province. Through collaborative efforts, such as those demonstrated by the KSK program, DTI-Rizal continues to contribute to the empowerment and upliftment of local communities.

CMDI holds 5th commencement exercises



CMDI Bay Campus Class 2023 Outstanding Student and Magna Cum Laude Krisha Joy M. Villarin expressed her heartfelt gratitude, saying, "God made our journey possible as he sent us the right people with whom we can dream of being able to wear this sablay sa kabila ng mga sablay natin sa buhay."

The Bay Campus of CARD-MRI Development Institute, Inc. (CMDI), the academic institution of CARD Mutual Reinforcing Institutions (CARD MRI), held its fifth commencement exercises, honoring the graduates of the Academic Year 2022-2023 on July 28, 2023.

With the theme "CMDI Graduates: Molded through a Resilient Educational Foundation," the academic institution celebrated the resilience and readiness of its graduates for their future endeavors. CMDI President Dr. Flor-deliza L. Sarmiento expressed her gratitude to the graduates, "I believe that CMDI has prepared you to face the world with hope and optimism, and we are very grateful that we have produced another class who has the strong heart to promote development not only for themselves but also for their family and community."

In total, 449 students completed their studies this academic year. Of these, 84 graduated from Senior High School, and 365 earned college degrees.

CARD MRI also encourages CMDI graduates to join its mission of ending poverty in the Philippines, confident that the values instilled during their education at CMDI will have a lasting impact on their communities.

Furthermore, Dr. Dolores M. Torres, CMDI Senior Dean and CARD MRI Senior Management Adviser motivated the graduates to partake in nation-building and poverty eradication efforts of CARD MRI or other activities outside the organization. Dr. Torres believes that sincere acceptance of helping communities to improve their quality of life can facilitate the achievement of the mutual goal of eradicating poverty in the country.

Also, the Undersecretary for Human Resource and Organizational Development (HROD) at the Department of Education and the program's guest speaker, Dr. Gloria Jumamil Mercado, MNSA, urged the graduates to continuously challenge the norm by serving beyond personal interest with love for their country and fellow citizens. Dr. Mercado reminded the graduates to use their education to serve humanity and our country with love and compassion. She also urges them to participate in community initiatives, cultivate volunteerism, and promote unity, equality, and inclusivity that will impact our country's progress and development.

CARD MRI Founder and Chairman Emeritus and CMDI Chairperson Dr. Jaime Aristotle B. Alip said, "Education will always be a great equalizer. An educated person will never revert to poverty because it is their



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION EVENT FOR MSMEs. Actor Dingdong Dantes, who is also the entrepreneur behind Dingdong PH powered by Riderko, gives the signature thumbs-up alongside Go Negosyo founder Joey Concepcion at the Digital Sign Up 2023 held at the Ayala Malls Manila Bay last September 23, 2023. Joining them were Undersecretary Rafaelita Aldaba of the Department of Trade and Industry and Undersecretary Jocelle Batapa-Sigue of the Department of Information and Communication Technology, as well as leading content creators, popular social media influencers, and top executives from the country's most innovative technology companies. The annual digital transformation event is aimed at encouraging MSMEs to embrace digital technology in scaling up their businesses through inspirational talks and informative sessions.

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NEDA backs proposal to ban POGOs

NPA Medical Officer arrested in Taguig City

Solon wants more special courses to boost MSMEs

Senate musters enough support for Gatchalian's call to expel POGOs from PH

Pag-IBIG sets record anew as home loans reach P76.94B in Jan to Aug, up 6%

DOST CALABARZON, LSPU-IDD conduct elimination round of its first Robotics Tournament in the region

DSWD chief assures Senate to keep BP2 going

SM Supermalls Launches 100 Days of Christmas Surprising shoppers every day till December 25

The countdown to Christmas Day begins on September 16 as SM launches a host of fun activities, deals, and surprises for each member of the family.

It starts with surprises each day! From September 16 to December 25, someone lucky will be surprised, one mall at a time, with toys, gifts, groceries and meals on us as SM begins 100 Days of Christmas Surprises. Which mall will delight someone today? Come to SM to find out!

WHAT ELSE IS A-HAPPENIN'?

Breathtaking Spectacles, to mark the festive season, will dazzle you at your favorite SM mall. Your favorite malls will all be dressed with a dazzling display of holiday magic and sparkling Christmas centrepieces await shoppers inside the malls for that IG-worthy moment.

100 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS SURPRISES

EVERY DAY A WINNER AT SM SUPERMALLS! SEP 16 TO DEC 25

SM 65

EXPERIENCE THE HAPPIEST CHRISTMAS

100 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS SURPRISES

HAPPIEST CELEBRATIONS OCT 16 TO 30

BRIGHTEST SIGHTS STARTING SEP 16

SM SUPERMALLS

some Christmas Pawty packed with games and prizes for furbabies in pet costumes.

Welcome our Overseas Filipino Workers and Families! With the help of BDO Kabayan, SM Supermalls will be bringing holiday cheer to our modern-day heroes at the Pamaskong Handog by BDO Kabayan in SM City Cebu, SM City Fairview, and SM City General Santos with Superstars, prizes, and laughs galore.

Let's not forget that you can make a positive impact on the lives of those in need while enjoying your shopping. Buy one SM Cares' Bears of Joy, and we will donate to one underprivileged child.

And the fun never ends! On News Year's Eve, welcome 2024 with an unforgettable New Year's Eve celebration at SM Mall of Asia, SM Seaside Cebu, SM Lanang, and SM CDO Uptown.

To know more about SM Supermalls' 100 Days of Surprises, visit <https://gosm.link/100DaysOfChristmasSurprises> for daily surprise videos, <http://www.smsupermalls.com>, and follow @SMSupermalls on social media for all the Christmas surprises!

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27 NATURAL HEALTH AND NUTRITION TIPS THAT ARE EVIDENCE-BASED

14. Get moving

Doing aerobic exercise, or cardio, is one of the best things you can do for your mental and physical health.

It's particularly effective at reducing belly fat, the harmful type of fat that builds up around your organs. Reduced belly fat may lead to major improvements in your metabolic health

According to the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, we should strive for at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity each week

15. Don't smoke or use drugs, and only drink in moderation

Smoking, harmful use of drugs, and alcohol abuse can all seriously negatively affect your health.

If you do any of these actions, consider cutting back or quitting to help reduce your risk for chronic diseases.

There are resources available online — and likely in your local community, as well — to help with this. Talk with your doctor to learn more about accessing resources.

16. Use extra virgin olive oil

Extra virgin olive oil is one of the healthiest vegetable oils you can use. It's loaded with heart-healthy monounsaturated fats and powerful antioxidants that have anti-inflammatory properties

Extra virgin olive oil may benefit heart health, as people who consume it have a lower risk for dying from heart attacks and strokes according to some evidence

17. Minimize your sugar intake

Added sugar is extremely prevalent in modern food and drinks. A high intake is linked to obesity, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend keeping added sugar intake below 10% of your daily calorie intake, while the World Health Organization recommends slashing added sugars to 5% or less of your daily calories for optimal health

18. Limit refined carbs

Not all carbs are created equal. Refined carbs have been highly processed to remove their fiber. They're relatively low in nutrients and may harm your health when eaten in excess. Most ultra-processed foods are made from refined carbs, like processed corn, white flour, and added sugars.

Studies show that a diet high in refined carbs may be linked to overeating, weight gain, and chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes and heart disease

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NPA...

CAMP CAPIN-PIN, Rizal- An NPA Medical Officer and Political Instructor was arrested by joint AFP and PNP forces in Taguig City on Monday September 18, 2023.

Troops from the 203rd Infantry "Bantay Kapayapaan" Brigade, 2nd Infantry "Jungle Fighter" Division, Philippine Army and MIMAROPA PNP conducted a law enforcement operation resulting to the arrest of Alias Yvonne/ Sam/Yang at Central Signal Village, Taguig City.

Alias Yvonne is an NPA medical officer and political instructor of Platoon 2, ISLACOM MIN-

NEDA...

MANILA – Socio-economic Planning Secretary and National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Director General Arsenio Balisacan on Thursday expressed support for the proposed total ban on Philippine Off-shore Gaming Operators (POGOs) in the country.

This was after the Senate Ways and Means Committee, in its Committee Report 136 filed Tuesday, recommended the permanent expulsion of POGOOs to help maintain peace and order and sustain economic growth.

In a Palace briefing, Balisacan backed the proposal to halt POGO operations in the country, saying he believes that the online gambling companies "promote negative externalities to society, such as those alleged crimes or related issues."

Balisacan, one of the country's economic managers, said what he supports are "legitimate investments, good investments, quality investments, and those investments that will produce goods and services."

"It's an appreciation of what the long-term benefits are versus the cost. Our position at NEDA, which we have submitted some time ago, the cost especially, social cost, are quite high. And we don't think that the benefits in terms of the revenues generated and the impact on the economy are worth the cost," he said when asked about

DORO of Sub Regional Military Area 4D of the Southern Tagalog Regional Party Committee.

Alias Yvonne is a wanted NPA for 4 counts of murder, multiple counts of frustrated murder and theft under criminal case numbers: R-6558, R-6546, R-6547, R-6548, Crim case no: P-7446 with a reward of Php 280,000.00 covered by Joint Orders on Reward under. Said NPA personality is currently detained at PNP Headquarters in Camp Crame, Quezon City. "This development is a result of the collaboration with our partners in the security sector

NEDA's stance on the Senate's recommendation for the permanent ban of POGOOs.

"We have been moving around in many countries, cities attracting investments to the country, marketing our country as a good place to do business. We are not going around to attract business of this kind. We have investments inflows that will promote not only the economic but also the social aspects of our development."

Balisacan also expressed optimism that new investments could replace the revenues the country would lose, once POGOOs cease their operations.

Asked if he would recommend to President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. the total ban of POGOOs in the country, Balisacan said, "Personally, yes, if I'm asked."

Senator Sherwin Gatchalian, who chairs the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, said any revenue collected from the industry is "not worth the massive social costs associated with POGO-related crimes."

The committee urged the executive department to cease the operations of POGOOs to safeguard the well-being of the Filipino people and maintain a trajectory of growth and development in line with the administration's economic reforms.

It also called on the Senate's recommendation for the permanent ban of

in ensuring the safety and security of our communities.

We will be continuously working with our PNP counterparts to enforce the law against these NPA criminals so that they will not be able to sow terror in our communities.

Once again, we are calling the remaining members and supporters of the CPP-NPA-NDF to leave the armed struggle, return to the folds of the law and start a new life with your families", 2nd Infantry "Jungle Fighter Division Commander Maj. Gen. Roberto S. Capulong said in a statement

tion (BI) to cancel and revoke the working visas issued to foreign nationals employed in the POGO industry and implement their deportation following immigration rules and regulations.

The total number of victims of POGO-related crimes already reached 4,355, involving a total of 903 perpetrators, from January 2017 to June 30 this year, based on data from the Philippine National Police (PNP).

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From Page 1

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From Page 1

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The PNP report said crimes committed in such incidents include human trafficking, forcible abduction, homicide, illegal detention, kidnapping-for-ransom, theft, robbery-extortion, serious. (PNA)

Sept. 27-Oct. 03, 2023

DOST CALABARZON, LSPU-IDD its first Robotics Tournament in the region



As part of the celebration of "KaSYEN-SaYAhan sa CALABARZON 2023", DOST-CALABARZON organized its first-ever Preliminary Elimination Round of the Regional Robotics Tournament: RoboClash 2023 with the theme "Conquering Ideation: Imagine, Ignite, Inspire," in collaboration with the Laguna State Polytechnic University (LSPU) and the Ideation, Design, and Development Laboratory (IDD) on September 12, 2023, at SM City San Pablo.

The tournament successfully achieved its goals by effectively highlighting the students' skills and expertise in robot designing, control systems, and programming. Student representatives came from various schools across the provinces of Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, and Quezon. They participated in the Line Tracing Category, which uses autonomous robots to accurately trace or navigate a path or track by following a line at a specified time. On the other hand the Sumobot Category, inspired by

sumo wrestling, uses autonomous robots to push opponents out of the ring or disable them within the time limit.

Two representatives from each province in CALABARZON have progressed to the Grand Finals in both the Line Tracing and Sumobot Battle categories.

The students who have advanced to the Grand Finals in the Line Tracing Category are:

Batangas

- Phebe De Galicia, Gilson Leif Titular and Samantha G. Balitaan from Lipa City Science Integrated National High School.
- Arreis Miro R. Garbo, Ridge Marcus V. Reodique and Glen Hendrick V. De Asis from Philippine Science High School Calabarzon Region Campus.

Cavite

- Noah Eleazar Solsona, Beatrice Rosalinda M. Dolis and Jahnrei Kennard A. Falalimpa from Baco National High School Main.
- Miguel Gabriel B. Cabra and Justin Bustamante from Baco National High School Main.

Laguna

- John Matthew R. Asilo, Adrian S. Cagitla and Brenan R. Matuto from Crecencia Drucila Lopez Senior High School.
- Keisha Marie Moreno Pales, Steff Yunica Simon-dac Borgoños and Jaychelle Marie Collaga Coligado from Liliw National High School.
- Caislyn Therese D. Umali, Pimmy Jirah L. Maramot and Gillian B. Iranzo from Recto Memorial National High School.
- Kyell Rolf Jorel B. Daelo, Windell C. Solo and John Lloyd R. Maaño from Luis Palad Integrated High School.

Rizal

- Sean Sebastian L. Dacilo, Ernesto III R. Heriales and Ma. Zarene Marchrys O. Buluran from Francisco P. Felix Memorial National High School/SDO-RIZAL.
- Janvin D. Salvador, Aizel Mae O. Baybay and Mharvin Tapales from Antipolo National High School.

The students who have advanced to the Grand Finals in the Sumobot Battle Category are:

Rizal

Meanwhile, Pag-



conductelimination round of



- Juan Florentino A. Maramag, John Marck B. Palpal-latoc and Chynna Nicole S. Trinidad from Rizal National Science High School.
- Skyelle M. Ogalesco, Jhuanne C. Gallaron and Carl Danielle Ignacio from Antipolo National High School.

Quezon

- Myreace B. Mendoza, Frances Ann M. Abarle and Pitt Markus M. Perez from Recto Memorial National High School.
- Lhander Magalona, Nikki F. Pedragoza and Glen Dhale L. Capparos from Gumaca National High School.

Batangas

- Alex Dutcher Forcado and Noah Perez from Batangas City Integrated High School.
- Maxine Louise B. Vergara, John Emmanuel D. Lundag and Bjorn P. Lanto from Lipa City Science Integrated National High School.

Laguna

- Zeythroid Gomez, Jose Urbano G. Jr. Domingo and Ashley Nicole Macajelos from Looc Integrated School.

- Martin Gian D. Cornelio and Lord Arnel D. Grajo from Camp Vicente Lim Integrated School.

Cavite

- Javier Alejandro Cuyno, Chito Jr. Roxas and Ethan Francis Arceo from De La Salle Santiago Zobel School - Vermosa Campus.
- Ian Joshua P. De La Cruz, Irielle Christeena Q. Lopez and Mack Allen M. Andrada from Cavite Science Integrated School.

In recognition of the students' dedication and creative efforts in showcasing their robot-building skills, awards were presented to the Top 3 robots with the most exceptional designs.

The Top 3 robots that won the Best Design are:

- 1st place John Matthew R. Asilo, Adrian S. Cagitla and Brenan R. Matuto from Crecencia Drucila Lopez Senior High School in Laguna.
- 2nd place Sean Sebastian L. Dacilo, Ernesto III R. Heriales and Ma. Zarene Marchrys O. Buluran from Francisco

P. Felix Memorial National High School/SDO-RIZAL in Rizal.

- 3rd place Iroquois Zachary Q. Reyes, Charleiz Gracielle B. Malana and Ericka R. Mendiola from Col. Lauro D. Dizon Memorial Integrated High School in Laguna.

This tournament played a crucial role in fostering stronger connections and relationships among faculty, students, and enthusiasts across the entire region who share a passion for these fields. The event was graced by the presence of Engr. Samuel L. Caperiña, Provincial S&T Director of Laguna, Professor Joel M. Bawica, Campus Director of Laguna State Polytechnic University - San Pablo City Campus, and Dr. Darwin Ofirin EdD, Associate Dean of the College of Industrial Technology at LSPU SPCC.

Participants in the RoboClash tournament who have successfully advanced to the Grand Finals will face off on September 19, 2023, with the awards ceremony scheduled for September 22, 2023, at the Baker Hall of the University of the Philippines Los Baños. **PR**

From Page 1

of their loans and keep their monthly payments affordable. This is because we at Pag-IBIG Fund highly value sustainability, so that our current borrowers can maintain their ability to pay their loans and allow even more members to avail of our home financ-

ing programs. With four months to go before we end the year, we are optimistic that we shall once again set a banner year in the home loan front, and thus empower more Filipinos to become homeowners," Acosta said



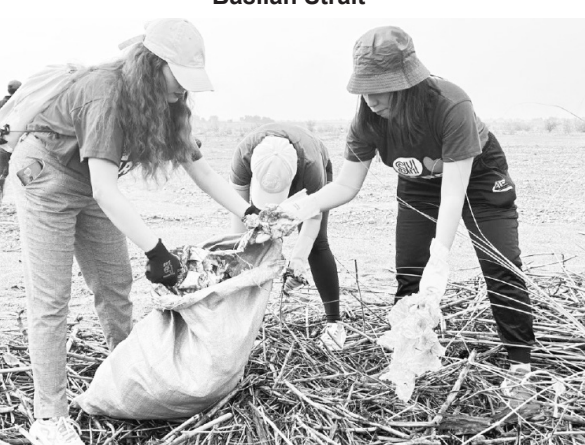
SM'S BIGGEST HAUL AT CLEAN UP: 100,000 KILOS OF TRASH COLLECTED BY OVER 17,000 VOLUNTEERS ACROSS 15 SM MALLS



SM Supermalls has participated in the International Coastal Clean Up since 2015, becoming an avenue for volunteers to work together towards a cleaner, greener future.

SM Cares continues to drive active participation in ocean conservation by taking part once again in this year's International Coastal Cleanup Day last September 16, 2023, Saturday.

15 SM malls in 12 locations nationwide partnered with the DENR, LGUs and communities to collect 100,432.50 kg of trash



The shores of Cagayan River get cleaned by volunteers from SM City Tuguegarao & SM Center Tuguegarao Downtown

SM City Bataan cleans coastal barangays by the Balanga Wetland and Nature Park



Bagasbas Beach gets greener with a clean up by SM City Daet

THE 38TH INTERNATIONAL COASTAL CLEAN-UP



SM City General Santos volunteers clear up Bauayan River



SM City Mindpro show their trash collected along Basilan Strait



The shores of Cagayan River get cleaned by volunteers from SM City Tuguegarao & SM Center Tuguegarao Downtown



Coastal barangays by Puerto Princesa Bay clean up with SM City Puerto Princesa



SM City Legazpi volunteers are ready to clean the coast of Legazpi Boulevard



SM City Sorsogon does a clean-up by the pier site of Brgy. Talisay & Bitan-o



SM City Olongapo Central and SM City Olongapo Downtown return to Kalaklan Parola for a clean-up



SM City Cebu and SM Seaside City Cebu clean Kinalumsan River by SRP



SM by the BAY volunteers fight for a trash-free Manila Bay

cont. on page 6

EDITORIAL:

New deal for farmers

Will the lives of more than 610,000 farmer-beneficiaries of the government's agrarian reform program improve significantly in the years ahead with the New Agrarian Reform Emancipation Act?

That would be the expected end-result of President Marcos Jr.'s recent order to the Department of Agrarian Reform to ensure the "smooth and immediate" enforcement of the New Agrarian Reform Emancipation Act.

What the new law does is to condone all loans, including interest, penalties, and surcharges incurred by over 610,000 agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs).

The condonation would cover at least 1.173 million hectares of land and an estimated P57.55 billion in unpaid amortization.

It would also terminate P206.25 million in unpaid just compensation by 10,201 ARBs tilling 11,531 hectares of land acquired through voluntary land transfer or the direct payment scheme.

The President's recent Executive Order extended for two years EO 4 which provides for a moratorium on the payment of the principal obligation and interest on amortization payable by ARBs.

The two-year extension of the agrarian debt moratorium will benefit some 129,059 ARBs whose land awards did not reach the cut-off on July 24, 2023 to qualify for the condonation of agrarian debt.

The extension of the moratorium on the payment of the amortization and principal on the debt of ARBs will no doubt contribute to a marked improvement in their daily lives as they will have more income to meet their daily needs.

ARB beneficiaries will be freed from the burden of onerous debts and instead reap the benefits from the land they cultivate.

Apart from contributing to their well-being and uplifting their quality of life, the New Agrarian Reform Emancipation Act will also re-energize the agricultural sector as a whole.

This will lead to greater farm productivity particularly at this time when weak harvests of palay and other agricultural crops have jacked up the retail prices of essential foodstuffs and contributed to galloping inflation.

At the same time, the administration should continue to facilitate the delivery of support services to all ARBs.

The farmers should be provided with adequate credit so they can gain access to modern farm equipment and afford basic farm inputs such as seeds, fertilizers and pesticides.

Other vital support services, including post-harvest facilities and farm-to-market roads, will make the lives of agrarian reform beneficiaries a lot better after a long wait for deliverance from poverty.

Solon...

MANILA – Senator Chiz Escudero on Thursday cited the need to pass a measure that will create special courses to boost the micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) sector, considered as the backbone and driver of Philippine economy.

"There is a dearth in curricular offerings tailor-made for incubating, managing, growing MSMEs, one which draws from experiences, both triumphs and failures, of local MSMEs," Escudero, chair of the Committee on Higher, Technical and Vocational Education, said in a statement.

He urged his colleagues to support Senate Bill No. 2442 or the Philippine Entrepreneurs' Academy Act, which seeks to provide undergraduate and graduate degree programs on entrepreneurship.

Escudero said this will boost entrepreneurship and strengthen the core competencies of up-and-coming Filipino entrepreneurs.

Under SB 2442, the proposed academy shall offer undergraduate and graduate degree programs and short-term diploma or certificate courses on entrepreneurship, including entrepreneurship development in the fields of agriculture, trade, technology and manufacturing.

"This bill answers a need that is integral to national economic development plans of manufacturing resurgence, high value-chain creation, jobs generation, and enterprises that pay taxes which are plowed back to the people," he said.

The Academy's mandate includes the following:

- (a) Enhance the core competencies of individuals on entrepreneurship;
- (b) Cater to the needs of technical-vocational, undergraduate and graduate students;
- (c) Promote the relevance of entrepreneurship to job generation and sustainable economic growth of the country;
- (d) Formalize and integrate, under a school system, the non-formal entrepreneurship programs and short-term technical-vocational

courses of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), and other government agencies concerned;

- (e) Provide education, consultancy and extension services;
- (f) Supervise publication on entrepreneurship;
- (g) Conduct scientific and policy-oriented research and training; and
- (h) Perform other interventions as may be formulated by its Board of Trustee.

Escudero, however, said the creation of the academy does not duplicate degrees that some state universities and colleges (SUCs) have been offering.

It will instead be offering specialized courses within this particular discipline. It fills a gap in the higher education landscape, one that is customized for a sector that is a growth driver, wealth creator, and jobs generator.

The academy will have two campuses, with the main campus to be established in the Clark Freeport and Special Economic Zone, which will be known as the Philippine Entrepreneurs' Academy Main Campus-Clark. The second campus will be put up in Baguio City, to be known as the Philippine Entrepreneurs' Academy-Baguio City Campus.

The proposed law allows the creation of more campuses upon approval of its governing board.

Meanwhile, Senator Sherwin Gatchalian said only 64 percent of TESDA for 2022 took assessments for national certifications.

He also lamented the decreasing targets for the number of Technical Vocational and Education Training (TVET) graduates that underwent assessment. From a 70 percent target in 2023, the target for 2024 is down to 60 percent.

The certification is needed by the graduates to be employed as employers value the certification of those courses.

Those who do not undergo assessments and receive certifications take courses that have

no training regulations. Some of these courses include creative web design and other information and communication technology (ICT) courses, as well as language training courses.

While those with training regulations are the only ones that have competency assessment tools. Some programs, however, including those that are enterprise-based

and community-based have no existing training regulations.

Gatchalian is also pushing for the certification of senior high graduates who took the technical-vocational-livelihood (TVL) track to boost their employability.

He proposed to include PHP1 billion in the 2024 budget for the certification of around 400,000 TVL learners. (PNA)

port, Gatchalian urges the labor department to look for alternative employment placements for Filipino nationals employed by POGO taking into account their skills and capabilities with the possibility of being absorbed by other industries such as Information Technology Business Process Outsourcing (IT-BPOs) and manufacturing through proper coordination.

The report also urges the Bureau of Immigration (BI) to cancel and revoke the working visas issued to foreign nationals employed in the POGO industry and implement their deportation following immigration rules and regulations.

"Malinaw sa datos na ating nakalap nito mga nakaraang buwan na ginagamit ng mga kawatan ang POGO para makapagsagawa ng mga krimen na kinabibilangan ng human trafficking, at iba't ibang investment tulad ng crypto-currency at love scam," Gatchalian added.

The total number of victims of POGO-related crimes already reached 4,355 involving a total of 903 perpetrators from January 2017 to June 30 of this year, based on a report released by the Philippine National Police (PNP). According to the PNP, crimes committed in such incidents include human trafficking, forcible abduction, homicide, illegal detention, kidnapping-for-ransom, theft, robbery-extortion, serious physical injuries, swindling, and grave coercion, among others.

Senate...

The Senate Committee on Ways and Means, led by Senator Win Gatchalian, has mustered enough support for its call to immediately expel Philippine Offshore Gaming Operators (POGOs) from the country in a bid to help maintain peace and order and sustain economic growth.

"Isa itong mahalagang hakbang para mapigilan ang paglaganap ng krimeng nagmula sa ilang kumpanya ng POGO. Inaasahan natin na maabot ang ating layunin na mapanatili ang kaayusan sa bansa, na siyang magdudulot ng paglago ng ating ekonomiya," Gatchalian said as he formally filed Committee Report No. 136 containing such recommendation.

Over the past several months, Gatchalian has steadfastly advocated for the closure of POGO in the country, maintaining that any revenue derived from the industry is not worth the massive social costs associated with POGO-related crimes. With the filing of the committee report, the country will realize sooner than later the removal of POGO operations from the country.

Specifically, the committee report calls for the adoption of a resolution urging the executive department to cease the operations of POGOs. This is aimed at safeguarding the well-being of the Filipino people and maintaining a trajectory of growth and development in line with the administration's economic reforms.

In the same re-

DA-4A, sinanay ang mga cluster sa pakikipagkalalan sa mga malalaking mamimili ng produktong agrikultural

Patuloy ang pagsulong ng Department of Agriculture IV-CALABARZON (DA-4A) Farm and Fisheries Clustering and Consolidation (F2C2) Program katuwang ang Jolibee Group Foundation sa proyektong Agro-Entrepreneurship Clustering Approach (AECA) sa pamamagitan ng pagsasanay sa mga magsasaka ukol sa pagiging entrepreneur.

Ang AECA ay isang proseso na naglalayong maturuan ang mga magsasaka ng mga estratehiya sa pagne-negosyo upang sila ay makapag-suplay sa mas malalaking mamimili gaya ng Jolibee Group Foundation. Hangad nitong langat ang estado ng pagsasakamula sa pagiging isang indibidwal na prodyuser tungo sa pagiging mahusay na negosyante na mas pinalalakas sa tulong ng clustering at consolidation.

Kaugnay nito, kamakailan lamang ay isinagawa ang pagsasanay sa AECA na nilahukan ng apat na cluster sa rehiyon. Sila ay ang High Value Crops of Sariaya, Masaganang Magsasaka ng Talahiban 1.0 at 2.0, Luntian Multi-Purpose Cooperative, at General Trias Dairy Raisers Multipurpose Cooperative.

Nagustuhan ni G. Melchor Namuco, pangulo ng cluster ng Masaganang Magsasaka ng Barangay Talahiban Uno at Dos, ang layunin ng AECA na nakapokus umano sa kanilang tuluyang pagkawala sa kamay ng mga trader at tumindig bilang isang mas pinatatag na cluster sa merkado.

Ang aktibidad ay pinangunahan nina F2C2 Focal Person Bb. Jhoanna Santiago, Agribusiness Promotion Section Chief G. Richmond Pablo, High Value Crops Development Program Coffee and Cacao Focal Person Maria Ana Balmes, kasama ang iba pang mga kawani mula sa DA-4A at lokal na pamahalaan.

economic Planning Secretary and National Economic Authority (NEDA) Director General Arsenio Balisacan on Thursday expressed support for the proposed total ban on Philippine Offshore Gaming Operators (POGOs) in the country.

This was after the Senate Ways and Means Committee, in its Committee Report 136 filed Tuesday, recommended the permanent expulsion of POGOOs to help maintain peace and order and sustain economic growth.

In a Palace briefing, Balisacan backed the proposal to halt POGO operations in the country, saying he believes that the online gambling companies "promote negative externalities to society, such as those alleged crimes or related issues."

Balisacan, one of the country's economic managers, said what he supports are "legitimate investments, good investments, quality investments, and those investments that will produce goods and services."

"It's an appreciation of what the long-term benefits are versus the cost. Our position at NEDA, which we have submitted some time ago, the cost especially, social cost, are quite high. And we don't think that the benefits in terms of the revenues generated and the impact on the economy are worth the cost," he said when asked about NEDA's stance on the Senate's recommendation for the permanent ban of POGOOs.

"We have been moving around in many countries, cities attracting investments to the country, marketing our country as a good place to do business. We are not going around to attract business of this kind. We have investments inflows that will promote not only the economic but also the social aspects of our development."



Balisacan also expressed optimism that new investments could replace the revenues the country would lose, once POGOOs cease their operations.

Asked if he would recommend to President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. the total ban of POGOOs in the country, Balisacan said, "Personally, yes, if I'm asked."

Senator Sherwin Gatchalian, who chairs the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, said any revenue collected from the industry is "not worth the massive social costs associated with POGO-related crimes."

The committee urged the executive department to cease the operations of POGOOs to safeguard the well-being of the Filipino people and maintain a trajectory of growth and development in line with the administration's economic reforms.

It also called on the Bureau of Immigration (BI) to cancel and revoke the working visas issued to foreign nationals employed in the POGO industry and implement their deportation following immigration rules and regulations.

The total number of victims of POGO-related crimes already reached 4,355, involving a total of 903 perpetrators, from January 2017 to June 30 this year, based on data from the Philippine National Police (PNP).

DSWD...

MANILA — Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Secretary Rex Gatchalian on Wednesday assured senators of the continuation of the Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pagasa (BP2) program of the government.

Gatchalian, who defended their proposed 2024 national budget in the Senate, said that as of August 31, the DSWD already have served 2,426 out of the 4,572 target families this year.

He said DSWD has already used PHP1 billion or 29 percent of the PHP3.5 billion budget allocation this year for the BP2.

"This is a very good program that we inherited and we plan to keep, in fact use all the time," Gatchalian said.

"We've already asked [for] a new executive order to build on the gains of the BP2. BP2 is something we want to expand to include other types of interventions na magagamit sa mga pamilya na nakatira sa lansangan (that we can use for the families living in the streets). We call them families in street situation," he added.

Gatchalian was responding to Senator Christopher Lawrence Go who asked for an update on the implementation of the BP2 program.

"Ito pong (This) Balik Probinsya Bagong Pag-asa is a socio-economic program of the Philippine government to reverse the migration of people to Metro Manila and other urban areas who are originally from rural areas of the country," Go said.

"You gave us your commitment that the BP2 Program will continue even after the pandemic. But I would like to get an update lang sa programang ito (on this program)," he added.

Gatchalian told Go that the DSWD has assigned 60 teams roaming around Metro Manila who are reaching out to families in street situation.

"Hindi na po

namin inaantay na sila ang lumapit sa amin kundi hinahanap na namin sila sa mga lansangan ng (We are not waiting for them to approach us, but we are the ones looking for them in the streets of) Metro Manila,"

The DSWD chief said the families in street situation are being housed in the agency's residential care facilities. Upon returning to their provinces, they will be provided with a livelihood grant to be monitored by the local social and welfare development office.

BP2 was implemented through Executive Order No. 114 signed by former President Rodrigo Duterte on May 6, 2020 with the primary goal of addressing overcrowding in Metro Manila.

It is also assisting informal settlers to go back to their home provinces with opportunities including the provision of transportation, sustainable livelihood assistance, and cash aid, as well as skills training programs, among others.

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The DSWD is proposing to spend PHP207.37 billion budget next year to fund its flagship projects including the Food Stamp Program and the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program. (PNA)



SM City Roxas joins the activity at Baybay Beach

SM's goal was to gather the biggest haul of trash and marine debris. This year's efforts amounted to 75,033kg collected with the support of SM's biggest participation since 2015 – 15 SM malls in 12 locations in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. This enabled more volunteers, totaling 17,026 SM employees and members of various sectors to join more clean-ups throughout the country.



SM STORE CELEBRATES ITS 65TH FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY BY HELPING FILIPINO CHILDREN IN NEED THROUGH THE SHARE SHOES CAMPAIGN



MANILA, Philippines. The simple things in life are oftentimes taken for granted. To some people, tangible objects like clothes, bags, or shoes are normal commodities that they can easily buy and eventually dispose of at will. Meanwhile, millions of people around the world, specifically children, walk barefoot as they lack

financial resources to avail themselves of decent footwear.

According to a 2017 article by William Blischke, an American Sociology professor at the California State University Dominguez Hills, 14% of the earth's inhabitants lack shoes or have inadequate footwear. He adds that in some devel-

oping countries, shoeless children cannot attend school because they may communicate and contract diseases from their foot sores. This is why some international non-profit organizations claim that shoes, or the lack thereof, are one of the most visible signs of poverty.

In the Philippines, there is no available academic study that justifies Filipino children's actual lack of shoes. However, this phenomenon can be substantiated by the 2023 report of the Department of Education, which states that one of the most pressing issues in the basic education system is the lack of access to resources. Since school shoes are an integral part of a student's uniform even in public schools, it will be difficult for less-privileged families to purchase them.

Thus, leaving children with no choice but to either use their old and ill-fitting shoes, or worse, walk barefoot – just to complete their education.

This is the challenge that the SM Store intends to address through the Share Shoes campaign – to provide school shoes to the poverty-stricken students of the Philippines. In line with the celebration of SM's 65th founding anniversary and through the help of its dedicated customers and partner organizations, SM Store aims to donate more than sixteen thousand (16,000+) pairs of shoes to the last-mile schools and communities in the country. With a minimum of Three Thousand Pesos (P3,000) single-receipt-spend at any SM Store, a customer is entitled to donate a pair of shoes, which originally

retails for P299, for only Sixty Five Pesos (P65.00) and shall be considered as a Share Shoes Champion.

In a statement, Mr. Dhinno S Tiu, Executive Vice President of SM Store, exemplifies the value and symbolism of shoes for both SM and its advocacy to support the community:

"Shoes have been the core of our business for over 65 years. Thus, giving out thousands of shoes to the Filipino children who need them the most through the generosity of our customers, is a symbolic gesture of our commitment to continue to live the legacy of sharing and giving back to our partner communities."

More than a material donation, SM Store hopes that these pairs of shoes would help the

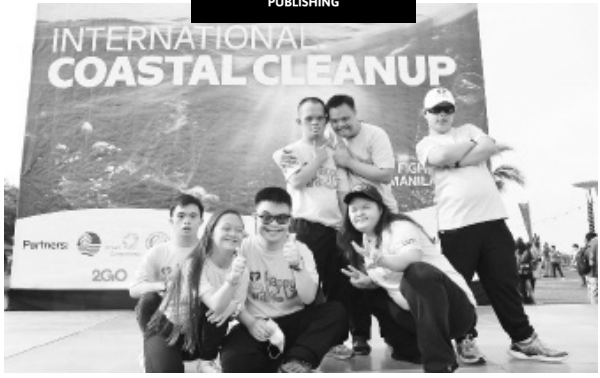
children's journey towards a better life. Through a simple act of giving, these underprivileged children will be able to learn, play, and flourish in school. And by protecting their young feet, time will come when they can confidently step, walk, run, and even leap towards their individual goals and dreams.

Shop at your favorite SM Store from September 1, 2023 to November 15, 2023 to support a child in need. For only P65, you can help transform a life by being a Share Shoes Champion! Help us put shoes on a child's feet and together, let us witness how they walk through life with smiles on their faces. (Per DTI Fair Trade Permit No. FTEB-172377, Series of 2023)

SM spearheads numerous cleanup drives throughout the year in support of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030). In line with this year's UN Ocean Decade Challenge, Sustainably Feed the Global Population, SM's projects on water conservation, including the recycling and treatment of water from handwashing and rainwater harvesting, highlights the importance of community initiative in minimizing

pollution, protecting fisheries and helping maintain potable water sources for everyone.

"We all have a responsibility to help protect and safeguard our marine environment, its resources, and the communities it serves," said SM Supermalls Vice President for Corporate Compliance and SM Cares Program Director for the Environment Engr. Liza B. Silerio. "A cleaner ocean means a better future for generations to come." **PR**



Gathering over 17,000 volunteers from various sectors, coastal clean-ups are part of SM Cares advocacies that champion social inclusion and care for the environment.



Indulge your cravings with Scorched flavored handcut wedges. Who can refuse these? Hurry! Scorched Smokehouse is located at Lower Ground Level Annex - SM City Dasmariñas