

MPTC expressways gear up for Undas, urges motorists to be expressway-ready

Easytrip RFID Stations

OUTSIDE EXPRESSWAYS

Angelen Southbound

Caltex EDSA Balintawak

Reboreno Galleria

Shell Mindanao

Shell Manila

Mamplasan Rotonda

Customer Service Centers

CAVITEX CS Link CSC

NLEX Tabang CSC

NLEX San Fernando CSC

CAVITE

Rawit

Rawit Toll Plaza

Lingapit Bypass

Parafaque Toll Plaza

Customer Service Centers

CAVITEX CSC - Manila South

CAVITEX CSC - Cavite South

CAVITEX

CAVITEX CS Link - Manila Entry

CAVITEX CS Link - Tagaytay Entry

LEGUENE

Leguene Blvd & Toll Plaza

Santa Rosa

Santa Rosa Toll Plaza

Shang Aguinado Interchange

Shang East & Toll Plaza

Customer Service Center

CALAX Greenfield

Mamplasan CSC

NLEX

Chilmas SCTEX Connector

Balintawak Toll Plaza

Bonifacio Toll Plaza

Espeña Toll Plaza

NLEX Drive & Dine

NLEX Balintawak ACPV

NLEX Mindanao CSC

Person Lakeshore

Shell of Asia

Shell Balagtas

Tarlac Toll Plaza

Total SFX Southbound

Customer Service Centers

NLEX Balintawak CSC

NLEX Valenzuela CSC

Angelen

Angelen

Angelen

Angelen

Metro Pacific Tollways Corporation re-activates its Safe Trip Mo, Sagot Ko (SMSK) motorists assistance program to ensure safe and convenient travel during Undas.

With an expected combined surge in traffic volume across its expressways — NLEX, SCTEX, NLEX Connector, CALAX, and CCLEX — the MPTC Group is ready to assist motorists through its increased personnel deployment, 24/7 traffic condition monitoring and incident response, and enhanced traffic management measures to guide motorists.

To ensure smooth travel experience of motorists — emergency and medical incident response teams will be deployed strategically within the expressways. MPTC will also offer free towing service for Class 1 vehicles up to the nearest exit from 6 AM of October 31 to 6 AM of November 4.

Roadworks and lane closures in MPTC expressways will be suspended from October 30 to November 4 — except for emergency safety repairs.

Plan trip ahead, travel on non-peak hours if possible. Motorists are encouraged

travel.

Smart will also provide free internet access and charging stations in selected areas for motorists to stay connected and keep their devices powered up while on the road.

Be expressway-ready

In addition to being physically and mentally prepared, ensuring your vehicle is in good condition, and observing road safety practices — a working RFID sticker will make your journey smoother.

With the busy holiday season ahead, MPTC encourages the motoring public to have their old RFID stickers replaced at the nearest Easytrip station or Customer

Service Centers to avoid inconvenience while on the road.

“We encourage motorists to be expressway-ready by ensuring that they have sufficient load in their RFID accounts for a hassle-free journey. Let’s drive responsibly so we can all arrive at our destinations safely, and spend more time with our loved ones,” said MPTC President and CEO Rogelio L. Singson.

For regular updates and road safety tips, check out MPTC expressways’ official Facebook accounts @NLEXexpressways, @OfficialCALAX, and @CCLEXexpressway; along with its 24/7 hotline at 1-35000.

MPTC also has investments in Indonesia

CARD MRI vows to continue its poverty reduction efforts

SAN PABLO, Laguna — The Center for Agriculture and Rural Development Mutually Reinforcing Institutions vowed to continue its poverty reduction efforts in the country, remaining committed to driving meaningful, sustainable change.

At least 15 media practitioners nationwide were recently invited to a “PANAGHI-USA: CARD MRI Exposure Tour Program for Media” to witness the CARD’s progress since it started in the 1980s and the changes it brought to its clients in San Pablo City.

Jeffrey Tandingan, manager of the CARD MRI Publishing House, said the tour

program aims to provide media practitioners with a comprehensive understanding of CARD MRI’s mission as the microfinance institution dedicated to fighting poverty in the country.

“Our goal is to foster a deeper understanding that CARD MRI is not just a lending institution, but a social development organization fully committed to assisting marginalized communities in their efforts to improve their quality of life,” Tandingan told the media in a local dialect.

The CARD MRI Publishing House, in partnership with Hijos Tour, two of the 29 institutions of the CARD MRI, toured the media from Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao

to San Pablo City, Samaloc, and Mojicap Lakes, providing a brief history of the city and about the seven lakes in San Pablo.

During a tour at Mojicap Lake, 34-year-old Marilyn Maghirang, a natural healer, emphasized the importance of taking good care of the country’s flora and fauna. She also discussed and showed how medicinal plants play a crucial role in human health and well-being, which they still practice.

A 58-year-old farmer and cook of the Ylaga at Sta. Elena, Joel Frago, showed the media during lunch how to prepare the one and only “pancit kalabuko,” which he started to make so his wife Myrna could have the opportunity to enjoy eating

vegetables. They also shared Ylaga’s success.

CARD MRI introduced the media to its main office, its first branch of the CARD Indogrosir, and its clinic with a laboratory, ensuring its members’ healthcare quality. It also introduced the CARD MRI Development Institute Incorporation, which offers scholarships for its members’ children.

The media also met other CARD MRI’s client members — Mga Likha ni Inay, an institution in San Pablo City that supports all members by helping elevate their handcrafted products; Harito Food Products in Los Baños City; Piñana Store in Calaoanan town; and Nidora’s House in San Pablo.

Marilyn M. Manila, president of the CARD MRI Publishing House, said highlighting the success stories of CARD MRI’s client members is a powerful source of inspiration for the general public to pursue personal and community improvement. Ivy Tejana

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Matagumpay na binuksan at isinagawa ang 2nd Imus City Franchise Expo sa

The District Mall kamakailan sa pangunahang ng Local Economic Development and Investment Promotion Office (LEDIPO) at sa pakikipagtulungan ng Association of Filipino Franchisers, Inc. (AFFI). Nakasama sa ribbon-cutting ceremony ni

Mayor Alex I. Advincula sina DTI CALABARZON Regional Director Ms. Marissa Argente, DTI Cavite Provincial Director Ms. Lilibeth Chavez, PCCI Cavite President Mr. Jaime Tesora, ICCI President Ms. Annie Jarin, City Administrator Mr. Larry Monzon, at LEDIPO OIC Ms. Jhett Vilbar-Lungcay. Dinaluhan din ito ng 21 franchisers, 345 potential at existing entrepreneurs, at 108 aspiring franchisees.

Governor Tolentino visits STS Kristine victims in Gen. Trias

TULONG PINANSYAL PARA SA MAHIGIT 3,000 NA BENEPISYARYO MULA SA CITY OF CARMONA

Ang tanggapan ni Sen. Ramon “Bong” Revilla Jr., Cong. Bryan Revilla ng Agimat Party-list, at Governor Abeng Remulla at Vice Governor Ram Revilla ay nagtulung tulong kamakailan para mabigyan ng financial assistance ang mahigit 3,000 na beneficiaries ng Carmona mula sa Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) ng DSWD. Nakasama sa pamamahagi sina Cong. Roy M. Loyola, Board Member Ivey Reyes, BM Aidel Belamide, Vice Mayor Cesar L. Ines, Jr., at ang Team Loyola 2025.

PhilHealth-NCR & Rizal promotes UHC through reel-making contest

The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth)-National Capital Region and Rizal Regional Office (PRO-NCR & Rizal) headed by Dr. Bernadette C. Lico recently held its #Nag-4MKNB? reel-making contest among Grade 8 students in the region. Said competition was aimed at promoting the basics of Universal Health Care (UHC) and participation in the National Health Insurance Program which PhilHealth administers.

4M stands for Magparehistro, Magbayad ng kontribusyon, Mag-update ng record, at Mag-

Cavite provincial government facilitated the last leg of distribution of the financial assistance to oil spill-affected fisher folk and families in the municipality of Rosario in the program held at SM City Rosario on October 26, 2024.

Vice Mayor Bamm Gonzales welcomed the team from the PGC and the other officials to their municipality on behalf of Mayor Voltaire Ricafrente. She expressed her appreciation for the support provided to their constituents who were affected by the oil

spill.

Board Members Romel Enriquez and Ram Revilla graced the event and reiterated their commitment to the welfare of the people especially from the first district. BM Revilla also extended the gratitude to President Bongbong Marcos for the assistance being distributed to the beneficiaries. He remarked that it exemplifies the unity of the national and local government to respond to the needs of the people in times of crisis. - E. Reyes

Remulla: No sacred cows, no special treatment for cops involved in EJK

Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Secretary Juanito Victor ‘Jonvic’ C. Remulla on Monday said there will be no sacred cows nor special treatment for police officials who will be implicated in the alleged extra judicial killings (EJK) due to illegal drugs.

“There are no sacred cows in this institution and in this investigation. Anyone who is found guilty will be treated like any other and treated as such,” Remulla said.

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MINDFULNESS EXERCISES & ACTIVITIES FOR ADULTS

5. Try to envision the shape that your skin is making as you sit in contact with the chair, shifting your awareness toward any physical sensations you are experiencing. As you feel each one, acknowledge its existence before letting your consciousness let go of it and move on naturally.

If you find any emotions coming up, recognize them and create space for them. Then bring your attention back to your observing self—your feelings and thoughts are there, but you are separate from them, noticing them. This is the “Observer you”.

This exercise can be continued for as long as desired and there are many stages you can work through that will help you practice being an observer of yourself. It is not an easy exercise at first because we are often habitually inclined to react to and over-identify with our feelings.

The goal of evoking the Observing Self is to enter a separate mode which allows you to step back from yourself and your experiences. Simultaneously, however, you are connecting with a deeper constant self that is unaffected by dynamic emotions.

2. Five Senses Exercise

This exercise is called “five senses”, and provides guidelines on practicing mindfulness quickly in nearly any situation. All that is needed is to notice something you are experiencing with each of the five senses.

Follow this order to practice the Five Senses:

- Notice five things that you can see.

Look around you and bring your attention to five things that you can see. Pick something that you don’t normally notice, like a shadow or a small crack in the concrete.

- Notice four things that you can feel.

Bring awareness to four things that you are currently feeling, like the texture of your pants, the feeling of the breeze on your skin, or the smooth surface of a table you are resting your hands on.

- Notice three things you can hear.

Take a moment to listen, and note three things that you hear in the background. This can be the chirp of a bird, the hum of the refrigerator, or the faint sounds of traffic from a nearby road.

- Notice two things you can smell.

Bring your awareness to smells that you usually filter out, whether they’re pleasant or unpleasant. Perhaps the breeze is carrying a whiff of pine trees if you’re outside, or the smell of a fast-food restaurant across the street.

- Notice one thing you can taste.

Focus on one thing that you can taste right now, at this moment. You can take a sip of a drink, chew a piece of gum, eat something, notice the current taste in your mouth, or even open your mouth to search the air for a taste.

This is a quick and relatively easy exercise to bring you to a mindful state quickly. If you only have a minute or two, or don’t have the time or tools to try a body scan or fill out a worksheet, the five senses exercise can help you or your clients bring awareness to the current moment in a short amount of time.

Continuation next week



Governor...

From Page 1

On October 25, 2024, Governor Athena Bryana D. Tolentino visited Barangays Tejero and Bacao in Gen. Trias City to personally extend support to families impacted by severe tropical storm Kristine. The governor, along with local officials led by Gen. Trias City Mayor Luis Jonjon Ferrer, Vice Mayor Jonas Glyn Labuguen, and 6th District Board Members Morit Sison and Kerby Salazar,

facilitated the distribution of emergency food packs and essential supplies to affected residents in evacuation centers and temporary shelters.

Governor Tolentino spent time with families to assess their current situation and address their most urgent needs. She assured the residents of the provincial government’s commitment to their safety and well-being. CPIO

Remulla...

From Page 1

“There will be no special treatment. They will not be accorded special privileges,” he added during a press briefing at Camp Crame in Quezon City.

He stressed that anyone who will be established as guilty parties will experience the full extent of the law where no one will be spared.

Remulla made the remarks after retired police colonel Royina Garna implicated police officers in the infamous EJKs during the time of former President Rodrigo Duterte at the House Quad Comm hearing last October 11, 2024.

According to the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, a total of 6,252 persons died in anti-illegal drugs operations from July 1, 2016 to May 31, 2022 as part of the war on drugs of the previous administration.

Remulla, however, pointed out that police officers involved, whether retired or in service, must

not be blindly judged according to one witness’ testimony solely. He said that due process must still prevail.

“We have to understand that they are innocent until proven guilty. So, we must not judge them already according to testimonies. They have to go through the process,” the DILG Secretary underscored.

The DILG Chief said the Department will defer actions until the investigation of the House of Representatives has wrapped up.

“Let us wait until the final hearings and recommendations of the [House] Quad Comm are done and then subsequent actions will be taken,” he said.

According to him, the Department has already conducted initial work but will not proceed until all testimonies are in and the investigation of the Congress is done. DILG.GOV



DTI offers financing program for typhoon-hit MSMEs

Nov. 06-12, 2024

MANILA — The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) on Friday, Oct. 25, encouraged local businesses affected by the recent storm to avail of the agency’s financing program.

In a Palace briefing, DTI Acting Secretary Cristina Aldegue-Roque said the DTI is “aggressively” calling on micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to take advantage of Small Business Corporation’s (SB-Corp) loan programs to help them recover.

“Let’s take advantage of this para makausad tayo,” Roque said.

“Of course, this situation is not a good situation, but we can always move forward and achieve better heights if we just take advantage of the programs and ‘yung mga possibilities na binibigay sa atin ng ating gobyerno, under President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos and ng Bagong Pilipinas,” she added.

Roque said the government has allotted P2 billion for its Enterprise Rehabilitation Financing

(ERF) under SBCorp, which is available to all MSMEs operating in areas under the State of Calamity.

The ERF program provides emergency working capital to help MSMEs address financial impacts from disasters, including typhoons. The Program covers losses in inventory, operational disruptions, revenue decline, and damages to fixed assets.

New and existing SBCorp borrowers can access loans of up to PhP300,000, repayable monthly for over three years, and with no collateral required.

“Now that SB-Corp is aggressively loaning out money, whether nasalanta o hindi nasalanta, especially to the small and medium enterprises, we make the requirements not difficult,” Roque said.

“Actually, wala na ‘tong mga collateral, eh. You just have to prove that you have a business that’s ongoing,” she added.

The program also offers zero-interest rate for the first year and a 1% monthly interest rate for the remaining two years. (PND)

GSIS launches new loan program for members

The Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) launches the Multi-Purpose Loan (MPL) Lite program to help its members quickly bridge or cover unexpected expenses and temporary budget gaps, the GSIS said.

The MPL Lite, tailored specifically to support members, offers accessible financing that ranges from P5,000 to P50,000 (multiple of five) with flexible repayment terms of six, 12, 18 or 24 months.

It has a competitive interest rates of 6% or 7%, based on years of service. It includes a one-time loan redemption insurance fully deducted

upfront without fees for early repayment and without service fee for those who have active MPL Flex. MPL Lite is available in the GSIS Touch mobile app, which simplifies the application process.

“As we reaffirm our commitment to deliver meaningful and significant products and services to our members, the GSIS has developed this program to provide accessible and affordable financial solutions that aim to honor their contributions. With e-crediting, hassle-free way to access funds and streamlined application process, government workers have a

cont. on Page 3

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International exhibit and fire square road show address disaster risks at SM Mall of Asia

As the world comes together to observe the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction (IDRR) 2024 in October, an increased awareness on disaster risk reduction becomes everyone’s responsibility in the community. In Manila, the event was commemorated through the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (APMCDDRR) “Are You Ready?” Exhibition and Fire Square Road Show. This brings together global leaders, government officials, United Nations (UN) representatives, and civil society organizations to underscore education as a driving force in safeguarding communities from natural and man-made disasters for a safer future.

A powerful platform for change

The “Are You Ready?” art exhibition, a collaborative effort by one of Asia’s leading integrated property developers SM Prime, together with its corporate social responsibility arm SM Cares, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), the Philippine government, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural



Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga and SM Prime Holdings Chairman of the Executive Committee Hans Sy engage in a discussion about the art exhibition highlighting disaster preparedness.



The “Are You Ready?” art exhibition highlights the stories of the 2004 Indian tsunami survivors.



Students complete a questionnaire reflecting on the art exhibit.



SM Supermalls President Steven Tan engages in a Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training.

Organization (UNESCO) Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, showcased thought-provoking artworks that highlighted the challenges and solutions related to disaster risk reduction in Asia and the Pacific. The exhibition aimed to raise awareness and inspire action to build more resilient communities, aligning

with the theme of the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction 2024.

Empowering youth through education

A panel discussion was also moderated by UNDRR’s Rosalind Cook aimed to address key issues concerning DRR in schools. Panelists discussed the Comprehensive School Safety Framework 2022-2030 and the necessity of empowering the youth to contribute to DRR strategies.

Participants emphasized the importance of knowledge and skills-building among students specifically on disaster preparedness.

Interactive fire safety training

The Fire Square Road Show, an initiative by the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), provided interactive training on fire safety and prevention. Attendees underwent work-



(L-R): Pasay City Chief of Staff Peter Pardo, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Regional Director for East Asia and the Pacific June Kunugi, Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) Director Louie Puracan, SM Prime Holdings Chairman of the Executive Committee Hans Sy, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Head of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction His Excellency Kamal Kishore, Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga, and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Communications Manager Afrhill Rances



Panelists highlight how to empower youth to lead the way in emergency preparedness, emphasizing the key principles of the global agreement on disaster risk reduction.

shops on first aid, proper use of fire extinguishers, electrical safety, and rappelling, among others. Live demonstrations on rappelling and emergency response showcased the BFP’s capabilities in handling emergency situations while educational materials were also provided for children and families on fire safety and emergency preparedness.

A collaborative effort for a safer future

The event demonstrated the power of collaboration in addressing disaster risks. By prioritizing education, empowering youth, and promoting awareness about disaster preparedness, the Asia-Pacific region can work towards a future where communities are better equipped to mitigate the impacts of disasters and help shape a better future for all.



National University (NU) President Dr. Renato Carlos Ermita Jr. participates in a fire safety demonstration at the Fire Square Road Show.



Future generations prepare for emergencies by learning survival techniques in a simulated disaster.



At two major business events held last week, Go Negosyo founder Joey Concepcion reiterated the importance of upscaling MSMEs and upskilling workers.

Speaking to nearly a thousand cooperatives at the 3rd Metro Manila Cooperative Congress and to government agencies and the business community at the 2024 Arangkada Philippines Forum, Concepcion reiterated the importance of a robust MSME sector in creating businesses, and of a workforce that is ready for the challenges of artificial intelligence and automation.

"If we get to the largest sectors, to the poorest, then our economy will grow rapidly and more jobs will be created and wages will increase, not because labor mandates us to increase wages but because there will be a supply shortage in labor," he said.

Concepcion observed that cooperatives closely resemble the conditions for successful entrepreneurship; that is, they provide access to mentorship, money and markets to their smaller members. "These are the three pillars which we promote in our advocacy at Go Negosyo. The bigger cooperatives mentor the smaller cooperatives, and as they do, they grow and become stronger," he said. He added that cooperatives provide the

scale that is needed by small entrepreneurs. "The key is good leadership; people who lead cooperatives should have the entrepreneurial, marketing and digital skills necessary today," he said. The community of member-cooperatives of the organization is estimated to have total assets of Php 179.3 billion and more than 1.8 million members. "Cooperatives provide the scale that small entrepreneurs need," he said. "We can eradicate poverty by helping MSMEs scale up."

According to data from the Department of Trade and Industry, MSMEs comprise 99 percent of enterprises in the Philippines and generate 65 percent of jobs. "Upscaling our MSMEs will have a huge impact because these efforts will trickle down to the grassroots and benefit more communities in more parts of the country," he said.

Concepcion added that access to capital and public-private partnerships continue to be critical in achieving MSME growth. "There's a lot of effort being done to encourage the microfinance institutions to increase lending, while the public-private sector partnership is helping us in the private sector reach out to the grassroots."

He said private sector is also working with government to align the curriculum and training (including digital skills)

based on industry standards so that the workforce can be ready to take on jobs. "This makes the effort of upskilling more efficient and effective because industry itself is giving guidance," he said.

The Cooperative Congress, led by its chair Fr. Anton CT Pascual, was organized by the One Cooperative Federation (OCF), the Union of Metro Manila Cooperatives (UMMC), the Regional Cooperative Development Council – NCR (RCDC-NCR), and the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA – NCR), while Arangkada was organized by the Joint Foreign Chambers of the Philippines. PR

Cavite Province Named "Most Business-Friendly LGU" at the 50th Philippine Business-Friendly Conference and Expo



The Province of Cavite shined on the national stage, winning the Most Business-Friendly Local Government Unit (LGU) award in the provincial category which was presented during the

DA-4A, nagdaos ng Two-Day Enterprise Development Training para sa mga benepisyaryo ng RiceBIS

Idinaos ang Two-Day Enterprise Development Training para sa mga benepisyaryo ng PhilRice BIDA Rice Business Innovations System (RiceBIS) Program sa pangunguna ng Department of Agriculture IV-CALABARZON (DA IV-A) Adaptation and Mitigation Initiatives in Agriculture (AMIA) sa San Francisco, Quezon, simula ika-18 hanggang ika-19 ng Setyembre.

Layon ng pagsasanay na tulungan ang mga benepisyaryo ng proyektong RiceBIS sa pagtataguyod ng kanilang mga lokal na produkto upang makamit ang mas mataas na produksyon at kita.

Sa unang araw ay tinalakay ni Research Division, Science Research Specialist II, Gng. Ginalyn D. Bocaya ang paksang Packaging at Labelling ng mga produkto na mayroon ang asosasyon. Sa sesyon na ito itinuro ang mga dapat ikonsidera upang maging maayos ang mga produkto gaya na lamang ng pagpili ng pangalan ng produkto, paggamit ng brand trademark, paglalagay ng kumpletong listahan ng mga sangkap, net contents, tamang pagiimbak



ng produkto, direksyon ng paggamit, mga kaalamang pang-nutrisyon, importasyon ukol sa mga allergen, bansang pinanggalingan ng produkto, at ang mga importanteng petsa na dapat tandaan ng mga mamimili.

Matapos ang pagsasanay sa unang araw ay namahagi rin ng black pepper seedlings sa mga benepisyaryo ng AMIA Villages sa naturang lugar. Ipinaliwanag sa distribusyon ang tamang pagtatanim at pagpaparami ng black pepper, at kung paano ito mapagkakitaan.

Sa ikalawang araw tinalakay ni AMIA Climate Resilient Agriculture Focal Person G. Girsy Anda ang Financial Literacy, kung saan ipinaliwanag ang mga benepisyaryo kung ano ang inventory management, records, reports, kung paano malaman ang dami ng stocks, at mga tamang gawain sa pag-imbentaryo ng produkto.

Nagkaroon din ng aktibidad ang bawat kalahok kung saan nagsanay sila sa pagpipresyo ng sarili nilang mga produkto. Kinilala ang mga kalahok na nagmula sa Tayumanin Upland Farmers Association.

Sa pagtatapos, nagpasalamat si Municipal Agriculturist, G. Randy Riego para sa DA-IV A AMIA Program at ipinaabot ang patuloy na pagsuporta ng kanilang opisina, kasama ng bawat magsasaka ng lalawigan, sa mga programa ng DA-IV A na mas makakatulong pa sa pamumuhay at pagsasaka ng bawat benepisyaryo. PR

Governor Athena Bryana Tolentino, joined by Vice Governor Shercont. on Page 3

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EDITORIAL: Sticking Scams

The Rodrigo Duterte administration focused on the war on illegal drugs which it claimed had become a pervasive problem throughout the country. The result, as we know by now, has been the involvement even of law enforcers – from the highest to the lowest levels — in extrajudicial killings, as unearthed by the ongoing House Quad Committee hearings.

But the previous administration is now also being exposed as having encouraged the proliferation of Philippine Offshore Gaming Operators (Pog-ogs) that lawmakers found are notorious for various online scams and other criminal activities, such as torture, kidnapping for ransom and murder.

In fact, online scammers have managed to swindle Filipinos of an estimated \$8.1 billion, or nearly P460 billion, in the past year alone.

That's the disturbing conclusion of a recent study by the Global Anti-Scam Alliance (Gasa), a non-profit group.

Consider this: The estimated losses are equivalent to 1.9 percent of the country's gross domestic product. On average, each Filipino victim lost \$275, or about P16,000, to scammers, noted the study, titled "The State of Scams in the Philippines 2024."

About 39 percent of surveyed Filipinos had lost money to scammers. Only 3 percent of the victims were able to recover their losses, while 78 percent tried but failed.

The study also found that 67 percent of the respondents had dealt with scams at least once every month. It also noted a rising trend as half of the respondents said they had encountered more scams in the past 12 months.

The study revealed that about 85 percent of the scams were delivered via text messages, which have risen by 10 percent since last year. Text scams usually trick unsuspecting victims into clicking suspicious website links by offering fake job opportunities and lottery winnings, among others.

The links lead to fake portals where users will be asked to input sensitive and personal information such as bank account details, phone number and address. From there, hackers can take over one's bank and e-wallet accounts to steal money.

"Filipinos often fall for scams due to attractive offers, acting hastily, with many victims admitting uncertainty about the legitimacy of the offers but choosing to risk it anyway. Still, around 41 percent of the respondents said they double-checked the legitimacy of the links to avoid falling victim, especially if the offer was too good to be true.

"Scams in the Philippines have reached an alarming level," the Gasa report concluded. It's time, we think, for law enforcement agencies, as well as the internet service providers, to closely collaborate and come up with ways to deter scammers from taking advantage of the gullible and the naïve

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Cavite...

nan Jaro and Sixth District Board Member Kerby Salazar, accepted the award with pride and gratitude, recognizing Cavite's proactive efforts to make the province an ideal place for businesses of all sizes. The award not only celebrates Cavite's ongoing support for local and international enterprises

but also underscores its dedication to building a resilient economy.

Under Cavite's forward-thinking leadership, the province has embarked on ambitious infrastructure projects to support its rapidly growing economy. New road networks and advancements in digital infrastructure are

helping Cavite stay connected and accessible.

The conference, celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, was organized by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI). With discussions, exhibits, and showcases of best practices from around the country, the event emphasized the importance of strong partnerships between businesses and local governments. Cavite's recognition as the Most Business-Friendly LGU was one of the conference highlights, underscoring

the province's dedication to becoming a leading destination for business and innovation.

For Cavite, the recognition reflects not only the hard work of its leaders but also a deep-rooted commitment to making the province a place where people and businesses can flourish. As Cavite builds on this achievement, it continues to set the bar for other LGUs, paving the way for a brighter, more sustainable economic future for all Filipinos. - CK. Torres

GSIS...

safe and reliable financial option at their fingertips," GSIS President and General Manager Wick Veloso said.

Once approved, funds are credited within three days.

If any member requires assistance in using the GSIS Touch mobile app, the GSIS dedicated customer service is available to assist 24/7. Please call the GSIS Contact Center at 8847-4747

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(Metro Manila) or 1-800-8-847-4747 (Globe and TM subscribers) or 1-800-10-847-4747 (Smart, Sun, and TNT subscribers).

For more information about the MPL Lite program and other GSIS' product offerings, please visit the GSIS website at www.gsis.gov.ph, follow the GSIS Facebook page (@GSIS.PH), email gsis-cares@gsis.gov.ph or contact the numbers provided in the website.

MEDIA AS A SHAPER

Media has the power to shape our thoughts and views on the world. But with this power, we have to ask, does it truly help us understand, or is it gently controlling our minds? In today's Rapidly changing world, telling real facts from smart persuasion is more challenging than ever.

Media has the power to shape people's thoughts and influence society's behavior. It brings people together through news, government updates, and important information, helping them understand the world around them. Media can inspire and motivate people to take action on relevant issues, creating positive or negative changes.

With this power comes a great responsibility. If the media or those who control it spreads false or biased information, it can lead to confusion and divide society.

Many people use the media to share reliable information and promote products in ethical ways, while others use it as a tool for propaganda, especially during election periods, to manipulate public opinion.

Political candidates often use media to gain exposure and highlight their achievements through paid advertisements, which is an acceptable campaign practice because it is transparent and paid for.

Media companies and organizations must follow ethical principles and serve the public by providing informed, unbiased news. They have a duty not to manipulate people's minds but to allow them to think freely about the news content.

They should avoid using graphics that could skew the content and refrain from adjectives that might shift people's perspectives. The original content should remain unchanged to avoid promoting specific political figures unfairly.

Some media outlets, however, promote political allies because they receive payment for doing so.

Media organizations are established to act as watchdogs over the government, monitoring corruption and keeping officials accountable. However, some news organizations misuse this role, using the media to help corrupt politicians mislead the public.

As a guide in society, the media's true purpose should be straightforward, it should be to educate, not to control. People deserve truthful information, free from prejudice, so they can reason independently and make wise decisions. Unbiased media is essential in maintaining democracy in a country.



Timeless Magic is Forever! EK celebrates 29 years with a spectacular anniversary show

Enchanted Kingdom, the first and only world-class theme park in the Philippines, presented a night of magical storytelling, enchanting performances, and a timeless fireworks exhibition show to thousands of guests during its 29th anniversary celebration last October 19 in Santa Rosa, Laguna.

The Timeless Magic Anniversary Show featured world-class performances from OPM singer-songwriter Zack Tabudlo, OPM gem Janine Berdin, and powerhouse dance crew G-Force. EK's homegrown talents — the ladies of Victoria's Way, gents of Kingsmen, and EK Circle of Artists — brought nostalgia to the festivities with their rendition of iconic EK songs. EK's P-pop girl group SMS also charmed the crowd with their performance of their upcoming single, Meant 2 Shine.

The theme park's timeless character Eldar the Wizard, along with Princess Victoria and Madeline, accompanied the audience in this spectacular evening of fun and entertainment.

Towards the end of the night, Eldar brought the magic to the sky with the new Timeless Magic Fireworks Exhibition Show. With the flick of his wand, dazzling lights burst into the sky in symphony to the tune of Timeless Magic, EK's 29th anniversary theme song composed and sung by SMS. Timeless Magic is now available for streaming and download on Spotify, YouTube Music, Apple Music, Amazon Music, as well as on other social media channels.

Beyond the Timeless Celebration

October is just the beginning of EK's celebration of 29 years of providing magical experiences and memories that last a lifetime!

EK's 29th Anniversary Chairman and Integrated Marketing Division

Head Nico R. Mamon shared that the pioneering theme park is committed to serve timeless experiences to its multi-generational guests, leading up to its 30th year.

To make the most out of the holiday season, EK is now open five days a week, and every day starting December 15 until the first week of January.

Get into the holiday spirit with EK's recently opened Food Fiesta Bazaar. Located at the Cultural Village's Agila Grounds, enjoy an array of Filipino and Korean street foods, fresh fruits, juices, hot meals, and delectable snacks.

This November, kids and the young-at-heart are in for a treat with EK's Halo-ween event! Feel the Filipino festive cheer as we bring back the proudly locally-made giant Parol and Christmas Tree. Embrace the magical spirit of the holidays with our Christmas shows and Christmastime Parade.

Lastly, get the perfect gift ideas to your loved ones as we launch our holiday e-catalogue. Bring home the magic with the newest set of EK merchandise like the Eldar Pop, Twin Princesses Rag Dolls, the six-piece set EK Christmas Baubles, and many more.

New ride and upgraded attractions
EK also shared that a new ride will be coming soon. The new family thrill ride will surely bring fun and excitement to guests with its exhilarating ride movement. The Rialto, a 4D motion simulator theater, will also start to feature a new film called Happy Family: Next Level at the end of October.

And most recently, EK opened its newest gated attraction, the Midway Mirror Maze. Guests will step into a world of illusions, twists and turns as they navigate the labyrinth of mirrors and lights. Perfect for adventurers, the Midway Mirror Maze attraction promises a fun and immersive experience for guests of all ages.

Magical Partnership
EK and Coca-Cola Beverages Philippines Inc. (CCBPI) have renewed their partnership for another five years, continuing 13 years of bringing magical moments together.

"We are honored and grateful to celebrate

Enchanted Kingdom's 29th anniversary with this significant milestone. At Coca-Cola, we are committed not only to refreshing the Philippines with our great beverages, but also to delivering timeless magical moments for Filipinos — a mission we proudly share with the entire Enchanted Kingdom family. On behalf of everyone at Coca-Cola, we look forward to many more years of growing our partnership and creating memories that will last a lifetime," says Chris Pesigan, CCBPI Commercial Vice President.

Since the beginning of this timeless partnership in 2012, the beverage company and the world-class theme park

have made their mark as partners with the establishment of the iconic Coca-Cola tunnel welcoming guests at the entrance of the thrilling Space Shuttle rollercoaster ride.

The Timeless Magic Anniversary Show is made even more magical with our event partners, UMG Philippines and Coca-Cola. The following brand sponsors also extended their support for EK's 29th anniversary celebration: Bounty Fresh, Dove Body Wash, Dove Deo, Surf, Tony & Jackey, Chippy, Cloud 9, Hello! Desserts, Piattos, C2, Acacia Hotel, ACT II, ByeBye-FEVER, Ceelin Gummies, Dayzinc, DITO Telecommunity, Easy Life, Ellite Ads, Eurotel,



fruitree, Fulitech, Galway Light Skin, Hawk Bag, Hunt's, King Sue, Maya, McCormick, Lucky Me Mi Goreng, Nina's Arts Enterprise, Nutri10Plus, Sip Plus Electrolyte Drink, Sip Purified Water, Yobick, Poten-Cee Plus, Philadelphia, Baby Flo, Cleene, Mediplast, Rhea, Reyes Barbeque, Tiny Buds, Tulip, and White Flower.

For more information about this celebration and more of EK's timeless magic, visit our Press Room at <https://www.enchantedkingdom.ph/ek-press-room/> and EK's official social media accounts @enchantedkingdom.ph for Facebook and Tiktok, and @ek_philippines for Twitter and Instagram.

DOST CALABARZON Presents iSTART Project to LGU Angono for Enhanced Local Development

ANGONO, RIZAL (August 1, 2024) — The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) CALABARZON, led by Engr. Francisco R. Barquilla III, Assistant Regional Director for Technical Operations, and Dir. Fernando E. Ablaza, Provincial S&T Director of DOST PSTO Rizal, initiated a courtesy visit with Angono Municipal Mayor, Hon. Jeri Mae E. Calderon, and her planning officers on August 1, 2024.

The visit aimed to introduce the "Innovation Science and Technology for Accelerating Regional Terchnology-Based Development" (iSTART) Project to LGU Angono. iSTART seeks to integrate science, technology, and innovation (STI) into local development plans, such as the Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) and Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP). This will help Angono strengthen its development initiatives by identifying gaps and incorporating relevant STI components.

During the meeting, ARD Barquilla provided a brief overview of iSTART and its connection to the Smart and Sustainable Communities Program. He emphasized that iSTART's primary goal is



to assist LGU Angono in crafting its own STI Plan, potentially during the workshop series or the mid-term review of their existing CDP. Mr. Patrick Isaiah Abarra, Project Technical Assistant of DOST CALABARZON, further elaborated on the iSTART project background, pilot sites, and technical aspects, including how iSTART aligns with CDP/CLUP through a designated operational framework.

ARD Barquilla also outlined the next steps for LGU Angono if they decide to participate in the iSTART Project. He clarified that DOST will be covering the workshop series, while the LGU will be responsible for providing the venue and meals. Additionally, DOST can



Mega at 49: Celebrating a Legacy of Growth and Dedication

For 49 years, Mega Prime Foods Inc. (MPFI) has been a source of pride for Filipinos by producing world-class brands. Since its inception, the company has been committed to uplifting the lives of Filipinos through affordable and nutritious food. This unwavering commitment to excellence has solidified Mega Prime Foods' reputation as a leading name in the food industry, making it a beloved household brand across the Philippines.

"Kailangan pangalagaan natin ang sustansya at nutrisyon ng mga Pilipino. Kasi kung hindi tayo, sino pa?" as shared by Marvin Tiu Lim, Chief Growth and Development Officer of Mega Prime Foods Inc.

On June 1, 2024, Mega Prime Foods celebrated its 49th anniversary. This milestone was marked by the presence of the company's dedicated employees from all departments of various business units, alongside the Executive Committee, Michelle Tiu Lim-Chan, Chief Executive Officer; Marvin Tiu Lim, Chief Growth and Development Officer; Mark Tiu Lim, Chief Spiritual and People Officer; Malcolm Tiu Lim, Chief Technical and Innovations Officer; and the company's founders, Chairman William Tiu Lim and Vice Chairwoman Marylou Tiu Lim. Their collective efforts have been instrumental in Mega's continued success.

"Siguro, not everyone knows, but it's tough



Michelle Tiu Lim Chan, CEO and President of Mega Prime Foods, expressed her heartfelt gratitude to the Mega employees for their dedication and unwavering support, acknowledging their crucial role in the company's success.

to keep a company alive for 49 years."

Mega Prime Foods has been at the forefront of innovation, continuously expanding and exploring various categories. Recently, ahead of their celebratory milestone, Mega made a significant acquisition of Jimm's Coffee Mix, marking its entry into the powdered drinks market. This strategic move, combined with relentless hard work and dedication, un-

derpin the company's ongoing success and growth for nearly five decades now.

"We wouldn't be here without the support of our people. Over these 49 years, we want to thank everyone who has worked with us, our Mega Dream team. You made it happen. Without you, all of this wouldn't be possible. This is a heartfelt truth." Michelle Tiu Lim Chan, CEO and president.

Moving forward,



The employees from the Mega Distribution Center at Valenzuela during Mega Prime Foods' 49th anniversary celebration



The builders of Mega Prime Foods Inc. during the company's 49th anniversary celebration



The founders of Mega Prime Foods, Chairman William Tiu Lim and Vice Chairwoman Marylou Tiu Lim, delivering their speech at the company's 49th anniversary celebration

Mega will continue to adapt to ongoing changes. Despite inevitable challenges, Mega remains committed to growth and development, striving for a better future. "Change is constant, and we need to adapt no matter how long the company has been around. Changes will come and go continuously, and I assure

you that we will grow and develop toward a better future in Mega," Marvin Tiu Lim, Chief Growth and Development Officer.

As we approach our 50th anniversary, Mega Prime Foods remains steadfast in its dedication to our founding principles while looking back to the foundational years and

embracing a future full of promise. Mega will continue to be the home of quality brands that enhance the lives of Filipinos worldwide, just as we have since the beginning. Our commitment to excellence and innovation ensures that we will keep making a positive impact for generations to come.



The Alpha business unit, Mega Manufacturing plant during Mega Prime Foods' 49th anniversary celebration