

Malonzo posts career-high to lead Ginebra past ROS



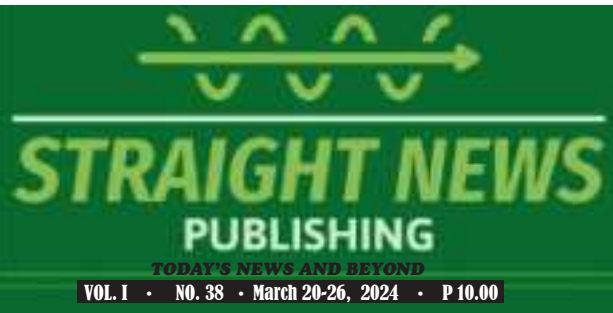
MANILA – Jamie Malonzo dropped a career-high 32 points to highlight an impressive performance to lead Ginebra to a 113-107 win against Rain Or Shine to open its PBA Philippine Cup campaign at the Smart Araneta Coliseum in Quezon City

on Friday night. Playing with his left eye still hurting from the strike thrown at him when he was involved in a restaurant brawl in Taguig, as shown in a video that went viral, Malonzo was on a mission from the get-go, dropping 15 points in the first quarter alone to lead

Ginebra to a 33-26 lead. He slowed down a bit in the second quarter but dropped 11 more points in the third quarter as his team posted a 13-point lead, 92-79, by the end of the period. The ROS, though, still put up a fight

in the end. Down 111-99 with 1:24 to go, the club went on an 8-0 run to cut Ginebra's lead down to four, 111-107, with 16 seconds remaining. Andrei Caracut thought he stole the ball off the inbound play, which led to a Santi Santillan layup that could have trimmed the gap further. The referee, however, called a foul on Caracut and Maverick Ahanmisi iced the game with two free throws. Malonzo also chipped in eight rebounds, three assists, two steals, and four blocks for the Gin Kings for an impressive two-way performance, although he committed seven turnovers, as well. Ahanmisi and

Christian Standhardinger each added 18 points, with the latter completing a double-double with 13 rebounds. Although Ahanmisi barely missed out on a triple-double with nine rebounds and nine assists, his performance was enough to make up for the absence of Scottie Thompson, who decided to take a rest after a back injury. Anton Asistio also fired a career-high with 21 points on five threes along with four rebounds and two assists, but it was not enough to give the Elasto Painters their first win of the conference as they slipped to 0-3. Cade Flores also had his best game so far in



the PBA to lead NorthPort to a 124-120 win against Phoenix in the first game. Flores was almost perfect from the field, going 8-for-9 from the field for 21 points with 12 rebounds to lead the Batang Pier, who set the tone in the first quarter after racing to a 35-25 lead against the Fuel Masters. Phoenix put up a fight in the fourth quarter and even took a 111-110 lead with 3:40 left, but after a 113-all tie, NorthPort went on an 8-3 run to seal the win. Zav Lucero bounced back from a

scoreless output against Converge and added 18 points, one rebound, four assists, two blocks, and one steal for the Batang Pier, who have now won back-to-back games after falling short against the NLEX Road Warriors in their conference opener. Jason Perkins fired 28 points, 26 coming in the second half, seven rebounds, two assists, one block, and one steal for the Fuel Masters, who got to a rough start to the season-ending conference after making the semifinals in the Commissioner's Cup. (PNA)

The Provincial Housing and Development Management Office successfully organized the Shelter Planning in the Local Government on March 8, 2024 at The Bayleaf Cavite in the City of Gen. Trias. Participated by LGU focal persons on housing development, the event served as venue for focal persons to enhance their understanding of housing development and management strategies, revisit LGUs' Local Shelter Plans and sharing of best practice as well as updates on policies and programs related to housing to align the local government's thrust with national goals.



tion.

Speakers from the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development who provided a refresher on local shelter planning and the role of LGUs in the implementation of housing development programs were Architect Louie Jeff Ramos Enp Elizabeth Bandojo.

Cavite Career Caravan: Nurturing Opportunities

Provincial Administrator Alvin S. Mojica graced the program signifying the provincial government's commitment to developing a comprehensive program to address housing needs in the province. Likewise, Engr. Danilo Nobleza, Provincial Director of the Department of the Interior and Local Government-Cavite also expressed his support to the program. Sharing of best practice was done by Ms. Annie Nacianceno from the Housing, Urban Development and Resettlement Department of the City Government of Bacoor showcasing their LGU initiatives and innovative solutions to address housing needs in their jurisdic-

In an era where career advancement and professional growth are pivotal, the Office of the Provincial Public Employment Service Manager (OPPESM) in partnership with Cavite Provincial Sangguniang Kabataan Federation spearheaded the Cavite Career Caravan on March 8, 2024 at GMA Sports Complex in Gen. Mariano Alvarez. The initiative showcased a remarkable platform for talent acquisition and career development. With more than 50 participating companies spanning various industries, the Cavite Career Caravan served as a convergence point where



job seekers could explore diverse career pathways and interact directly with potential employers. From multinational corporations to local enterprises, the event offered a broad spectrum of employment opportunities, catering to individuals with varied skill sets and aspirations.

Engr. Elsa Juliana Calimlim of the Social Housing Finance Corporation provided an orientation on Community Guided Financing for LGUs to consider in planning and in sourcing funding opportunities for their housing projects. From the National Housing Authority, Engr. Emma Monica Anacan and Ms. Mernie Benitez provided inputs on the programs and processes of their agency. Participants showed their engagement and active involvement during the open forum sharing their insights and

raising clarifications as well as suggestions for consideration of the body in the hope of laying a common ground in crafting and updating their respective local shelter plans. Ms. Karen Camañag-Tupas, PHD-MO Housing and Home-site Regulation Officer V extended her heartfelt gratitude to the resource speakers and all the participants for taking part in the significant activity as she looks forward to fostering sustainable and inclusive housing development across Cavite. - Eve M. Reyes

Out of 171 eager applicants, an impressive 66 individuals were hired on the spot. This turnout highlights the tangible impact they have on bridging the gap between job seekers and employers. Moreover, the presence of representatives from government agencies like SSS, Pag-ibig, PSA, BIR, TESDA, OWWA, NBI and Phil-Health added another layer of value to the event. These stakeholders not only provided valuable insights into career pathways and skills development but also underscored the importance of collaboration. **Cont. on Page 3**

Swedish investors to Recto: PH is where we should be



SSS covers over half a million more temporary government workers



Members of PRO CALABARZON participate in the Monthly Rank Inspection for the month of March wearing GOA C uniform held at PRO 4A Kiosk, Camp BGen Vicente P Lim, Calamba City Laguna.

The Rank Inspection is regularly conducted in the Regional Headquarters down to the Municipal/City Police Stations and other units to adhere to the "Tamang Bihis" policy of the Philippine

National Police to ensure that all its personnel are presentable at all times during the performance of their duties. The inspection was immediately followed by a Police Information and Continuing Education or PICE by the Regional Operations Division regarding anti-insurgency efforts of the PNP or the PNP ISO Campaign Plan KATARUNGAN MC 2023-004 and the Regional Investigation and Detective Management Division

JOEY CONCEPCION
President, Philippine Council for Entrepreneurship (Go Negosyo)

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MiMAP (RIMANSI) is celebrating its 19th anniversary this March 2024



Today, on March 14, MiMAP is hosting its first regular Board of Trustees (BOT) Meeting for the year 2024 alongside the annual General Assembly (GA) Meeting. One of the key points discussed during the morning BOT Meeting was the approval of USWAG MBA's regular membership in the Association. This decision will be officially ratified during the GA meeting scheduled for the afternoon. Additionally, the Association took the opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the birthdays of individuals from the MiMAP Board and Secretariat who are celebrating their birthdays this first quarter of the year. The morning BOT Meeting marks the conclusion of the MiMAP BOT's term for 2023-2024. A new set of BOT for 2024-2025 will be elected this afternoon during the GA meeting.

NCSC urges groceries to implement P500 monthly discount for elderly

Metro Manila Subway on track for 2029 partial ops

POINT OF VIEW

HEALTH HINTS FOR ELDERSD FROM AGES 45 TO 100 YEARS3rd series

Sometimes it can feel like maintaining a healthy lifestyle is an overwhelming challenge that doesn't fit within the realities of daily life. It's tough to hold down a full-time job, eat well, train for a marathon, make homemade green juice, spend quality time with your family/partner, and meditate for an hour each day.

Of course, healthy living can incorporate all of these things (if you want it to), but it doesn't have to be defined by grandiose displays of health and fitness.

So much of healthy living is really made up of small things we do daily—things that are so small they don't feel momentous, but that, done consistently over time, add up to produce big results.

31 wellness tips for healthy & happy living Here are 31 tips to live a healthier, happier lifestyle—all simple, easy things that can be seamlessly incorporated into your daily life:

1. drink a glass of water first thing in the morning Coffee's great too, but it's best to start your day by re-hydrating with a full glass of water. Hydrating first thing in the morning helps to aid digestion, enhance skin health and boost energy.

2. take the stairs Taking the stairs instead of the elevator is a simple way to get a little more physical activity in your daily life. It also strengthens and tones your legs and core while you're at it!

3. make half your plate veggies A simple hack for healthy eating (and portion control) is to make half your plate veggies at each meal. The veggies pack in essential vitamins, minerals and other phytonutrients important for health and longevity. And, because they're rich in fiber, they help to aid digestion (aka keep you regular!) and keep you feeling full longer.

4. get a fitness tracker + track your steps Using a fitness tracker (like a Fitbit or Apple Watch) to track your steps is an easy way to make sure you're getting enough physical activity each day. We aim for 10,000 steps daily, which has significant physical and mental health benefits. A fitness tracker will also remind you to get 250 steps each hour (another important measure of health—see tip #9!). Here are our favorite fitness tracker smartwatches of 2021.

5. switch to non-toxic household cleaning products Conventional household cleaning products are full of harmful chemical ingredients that are not good for our health (or the health of our kids or pets!). Switching to healthier alternatives is a simple way to reduce your exposure to environmental toxins in your home. See our Healthy Cleaning Guide for a complete list of recommendations, and what to look for when choosing safer household cleaning products.

6. use non-toxic skincare + personal care products Similar to cleaning products, conventional skincare Cont. on next week serries 5th

Cavite...

ration between the public and private sectors in driving sustainable economic growth.

The event not only attracted job seekers and employers but also garnered significant support from key leaders and stakeholders. Among those present were Board Member Chelsea Jillian Sarno, SK Federation President, Provincial Director Marivic Martinez of DOLE 4A, and GMA Mayor Maricel E. Torres, who expressed their support and highlighted the im-

NCSC...

MANILA – The National Commission on Senior Citizens (NCSC) is urging grocery stores to implement the PHP500 monthly discount on items and prime commodities given to senior citizens, saying this plays an important role in their enjoyment of quality life.

NCSC chair Franklin Quijano said the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has issued a directive increasing the maximum discount to PHP500 starting this month.

"Kelangan lang i-disseminate ang information kasi baka may mga groceries na hindi pa nila alam. Although ang DTI na naglabas na ng kanilang directive (The information must be disseminated because some grocery stores may not know about it. Although the DTI has already released a directive)," Quijano said in a Bagong Pilipinas Ngayon interview aired over People's Television.

The discounts senior citizens can enjoy cover only basic goods and prime commodities, or typical items consumed daily, such as rice, corn, bread, meat, fish, chicken, eggs, cooking oil, sugar, vegetables, fruits, onions, garlic, fresh milk, and processed milk.

Manufactured goods, such as processed meat and sardines, are also covered.

Exempted from discounts are medi-

portance of public-private partnerships in addressing employment challenges and fostering economic growth.

Furthermore, the event underscored the province's commitment to supporting its workforce and fostering a conducive environment for economic prosperity. By proactively engaging with both employers and job seekers, initiatives like these contribute to reducing unemployment rates, boosting productivity, and driving overall socio-economic development. – JDP

FROM PAGE 1

cal-grade milk, premium brands of manufactured goods, cakes, and pastries.

However, there are additional discounts on basic construction supplies, like cement, hollow blocks, and electrical supplies, including light bulbs.

Quijano urged the seniors to address their complaints and concerns to the Office of the Senior Citizen Affairs (OSCA).

"Kung may reklamo man sila, hindi lang nila sa OSCA ipapadala, kung hindi i-copy-furnish ang National Commission on Senior Citizens, nang sa ganon matulungan natin ang OSCA na tawagan ang mga alkalde at ang mga ahensiya at mga groceries (If they have complaints, they can send it not only to OSCA. They should copy-furnish NCSC so that we can help OSCA call the mayors, the agencies, and grocery stores)," he said.

Apart from additional discounts on groceries, senior citizens who are turning 80, 85, 90, and 95 years old this year would receive PHP10,000 under Republic Act 11982.

Quijano said the guidelines for the implementation of the act are being drafted and are expected to be completed in a month.

He added that the NCSC is waiting for the go-signal from the Department of Budget and Management for the availability of the fund. (PNA)

Swedish...

Swedish investors have expressed their strong interest in investing in the Philippines in light of its robust macroeconomic fundamentals, improved business climate, and highly skilled workforce during a meeting with Finance Secretary Ralph G. Recto on March 8, 2024.

The Swedish investors were represented by Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken (SEB) Chairman Marcus Wallenberg and Saab President and Chief Executive Officer Michael Johansson.

SEB is a leading North European financial group with a current market value of USD 30.61 billion (approximately PHP 1.7 trillion) as of March 2024.

Meanwhile, Saab is a prominent Swedish defense and security company with a market value of USD 10.36 billion (roughly PHP 580.18 billion) as of the same period.

The delegation was accompanied by Ambassador of the Kingdom of Sweden to the Republic of the Philippines Annika Thunborg during the meeting.

The investors expressed particular interest in bolstering the Philippines' defense industry, drawing upon Sweden's track record in enhancing defense capabilities in countries like Brazil and Thailand, which not only fosters long-term competence but also stimulates domestic job creation.

The investors also emphasized that Sweden's recent membership to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) presents significant opportunities for Swedish arms manufacturers to contribute to the modernization of the Philippines' defense capabilities.

Other potential areas for collaboration discussed included pharmaceuticals, financial solutions, green projects, and deeper public-private partnerships (PPP).

In turn, Secretary Recto invited Swedish investors to invest in the country's flagship infrastructure projects primed and ready for PPP invest-

ments under the President's Build Better More program.

The program features 185 big-ticket infrastructure projects worth PHP 9.14 trillion (about USD 163 billion) ranging from power, physical connectivity, rural development, water resources, digitalization, sustainable initiatives, and healthcare.

The Finance Chief particularly emphasized the strategic advantage of investing in the Philippines, citing its status as the fastest-growing economy in the ASEAN despite external challenges such as elevated inflation, slower global growth, and rising geopolitical tensions.

Secretary Recto also showcased the pro-business and economic liberalization policies that the country has in place to foster a welcoming environment for businesses and encourage foreign partnerships.

These include the recently-enacted PPP Code; the amendments to the Retail Trade Liberalization Act (RTLA), the Public Service Act (PSA), and the Foreign Investments Act (FIA); and the amendments in the implementing rules and regulations of the Renewable Energy Act of 2008 that granted full foreign ownership of renewable energy projects.

Secretary Recto likewise shared that the government is refining the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises Act (CREATE) Act to further tailor fit incentives to investor interests and encourage investment in strategically important sectors.

He underscored that all of these pro-business policies are complemented by the competitive advantage offered by the Philippines' "demographic sweet spot".

As the populations of economies in Asia and other industrialized countries begin to age, the Philippines looks forward to the entry of millions of young and skilled Filipinos into the workforce whose median age is 25 years old. DOF.GOV

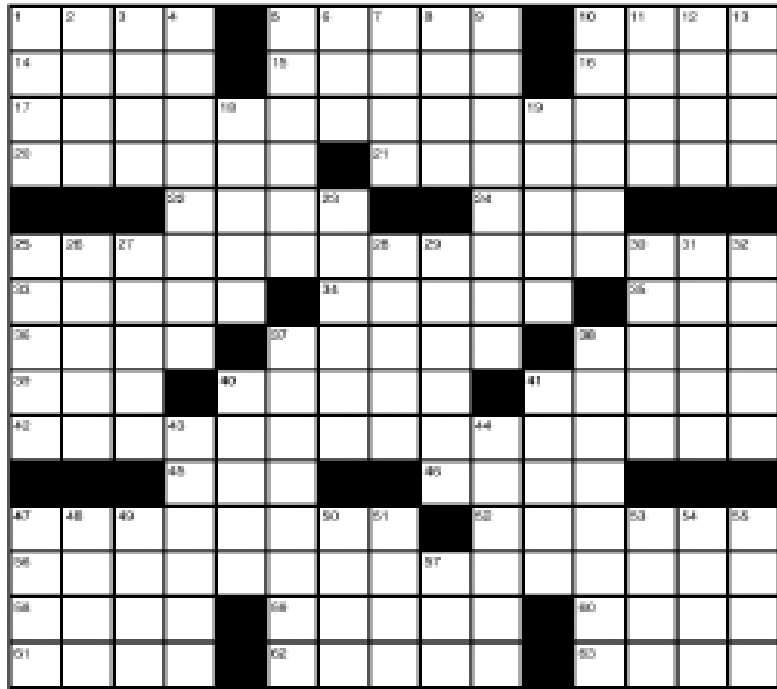
FROM PAGE1

ACROSS

- 1 Patron saint of Lost causes
- 5 Political leader?
- 10 Recipe direction
- 14 "Movin' ___" ("The Jefferson's theme song)
- 15 The Donald
- 16 Earned
- 17 FLUSH
- 20 Pooh-pooh
- 21 Reuben requirement
- 22 Laker forward Lamar
- 24 Time to buy a new calendar: abbr.
- 25 FLUSH
- 33 Put at stake
- 34 Vehicle for a rowed warrior?
- 35 Luke, to 18 down
- 36 Stopovers for the QW2
- 37 Shocking end to a police chase
- 38 "More info. on next page"
- 39 Cpl., for one
- 40 Is teary
- 41 having wings
- 42 FLUSH
- 45 "___ Spock" -- 1995 Nimoy autobiography

- 46 Ages
- 47 Teary
- 52 Spay
- 56 FLUSH
- 58 Allot
- 59 Poi parties
- 60 Leprechaun's land
- 61 Turning point
- 62 Biological bristles
- 63 Lilliputian's lack

Crossword Puzzles



DOWN

- 1 Patronsaint of soldiers (canonized in 1920)
- 2 Donald, to huey, Dewey and Louie
- 3 Airport shops may be free from it
- 4 "Star Trek" had 79
- 5 Remain employed
- 6 Scrap
- 7 One who waves from the wings
- 8 "One choice is to..."

- 9 Chose
- 10 Sully
- 11 One involves Two Cities
- 12 Inspiration
- 13 AARP part
- 18 Anakin, eventually
- 19 In need of a loss
- 23 Winnerof the 2008 Republican Primary
- 25 Famous name in Dallas
- 26 Da Gama on the ocean
- 27 Alaskan white house
- 28 Loosened
- 29 Diaper shirt

- 30 In brine, e.g.
- 31 Game involving
- 32 Record
- 37 Shackles
- 38 Snaps and zippers
- 40 Kind of letter or mail
- 41 It'll take your breath away
- 43 Songs to waje you in the mourning
- 44 Reason for rust, perhaps
- 47 Tibetan teacher
- 48 What is Mr. Trebek's first name?
- 49 2008 bailout recipient,n brief
- 50 Inunison, musically (literally "by two")
- 51 One bar to reaching the bar: abbr.
- 53 She played Lois on TV
- 54 Shakespeare's era: abbr.
- 55 Baseball's Sandberg
- 57 Sine___ non



S U D O K U



WORDHUNT

C H J Y S F P N E X J K U Y G
D N F P V J J P R I N T E R O
K I U B K I P R V J B N B P T
W Y G S C R A P B O O K A E E
N Q K I E V J Z S V M P V G N
C J D V T K Z V E B E I X W F
A S I N U A N N V R T W V A T
J E R O U S L E A A X F T O G
W F B X Y S E L E M E N T S O
B G Y P D D B R L I Z Q Z G B
D S H A C C C P G F R S T Q Z
K S R E W O L F G T P T H Y W
S B G M E M O R I E S H A Z A
T T Z W Z V P Q I P M R H U I
T P Y S W R I B B O N S T S H

SCRAPBOOK
DIGITAL
PAPER
PREVIEW
ELEMENTS
FLOWERS
LEAVES
CREATIVE
SUZYQ
HYBRID
PRINTER
RIBBONS
BRADS
MEMORIES

Hontiveros to ask Zubiri for Quiboloy's arrest warrant

MANILA – Senate Deputy Minority Leader Risa Hontiveros is set to request Senate President Juan Miguel Zubiri to issue a warrant of arrest against Kingdom of Jesus Christ (KOJC) leader Pastor Apollo Quiboloy.

Hontiveros said Quiboloy's camp is asking to resolve the show cause order through a Senate plenary hearing.

"Sa totoo lang, wala nga sa [Senate] Rules ang show cause order (The truth is the show cause order is not

even in the Senate Rules). It was a courtesy extended to Sen. Robin [Padilla], at the request of the SP [Zubiri]," Hontiveros said in a statement Friday.

"Kung wala nga sa Rules ang show cause order, much less wala sa Rules na kailangan ng (If the show cause order is not in the [Senate] Rules, much less is the) hearing in plenary to resolve the show cause order," she added.

Hontiveros cited previous cases, such as that of Senator Cynthia Villar who cited Davidson Bangayan in contempt and ordered his arrest even if criminal charges were already filed against

PRESCRIPTIONS

TEST QUESTIONS

The foolish man seeks happiness in the distance, the wise grows it under his feet.

HERE ARE SOME TEST QUESTIONS to see how you're spending your time on earth. What is one thing you love about being alive? How would you finish this snetence; Thank God Im _____?

How long did it take you to answer each questions? if you had to stop and think, you took to long, These answer should flow easily. If they don't, it is a sign you're not in touch with your heart and that it needs to be nourished.

Now answer this question: When you took at a garden do you see the weeds or the flowers? If youu had trouble with thw answer, perhaps it is because you need to take off the blinders others have put over your eyes. You do not have to see what they tell you is before you. You have a choice in how you percieve your world. The true answer to all of these questions can only come from your heart.

Soulution of the Week

Write down the first two questions.

For the next week respond to them with at least one new answer each day

They are good questions to ask yourself on a monthly basis.

DICT holds multi-sectoral training

LOS BAÑOS, Laguna (PIA) – Enhancing the knowledge of the public in digital skills and utilizing it for their livelihood has been one of the priority projects of the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) Laguna Provincial Office as they continue to organize a series of capacity development sessions in different sectors across the province.

During a training session held in Los Baños, Laguna on March 8, representatives from senior citizens, persons with disability (PWDs), out-of-school youths and adults, solo parents, academe, transportation, local government, and the private sector were tapped by the

DICT and the municipal government of Los Baños for training sessions on Canva layout design, smartphone photography, and cybersecurity awareness.

Hazel Pagao, provincial officer of DICT Laguna highlighted the importance of digital literacy awareness, especially for vulnerable and marginalized groups, as they are the sectors being targeted by cyber criminals.

"It is important to spread digital literacy, especially for marginalized sectors so that's what we are doing here in DICT Laguna. It is also beneficial for us to maintain a close coordination and partnership with our local government units so that they can effectively tap the participants for our sessions,"

Pagao stated. One of the participants of the training, principal Emma Izon, said that it is important to continuously enhance their knowledge especially on new trends in the digital space. (Christopher Hedreya/PIA-Laguna)

Emma Izon, principal of Tuntungin Putho Integrated National High School and one of the participants of the training, said that it is important to continuously enhance their knowledge especially on new trends in the digital space.

PIA CALABARZON LAUNCHES BAGONG CALABARZON BARANGAY FORUM ph



The Philippine Information Agency (PIA) IV-A has launched the Bagong Calabarzon Barangay Forum, a grassroots communications program of the agency, that aims to communicate the various programs and services of the government directly to the barangays and members of different sectors and organizations, in Barangay Palongon, Calamba City, Laguna on February 29, Thursday.

Fisherfolks from 10 lakeshore barangays of Calamba City had the opportunity to voice their concerns, experiences, insights, and suggestions and ask questions about pressing issues affecting the industry.

The Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) presented its programs, projects, and initiatives aimed at the development of fisherfolk communities around Laguna de Bay and bear the conservation efforts being done by the agency for the largest freshwater lake in the country.

The city government of Calamba, through the Office of the City Mayor and City Agricultural Services Department, and the Office of Rep. Charisse Anne Hernandez-Alcantara, were also present in the event to obtain said issues which may be used in formulating local programs for the fisheries

sector. The LLDA and the local government commended the initiative of the grassroots strategy of PIA, which allowed them to obtain feedback from communities directly and pave the way for a collaborative approach to finding solutions that seek to benefit the fishing community and the environment.

The Bagong Calabarzon Barangay Forum is in line with the Bagong Pilipinas campaign of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. which serves as the National Government's branding and communications strategy. | via Anna Mole, PIA-4A



digital skills, cybersecurity

digital skills."

Izon commended DICT for also including out-of-school youths as they are often neglected in capacity development training.

"This is a great initiative, especially for our out-of-school youth because they have no knowledge of it through our schools and they have limited exposure to technology so they will benefit greatly from this," she added.

Although not 'technology savvy' Jaime Robillon, chairman of a local transport cooperative in Los Baños, said that the program is a big help for his organization as they will be able to apply the acquired knowledge and skills in the training for the cooperative's day-to-day

operation.

"This is very timely for us because we are starting to craft our own quality management system, operation management system, and accounting system that will guide us for our operations. Now, we will also know how we can safeguard the documents of our organizations from scamming and other cyberattacks," Robillon said.

Los Baños Councilor Miko Pelegrina, the local partner of DICT for the training, supports the conduct of capacity development sessions for groups in a bid to foster inclusivity and add financial opportunities for the attendees.

"The idea and vision for this is to invite knowledgeable resource persons who will share

their wisdom to attendees. People will know more through these sharing sessions, so I am hoping that it will be shared as well to marginalized sectors," Pelegrina explained.

According to the DICT, the common cyber threats being observed in the country are malware attacks, supply chain attacks, spoofing and hijacking credentials, password attacks, phishing, and business e-mail compromise, and through the sessions they share techniques on how to avoid falling prey to the said cybercrimes.

Pagao calls on the public to do their part and be responsible online users by always being vigilant, by thinking before clicking, and by verifying facts and information before doing their transactions. (CH/PIA-Laguna)

DOH certifies over 100 community-based drug rehab programs in Calabarzon



CALAMBA CITY, Laguna (PIA) – The Department of Health Center for Health Development (DOH-CHD) IV-A announced that it has certified a total of 111 Community-Based Drug Rehabilitation Programs (CBDRP) from different local government units throughout the Calabarzon region.

Theresa Malubag, Regional Outcome Manager for the Substance Abuse Prevention Program of DOH IV-A said during a meeting of the Inter-Agency Committee on Anti-Illegal Drugs (ICAD) Advocacy Cluster that out of the total of 142 LGUs in the region, the province of Cavite with 23 CBDRPs has 100 percent certification rate after the rigorous validation process by the agency.

CBDRP is an integrated model for drug users with moderate risk for drug dependence and/or mild substance use disorder. Individuals who are under the program were provided with care from outreach and low-threshold services through coordination with health, social, and other non-specialist services needed to meet their needs.

Local governments were given the mandate to implement CBDRPs, depending on available resources and the number of clients they accept.

The health department, however, sets guidelines to which LGUs must adhere to have an effective CBDRP, such as adequate promotion of anti-drug use; and establishing prevention guidelines

by having a health service provider and screening tools for drug screening tests.

DOH also requires setting up treatment centers, forming a referral system between local governments and health service providers that will conduct drug dependence examinations, and having functional recovery clinics, psycho-social and spiritual services, and specialty service providers.

According to the latest DOH IV-A data dated Feb. 20, 2024, only 31 LGUs remain uncertified in the region. The majority are from the province of Quezon with 15 uncertified CDRPs, 10 from Batangas, and 3 in Laguna and Rizal, respectively. They target certifying all CDRPs by the end of March.

Cont. on Page 3

EDITORIAL:

El Niño nearing its peak

We heard it from the Task Force El Niño spokesman, who raised a bulletin of uneasiness, with the Department of Agriculture saying the weather phenomenon has caused at least P1.31 billion worth of agricultural damage as of mid-March.

Now the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System is considering reducing the water pressure of concessionaires in Metro Manila due to the continuous decline of water levels in Angat Dam.

Task Force spokesman Joey Villarama said the country is still experiencing "strong and mature" El Niño, pointing out this year's damage caused by the drought was less than previous figures.

"We are anticipating we have seen the worst, and the damage would not be any bigger," Villarama said.

With the intense heat, at least five municipalities have declared a state of emergency, and about 60-70 provinces would be affected by the El Niño up to April.

At least 65 provinces, or 77 percent of the total provinces of the country, are forecast to experience drought by the end of May 2024 due to a "strong" El Niño, Science and Technology Secretary Renato Solidum Jr. said earlier.

Around six provinces or 7 percent of the total provinces nationwide may experience a dry spell.

The dry spell would be felt in north Luzon and

northern extreme Luzon, while dry conditions would prevail in some parts of Mindanao.

"By the end of May, 77 percent of the provinces of the country [that] will have potential for drought. That would be around 65 provinces," Solidum said.

Essentially, that means the rest of the country would be from dry condition to drought, mostly drought.

A dry spell is defined as three consecutive months of below normal rainfall condition, while a dry condition is defined as two consecutive months of below normal rainfall condition, both 21 to 60 percent reduction from average rainfall.

Drought is three consecutive months of way below normal rainfall condition (60 percent reduction from average rainfall).

The effects of El Niño are currently felt and have been experienced in some areas in the country, with the reduction of rainfall up to 80 percent which led to dry conditions or dry spells.

Based on recent conditions, moderate to severe drought conditions are likely from February to May 2024," Solidum said.

Solidum warned there is an indication the strong weather phenomenon is "comparable" to the 1997 to 1998 episode, regarded as the worst El Niño event in the world.



Hontiveros ...

him.

She said Senator Ronald dela Rosa continued to hear the disappearance of Catherine Camilon even though charges were filed against the police officer who was believed to be involved.

Senator Imee Marcos, Hontiveros said, also presented witnesses with covered faces and using aliases in her hearing on people's initiative.

"At si SP [Zubiri] mismo, noong Senate hearings sa pagpatay kay Horacio Castillo, hindi niya tinanggap ang right against self-incrimination excuse at ginamit doon ang contempt power ng Senado (And SP Zubiri

(PNA)



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himself, during the Senate hearings in the killing of Horacio Castillo, he did not accept the right against self-incrimination excuse and used the contempt power of the Senate)," she said, noting it resulted in the passage into law of the Republic Act No. 11053 or the Anti-Hazing Law.

The Senate Committee on Women, Children, Family and Gender Equality chaired by Hontiveros received Friday Quiboloy's response to the show cause order which was issued by the panel last Wednesday, asking the KOJC head to explain why he continues to refuse to appear before the panel's proceedings.

Quality of jobs in PH continues to improve as more Filipinos are engaged in formal and stable work

Finance Secretary Ralph G. Recto has underscored that the quality of jobs in the Philippines has continued to improve as more Filipinos are engaged in formal and stable work—representing the largest portion of the employed workforce in the country, according to the latest Labor Force Survey (LFS) results.

The LFS showed that the country recorded a total number of 45.9 million employed individuals in January 2024, the majority of which (30.8 mil-

lion or 67.1%) were wage and salary workers mostly coming from private establishments.

This improvement in the quality of jobs is also reflected in the decline of the underemployment rate, which dropped to 13.9% in January 2024 compared to 14.1% in the same month last year.

"Wage and salary workers enjoy more stable employment conditions, including perks such as health insurance and social welfare benefits. The fact that they are

continuously increasing and accounting for the largest share of employed persons in the country indicates that the majority of our workforce is engaged in formal jobs," the Finance Chief said.

More than half of the total employment in January 2024 was provided by services (60.2%) followed by agriculture (21.4%) and industry (18.4%).

Meanwhile, the top sub-sectors that recorded annual increases in the number of employed persons in January 2024 were construction; transportation and storage; administrative and support service activities; and fishing and aquaculture.

Overall, the employment rate rose to 95.5% in January from 95.2% in the same month in 2023.

This brought the unemployment rate to drop to 4.5% from 4.8% in the same month of the previous year, indicating sustained improvement in

the labor market as more Filipinos are being hired.

While the Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR), or the estimate of an economy's active workforce, slightly dropped to 61.1% in January 2024 compared to 64.5% in January 2023, this could be attributed to a decrease in youth LFPR due to return to schooling.

Strategies to boost the quantity and quality of employment

The Department of Finance (DOF) has the Growth-Enhancing Actions and Resolutions or GEARs plan in place to ensure that the country is on track to achieve a growth-enhancing fiscal consolidation, which will in turn foster an environment that is conducive to employment-generating investments.

Under this plan, the DOF will act fast on investments through the swift implementation of pro-business

reforms, improvements in the regulatory regime, reduction in the cost of doing business, and addressing constraints.

These include pushing forward the amendments to the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises (CREATE) Act to further address investor concerns, tailor-fit incentives, and attract more strategic investments into the country.

"The ease of doing business is what builds investment-led growth that creates more quality jobs in a land whose talents far outstrip opportunities that could harness them," Secretary Recto said.

With its high multiplier effect on the economy, the government will also vigorously implement the President's Build Better More program to generate more employment and investments. The government targets an annual infrastructure spending of 5% to 6% of GDP.

The government will leverage private sector capital and expertise through the recently enacted Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Code to cut the infrastructure backlog, free up fiscal space for social services, and generate jobs that boost domestic consumption.

Meanwhile, the Finance Chief aims to achieve its revenue collection targets by further enhancing tax administration efficiency to provide more funds for education, upskilling and worker training, health care, and other human capital development programs that will improve the preparedness of Filipinos for quality job opportunities.

"Our greatest asset is our people. This is something even countries worldwide recognize. Thus, we will prioritize empowering them further by investing heavily in human capital development for prime and prepare them for the best and the brightest opportunities ahead," Secretary Recto said.



SITE INSPECTION. Department of Transportation Secretary Jaime Bautista (3rd from left) with other DOTr officials and private contractors during a site visit at the North Ave. Station of the Metro Manila Subway Project Contract Package 101 (CP101) on Thursday (March 7, 2024). Bautista said the project is 40 percent complete and is on track to open for partial operations by 2029. (PNA photo by Joan Bondoc)

MANILA – The first contract package (CP101) of the Metro Manila Subway Project (MMSP) is 40 percent complete and is on track for partial operations by 2029, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) said Thursday.

In a press conference following a site visit and launch of tunnel boring machine (TBM) 4 at the MMSP's North Avenue Station, DOTr Secretary Jaime Bautista said the project's on-time completion would mostly depend on resolving right-of-way (ROW) issues.

To date, he said some properties where stations are located are owned by private individuals, in addition to a

Department of Education (DepEd) building that cannot be demolished due to its status as a heritage site.

"Meron din issues like property owners na ayaw nila 'yung MMSP dumaan sa ilalim ng kanilang property (There are also issues like property owners that protest against having the MMSP tunnel run under their property)," Bautista said.

DOTr Undersecretary for Rails Jeremy Regino said while the ROW challenges of the MMSP is the "first of its kind and the largest in magnitude in Metro Manila," expropriation — or the government claiming a private property against the wishes of its owners —

would allow for the project to proceed on time.

While expropriation is not "forced occupation" but rather a "just compensation," Regino said the option is only the government's last recourse should negotiations with the property owners arrive at an impasse. "We have now shortened the negotiation process. If there will be no agreement, we will have to file expropriation proceedings but without prejudice to continue with the negotiations," he said.

He noted that being granted a writ of possession would also "not bar the continuation and conclusion of a successful negotiation."

"We are doing our best to convince prop-

erty owners, all things considered, that their concerns are already factored in," he said.

During the event, Bautista, Regino, and other officials of the DOTr conducted a site visit at the CP101 site being constructed by the Joint Venture of Shimizu Corporation, Fujita Corporation, Takenaka Civil Engineering & Construction Co., Ltd, and EEI Corporation.

The CP101 is one of seven civil works contracts of the MMSP and involves the construction of three underground stations — Quirino Highway, Tandang Sora, and North Ave. stations — and a depot in Valenzuela City.

The MMSP — the country's first underground railway — is a 33-kilometer railway system that will



Department of Transportation Secretary Jaime Bautista visits the site of the ongoing construction of the Metro Manila Subway Project at the North Ave. Station on March 7, 2024. (PNA photo by Joan Bondoc)



The tunnel boring machine at the Metro Manila Subway Project's North Avenue Station (PNA photo by Joan Bondoc)

connect Valenzuela City in the north to Pasay City in the south, with a spur line at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 3 in Parañaque City.

Once operational, the subway is seen to reduce travel time from Valenzuela to NAIA from a drive of one hour and 30 minutes to a 35-minute train ride — and is capable of serving 519,000 passengers daily. (PNA)

DOH ...

Malubag assured that they will continue to assist barangays in the region to attain a drug-cleared and drug-free declaration within their communities.

"Validation and certification are required for all applicants in the government's drug clearing program. [Our] training on screening, providing interventions, and referral to treatment will continue for the validation of baran-

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gays to be declared drug-free," she explained.

The DOH said that the drug-clearing program in the Calabarzon region will be further intensified through the promotion of a campaign for a drug-free workplace, disseminating information

for advocacy and policies, providing technical assistance, and distributing drug test kits to local government units.



SSS PCEO Macasaet and Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte signed an agreement last January 29, 2024. Prior to the SSS-QC Government partnership, the pension fund has already sealed agreements with the Local Government of Mandaluyong, Taguig and Malabon in 2023.

"As they are exposed to various health hazards while performing their duties, the more these workers deserve social security protection regardless of their employment status in the government," Agas added.

Agas said more government agencies employing JO workers are expected to join the KaSS-Sangga Collect Program. In January 2024 alone, Agas said SSS had sealed partnerships with 32 government institutions in the National Capital Region.

Likewise, an additional 74 program partners from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao also joined the agreements which secured the SSS membership of 2,251 temporary government workers, he added.

Agas urged other public sector leaders and groups to extend social security protection to their constituents and colleagues by subsidizing their monthly SSS contributions.

"They can shoulder the contribution payments of their chosen recipients for at least six months through the Contribution Subsidy Provider Program. Let us join forces to invest in the future of our fellow workers in government through equitable social security protection," Agas said.

Agas noted that SSS was able to collect over P7.08 billion worth of workers' contributions from 2015 to 2023 under the program. Over 2,100 Local Government Units (LGUs) remitted P4.66 billion worth of contributions while almost 700 National Government Agencies (NGAs) and Government Owned and Controlled Corporations (GOCCs) paid P2.03 billion.

On the other

hand, over 100 State Colleges and Universities (SUCs) remitted P289.91 million SSS contributions and 86 Local Water Districts (LWDs) paid P97.64 million. "We commend the proactive stance of our partners in the government sector in providing adequate social safety nets to their JO and COS workers through active SSS membership," Agas said.

He added that their significant role as coverage and collection partners helped SSS in generating higher revenues while also providing meaningful benefits to all members.

It was recently announced that in 2023, SSS achieved P83.13 billion net income that year, with a huge bulk coming from contribution collection of P309.12 billion.

Agas attributed the outstanding financial performance of SSS last year to the efforts of the SSS management and employees in intensify-

ing its collection activities such as registering new paying members, improved collection from delinquent employers, and the 2023 contribution rate hike. End

DOST PSTO Rizal conducts Courtesy Call Meeting to DepEd SDO Antipolo to discuss S&T Interventions on

ANTIPOLO CITY, Rizal – Earlier, DOST Rizal Provincial S&T Director, Mr. Fernando E. Ablaza, accompanied by Ms. Niña Sherylle S. Giron, Supervising SRS, and Mr. Raphael San Antonio, Science Research Specialist I, made a courtesy call to the Antipolo Schools Division Superintendent, Dr. Lerma L. Flandez. Also in attendance were Mr. Darwin D. Bargo, Education Program Supervisor of SDO Antipolo, and Ms. Rosanna A. Ortiz, School Principal of Antipolo City National Science and Technology High School (ANSCI).

DOST PSTO Rizal will then be coordinating with the Local Government Unit of Antipolo, alongside existing project

ing, PD Ablaza and his team presented a brief about the 21st Century Learning Environment Model (21st CLEM) Project Proposal for ANSCI. The 21st CLEM, a project spearheaded by the DOST Science Education Institute (DOST-SEI), is designed to be a learning environment of education, information and communications technology resources and innovations that will serve as a support system to both the K-12 Curriculum and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education.

The ANSCI has been identified as one of the target schools for deployment of the 21st CLEM in response to the request for S&T intervention by the Office of Congressman Romeo M. Acop, Representative of 2nd District, Antipolo City.

DOST PSTO Rizal will then be coordinating with the Local Government Unit of Antipolo, alongside existing project

PBBM inks new PH passport law

MANILA – President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has signed Republic Act (RA) 11983, or the New Philippine Passport Act, to streamline the passport application process in the country.

RA 11983 was signed by Marcos on March 11, repealing RA 8239 or the Philippine Passport Act of 1996, aiming to develop a new generation of Philippine passports that are at par with international standards, Communication Secretary Cheloy Garafil said in a statement on Friday.

Garafil said the new passport law makes the application process for regular passports readily accessible, especially for some individuals, including senior citizens, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and overseas Filipino workers (OFWs).

"The new passport law now authorizes DFA (Department of Foreign Affairs) to provide off-

site and mobile passport services in areas outside of the consular offices and foreign service posts," she said.

The new law mandates the DFA to accommodate the applications of regular passports by senior citizens, PWDs, pregnant women, minors aged 7 years and below, solo parents, OFWs, and individuals with emergency and exceptional cases, she added.

RA 11983 also mandates the DFA to establish an electronic one-stop shop on its website for easy application, and gathering and submission of requirements.

Under the new law, incumbent government officials and employees, as well as members of their families, may hold two passports simultaneously, Garafil said.

"Regular passports are issued to Filipino citizens who are not eligible or entitled to diplo-

collaborators to finalize pre- and implementation activities of the 21st CLEM.

In addition to 21st CLEM updates, PD Ablaza also shared about DOST ASTI's Resilient Education Information Infrastructure for the New Normal (REINN) Project, DOST's scholarship initiatives, and deployment of DOST-STII's Science and Technology Academic and Research-Based Openly-Operated KioskS (STARBOOKS). Interested parties and individuals are advised to submit a letter of intent addressed to the Provincial S&T Director.

Note to editors: DOST-CALABARZON is one of the regional offices of the Department of Science and Technology and is located at Jamboree Road, Brgy. Timugan, Los Baños, Laguna. For more information, you may visit us on Facebook at facebook.com/dostcalabarzon or our website at www.region4a.dost.gov.ph. You may also reach us at parcu@ro4a.dost.gov.ph.

Comelec keen on tapping malls as voting hubs

MANILA – The Commission on Elections (Comelec) is keen on tapping anew private establishments such as malls as voting centers for the May 2025 midterm polls.

This is to minimize crowding and prevent the "wear and tear" of facilities of public schools which are usually utilized as voting centers, Comelec chairperson George Erwin Garcia said in a press briefing Thursday.

"Kung andito tayo sa ganitong lugar, maayos ang lugar, maayos ang pila at hindi nagagamit mga paaralan. Kung sakali may ibang lugar na ibibigay sa atin ng libre, katulad ng malls, mas ma-

ganda dun na lang gawin (If we are in this kind of place, the place is conducive, the queues are organized, we do not have to use schools anymore. If ever there are other places that can be given to us for free, like malls, it would be better)," Garcia said.

Currently, the Comelec is holding voter registration in selected malls all over the country which started on Feb. 12 and will end on Sept. 30.

"171 malls ang pinapagamit ang spaces para sa registration natin. Kaya naman pala gawin at pwede pala gamitin ang iba pang (Some 171 malls are allowing us to use their space for our voters registration. We saw that this

is possible, we can make use of other) public places other than elementary schools," he added.

However, Garcia said they would still be tapping public schools as voting centers, particularly in far-flung areas.

"Pero syempre, may mga lugar na no choice kundi gamitin elementary schools dahil yun lang medyo maayos na facility sa isang barangay, lalo sa (But of course, there are areas where we have no choice but to use elementary schools as these are the only conducive facilities in a village, especially in) far flung areas," he said.

At the same time,

the Comelec chairman said there will be consultations on precincts that are going to be transferred to malls.

"The malls are in the town proper. Of course, we would not transfer precincts located in far-flung areas to malls. These can apply to areas near malls. We need a bigger space because people will flock there. I hope malls would participate in our mall voting plan," Garcia said.

The malls that are participating in the seven-month voter registration period are SM Supermalls, Robinsons Malls, Megaworld Lifestyle Malls, and Filinvest Festival Malls. (PNA)