

MPT South Gears Up for 2023 Holiday Traffic Surge on CAVITEX and CALAX



Metro Pacific Tollways South (MPT South), a subsidiary of Metro Pacific Tollways Corporation (MPTC), is gearing up for the anticipated surge in traffic on the Manila-Cavite Expressway (CAVITEX), including its C5 Link segment, and Cavite-Laguna Expressway (CALAX) as the holiday shopping and travel season enters full swing.

From the third to the last week of December 2023, the toll road company anticipates a 15% to 20% surge in traffic for CAVITEX, primarily from motorists in Cavite heading to Manila. The average daily traffic count is projected to increase to 208,000 vehicles, up from the current 181,000. Meanwhile, for CALAX, MPT South expects a significant 35% increase in traffic, rising to 47,000 from last year's 35,000 figures. This surge is attributed to travelers from Manila going to Tagaytay and nearby cities and municipalities via the recently opened Silang (Aguinaldo) Interchange, providing motorists with quicker access to tourist destinations.

With this, MPT South will be placed on 'high-alert' status and reinforce "Safe Trip Mo, Sagot Ko", a motorist assistance program mobilized during holiday peaks across its high-speed road networks, starting 6AM of December 22 to 6AM of December 24, 2023; 6AM of December 26 to 6AM of December 27, 2023; and from 6AM of December 30, 2023 to 6AM of January 2, 2024. This program includes additional on-ground manpower for services like traffic management and toll collection, standby emergency medical services, and incident response teams. Motorist assistance is also accessible through 24/7 Customer Service Centers, a 24/7 Customer Care Hotline at 1-35000, and 24/7 social media channels (Facebook: fb.com/caviteexpressway, fb.com/OfficialCALAX, Twitter: twitter.com/caviteXpressway, twitter.com/OfficialCALAX) to ensure stress-free journey.

As part of the SMSK program, free towing up to the nearest exit will be provided during the period. "As we gear up to ensure a safe and smooth journey for our motorists this holiday season, we advise everyone to plan their trips and check their vehicle's health to avoid untoward incidents. We also encourage our motorists to take advantage of using their Easytrip RFID for quicker toll transactions, and even stand

a chance to win in our MPTC's Happy Holidеals promo if they reload their account via MPT DriveHub App," said, Mr. Raul Ignacio, MPT South President and General Manager. The MPT DriveHub app provides users with convenient access to a range of Easytrip and CCLEX RFID services. With just a few taps on their phones, users can reload in real-time, check their balances, plan routes, and receive assistance in roadside emergencies. MPTC 2024 HAPPY HOLIDЕALS MPTC earlier announced the comeback of its Happy Holidеals Promo as a way of giving back to its motorists with an extensive promo period from December 8, 2023- March 7, 2024. Motorists passing through any MPTC toll road at least 4x during the promo period stand a

chance to win exciting prizes, including brand-new Chevrolet Tracker LS, Php 50,000, and Php 100,000. Two winners of brand-new Chevrolet Tracker LS, 40 winners of Php 50,000, and 10 winners of Php 100,000 will be selected during the promo period. To earn points, motorists must download and link their RFID account to MPT DriveHub App. For every reload of Php 200.00 via the app, motorists also earn an additional point. Each point is equivalent to one raffle entry. For full promo mechanics, visit https://www.mptdrivehub.com.ph/promos/holidеals. Per DTI Fair Trade Permit No. FTEB-179965 Series of 2023. MPTC is the biggest toll road developer and operator in the country. Aside from the CALAX and CAVITEX network of toll roads, MPTC's domestic portfolio includes the concessions for the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX), the NLEX Connector Road, the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEX) and the Cebu-Cordova Link Expressway (CCLEX) in Cebu. For further information and media concerns, please get in touch with corpcomm@mpt-south.com



92% of Filipinos hopeful for 2024 – survey



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Funding for cash aid for 'near poor' families to continue in 2025



DILG to assist 'low capacity' LGUs ahead of devolution

MARCOS INKS P5.768-T 2024 NATIONAL BUDGET

Lifeless body of an NPA rebel found near encounter site in Batangas



DA-PRDP 4A, pinag-ugnay ang FCAs, publiko at pribadong \ sektor sa industriya ng poultry



Gatchalian: Accelerate digitalization to ensure adequate learning \ materials

POINT OF VIEW

100 HEALTH AND FITNESS TIPS

27. Balance your carbohydrates, fats, protein, etc. in each meal.

- There are a lot of different diets out there, but the easiest thing you can do is just monitor how much of each thing you are putting in your body. Eating real, whole foods makes it easier to balance these items. Food tracker apps also help you see the composition of different foods as plan your meals.

28. Warm up before and cool down after your workouts.

- It's not a waste of time, it's the best a way to reduce your risk of injury and improve your performance. Let's start with the warm-up. Your warm-up is designed to prepare you for the workout ahead. Therefore, the way you warm up will vary depending on what you plan to do in your workout. A warm-up for a jog would involve walking. A warm-up before lifting weights would involve performing some lighter weight sets. Use MYZONE to help your warm-up by working a few minutes in the gray, move up to blue, then to green, and finally yellow/red if desired. Cool down by performing your workout at a lower intensity or walking until your heart rate lowers. And, don't forget stretching!

29. Don't add salt to your food.

- If you're already eating whole, fresh foods, this isn't such a big issue, however, most packaged foods already contain high levels of sodium, so adding more only increases your intake. Most Americans consume more than double the recommended level of sodium a day (2,300 mg), which can raise blood pressure and lead to heart disease and stroke.

30. Make dark chocolate your 'indulgence food.'

- In case you haven't heard, dark chocolate is better for you than milk or white chocolate. One of the biggest benefits of dark chocolate is that it can lead to a decrease in blood pressure (with a healthy diet). Aim for dark chocolate with a cacao percentage of at least 70% to reap these health benefits, and, as with all indulgences, moderation is key.

31. Take a walk. Walking is a calming activity that helps you stay healthy without requiring any equipment.

Regular 30-minute walks can help control hypertension and slow the progress of osteoporosis. Take regular walks throughout the week to stay on track!

cont. for next issue

The Philippines is known for its bountiful coconut production, standing as ASEAN's second-largest producer. With over 347 million metric tons harvested annually in 2018, coconuts thrive in 69 of the 82 Philippine provinces. Notably, the Davao Region contributes over half of this output.

Beyond the traditional uses of coconuts for fruit, milk, and oil, its nectar turned into sugar also provides a sweet opportunity. Layzel Bocol, a 29-year-old from General Santos City, tapped into this opportunity and started her coco sugar business in 2019.

Coconut Business Hailing from Sultan Kudarat, Layzel's connection to coconuts began early. Her family transferred to General Santos City when her father was promoted as a manager in a coconut

plantation, a role he held from 2007 to 2017. Growing up, Layzel witnessed the process of coco sugar production, so when a buyer came in search for a coco sugar manufacturer in 2019, she did not hesitate and accepted the offer of producing coco sugar with the agreement that the buyer would be financing the operation.

However, startup challenges were not foreign to Layzel. The funds from her buyer were insufficient, which led her to seek additional support from CARD, Inc. (A Microfinance NGO) starting 2016. Their loan supported her business, but 2020 posed a new obstacle with the global health crisis. Production dwindled but began its recovery in the latter part of 2022.

Today, Layzel's business produces 150-200 kilograms of coco sugar daily. Any coconut

nectar that was not immediately processed into coconut sugar finds its way into sinamak, a sought-after spice vinegar. With their dedicated land for raw materials and a committed team of 20, their business continues to flourish. She considered

herself blessed; with her business, she was able to purchase land and a car, and her life grew more pleasant.

Emphasizing the importance of a strong team, Bocol shares a piece of wisdom: "Treat you

our border, treating the sick, keeping our people healthy, creating jobs, and funding livelihoods," he said in a keynote speech.

"It is wrong to say that the budget merely pays for the overhead of the bureaucracy. It is more than that. It funds the elimination of problems that we as a nation must overcome. It is incorrect to say that the budget merely finances the operations of government because its fine print bankrolls the realization of our dreams writ large," Marcos added.

The expenditure items in the 2024 GAA, when translated to projects, would transform the country and the Filipinos' lives "for the better", adding that the national budget for next year would help boost "both the physical and human capital of the nation", he said.

Marcos, however, acknowledged that the budget for 2024 is not enough to fully fund his administration's plans for the country.

"How I wish that we could wipe out with one budget cycle all our

HARVESTING SWEET OPPORTUNITIES



Layzel Bocol shows her locally distributed coco sugar and sinamak products.

herself blessed; with her business, she was able to purchase land and a car, and her life grew more pleasant.

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country's economic goals specifically identified in the current administration's Medium-Term Fiscal Framework (MTFF), the Eight-Point Socioeconomic Agenda and the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028.

"So with this reminder comes the most important budget commandment that we must all must heed: We are working for the people, not for ourselves. We are working for the country, not for ourselves. Honor the taxpayers who make the budget possible and in doing so we will bring closer to the brighter tomorrow that we aspire— for Bagong Pilipinas (New Philippines)? that we all envision for our people," Marcos added.

The 2024 budget prioritizes expenditure items that advance social and economic transformation through programs that promote food security, reduction of transport and logistics costs, improved health system, strengthened social protection, sound fiscal management and enhanced bureaucratic efficiency. (PNA)

ACROSS

- "Oh, woe!"
- The first to fall, after the fall
- She had a cat names Dinah
- The wisw have it?
- Subject of an apology from HAL-9000
- What he says, goes
- Stopped sleeping on the floor?
- Catcher's position
- Request to a barista
- It might be Odd or happy
- A hero might have it
- Pai plant
- Barber's instuction manual?
- Album entry
- The true face of Walter Mitty
- Part of MIT
- Neither all nor nothing
- She and Nicole lived a Simple Life
- Kind of values
- Gets a bronze
- Store sign
- Evening news hr.
- "Best of intentions" or Modern Day Bonnie and Clyde"?
- Many unknown
- Johns and Janes
- Surrounded by
- Like a brand new trail
- Prepare to end an engagement
- Letter embellishment
- Prestigious list of groundbreaking axioms?
- Partner of Brahma and Vishnu
- Stable parent
- Are not casual?
- Less green, perhaps
- "I he Heat _____"
- It may require stiches

DOWN

- Some saxes
- Blackmore's "_____ Doone"
- Triton's daughter, a la Disney
- _____bet (stays in the game)
- Slow movement
- Cake with a kick
- Present opener?
- Was in the forefront
- Categorize
- Flavor for a British jelly bean
- "My turn to bat"
- Part of a Barbecue bed
- German duck
- Disney flier
- Paris bistros
- Fiddling (with)
- Giraffes' kin
- A singing Carpenter
- Cognizant of
- Automaker's amt.
- Stem's opposite
- "Yo, Bubi!"
- Word with zero or happy
- Present opener?
- Take a Porsche out without paying, perhaps
- Prepared to be shot
- Melodic subjects
- Beyond bounds
- Mediterranean
- sail
- Neckwear for a dog or a dogface
- "Beavis and Butt-head" spinoff
- Gobsnacks
- Part of a cog or a comb
- "Back in the _____" Beatles
- Soda available in grape, orange, and peach
- Send sprawling
- Spanish ladies: Abbr.
- Drachma's replacement
- PA location of a '79 scare

Camp Vicente Lim Press Corps nagsagawa ng libreng Medical & Dental Mission



Matagumpay ang isinagawang Medical and Dental mission ng Camp Vicente Lim Press Corps noong ika-15 ng Disyembre, 2023, na idinaos sa Camp Vicente Lim covered court, na may temang, "Maayos na Kalusugan, Ngayong Kapaskuhan.

Labis ang pas-

asalamat ng Pangulong ng CVLPC Daniel Castro, sa lahat ng nagtulong-tulong upang matagumpay na maisakatuparan ang nasabing aktibidad.

Aniya, "Mula sa pagpapalano hanggang sa pagpapatupad ng proyekto, buong suporta ang ibinigay ng mga opisyal at lahat ng miyembro ng

CVLPC."

Nagpasalamat din siya sa pamunuan ng Police Regional Office 4-A sa ilalim ng pamumuno ni PBGEN Paul Kenneth T. Lucas sa pagboayah na ganapin ito sa covered court ng Camp Vicente Lim. Gayun din kay PRO4A RPIO Chief PLTCOL Chitadel Gaoiran

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SUDOKU

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DA-PRDP 4A...

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Nagsagawa ng isang business conference (BizCon) ang Department of Agriculture – Philippine Rural Development Project Regional Office Calabarzon (DA-PRDP 4A) upang tipunin at pag-ugnayin ang mga farmers cooperatives and associations (FCAs) at mga kinatawan ng publiko at pribadong sektor sa industriya ng poultry.

Bahagi ito ng paghahanda ng DA-PRDP 4A sa pagpondo ng mga proyektong pangnegosyo sa ilalim ng DA-PRDP Scale-Up, ang mas pinalawak na bersyon ng DA-PRDP.

Tinalakay sa BizCon ang mga sumusunod: ano ang PRDP Scale-Up, kalagayan ng industriya ng poultry sa rehiyon ng CALABARZON, at mga oportunidad at stratehiya na magpapatibay at magpapalakas dito.

Hinikayat ni DA-PRDP National Deputy Project Director Shandy Hubilla ang mga kinatawan ng publiko at pribadong sektor na lumahok sa DA-PRDP Scale-Up. Ayon sa kanya, ang DA-PRDP Scale-Up ay isang oportunidad upang mas

paigtingin at gawing makabuluhan ang ugnayan ng mga magsasaka sa mga publiko at pribadong sektor tungo sa mas maunlad na sektor ng agrikultura.

"In DA-PRDP, we are catalyzers. We bring in all the major players of this industry. We hope that through the PRDP Scale-Up, we will be able to unlock the potential of the chicken and egg industry here in your region," ani DA-PRDP National Deputy Project Director Hubilla.

Dumalo sa pagtitipon sina DA Undersecretary for Finance Agnes Catherine Miranda at maging ang mga kinatawan ng World Bank. Dumalo din ang mga sumusunod sa BizCon: Regional Agriculture and Fishery Council – CALABARZON, Land-Bank of the Philippines, Development Bank of the Philippines – Lipa Lending Center, Quezon Poultry and Livestock Corporation, APT Health Inc., Agro-digital PH, Cavite Livestock and Poultry Raisers Association, Siniloan Livestock and Poultry Raisers Association, Batangas Egg Producers Multi-Purpose Cooperative, Batangas Egg Producers Association Inc., at ang Rizal Poultry and Livestock Association

Funding...

MANILA – Speaker Martin Romualdez announced on Wednesday that funding for the new PHP60 billion Ayuda sa Kapos ang Kita (AKAP) program will continue in 2025.

Romualdez made the statement as he welcomed the signing by President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. of the PHP5.768-trillion national budget for 2024.

He claimed that Congress introduced AKAP, which aims to extend cash assistance to poor and low-income families, in the 2024 budget for the first time under the Marcos administration.

Each household with a monthly income of P23,000 or less would receive a PHP5,000 one-time cash assistance. The initial target for the PHP60 billion program is 12 million families.

"We intend this to be a continuing program to help our people. Thus, it is critical that we should make it work in its first year of implementation,"

Lifeless body...

CAMP CAPIN-PIN, Rizal – Government forces and officials found a lifeless body of an NPA rebel near encounter site in Balayan, Batangas on Tuesday, December 19, 2023. Acting on reports from residents of Barangay Malalay, troops from the 59th Infantry "Protector" Battalion together with Balayan PNP and barangay officials proceeded to the vicinity where a dead NPA rebel was found, more or less 500 meters from encounter site of the clash between joint government forces and the communist terrorist group two days ago.

The dead NPA rebel left by their fleeing comrades was identified as Alias Kyrie/Vince, Vice Platoon Leader of SPP Kawing of the Southern Tagalog Regional Party Committee's Sub-Regional Military Area 4C. This is in addition to the six slain NPA rebels during clash with soldiers last

Romualdez said. Romualdez said he does not foresee any difficulties in implementing AKAP.

"We just have to make sure that the beneficiaries are qualified under government criteria and the money reaches them on time and with sufficient safeguards in place," Romualdez said.

Romualdez, meanwhile, urged national agencies and local government units to prepare for the implementation of the 2024 national spending program, saying that they should hit the ground running in carrying out the budget at the start of the new year.

"The budget is the most important piece of legislation Congress passes each year and the President signs into law. It is the blueprint for national development, for sustaining economic growth, for creating more job and income opportunities, and in general, for improving the lot of our people," he said. (PNA)

Gatchalian

Senator Win Gatchalian is pushing to accelerate digitalization to ensure that Filipino learners will have adequate and quality learning materials.

The 2022 round of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) showed that compared to other Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development countries on average (-0.17), the index of shortage of educational materials in the Philippines was relatively high (0.71). A one-unit increase in the index of shortage of educational material resulted in a decrease of four score points in mathematical performance.

The triennial assessment of 15-year-old learners also showed that 55% of students attended schools where principals reported a lack of educational materials, including textbooks, information and communications technology (ICT) equipment, library, or laboratory materials. Forty-nine percent of students were in schools whose principals reported inadequate or poor quality educational materials.

Six out of ten students attended schools where principals reported a lack of digital resources (63%), and inadequate or poor quality digital resources (63%), which include desktop or laptop computers, internet access, learning management systems, or school learning platforms.

puter with charger, one power bank, two cellphone chargers, four notebooks, one medical kit with assorted medicines, two IDs, one bandolier, personal belongings, and other subversive documents. In a statement, 2ID Commander Maj. Gen. Roberto S. Capulong said that we will never rejoice in the death of seven of our kababayans who joined the communist terrorist group.

He expressed his sympathies to their families and further urge the remaining NPA rebels to surrender and work with the government so as not to suffer the same fate as Public Affairs Office, 2ID,

The 2022 PISA, however, also revealed that compared to OECD countries, Filipino students reported a more positive experience with home-based learning. Seventy-nine percent of learners reported that distance learning improved their skills in using digital devices for learning purposes, while 83% said their teachers were well prepared to provide remote instruction.

Fifteen-year-old learners also spend approximately 10.7 hours on digital resources, six for learning and 4.7 for leisure. Every one-hour increase in time spent per day on digital devices for learning at school led to a three-point increase in math scores but resulted in a four-point decrease when used for leisure.

For Gatchalian, these findings, coupled with the country's experience during the pandemic, underscore the need to bridge the digital divide and adopt digital education to make the sector more resilient and innovative. He also emphasized the need to ensure learning continuity even in the midst of disruptions.

Gatchalian's bills that seek to accelerate the use of digital technology in education include the Digital Transformation in Basic Education Act (Senate Bill No. 383), the Philippine Online Library Act (Senate Bill No. 477), and the One Learner, One Laptop Act (Senate Bill No. 474).

Iringan said not all LGUs have equal access to resources and capabilities to respond to different challenges and the needs of their constituents.

Meanwhile, he added that they support the extension of the transition period for the full devolution until 2027 to give ample time to the local government units to beef up and increase their capacities.

DILG ...

MANILA – The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) has vowed to assist local government units (LGUs) that would be unable to keep up with the full devolution of some basic services and facilities from the national government.

"We came up with analytics and we look at the capacity, particularly the capacity development needs of our LGUs and we share this with the different national government agencies, aside from that, we look at the result of the seal of local governance where we came up with, we identified LGUs which are high capacity and high performance, LGUs which are low capacity, low performance, LGUs which are low capacity and high performance and the last category is high capacity, low performance so that we would focus more our effort, our time in assisting local government units which belong to the category of low capacity, low performance," DILG Undersecretary Marlo Iringan said during the Post-State of the Nation Address (SONA) Discussions at the Hilton Hotel Manila in Pasay City on Wednesday afternoon.

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Iringan said Sec-

who made the ultimate sacrifice along with the three wounded soldiers in this incident. He added that Sgt Ramillano's dedication to duty will forever inspire every Jungle Fighter to be unrelenting in the pursuit of peace and development here in the Southern Tagalog Region. 2ID

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EDITORIAL:

Stronger drive vs corruption

If most Filipinos believe the national government should exert greater efforts to fight corruption, will our leaders and policy makers heed their sentiment?

The latest Pulse Asia survey found 84 percent of 1,200 respondents agreed with this statement: "Pursuant to the Philippine s' concurrence with international agreements, the power of national agencies, laws, and mechanisms to fight corruption should be strengthened."

A total 36 percent said they "strongly agree" while 48 percent said they "somewhat agree" with the statement.

What's interesting is that most of those who agreed the government should do more to curb corruption come from Mindanao (92 percent) and Visayas (89 percent), where poverty levels are higher as compared to NCR (82 percent) and Balance Luzon (80 percent).

The result of the survey, from June 19 to 23 and commissioned by Stratbase ADR Institute, indicates nearly all Filipinos consider corruption as an enormous challenge that should compel government to take firm steps to solve.

According to Pulse Asia President Dr. Ronald Holmes, "virtually no one" disagrees with the strengthening of the agencies, laws, and mechanisms to fight corruption.

He observed the usual

proposal in the past was for the government to establish a single, well-resourced anti-corruption agency which has fiscal autonomy and is insulated from partisanship and political interference.

What's starkly clear is past administrations simply ignored the recommendation, leading to what the World Bank claimed has been the loss of about one-fourth of the total annual national budget to inveterate crooks in government.

The survey also yielded various answers to what the respondents felt were the negative effects of corruption in Philippine society.

Respondents said corruption erodes trust in government services and public officials; creates a normalized attitude towards corrupt practices; results in inefficient delivery of basic social services as health and education; leads to less public funds devoted to fighting poverty; and produces substandard infrastructure.

Given this range of the negative consequences of corruption in our public life, the question that needs to be answered now is whether this government is willing to take the road less traveled and embark on an honest-to-goodness anti-corruption drive that will spare no one, from the big fish to the small fry.

It has five more years to prove that it really listens to what Filipinos are saying.

Camp Vicente...

pagdalo ay nagpapakita, lamang na ang miyembro ng media at ang kapulisan ay may mabuting ugnayan hindi lamang sa pagsugpo ng kriminalidad kundi maging sa adhikaing

makatulong sa ating mga mamamayan.

"Ang pagkakaroon ng malusog na pangangatawan ay ang isa sa pinakamagandang regalo na ating natanggap sa

taong ito. Kaya tunay na "Health is Wealth!".

"Aking hiling sa inyo na patuloy nating suportahan ang mga programa at adbokasiya ng Philippine National Police. Dahil ang pagkamit ng kapayapaan at kaayusan ay hindi lamang nakasalalay sa amin, kailangan namin ang inyong suportang mapanatili ng katahimikan sa ating pamayanan. Magkapit bisig tayo tungo sa kapayapaan at pag unlad ng ating minamahal na bansa." Ayon kay PBGen Lucas.

Makakaasa ang taong bayan, na ang Police Regional Office 4A at ang Camp Vicente Lim

SURVEY...

MANILA – Almost all Filipino adults, or 92 percent, said they are hopeful for the new year, according to a recent survey by Pulse Asia.

The survey conducted Dec. 3 to 7 showed that only 1 percent will face 2024 without hope, while 7 percent were neither hopeful nor without hope for the coming year.

"Amidst the various challenges Filipinos face on a daily basis, most of them continue to remain optimistic, with 92% saying they will face the new year with hope. This is the prevailing sentiment in every geographic area and socio-economic grouping," Pulse Asia said in its report.

Ninety-five per-

cent of respondents from the Visayas said they are hopeful, followed by Balance Luzon at 94 per-cent, National Capital Region at 92 percent, and Mindanao at 84 percent.

The same survey also showed that 41 percent of the respondents believe that their holiday celebrations this year will be as prosperous as last year's.

Around 30 percent are expecting their celebrations this year to be more prosperous than in 2022.

Sixteen percent said their upcoming holiday celebrations will be the same as last year in the sense that it was not prosperous.

Meanwhile, 13

Focus crimes down 18% from Sept. 1 to Dec. 19: PNP

MANILA – The Philippine National Police (PNP) has recorded an 18-percent drop in focus crime incidents from Sept. 1 to Dec. 19 this year.

Citing the latest data as of Wednesday, PNP spokesperson Col. Jean Fajardo said 10,268 focus crimes were recorded during this period as compared to 12,554 crimes recorded in the same period last year.

From Jan. 1 to Dec. 19 this year, the po-

lice force recorded 37,089 focus crime incidents or 8.22 percent lower than the 40,411 incidents logged in the same period in 2022.

Classified as focus crimes are murder, homicide, physical injury, rape, theft, robbery, vehicle theft and motorcycle theft.

"Crime incidents are on a downtrend, especially during the 'ber' months, we have seen an almost 20 percent drop and we are expecting that through the cooperation of force multipliers, other law enforcement agencies and our people, crime incidents would continue to drop," Fajardo told reporters in a press conference held at Camp Crame.

She said they have not monitored any "serious and credible threat" that would hamper the celebration of the Christmas season.

On alert for CPP



From Page 1

percent said it would be "poorer" than last year.

The survey on the high optimism of Filipinos was made during the same week of the escalating tension in the West Philippine Sea between the Philippines and China, a magnitude 7.4 earthquake in Surigao del Sur, the bombing at the Mindanao State University in Marawi City and a nationwide transport strike, among others.

The nationwide survey was based on a sample of 1,200 representative adults 18 years old and above.

It has a ± 2.8 percent error margin at the 95 percent confidence level. (PNA)

SM FOUNDATION BRINGS CUTTING-EDGE CARE TO 200TH HEALTH CENTER

Rural health centers are more than just buildings—they're lifelines, offering a comprehensive range of health services at a minimal cost or even free to the most vulnerable. The presence of dedicated healthcare providers, who truly grasp the local struggles and share the community's cultural fabric, imbues these centers with a profound sense of purpose, fostering genuine trust.

Underscoring its firm belief in the power of health centers to improve lives and strengthen communities, the SM group's foundation has recently unveiled the revitalized Santa Cruz Rural Health Unit (SCRHU). This marks a significant milestone for the organization, representing its 200th health center nationwide.



Service amidst challenges

SCRHU lies in the bustling landscapes of Laguna province, serving nearly 140,000 residents. Its reach extends beyond the immediate community, welcoming those from neighboring municipalities, primarily from low-income households.

For nearly a decade, Dr. Elmina Montesa has been the guiding force behind the old SCRHU. For years, she and her fellow health workers continued to extend services amidst the cramped spaces, inadequate facilities, and timeworn structure.

"Marami kaming programa na hindi namin malagyan ng lugar kasi



The center now exudes warmth, with comfortable waiting areas for patients and reception for health workers.



A doctor measures the blood pressure of the patient using the new equipment provided by the SM group.

ty, particularly the most vulnerable—because for them, public service wasn't just a job; it was a



The rainwater catchment system helps lessen the center's reliance on municipal sources and contribute to water conservation efforts.

calling.

"Iba 'yung nararamdaman mong fulfillment sa trabahong ito. Napakasaya tuwing natutulungan mo ang pasyente at kita mo sa mga ngiti at mata nila na thankful sila dahil binigay mo sa kanila ang pangangailangan nila ng walang kapalit," she said.

Uplifting community anchors

Dr. Montesa emphasized the value of health: "Kayamanan ng tao ang kalusugan. Kahit wala kang masyadong pera, pero intact ang kalusugan mo, maituturing mo nang kayamanan iyon."

One with Dr. Montesa, SM Foundation collaborated with Sta. Cruz, Laguna to provide



The center features a mobile play cabinet with gender-neutral toys to nurture comfort and promote coping in the face of illnesses.

ern-day heroes.

From the once cramped center, the SM Foundation elevated SCRHU, following DOH's guidelines. It now has clearly defined areas for different programs and

nesses.

As SM Foundation turned over the health center, Dr. Elmina and SCRHU turned over a new leaf in health care.

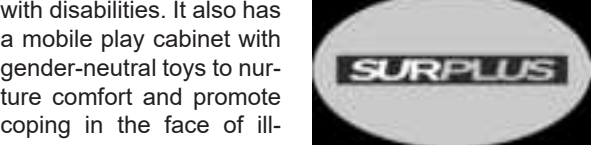
"Masaya," she smiled as she looked around the new SCRHU. "Dati, nakakapaghatid kami ng serbisyo kahit hindi conducive to working ang lugar. Kaya't itong renovation mas magiging fulfilled kami dahil maganda 'yung environment na aming gagalawan. Mas mapapaigting pa namin ang pagsisilbi namin sa komunidad."

"Iba kasi pag maganda ang surroundings mo. Minsan, 'yun lang ay sapat na para gumaan ang pakiramdam mo. Ngayong comfortable na ang center, mae-enhance na ang communication namin. Sa tulong ng organized at good environment, mai-paliliwanag ng mabuti at



SM Foundation's Senior Project Manager Albert Uy places the 200th Wellness Center marker as they complete the final stages of the renovation.

munity oriented, SCRHU has designated facilities for breastfeeding mothers, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. It also has a mobile play cabinet with gender-neutral toys to nurture comfort and promote coping in the face of ill-



THOUGHTFUL HOLIDAY GIFT IDEAS FROM OUR HOME

SM City Bacoor Spread Holiday Cheers Through #ChriSMiles



As the holiday season approaches, it's the perfect time to fill your home with warmth and joy. The holiday season after all is a time for celebration, gratitude, and creating cherished memories.

Whether you're looking to revamp your space or surprise your loved ones with thoughtful gifts, here's a curated list of holiday gift ideas that give warmth, comfort and style for the spaces we cherish most.

- Surprise your loved ones with the gift of cozy moments this Holiday season with recliners available at Our Home.
- Unwrap the joy of comfort this season with Our Home's collection of cushions that everyone will love to have and hug.
- Share the gift of a welcoming home with candles and scents.
- Give the gift of organized beauty. Our Home's jewelry organizers are designed to keep precious treasures safe and stylish.
- Looking for the perfect gift for those who love to host? Our Home's serveware and barware make the perfect gifts for them.
- Nespresso machines for coffee enthusiasts that they will definitely love.

This holiday season, whether you're treating yourself or surprising loved ones, celebrate the joy of giving with these gift ideas. Fill your space with festive cheer and lasting elegance, making the holiday season even more special and memorable.

Visit OUR HOME Store near you, shop online or call a Personal Shopper



SM CITY BACOR, CAVITE - In the spirit of spreading joy and goodwill this holiday season, SM City Bacoor in partnership with SM Cares ushered in the #Happiest-ChristmasAtSM through a heartwarming #ChriSMiles event with dedicated SM employee volunteers who orchestrated a cheerful day for the children of Habay-2 Day Care Center at SM City Bacoor, turning it into a happy Santa workshop full of laughter and excitement. The kids were treated to a day filled with thrilling games, entertaining rides, and special gifts. This initiative not only embodies the essence of the festive season but also highlights SM's commitment in supporting communities and making a positive impact on the lives of those who need it the most.

As the ChriSMiles Program unfold, SM employees showcase the power of collective kindness, proving that the true magic of Christmas lies in coming together to bring smiles to the faces of others. Through this heartening initiative, SM is not only fostering a sense of community but also exemplifying the importance of spreading joy and compassion during the holiday season.

BACK TO BACK SALE AT ACE HARDWARE - SM CITY MOLINO!



SM CITY MOLINO, CAVITE - Calling all savvy shoppers and DIY enthusiasts! Brace yourselves for the ultimate shopping experience at Ace Hardware - SM City Molino! The ACE Clearance Sale and Yearend Sale, running from December 15 to January 15, is your golden ticket to incredible savings. Dive into a treasure trove of unbeatable deals and score up to a whopping 70% OFF on a diverse range of selections. Whether you're in search of tools, home improvement essentials, or decor to spruce up your space, Ace Hardware got you. Don't miss out on this fantastic opportunity to elevate your shopping experience and snag amazing deals. Hurry and shop now at Ace Hardware - SM City Molino, and let the thrill of savings ignite your passion for a home makeover in smart and stylish shopping!

BUFFALO AVENUE, NOW OPEN AT SM CENTER IMUS!



SM CENTER IMUS, CAVITE - Love wings? Prepare your taste buds for a flavor explosion at Buffalo Avenue, the newest culinary gem at SM Center Imus. Embark on a gastronomic adventure and indulge in the ultimate wing experience that will leave you craving for more. From savory classics to innovative and mouthwatering flavors, Buffalo Avenue will surely satisfy your wing cravings like never before. Gather your friends and family and head to SM Center Imus to savor the delectable dishes at Buffalo Avenue together. It's time to unite and delight in the extraordinary world of wings!

