

Regional Civil Society Organization Summit, isinagawa ng DA-4A



Nagsagawa ang Department of Agriculture IV-CALABARZON (DA-4A) ng Regional Civil Society Organization (CSO) Summit 2023 noong Setyembre 25-26 at Oktubre 3-4, 2023, sa Lipa City, Batangas

Ito ay upang hikayatin ang mga organisasyon ng magsasaka na maging DA-Accredited CSO at mas palakasin naman ang mga ganap nang akreditadong CSO sa pamamagitan ng pagkakaroon ng personal na interaksyon at pakikipagugnayan sa ibat ibang government agencies, Government Owned and Controlled Corporations (GOCC), government banks, Local Government Units (LGUs), at mga banner programs ng DA-4A.

Dito ay tinalakay ng mga naimbitang ahensya ang kanilang mga serbisyo at programa para sa pagpapalakas at pagpapatibay ng mga akreditadong organisasyon.

Ang CSO ay tumutukoy sa isang samahan o organisasyon sa pribadong sektor ng lipunan na nakikiisa sa pamahalaan upang makatulong sa mga adhikain at layuning pang-kaunlaran. Samantala, ang DA-Accredited CSO naman ay ang mga lehitimong grupo o samahan na dumaan sa masusing akreditasyon na isinagawa ng DA upang mag-ing kwalipikado sa mas malalaking interbensyon o ayuda ng kagawaran na

kung saan sila mismo ang magiging katuwang ng ahensya sa pagsasagawa o implementasyon ng mga programa o proyekto.

Ang mga nag-ing tagapagsalita ay mga representante mula sa Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries (PCAF), Technical Education And Skills Development Authority (TES-DA), Cooperative Development

Authority (CDA), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), National Irrigation Administration (NIA), Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC), Landbank Lending Center-Batangas, Office of the Provincial Agriculturist Cavite, Office of the Provincial Veterinarian Cavite, DA-4A Administrative Division, at mga banner programs representative o opisyal mula sa Rice, Corn, High Value Crop, 4K, Organic, Livestock at F2C2.

Ayon Kay Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Division Chief at Vice-Chairperson for DA-4A CSO Regional Technical Committee Ma.

Ella Obligado, ang mga DA-Accredited CSO ay ang magiging modelo ng mga

organisasyon sa agrikultura. Aniya, sila ang magiging partner ng kagawaran para pagpapaunlad ng mga

magsasaka at sila din ang kokonsultahin ukol sa mga pangangailangan ng mga ito.

Samantala, ang mga naimbitahang mga DA-Accredited CSO ay ang Lipanta Agriculture Workers Association, HoneyBee Multi-Purpose Cooperative, Bongliw Women Improvement Club, Sentrong Ugnayan ng Mayayang Pilipino Multi-Purpose Cooperative, Pacheco Agrarian Reform Cooperative,

Daine 1&2 Farmers Association Inc., Infanta-Gen.Nakar Producers Cooperative, Buklod Unlad Multi-Purpose Cooperative, L7 Livestock Agriculture Cooperative, Cavinti Farmers Agriculture Cooperative, Pina Taysan Agriculture Cooperative, Rhudara Multi-Purpose Cooperative, Top Herbalist Agriculture

Cooperative, Barangay Bato Organic Farmers Association, Batangas Egg Producers Association Inc., Quezon Federation Union of Cooperative (QFUC), Terra Verde Ecofarm, Bilibinwang Multi-Purpose Cooperative, Yakap at Halik Multi-Purpose Cooperative, Luzon Eco-Transport

Service and Multi-Purpose Cooperative at Pangkalahatang Samahan ng Magsasaka ng Siniloan (PAS-AMASI).

Ayon kay G. Ramon Daet, isang opisyal mula sa Brgy. Balungay Coconut Farmers Association ng Panukulan, Quezon, ang ganitong aktibidad ay malaking tulong sa kanilang samahan. Aniya,

nagkaroon sila ng mga ideya sa mga possible nilang ang makuhang tulong sa iba pang ahensya upang lalong patatagin ang kanilang samahan.

CAVITIENDA Trade Fair Showcases Local Entrepreneurship in Cavite Province



The Department of Trade and Industry-Cavite, in collaboration with the local government of Silang and Acienda Designer Outlet, launched the "CAVITIENDA: Cavite's Finest Products" Trade Fair. The event, which runs from October 27 to October 29, 2023, aims to promote and support the micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the province of Cavite.

Cavitienda Trade Fair is a testament to the collaborative efforts of various organizations and individuals who are dedicated to fostering economic growth and innovation in the province. The trade fair has brought together 20 outstanding MSMEs,



REMINDER FROM SSS: SELF-EMPLOYED, VOLUNTARY AND NON-WORKING SPOUSE MEMBERS MAY PAY THEIR SSS CONTRIBUTIONS UNTIL OCTOBER 31 FOR APPLICABLE MONTHS OF JULY, AUGUST, AND SEPTEMBER

The Social Security System (SSS) said on Friday that all self-employed, voluntary and non-working spouse members have until October 31, 2023 to pay their SSS contributions from July to September 2023.

SSS made the announcement following the long weekend in the country this week due to the nationwide Barangay Elections.

However, this payment deadline reminder does not apply to land-based OFW-members. The contribution payment deadline for land-based OFW members for the applicable months of January to September of a given year is on December 31 of the same year, while for the applicable months of October to December of a given year, it is on January 31 of the succeeding year.

If the deadline falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday, payments may still be made on the next working day.

The SSS has various accredited bank and non-bank collecting partners that offer over-the-counter and online payment options. These are in addition to the Automated Teller System facilities located in selected SSS branches. PR

Japan, PH agree to strengthen security ties



DTI-Laguna Participates in the Celebration of Philippine Independence Day and Showcase a Laguna Fashion Exhibit



Victoria, Laguna — The Department of Trade and Industry – Laguna Provincial Office (DTI-Laguna) joined the nation in celebrating Philippine Independence Day at Venice Grand Canal Mall in Taguig City.

DTI-Laguna, Provincial Government of Laguna and Megaworld Lifestyle Malls proudly presented the grand opening of "Tara Pasyal Na: Threads of Tradition - Laguna Fashion Exhibit" at the Ponte de Amore, Venice Grand Canal Mall, McKinley Hills, Taguig City, Metro Manila, on June 12, 2023.

This is the second leg of the above mall tourism campaign initiated by Megaworld Lifestyle Malls in partnership with the Department of Tourism. Present in the ribbon cutting ceremony were the Local Economic Development and Investment

Promotion Office Designate in Laguna, Ms Fatima Eleonor Villaseñor; Officer-in-Charge of DTI-Laguna, Mr. Christian Ted Tungohan; and the Mall Head of Venice Grand Canal, Mr. Walter Lee.

The rich heritage and craftsmanship of Laguna's fashion industry was highlighted in this fashion exhibit as the collaboration showcased the vibrant and diverse threads that make up Laguna's cultural tapestry. A display of traditional and contemporary garments, accessories, and handicrafts that beautifully blend history and innovation captivated walk-in clients as they immerse themselves in the different set-ups of mannequin displays and special setting.

This extraordinary fashion exhibit not only pays homage to our country's independence but also serves as a plat-

form to support and promote local artisans and designers. Their extraordinary talent and their dedication to preserving our rich cultural heritage has been witnessed and shared through this event. The fashion exhibit run until June 14, 2023.

DTI-Laguna would like to thank the following designers and exhibitors, who made the said event feasible:

1. Ai-She Fashion from Li-liw, Laguna
2. Berches Barong Avenue from Lumban, Laguna
3. Designers Circle Philippines - Laguna Elite Group
4. E. A. Casedo Embroidery from Lumban, Laguna
6. Fashionoble from Lumban, Laguna
7. Isola Handicrafts from Los Baños, Laguna
8. Rolyolikha At Iba Pa Handicrafts from Pila, Laguna (DTI-Laguna)

MSME DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL MEET FOR DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

MSME Development Council Vice Chair and Go Negosyo founder Joey Concepcion addressed the delegates to the Validation Workshop for the MSME Development Plan 2023-2027 in Makati City last October 16, 2023. In his message, Concepcion underscored how collaborative efforts between the government and the private sector can facilitate the growth of MSMEs and contribute to the Philippine economy. He also emphasized the importance of giving micro-entrepreneurs access to mentorship as they build their businesses.

This workshop brought together delegates from 43 government agencies and private sector organizations. Joining Concepcion (center) as Luzon Private Sector Representative were MSMED Council Private Sector Representative for Mindanao Dr. Malou Monteverde (at left) and MSMED Council Private Sector Representative for Visayas Melanie Ng.



AT MASIGLANG KOMUNIDAD!

Naniniwala si Senator Alan Peter Cayetano na ang pagboto sa mga pinuno ng ating mga barangay ay may direktang ambag sa pagbabago ng ating lipunan. Ayon sa kanya, napaka-importante nito dahil ang mga barangay ay bumubuo ng pamilya sa mga komunidad, at ang ating next generation of leaders ay posibleng magmula sa ating mga ihahalal. Isa si Sen.

Alan sa milyun-milyong Pilipino na bumoto sa Barangay at SK elections na ginaganap ngayong araw, October 30, 2023.





100 HEALTH AND FITNESS TIPS

- 11. Exchange the elevator for the stairs.**
- There's a reason we have stair climbers at the J – getting those steps in is great exercise. Adding more flights of stairs into your routine can increase your conditioning as well!
- 12. Meal prep & cook ahead.**
- Resorting to fast food or vending machine snacks is often the result of not having a better option easily available. Making a plan for the week can help you schedule in time to prepare your food while juggling all of your weekly responsibilities. Try to set aside a few hours to make a few meals all at once, and you can start your week off with all your meals ready to go!
- 13. Fit in a short workout before your shower.**
- Give yourself a few extra minutes before you shower to fit in some bodyweight exercises. Or, do them before you make your bed in the morning or after doing your dinner dishes. Pick a regular moment during your daily routine and commit to a few exercises. Squats, lunges, push-ups, sit-ups and planks are all easy to fit in – no matter the room of your house!
- 14. Go to bed at the same time every night.**
- Or at least as much as possible. Everyone's schedule changes, but training your body to begin the sleep process at a similar time each evening can help you fall asleep more quickly and prevent those nights of restless tossing and turning.
- 15. Try short but intense workouts.**
- Don't have 45 minutes to spend at the gym every evening? Squeeze in a high-intensity interval training (HIIT) workout. This type of workout alternates short periods of maximum effort with less intense recovery periods. Think jump rope workouts, sprinting intervals on the treadmill, circuit training and more. The J offers HIIT classes as part of our group exercise schedule.
- 16. Go shopping on a full stomach.**
- Avoid that moment in the grocery store when you watch your favorite unhealthy food make its way into your cart. When you're hungry, you're more likely to buy more food than you need and to let those unhealthy foods you crave make their way back to your home.
- 17. Stop doing anything in your best except for sleep.**
- Make your night's sleep better by conditioning your body. Scale back your use of devices and TV before you're in bed.
- 18. Dine out less frequently.**
- Save money and calories. By making your meals at home, you can monitor what actually goes into your food and the portion size. If you do go out to eat – think about substituting your sides for steamed vegetables!

DOST's



Phase 2 of the Department of Science and Technology CALABARZON's (DOST-CALABARZON) technical assistance for cooperative beneficiaries in food processing enterprises, under the Department of Agriculture - Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP) in CALABARZON, is underway. This phase is focused on conducting a Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and Sanitation Standard Operating Procedure (SSOP) Manual writeshop, held at Argosino Hall, LARES Compound, Lipa City, from October 17 to 18.

The writeshop aimed to help cooperative beneficiaries prepare their individual GMP Manuals, a crucial step for their

application for a license to operate from the Food and Drug Administration. The topics covered included the preparation of each cooperative's profile, organizational chart, plant location, plant layout, premises' condition and sanitation, equipment specifications, process flow diagrams, process descriptions, quality control procedures, product specifications, raw material specifications, GMP documentation, sanitation audits, storage and distribution, product recall, retention of samples, and risk management plans.

The writeshop also included the preparation of SSOP Manuals, which covered a sanitation plan for production areas, equipment, tools,

utensils, personnel health and education, pest control, safety of water, prevention of cross-contamination, maintenance of handwashing facilities, protection of food, food packaging materials, and food contact surfaces from adulteration, labeling, storage, use of toxic compounds, temperature monitoring, product recall, and risk management.

The eight cooperative beneficiaries, namely Aga Farmers Multipurpose Cooperative, Magsasakang Tanauño Agricultural Marketing Cooperative, Tanauan Organic Natural Farming Association, Quezon Federation and Union of Cooperatives, Guinayangan Coffee Agri-farmers, Processors, and Entrepreneurs

Agriculture Cooperative, Cacao Growers' Association of Lopez, Samahan ng Magsasaka ng Barangay Nieva, and Luisiana Cacao Grower Producers Cooperative, were able to complete the initial draft of their GMP Manuals following the writeshop. These manuals will serve as their guiding documents for implementing GMP within their respective organizations, strengthening their food safety and quality systems.

Resource speakers for the writeshop included Mr. Mhark Ellgine A. Libao, Mr. John Maico M. Hernandez, Ms. Anna Marie M. Marasigan, and Mr. John Michael A. Florendo, who are members of DOST CALABARZON's Food Safety Team.

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the importance of cooperative leaders, and how echoing their knowledge and learnings from the conference to their respective cooperatives will inspire improvements. Subsequently, Hon. Dahlia Loyola, City Mayor of Carmona, reiterated the significance of encouraging others to form and be part of cooperatives. She assured every one of the City's full support for cooperative movement, concluding her speech with the statement, "pag may kooperatiba, cooperation, pagkakaisa, walang kata-lo-talo".

Meanwhile, Congressman Roy Loyola also showed his support to the

event, sharing that the cooperative is a big help to Cavite and the Philippines. "There is no reason why cooperatives will fail. Definitely, cooperatives will push the needed development and progress for the province, and for the entire nation", he stated.

Following was Hon. Francisco Gabriel Remulla, 7th District Board Member, who stressed the need for sustained efforts to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change and ensure food security. He then praised the cooperatives, on behalf of the PGC, for their initiatives and efforts in addressing the said issues.

As the keynote

speaker, Senator Francis Tolentino commended the efforts of the cooperative movements in Cavite for actively working toward solutions for climate change and food security. The senator underlined how cooperatives foster collective action, enabling individuals and organizations to share resources and collaborate in achieving their goals.

The conference then delved into various topics concerning the roles of cooperatives and the services offered by different agencies in combating climate change and achieving food security were discussed.

The celebra-

tion continued with the KOOParangal 2023, which recognized and awarded exemplary and outstanding cooperatives in the province.

The event was concluded by Atty. Khervy Reyes, acknowledging the challenges that cooperatives have faced and the unity they have demonstrated in overcoming them. He added that the success of the cooperatives is because of the heart poured by the members as well as the cooperative leaders. Hae then urged the cooperative leaders to step up and rise to the challenges ahead.

- Jam Elisse M. Reyes

Nov. 01 - 07, 2023

Phase 2 Assistance to DA-PRDP Coop Beneficiaries in Food Processing Enterprise Kicks Off

Nov. 01 - 07, 2023

SM CITY STO. TOMAS IS NOW OPEN

Your Ultimate #AweSM Batangas Destination!



SM Prime Holdings, Inc. recently opened its 85th supermall, the 4th in the province of Batangas. Nestled against the majestic backdrop of Mt. Makiling, SM City Sto. Tomas is a vibrant and exciting shopping hub that offers endless delights. This spacious lifestyle destina-

tion boasts a vast array of retail choices, delicious dining options, and top-notch entertainment, all set against the backdrop of a bustling city. Sharing honors in the balloon popping during its blessing are: Batangas Governor Hermilando Mandanas, (3rd from left) with Sto. Tomas City Mayor Atty. Jhun Marasigan and wife Elizabeth (center), Sto. Tomas City Vice Mayor Catherine Perez (3rd from right) and Vicar General Msgr. Ruben Dimaculangan (4th from left). They were joined by



SM officials (from L-R) SM Engineering Design and Development Corporation President Hans Sy Jr., SM Supermalls' President Steven T. Tan, SM Prime Holdings Inc. President Jeffrey C. Lim, and SM Retail Executive Director Herson Sy.

A paradise in the city

SM City Sto. Tomas's architectural design mirrors the dynamic spirit of the locality: wide, airy spaces adorned with touches of lush greenery.

As you step inside SM City Sto. Tomas, you'll be greeted by its spaces that evoke a sense of openness and freedom. The expansive hallways and high ceilings inevitably make your mall experience like a breath of fresh air.

The abundant natural light that filters through the windows adds a warm and inviting ambiance, making you feel at ease the moment you enter. Also, the presence of greenery adds a touch of natural beauty, offering visitors a brief escape from the urban jungle.

Immerse yourself in art installations and in



stagram-worthy spots, making each visit a unique and magical experience.

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IS NOW OPEN



Pawsitively purrfect company for your Instagram or Tiktok post



The Glow Verse

The Infinity Room

World-renowned brands and local favorites come together to create a shopping paradise that offers an abundance of choices to Batangueños. You can find everything you need under one roof, from fashion essentials at The SM Store, trendy fashion finds at Surplus, a variety of food options at the Food Court, home essentials at Watson's, groceries at SM Supermarket, electronics at SM Appliance Center, the latest gadgets at Cyberzone, trendy goods at Miniso, pet care at Pet Express, and hardware solutions at Ace Hardware. SM City Sto. Tomas truly is a shopper's utopia!



For movie buffs, the three digital cinemas provide a premium cinematic experience. Catch the latest blockbusters in style with its premium Opus fixed seats, laser cinema projection, and a Dolby Surround 7.1 sound system. It's the perfect way to unwind and escape into the world of cinema



Conveniently located along the Maharlika Highway with its own transport terminal, SM City Sto. Tomas is easily accessible to Batangas, Laguna, and Quezon residents. Positioned in a rapidly evolving city, it serves as an all-in-one community hub, perfect for creating lasting memories.

SM City Sto. Tomas is committed to sustainability, offering eco-friendly features such as EV charging stations and energy-efficient design and a bike parking station where cyclists can safely park their trusty two-wheelers.

This mall is not just a shopping center; it's a destination for creativity, flavors, and shopping. See you at SM City Sto. Tomas – Ala eh!!

For updates about SM City Sto. Tomas, visit SM Supermalls or follow SMSupermalls on social media.

European credit insurance group expresses interest in facilitating investments with PH in meeting with Diokno



Finance Secretary Benjamin E. Diokno met with Credendo, a state-owned European credit insurance group and Belgian Export Credit Agency, on October 27, 2023 following the inaugural Global Gateway Forum in Brussels, Belgium.

CEO and Chairman Dirk Terweduwe expressed Credendo's interest in facilitating investments between Belgium and the Philippines.

He also shared that Credendo's risk outlook on the Philippines is stable, noting that the low external debt, adequate liquidity, and continued prudent government policies are supportive buffers in an uncertain climate.

Credendo's Philippines Risk Assessment: <https://credendo.com/en/country-risk/philippines>

Credendo, headquartered in Brussels, Belgium, provides customized options for insurance,

reinsurance, guarantees, surety, and financing related to domestic and international trade transactions or investments abroad. It protects companies, banks and insurance undertakings against credit and political risks, and facilitates the financing of export transactions.

Credendo has supported projects in the Philippines such as Turbulent Micro Hydro's demonstration site in Davao Oriental.

Cavite Coop Month culmination



Cavite cooperative month celebration capped with a gathering of cooperative movement forerunners in the province during the 10th Cooperative Leaders' Conference bannered the theme, "Cavite Cooperatives: Pioneering the Path to Recovery Amidst Modern Challenges of Climate Change and Food Security" held at Carmona Community Center on October 24, 2023.

The program was spearheaded by the Office

of the Provincial Cooperatives Development Officer led by its officer in charge, Atty. Khervy Reyes.

During the conference, Mr. Alvin S. Mojica, Provincial Administrator for Community Affairs, warmly welcomed the honorable guests, resource speakers, and attendees, extending his gratitude for the continuous support, assistance, and patronage to Cavite cooperatives, which have played a significant role in its recognition, devel-

opment, and progress. PA Mojica also highlighted the recent achievements of the Provincial Government of Cavite, including the Digital Governance Award of Cavite Provincial Jail; finalist in the search for the most business-friendly LGU of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry; and, in the Galing Pook Awards.

Afterwards, Fr. Arturo Joseph Balagat, Provincial Cooperative Development Council Chairperson, emphasized



In the Pink of Business The beauty behind life's challenges



Elizabeth Lalap, once a corporate employee, started her own beauty brand from just one franchise store. Now, she owns four stores in Laguna and Batangas.

With just a PhP30,000 capital, Elizabeth Lalap and her husband became a franchisee of a well-known beauty brand in the Philippines. They named their franchise store "Speak Chicks," which inspired the couple to dream bigger.

As their business continued to progress, like many others, they faced setbacks, such as a lack of business capital for business expansion, a limited business product line, and strong market competition, which tested their stability as a couple and as entrepreneurs.

CAVITIENDA...

offering them a platform to showcase their unique products and services, all while bolstering the local economy.

The event was inaugurated in a ceremony attended by esteemed guests, including some of the department heads from the provincial government of Cavite, representatives from the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), and local officials of the municipal government of Silang.

Ms. Chie Ricasata, the Brand Communications Manager of Acienda Designer Outlet, set the tone for the event with her warm and welcoming remarks. She expressed her excitement about the trade fair and emphasized the importance of supporting local businesses.

Following her, Dir. Revelyn Cortez, OIC Assistant Regional Direc-

tor of DTI CALABARZON, delivered an inspiring opening message, highlighting the significance of the CAVITIENDA Trade Fair in boosting the local economy and providing opportunities for growth and development to the participating MSMEs.

Inspirational messages were also conveyed by Mr. Arman Ilano, the Center Director of Acienda Designer Outlet, and Silang Municipal Mayor Kevin Anarna, who emphasized the importance of collaboration between the public and private sectors for the prosperity of the community.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony officially marked the commencement of the trade fair, symbolizing the unity and support from the local community for the thriving MSMEs in the province of Cavite.

Throughout the

hard work and burning passion, their business has grown from one franchise store to four branches, located in Batangas and Laguna.

"Aside from our passion and faith in the Lord, the support we received from CARD SME Bank made all of this possible," said Elizabeth.

Elizabeth joined the thrift bank in 2010. With her 13 years of clientship, her loans reached up to PHP 200,000, which she used solely for business and the needs of their family.

Currently, Elizabeth's official business Facebook Page named "Ganda ni Kumare Beauty Essentials" has thousands of followers. Their online presence allows their customers to check out and order their products. This 2023, they are planning to open six more branches.

"To other entrepreneurs and CARD clients, know that all our dreams are valid. Believe that everything is possible. Manage and utilize your money wisely. Don't give up on life's challenges. Remember, success takes time and requires patience," she concluded.

three-day event, visitors can explore a diverse range of items, from handmade crafts to delectable treats, fashionable clothing to distinctive accessories, and so much more. It presents an ideal opportunity to find the perfect, one-of-a-kind item and support local entrepreneurs in the process.

The event exemplifies the unwavering commitment of the Department of Trade and Industry-Cavite, the local government of Silang, and Acienda Designer Outlet

Organizers of the event urge everyone to visit the CAVITIENDA Trade Fair – a celebration of local business, culture, and creativity at the Acienda Designer Outlet in Barangay Lalaan 1 in Silang, Cavite from October 27 to 29 and be part of the exciting journey to support local MSMEs. - AC Cabrera

EDITORIAL: Exodus of nurses

Don't look now, but we're likely to lose nearly 30,000 of our nurses to hospitals in the United States soon.

That's because there's likely to be a fresh wave of mass migration of Filipino nurses seeking the proverbial greener pastures primarily to the United States.

The result: Our own hospitals and other medical and health facilities could end up seriously understaffed and unable to provide adequate care to our own growing population. The fear is real.

As things now stand, according to the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, 18,644 nurses went overseas in 2019, a total 16,711 of them as temporary migrants and 1,933 as permanent migrants.

Because of the migration ban during the pandemic, POEA recorded 5,787 temporary nurse migrants in 2020 and 10,610 in 2021.

A 2020 study by the University of the Philippines showed there were 8.2 nurses per 10,000 nationwide, below the WHO-prescribed ratio of 1:1,000, or 10:10,000.

The standard nurse-to-patient ratio set by the Department of Health is 1:12 but according to other studies, in most government hospitals, the usual nurse to patient ratio in general wards is 1:20.

The Professional Regulation Commission reported a total 475,995 licensed nurses in the country in 2021.

According to DOH data, there are around 10,600 registered nurses annually and Philippine schools produce some 80,000 nursing graduates every year.

The House committee on higher and technical education has noted 26,972 Filipino nurses took their first US licensure test from January to September this year.

This number is more than double the 12,399 who took the test during the same nine-month period in 2022.

The US National Council of State Boards of Nursing Inc., which administers the National Council Licensure Examination, has reported 49 percent of Philippine-educated nurses pass the exam on their first take.

Passing this exam is the final step in the US nurse licensing process.

The surge in the number of nursing graduates from the Philippines taking the US licensure examination portends an alarming decline in the number of nurses who can take care of our own people. What is to be done?

The government should take firm action now to incentivize our nurses to stay here.

House Bill 5276 would raise the lowest monthly base pay of nurses employed by government hospitals by 75 percent – from P36,619 to P63,997.

This will increase the minimum base pay of government nurses by six notches to Salary Grade 21 under the Salary Standardization Law of 2019.

Congress should pass the proposed measure soon as the WHO has warned that overseas migration could result in a nurse shortfall in the Philippines of 249,843 by 2030.

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Japan...

MANILA – President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida have formally agreed to commence the negotiations on a reciprocal access agreement (RAA) between the two states.

The agreement was announced after the two leaders' bilateral meeting at Malacañan Palace on Friday.

An RAA is a legal framework seen to strengthen collaboration and facilitate exercises between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF).

"Decision was made to start negotiations on the reciprocal access agreement (RAA) and (we) agreed to further strengthen trilateral cooperation among Japan, United States and the Philippines," Kishida said.

Marcos recalled Manila and Tokyo's "commitment" to work on the said deal, which he said would serve as a framework for the two nations' status of visiting forces.

"We are cognizant to the benefits of having these arrangements both to our defense and

military personnel and to maintaining peace and stability in our region," he said.

The announcement came as both leaders underscored their strong commitment to promote a free and open Indo-Pacific region based on the rule of law.

In a separate statement, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said Kishida and Marcos discussed the developments in the South China Sea and East China Sea and "strongly opposed any attempt to jeopardize the foundation of the international order which does not accept any change of the internationally recognized borders by force or coercion".

"We share the serious concerns about the situation in the East China Sea and the South China Sea and that attempt to unilaterally change the status quo by force is unacceptable," Kishida said.

Marcos noted that as leaders of like-minded states, he and Kishida are committed to pursuing "peaceful negotiations to resolve maritime conflicts".

Kishida, who is in

Manila for a two-day official visit from Nov. 3 to 4, affirmed that Japan would also help improve the Philippines' maritime law enforcement capabilities.

One of the four documents signed during his trip was, in fact, a JPY600 million (approximately PHP235.5 million) Official Security Assistance (OSA) for the acquisition of a coastal radar system to help improve the Philippine Navy's maritime domain awareness capabilities.

The two leaders also discussed international security issues, including peace in the Korean Peninsula and the ongoing Hamas-Israel war.

'Fruitful visit' Aside from defense and security, Marcos and Kishida discussed the two states' political, trade and investment, development, and people-to-people ties.

"(Prime Minister Kishida's) visit marks another important milestone in the strategic partnership between our two countries. It is a testament to the strong commitment of both countries to further strengthen our bilateral relations," Marcos said.

Chinabank is 2023 Employer of the Year



China Banking Corporation (Chinabank) was named as the 2023 Employer of the Year in the Philippines by the People Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP).

The prestigious Employer of the Year (EOY) award represents a standard for excellence in people management. Chinabank, the only bank to win this coveted award in the last 30 years, was recognized during the 60th PMAP Annual Conference Awards Night on October 26, 2023 at the Waterfront Hotel in Cebu.

"Our legacy is not just about banking, it's about people. This achievement reflects our commitment to the well-being and happiness

of Chinabankers and to creating an empowered and inclusive workplace," President & CEO Romy Uyan said.

PMAP received a total of 77 nominations from all over the country for the three Award categories—Employer of the Year, People Manager of the Year, and People Program of the Year. There were 33 nominations for the EOY category, which were evaluated based on the following criteria: strategic business management and HR partnership,

prior group of companies and professional management executives engaged or interested in Human Resource Management and Industrial Relations work in the Philippines.

Now on its 47th year, the PMAP Awards program continues the tradition of recognizing the best practices in the people management profession for others to emulate.

"We had a very productive and insightful discussion that covered many important aspects of our bilateral relations and how we can work further together to reach our full potential," he added.

On top of the OSA, the three agreements were also presented after the meeting:

- Exchange of Notes for the JPY957 million (approximately PHP376 million) non-project grant aid for the provision of construction equipment for road network improvement/implementation and disaster quick response operation in the Bangsamoro Region;
- Memorandum of Cooperation in the field of Tourism between the Department of Tourism and Japan's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism; and

- Memorandum of Cooperation on Mining Sector between the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry

The two leaders also agreed to facilitate the "steady implementation" of ongoing and future economic cooperation projects through the High Level Joint Committee on Infrastructure Development and Economic Cooperation.

Marcos then expressed appreciation for Japan's "dynamic support" to the country's efforts to attain Upper Middle Income Country (UMIC) status by 2025 in line with the administration's Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028.

"The Japan-funded Metro Manila Subway Project and the development of the North-South Commuter Railway and its extension will secure a reliable safe and efficient mass transportation system for the entire country," he said.

"Once again, we extend our heartfelt thanks to the prime minister and his delegation for his fruitful and meaningful visit," Marcos added.

The two leaders are expected to meet again in December 2023 as Marcos attends the ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation Summit in Tokyo. (PNA)

Come on and ride the sleigh for the happiest Christmas at SM City Trece Martires



The happiest and the most magical Christmas is now at SM City Trece Martires with the unveiling of the Santa, Stars and Sleigh Christmas centerpiece that brings us to Santa's favorite place. This Christmas display lets the shoppers experience an awSMe and fun ride with Santa's life-sized reindeers in motion under the bright and glistening stars. Lighting the Christmas display was Trece Martires City Mayor, Hon. Gemma Lubigan, Regional Operations Manager, Ms. Minabelle Llanes, SM City Trece Martires Mall Manager, Mr. Mavs Fernandez and SM City Trece Martires Assistant Mall Manager, Ms. Normie Bongolan. They were ushered in by the performance of LeDanz Philippines. The Santa, Stars and Sleigh display and this joyous celebration at SM City Trece Martires is until January 7, 2024.

LONG LIFE. Centenarian Maura Agripa shows the PHP100,000 check she receives from the Taguig City government on her 100th birthday on Sept. 26, 2023. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) announced that a total of 12,186 centenarians have received PHP100,000 incentives from the national government through DSWD from 2017 up to September this year. (Photo courtesy of Taguig PIO)

MANILA – A total of 12,186 centenarians have received PHP100,000 incentives from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) from 2017 up to September this year, Assistant Secretary Romel Lopez said on Tuesday.

"This achievement serves as a testament to the nation's unwavering commitment to honoring its elderly citizens," Lopez, also DSWD spokesperson, said in a news release.

Under Republic Act No. 10868 or the Centenarians Act of 2016, all Filipinos at the age of 100 years old, whether residing in the Philippines or abroad, shall be honored with a letter of felicitation signed by the President of the Philippines congratulating the celebrant for his or her longevity, and a "centenarian gift" worth PHP100,000.

Aside from the cash gift, the DSWD provides a posthumous plaque of recognition for a deceased centenarian, which may be received by her or his nearest surviving relative.

"The Centenarian Program represents our respect for our elderly and acknowledges the invaluable contributions they have made to society over the decades," Lopez said.

Lopez reiterated that to avail of the benefits under the law, relatives of the centenarians must submit primary documents such as the birth certificate and Philippine passport to

the City or Municipal Social Welfare Office and/or to the Office for Senior Citizens Affairs (OSCA) in their localities.

If the two documents are not available, any one of the primary Identification Cards issued by OSCA, the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), and Social Security System (SSS); driver's license; Professional Regulations Commission (PRC) license; and Commission on Elections (COMELEC) Voter's ID, is also accepted.

"In cases that the said identification documents are not available, the centenarian or their family members can submit any secondary documents such as marriage certificate, birth certificate



Pormal nang pinasinayaan ng lokal na pamahalaan ang pinakaunang Municipal Trial Court sa bayan ng General Mariano Alvarez noong Lunes, Oktubre 23.

Sa pangunguna nina Provincial Administrator Alvin Mojica, Cavite Fifth District Representative Roy Loyola, Mayor Maricel Echevarria Torres, at iba pang opisyal ng lokal na pamahalaan, isinagawa ang Blessing at Ribbon Cutting Ceremony ng GMA Municipal Trial Court.

Sa kanyang Facebook post, pinasalaman ng alkalde ang mga tumulong upang maging matagumpay ang nasabing proyekto.

"Nais din po ng

of a child borne by the centenarian, among others," Lopez said.

The DSWD vowed to closely coordinate with the local government units and the National Commission on Senior Citizens to improve the planning and budgeting for more effective implementation of the law, in pursuit of honoring the contributions of the centenarians in nation-building.

The law also provides that centenarians shall receive a plaque of recognition and a cash incentive from their respective city or municipal government "in appropriate ceremonies" in addition to the letter of felicitation and a PHP100,000 centenarian gift from DSWD. (PNA)

Enchanted Kingdom celebrates 28 years with the storied Sky Wizardry Fireworks Competition Grand Finale



EK launched its very own Grand Storybook Characters Parade which introduces other main characters weaved in Enchanted Kingdom's story for the past 28 years.



It was indeed a magical night with Asia's Soul Supreme KZ Tandingan during the Be Enchanted! Concert, together with dwta and dance group AXIS PH.

Teachers taking a break with a Zumba dancing session during EK's World Teacher's Day Celebration.

Enchanted Kingdom, the first and only world class theme park in the Philippines, culminated its anniversary celebration with the Grand Finale of the Sky Wizardry Fireworks Competition last October 28, in Santa Rosa, Laguna. Asia's Soul Supreme KZ Tandingan wowed the audience as the headliner for the Be Enchanted! Concert, together with dwta and dance group AXIS PH.

Due to popular demand, EK brought back the Sky Wizardry Fire-

works Competition eight years after its last spectacle. EK collaborated with Filipino fireworks manufacturers to showcase their products and creativity. This year, St. Vincent Pyrotechnics Services and Trading, from Laguna, bested five other competitors, highlighting local artistry with pyrotechnics and music.

"We are immensely grateful for all the support of our guests and loyal park-goers. We were pleased with the turnout and hopefully, our guests



Enchanted Kingdom boasted local artistry with pyrotechnics and music through the return of the Sky Wizardry Fireworks Competition - eight years after its last spectacle - entertaining and dazzling guests for the past four Saturdays of October. Photo courtesy of Ed Santos



Enchanted Kingdom boasted local artistry with pyrotechnics and music through the return of the Sky Wizardry Fireworks Competition - eight years after its last spectacle - entertaining and dazzling guests for the past four Saturdays of October.

yond October.

"Enchanted Kingdom is already working its magic in bringing our guests an enhanced retail and dining experience with branded outlets planned for the EK Portico area, located just beside the front gate of the park. We are also preparing an en-

chanting holiday celebration through our Christmas Tree Lighting this coming November 26," he added. Mamon also shared that guests should also anticipate new attractions in 2024.

Lastly, Enchanted Kingdom announced that as an early Christ-



Enchanted Kingdom boasted local artistry with pyrotechnics and music through the return of the Sky Wizardry Fireworks Competition - eight years after its last spectacle - entertaining and dazzling guests for the past four Saturdays of October. Photo courtesy of Bobby Nocom

were able to create more enchanted stories with their families and loved ones," said Nico R. Mamon, EK's 28th Anniversary Council Chairman.

It can be recalled that as part of their celebration, Enchanted Kingdom conducted various events every Saturday for the whole month of October such as the

World Teacher's Day (October 7), the launch of the Grand Storybook Characters Parade (October 14), the Eldar's E-Kreator Event (October 21), and EKMC Weekend Specials for their annual pass members.

Mamon also shared that Enchanted Kingdom has a lot in store for its guests be-

Diokno commends local treasurers for their vital role in local elections' success

Finance Secretary Benjamin E. Diokno has commended the local treasurers all over the country as they embark on playing a crucial role in the success of the Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan (BSK) elections on October 30, 2023.

"Today marks a significant moment as we step out to exercise our right to vote and choose new leaders for our barangays and the Sangguniang Kabataan. Our barangays serve as an essential building block of good governance," Secretary Diokno said.

"On Election Day, our local treasurers will be at the forefront, diligently performing their duties to ensure the seamless execution of election-related tasks. I have full confidence that, as they have done in previous elections, our local treasurers will serve with competence, dedication, and unwavering integrity, despite the challenges they may face," he affirmed.

"Our local treasurers, together with our teachers and policemen, are among the unsung heroes during elections," Secretary Diokno added.

Secretary Diokno also commended the Bureau of Local Government Finance (BLGF) Central and Regional Officials, which are under the Department of Finance, for ensuring that local treasury operations and services in all provinces, cities, and municipalities are unhampered during the election season.

The Office of Local Treasurers works 24 hours right before and after elections.

According to the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) rules, provincial treasurers are mobilized to help facilitate the distribution of ballot boxes

and election paraphernalia to all component municipalities and cities, with independent cities receiving their supplies directly from the COMELEC.

After the elections, ballot boxes are delivered to Municipal/City Treasurers for secure safekeeping. In the event of any election protests, they may be summoned to present the ballot boxes under their custody in court.

Municipal Treasurers also sit as a Member of the Board of Canvassers. DOF.GOV