

SM LITTLE STARS 2024 SHINES A SPOTLIGHT ON YOUNG TALENT AND BUILDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Get ready, kids and parents! SM Little Stars 2024 is here, bigger and brighter than ever before! It's your child's chance to shine on a national stage and potentially transform their lives. With SM Little Stars, kids can express themselves through the performing arts, nurturing young talent and enriching our communities. If you're between 4 and 7 years old and have a talent that can wow the world, SM Supermalls is looking for YOU!



Formally launching 2024 SM Little stars are (L-R): Multi-awarded filmmaker Antoinette Jadaone, 2013 SM Little Stars Girl Grand Winner Esang de Torres, SM Supermalls' Senior Vice President for Marketing Joaquin San Agustin, SM Supermalls' Assistant Vice President for Marketing and SM Little Stars Project Head Carinna Sy, singer Karylle Yuzon, National University Senior Director of Admissions Dr. Christina Corpuz, and Sparkle GMA Artist Center Consulting Head for Talent, Imaging, and Marketing Lawrence Tan.



SM Supermalls' Assistant Vice President for Marketing and SM Little Stars Project Head Carinna Sy encourages prospective participants to showcase their unique talents.

This isn't just any talent show – it's the Philippines' biggest mall-based kiddie talent search, held annually across SM malls nationwide. Now in its 15th year, SM Little Stars is a beloved tradition, uniting communities in showcasing their best and brightest. In 2023 alone, a staggering 33,722 participants auditioned across 70 malls! This year, SM is bringing the talent show-down to its 71 participating malls for Preliminary Screenings, and we can't wait to see the talent you'll bring!

"Starting from its humble beginnings in SM China malls, thanks to my dad, Mr. Hans Sy, in 2003, this journey has brought joy, inspiration, and countless opportunities to our

young participants," said SM Supermalls Assistant Vice President for Marketing and SM Little Stars Project Head Carinna Sy. Registration for the Preliminary Screenings begins on June 5, 2024 through the SM Malls Online app. The Preliminary Screenings will kick off on June 8-9 and continue on weekends through July 13-14. The competition journey includes Preliminary Screenings, Regional Finals, and the Grand Finals. Mark your calendars for the Grand Finals on September 7 at SM Mall of Asia, where 28 grand finalists will shine bright on the big stage.

And the prizes? They're out of this world! The grand winners will receive:

- Php 100,000 worth of cash and SM gift certificates
- Php 30,000 worth of Toy Kingdom gift cards
- A Brand New Suzuki Dzire GL MT
- 100% scholarship on tuition and miscellaneous fees at National University
- A one-year talent management contract from Sparkle – GMA Artist Center
- A trip to South Korea for two people for five days and four nights
- An annual pass certificate for unlimited bowling and skating at SM malls
- 30 regular ride tickets at SM by the BAY Amusement Park / Sky Ranch
- Gift vouchers for a two-night stay at Radisson Blu Cebu



SM Little Stars Grand Winners, like 2013 Boy Grand Winner Nihkzy Calma, can avail of a full scholarship for any college program at National University.



2013 SM Little Stars alumna Esang de Torres, who's also known as Lea Salonga's MiniMe, now serves on the 2024 SM Little Stars panel of judges.

Past contestants have gone on to do amazing things! 2014 Girl Grand Winner Chun Sa Angela Jung has graced both the big and small screens. 2013 Boy Grand Winner Nihkzy Calma became the 2017 Junior Grand Champion Performer of the World. 2016 Grand Winners Marcus Cabais and Sheena Bentoy joined the Manila run of the musical show "The Lion King," and many others have made their mark in showbiz, modeling, singing, and dancing. Once part of the SM family, the possibilities are endless!



Seize the chance to be a part of the SM family and be like SM Little Stars alumni. In the photo are Nihkzy Calma, Lance Lucido, Haley Magtoto, Esang de Torres, Jourdanne Baldonido, Aljon Christoff Banaira, Eduardo Joson II, Chun Sa Angela Jung, Haley Magtoto, Gaea Salipot, Sheena Bentoy, and Aleynah Redillas – all of whom are welcomed home at SM.



2023 SM Little Stars Girl Grand Winner Jourdanne Baldonido (center) is now a Sparkle GMA Artist, sharing a talent management agency with Filipino celebrities Alden Richards and Gabbi Garcia.

Every talented boy or girl aged 4 to 7 can join. Whether you sing, dance, act, play an instrument, do acrobatics, or have a unique talent, we want to see it! Each contestant will have just one minute to impress the judges during the Preliminary Screening. Make sure you bring your A-game!

For more information and to stay updated, visit www.smsupermalls.com/smlittlestars or follow SM Supermalls on Facebook. Don't miss your chance to be part of SM Little Stars 2024 – where young talents shine the brightest!

Let's make this the most exciting year yet! See you at the auditions! Scan the QR code for more information on registration and audition dates for SM Little Stars 2024!

STRAIGHT NEWS
PUBLISHING

TODAY'S NEWS AND BEYOND

VOL. I • NO. 51 • June 19-25, 2024 • P 10.00

Congress leaders vow to expedite admin's legislative agenda

PCC GOES TO MENDEZ FOR ANOTHER LEG OF CAVITE CAREER CARAVAN



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

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SENATOR URGES PAGCOR TO GO AFTER UNLICENSED POGOS



CAVITE CONVERGENCE: EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES THROUGH INCLUSIVE SERVICES



The Provincial Government of Cavite, through the Office of the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Officer (OPSWDO), spearheaded a successful event titled "Cavite Convergence: A Pathway for a Bet-

ter Tomorrow for Inclusive Services to All" on June 11, 2024, at Alfonso Town Plaza. The gathering brought together over 500 selected members of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) from the municipalities of Alfonso, Magallanes, and Maragondon who took part in

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UP Concert Chorus wows The Hague in 126th Independence Day show

ADD'L GRANT ONLY FOR 4PS HOUSEHOLDS WITH PREGNANT, NURSING MOTHERS

PHLPost issues 'longest stamp' for 2024 Independence Day



POINT OF VIEW

MAINTAINING A HEALTHY HEART

6. Have regular check-ups with your doctor

Regular check-ups with your primary care provider are important for maintaining heart health. Your doctor can monitor your blood pressure, cholesterol, weight and all wellness indicators to make the best recommendations for your heart health and lifestyle habits. High blood pressure is a common condition and a major risk factor for heart disease. Get your blood pressure checked often and work with your doctor to actively manage it if it is high. By exercising, having a healthy diet and adopting other positive habits, like managing stress and getting quality sleep, you can greatly improve your blood pressure and keep your numbers within a healthy range. Other important levels to monitor are cholesterol, blood sugar and body mass index (BMI), which collectively help your doctor thoroughly assess your heart disease risks and advise you accordingly. Your primary care doctor can also provide a referral to see Gundersen Cardiology for further evaluating if needed.

By following these six tips, you can take control of your heart health and greatly reduce your risk of heart disease. Remember to always consult with your doctor regarding any concerns about your heart health and for an examination before making any significant changes to your lifestyle.

Where can I find more information about heart health?

Visit our website for more information about heart health, Cardiology services, support groups and more or connect with our Cardiology providers.

PGC...

The program served 48 applicants who sought for better careers in the 26 participating companies. Likewise, eight national government agencies were present to provide services for those who are planning to join the corporate world.

Mendez Mayor Francisco Mendoza, Jr., graced the program, conveying his utmost gratitude to Governor Jonvic Remulla and Vice Governor Athena Tolentino for bringing the said program in their municipality and

giving his constituents the opportunity to connect with various companies and employers.

"Kami po ay taos pusong nagpapasalamat dahil hindi ninyo nakakalimutan ang bayan ng Mendez para sa ganitong mga programa. Sana ay malaking porsyento ng mga nag-aaply ngayon ay matanggap ng iba't ibang kompanya dito sa Cavite."

Eight aspiring individuals were hired on-the spot, while others are continuing with the application procedures. - Jam Elisse M. Reyes

UP...

MANILA – Music celebrating peace and justice filled the halls of the Diligentia Theater at the historic Lange Voorhout in The Hague as the University of the Philippines Concert Chorus (UPCC) serenaded some 450 attendees from the Dutch government, diplomatic corps, business, academic and international organizations in the Netherlands

CAVITE ...

the wide range of essential services promoting the spirit of modern-day Bayanihan.

The program commenced with a warm welcome from Vice Mayor Madonna M. Pel, followed by insightful messages from key representatives. Ms. Nellibeth V. Mercado, Division Chief of the PPPPMO and representative of Dr. Barry R. Chua, Regional Director of DSWD IV-A, emphasized the importance of convergence and continuous cooperation among the participants. Ms. Beverly Alvaran, representative of BM Romel R. Enriquez, Chairperson of Social Services, Family, Women, Children, and Elderly, also shared her insights, along with Ms. Carolina Rivera, representative of Vice Governor Bryana Athena Tolentino, who highlighted the significance of the event in ensuring easy access to basic services for 4Ps members.

The event was a hub of vital services, primarily health-related, provided by the Office of the Provincial Health Officer. Attendees received medical check-ups, dental services, nutrition programs, maternal and child health services, family planning advice and supplies, TB programs, HIV screenings, skin consultations, and health promotion. Free vitamins and medicines were also distributed, courtesy of the Office of the Provincial Governor. Beyond healthcare, participants enjoyed a range of

the significant strides in Philippine-Netherlands relations, notably the productive visit to Manila of Minister of Foreign Affairs Hanke Bruins Slut in October 2023 and of H.M. Queen Maxima last May in her capacity as the United Nations (UN) Secretary General's Special Advocate for Financial Inclusion for Development.

Malaya highlighted the important contributions of the PCA in the peaceful settlement of disputes, as recognized by the UN General Assembly in its unanimous resolution in August last year.

other services. PhilHealth provided an orientation on Universal Health Care and Konsulta Benefits, while Landbank introduced the Perang Inimpok Saving Option (PISO). The Office of the Provincial Cooperatives and Development Officer offered economic opportunity mentoring, and the Office of the Provincial Public Employment Services Manager provided career guidance and employment coaching. Legal consultations were available through the Office of the Provincial Legal Officer, and the Department of Trade and Industry offered customer protection and consultation services. Support also came from various members of the Provincial Advisory Council, including DILG, OPEN-RO, DOST, OPIO, Pearl of the Orient, Cavite State University, and DepEd, ensuring a comprehensive support network for all attendees.

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

"Even seemingly intractable disputes, including territorial disputes between neighbors, are capable of resolution -- with good faith, patience, and mutual desire for its settlement and through peaceful means and on the basis of international law. And then as now, the facilities of the PCA are open and available to facilitate the process of settlement," Malaya said in a news release on Monday.

The Independence commemoration coincides with the opening of the PCA's three-day Congress of the Members

ADD'L...

MANILA – Only pregnant and nursing mothers who are enrolled and registered as beneficiaries of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) can receive the expanded cash grant under the "1st 1000 Days" initiative of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), according to the 4Ps national program manager on Thursday.

"Talagang kailangan linawin natin kasi marami na pong nagpapalista na mga buntis at may 0 to 2 years old. Liwanagin lang po natin. So, ngayon kailangan maliwanag na ang magiging beneficiaries nito ay iyong talagang existing na beneficiaries ng 4Ps. Hindi siya outside ng 4Ps (We need to clarify this because there are already a lot of pregnant women and those with 0 to 2-year-old children who want to enlist. Let us make this clear. We need to clarify that the beneficiaries of this are the existing beneficiaries of 4Ps, not outside 4Ps)," 4Ps National Program Manager Gemma Gabuya told reporters during the Thursday Media Forum at the DSWD Central Office's New Press Center in Quezon City.

Gabuya explained that the additional grant, which is proposed at PHP400 per month, is also subject to the beneficiaries' compliance with the program conditions.

"Nais nating linawin na ito ay dagdag grants lamang sa existing na health grants na nakukuha nila (We want to clarify that this is an additional grant to the existing health grants they are already receiving)," she said.

She said the DSWD is currently coordinating with the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) to identify the target number of beneficiaries of the expanded cash grants and of the Court.

Concert proper

The performance began with the song of praise and thanksgiving "Cantate Domino" that features lyrics in English, Basque, and Latin.

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the budget needed for its implementation.

"Nag-uusap-usap na po ang NEDA, kami sa DSWD para linisin ang data. Syempre we really need to come up with accurate data, kung ilan talaga. Kasi it will require also budget (NEDA and we at the DSWD are already discussing to come up with a clean data. Of course, we really need to come up with accurate data on how many should be included. Because it will also require a budget), how much it will entail," the DSWD official pointed out.

Currently, 4Ps households are receiving cash grants for the education, nutrition, and health of the monitored children.

Under the DSWD's 4Ps program, household-beneficiaries receive grants on the condition that their children attend school and are brought to health centers for their monthly medical check-up.

Household beneficiaries of 4Ps with elementary students receive PHP300 per child per month for 10 months; PHP500 per child per month for 10 months for junior high school; and PHP700 per child per month for 10 months for senior high school.

Household-beneficiaries also get PHP750 per month in health grants for 12 months provided that their children aged two to 14 years old undergo a growth development and monitoring program and deworming.

The 4Ps, implemented by the DSWD, is a national poverty reduction strategy institutionalized under Republic Act No. 11310 or "An Act Institutionalizing Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)".

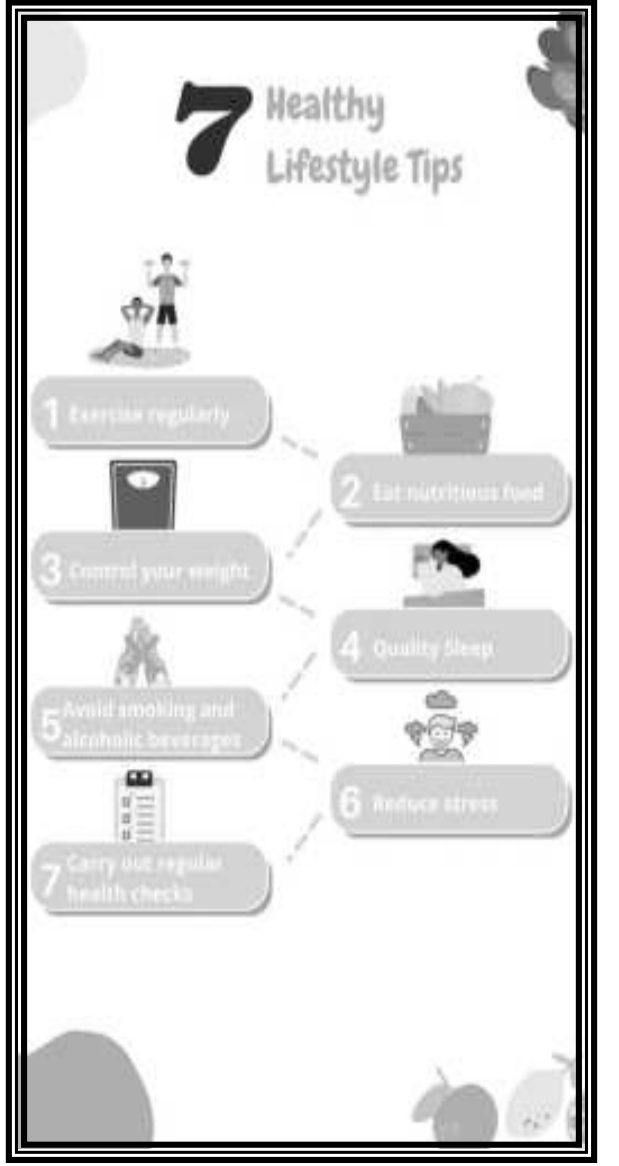
It puts a premium on giving indigent families the means to break-away from the intergenerational cycle of poverty through human capital investments. (PNA)

Reflecting the unwavering faith of Filipinos, the group then sang known choral pieces with lyrics from the Bible, "Laudate Dominum (Psalm 117)" and "Salmo 150."

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Summer Holidays

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

August	canoeing	holidays	pool	sprinkler
barbecue	cottage	ice cream	popsicles	strawberries
beach	family	July	puzzles	summer camp
biking	friends	lake	reading	swimming
bonfires	games	lemonade	relax	traveling
books	hammock	memories	road trips	vacation
camping	hiking	picnics	sports	watermelon

HORSE SENSE



The outside of a horse does good for the inside of a man. -WINSTON CHURCHILL

RON DAY I FOUND A HORSE roaming free near our home. I jumped on him and got him back on the road. Whenever he strayed from the road, I guided him back. Many miles from where we started, he turned into a farm. The farmer said "That's my horse. How did you know he belonged here?"

"I didn't know." I replied. "The horse knew. All I did was keep him the road."

The horse has an intuitive wisdom and follows it.

Another time I tried to keep a horse I was riding from going under a tree. I stood up in the saddle and pulled with all my might on the reins, but the horse won and a branch of the tree knocked me out of the saddle. The horse left and I waited. I knew he would go back to the barn and that people would come looking for me.

Sometimes we have guides and teachers that help keep us on the path. At other times people and events lead us astray. But ultimately, we all need to live like the horse and know our own way home.

Soulution of the Day

Where is your home? If you were a horse, and someone let go of your reins, where would you head?

MANILA — Senate President Pro Tempore Jinggoy Estrada has called on the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) to address reports that some 250 Philippine Off-shore Gaming Operators (POGO) in the country are operating illegally or without licenses.

"Kung may sapat na impormasyon na ang PAGCOR tungkol dito, huwag na sana silang magpatumpik-tumpik pa sa pagpapasara ng mga ilegal o unlicensed na POGOs (If PAGCOR already has enough information about this, they should not hesitate to shut down illegal or unlicensed POGOs)," Estrada said in a statement on Thursday.

He said PAGCOR should also work with the Bureau of Immigration in cancelling the visas of foreign employees of these illegal POGOs and deport them.

"Walang mabuting naidudulot ang patuloy nilang pamamalagi sa atin dahil bukod sa hindi naman sila nagbabayad ng kaukulang buwis, samu't saring krimen at paglabag sa ating batas ang ginagawa ng mga ito (Their continued stay in our country does no good because apart from not paying the appropriate taxes, they commit various crimes and violations of our law)," Estrada said.

The senator made the statement amid the security concerns raised by Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro over POGOs operating near Philippine military bases.

"The concern is that we should stop these syndicated criminal activities operating out of our base, which weaken our financial standing, our country ratings, [and] corrupt our society," Teodoro said.

Senator Sherwin Gatchalian said Teodoro's assessment reinforces his call for the immediate ban of POGOs in the country.

"As Defense secretary, he possesses privileged information and intelligence that convinced him to make that statement," Gatchalian said in

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a separate statement. Meanwhile, Senate Deputy Minority Leader Risa Hontiveros said Teodoro "only confirms" that POGOs already qualify as a national security risk.

"I would also like to urge him to advise the President not only to stop POGOs near PH military bases, but also to forbid the entire POGO industry from operating in our country," she said in another statement.

'National concern'

Meanwhile, National Security Adviser (NSA) Eduardo Año does not yet view POGOs as a national security threat that would require "direct involvement of defense forces" to neutralize.

"At the moment, it is a national concern that law enforcement and regulatory agencies can address. Our lawmakers may also need to look into the pros and cons of allowing its continued operations," he said in a statement.

He said there are legitimate POGOs that are duly licensed and regulated by the PAGCOR and other government agencies.

Illegal POGOs and those involved in scams and illegal activities should not be tolerated, he added.

"The issues related to illegal POGOs, such as illegal activities and regulatory violations, can be addressed within the framework of existing government regulations and law enforcement mechanisms."

Año said the National Security Council, which he heads, would continue to work with relevant government agencies and stakeholders to gather comprehensive data and insights, "providing a balanced and informed perspective".

"This approach will help ensure that any policy regarding the future of POGOs and other related operations in the Philippines are made with a clear understanding of their implications to national security," he said. (With a report from Priam F. Nepomuceno/PNA)

CEB'S...

Cebu Pacific's (PSE: CEB) Chief Marketing and Customer Officer, Candice Iyog, was hailed as the Chief Marketing Officer of the Year at the 2024 Asia Pacific Tambuli Awards held on June 4, 2024.

The annual Asia Pacific Tambuli Awards recognizes the marketing and sustainability campaigns of businesses that push for performance with purpose.

The Chief Marketing Officer of the Year award is given to individuals who embody leadership and excellence in terms of business profitability and promotion of brand purpose through marketing initiatives.

In her acceptance speech, Iyog recognized CEB's effort to ensure that Filipinos and other foreign travelers will have more opportunities to fly and live better lives.

"I have seen how Cebu Pacific has worked to give Filipinos a brand and an airline they can be proud of—one that makes travel safe, reliable, accessible, and affordable. It hasn't been easy, in fact it's been difficult, but it's worth it. It's the price we pay for the opportunity to have a lasting and positive impact on the communities we serve," she said.

Iyog has been an integral part of CEB's success since 2003, leading

DOST TO UPGRADE SUMAN PROCESSING OF SAN ANTONIO, QUEZON

The Food Innovators RIC of San Antonio, Quezon (FIRICSAQ) received funding from the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) CALABARZON to upgrade their process and products of "suman sa lihiya".

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was signed between Ms. Maria Esperanza E. Jawili, Provincial Director of DOST Quezon and Ms. Angela Lumar, President of FIRICSAQ at Lucena City, June 3, 2024.

The approval of the project entitled "Upgrading of Processes and Product of Food Innova-

FROM PAGE 1

tion the marketing and distribution team of the Philip-pines' leading airline. In 2019, she took on an expanded role as Vice President for Marketing and Customer Experience, ensuring that the airline operates with a customer-first approach.

Cebu Pacific has undergone a remarkable digital transformation under Iyog's leadership. She pioneered several industry-first initiatives, including the introduction of e-ticketing in the Philippines in 2003 and the launch of Asia's first-ever 24/7 customer command center operated by a low-cost carrier in 2017.

It was also under Iyog's leadership that CEB solidified its brand as an airline, with its trademark Piso Sale and the pandemic-borne CEB Super Pass, an open-dated, open-destination P99 voucher, designed based on data and customer need for flexibility.

Aside from marketing and customer experience efforts, Iyog has also been at the forefront of leading with purpose within CEB as she influences the organization's initiatives to promote diversity, equity and inclusivity, and sustainability in the workplace.

More CEB news at Facebook: **Cebu Pacific Air**, X: **@CebuPacificAir**, and Instagram: **cebu-pacificair**

UP...

Songs of hope and believing amidst adversity were then rendered, beginning with the song "Wade in the Water," with the solo sang by UPCC conductor professor Janet Sabas-Aracama.

Malaya surprised the audience when he accompanied the choir on the piano as they sang "Payapang Daigdig" (Peaceful World), which reflected the concert's theme, "A Celebration of Peace and Justice."

The choir then moved to contemporary songs, like the Disney classic "Go the Distance" in Spanish (No Importa La Distancia) and another beloved Filipino composition, "Bagong Umaga" (New Morning), this time with their signature choreocapella (choreographed a capella).

The medley of Europe's cherished pop supergroup ABBA ("Thank you for the Music, Fernando and Dancing Queen"), specially arranged by conductor Janet Sabas-Aracama, also wowed the audience.

The performance was "very beautiful, I enjoyed it very much. The singing was really marvelous. I am used to listening to choirs, but this is superior and excellent," Hendriks said.

Established in 1962, the UPCC holds the singular honor of being invited 11 times to the prestigious Aberdeen International Youth Festival in Scotland and four times for command performances for the late Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom.

It also holds the distinction of having been chosen as one of the world's best choirs at the 4th Lincoln Center International Choral Festival in New York.

The UPCC won the Grand Prix, Cracovia Cantans Choral Competition (Poland, 2015) and First Prize Folk Song Category at 16th Festival Internacional de Musica de Cantanigros (Spain, 2012). (PR)

under the DOST Grant-In-Aid Community Based Project (GIA-CBP). DOST GIA-CBP is designed to fund relevant S&T under-

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which we can only achieve if we keep in touch with our shared humanity and common passion for the good things that life has to offer."

"A better way to reinvigorate our shared humanity and renew our passions together is through music that touches our hearts and souls," Czepelak added.

Ijssel said "the establishment of the PCA is the foundations of what we now call the rules-based international legal order...125 years of PCA, 125 years Hague Peace Conference are milestones for us all, as very much illustrated in this concert organized by the Philippines."

Praises The UPCC members met the audience at the lobby of the theater after the concert.

"The chorus is stunning and the voices together are really moving and inspiring," International Organization for Migration chief of mission Antonio Polosa said.

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takings that will improve Philippine-based projects, and the quality of Filipino lives by generating appropriate technologies. PR

June 19-25, 2024

EDITORIAL:
Php 23b for the new Senate building

'SURPRISED' and 'shocked' were the words uttered by newly installed Senate President Francis 'Chiz' Escudero before officials and staff of the upper chamber of Congress recently after discovering the ongoing construction of the institution's new office in Bonifacio Global City in Taguig would cost a whopping P23 billion.

The original estimate? It was P8.9 billion, then later climbed to P13 billion.

Now, at the rate construction and other costs are piling up, it is estimated to reach an astronomical P23 billion, perhaps in keeping with the ultramodern and luxurious surroundings of BGC.

Escudero aptly described it in the vernacular: "Parang OA" or overacting.

"In my view, this leaves a bad taste in most people's mouths, especially in the middle of an economic crisis and poverty that many of our countrymen see," he said.

Hence, the Senate President wants to review the budget for the News Senate Building.

He has therefore directed Senator Alan Cayetano, head of the Senate committee on accounts, to suspend the payments and construction of the NSB pending a review.

Escudero clarified he was not saying there was any irregularity or anything questionable with the amount requested for the NSB's construction: "It's not questionable. I just find it excessive" to spend P23 billion for just one office.

Quite apart from the escalating cost of the new Senate building, other issues have been raised against it.

One, the construction of the Senate building in a high-end commercial and residential enclave such as BGC reflects skewed priorities amid the urgent need to utilize scarce resources to boost the over-all economy through infrastructure development and the efficient delivery of vital social services such as health and education to the poor and disadvantaged sectors.

Why build an expensive building complete with state-of-the-art facilities and furnishings instead of a modest one that's adequate for 24 senators, officials and staff?

Two, why build a separate building for the Senate at all?

Why not build a structure that would accommodate both chambers of Congress to facilitate and enhance inter-chamber dialogue, consultation and cooperation, particularly when it comes to reconciling differing opinions on contentious political, economic and social issues and concerns?

Perhaps we need to remind our lawmakers their job is to craft laws that will lead to political stability, sustained economic growth and social concord.

Will a new Senate building costing P23 billion lead to better and more responsive laws?

Maybe. Or maybe not.

What is clear is that good laws emanate from sound and sober thinking and lucid analyses of challenges we face as a nation, not necessarily from a spanking new building that would cost taxpayers an arm and a leg.

Congress

MANILA — Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez and Senate President Chiz Escudero led other Congress leaders in a meeting in Malacañang on Thursday to foster greater unity and collaboration between the two chambers.

"This meeting symbolizes a renewed and reinvigorated partnership between the House of Representatives and the Senate under the leadership of Senate President Escudero," Romualdez said in a news release.

"Together, we are committed to working hand-in-hand to pass key legislation that will significantly benefit the Filipino people," he said, adding that the meeting also served as a preliminary to the full Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council (LEDAC) meeting on June 25.

During the discussions, Romualdez and Escudero reaffirmed their dedication to President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s legislative agenda, and prioritized measures aimed at improving the lives of Filipino citizens.

"Our joint efforts with the Senate reflect our collective resolve to push forward the President's priority measures," the House leader said as they initially discussed the legislative calendar for the 3rd Regular Session of the

19th Congress.

"With Senate President Escudero's dynamic leadership, I am confident that we can expedite the legislative process, ensuring that the benefits reach our people without delay," he added. Romualdez noted that a key focus of the meeting was the amendments to the Rice Tariffication Law, which was identified as a top priority.

He said these amendments aim to provide quality affordable rice to Filipinos and increase the income of Filipino farmers. "We are committed to making quality rice affordable for all Filipinos while boosting the livelihoods of our local farmers," he said.

The meeting, Romualdez said, also reviewed the progress of existing priority legislation and identifying next steps to ensure timely approvals. "The focus remains on the twenty LEDAC priority measures targeted for approval by June 2024, with significant advancements already made, including 10 measures approved by both Houses, one enacted into law, and several others in various stages of the legislative process," he said.

Additionally, the discussions covered the 2023 SONA priority mea-

sures and the Common Legislative Agenda (CLA).

The House has approved 56 out of 59 measures identified in the CLA, with the remaining measures — Amendments to the Electric Power Industry Reform Act, National Defense Act, and Budget Modernization Bill — still under consideration.

Romualdez said the prioritization of legislative measures for the adjournments of October and December 2024 was also addressed, along with the proposal of 19 other priority measures for inclusion in the LEDAC.

"This partnership between the House and Senate is not just about passing laws; it's about making a tangible difference in the lives of Filipinos," he said. "We are committed to an efficient and cohesive legislative process that will bring about meaningful reforms and improvements for our country."

Meanwhile, Escudero said they were able to discuss ways to bridge gaps, establish open communication, and synchronize legislative efforts for the best interest of the country.

"Today's productive meeting marks the beginning of a renewed and strengthened partnership between our two chambers. Together, we are committed to working

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towards a more united and effective legislative body that can better serve the needs of our nation," he said in a statement.

"We have agreed to keep the lines of communication open to prevent misunderstandings and to promote a collaborative legislative environment."

Escudero said good relations between the Senate and the House are "crucial for the smooth passage of laws that will benefit our country and our people."

He said he looks forward to future meetings with Romualdez, particularly in preparation for the President's State of the Nation Address, to align and support the administration's legislative priorities.

Present during the meeting were Senate Majority Leader Francis Tolentino, House Majority Leader Manuel Jose M. Dalipe, Senior Deputy Speaker Aurelio Gonzales Jr., Deputy Speaker David "Jay-jay" Suarez, House Committee on Appropriations Chairman Zaldy Co, Presidential Legislative Liaison Office (PLLO) Secretary Mark Llandro Mendoza, Undersecretary Adrian Carlos Bersamin of the Office of the Executive Secretary, House Secretary General Reginald Velasco, and Senate Secretary Renato Bantug. (With a report from Wil-nard Bacionia/PNA)

FROM PAGE 1

the Manila Central Post Office compound in Lawton, Manila on June 12.

"The beauty, uniqueness, and special significance of commemorative stamps continue to be a source of fascination among collectors," it said.

PHLPost has printed 9,000 pieces of the strip of three stamps to be sold at PHP125 each, along with 400 pieces of the official first-day cover envelope, which measures 25 cm. by 19 cm.

Artist Roderick "Derrick" Macutay designed the stamps with layout by Jose Antonio A. Jayme of PHLPost.

The stamps feature iridescent ink, a special embellishment, on all figures. (PR)

"A LITTLE PROGRESS EACH DAY ADDS UP TO BIG RESULTS."

SATYA NAMI

STRAIGHT NEWS PUBLISHING

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CAVITE OFFICE : Blk. 5 Lot 69 Barcelona Ph. 2, Buhay Na Tubig, Imus, Cavite

Mobile No. ----- 09556586520 / 09164731260

TIN NO. ----- 237756418-000

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Published Weekly by: STRAIGHT NEWS

PHLPOST ...

MANILA — In celebration of the 2024 Araw ng Kalayaan and the 125th anniversary of the First Philippine Republic of 1899, the Philippine Postal Corp. or PHLPost issued the "longest stamps" to set a new Guinness World Record.

Considered the Philippines' longest Postage Stamps, the sheetlet strip of three measures 200 mm. by 35 mm., the first of its kind to be issued by PHLPost.

Titled "Philippines: First Republic in Asia," the remarkable stamp vividly illustrates the Philippines' nationhood from the historic proclamation of Philippine

Independence on June 12, 1898 to the declaration of the First Philippine Republic in 1901.

The commemorative stamp features historical vignettes that transpired from the declaration of Philippine Independence in 1898, the arrival of Aguinaldo in Malolos Bulacan, the inauguration of the first Philippine Republic at the Barasoain Church in 1899, the Philippine American War, Aguinaldo's odyssey in Northern Luzon with women nursing the wounded, Apolinario Mabini in Pangasinan, and Aguinaldo's capture in Isabela but others continued to fight for liberty in 1901.

Inside the stamps are the photos of the Philippine Revolutionary Government Postage Stamps and the Philippine Revolutionary Government Postage and Telegraph Registration Stamps issued during that historic era.

PHLPost immortalized this legacy with a unique stamp underscoring the Philippines as a beacon of liberty, democracy, and republicanism in Asia.

"The stamps continue to be the source of inspiration, courage, and patriotism among Filipinos," PHLPost said in a news release on Tuesday.

The PHLPost postage stamp will be available to the public at

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DOST to upgrade suman processing of San Antonio, Quezon



The Food Innovators RIC of San Antonio, Quezon (FIRICSAQ) received funding from the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) CALABARZON to upgrade their process and products of "suman sa lihiya".

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was signed between Ms. Maria Esperanza E. Jawili, Provincial Director of DOST Quezon and Ms. Angela Lumar, President of FIR-ICSAQ at Lucena City, June 3, 2024.

DOST-SEI AND DOST CALABARZON IS SET TO CONDUCT ITS 2024 EXIT CONFERENCE FOR GRADUATING SCHOLARS



The Department of Science and Technology - Science Education Institute (DOST-SEI) and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST)-CALABARZON is set to conduct its 2024 Exit Conference for DOST-SEI graduating scholars on June 14 and July 5, 2024, at Taal Vista Hotel, Tagaytay, Cavite. This event aims to remind scholars of their commitment to the scholarship agreement and prepare them for their future careers.

The conference will be attended by DOST Key officials, including Ms. Maridon O. Sahagun, DOST Undersecretary for Scientific and Technical Services, Engr. Albert G. Marino, DOST-SEI Officer-in-Charge, and Mr. Peter Gerry P. Gavina, DOST-SEI Chief of the S&T Scholarship Division.

A total of 641 scholars from CALABARZON will be attending the exit conference (308

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LANDBANK backs Philippine Army co-op with P10-B loan line



LANDBANK and PAFCPIC sign a P10-billion loan line to support the financial needs of AFP personnel and their families. Leading the ceremony are LAND-BANK President and CEO Lynette V. Ortiz (2 nd from right), PAFCPIC Chairman BGen. Francisco M. Paredes (Ret) (3 rd from right), LANDBANK Executive Vice President Ma. Celeste A. Burgos (rightmost), and PAFCPIC President BGen. Fernando S. Zabata (Ret) (leftmost).

Land Bank of the Philippines (LANDBANK) has extended a P10-billion rediscounting line to support the Philippine Army Finance Center Producers Integrated Cooperative (PAFCPIC) and its members serving in the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

The state-run Bank expanded the Co-operative's previous P8 billion credit line to P10 billion to sufficiently augment working capital and enable PAFCPIC to better serve the financial requirements of its more than 190,000 members.

PAFCPIC's membership consists of active and retired military and civilian personnel from the Philippine Army, Philippine Navy, and Philippine Air Force, as well as their immediate dependents.

The ceremonial loan signing event was led by LANDBANK President and CEO Lynette V. Ortiz and PAFCPIC Chairman BGen. Francisco M. Paredes (Ret), alongside LANDBANK Executive Vice President Ma. Celeste Burgos and PAFCPIC President BGen. Fernando S. Zabata (Ret)

cover topics like scholarship policies, the Filipino Patriot Project, and a forum called "Kamustahan" for scholars to share academic challenges.

Ms. Cleofe B. Austria, Project Technical Specialist II of DOST-CALABARZON, mentioned her hope that the scholars will retain their patriotism and strong commitment to science and technology.

She remarked, "I hope that beyond just the

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is a manifestation of almost three decades of business collaboration between PAFCPIC and LANDBANK, nurtured and nourished with trust and confidence. We are grateful for LANDBANK's unwavering support, which has been instrumental in enabling us to better serve our members and their families," said PAFCPIC Chairman Paredes.

LANDBANK conferred PAFCPIC with the Distinguished Initiators and Movers of National Development (DIAMOND) Award last year, for the co-op's contributions to promoting countryside and national development. The LANDBANK DIAMOND Award honors exceptional Bank clients, fund management and digital banking partners that have made positive change in the communities they serve.

LANDBANK remains committed to providing robust financial solutions to cooperatives and its members nationwide towards promoting countryside to country-wide development.

ABOUT LANDBANK

LANDBANK is the largest development financial institution in the country promoting financial inclusion, digital transformation and sustainable development to benefit Filipinos. As the only Bank present in all 82 provinces in the country, it is committed to providing accessible and affordable financial support to key players and industries as part of its broader thrust of serving the nation.

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SANGAY NG PHILIPPINE GENERAL HOSPITAL, NAKATAKDANG ITAYO SA CARMONA CITY



Plano ng Philippine General Hospital (PGH) na makapagtayo ng sangay nito sa lungsod ng Carmona upang mas mailapit pa ang mga serbisyo ng kanilang pagamutan sa lalawigan. Noong Biyernes, Hunyo 7, nakipagpulong si Cavite Fifth District Representative, Atty. Roy Loyola, kina Gobernador Jonvic Remulla at mga kinatawan ng PGH sa pangunguna ni UP-PGH Presidente Angelo Jimenez. Layon nitong isapinal ang Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) para sa pagpapatayo ng PGH City Carmona. Oras na matapos ang konstruksyon nito, ang PGH City of Carmona ang unang branch ng nasabing pagamutan. Inaasahang mababawasan nito ang case load ng PGH Manila at makakatulong sa healthcareinfrastructure sa rehiyon. Pinasinayaan ang PGH noong Setyembre 1910, alinsunod sa Act No. 1688 ng Philippine Commission. Sa kasalukuyan, ito ang pinakamalaking tertiary government hospital sa bansa kung saan mahigit 600,000 pasyente ang nagpapagamot taun-taon. | via Atty. Roy M. Loyola

PAGPAPATIBAY AT PAGPAPALAKAS NG TRADISYUNAL NA BINHING MAIS HATID NG DA-4A CGUARD SA CALABARZON



Patuloy ang pananaliksik ng mga kawani ng Department of Agriculture IV-CALABARZON (DA-4A) Lipa Agricultural Research Experiment Station (LARES) upang mapalakas at mapatibay ang kalidad at kakayahang ng mga tradisyunal na binhing mais sa rehiyon sa pamamagitan ng programang Corn Germplasm Utilization Through Advanced Research and Development (CGUARD).

Kalakip ng programang CGUARD ang mangolekta, magtabi, magparami at magpabuti ng tradisyunal na barayti ng mais. Ang mga nakolektang binhi ay paglalalahi-lahiin upang mapagsama-sama ang mga magagandang katangian at makapagpalabas ng isang panibagong barayti. Taglay ang mga ninanais na katangian, inaasahan na makakatulong ito

upang mapataas ang ani at mapalakas o mapabuti ang resistensya ng mga mais laban sa mga peste, sakit at natural na kalamidad.

Sa kasalukuyan ang CGUARD team ng DACalabarzon ay nasa ikaapat na yugto na ng programa na kung saan sinisimulan na ang mga proseso ng paglikha ng mas pinabuting barayti ng tradisyunal na mais. Inaasahan sa loob ng dalawa hanggang tatlong taon ay makakapaglabas na ang DA-4A ng pinabuting barayti ng mais na maaring irehistro sa National Seed Industry Council (NSIC) ng Bureau of Plant and Industry (BPI) para sa pagkilala sa buong bansa.

Ayon kay Dr. Artemio M. Salazar, isang CGUARD Technical Expert, tinawag itong GUARD upang mapangalagaan ang mga katu-

tubong barayti ng mais taglay ang mga magagandang katangian laban sa peste, sakit at natural na kalamidad at ang pagkakaroon nito ng kakaibang lasa. Aniya, tinutulungan nila ang mga magsasaka na mapabuti ang kanilang mga binhi ng hindi inaalis ang magagandang katangian nito nang sa gayon ay mas maging kapakinabang.

Samantala, bilang isa sa mga kinikilalang nagsasagawa ng programang CGUARD, inirekomenda ni Dr. Salazar ang DACalabarzon upang magbahagi ng kaalaman sa mga kawani ng Baguio Animal Breeding and Research Center (BABRC). Ito ay maari nilang gamitin sa kanilang rehiyon. Katuwang ang LARES, nangyari ito noong ika-12 hanggang ika-13 ng Marso, 2024 sa Lipa City at Nasugbu, Batangas.

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PGC's Operation Tuli in Paradahan 1, Tanza



On June 4, 2024, Barangay Paradahan I in Tanza, Cavite, hosted the 'Operation Tuli Program,' a free circumcision event orchestrated by the Cavite Provincial Governor's medical mission team in collaboration with local officials and health workers. The event marked a significant community effort toward promoting health and well-being, with 163 young boys receiving the procedure along with complimentary medicines. Councilor Derek Matro attended the event to show his support, underscoring the local government's dedication to the health of its residents. - CK Torres

SECURITY BANK WINS BEST BRANCH DIGITISATION IMPLEMENTATION FOR NEW TELLERING SYSTEM FROM THE ASIAN BANKER

Security Bank Corporation (PSE:SECB) won the "Best Branch Digitisation Implementation" award at The Asian Banker's Financial Technology Innovation Awards for the successful implementation of its Mosaic Voyager (MV) Teller and Lobby Management System in partnership with Malaysian-based automation company Consolsys.

The MV Teller-ing and Lobby Management System replaced the Bank's legacy tellering, lobby management, and Signature Verification System (SVS), a key step forward in the Bank's omni-channel digital strategy. This branch digitization project improved the overall banking experience for both external and internal customers, introducing new features and functionalities, improved the speed, accuracy, and security of transactions, and integrated cutting-edge technology to provide efficient lobby management and a tailored experience for high-value clients.

"We're honored to receive the Best Branch Digitisation Implementation award from The Asian Banker, which reflects our vision of providing seamless and convenient BetterBanking experiences to our customers across all channels" said Nishy De Silva, SVP and Shared Services Technology Head. "The implementation of our MV Teller-ing and Lobby Management System has enabled us to enhance our operational efficiency, customer satisfaction, and market competitiveness, while demonstrating our leadership in digital innovation and transformation and successfully implementing a key component of our broad vision of a true omni-channel experience."

Tina Henson, SVP and Operations Head, added, "This recognition underscores our unwavering commitment to leveraging technology to provide exceptional service to our customers. This project, in partnership with Consolsys, has been instrumental in revolutionizing our branch operations, and we are proud of the positive impact it has made on both our employees and customers."

The Asian Banker Global Financial Technology Innovation Awards program recognizes achievements and identity best practices in technology by traditional and non-traditional financial services players to meet their current and future business needs. The primary assessment for the awards

is based on the strength of the submitting institution's innovation in technology in specific operational areas, the disruption, sustainable business impact, and successful implementation of the initiative.

According to The Asian Banker, Security Bank "launched a groundbreaking cloud-based digitisation project across its 340+ branches, replacing the existing branch teller system, seamless integration on internal systems and transitioned from outdated monolithic architecture to a modern, service-based, distributed system. It integrated advanced functionalities like signature verification and lobby management, enhancing customer experiences across all touchpoints and reducing frauds, errors and processing time."

The MV Teller-ing and Lobby Management System is just one of the many initiatives of Security Bank's digital transformation agenda. The Bank is investing heavily in technology to elevate its banking services for retail, corporate, commercial, and MSME clients with seamless, omni-channel customer experiences, enabled by a future-proof common technology stack.