

CMDI holds 5th commencement exercises

The Bay Campus of CARD-MRI Development Institute, Inc. (CMDI), the academic institution of CARD Mutually 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. The Bay Campus of CARD-MRI Development Institute, Inc. (CMDI), the academic institution of CARD Mutually 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. Flordeliza L. Sarmien-to expressed her gratitude to the graduates, "I believe that C M D I 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 grad-



CMDI Bay Campus 2022-2023 AY graduates sang their graduation song, "At the Beginning," marking a start of a new chapter of their lives.

uated 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 tool to transcend it." Dr. Alip firmly believes that education opens excellent doors of opportunities that can help them break the cycle of poverty in their families. In pursuit of this goal, CARD MRI offers scholarships and vouch-

ers to deserving students, with 615 active scholars on Bay Campus and 1,656 total scholars on both of its campuses at Bay and Tagum City, Davao del Norte, as of June 2023. In their speeches, CMDI's outstanding senior high school student Nikka Joy V. Bautista and college's outstanding student and Magna Cum Laude Krishna Joy M. Villar-in expressed their heartfelt gratitude for the unwavering support they received throughout their academic journey. In his closing remarks, CARD MRI Managing Director Mr. Aristeo A. Dequito recognized CMDI's role over the past 23 years in shaping individuals to fulfill their dreams and assume leadership roles to combat poverty in the country. To know more about CMDI, their training programs, and academic courses, visit its Facebook page @cmdiofficial or website at https://cmdi.edu.ph/. PR

CIC Completes CAVITEX C5 Link Girder Launching



Cavitex Infrastructure Corporation has achieved another major milestone by successfully completing the girder installation for the CAVITEX C5 Link R-1 Interchange, located near the CAVITEX Paranaque Toll Plaza, ahead of schedule. This significant development will establish a direct link from CAVITEX R-1 (Coastal Road) to Sucat Road in Paranaque City, reducing travel times by

10 minutes. The project is targeted to open in Q1 of 2024. The R-1 Interchange serves as a vital 1.9-kilometer segment (Segment 2) within the broader CAVITEX C5 Link project. This 7.7-kilometer, 2x3 lane expressway is poised to serve 50,000 motorists seamlessly connecting CAVITEX R-1 to C5 Road in Taguig, greatly enhancing regional mobility. For inquiries regarding this photo release, you may contact us at corpcomm@mpt-south.com

STRAIGHT NEWS PUBLISHING

TODAY'S NEWS AND BEYOND

VOL. I • NO 14. • October 04-10, 2023 • P 10.00

BingoPlus welcomed new picks at the PBA Season 48 Rookie Draft

METRO MANILA, PHILIPPINES – The end of the recent success of the FIBA World Basketball World Cup 2023 marks the beginning of the most awaited 48th season of the Philippine Basketball Association (PBA). BingoPlus, the official Bingo partner of PBA, have renewed its partnership with the league, ensuring that Filipino fans can continue to enjoy high-quality and thrilling basketball action. BingoPlus joined PBA in introducing a new batch of players who had participated in the record-breaking Rookie Draft event last September 17 at the Market! Market! in Taguig. Prior to this, the two-day PBA Draft Combine unfolded on September 12 and 13 at the Gatorade Hoops Center in Mandaluyong, where aspiring PBA talents showcased their skills in the hopes of securing a spot on a PBA team. This year has been record-breaking with a total of 124 rookies competing for selection by the twelve PBA teams, all aiming for success in the upcoming PBA season. Notable rookie picks include Stephen Holt, a rookie-veteran from Portland, former US NCAA player Christian David, former UE Red Warrior Luis Villegas, California grown-player Keith Datu Jr., celebrity basketball star Ricci Rivero, and YouTuber Kyt Jimenez. BingoPlus is in full support for the upcoming 48th PBA season, which holds special significance as it coincides with the participation of the national team, GILAS Pilipinas, for the ongoing Asian Games. The brand remains unwavering in its commitment to providing a top-tier and enjoyable basketball experience, accessible anytime and anywhere. The 48th PBA season is set to kick off on November 5, 2023. Do you want to be the next BingoPlus jackpot winner? Download the app now in Google Play and the App Store. Visit www.bingoplus.com for more details.

SM CENTER SAN PEDRO

OPENS ON OCT 13 • FRI • 3PM

SM



STRAIGHT NEWS PUBLISHING

TODAY'S NEWS AND BEYOND

VOL. I • NO 14. • October. 04-10, 2023 • P 10.00

House approves P5.768-T budget for 2024

Urban, peri-urban agriculture ng DA-4A, suportado ng RAFC4A



sultative Workshop Cum Expository Tour on UPA sites in CALABARZON, noong Agosto 29-30, 2023, sa Mabitac, Laguna. Ang RAFC ay ang binubuo ng mga kinatawan ng pribadong sektor ng agrikultura at isa sa mga katuwang ng Department of Agriculture IV-CALABARZON (DA-4A) sa pagpapaunlad ng industriya ng pagsasaka sa rehiyon. Bilang pagkilala ng lupon sa papel ng programa bilang isa sa mga susi ng pagkamit ng food security, inirekomenda ng pamunuan sa pangunguna ni RAFC Chairperson Flordeliza Ma-leon, ang pagsasagawa ng malawakang oryentasyon para sa Farmers' Cooperatives, and Associations at ang ang pagtatag ng community gardens sa rehiyon. Ito ay matapos na maibahagi sa RAFC ang estado at implementasyon ng NUPAP sa rehiyon; at ang sistema at benepisyo ng pagsasagawa ng Community and Urban Gardening na ipipresenta ni DA-4A Field Operations Division Chief at High Value Crops Development Program Coordinator Engr. Redelliza Gruezo at Bb. Niña Rosales mula sa Bureau of Plant Industry Los Baños National Crop Research, Development, and Production Support Center. Bumisita din ang RAFC-4A sa Adoress Farm kung saan direkta nilang nasaksikhan ang mga pamamaraan at pamamahala sa pagsasagawa ng UPA. Inaasahan na patuloy na makikipagpulong ang pamunuan ng RAFC sa lokal at panlalawigang pamahalaan ng rehiyon upang maisakatuparan ang layunin ng NUPAP. PR

GSIS to give 'ultimate customer service' to teachers - VP Sara

Quiz PhilHealth on rollout of mental health packages

DSWD expects Congress to approve add'l fund for 4Ps

27 NATURAL HEALTH AND NUTRITION TIPS THAT ARE EVIDENCE-BASED

19. Lift weights

Strength and resistance training are some of the best forms of exercises you can do to strengthen your muscles and improve your body composition.

It may also lead to important improvements in metabolic health, including improved insulin sensitivity — meaning your blood sugar levels are easier to manage — and increases in your metabolic rate, or how many calories you burn at rest

If you do not have weights, you can use your own bodyweight or resistance bands to create resistance and get a comparable workout with many of the same benefits.

The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommends resistance training twice per week

20. Avoid artificial trans fats

Artificial trans fats are harmful, man-made fats that are strongly linked to inflammation and heart disease

Avoiding them should be much easier now that they have been completely banned in the United States and many other countries. Note that you may still encounter some foods that contain small amounts of naturally occurring trans fats, but these are not associated with the same negative effects as artificial trans fats

21. Use plenty of herbs and spices

There is a variety of herbs and spices at our disposal these days, more so than ever. They not only provide flavor but also may offer several health benefits as well

For example, ginger and turmeric both have potent anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects, which may help improve your overall health

Due to their powerful potential health benefits, you should aim to include a wide variety of herbs and spices in your diet.

22. Nurture your social relationships

Social relationships — with friends, family, and loved ones you care about — are important not only for your mental well-being but also your physical health.

Studies show that people who have close friends and family are healthier and live much longer than those who do not

23. Occasionally track your food intake

Some people may benefit from working out how many calories they eat is by weighing their food and using a nutrition tracker

Tracking can also provide insights into your protein, fiber, and micronutrient intake.

However, while tracking, may help some people manage their weight, there is also evidence it can lead to disordered eating tendencies Always speak with a doctor before using this strategy.

to be cont. for next issue

CAMP CAPINPIN, Rizal - Troops of the Philippine Army and Philippine National Police foiled bomb plans of the New People's Army following the recovery of two antipersonnel mines in Calauag, Quezon on Sunday, September 24, 2023. Acting on information from a concerned citizens regarding buried anti-personnel mines, the 85th Infantry "Sandiwa" Battalion and the Calauag PNP have unearthed two anti-personnel mines at Barangay Kigtan believed to be from Platoon Reymark of the Southern Tagalog Regional Party Committee.

As the provincial government continues its pursuit of providing better future to young Caviteño hopefuls, the Office of the Provincial Public Employment Service Manager (OPPESM), under the supervision of Ms. Rizalie Enero, goes to Mendez, Cavite on June 07, 2024 for another leg of Cavite Career Caravan giving Mendezeños a range of employment opportunities for growth and development.

The 2nd Infantry "Jungle Fighter" Division Commander Maj. Gen. Roberto S. Capulong commended the bravery and cooperation of the members of the community which led to this development and emphasized the importance of collaboration between the community, valued stakeholders, all levels of government, and the security sector in countering threats posed by the communist terrorist groups. 2ID



Following the recent Buhayani Job Fair last June, SM City Calamba is delighted to have another job fair, making SM a venue of opportunities. A special partnership between employers and potential employees. The job fair aims for the job seekers to take advantage and get in contact with new people and broaden their personal and professional network.

The Provincial Government of Cavite, through the Office of the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Officer (OPSWDO), spearheaded a successful event titled "Cavite Convergence: A Pathway for a Better Tomorrow for Inclusive Services to All" on June 11, 2024, at Alfonso Town Plaza. The gathering brought together over 500 selected members of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) from the municipalities of Alfonso, Magallanes, and Maragondon who took part in the wide range of essential services promoting the spirit of modern-day Bayanihan.

The program

October 04-10, 2023

-PNP FOILS NPA BOMB PLOT IN QUEZON

October 04-10, 2023

came from various members of the Provincial Advisory Council, including DILG, OPENRO, DOST, OPIO, Pearl of the Orient, Cavite State University, and DepEd, ensuring a comprehensive support network for all attendees. In closing, Ms. Maria Aura D. Fuentes, Social Worker Officer III from OPSWDO, expressed heartfelt gratitude to all participants and service providers for their active involvement and support, which made the event a resounding success. The convergence event marks a significant step towards ensuring that all 4Ps members in Cavite have access to essential services and opportunities, reinforcing the Provincial Government of Cavite's commitment to fostering a better tomorrow for all its residents. - AC Cabrera

A total of 1,101 applicants were screened and interviewed by the participating companies. The 42 companies were mainly from the manpower, manufacturing and retail industries, 38 of which are local companies while the remaining 5 are for overseas recruitment. During the Buhayani Job Fair, 407 candidates were hired on the spot. This time, 571 interviewees will be having new jobs in the succeeding days as they were hired on the spot by their chosen corporations.

SM Supermalls, being a home to over thousands of employees, will continue to make efforts in providing jobs to the growing Filipino workforce.

Support also

HE IS MY
Healer
EXODUS 15:26

October 04-10, 2023

Every drop matters at SM: to save water even during the rainy season

The wet season is here! But that does not mean that we should waste our water supply. While many parts of Metro Manila have observed heavy rainfall recently, some parts of the country still experience insufficient rain, which further declines the water level supply in our reservoir dams. It is no secret that water is an essential resource used every day for cleaning ourselves, the food we eat, and our surroundings to prevent the spread of diseases. To help alleviate the impacts of climate change, here are nine practical strategies to save water.



We can save water by using only what is needed.

1. Reduce Shower Time: Shorten showers by aiming for about just five minutes, to conserve water and energy for heating.
2. Don't Leave the Tap Water Running: To prevent unnecessary water waste, turn off the faucet while brushing your teeth, washing your face, and cleaning the dishes.



1. Reuse Water: Reuse water used for washing rice and vegetables or rinsing dishes to water indoor plants. Laundry water can also be used for toilet flushing.
2. Sweep Instead of Hose: Save water by sweeping the dirt on sidewalks and roads instead of using a hose to clean them.
3. Use Only Full Loads of Laundry: Wait until you have a full load of laundry before using your washing machine to maximize water efficiency.
4. Fix Leaks ASAP: Immediately fix even small leaks in your home's plumbing system because it can eventually waste a lot of water.
5. Water Plants Sensibly: Water your plants in the early morning or late evening to minimize evaporation.

How



The SM's recycled mall wastewater is used for watering gardens, among others

8. Collect Rainwater: Set up rain barrels or containers to capture rainwater for outside uses like cleaning, watering plants, or filling toilet bowls



SM City Baguio features a water catchment basin designed to gather and treat water for recycling within the mall.

As a part of every community that it serves, SM Supermalls is aware of the fundamental role it can play in promoting water security and conservation, championing water reuse, and being the catalyst of a sustainable solution. Water catchment basins in 25 malls have been installed to help prevent flooding as well as soil erosion during heavy downpours. In its malls nationwide, water is reused for non-potable use, such as cleaning the malls, flushing toilets, and watering plants. Last July, SM City Baguio introduced the first of its-kind in a mall-setting facility that converts rainwater into potable water and contributes to the city's water management measures.

1. Raise awareness to others: Spread the word about water conservation among family, friends, and neighbors to create a positive impact and viable solutions.

Keep in mind that every little bit helps, and by putting these water-saving tips into practice, we can significantly contribute to preserving this vital resource for everyone's future.



Observe water conservation measures to help battle the effects of climate change.

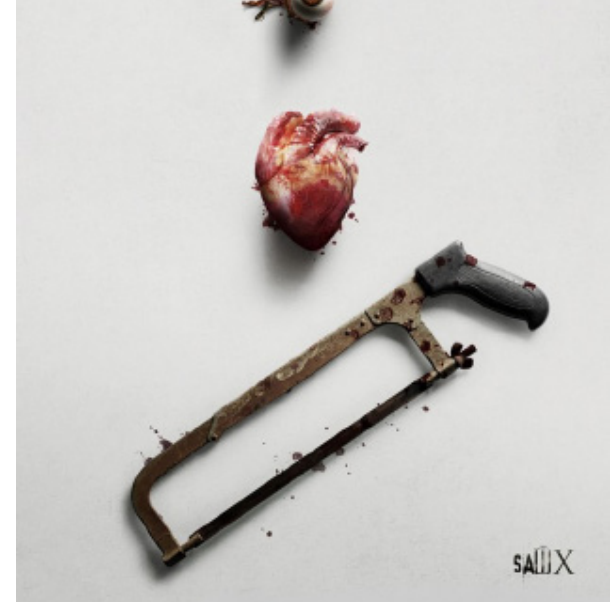
To know more about SM Supermalls' water conservation efforts, visit SM Supermalls or follow SMSupermalls on social media.



The day of the reckoning is coming, mother. Meet two self-made women - Asia's Superstar Kathryn Bernardo playing the provoking role of Phili, and BAFTA and Golden Globe nominee Dolly de Leon as Molly. Unveil the story behind their success, and rage.

Don't miss the most awaited movie A Very Good Girl, showing from September 27 at SM Cinema so go ahead and set a movie date with your girlfriends.

SAW X, PLAYING SOON AT SM CINEMA



This is not retribution, this is reawakening. And it's time to play a game of choice because the iconic Jigsaw (portrayed by veteran actor Tobin Bell) is back to deliver the ultimate game to choose between life and death.

Time to invite all your thrill-seeking friends to set a date at SM Cinema near you to watch Saw X starting September 27 and enjoy the best cinematic experience with comfy seats, and the best screen display and digital surround sound. Experience all these as you munch on freshly popped, buttery popcorns and delectable snacks from Snack Time.

MANILA – The House of Representatives on Wednesday approved on the third and final reading the proposed PHP5.768-trillion national budget for next year with a 296-3 vote with no abstentions.

Speaker Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez said the timely passage of the 2024 General Appropriations Bill (GAB) just before Congress adjourns for a month-long break not only demonstrated the commitment of the House to upholding its constitutional role but also underscored its dedication to serving the Filipino people with transparency and accountability.

"Pursuing the constitutional requirement of transparency, the House of Representatives has to shepherd the national expenditure program no matter the rigors and challenges along the way. These include difficult discussions on the confidential and intelligence funds, which the House successfully steered toward a healthy and vibrant exchange," he said before adjourning the session.

Romualdez lauded his colleagues for underscoring the need for agencies to abide by the strict accounting and auditing rules governing the handling and release of

such funds and emphasized the need to safeguard its efficient and responsible utilization.

"As a result, the House was able to assess and evaluate the nature and use of these funds and correct any mix-ups and allay public concerns regarding this issue," he said.

Earlier, the House leadership decided to reallocate confidential and intelligence funds, originally designated for non-security departments, to bolster security efforts in the West Philippine Sea.

A significant portion of these funds will now support the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (NICA) and the National Security Council (NSC), organizations responsible for intelligence activities and national security coordination, respectively.

Additionally, the 2024 budgets for the Philippine Coast Guard and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources will be increased to enhance surveillance capabilities in the West Philippine Sea.

This decision was jointly announced by leaders of political parties, including Rizal 1st District Rep. Michael John R. Duavit, president of

Nationalist People's Coalition; Agusan del Norte 1st District Rep. Jose S. Aquino II, secretary general of Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats; Romblon Rep. Eleandro Jesus Madrona of the Nacionalista Party; Surigao del Sur 2nd District Rep. Johnny T. Pimentel, vice president for Mindanao of PDP-Laban; Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Raymond Villafuerte, president of National Unity Party; and Barangay Health & Wellness (BHW) Party-list Rep. Angelica Natasha Co, representing Party-list Coalition Foundation Inc. (PCFI), in response to recent incidents in the region.

Romualdez said the approval of the 2024 GAB also stands as a testament to the House's commitment to the welfare of the Filipino people and their enduring pursuit of a more prosperous and equitable nation.

"Tiwala ako na hindi lamang makakatu-long ang ipinasa nating budget para mapabuti ang kalagayan ng mga Pilipino. Susi rin ito para mag-tuloy-tuloy ang ating pagbangon tungo sa mas magandang kinabukasan (I am confident that that the budget we passed will not only improve the welfare of Filipinos, it is also the key for our continuous rise towards a better fu-

ture)," he said.

He also acknowledged his fellow legislators, especially members of the minority bloc, for their diligent efforts and collaborative spirit in evaluating, scrutinizing, and dissecting the national budget every session day.

"What the minority bloc puts forth unto the process of lawmaking is truly essential and valued," he said.

With their collective action, Romualdez expressed confidence that every centavo in the national budget reflects the overarching targets to usher economic transformation towards inclusivity and sustainability and aligns with the administration's medium-term fiscal framework, the 8-point socioeconomic agenda, and the Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028.

Agenda for Prosperity

The proposed 2024 budget, equivalent to 21.7 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), is 9.5 percent higher compared to the PHP5.268 trillion 2023 budget.

Anchored on the theme, "Agenda for Prosperity: Securing a Future-Proof and Sustainable Economy," Pangandaman said the proposed national budget is framed based on the 8-Point So-

cioeconomic Agenda and will continue to support the goals of the Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028 of securing a future proof and sustainable vibrant economy.

Along with the agenda for prosperity, the proposed budget aims to expedite the recovery of the nation in a post-pandemic era, and transition the country towards a promising future of an inclusive and sustainable economy wherein "no Filipino is left behind."

The social services sector --composed of health, education, culture and manpower development, as well as social security, welfare and employment among other social services-- will receive the largest allocation of PHP2.183 trillion, or 37.9 percent of the total proposed national budget.

This represents an increase of PHP178.7 billion, or 8.9 percent, over the 2023 budget.

The education sector receives the largest allocation at PHP924.7 billion, including funds for the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education program, textbooks, and feeding programs. The Department of Education sees a 5.37 percent increase to PHP758.6 billion.

Meanwhile, General Public Services will receive PHP893.3 billion; debt burden at PHP699.2 billion; and defense sector at PHP282.7 billion, with the Department of National Defense's budget rising by 14.16 percent to PHP232.2 billion. (PNA)

The economic

services sector – which covers communications, roads and other transport; agriculture and agrarian reform, as well as trade and industry - will account for PHP1.709 trillion or 29.6 percent of the total proposed budget.

Infrastructure priorities include the North-South Commuter Railway System and Metro Manila Subway Project Phase 1.

The Department of Public Works and Highways gets PHP822.2 billion with allocations for road improvement; while the Department of Transportation's budget doubles to PHP214.3 billion, focusing on mass transport and rail systems.

Agriculture receives PHP181.4 billion, supporting rice, corn and high-value crops production.

The Department of Health gets PHP306.1 billion, while the Department of Social Welfare and Development sees a 5.2 percent increase to PHP209.9 billion.

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This is due to the country's high exposure

to natural hazards (cyclones, landslides, floods, droughts), dependence on climate-sensitive natural resources, and vast coastlines where all of its major cities and the majority of the population reside.

We note the Philippines submitted its Nationally Determined Contribution to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in April 2021.

It pledged a projected reduction and avoidance of greenhouse gas emissions of 75 percent for the period 2020–2030, of which 2.71 percent is unconditional and 72.29 percent is conditional.

Ms. Wyndelyn Fama, Negosyo Center Business Counsellor based in Calamba City, Laguna, then tackled the consumer rights and responsibilities. Fama focused the discussion on how to increase public awareness about consumer rights and responsibilities and other trade and industry laws to protect the consumers of various goods and services against malpractices. Ultimately, Fama emphasized the benefits of this awareness to both consumers and businesses, as it leads to a more transparent and accountable marketplace.

Extension services thru business information and advocacy is one of the DTI's ongoing education initiatives created to help microentrepreneurs. This program aids these microentrepreneurs in learning how to improve their competitiveness in both domestic and foreign markets. (JCSoriano, DTI-Laguna)

EDITORIAL • Climate change: no far-off threat

It is a continuing disaster, as climatologists and analysts tell us.

And climate change is endangering humans and natural environments in every continent, and the United Nations says the world is running out of time to keep at bay the most devastating consequences of global warming.

Experts have raised the bulletin board that global warming impacts everyone's food and water security.

They add climate change has been a direct cause of soil degradation, which limits the amount of carbon the earth is able to contain, pointing out that some 500 million people today live in areas affected by erosion, while up to 30 per cent of food is lost or wasted as a result.

The report, released by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, or IPCC, outlines the increasing risk that climate change poses to human health, infrastructure, the stability of food and water resources and the biodiversity of the planet's ecosystems.

The assessment, produced by 270 scientists from 67 countries who make up the IPCC's so-called Working Group II, represents broad consensus within the research community about how global warming is affecting people and the environment – and the potential consequences of inaction.

Beyond doubt, we have seen in recent months increased heatwaves, droughts and floods which are exceeding plants' and animals' tolerance thresholds, driving mass mortalities in species such as trees and corals.

Climate scientists who have been warning about the long-term and inequitable effects of global warming say the need for immediate and comprehensive action cannot be overstated.

Rising temperatures are fueling environmental degradation, natural disasters, weather extremes, food and water insecurity, economic disruption, conflict, and terrorism.

Sea levels are rising, the Arctic is melting, coral reefs are dying, oceans are acidifying, and forests are burning.

The impacts of climate change in the Philippines, which loses P26 billion per year from this weather phenomenon, are immense, including annual losses in GDP, changes in rainfall patterns and distribution, droughts, threats to biodiversity and food security, sea level rise, public health risks, and endangerment of vulnerable groups such as women and indigenous people.

This is due to the country's high exposure to natural hazards (cyclones, landslides, floods, droughts), dependence on climate-sensitive natural resources, and vast coastlines where all of its major cities and the majority of the population reside.

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GSIS...

MANILA – Teachers and other personnel of the Department of Education (DepEd) will soon be enjoying an exclusive express lane at the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) Central Office and its regional branches.

This after Vice President and concurrent Education Secretary Sara Z. Duterte and GSIS President and General Manager Wick Veloso signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) on Monday.

Aside from the exclusive express lane, the MOA, which will be implemented immediately, directs the addition of a DepEd personnel-specific option to the GSIS hotline; designates special officers that will handle accounts of teachers and other DepEd personnel; and will set a yearly dialogue between the DepEd and GSIS.

"On behalf of all the teachers and of course, the non-teaching personnel of the Department of Education, we are truly happy that we are able to finalize the MOA for the ultimate customer experience for our teaching and non-teaching personnel," Duterte said during the signing ceremony held at the GSIS head office in Pasay City.

"We cannot overstate the importance of our

gathering today especially for government teachers and employees of the Department of Education. This gathering, happening while we are observing the National Teacher's Month, is the continuing efforts that the Department of Education initiated with the Government Service Insurance System to address the concerns of our employees," she added.

"DepEd composed more than half of the entire GSIS membership. That is why we are really passionate about pursuing dialogues in coming up solutions to the problems that we see in our school level," Duterte said.

Veloso said he is looking forward to working with DepEd to enhance the customer experience of teachers.

"Under the leadership of our Secretary (of) Department of Education and Vice President, we are confident that constant interaction with your team will allow us to deliver the promise of a better life not only for the teachers, but also for the rest of the Filipinos," he said.

GSIS is also planning to put together another program that will provide medical insurance for teachers "over and above" what Philhealth provides, Veloso added. (PNA)

Quiz PhilHealth...

Ahead of the Senate budget briefing of the Department of Health (DOH) and its attached agencies, Senator Win Gatchalian said he will seek updates on the rollout of the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation's (PhilHealth) packages for mental health illnesses.

Gatchalian recalled that in a hearing by the Senate Committee on Health and Demography, PhilHealth said that it is planning a July rollout of a mental health outpatient package. The senator flagged that this package has not been released despite the country facing a pandemic of mental health issues. To date, PhilHealth only offers a P7,800 case rate for confined patients

having specific conditions such as dementia, bipolar disorders, schizophrenia, and anxiety disorders.

The lawmaker lamented that the high cost of mental health services make it inaccessible to many Filipinos. He noted that a cursory search on the internet would point to packages costing up to P43,800.

"Sisingilin ko ang PhilHealth sa mental health package dahil nangako sila. Noong una natuwa kami dahil may acknowledgement sila na may problema tayo sa mental health at mababa ang ating package, pero wala namang aksyon na nangyari. Sisingilin talaga namin sila dahil nga kung titignan natin yung datos,



DSWD...

MANILA – Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Secretary Rex Gatchalian on Wednesday said he is still expecting Congress to approve their request for additional funds to increase the cash grants under the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps).

Gatchalian made this remark as the House of Representatives and the Senate tackle the proposed national budget for 2024.

He said the DSWD fully supports an increase in cash grants after the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) came out with a report showing that the PHP31,200 maximum amount being received by a 4Ps household had been reduced in value to only PHP14,524 due to Covid-19 pandemic and high inflation.

"But siyempre dahil budget season ngayon we leave it to the Congress and the Senate to approve this measure. And ako naniniwala ako na maram-

ing sumisimpatiya para sa ating 4Ps Program (But of course, since it is budget season, we leave it to the Congress and Senate to approve this measure. And I believe that many sympathize with the 4Ps program)," he said during the Bagong Pilipinas Ngayon (BPN) program.

Gatchalian said if Congress would not approve the additional fund, the 4Ps beneficiaries would continue to find means to support the education of their children.

He said 4Ps is just one of the government's whole spectrum of programs aimed at alleviating poverty through investment in education.

"It's a whole spectrum of anti-poverty programs that we should look into together holistically," he said.

The 4Ps is a human development measure of the national government that provides conditional cash grants to the poorest of the poor, to improve the health, nutrition and education of children aged 0-18. (PNA)

For 2022, the number of calls to the NCMH and deaths by suicide remain high. Out of the 18,011 total calls to the NCMH that year, 6,853 were suicide-related. That same year, the PSA recorded 3,103 deaths by suicide.

Gatchalian further emphasized how mental health issues affect learners. For School Year 2021-2022, 404 learners died by suicide.

The Senate recently approved on third and final reading the Basic Education Mental Health and Well-Being Promotion Act, which Gatchalian authored and sponsored. The proposed measure seeks to institutionalize the School-Based Mental Health Program to promote and ensure the mental health and well-being of learners in public and private basic education institutions.

DTI-Laguna Extends Services and Provides Consumer Education to Kilometro Zero Organization Members

Rizal, Laguna — The Laguna Provincial Office of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), in partnership with Kilometro Zero Organization and the City Government of Calamba, held a successful event entitled "DTI Programs and Services cum Consumer Education" on September 15, 2023.

The event was attended by existing and potential microentrepreneurs and members of Kilometro Zero Organization. The theme of the event was centered on helping the participants know the programs and services offered by the

Department and to provide them with information on how to be part of these programs and services, including the benefits. Additionally, the participants were informed with the basic needs and rights to ensure empowerment of consumers.

Ms. Jerilyn Soriano, Negosyo Center Business Counsellor based in Rizal, Laguna, discussed the DTI programs and services. She talked about the various assistances and interventions provided by DTI to support the innovation capacity and competitiveness of microentrepreneurs. Soriano also informed the participants



of the policies and programs intended to support the Philippine economy's growth and development to enhance local and international direct investments and competitiveness, organizational innovation, and adaptability of industries.

SM CENTER SAN PEDRO TRADITION ALIVE



Students of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines - San Pedro experience the art of garland making at SM Center San Pedro.



A college student learns to thread tradition by participating in a Sampaguita garland-making activity.



Stanley Oriondo and Veronica Berroya, sampaguita makers from San Pedro, teaching mall shoppers to thread the sampaguita buds into leis.

This Independence Day, SM Center San Pedro joins forces with the local government to breathe new life into San Pedro City's renowned Sampaguita industry. The Philippines' national flower has long been a source of livelihood for San Pedrenses, and SM Center San Pedro's initiative aims to empower local Sampaguita makers and ensure the tradition thrives for generations to come.

The event aims to revive and preserve this precious tradition, providing a hands-on experience for young and old alike. Shoppers were treated to a chance to learn the art of

Sampaguita garland making, not just witnessing the process but actively participating in creating these fragrant necklaces. This immersive experience fostered a deeper appreciation for the skill and dedication required of San Pedro's Sampaguita makers.

The flourishing

KEEPS SAMPAGUITA



Students get a hands-on lesson in Sampaguita garland making.



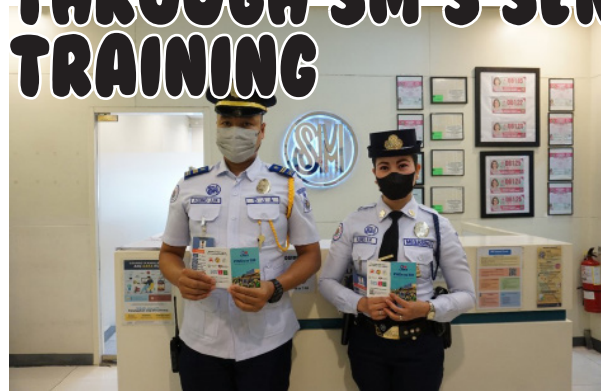
A young shopper learns the art of Sampaguita garland making from a San Pedro Sampaguita maker.



An SM shopper receives a free lesson from a San Pedro Sampaguita maker on how to make garlands and leis.

Sampaguita industry plays a crucial role in enhancing the livelihood of San Pedrenses. SM Center San Pedro, in collaboration with the local government, goes beyond just celebrating the Sampaguita. It's a testament to their commitment to preserving cultural heritage and empowering the local community. By fostering appreciation for this time-honored tradition and equipping younger generations with these skills, they ensure the sweet fragrance of the Sampaguita, and the livelihoods it supports, will continue to bloom for years to come.

#PWDESASM: CREATING THROUGH SM'S SENSITIVITY TRAINING



SM Mall of Asia (MOA) security personnel Jay Jess Aquino and Rebecca Flores pose with their sensitivity training manuals on how to care for patrons with different needs.

20 September 2023. Pasay City, Philippines-- When people are accepted, they become empowered and feel appreciated and recognized.

In celebration of the International Day of Sign Language, SM Cares of the SM Group, continues its mission to provide inclusive spaces as a mall for all through its yearly sensitivity training for its frontline employees. The training equips them with skills to better serve customers with different needs or persons with disabilities (PWDs).

Engr. Bien Mateo, Senior Vice President for Mall Operations and Program Director of SM Cares Disability Affairs noted the company's dedication to creating positive impacts within its communities.

"Genuine inclusion starts with us," he said. "One of the integral steps in line with this effort is by conducting sensitivity training for our employees."

As SM frontliners, they must be quick to recognize guests with mobility issues to provide alternative solutions such as wheelchairs and even drive them via golf karts when available. The mall's administration office is also open to serve as a safe and quiet space for guests who may be sensitive to several sensory inputs.

A PWD-friendly mall for all

Apart from SM Supermalls' facilities, the shopping malls of SM Prime Holdings, Inc. promotes inclusive spaces through features such as ramps, handlebars in comfort rooms, and Braille-labeled elevator buttons. The efforts to promote inclusivity within the malls also rely on equipping its workers with the knowl-

edge and best practices for assisting PWDs.

Jay Jess Aquino, a security personnel in SM Mall of Asia for 15 years shared how helpful the annual sensitivity training is on learning how to respectfully assist customers who have different needs.

With daily interactions from different PWD communities, he shared how a simple act of acknowledging guests on the autism spectrum or persons with Down syndrome every time they playfully salute them goes a long way.

"Pagpasok po nila sa mall, sumalau po sila sa amin mga guards, he said. "Natutuwa rin po kami kasi kahit sa simpleng pag-acknowledge po namin, eh napapangiti na po namin sila."

(They salute us guards as they enter the mall. We are also pleased because even with our simple acknowledgment, we can already make them smile.)

Ms. Flores even recalled to her initial experience when a child on the autism spectrum playfully kicked her. She remembered how shocked she was during the exchange. And although the child's parent immediately explained the situation, Ms. Flores recalled in jest how the child tried to get her again on the way out.

"Di ako nagalit. Mas nagpasalamat ako sa training kasi may kaalaman kami," she said.

experience in SM.

She emphasized the importance of maintaining open communication and building rapport with customers on the spectrum before they enter. This approach helps dismiss any notion that security guards are intimidating.

"Opo. Sa entrance pa lang talaga hinahinga (saying hi/hello) na namin sila," Ms Flores said. "Nagreespond sila. Bumati ka sa kanila para di sila matakot sa guard. Para kahit mawala sila, di sila matakot lumapit sa guard. Kasi maalala nila ay ito yung bumati sa akin." (We see to it that we give

them a lively greeting as they enter the mall because they remember you. Even in the unfortunate event of being lost in the mall, they won't hesitate to approach you to find their way since they will recall the friendly face who said hi to them.)

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"Di ako nagalit. Mas nagpasalamat ako sa training kasi may kaalaman kami," she said.

(I didn't get mad. I'm thankful because the training imparted learnings on this.)

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administration office is also open to serve as a safe and quiet space for guests who may be sensitive to several sensory inputs.

Jay Jess Aquino, a security personnel in SM Mall of Asia for 15 years shared how help.

His colleague and fellow security staff Rebecca Flores in Mall of Asia expressed how the sensitivity training has made her more confident to assist patrons with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) over her nine-year SM Cares, the corporate social responsibility arm of SM Supermalls and a division of SM Foundation, Inc. ensures a barrier-free and disability-inclusive environment for PWDs in all of its malls nationwide.



Following the recent Buhayani Job Fair last June, SM City Calamba is delighted to have another job fair, making SM a venue of opportunities. A special partnership between employers and potential employees. The job fair aims for the job seekers to take advantage and get in contact with new people and broaden their personal and professional network.

A total of 1,101 applicants were screened and interviewed by the participating companies. The

42 companies were mainly from the manpower, manufacturing and retail industries, 38 of which are local companies while the remaining 5 are for overseas recruitment. During the Buhayani Job Fair, 407 candidates were hired on the spot. This time, 571 interviewees will be having new jobs in the succeeding days as they were hired on the spot by their chosen corporations.

SM Supermalls, being a home to over thousands of employees, will continue to make efforts in providing jobs to the growing Filipino workforce.

