MPT South Gears Up for 2023 Holiday Traffic Surge on CAVITEX and CALAX A METRO RACING TOLLARY COMPANY TODAY'S NEWS AND BEYOND VOL. I · NO. 26 · Dec. 27-Jan. 02, 2024 · P 10.00



ways South (MPT South), tributed to travelers from cific Tollways Corporation and nearby cities and mutraffic on the Manila-Cavite do) Interchange, providincluding its C5 Link seg- access to tourist destinament, and Cavite-Laguna tions. Expressway (CALAX) as the holiday shopping and South will be placed on travel season enters full 'high-alert' status and way, twitter.com/Official-

the last week of Decem- sistance program mobiber 2023, the toll road lized during holiday peaks company anticipates a across its high-speed road ing for CLASS 1 vehicles 15% to 20% surge in traf- networks, starting 6AM of up to the nearest exit will fic for CAVITEX, primarily December 22 to 6AM of be provided during the pefrom motorists in Cavite December 24, 2023; 6AM riod. heading to Manila. The of December 26 to 6AM of average daily traffic count December 27, 2023; and is projected to increase from 6AM of December journey for our motorists to 208,000 vehicles, up 30, 2023 to 6AM of Janu- this holiday season, we from the current 181,000. ary 2, 2024. This program advise everyone to plan Meanwhile, for CALAX, includes additional on- their trips and check their MPT South expects a ground manpower for sersignificant 35% increase vices like traffic manage- untoward incidents. We in traffic, rising to 47,000 ment and toll collection, also encourage our mofrom last year's 35,000 standby emergency med-torists to take advantage

a subsidiary of Metro Pa- Manila going to Tagaytay (MPTC), is gearing up for nicipalities via the recently the anticipated surge in opened Silang (Aguinal- a 24/7 Customer Care Expressway (CAVITEX), ing motorists with guicker 24/7 social media chan-With this, MPT

reinforce "Safe Trip Mo, CALAX) to ensure stress-From the third to Sagot Ko", a motorist as-

response teams. Motorist sible through 24/7 Customer Service Centers, Hotline at 1-35000, and nels (Facebook: fb.com/ cavitexpressway, fb.com/ OfficialCALAX, Twitter: twitter.com/caviteXpress-

As part of the SMSK program, free tow-

"As we gear up to ensure a safe and smooth vehicle's health to avoid

of using their Easytrip as a way of giving back to RFID for quicker toll trans- its motorists with an exa chance to win in our cio, MPT South President and General Manager.

> The MPT Drivewith convenient access to a range of Easytrip and CCLEX RFID sercan reload in real-time, check their balances, plan routes, and receive assis-

MPTC 2024 HAPPY HOLIDEALS

MPTC earlier anits Happy Holideals Promo point is equivalent to one south.com

actions, and even stand tensive promo period from December 8, 2023- March MPTC's Happy Holideals 7, 2024. Motorists passpromo if they reload their ing through any MPTC account via MPT DriveHub toll road at least 4x during App," said, Mr. Raul Igna- the promo period stand a chance to win exciting prizes, including brand-new 50,000, and Php 100,000. Chevrolet Tracker LS. 40 winners of Php 50.000. vices. With just a few taps and 10 winners of Php

on their phones, users 100,000 will be selected (NLEX), the NLEX Conduring the promo period. To earn points. motorists must download tance in roadside emer- and link their RFID ac- bu-Cordova Link Expresscount to MPT DriveHub Php 200.00 via the app, motorists also earn an

mechanics, visit https:// www.mptdrivehub.com. ph/promos/holideals. Per DTI Fair Trade Permit No. FTEB-179965 Series of

MPTC is the biggest toll road developer and operator in the coun-Chevrolet Tracker LS, Php try. Aside from the CALAX Two winners of brand-new of toll roads, MPTC's domestic portfolio includes the concessions for the North Luzon Expressway nector Road, the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEX) and the Ce-

For further information and media concerns, please get in touch nounced the comeback of additional point. Each with corpcomm@mpt-



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Funding for cash aid for '<mark>near poor</mark> families to continue in

Three-day Basic Employment Services three-day

Basic Employment Services Training facilitated by the Office of the Provincial Public Employment Service Manager (OPPESM) on December 13-15, 2023 at the Sangguniang Panlalawigan Session Hall in Trece Martires City successfully wrapped up with enhanced capabilities of local PESO managers and staff on employment-related services.

Ms. Rizalie Pin-Provincial pin-Enero, PESO Manager opened the training with appreciation of the support of partner agencies and cooperation of local Public Employment Service Offices in continuously upscaling the delivery of employment services.

The training was graced by the Provincial Director Marivic B.



(DOLE)-Cavite Provincial Office, along with resource speakers from the DOLE-Region IV-A, Labor and Employment Officer III. Marie Iris A. Prieto-Perez, and Labor and Employment Officer III, Anne Marie Faye Marjes-Gloria. Their insights and expertise contributed

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



NPA rebel found



CAMP CAPINPIN. Rizal Miko, Medic of Sinag 1/ He expressed his sympa-- Government forces and Vice Iskwad Lider/P5 of thies to their families and officials found a lifeless SPP Kawing; Alias Henry/ body of an NPA rebel near encounter site in Balavan. 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 December 17 identified as er subversive documents. Alias Binhi/Amlai, Political Instructor of SPP Kawing; mander Maj. Gen. Roberto Alias Dolor/Letisha. GP/ S. Capulong said that we Logistics Iskwad Tres of will never rejoice in the SPP Kawing; Alias Orya/ death of seven of our ka-Seven, GP/P4 Iskwad babayans who joined the the Southern Tagalog Re-

Mendel, and S5, Iskwad Tres of SPP Kawing and Former Regional Tax Implementing Group of STRPC and one still unidentified personality. Alias Binhi/Amlia Alias Dolor/Letisha and Alias Orya/Seven have already been claimed by their families while Alias Miko, Alias Henry/Medel and one unidentified personality are still at Romv's Funeral in Balayan, Batangas. It can be noted that soldiers were able to recover the following items in the encounter site: two M16 rifles, one M653 rifle, one 12 Gauge Shotgun, 13 units of assorted cellphones, one Laptop computer with charger, one power bank, two cellphone chargers, four notebooks, one medical kit with assorted medicines, two IDs. one bandolier personal belongings and oth-In a statement, 2ID Com-Uno SPP Kawing; Alias communist terrorist group. gion. 2ID

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, PA Camp General Mateo Capinpin, Tanav. Rizal Cp Number: 09173180365 Email Add: dpao2id@gmail.com Like us on our Facebook page: 2nd Infantry Jungle Fighter Division Follow us in Instagram: 2idjungle fighter Follow us in Twitter: @ JunaleFighter2 their comrades, but rather enjoy the government's peace programs with their loved ones this Christmas, Mai. Gen. Capulong added that the men and women of the 2nd Infantry "Jungle Fighter" Division and the AFP as a whole render our snappiest salute for the bravery and heroism of Sgt Jermell Ramillano who made the ultimate sacrifice along with the three wounded soldiers in this incident. He added that Sgt Ramillano's dedication to duty will foreyer inspire every Jungle Fighter to be unrelenting in the pursuit of peace and development here in

MANILA - AI-92 percent, said they are hopeful for the new year, according to a recent survev 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 so-cio-economic grouping," Pulse Asia said in its

Ninety-five per- prosperous most all Filipino adults, or cent of respondents from the Visavas 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

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

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

Meanwhile, 13 percent said it would be "poorer" than last vear.

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.

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

Philippine National Police in 2022. (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 Faiardo said 10.268 focus crimes were record-ed 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 police force recorded 37,089 40,411 incidents ers in a press conference

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

"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 infocus crime incidents or cidents would continue to 8.22 percent lower than drop," Fajardo told report-

Cayetano, hinikayat ang

mga guró na turuan ng

wastong asal and mga

MANILA - The logged in the same period 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 anniversary

Meanwhile, Faiardo said the PNP remains on alert to prevent any atrocities that might be committed by insurgents to commemorate the 55th founding anniversary of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) on Dec. 26.

magkukumpiyansa lalong lalo yung deployment natin doon sa mga police stations na malalayo na vulnerable sa enemy attacks ay nagdagdag tayo ng puwersa doon particularly coming doon sa ating mga maneu-ver forces, SAF (Special Action Force) troopers ay dineploy natin diyan sa mga vulnerable police stations (We will not be complacent, especially in terms of our deployment there in police stations that are far away and are vulner-able to enemy attacks. We have deployed additional forces there In particular, we have our maneuver forces, SAF troopers we have deployed there in vulnerable police stations)," she said

Faiardo said they also working with the military to thwart any attacks by communist insurgents.

From Page 2

isang business confer- na magpapatibay at magence (BizCon) and Department of Agriculture Philippine Rural Development Project Regional Project Coordination Office Calabarzon (DA-PRDP 4A) upang tipunin at pag-ugnayin ang mga farmers cooperatives and Ayon sa kanya, ang DAassociations (FCAs) at PRDP Scale-Up ay isang mga kinatawan ng publiko at pribadong sektor sa in- paigtingin at gawing makdustriya ng poultry.

DA-PRDP...

Bahagi ito ng paghahanda ng DA-PRDP 4A sa pagpondo ng mga proyektong pangnegosyo sa ilalim ng DA-PRDP awak na bersyon ng DA-

Con and mga sumusunod: CALABARZON, at mga DA-PRDP National Depu-

papalakas dito

Hinikavat ni DA-PRDP National Deputy Project Director Shandy Hubilla ang mga kinatawan ng publiko at pribadong sektor na lumahok sa DA-PRDP Scale-Up. oportunidad upang mas abuluhan ang ugnayan ng mga magsasaka sa mga publiko at pribadong sektor tungo sa mas maunlad na sektor ng agrikultura.

"In DA-PRDP, we Scale-Up, ang mas pinal- are catalyzers. We bring in all the major players of this industry. We hope that Tinalakay sa Biz- through the PRDP Scale-Up, we will be able to unand and PRDP Scale-Up. lock the potential of the kalagayan ng industriya chicken and egg industry ng poultry sa rehiyon ng here in your region," ani

Nagsagawa ng oportunidad at stratehiya ty Project Director Hubilla.

titipon 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 Associa-

tion Inc., at ang Rizal Poul-

try and Livestock Associa-

Dumalo sa pag-

nitong Lunes and mga guro na gampanan ang mahalagang papel sa asal sa isip ng kabataang

> malaki ang kanilang impluwensya sa paghubog ng kinakaharap hindi lang ng kabataan kundi ng ating ban-

"Whatever and itanim n'yo ngayon, 'yan ang Pilipinas, 30, 40 years from now," pahayag ni

Hinikayat ni Sen- Cavetano sa kanyang ator Alan Peter Cayetano mensahe sa mga opisyal ng elementary at secondary schools ng City of Taguig sa kanilang Christpagtatanim ng wastong mas Party noong December 18 2023

> Katulad ng bibprinciple na "Kung lical ano ang iyong itinanim, siyang aanihin," sinabi ni Cayetano sa mga guro na ang mga binhi na kanilang itatanim sa kabataan ngayon ang huhubog sa kinabukasan ng Pilipinas.

"Kung ang escont. on Page 2

"Life is about making an impact, not making an income.

Dec. 27-Jan. 02. 2024

EDITORYAL:

Stronger drive vs corruption

govern-ment

proposal in the past was for the gov-

ernment to establish a single, well-re-

sourced anti-corruption agency which

has fiscal autonomy and is insulated

from partisanship and political interfer-

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

ous answers to what the respondents

felt were the negative effects of corrup-

erodes trust in government services

and public officials: creates a normal-

ized attitude towards corrupt practices;

results in inefficient delivery of basic

social services as health and educa-

tion; leads to less public funds devoted

to fighting poverty; and produces sub-

ative consequences of corruption in

our public life, the question that needs

to be an-swered now is whether this

government is willing to take the road

less traveled and embark on an hon-

est-to-goodness anti-corruption drive

that will spare no one, from the big fish

that it really listens to what Filipinos are

tion in Phil-ippine society.

standard infrastructure

to the small frv.

What's starkly clear is past

The survey also yielded vari-

Respondents said corruption

Given this range of the neg-

It has five more years to prove

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 Philippines' 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 state-

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 Fili-pinos consider corruption as an enormous challenge that should compel government to take firm stens 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.

cayetano ...

tuturo ng teacher naman

y'ung pagdidilig," wika

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: Maria Victoria S. Soberano

hands." dagdag niva.

Editorial Office

He observed the usual saying.

. From Page 2

Upang makamit

ito, naghayag ng suporta

tion system no bansa at

hinikayat ang mga guro

na iparating ang kanilang

mga pangangailangan sa

Senado at iba pang mga

ahensya ng pamahalaan.

Cavetano sa educa-

school naman natin y'ung naging susi sa matagump- It was DepEd," wika niya, soil, and then y'ung pag- ay na paglinang ng Singa- na tinutukoy ang Ministry pore ng positibong asal sa of Education ng Singamamamavan nito. "Sa Singapore, many of the key chang-

tudyante ang seed, and etano, ang edukasyon ang ROTC, hindi Central Bank

"I'm just emphaes in attitude, alam niyo sizing that the future of the Philippines is in your naging susi nila av hindi Ayon kay Cay-

finance department, hindi health department, hindi

TRAIGHT NEWS

"Whatever we can do to support you, please tell us, "wika niya.



ACROSS

STRAIGHT NEWS

- River hazard It aids commerce in Cancun, Kalamazoo. and Calgary
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sailing trio

"Well said!"

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lox, perhaps

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in a pound

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CROSS WORD PUZZLES

57 Land of the



LBMYSTERIOUSM UNICORN **FANTASY** MAGICAL PERFECT LEGENDAR' MYSTICAL V F A N T A S Y X V F L LFAIRYTLEDDHD

GMAGICAL ERFECTR YTHUXJSCPH TTALESOSODAU AJTUNICORN INBOWRFTKY YSTICALGLS RKOBIIFEW FELEGENDARYYI

RAINBOW **BEAUTIFUL** WILD PERFECT LEGENDAR' MYSTICAL **RAINBOW** BEAUTIFUL WILD SPARKI F **MYSTERIOUS BEAST** REAL

make sure that the benefi-

ciaries are qualified under

on time and with sufficient

safeguards in place," Ro-

mualdez said

Romualdez said

"We just have to

Romualdez,

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

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 time cash assistance. The initial target for the PHP60 bilion program is 12 million

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

Romualdez government criteria and the money reaches them

meanwhile, urged national He claimed that agencies and local government units to prepare for the implementation of the 2024 national spending program, saving that they should hit the ground running in carrying out the budget at the start of the

"The budget is the most important piece receive a PHP5,000 one- of legislation Congress passes each year and the President signs into law. It is the blueprint for national development, for sustain-"We intend this to ing economic growth, for creating more job and income opportunities, and in general, for improving the lot of our people," he said. (PNA)

Lifeless body... From Page 1

CAMP CAPIN- tisha, GP/Logistics Isk-PIN, Rizal - Government wad Tres of SPP Kawforces and officials found ing; Alias Orya/Seven, a lifeless body of an NPA GP/P4 Iskwad Uno SPP rebel near encounter site in Balayan, Batangas on ic of Sinag 1/Vice Iskwad Tuesday, December 19, Lider/P5 of SPP Kawing; 2023. Acting on reports from residents of Baran- S5, Iskwad Tres of SPP gay Malalay, troops from Kawing and Former Rethe 59th Infantry "Protector" Battalion together with Balayan PNP and baran- one still unidentified pergay officials proceeded to sonality. Alias Binhi/Amlia. the vicinity where a dead NPA rebel was found. more or less 500 meters already been claimed by from encounter site of the their families while Alias clash between joint government forces and the and one unidentified percommunist terrorist group sonality are still at Rotwo days ago. The dead NPA rebel left by their flee- Batangas. It can be noted ing comrades was identified as Alias Kyrie/Vince, Vice Platoon Leader of SPP Kawing of the South- M16 rifles one M653 rifle ern Tagalog Regional Par- one 12 Gauge Shotgun, ty Committee's Sub-Regional Military Area 4C. phones, one Laptop com-This is in addition to puter with charger, one the six slain NPA rebels power bank, two cellphone during clash with soldiers chargers, four notebooks, last December 17 identi- one medical kit with asfied as Alias Binhi/Amlai, sorted medicines, two IDs, Political Instructor of SPP one bandolier, person-

Kawing; Alias Miko, Med-Alias Henry/Mendel, and gional Tax Implementing Group of STRPC and Alias Dolor/Letisha and Alias Orya/Seven have Miko. Alias Henry/Medel mv's Funeral in Balavan. that soldiers were able to recover the following items in the encounter site: two 13 units of assorted cell-Kawing; Alias Dolor/Le- al belongings, and other



From Page 1

countries, Filipino stu-

learners reported that dis-

tance learning improved

their skills in using digital

devices for learning pur-

poses, while 83% said

their teachers were well

prepared to provide re-

learners also spend ap-

proximately 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

No. 383), the Philippine

Online Library Act (Senate

Bill No. 477), and the One

Learner, One Laptop Act

Fifteen-vear-old

mote instruction.

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 math-

ematical 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.

The 2022 PISA

(Senate Bill No. 474). subversive documents. Follow us in Twitter: @ In a statement, 2ID Com-JungleFighter2 their commander Mai Gen Roberto rades, but rather enjoy S. Capulong said that we the government's peace will never rejoice in the programs with their loved ones this Christmas. Maj. death of seven of our ka-Gen. Capulong added that babayans who joined the communist terrorist group. the men and women of the 2nd Infantry "Jungle He expressed his sympa-Fighter" Division and the thies to their families and AFP as a whole render our further urge the remaining snappiest salute for the NPA rebels to surrender bravery and heroism of and work with the govern-Sgt Jermell Ramillano who ment so as not to suffer made the ultimate sacrithe same fate as Public Affice along with the three fairs Office, 2ID, PA Camp wounded soldiers in this General Mateo Capinpin, incident. He added that Tanay Rizal Co Number: Sgt Ramillano's dedication 09173180365 Email Add: o duty will forever inspire dpao2id@gmail.com Like every Jungle Fighter to be us on our Facebook page: unrelenting in the pursuit 2nd Infantry Jungle Fightof peace and development er Division Follow us in Inhere in the Southern Tagastagram: 2idjungle_fighter loa Region, 2ID

DILG ...

however, also revealed that compared to OECD dents reported a more positive experience with home-based learning. Seventy-nine percent of

ed programs, projects and from the national governactivities these are pro-"We came up with analytics and we look funding, big funds, would at the capacity, particularly needs of our LGUs and we ent national government ed through economies agencies, aside from that, of scale so those are the we look at the result of the things that we thought 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 category is high capacity.

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 experigory of low capacity, low ence during the pandemperformance," DILG Unic. underscore the need dersecretary Marlo Iringan to bridge the digital divide said during the Post-State and adopt digital educaof the Nation Address tion to make the sector (SONA) Discussions at more resilient and innovathe Hilton Hotel Manila in tive. He also emphasized Pasay City on Wednesday 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 Digiuents tal Transformation in Basic Meanwhile. he Education Act (Senate Bill

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.

Iringan said Sec- more than 21,000 operretary Benjamin Abalos Jr. ations resulted in the anprehension of more than is consistently coordinat-26,000 suspects with a ing with the Department of Budget and Management drug haul amounting to more than PHP20 billion. to help address concerns raised by LGUs.

OPPESM ...

to the success of the program, enhancing the participant's knowledge and

Furthermore, Labor and Employment Officer III Marie Iris A Prieto-Perez emphasized that Labor Market Information (LMI) serves as the heart and soul of PFSO. Without it. PESO wouldn't be able to perform effectively, she

····· Dec. 27-Jan. 02. 2024

"We came up with

level where these functions

be devolved. Particularly

grams, projects, and activ-

ities that would require big

require the specialized

technical expertise of local

government functionaries.

should be implemented

by higher levels of govern-

ment, particularly the na-

tional government and the

tive Order 138 signed by

former president Rodrigo

Duterte in 2021 select

functions services and

facilities of certain nation-

al government agencies

related to local infrastruc-

ture, health care, liveli-

hood, agriculture, and so-

cial welfare, among others,

will be transferred to LGUs

under their increased fiscal

with the Supreme Court

ruling in favor of the peti-

tions of Batangas Gover-

nor Hermilando Mandanas

and former Bataan Gov-

ernor Enrique Garcia Jr.

saying that LGUs are enti-

tled to just shares from all

national taxes collected by

gan said on the govern-

ment's flagship program

Buhay Ingatan, Droga'y

Avawan (BIDA), which

covers both supply and de-

mand reduction measures.

continues to reap gains.

(PNA)

Meanwhile Irin-

Iringan noted that

the government.

complies

This

resources

Under Execu-

provinces." he explained.

will be best implement-

MANILA - The Department of the Inte- a recommendation that we rior and Local Govern- need to properly delineate ment (DILG) has vowed the functions at the LGUs to assist local government units (LGUs) that would be and services will have to unable to keep up with the full devolution of some ba- we are looking at targetsic services and facilities

the capacity development share this with the differperformance and the last low performance so that we would focus more our effort, our time in assisting local government units which belong to the cate-

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

added that they support

From Page 1

There were also

discussions on the use of the PESO website, the roles of DOLE and PESO, as well as tricks that can be applied in Excel, calculations, and a guestion-and-answer session which provided participants with an in-depth understanding of concepts from the resource speakers. - Fatima A. Tamio

Dec. 27-Jan. 02, 2024 Harvesting Sweet **Opportunities**

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. Lavzel Bocol. a 29-year-old from General Santos City, tapped into this opportunity and started her coco sugar business in 2019.

Coconut Busi-

ness Hailing from Sultan Kudarat, Layzel's connection to coconuts began early. Her family transferred to General Santos City when buyer came insearch for a



plantation, a role he held tate and accepted the offer from 2007 to 2017. Growing up. Lavzel witnessed the process of coco sugar production, so when a ing the operation. her father was promoted coco sugar manufacturer challenges were not for- piece of wisdom: "Treat as a manager in a coconut in 2019, she did not hesi- eign to Layzel. The funds you **The Social Security System**

(SSS) calls on its rétiree-

pensioners to take

SSS President

and Chief Executive Offi-

loan sharks.

of producing coco sugar with the agreement that the buyer would be financ-

However, startup

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from her buyer were in-

sufficient, which led her

to seek additional support

from CARD, Inc. (A Mi-

crofinance NGO) starting

2016. Their loan support-

ed her business, but 2020

posed a new obstacle with

the global health crisis.

Production dwindled but

began its recovery in the

Today,

to flourish. She considered

herself blessed: with her

business, she was able to

purchase land and a car,

and her life grew more

importance of a strong

dated "mailing address

ee-pensioners may submit

the nearest SSS branch

office or through their

My.SSS account. Once

approved. loan proceeds

will be credited to their

nominated bank account

or UnionBank quick card,

within three working days

for online applications and

five working days if filed

over-the-counter through

the SSS branch

Interested

and mobile number."

team, Bocol shares a

Emphasizing the

pleasant

latter part of 2022.

Marcos ...

MANILA - President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. on Wednesday signed the 2024 Gen- the government agencies eral Appropriations Act (GAA) which contains the PHP5.768-trillion budget that will be tapped to fund the administration's key programs and projects for next year to expedite the country's recovery in a post-pandemic era.

zel's business produces Marcos signed 150-200 kilograms of Republic Act (RA) 11975, coco sugar daily. Any cothe law that appropriates conut nectar that was not funds for the national govimmediately processed ernment's operations from into coconut sugar finds Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2024, its way into sinamak, a sought-after spice vinein a ceremony at Malacañan Palace in Manila on gar. With their dedicated land for raw materials and Wednesday afternoon. a committed team of 20 "Although it is their business continues

teeming with numbers, this budget is more than a spreadsheet of amounts. or a ledger of projects. Rather, it details our battle plan in fighting poverty and combating illiteracy, in producing food and ending hunger, in protecting our homes and securing 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 vear would help boost "both the phystheir loan applications at ical 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 infrastructure backlog. How I wish we had 'unli' revenues to realize our ic efficiency. (PNA)

country's limited unlimited

Marcos reminded to spend their respective budget appropriations "for the correct purposes, the right way, on time, and on budget. "I say this to re-

mind those who will execute this budget that red tape, at least to underspending and overspending that disregards legal quardrails are two sides of the same coin. Implementation delay and illegal deviations inflict the same havoc of denving the people of the progress and development that they deserve." he said.

The 2024 GAA which is equivalent to 21.7 percent of gross domestic product, is 9, 5 percent higher compared to the PHP5.268 trillion budget for 2023. It is anchored on

the framework provided by the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 National Expenditure Program (NEP) that is geared towards achieving the 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 re

minder 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 taxpay ers 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 bureaucrat-

Pension Loan Program (Pl SOCIAL SECURITY SYS

cer Rolando Ledesma Mamonthly pension with a casaet said SSS launched maximum loan amount of PLP to assist SSS retir-P200.000, Moreover, SSS month after SSS granted ee-pensioners in their imwill ensure that their net mediate financial needs take-home pension is at by offering a loan program least 47.25% of their agwith a low-interest rate of gregate monthly pension 10% per annum computed when they start paying the on a diminishing principal monthly amortization for balance, which is a far cry the pension loan. from those being lent by

advantage of its low-interest

plus the P1,000 additional

benefit or their aggregate

"Aside from low interest rate, SSS will not require them to surrender their ATM cards as collaterals, unlike the practice of some private lending institutions. We also do not charge any processing or service fee when they avail of the pension loan,"

Macasaet added Qualified retiree-pensioners can borrow a loan of up to three, six. nine, or 12 times their basic monthly pension (BMP)

pensioner's aggregate monthly pension has a

payment term of six and months, respectivelv. On the other hand, a pension loan of nine or 12 times the aggregate has monthly pension a payment term of 24 months," he added

The SSS Chief said the PLP also has an extended repayment period. "A pension loan of three and six times the

of the loan term:

The first monthly amortization for pension loans is due on the second

· must be receivthe loan. Further, the 1% ing their regular monthly service fee is waived to pensions for at least one subsidize the payment for month, and the pension the borrower's premium of status is "Active"; and the Credit Life Insurance · must have up-

To qualify for the PLP, retiree-pensioners:

must be 85 years of age or below at the end of the last month

 must have no deductions such as outstanding loan balance, benefit overpayment payable to the SSS, etc., from their monthly pension;

 must have no existing advance pension under the SSS Calamity Assistance Package

ters are more than just center nationwide. buildings—they're lifelines, offering a comprehensive challenges range of health services at SCRHU lies in the busa minimal cost or even free tling landscapes of Lato the most vulnerable. guna province, serving The presence of dedicated healthcare providers. Its reach extends beyond who truly grasp the local the immediate communistruggles and share the ty, welcoming those from community's cultural fab- neighboring municipaliric, imbues these centers ties, primarily from low-inwith a profound sense of come households. purpose, fostering genuine

firm belief in the power of behind the old SCRHU. health centers to improve For years, she and her lives and strengthen com- fellow health workers conmunities, the SM group's tinued to extend services foundation has recently amidst the cramped spacunveiled the revitalized es, inadequate facilities, Santa Cruz Rural Health and timeworn structure Unit (SCRHU). This marks a significant milestone for programa na hindi namin the organization, repre- malagyan ng lugar kasi



kulang ang space kaya't hindi sapat ito lalo na kanaghahagilap kami kung pag umuulan. Hindi namin saan ito ipu-pwesto. Min- sila mapapasok dahil wala san, dahil sa challenge ng silang pu-pwestuhan. Hinspace, napapaisip kami di namin mai-provide ang kung sa labas na lang ba comfort na nararapat para namin gagawin ang ibang sa mga pasyente," she programa. May kakulan- added. gan din po sa furniture noon," she shared.

"Napupuno po her dedicated team of kami lalo na pag may di- health workers report for abetic clinic-puno sa la- duty daily, their hearts set bas. Bagamat may tent, on serving the communi-



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

Rural health cen- senting its 200th health

nearly 140,000 residents. For nearly a de-

cade, Dr. Elmina Montesa Underscoring its has been the guiding force

"Marami kaming



communities to increase

access to healthcare and

A doctor measures the blood pressure of the pa-

group.

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

Despite the chal-

lenges, Dr. Montesa and

"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.

munity anchors

Dr. Monte s a 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

functions, including patient consultation examination rooms, treatment rooms, utilities, and staff areas. It improved the center's layout to ensure accessibility, ample lighting and ventilation, and spacious walkways to avoid congestion and contamination.

It is equipped with a rainwater catchment facility for non-potable purposes to help lessen their reliance on municipal sources and contribute to water conservation efforts

Beyond this, through the much-needed rehabilitation, the center now exudes warmth, with comfortable waiting areas for patients and reception area for health workers. Ensuring that the center remains com-

munity oriented, SCRHU magagawa kung ano ang has designated facilities nararapat na treatment for breastfeeding mothers, para sa pasyente," she



Service amidst

tient using the new equipment provided by the SM ty, particularly the most the best possible care to vulnerable—because for them, public service wasn't just a job; it was a boost the morale of mod-



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

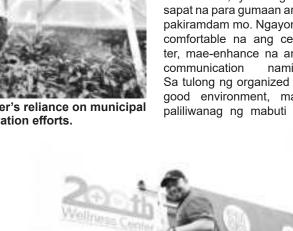
ern-day heroes.

Foundation SCRHU, following DOH's guidelines. It now has clearly defined areas for

From the once As SM Foundacramped center, the SM tion turned over the health elevated center. Dr. Flmina and SCRHU turned over a new leaf in health care.

"Masaya," she different programs and smiled as she looked around the new SCRHU. nakakapaghatid "Dati. kami ng serbisyo kahit hindi conducive to working ang lugar. Kaya't itong renovation mas magiging fulfilled kami dahil maganda 'vung 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 and communication namin. Sa tulong ng organized at good environment, maipaliliwanag 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.

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-

Dec. 27-Jan. 02, 2024

THOUGHTFUL HOLIDAY GIFT **IDEAS FROM OUR HOME**



As the holiday season approaches, it's available at Our Home. 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.

looking to revamp your space or surprise your loved ones with thoughtful style for the spaces we stylish. cherish most.

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

Whether you're of a welcoming home with candles and scents.

· Give the gift of organized beauty. Our of holiday gift ideas that are designed to keep pregive warmth, comfort and cious treasures safe and

 Looking for the cozy moments this Holi- serveware and barware Shopper

DEC 15-JAN 15

make the perfect gifts for them.

special and memorable.

Visit OUR HOME

 Nespresso machines for coffee enthusiasts that they will definitely This holiday sea-

son, whether you're treating yourself or surprising loved ones, celebrate the joy of giving with these gift ideas. Fill your space with gifts, here's a curated list Home's jewelry organizers festive cheer and lasting elegance, making the holidav season even more

· Surprise your perfect gift for those who Store near you, shop onloved ones with the gift of love to host? Our Home's line or call a Personal



partnership with SM Cares

ushered in the #Happiest-

employee volunteers who

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 COOR, CAVITE - In the shop full of laughter and January 15, is your golden ticket to incredible savings. Dive into a treasure trove of unspirit of spreading joy and excitement. The kids were beatable 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 ChristmasAtSM through a embodies the essence 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

goodwill this holiday sea- treated to a day filled with son, SM City Bacoor in thrilling games, entertaining rides, and special gifts. This initiative not only heartwarming #ChriSMiles of the festive season but event with dedicated SM also highlights SM's commitment in supporting orchestrated a cheerful communities and making day for the children of Ha- a positive impact on the bay-2 Day Care Center at lives of those who need it SM City Bacoor, turning it the most.

BUFFALO AVENUE, NOW OPEN



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 like never before. Gather together. It's time to unite and delight in your friends and family the extraordinary world of wings!

SMCENTER IMUS Avenue will surely sat- and head to SM Center Imus to savor isfy your wing cravings the delectable dishes at Buffalo Avenue



Miles 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