

PHILIPPINE 126TH INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION "BARADA NG KALAYAAN" AT QUIRINO GRANDSTAND



Manila's Quirino Grandstand burst with vibrant colors, music, and national pride on June 12, 2024, as the Philippines celebrated its 126th Independence Day with the grand "Parada ng Kalayaan." This year's event saw the enthusiastic participation of various provinces, each showcasing their unique cultural heritage. Among the stand-out participants was the province of Cavite, known for its rich historical significance in the nation's fight for freedom.

The provincial government of Cavite, in collaboration with the local government units (LGUs) of Imus, Kawit, and Cavite City, took part in the celebration with passion and creativity. Their float was a testament to Cavite's pivotal role in Philippine history, particularly during the revolution against Spanish colonization.

The historical highlights of Cavite's float are: the Battle of Alapan in Imus, a significant en-

counter during the Philippine Revolution where Filipino forces, led by General Emilio Aguinaldo, achieved a crucial victory against the Spanish troops; the first unfurling of the Cavite City flag, symbolizing the birth of a unified resistance against colonial rule; waving of the Philippine National Flag portraying the iconic moment when the Philippine national flag was first waved, marking the declaration of independence. The powerful visuals re-

minded the audience of the sacrifices and bravery of Filipino heroes.

Adding to the festive atmosphere was the Saint Mary Magdalene Band from Kawit. Their lively performance immersed the parade with music and color, enhancing the overall experience for the audience. The band's participation was a nod to the rich musical traditions of Cavite and its role in the cultural fabric of the nation.

President Ferdi-

nand "Bongbong" Romualdez Marcos Jr. graced the event, showing his support and appreciation for the diverse cultural entries from across the Philippines. His presence underscored the importance of unity and national pride, themes that resonated throughout the celebration.

The "Parada ng Kalayaan" at Quirino Grandstand was more than just a display of floats and performances; it was a heartfelt celebration of the nation's enduring spirit and unity. Each province's contribution, including Cavite's historically rich and culturally vibrant float, highlighted the shared heritage and collective pride of the Filipino people.

As the festivities concluded, the message was clear: the Philippines' past, present, and future are intertwined in a legacy of freedom, resilience, and hope. The 126th Independence Day celebration was a beautiful reminder of the nation's journey and the bright future that lies ahead. - CK Torres

KAMPANYA KONTRA DENGUE SA CARMONA



Malaki ang gampanin ng mga barangay sa kampanya ng pamahalaang lungsod ng Carmona kontra dengue. Kaya naman isinagawa ng City Health Office at Association of Barangay Captains ang Aksyon Barangay Kontra Dengue kasabay ng pagdiriwang ng Dengue Awareness Month. Dinaluhan ng mga kasapi ng Barangay Anti-Dengue Task Force ang nasabing aktibidad kung saan isinagawa ang activation ng Barangay Anti-Dengue Task Force na layuning pigilan ang pagkalat ng nasabing sakit sa pamamagitan ng wastong paraan ng pagsasagawa ng misting gamit ang fogging machine. | via City Government of Carmona

Tatlong samahan ng mga magsasaka sa Quezon, tumanggap ng P16.9-M halaga ng pasilidad mula sa DA Calabarzon



Nagkakahalaga ng P16,938,366.6 sa kabuuan ang Bio Secured at Climate Controlled Finish-

er Operation Facility na tinanggap ng tatlong samahan ng mga magsasaka sa Guinayangan, Quezon.

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MARCOS ORDERS
MODIFICATION
OF TARIFF
RATES ON
VARIOUS PRODUCTS

Comelec: Over 18K
posts up for grabs in
2025 midterm polls

JUNE 24
SPECIAL
NON-WORKING
DAY IN MANILA

CATCHALIAN
SEEKS
INQUIRY ON
PROLIFERATION
OF FAKE BIRTH
CERTIFICATES

Modernization program should benefit PUV drivers, local makers

DOST Internal Audit Service Evaluates CALABARZON Regional Office Programs



On June 3, part of the Department of Science and Technology Internal Audit Service (DOST-IAS) comprehensive audit on the DOST-CALABARZON regional office was the project visit and validation of the SETUP, CBP, and LGIA-funded projects in Cavite. The projects visited were the SMMC Precision Trading in Carmona

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VP Sara resigns as DepEd chief

MERALCO RETRACTS; JUNE RATES DOWN, NOT UP

Probe rising child rape cases in PH, Legarda urges Senate

PAOCC FILES HUMAN TRAFFICKING CASE VS BAMBAN MAYOR

TULFO EYES PROBE ON MRT-3'S 'INCOMPATIBLE' DALIAN TRAINS



THE ULTIMATE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO BUILDING AN INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO

Even if it sounds intimidating at first, building an investment portfolio may be one of the best things you could do to protect and grow the value of your existing wealth. On top of allowing you to generate passive income, an investment portfolio can eventually serve as a hedge against inflation and a means to achieve long-term financial goals such as retirement, homeownership, or funding your education.

As a complete beginner, you actually have various accessible investment options available to you that can help you start this journey with confidence and clarity. These include the following:

Digital Banking and Fintech Platforms

It might come as a surprise, but one of the most accessible investment options for everyday consumers can be found on their phones. In the Philippines, a top digital bank like Maya presents investment opportunities that people can use at a click of a button.

Maya Savings, for one, offers interest rates that are much higher than a typical savings account offered by a traditional bank. It gets even better when you open a short-term Personal Goal account, which has a starting interest rate of 4% p.a., or a Time Deposit account, which offers up to 6% p.a. What's more, it's also possible to check out cryptocurrency investments, cryptocurrency trading, stocks, and funds using the Maya app. To get started on investing and building your future portfolio, download the app, register for an account, and choose an investment product that fits your financial goals.

Cooperative Investments

Cooperatives have established themselves as important economic actors in a country like the Philippines, and many communities see them as a way to attain sustainable economic growth as a collective. Gaining membership in a cooperative can actually bring you closer to investment opportunities that are very beginner-friendly, such as share capital and time deposits with competitive interest rates. You'll also be able to enjoy the rewards of seeing a whole community develop while you wait for your returns.

to be cont. for next issue

DA CALABARZON... FROM PAGE 8

Production Initiatives for Recovery and Expansion (INSPIRE) na naglalayong suportahan ang mga magsasaka sa pagbangon mula sa epekto ng African Swine Fever (ASF).

Isang maikling programa at ribbon cutting ang isinagawa sa aktibidad na pinangunahan naman nina OIC-Regional Executive Director Fidel Libao, Livestock Program Coordinator Dr. Jerome Cuasay, Guinayangang Mayor Maria Marieden Isaac at tanggapan nina

Quezon Governor Helen Tan at Quezon 4th District Representative Keith Micah "Atty. Mike" Tan kasama ang iba pang kawani ng Kagawaran at lokal na pamahalaan.

Nagpasalamat si Fidel Pantoja Jr., pangulo ng Samahan ng Aktibong Kalalakihan at Kababaihang Magsasaka ng Brgy. A. Mabini, sa ipinagkaloob na pasilidad na ipinangakong gagawin ang responsibilidad na siguruhin ang pag-iingat dito lalo na pagdating sa kalinisan.

PUV...

MANILA — Senators on Friday said jeepney drivers and local manufacturers must benefit from the Public Transport Modernization Program (PTMP) as a leading transport builder claimed it was not consulted to design a modern jeepney.

At the hearing of the Senate Committee on Public Services, Senator Robin Padilla said that while lawmakers fully support the modernization plan, support should be given to local manufacturers.

This after Elmer Francisco, chair and chief executive officer of Francisco Motors Corporation, said they were not consulted by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in the creation of the national standard for the modern jeep.

"Hindi kami kinonsulta. Ang kinonsulta ng DTI para gawin 'yung Philippine National Standard (PNS) sa manufacturers ay 'yung mga manufacturer ng bus sa ibang bansa (We were not consulted. The DTI consulted with foreign bus manufacturers to create the Philippine National Standard for manufacturers)," Francisco said.

He added that

Marcos...

MANILA — President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has ordered the modification of nomenclature and tariff rates on various products to ensure continuous supply of goods and protect the purchasing power.

According to a Presidential Communications Office (PCO) news release on Friday, the President issued Executive Order (EO) No. 62, which implements a new multiyear and comprehensive tariff schedule that will provide transparent and predictable tariff structure.

"The implementation of an updated comprehensive tariff schedule aims to augment supply, manage prices, and temper inflationary pressure of various commodities, consistent with the Philippine national interest and the objective of safeguarding

Sarao Motors was consulted only for a while but was then left out.

The current PNS for the modern jeepney is a product of DTI's Bureau of Philippine Standards (BPS), working together with the Truck Manufacturer's Association (TMA).

Included in the PNS are the class-specific requirements, as well as the provision that it must be powered by a Euro-4 emissions-compliant (or better) engine or electric motor powered by on-board batteries.

Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) chair Teofilo Guadiz III said that this is the standard set by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and they merely adopted it when the program was initiated.

Department of Transportation (DOTr) Undersecretary for Road Transport and Infrastructure Andy Ortega said there were local manufacturers and builders present when the PNS was formulated in 2017.

Committee chairperson Senator Raffy Tulfo told Ortega that the DOTr should consult first local manufacturers before going to the foreign

companies.

"Stop consulting with these people, especially from China. Local manufacturers natin capable sila. Sana binibigyan natin sila ng respeto (Our local manufacturers are capable. Let's give them respect)," he said.

Meanwhile, Senator Grace Poe, who formerly chaired the Senate Public Services Committee as well as prior hearings on the PTMP (formerly the Public Utility Vehicle Modernization Program or PUVMP), said the DOTr should prioritize the completion of the route plans before reducing the PUV units.

To better control the number of vehicles plying a particular route, the government is instituting a one route, one franchise policy and is already in talks with several local government units (LGUs) to scrutinize the current routes, develop new routes if necessary, and streamline any of the current ones.

Tulfo, however, expressed his concern about the LGUs' participation in creating routes as it may be used for personal gain.

He urged the DOTr and the LTFRB, with

the help of the operators, to take charge of drawing up the routes.

Poe said the high cost of modern jeepney, lack of route plans and inadequate safety nets have brought uncertainties to the livelihood of thousands of drivers and hardship to many commuters who have to deal with fewer PUVs plying the roads.

"Throughout the seven years, this committee has never stopped asking the DOTr to revisit the program while we begged for cooperation from the drivers-operators and commuters," Poe said.

She asked the DOTr to prioritize the completion of the route plans before reducing the current number of PUVs to ensure enough ride for commuters, as well as its plans for the 36,217 PUVs that did not join cooperatives.

She also reiterated her proposal to tap local jeepney manufacturers that can offer more affordable modern jeepney units.

"The DOTr should also provide cooperatives and corporations proper management, accounting, and human resources training, including effective grievance mechanisms for transport entities," she said. (PNA)

FROM PAGE 1

hybrid and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles, battery, hybrid and plug-in hybrid e-buses and e-jeepneys, completely knocked down e-vehicles of all types, and nickel metal hydride accumulators.

On June 3, the National Economic and Development Authority Board endorsed the modification of the nomenclature and rates of import duty on various products for years 2024 to 2028.

The comprehensive tariff schedule will apply upon effectivity until Dec. 31, 2028.

The MFN tariff rates for rice will be subject to review every four months from effectivity of the EO.

The comprehensive or specific MFN tariff rates, on the other hand, will be subject to periodic review as may be necessary or directed by the President. (PNA)

SODOKU

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BLACK HOLES OF RENEWAL

The cave you fear to enter holds the treasure you seek. –JOSEPH CAMPBELL

WHEN WE NEED to find our energy and source, the place to look is in the darkness. It is in the black holes that the energy of creation live. Whether we are speaking of the universe or of an individual, darkness is the source of life.

When facing emotional despair, hopelessness, or physical anguish, going into the darkness helps us to find our self and renew our life. It is in the nothingness that we can stop and find peace and answer. When we see our true potential, we can then create ourselves anew. We can become like a blank canvas and begin the act of creation out of darkness.

When I lecture, I hold up a piece of paper with a black dot on it and then ask people to describe what they see. Many say a black dot, while others answer correctly answer and say a piece of paper with a dot on it. You can decide to focus on the darkness or use it to appreciate that your life contains light too. You would never appreciate the light if you didn't have the darkness.

Don't be afraid of the darkness. Let the Director show you the way! Go inside, discover your own black hole, and emerge with new energy and the true light of awareness. Let the tomb become a womb.

Soulution of the Day :
Spend some time in the dark today



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63. Arizona baseball player
68. Ballpark fig.
69. Disney mermaid
70. Suspect's story
71. Mr. Rogers
72. ___ message
73. ___ good example

Down
1. 3, 4 or 5, typically, in golf
2. Post-E.R. place
3. Baby bear
4. Superman's birthplace
5. Fill to the gills
6. Mix
7. Rene of "Lethal Weapon" movies
8. "Then what?"

9. Heroin, slangily
10. Most bashful
11. Heavenly entrance
12. Runs in neutral
13. Oklahoma city
18. Condo, e.g.
22. Conde ___
23. Catches some rays
24. Rock's ___ John
25. Wizard's home
27. Cook in a wok, perhaps
30. Groundskeeper's supply
32. "Norma ___"
34. Assumed name
35. The start of 17-, 63-across or 11-, 25-down, for example
37. Absurd
38. Senseless

41. Freddy Krueger's street
42. "___ in the City"
45. Elation
48. Trip
50. Nike competitor
51. Actor McGregor
52. Following
53. "You are not!" reply
55. Like circus elephants
56. ___ Gay (W.W. II plane)
59. Lose steam
61. Vitamin amts.
64. Department of eastern France
65. River islet
66. Letterman's network
67. Sportage maker



MANILA – More than 18,000 national and local positions are up for grabs in the May 2025 midterm polls.

Based on Commission on Elections (Comelec) data released on Friday, 18,271 elective posts will be contested involving 14 different positions next year.

For national positions, 12 senatorial seats, 63 seats for party-list representatives and 254 seats for congressional district representatives are available.

As for the local offices, to be contested are 82 seats for governors, 82 seats for vice governors,

FROM PAGE 1

and 792 seats for provincial board members.

For city positions, there will be 149 seats for mayors, 149 seats for vice mayors, and 1,682 seats for councilors.

At the municipal level, the available positions are 1,493 seats for mayor, 1,493 seats for vice mayor, and 11,948 seats for councilors.

The Comelec said there will be 32 parliament members seats and 40 party-list representatives seats in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Registered voters in the country will be voting their bets on May 12, 2025. (PNA)

FROM PAGE 1

hub Zun Yuan Technology Inc. in Bamban town in March this year.

The PAOCC submitted two boxes of documents as evidence.

“Lumabas ang mga ebidensya dito tulad ng fact na siya ang nag-apply para dun sa dating POGO (Pieces of evidence such as the fact that she applied permits for the POGO surfaced)

from the local government, lumabas din ang kanyang involvement doon sa lessor company, kasama na rin ang ibang ebidensya diyan tulad ng pangalan niya na lumulutang sa mga sabi-sabing dokumento na nahanap sa (Her involvement in the lessor company, as well as other prices of evidence such as her name appearing various documents recovered in the) POGO compound,” DOJ Undersecretary and Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking chairperson Nicholas Ty said in a press briefing.

He said there is a possibility that other cases may be filed against Guo and others, as they are still gathering more pieces of evidence.

During the briefing, State Prosecutor Benjamin Samson said authorities believe that Cunanan is part of a “grand conspiracy.”

He said they discovered that Zun Yuan's operation started with one corporation which was Baofu, and then another

MERALCO...

MANILA – Power distributor Manila Electric Company (Meralco) announced on Sunday a substantial reduction in June electricity rates, retracting an earlier announcement of an increase.

In a statement, Meralco said the turnaround was due to the order of the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) to stagger the collection of generation costs from the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM) purchases in the May supply month in four equal monthly installments starting in the June billing.

Thus, Meralco customers can expect a PHP1.9623 per kWh (kilowatt-hour) reduction in the electricity rate this June instead of the PHP0.6436 per kWh increase as earlier announced.

This brings the overall rate for a typical household to PHP9.4516 per kWh from the previous month's PHP11.4139 per kWh, Meralco said.

For residential customers consuming at least 200 kWh, the adjustment is equivalent to a PHP392 reduction in their total electricity bill.

The cutback for June primarily reflects a decrease of P1.8308 per kWh in the generation charge, while transmission charges and feed-in

corporation was created.

“In one of the corporations, we found a document wherein the name of Mr. Dennis Cunanan appeared. After piecing together the pieces of evidence, we concluded and we decided that he is part of the grand conspiracy to commit labor trafficking,” he said.

As a case has been filed, Ty said the DOJ is now processing the Immigration Lookout Bulletin Order (ILBO) against Guo, which they hope to be signed by Justice Secretary Jesus Crispin Remulla next week.

“Hindi naman natin matatanggi na kahit sinong makasuhan ng kriminal ay may flight risk, lalo na kung may resources ito mangibang bansa. Ngunit ito naman kay Mayor Guo, hopefully, hindi naman siya lilipad dahil siya mismo at yung kanyang mga representatives ang nagsabi na

tariff allowances remain unchanged at P0.1450 per kWh and P0.0474 per kWh, respectively.

Taxes and other charges also see a net reduction of P0.3239 per kWh.

Joe Zalardriaga, Meralco vice president and head of corporate communications, said the power distributor is committed to implementing the ERC's order and ensuring customers have enough time to pay their bills by adjusting due dates.

However, the Meralco official cautioned customers of an expected increase in generation charges over the next three months as deferred amounts are collected on a staggered basis.

“We would like to advise this early that our customers can expect generation charge to increase in succeeding months as we collect the deferred amounts on a staggered basis as a result of the recent developments,” Zalardriaga said.

“With these already deferred costs, and the recent order of the ERC to also stagger the collection of WESM charges, around P0.77 per kWh will be added every month to the generation charge in the July to September bills,” he added. (PNA)

nais niyang harapin ang mga alegasyon laban sa kanya (We cannot deny that anyone charged with a crime is a flight risk, especially if they have the resources to go abroad. But in the case of Mayor Guo, hopefully, she will not fly because she and her representatives said she wants to face the allegations against her),” Ty said.

PNP-CIDG chief Maj. Gen. Leo Francisco, meanwhile, vowed to strengthen its fight against illegal POGOs.

“In collaboration with PAOCC and other law enforcement agencies, we are intensifying our fight against these illegal POGOs and the PNP is one with this fight, especially the PNP-CIDG,” he said. (PNA)



TULFO...

MANILA – Senator Raffy Tulfo on Wednesday said he would schedule an investigation after the sine-die adjournment to look into the 48 unutilized Dalian trains of the Metro Rail Transit (MRT) 3 due to unresolved incompatibility issues with the railway system.

In a news release, the chairperson of the Senate Committee on Public Services said those responsible for the mess should be held accountable.

He made the statement after he inspected the controversial trains purchased in 2017 and gathering dust at the MRT-3 Depot in North Avenue, Quezon City on Tuesday.

“Nakatiwang-wang lang at nababalot na ng alikabok ang 48 Dalian trains na gawa ng China na nagkakahalaga ng PHP3.7 billion simula noong ito ay ma-deliver noong 2017 (The 48 Chinese-made Dalian trains costing PHP3.7 billion are left unused and covered in dust since they were delivered in 2017),” Tulfo noted.

The senator also found out that the Aquino administration was aware from the beginning that

RECTO...

and member agencies will organize public consultations and stakeholder engagements to ensure the proper and efficient implementation of the systems.

With the systems in place, Secretary Recto said that the country is now one step closer to putting an end to smuggling, misdeclaration, and undervaluation.

He urged the members of the Committee to lend their full cooperation, commitment, and expertise to the success of the crucial initiative.

“Remember, according to AO No. 23, we have two years to complete and fully implement the systems. So, let us all buckle down to work and get this started. Delay is not an option,” he said.

Present during the meeting were the Office of the Special Assistant to the President for

the specifications of Dalian's wagons were incompatible and non-compliant with the country's MRT system, but still insisted on continuing the contract and accepting its delivery.

While some individuals were charged before the Ombudsman over the controversy, Tulfo pointed out that the cases were dismissed.

"At kung sakali mang piliting gamitin at patakbuin ng ating gobyerno ang mga Dalian trains, kailangang sumuka muli ang pamahalaan ng panibagong limpak-limpak na pera na magkakahalaga sa dalawang bilyong piso kada taon para lang sa maintenance (If the government pursues using the Dalian trains, it needed to cough up PHP2 billion yearly just for maintenance alone)," he pointed out.

Instead of “spending huge amounts” for the maintenance of defective trains, he suggested that the Department of Transportation renegotiate the contract so that the trains can be returned and the amount of money spent be refunded.

Congress will resume sessions on July 22. (PNA)

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Investment and Economic Affairs (OSAPIEA) Secretary Frederick D. Go; DOF Undersecretary Charlito Martin R. Mendoza; and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Undersecretary Mary Jean T. Pacheco.

Also in attendance were OSAPIEA Assistant Secretary Kristine Joy Diaz-Teston; DTI Assistant Secretary Agaton Teodoro P. Uvero; DOF Director Euvimil Nina R. Asuncion; Department of Agriculture Directors Jerome D. Bunyi and Honorio C. Flameño; Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency Director Agnes D. Mandap; Department of Energy Division Chief Gloria A. Ferranco; Department of Health Division Chief Ms. Cherrie D. Esteban; and Department of Information Technology and Communication Technology representative Mr. Mario Elmer Cunanan. DOF.GOV

EDITORIAL:
Crackdown on POGOs

THE national government appears dead-set on going after illegal Philippine offshore gaming operators (POGOs) in various areas of the country and shutting them down once found to have violated our laws.

According to the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (PAGCOR) the state gaming regulator, between 250 and 300 POGOs are operating in the Philippines without a license, six times more than the 46 legitimate operators.

Together with the police, PAGCOR wants to identify these illegal operators, conduct raids, and shut them down.

The online gaming industry emerged in 2016 and grew exponentially as operators capitalized on the country's liberal gaming laws to target customers in China, where gambling is banned.

At their peak, POGOs totaled 300 and employed more than 300,000 Chinese workers. But the pandemic and tighter tax rules forced many to relocate or go underground.

The ongoing crackdown has been triggered by reports of POGO-related crimes like human trafficking, torture, kidnapping and fraudulent activities like credit card, crypto investment, and so-called 'love scams' where criminals adopt fake online identities to persuade victims to give them money.

In the most recent raid on a POGO in Porac, Pampanga by the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Commission (PAOCC), they discovered Lucky South 99 has been operating in a 5.8-hectare compound within the vast Royal Garden Estate without any valid permit from PAGCOR.

There, they found several Chinese military uniforms and medals in several of the 46 buildings in the compound.

They also found several rooms with bloodstains. The rooms were believed to be torture chambers where POGO workers were beaten up for not complying with management directives and for failing to reach their quotas.

One of the buildings forcibly opened by police officers showed a large KTV bar with VIP rooms and rooms with beds. Authorities believed the building was used for the sex trafficking of foreign and Filipino women.

Following recent raids on POGOs in Bamban, Tarlac and Porac, Pampanga, the clamor for President Marcos Jr. to ban all POGOs for posing a threat to national security and being the breeding ground of various crimes has been gaining ground.

Senate President Francis Escudero, who has supported calls for total phaseout of illegal POGOs, has urged the Department of National Defense to discuss with PAGCOR the concerns they had raised regarding the presence of POGOs near military camps.

For his part, Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr., a total ban on illegal POGOs is necessary on national security grounds because, he said, these “weaken our political, economic, social, and peace and order fabric.”

Will Malacañang heed the clamor? We'll know soon enough.



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MANILA – Senator Loren Legarda has filed Senate Resolution No. 1050, directing the appropriate committee to look into the increasing number of child rape cases in the country, with the goal of strengthening the laws against the heinous crime.

In a news release on Thursday, Legarda cited a report from the Child Protection Network Foundation Inc. saying 2,890 of the 4,079 child violence cases reported from January 1 to May 26, 2024, were sexual abuse/assault.

“We are very concerned with the alarming increase of child rape cases, especially that many of the perpetrators are relatives of the victims, trusted individuals,” she said.

“We need to find out whether our current laws are enough or are even being properly implemented to punish the guilty, protect the victims, and empower the state to help the victims recover anew,” she said.

DOST...

City, and the GP Synergia Technologies Corporation located at FCIE Compound, Dasmarinas City, both were SETUP-assisted firms; and the CvSU's Makapuno R&D Center in Indang; and the DOSTruck Coffee Processing Facility in Magallanes.

This initiative is part of a broader effort to ensure adherence to established policies, procedures, and regulations, focusing on the implementation of key programs such as the Small Enterprise Technology Upgrading Program (SETUP) and the Grants-In-Aid (GIA) program. The audit purposes were to evaluate compliance with regulatory standards, enhance the operational efficiency of technical operations within DOST regional and provincial offices, and improve management and planning related to program implementation and resource allocation. Through this audit, DOST-IAS aims to identify areas for improvement, ensure

Legarda called for better implementation of the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act, and the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act.

Other laws such as the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act and its expanded version, and An Act Promoting for Stronger Protection Against Rape and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, Increasing the Age for Determining the Commission of Statutory Rape should also be implemented properly, she said.

Legarda also called for the passage of Senate Bill No. 2401 that seeks to establish Women and Children Protection Units in all government hospitals.

The bill, which Legarda filed in August last year, includes the necessary appropriations to ensure that the protection units are well-equipped to respond to cases of violence against women and to deter gender-based violence. (PNA)

FROM PAGE 1

ing that DOST regional and provincial offices effectively utilize resources and adhere to best practices. The findings will be instrumental in improving operational efficiencies, resources management, and enhancing program planning and implementation strategies. This, in turn, is expected to lead to better outcomes for the programs and a more robust framework for future projects.

The DOST-IAS audit is part of an on-

JUNE 24 SPECIAL
NON-WORKING DAY IN MANILA

MANILA – President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has declared June 24, a Monday, a special non-working day in the City of Manila to mark its 453rd founding anniversary.

Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin, by the authority of the President, signed Proclamation 599 on Wednesday.

Senator Win Gatchalian wants to probe the proliferation of fake birth certificates which allow unscrupulous individuals including foreign nationals to secure government-issued identification, evade immigration laws, and perpetrate crimes.

“Syndicates may be behind the proliferation of fake birth certificates as well as the apparent abuse of the late birth registration system,” Gatchalian said, as he filed Senate Resolution 1053.

Gatchalian's resolution follows findings of discrepancies in the birth certificate of Bamban Mayor Alice Guo, citing specifically the absence of government records proving the existence of one Amelia Leal, the named mother in Guo's birth certificate. A Senate fact-finding investigation revealed that Amelia Leal does not have any birth or marriage certificate.

Guo is being linked to the operations of a POGO hub in Bamban, which was recently raided by the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Commission (PAOCC) and the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) for violation of human trafficking laws and serious illegal detention.

Gatchalian, chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, pointed out that investigations conducted by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), the Bureau of Immigration (BI), and the Philippine Statistics Authority

going effort to maintain high standards across all DOST regional offices. By identifying strengths and areas for improvement, DOST-IAS seeks to foster a culture of continuous improvement and excellence within the organization. This proactive approach underscores the Department's commitment to transparency, accountability, and the effective use of public resources in advancing scientific and technological development in the Philippines.

“It is but fitting and proper that the people of the City of Manila be given full opportunity to participate in the occasion and enjoy the celebration,” the proclamation read.

“I, Lucas P. Bersamin, Executive Secretary, by authority of the President, Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr., do hereby declare Monday, 24 June

thority (PSA) have brought to light the alarming proliferation of fake or spurious birth certificates, which some foreign nationals use to secure government identification and evade the country's immigration laws.

During the Senate deliberations on the PSA's 2024 budget, the agency disclosed that at least 308 fake birth certificates were used for Philippine passport applications from January to September last year, he said. Six of these birth certificates belonged to foreign nationals who were issued Philippine passports.

The PSA is currently investigating the ongoing proliferation of fake birth certificates, including around 300 incidents involving Filipinos and 65 cases involving foreigners, the senator disclosed. The DFA, on the other hand, has prevented over a hundred attempts of foreigners in applying for Philippine passports using spurious documents, with over 55 active cases referred to law enforcement agencies. According to the DFA, foreign nationals pose as Filipinos by presenting authentic and genuine PSA-issued birth certificates, along with valid government-issued ID.

The BI, for its part, has expressed alarm over incidents involving overstaying foreigners who misrepresent themselves to secure Philippine documents and evade immigration inspection, Gatchalian said.

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Manila, the capital city of the Philippines, is the center of the country's economic, political, social, and cultural activity. (PNA)



RECTO CONVENES INAUGURAL COMMITTEE MEETING TO OPERATIONALIZE THE DIGITALIZED BORDER PROTECTION SYSTEM

Finance Secretary Ralph G. Recto convened the inaugural committee meeting to operationalize the Pre-border Technical Verification and Cross-border Electronic Invoicing Systems under Administrative Order (AO) No. 23, series of 2024 on June 11, 2024 at the Department of Finance (DOF) office in Manila.

"Grounded by AO No. 23, series of 2024, we take the first steps today towards achieving a fully digitalized border protection system in the country where no import goes unnoticed and unaccounted for," he said in his opening remarks.

AO No. 23 was issued by President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. and signed by Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin on May 13, 2024 to expedite the inspection of all imported commodities entering the Philippines through digital and integrated pre-border technical verification and cross-border electronic invoicing.

It is intended to strengthen national security, safeguard consumer rights, and protect people against substandard and hazardous imported goods.

AO No. 23 will be implemented in three phases. The first phase will cover agricultural goods; phase two will focus on non-agricultural goods with health and safety issues; and the third phase involves other goods with misdeclaration avoiding duties and taxes.

Pre-border Technical Verification stands for the safety testing and inspection of all imported commodities prior to shipment. This entails the verification of the declared specifications, description, weight, volume, and country of origin.

Meanwhile, the Cross-border Electronic Invoicing System will be used to create electronic invoices to monitor inter-

national trade transactions

of all imported goods, and will be shared in real time across relevant government agencies for transparency.

AO No. 23 created the Committee for Pre-border Technical Verification and Cross-border Electronic Invoicing (CPT-VCEI) chaired by the Secretary of Finance.

The Secretaries of Agriculture, Trade and Industry, Energy, Health, Environment and Natural Resources, and Information and Communications Technology serve as members.

Other committee members include the Bureau of Customs (BOC) Commissioner, the Director General of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), and two non-voting representatives from duly recognized industry associations to be appointed by the chairperson upon recommendation of the committee.

During the inaugural meeting of the Committee, BOC Commissioner Bienvenido Y. Rubio provided the overview of the initiative, while BOC Assessment and Operations Coordinating Group Deputy Commissioner Vener S. Baquiran presented the draft joint administrative order (JAO) on the guidelines and IRR for the conduct of the system.

The CPTVCEI approved the creation of a TWG to review and finalize the base draft JAO, which is set to be presented in the next committee meeting.

The JAO details the objectives, scope, exemptions, qualifications for the accreditation of Testing, Inspection, and Certification (TIC) companies, reporting, and clearance procedures, among others for the proper implementation of AO No. 23.

In line with Section 2 of AO No. 23, the

VP Sara...

MANILA – Vice President Sara Duterte stepped down as education secretary and vice chairperson of the government's anti-communist task force, Malacañang announced on Wednesday.

According to Presidential Communications Office (PCO) Secretary Cheloy Garafil, Duterte went to Malacañang at 2:21 p.m. Wednesday to tender her resignation as Member of the Cabinet, Secretary of the Department of Education and Vice Chairperson of the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC).

Garafil added that the Vice President did not provide a reason for her resignation

"She [Duterte] declined to give a reason why. She will continue to serve as Vice President. We thank her for her service," Garafil said, noting that President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. accepted Duterte's resignation from the Cabinet.

Marcos appointed Duterte as education secretary upon their assumption to office on June 30, 2022.

Marcos and Duterte ran and won convincingly under the UniTeam Coalition in the 2022 election

In a speech at the DepEd Main Office in Pasig City, Duterte assured an orderly transition as she confirmed her resignation.

"Ano mang kwen-to, kahit gaano kaganda ay sadyang nagtatapos rin (Whatever story, no matter how good, still comes to an end). Earlier today, June 19, 2024, I sought an audience with the President and tendered my resignation as the Secretary of Education effective July 19, 2024," she said.

"I have given my 30-day notice to ensure CPTVCEI Secretariat presented the process and timeline for the nomination and appointment of the non-voting representatives from duly recognized industry associations.

The Committee shall receive nominations

the proper and orderly transition for the benefit of the next secretary," she added.

Duterte expressed her gratitude for the support of all teachers, non-teaching personnel, local government units, and private stakeholders as she pushed for reforms in the education sector.

She also vowed to continue advocating for the rights and welfare of all teachers and learners in the country.

Under Duterte's leadership, the DepEd has launched its MATATAG Agenda to address challenges in the quality of the education sector.

The MATATAG Agenda stands for MAKE the curriculum relevant to produce competent and job-ready,

active, and responsible citizens; TAKE steps to accelerate delivery of basic education facilities and services; TAKE good care of learners by promoting learner well-being, inclusive education, and a positive learning environment; and Give support to teachers to teach better.

Education as tool vs. insurgency

Duterte's stint at the DepEd was marked by ongoing efforts to improve the country's educational system, considered one of the important tools in combating local communist insurgency, NTF-ELCAC executive director Undersecretary Ernesto Torres Jr. said

"She spearheaded various programs aimed at improving the quality of education and making it more accessible, thereby addressing one of the key factors contributing to local conflicts," Torres said. "Her leadership has also emphasized the importance of education as a vital component in combating insurgency."

Torres thanked Duterte for her "invaluable contributions and leadership,"

until June 20, 2024, and the Secretary of Finance shall have appointed two representatives by June 28, both of which will be invited to attend the next committee meeting.

The Committee Cont. on Page 2

saying dedication to the task force has resulted in numerous successful initiatives and operations that have strengthened the resolve and capacity of communities to stand against insurgency.

"We wish her success in her future endeavors and are confident that she will continue to serve the Filipino people with the same passion and dedication," Torres said.

Senators weigh in Meanwhile, Senator Sherwin Gatchalian, who chairs the Senate Committee on Basic Education, said Duterte's resignation as DepEd secretary "is a big loss" as the "political will" of the vice president is important in putting the directions of the education sector in "one direction."

"Ang isang pangunahing dahilan kung bakit itinalaga [ni President Marcos] si Vice President Sara dahil binibigyan ng priority yung (One of the main reasons why [President Marcos] appointed Vice President Sara is because he prioritizes the) education sector," Gatchalian said during the Kapihan sa Senado.

He said he is hoping that existing programs and policies being implemented by the DepEd will continue despite her resignation.

For Senate Majority Leader Aquilino Pimentel III, President Marcos should appoint a new DepEd chief who has "experience and good track record" in the education sector

"This person must be someone who has worked with or in the department for decades. Someone familiar with how the department works as well as with the problems of the education sector and educational system. Someone who has dedicated his or her life to education and can show the track record for it," Pimentel said in a Viber message to reporters.

Meanwhile, Senator Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa trusts that Duterte's decision was "well thought of."

"I believe it was a choice that took into consideration the best interest of our people, as has always been characteristic of her. I fully trust that she will continue to fulfill her man-

date as the Vice President of the Philippines and help uplift the lives of every Filipino. After all, beyond her titles, it is her integrity that defines her leadership, and it is this integrity that she shall always uphold," dela Rosa said in another Viber message.

Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman expressed hope that the issues hounding Philippine education will be resolved as a result of Duterte's resignation.

Lagman also hoped that Duterte's replacement would come from the ranks of "experienced and dedicated educators who can efficiently steer and professionally manage" the country's educational system.

He noted that Duterte's departure from a prime position in the President's Cabinet signifies the end of the "increasingly tenuous partisan relations" between the Marcos and Duterte political power blocs.

ACT Teachers party-list Rep. France Castro expressed optimism that President Marcos would appoint a DepEd secretary with experience in the field who would truly serve the education sector.

GABRIELA Party-list Rep. Arlene Brosas said Duterte's resignation as DepEd secretary highlights the urgent need to appoint a genuine public servant who will prioritize uplifting the long-neglected education sector

"From the very start, the Vice President had no real intention of addressing the crisis in our education system," Brosas said.

Brosas described Duterte's exit as a political move in preparation for the 2025 elections to "set the stage for a potential power struggle" between the Duterte and Marcos factions.

Manila Rep. Joel Chua said the breakdown of Duterte's alliance with President Marcos under the UniTeam exposed the Vice President's "false façade of unity" that was merely maintained for "election purposes".

(with reports from Stephanie Sevellano, Priam Nepomuceno, and Wilnard Bacolonia/Filane Mikee Cervantes/PNA)

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June 26- July 2, 2024

DOST-CALABARZON CONDUCTS TRAINING ON EU FOOD LAWS AND PHILIPPINE QUALITY TRADE PLATFORM, PLANS TO OFFER MORE COMPREHENSIVE ASSISTANCE TO MSMEs WHO EXPORT TO EU COUNTRIES



The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) CALABARZON, together with ARISE Plus Philippines, conducted a two-day training program on EU Food Laws and the Philippine Quality for Trade (Q4T) Platform for its Food Safety Team (FST) members. The training was held last June 13-14, 2024, at the DOST CALABARZON Regional Office, RFSQAC Multi-Purpose Hall.

Led by Mr. Guilberto A. Veluz, a professional food technologist, the training program aims to equip the DOST Food Safety Team with the necessary knowledge and skills to better assist micro, small, and medium

enterprises (MSMEs) in the CALABARZON region regarding their compliance with food safety regulations and standards.

This training is part of the ARISE Plus Programme of the International Trade Center (ITC), which offers training courses on food safety and international food standards. It covered topics on EU Food Laws and the Philippine Quality for Trade (Q4T) Platform.

This initiative highlights the region's strength in food safety infrastructure and promotes safe, high-quality, and compliant food products. With this training, the DOST FST CALABARZON will be able to pro-

vide MSMEs with valuable knowledge and skills to improve their food safety and quality management practices.

Ms. Maria Teresa Pamplona, Science Research Specialist I and the Head of the Food Safety Team (FST) of DOST-CALABARZON, said that the training will enable MSMEs to gain valuable knowledge and skills to improve food safety and quality management practices in line with international standards.

She said that DOST-CALABARZON plans to capacitate its FST members through trainings on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) and Food Safety System Certification (FSSC).

PNP PERSONNEL TO HAVE HEALTH INSURANCE BEGINNING JULY



MANILA – The 232,000-strong Philippine National Police (PNP) will have additional protection as they are set to receive health insurance cards beginning next month.

PNP chief Gen. Rommel Francisco Marbil said each health maintenance organization (HMO) card has PHP40,000 that police officers can use especially during medical emergencies.

"Next month we

will be giving yung cards, yung HMO cards, para sa bawat pulis although worth na PHP40,000 yan, maliit lang po but we will make sure na makakatu-long sa inyo (Next month we will be giving the cards, the HMO cards for each policeman, although it is only worth PHP40,000, although small but we will make sure that it will help you)," Marbil said during the launch of the PNP Family Day at their Camp Crame headquarters on Saturday.

Marbil said the HMO cards will be helpful particularly in the provinc-

es where the PNP does not have hospitals.

"Usually mga (only) private hospitals so instead we give them new cards so they can go anywhere basta accredited yung establishment (as long as the establishment is accredited)," he said.

Marbil also promised to provide legal assistance for police officers facing counter charges, one of the challenges they face in the performance of their duties.

Highest stan-

dards On Sunday, Marbil urged all police officers

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Orientation on the Special Protection of Children in the Situation of Armed Conflict



The Provincial Government of Cavite, through the Office of the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Officer (OPSWDO), successfully conducted an orientation aimed at enhancing knowledge and skills regarding the special protection of children in situations of armed conflict on June 19, 2024, at The Bayleaf Hotel in the City of General Trias.

More than 50 participants, comprised of members of the Sangguniang Bayan and Sangguniang Panlungsod who are in charge of the Committee of Social Services, Family, Women, Children and Elderly, social workers from various local government units in Cavite, representatives from national government agencies (NGAs), and uniformed personnel, joined the activity.

The orientation sought to deepen participation to uphold the law and maintain the highest standards of integrity, particularly concerning Philippine Offshore Gaming Operators (POGOs).

He also reiterated that any police personnel involved in protecting illegal POGO operations will face appropriate disciplinary actions.

"Integrity and accountability are the cornerstones of our public service. We remain committed to ensuring that our officers uphold these

ipants' understanding of the legal framework governing the protection of children during armed conflict, encompassing both national and international laws and policies. Key topics included Republic Act 11188 or the "Special Protection of Children in Situations of Armed Conflict Act" and its implementing rules and regulations, crucial for safeguarding children from violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect, and displacement in times of armed conflict and the salient points of DSWD's Pag-Abot Program.

The event commenced with a warm welcome from Ms. Precyl T. Ramos, Officer-in-Charge of OPSWDO, followed by an inspirational message delivered by Ms. Marife V. Bautista, representing Board Member Romel R. Enriquez, Chairperson of the Committee on Social Services, Family, Women, Children, and Elderly.

values," he said in a statement.

The PNP has intensified campaign against illegal POGOs, resulting in several successful opera-

Ms. Elena Mae C. Romano, Social Welfare Officer from DSWD IV-A, served as the resource speaker, providing in-depth insights into the legal protections and practical approaches in identifying and assisting children at risk.

A highlight of the orientation was the commitment setting by all participants, underscoring their dedication to upholding the rights and well-being of children affected by armed conflict. The session concluded with closing remarks from Ms. Maria Aura D. Fuentes, a registered social worker from OPSWDO.

The Provincial Government of Cavite remains steadfast in its commitment to fortify the protection mechanisms for children amidst challenging circumstances, ensuring their safety and fostering a nurturing environment conducive to their growth and development.

--- AC Cabrera tions in coordination with the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) and the Anti-Cybercrime Group (ACG). (PNA)

