

PHILHEALTH JOINS FIGHT AGAINST TB AND HIV, REITERATES BENEFIT PACKAGES DURING HEALTH MEETING



PhilHealth took part in the 4th National Health Sector Meeting organized by the Department of Health (DOH) held last October 28 to 30 in Dapitan City, Zamboanga del Norte. Multi-sectoral efforts to combat TB and HIV, specifically strategies to improve health care delivery and financing, were the discussed during the meeting.

PhilHealth's Konsulta Package, which includes coverage for laboratory tests such as chest x-ray - essential in early detection of TB and effective management of respiratory illnesses, was highlighted in the event. Members and their beneficiaries can register in any Konsulta Package Provider (KPP) of their choice and can avail of services and annual benefits amounting to ₱1,700 per beneficiary.

Apart from this, the Corporation also has an outpatient Tuberculosis - Directly Observed Treatment Short-course (TB-DOTS) benefit package of ₱5,200 that members can avail of at any PhilHealth-accredited TB-DOTS center.

PhilHealth also promoted its OHAT (Outpatient HIV/AIDS Treatment) package among the participants. The benefit covers HIV/AIDS patients for their outpatient consultations, laboratory tests, and anti-retroviral therapy (ART). The annual package of P39,000 not only provides financial relief, but better outcomes for those affected with HIV/AIDS.

These benefit packages aim to ease financial burdens associated with TB treatment to ensure patients receive necessary care without worrying about health care costs – manifesting PhilHealth's commitment to supporting health care providers and patients through definitive financing. The strategies formulated during the meeting have the potential to significantly contribute to the fight against TB and HIV/AIDS, promoting healthier communities. END

ADVISORY

PhilHealth

PhilHealth payment now available on the GCash App

Effective November 6, 2024, PhilHealth members can now pay their premium contributions on their mobile phones through the GCash App.

Using the GCash App is so easy and convenient with these steps:

1. Members will have to open the app.

2. Click "Bills".

3. Select "Government" in the category.

4. Look for and select "PhilHealth" in the list of billers.

5. Input your bill details.

6. Review data inputs and

7. Pay premium.

For the complete list of Accredited Collecting Agents, log on to <https://www.philhealth.gov.ph/collecting-agents>

Chief Executive Officer, PhilHealth

President and Chief Executive Officer

November 15, 2024

METRO PACIFIC TOLLWAYS COPR. ANNOUNCES NEW LEADERSHIP FOR KEY BUSINESS UNITS

Pangilinan-led Metro Pacific Tollways Corporation (MPTC) today announced a strategic leadership change to strengthen its focus on operational excellence and robust financial management. Effective immediately, the new set of officers — NLEX Corp Chief Finance Officer Ma. Teresa O. Wells, Metro Pacific Tollways South (MPT South) Vice-President for Finance Elnora D. Rumawak, and Metro Pacific Tollways Mobility Corporation (MPT Mobility) Vice-President for Finance Angel L. Carbo — will assume leadership of their respective business units as Officers-in-Charge. They will oversee the companies' financial strategy, guide fiscal priorities and lead various critical initiatives.

After decades of dedicated service, NLEX Corp. President and General Manager J. Luigi Bautista, MPT South President and General Manager Raul L. Ignacio, MPT Mobility President and General Manager Roberto "Bobby" V. Bontia, and MPTC Chief Human Resources Officer Baby Lea M. Wong have announced their retirement.

This management realignment follows closely on the heels of MPTC's newly appointed President and Chief Operating Officer, Arrey A. Perez, to ensure the seamless execution of operational initiatives.

"The decision to elevate financial leadership at this juncture reflects our direction to ensure the subsidiaries are positioned for continued growth and aligning them with MPTC's broader goals, as we work to deliver 5-star service to our motorists," said Perez. To support Perez at the Group level, MPTC management has brought in Luis S. Renon as its new Chief Finance Officer, leveraging his expertise to enhance the company's fiscal position. Renon previously served as Senior Vice President for MVP-owned PLDT where he led its internal audit division.

MPT South Communication and Stakeholder Management

Integrated Communication

corpcomm@mphsouth.com

02 8539 3888 | 0919 081 4750

MPT South Management Corporation

MPTS Hub, Brgy. Alapón II-B, Imus City, Cavite

www.cavitex.ph | www.calax.com.ph

@caviteXpressway | @officialCALAX

MPT SOUTH

CAVITEX

CALAX

DISCLAIMER: This email message and accompanying attachments or data may contain information that is confidential. If you are not the intended recipient, you are notified that any use, alteration, dissemination, distribution or copying of this message or data is prohibited. If you received this email in error, please notify us immediately by return email and delete all copies of this message and attachments from this system. This representation is made that this email is free of viruses. Virus scanning is recommended and is the responsibility of the recipient. Thank you.

ISSN NO. 3028-1954

STRAIGHT NEWS

PUBLISHING

TODAY'S NEWS AND BEYOND

VOL. II • NO. 22 • Nov 27 - Dec 3, 2024 • P 10.00

CA CONFIRMS REMULLA AS DILG CHIEF; CSC CHAIR ALSO GETS NOD

Page 2

BACOR CITY EXTENDS HELPING HAND: MAYOR STRIKE B. REVILLA LEADS DISTRIBUTION OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE



COUNTRY'S UNEMPLOYMENT RATE DOWN TO 3.7% IN SEPTEMBER 2024- PSA

GSIS LAUNCHES NEW LOAN PROGRAM FOR MEMBERS

CAYETANO REITERATES CALL FOR DIRECT, SUSTAINABLE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO FILIPINO FAMILIES

PAG-IBIG FUND'S ASSETS BREACHED P 1 TRILLION

LEE DEMANDS URGENT UHC AMENDMENTS FOR BETTER HEALTH BENEFITS, LOWER MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS



# CA CONFIRMS REMULLA AS DILG CHIEF; CSC CHAIR ALSO GETS NOD



Department of the Interior and Local Government Secretary Jonvic Remulla (center, upper row) poses for a photo with members of the Commission on Appointments after his confirmation at the Senate session hall in Pasay City on Wednesday (Nov. 20, 2024). Remulla replaced Benhur Abalos who will run for senator in the 2025 midterm polls. (PNA photo by Avito Dalan)

The Commission on Appointments (CA) on Wednesday approved the ad interim appointment of former Cavite Governor Juanito Victor "Jonvic" Remulla as secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG).

CA Majority Floor Leader Luis Raymund "L-Ray" Villafuerte Jr. moved to recommend the confirmation of Remulla, formally joining his brother, Justice Secretary Crispin Remulla, in the Cabinet of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.

Remulla reiterated his plan to streamline the police organization. "We have 153 generals, and a lot of them are redundant. And I think we've had consultations, we've been talking to them, and

I think we can streamline this down to maybe less than 100 as of current," Remulla said. Remulla also said he intends to address some questions on the computation of the internal revenue allotment (IRA).

"I think everyone here who has served in local government sees a great question mark every time an IRA is passed down to a province," he said.

President Marcos appointed Remulla as DILG chief last October, replacing Benjamin "Benhur" Abalos who will run for senator in the 2025 mid-term polls.

The CA also confirmed the appointment of Marilyn Barua-Yap as the chairperson of the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

## GSIS.....

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 ₱5,000 to ₱50,000 (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 accessi-

ble 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 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

## STRIKE...

Bacoor City, November 18, 2024 - Mayor Strike B. Revilla, along with the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWD), spearheaded the distribution of financial assistance to 900 Bacooreños today at the Bacoor City Hall Main Lobby. This initiative, part of the City Government's ongoing efforts to provide support to those in need, focused on providing medical assistance, burial assistance, and other essential aid.

The program, which was organized by the Office of Mayor Strike

B. Revilla through the CSWD, received support from Team Revilla, the Sangguniang Panglungsod led by Vice Mayor Rowena Bautista Mendiola, Senator Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr., Cong. Lani M. Revilla, and Cong. Bryan Revilla of the Agimat Partylist.

Mayor Revilla personally oversaw the distribution, emphasizing the City Government's commitment to helping its citizens overcome challenges and improve their quality of life.

"This financial assistance is a testament

to our commitment to providing a safety net for our Bacooreños," said Mayor Revilla. "We believe that by working together, we can build a stronger and more compassionate community."

The distribution of financial assistance is part of the City Government's broader social welfare program, which aims to address the needs of vulnerable individuals and families. The program is funded by the City Government of Bacoor, demonstrating its commitment to providing essential support to its constituents.

From Page 1

## CAYETANO...

Senator Alan Peter Cayetano on Wednesday reiterated his call for providing direct, sustainable financial aid to Filipino families, aiming to close gaps in the current targeted assistance system.

During the first day of plenary debates on the proposed 2025 budget with the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) on November 6, 2024, Cayetano pointed to the effectiveness of providing P10,000 per family, a strategy he used during the pandemic to provide relief.

"As you know, I've personally advocated P10,000 per Filipino family. We did that during the pandemic. Towards 2021, I personally felt na kailangan ng additional ayuda," he said.

"So theoretically, we can actually give P10,000 per family. In fact,

we can give 20 [thousand pesos] if it's P500 billion and we have 27 [million families]," he added.

The discussion followed the statement of Senator Grace Poe, as the Chairperson of the Committee on Finance, highlighting the allocation of P591 billion in the 2025 budget for ayuda or aid.

Cayetano noted, however, that the government's preference is for targeted assistance, which he said benefits mainly those with the right connections or those living near government offices.

"The answer last year is we'd rather have it targeted. Ang problema sa targeted, if you do not have the right padrino, the right access to media or hindi mo katabi y'ung regional office, hindi rin napunta sa poorest of the poor [ang ayuda,]" he said.

"The answer last year is we'd rather have it targeted. Ang problema sa targeted, if you do not have the right padrino, the right access to media or hindi mo katabi y'ung regional office, hindi rin napunta sa poorest of the poor [ang ayuda,]" he said.

Senator Grace Poe agreed with Cayeta-

no's call for more comprehensive support, acknowledging that some of the most vulnerable sectors are often overlooked under the current system.

In his remarks, Cayetano also expressed concern that the poorest of the poor may still be left out by the existing structure and advocated for a shift toward a more inclusive and sustainable form of assistance that will empower families beyond temporary relief.

"So let me just put that on the table. At what point do we stop increasing yung ayuda and start increasing yung programs that are really for teaching people to fish?" he said.

"We'll always need some form of ayuda. But how do we do the balance? Maybe it's time to start that discussion if it's not being discussed already," he added. PR

From Page 1

# EK GIFTS FILIPINOS WITH TIMELESS MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS



Celebrating its 29th year anniversary, experience the timeless magic of the holidays with a grand spectacle of music, harmony of lights, unlimited rides and EKciting attractions only at Enchanted Kingdom — the first and only world class theme park in the Philippines!

Timeless Magic of Christmas

On November 23, Saturday, witness the grand kickoff of the holiday festivities here at EK with our Timeless Magic of Christmas event.

Get into the festive mood and join Eldar the Wizard and friends across the Park's themed zones during the vibrant Eldar's Moonlight Parade. Dance under the melody of dazzling lights and festive holiday music at the

Eldar's Brooklyn Symphony. Be enchanted by the lighting ceremony of the unique Enchanted Christmas Tree, adorned with the sparkling EK Storybook Characters decors. Sing along to classic Filipino Christmas songs playing at EK's 22-foot Grand Parol, created by renowned Pampanga lantern maker Eric Bondoc Quiwa.

Groove with powerhouse dance crew G-Force, and don't miss out world-class Filipino music talent with the internationally-renowned De La Salle Santiago Zobel (DLSZ) Rondalla as they serenade us with their enchanting performance of Christmas carols.

EK's homegrown talents, SMS, Victoria's Way and the Kingsmen, will also be there to spread

the magic through a series of spectacular musical performances.

And finally, to cap off the night, create more lasting memories with the Timeless Magic Fireworks Show to the tune of EK's 29th anniversary theme song composed and sung by our very own P-Pop girl group SMS.

Homegrown EK Talents and Weekend Carols

This December, embrace the magical spirit of the holidays with our Christmas shows.

EK is set to showcase our homegrown talents through the play A Very Timeless Christmas featuring Eldar the Wizard, Princess Victoria, Princess Madeline, and SMS. Victoria's Way and The Kingsmen, together with SMS, will serenade guests with Christmas Songs at EK's bandstand. Also, watch out for the Christmastime Parade and enchanting live carols every weekend this December!

A Merrier Timeless Christmas EKsperience

Christmas is made even more merry here at EK!

Give in to your holiday cravings at EK's Food Fiesta Bazaar located at the Eldar's Village. Enjoy an array of Filipino and Korean street foods, fresh fruits, juices, hot meals, and delectable snacks.

Stay tuned for our upcoming holiday food offerings this December! EK is working our magic in creating a delightful selection of seasonal treats to make your EK adventure extra special.

Eldar the Wizard continues to bring enchantment in the sky with the Timeless Magic Fireworks Show on all Saturdays of 2024. This special display of lights gives a spectacular twist to one of EK's traditions, the Sky Wizardry Fireworks Show, which will still illuminate the night sky during all of the Park's open days except Saturdays.

And lastly, don't forget to feel the magic of love with your family and loved ones at EK's 4D motion stimulator Rialto - with its new featured film Happy Family: Next Level.

So save the date for your next EK getaway as we open six days a week starting December 3 to 15. We will also be open every day starting December 16 until the first week of January.

For more information about this celebration, available promotional offerings 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.

From Page 6



Nakisaya sa napakagandang Christmas Tree Lighting sa Robinsons Imus kamakailan ang buong Team AJAA sa pangunguna nina Mayor Alex L. Advincula, Vice Mayor Homer T. Saquilayan, Vice Governor Shernan Jaro at ang Tanzang Luma Child Development Center, at kanilang mga pamilya. Ang mga maningning na ilaw ay sumisimbolo ng pag-asa, pagkakaisa, at pagmamahal na hatid ng diwa ng Pasko.

## FCAS SA QUEZON, LAGUNA IPINAKILALA ANG MGA PRODUKTONG NIYOG AT CACAO SA AGRILINK 2024



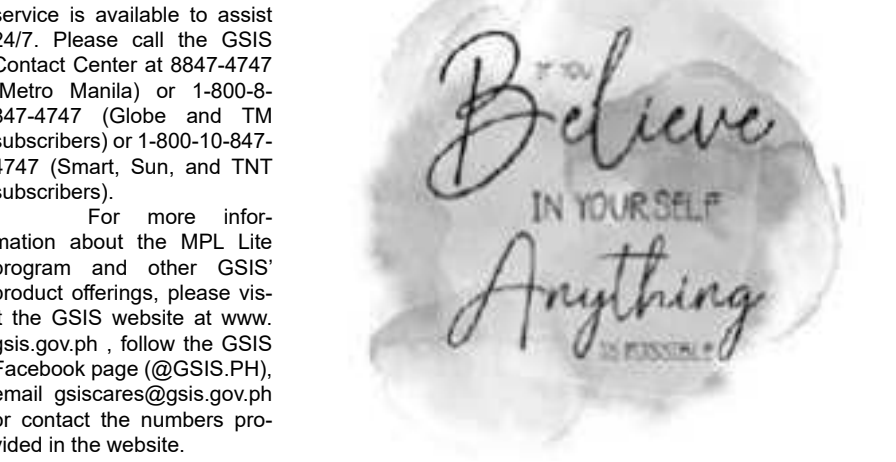
Ipinakilala ng dalawang farmers and fisherfolk cooperatives and associations (FCAs) ang kanilang mga produktong virgin coconut oil at cacao sa AgriLink 2024, ang pinakamalaking agribusiness trade fair sa bansa na ginanap sa World Trade Center, Pasay City, May temang "The Best of Philippine Agri to the World," ang AgriLink ay naglalayong isulong ang mga lokal na mga produktong agrikultural sa mas malalawak na merkado tunga sa pag-unlad ng ekonomiya at pagpapaluy ng produksyon ng pagkain sa bansa.

Ang mga nasabing samahan ay ang Quezon Federation and Union of Cooperatives (QFUC) mula sa Pagbilao, Quezon at ang Luisiana Cacao Grower Producers Cooperative (LCGPC) ng Luisiana, Laguna. Parehong namamahala ang mga samahan ng mga proyektong negosyo mula sa Department of Agriculture — Philippine Rural Development Project na nagkakahalaga ng ₱79,047,462.24. Sa pamamagitan ng mga ito, nakakapag-proseso sila ng mga ani upang maging pangbentang mga produkto na may mas mataas na halaga.

Ibinenta ng mga FCAs ang mga sumusunod na produkto: virgin coconut oil (VCO) massage oil, edible VCO, tablea, dark chocolate, choco oatmeal balls, at cacao tea. Nakabenta ang QFUC ng ₱14,355.00 at ang LGPC naman ay nakabenta ng ₱21,825.00. Bukod sa marketing, nakipag-ugnayan rin ang mga samahan sa mga potensyal na suppliers, partners, at resellers na umaabot hanggang Camarines Norte at Davao.

Pinasalamatan ng mga grupo ang Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office IV- Calabarzon Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division sa pagimbata sa kanila sa aktibidad. Anila, ang kanilang mga naging karanasan ay nagsisilbi sa kanilang inspirasyon upang pagandahin pa ang kalidad ng kanilang mga produkto at paghusayin pa ang kanilang marketing. Kasalukuyan, inasikasog ng mga grupo ang kanilang aplikasyon upang makakuha ng License to Operate mula sa Food and Drug Administration. Kapag nakula na nila ito, plano ng mga grupo na magbenta na rin ng produkto sa mga online platforms. PR

From Page 1



555...

Belinda said by default, members can use the SMS-OTP to log in to their accounts. A six-digit passcode will be sent to their SSS-registered mobile every time they log in. It will be used to verify their identity in the My.SSS Portal. Thus, this calls for im-

mediate updating of their contact numbers.

"Members can use TOTP as their preferred authentication method. They must enter the verification code to the Google Authenticator app to access their My.SSS account," Belinda explained.

She added that implementation of these two authentication options for the My.SSS Portal bolsters the security feature of the online portal, mitigating the risks associated with unauthorized access and potential fraud. PR

## BIGGER AND BETTER: BOTICARD DOLORES BRANCH MOVES TO NEW LOCATION



BotiCARD President Ms. Rosenda Aquino (5th from right, middle row) alongside BotiCARD Operations Director Ms. Florife Reynido (6th from right, middle row), BotiCARD Cluster Manager 2 Mr. Jame Rachel Yaneza (7th from right, middle row), BotiCARD Cluster Manager 4 Ms. Merrie Joie Prenciona (4th from left, middle row), Pharmacy Assistant OIC BCI Dolores Branch Ms. Khristine Joy Aureus (4th from right, middle row), attended the relocation of the branch along with other officers and staff.

BotiCARD Dolores branch officially relocated its building on July 15, 2024, in support of its mission to provide quality, affordable, and accessible healthcare and personal care products and health services to Filipino families.

"As we combat the cycle of poverty while improving the health and wellness of people, we will continue to advocate for quality affordable medicines, health supplies, hygiene products, and selected supplements. It is a basic right every Filipino should enjoy," said BotiCARD President Rosenda

Aquino. As part of the branch's relocation, free medical consultation, dental extraction, blood pressure monitoring, and other freebies like a 28% discount are also provided for those who attended the event.

"Through the range of BotiCARD services, we hope to reach more communities to provide the quality products and services they deserve," Aquino added.

The branch's new building is located at Marquez Street, Barangay Bagong Anyo, Dolores, Quezon.

Established in 2011, BotiCARD is a member institution of CARD Mutually Reinforcing Institutions (CARD MRI), a group of institutions sharing the same goal and objective of poverty eradication and improving the lives of Filipino families. As of June 2024, BotiCARD has 20 pharmacies and serves more than 2 million clients across the country.

To know more about BotiCARD, Inc., visit its website at [www.card-mri.com/boticard/](http://www.card-mri.com/boticard/) and the official Facebook page, @boticardOfficial. PR



## DTI Rizal Joins in Strengthening Kadiwa ng Pangulo Program in Antipolo



November 7, 2024, ANTIPOLO CITY - Key government agencies convened today in a collaborative meeting to enhance the Kadiwa ng Pangulo (KNP) program implementation in Antipolo City. The inter-agency coordination aims to ensure the program's success in providing accessible and affordable basic commodities to consumers.

Representatives from the Department of Agriculture (DA), Depart-

ment of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), and the Local Government Unit of Antipolo City participated in the strategic planning session. During the meeting, the agencies established clear roles and responsibilities to ensure smooth program implementation.

The Kadiwa ng Pangulo program is

scheduled to be implemented in Antipolo City on November 20, December 4, and December 18, 2024. Residents can look forward to a diverse selection of products as the program will feature authorized sellers offering both food and non-food items. This initiative is designed to create direct market linkages between producers and consumers, effectively reducing prices of essential goods while ensuring fair returns for local farmers and producers.

## Profriends Welcomes Its Newest Kapitbahay



Dimples Romana, our newest kapitbahay!

Property Company of Friends, Inc. (Profriends) celebrates its 25th anniversary by welcoming its newest Kapitbahay. This November,

Profriends will introduce a video that portrays how a nurturing community can bring out the best in an iconic character.

"We are very honoured to have Dimples Romana as our newest Kapitbahay! Beyond her

teleserye character, we feel that her genuine and warm personality fits who Profriends is," explains Profriends brand manager KC Ordonez. "We have always been committed to develop more than just houses and condomini-

cont. on page 7

## EDITORIAL: Doing good by our Mary Janes

Mary Jane Veloso, on death row in Indonesia, is coming home. To be sure, she would still be a prisoner, but at least she would serve out the rest of her sentence in a Philippine jail.

Veloso was arrested in Yogyakarta in April 2010 for possession of 2.6 kilos of heroin. She was sentenced to death in October of the same year. Subsequently, the appeals court and Indonesia's Supreme Court upheld the death sentence.

Veloso insisted she knew nothing about the drugs she carried, and the person who roped her into the scheme was later on charged with illegal recruitment, human trafficking, and estafa. The appeals continued even as Veloso was already transported to Nusa Kumbangan Island, known to some as "execution island." Her execution was scheduled but was suspended at the last minute.

In January this year, the Philippines received a commitment from outgoing President Joko Widodo that the case would be reviewed. His successor, President Prabowo Subianto, made good on that commitment. Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. announced Wednesday that the two countries had reached an agreement to bring Veloso home, even as there is no written agreement yet as of press time Thursday.

Veloso's family is expectedly elated. Mary Jane is not the first among them to venture outside the country to search for better income opportunities. She will likely not be the last. Across the country, and for decades, Filipinos have been shedding the com-

fort and safety of home to try their luck at working overseas. The rewards could be substantial enough to improve their families' quality of life back home, but as we know too painfully and too well, the risks are likewise great.

It is a good development that a Department of Migrant Workers has been created, even as it betrays a resignation to the fact that labor migration will be a fixture in our society for the foreseeable future. Acknowledging the situation at hand, the government must not lose steam in its efforts toward the constant education, awareness, and care of departing workers so that they may not find themselves in situations where they could not defend themselves. If we are not able to protect our people all the time, we should be earnest in enabling them to protect themselves.

Saying migrant workers are heroes may be a cliché, but it's also still true. We only need to see them in a nuanced light such that each person has a story, as well as strengths and vulnerabilities, that will likely determine how they fare in their stints abroad.

It is not all bad, too – there are many success stories among our migrants. But the not-so-good developments, especially when our citizens run into conflict with the law of their destination countries, or when their rights are trampled on, or when their safety is threatened, should serve as a constant reminder that we could do better in doing right by our migrants.



### EDITORIAL OFFICE

CAVITE OFFICE : Blk. 5 Lot 69 Barcelona Ph. 2, Buhay Na Tubig, Imus, Cavite  
Mobile No. ----- 09556586520 / 09164731260  
TIN NO. ----- 237756418-000

Email ad: [newsstraight172@gmail.com](mailto:newsstraight172@gmail.com)  
[soberanmavic@gmail.com](mailto:soberanmavic@gmail.com)

### EDITORIAL BOARD

Publisher : Maria Victoria S. Soberano  
Editor-In-chief : Dominador "RAEL" Soberano  
Marketing Manager : Kristina Marres  
Legal Consultant: Atty. Evelyn R. Dominguez

### ADVERTISING RATES

COMMERCIAL ----- P200/col.cm  
LEGAL/NOTICES ----- P160/col.cm  
Font Size:

Heading : 10  
Body Text : 8  
Space : Single space

Published Weekly by: STRAIGHT NEWS PUBLISHING

## The Voice of the Voiceless

Who would you depend on when your own administration is the one preventing you from telling the truth?

During Marcos Sr.'s martial law, the mainstream media were forced by the government to stop circulating. All news had to pass through government control before publication. Often, news was manipulated to ensure that nothing critical of the regime was released.

But the job of the media is to hold power accountable. The people trust the media to uncover the government's wrongdoing, prevent corruption, and expose unethical actions of leaders and government employees.

As they take on the crucial role of advocating for society, shaping public ideas, and acting as a watchdog for democratic principles, suppressing the media allows the government to act freely, even if it leads to corruption.

However, as long as people believe in justice, the media will continue to fight back, despite all efforts by the Marcos administration to suppress them.

New media organizations began to emerge from school campuses. Marcos Sr. described them as "mosquito press" because just like mosquitoes, they can be a major annoyance but not too deadly.

Campus journalists played a vital role in attaining democracy under Marcos Sr.'s dictatorship. By publishing underground issues, they exposed human rights violations that the administration was hiding from the public.

They proved they could serve as an alternative media force not only within the school community but in society as a whole.

Like mainstream media, campus journalists became victims of numerous human rights violations.

In the current state of campus press freedom, reports from 2023 to 2024 reveal 206 violations, including censorship, withholding of funds, adviser interference, harassment, red-tagging, and government monitoring. These violations disrupt the operations of campus publications.

These challenges are not new. According to a 2010 report from the College Editors Guild of the Philippines (CEGP), over a thousand campus press freedom violations had already been documented, despite the enactment of the Campus Journalism Act of 1991. Violations included harassment of student journalists, editorial interference, administrative intervention, looting or withholding of publication funds, and outright censorship of editorial content.

Ironically, the Campus Journalism Act, which was meant to support and protect campus journalists, has often been used against them.

Despite the lack of a law that genuinely protects campus press freedom, the CEGP continues to advocate for the rights of student journalists.

CEGP is actively involved in efforts to improve protections, such as participating in conversations during World Press Freedom Day.

In a recent community chat, they strongly criticized media censorship and administrative intervention in campus publications, which often pressure editorial teams to control their content. They have also pushed lawmakers to review and strengthen the Campus Journalism Act of 1991 (RA 7079), recognizing its limitations in safeguarding the rights of campus journalists today.

The fight for press freedom continues, as the voice of the voiceless stands strong. Despite censorship and threats, campus journalists and advocates keep pushing for truth and justice, showing that no amount of suppression can stop the fight for democracy.

KEVIN GOROSPE

## PSA...

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna (PIA) – The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said the country's unemployment rate continues to drop as more industries take part in various job fairs conducted locally.

According to PSA data, over 1.89 million Filipinos are estimated to be unemployed. This was lower than the estimated number of unemployed persons at 2.26 million in September 2023 and 2.07 million in August 2024.

To the government's initiative of generating more jobs for the people, local governments have been consistently holding job fairs to open more career opportunities.

The City Government of Calamba through its Information,

Investment, Promotions and Employment Services Office (IIPESO) offered a wide array of employment opportunities across diverse industries with its first Grand Trabaho Expo.

During the event, Calamba City Mayor Roseller Rizal emphasized the importance of an expo in the city known for its economic activity and industrial growth.

"We aim Calamba to remain an economically active city by offering our citizens employment opportunities and of course, it is still part of our program to have a sustainable program for the people of Calamba and its neighboring municipalities," Rizal said.

To the government's initiative of gen-

cont. on page 4

PSA...

erating more jobs for the people, local governments have been consistently holding job fairs to open more career opportunities. The unemployment rate in Calamba stands at nearly nine percent, prompting local authorities to organize job fairs like the Grand Trabaho Expo which featured over 80 companies that set up booths to conduct on-the-spot interviews, making it a convenient experience for both job seekers and companies.

Moreso, the event aims to match job seekers with potential employers, reducing the gap between available skills and industry needs.

The expo produced 602 new hires on the spot. For Carla Ojeda, the first hired-on-the-spot was thankful as the event will help her process her requirements with ease.

From Page 3

PAG-IBIG...

Pag-IBIG Fund reached new heights as the agency breached the P1-trillion mark in Total Net Assets in August 2024, reflecting a 14% growth versus September last year. The growth is largely driven by higher net revenues, increased member savings, and strategic management of its investment portfolios, top officials announced.

"We have just celebrated the National Shelter Month and we are proud to share that Pag-IBIG Fund has breached the P1-trillion mark in assets. This serves as a testament to our commitment of fulfilling our mandate. Not only can we assure that our members' fund is prudently managed, it also means that we are ready and able to finance our Filipino workers' dream of home ownership. This remains consistent with the directive of President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. to provide quality and accessible social benefits to our countrymen," said Secretary Jose Rizalino L. Acuzar of the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD), who serves as chairperson of the 11-member Pag-IBIG Fund Board of Trustees.

As of the end of September 2024, Pag-IBIG Fund's fiscal performance continues to grow, recording a Total Net Assets of P1.02 trillion – a P125.74 billion increase compared to September last year. The agency's gross income reached P62.09 billion, while net revenues amounted to P39.54 billion – higher by 17% compared to P33.66 billion in September 2023.

Member savings as of the third quarter of 2024 amounted to P98.72 billion, an increase of 48% from P66.73 billion collected within the same period last year. This double-digit growth was due to the increase in both the Pag-IBIG Regular Savings and Pag-IBIG MP2 Savings.

Buoyed by the implementation of the Maximum Fund Salary(MFS) increase early this year, total collections for the Pag-IBIG Regular Savings amounted to P49.86 billion as of September 2024, while MP2 voluntary savers remitted P48.86 billion collectively, a year-on-year increase of 58% and 39%, respectively.

The agency also reported a net unrealized gain of P320 million, a reversal from the P2.28

billion net unrealized loss in September 2023. This movement is attributed to improved market valuations of investments measured at fair value through other comprehensive income, further strengthening the agency's financial position.

Pag-IBIG Fund Chief Executive Officer Marilene C. Acosta remarked that members will benefit the most from the agency's strong performance.

"Ang panalo po dito ay ating mga miyembro. With our strong fiscal standing, we continue to provide our members with the best benefits and programs, to help them prepare and secure a better future, not just for themselves, but also for their families. They are assured that the money that they entrust with us is not just well accounted for but continues to grow. We remain steadfast in our commitment to help improve the lives of the Filipino workers," Acosta said.

Acosta emphasized that the growth in Pag-IBIG Savings does not only translate to available funds for the members but also helps the Philippine economy grow.

"As a money mul-

From Page 1

tiplier, every P100 saved by members and employers in Pag-IBIG Fund can potentially help generate P1,800 in the economy through future loans and infusion of cash into the economy. Of course, this can be easily achieved if our members and partner-developers continue to avail of our housing loan, development loan, and cash loan programs. For those whose loans have already been approved, on-time repayment is also important so that we can continue the financial cycle. In the end, whatever revenues that Pag-IBIG generates, it will still benefit our members through the crediting of dividends," she added. Aside from showcasing proper fiscal management through its exponential growth in assets and revenues, the Commission on Audit also rendered an unmodified opinion on the fairness of the presentation of Pag-IBIG Fund's 2023 financial statements, in accordance with applicable financial reporting frameworks. It is the 12th consecutive unqualified/unmodified opinion, which the Fund has received from the commission, since 2012.

From Page 1

in PhilHealth benefits, which was implemented last February 14. These include increasing the PhilHealth benefit package for hemodialysis from P2,600 to P6,350 per session and from 90 sessions per year to 156 sessions annually, as well as the increase in breast cancer treatment coverage from P100,000 to P1.4M.

gan para maabot ang pinaka-layunin ng UHC," Lee said. "Napakaraming pera ng PhilHealth, dapat ilaan ito di lang sa pagpapal-awak ng mga benepisyo para sa mga Pilipino, kundi pati na rin sa pagpapababa ng kontribusyon na isa ring mabigat na pasanin ng marami nating kababayan," he added.

A staunch health advocate, Lee is at the forefront of holding the Department of Health (DOH) and PhilHealth accountable for its commitments to radically increase health benefits and for fighting for free diagnostic scans, free prescription eyeglasses and at least 80% coverage for cancer treatments and heart procedures, among others.

Earlier, the solon from Bicol welcomed the issuance of a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) by the Supreme Court, halting the fourth and last tranche of PhilHealth fund transfer to the National Treasury, as there can be more funds for the radical expansion of PhilHealth benefits, which he has been consistently pushing for since last year.

Lee successfully fought for the 30% increase

SUSTAINABILITY  
FOR MSMEs



In the photo are (from left) Rene Meily of Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation, Timothy Mark Daniels of SM Investments, Roberto Batongbacal of the Makati Business Club, Melissa Vergel de Dios of PLDT and Smart Communications; Fatima Yasmin of the Asian Development Bank, U.N. Deputy Secretary-General Mohammed, Go Negosyo's Concepcion, Dandan Chen of The World Bank Group, Bayo Manila's Lagon, and Jaime Urquijo of Ayala Corp.

Go Negosyo founder Joey Concepcion met with UN Deputy Secretary General Amina Mohammed last October 29, 2024, together with members of the private sector and international finance institutions to mobilize support and financing to accelerate progress on Sustainable Development Goals.

Joining them

was 2023 Go Negosyo Inspiring Filipina awardee Anna Marie Lagon of Bayo Manila Inc., a Philippines-based MSME that has committed to sustainability through various

Practices, such as designing to minimize waste, using sustainable materials, carbon offsetting, and repurposing waste materials, and working with local communities.



DOST-CALABARZON to conduct  
CEST Forum 2024 during this  
year's National S&T Week in CDO



As part of the 2024 National Science, Technology, and Innovation Week (NSTW) celebration, the Department of Science and Technology (DOST)-CALABARZON will conduct the CEST Forum 2024: Green Innovation Towards an Inclusive and Sustainable Green Economy on November 27, 2024, at the Limketkai Center, Cagayan de Oro City.

The forum aims to emphasize the critical role of science, technology, and innovation (STI) in facilitating the transition to a sustainable and inclusive green economy. It seeks to enhance participants' awareness and understanding of the transformative potential of STI in addressing challenges

and creating opportunities within the green economy.

The event will feature prominent speakers from diverse fields, each bringing a wealth of expertise and experience in green innovations:

- Dr. Richard S. Abendan, Chief of Party, U.S.-Philippines Partnership for Skills, Innovation, and Lifelong Learning (UPSKILL) Program
- Dr. Rowena Cristina L. Guevara, Undersecretary of the Department of Energy
- Ms. Judit Alday-Mangmang, Business Development Manager, Batangas Egg Producers Multipurpose Cooperative
- Mr. Michael S. Caballes, Chief

Farmer and Owner, Bukid Amara Agri Farm

The Community Empowerment Through Science and Technology (CEST) Forum is one of DOST's flagship initiatives aimed at delivering sustainable development to communities across the nation. By leveraging targeted S&T interventions, CEST addresses five critical areas: Livelihood, Health and Nutrition, Environmental Protection and Conservation, Education, and Disaster Risk Reduction and Management.

Interested individuals can explore the full NSTW General Program of Activities at <https://bit.ly/3CLdDPv> and register via the NSTW app, available for download on the Play Store. PR

Cavite farmers received seedlings  
and fertilizers from OPA



On November 13, 2024, Cavite's agricultural community marked a significant milestone with the distribution of seedlings and fertilizers to 135 farmers from 10 associations across the province. The initiative, led by the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist, aimed to support and empower local farmers in their agricultural endeavors. The event was graced by Vice Governor Sheridan Jaro, who directly engaged with the beneficiaries, and Ms. Anna Pamela Nova, OIC-Provincial

Agriculturist, who conducted a brief orientation and gathered updates on the farmers' current practices and challenges. The beneficiaries represented organizations such as the Cavite Farmers Federation, Coffee Farmers Association, Cacao Farmers Association, Banana Council, Mango Growers Association, Si-pag (High Value Crops), Rural Improvement Club, 4H Club, Provincial Agriculture and Fishery Council (PAFC), and Corn Growers Association. Each farmer received a

package that included assorted vegetable seeds, one bag of complete fertilizer, one bag of urea, and four bags of compost. Vice Governor Jaro reaffirmed the provincial government's steadfast commitment to advancing Cavite's agricultural sector and supporting its farmers. The event's success was also credited to the leadership and dedication of Mr. Rodel Vincent T. Bae, OPG Chief-of-Staff and former OIC-Provincial Agriculturist, whose efforts ensured the program's smooth execution. - R. Dones



Governor Athena Tolentino fronted the Women's Welfare Program in the City of Dasmariñas, providing Php 2,000 in cash assistance to 2,000 women. Showing their support to the initiative, the Governor was joined by Mayor Jenny Barzaga, 4th District Board Members Nickol Austria and Jun Dela Cuesta, as well as members of the Sangguniang Panlungsod.

SSS URGES MEMBERS TO UPDATE THEIR  
CONTACT INFORMATION; IMPLEMENTS  
SMS-OTP IN THE MY.SSS PORTAL

The Social Security System (SSS) today called on its members to immediately update their contact information, especially their mobile numbers as the state-run pension fund implemented Multi-Factor Authentication schemes during logins to the My.SSS Portal.

SSS Officer-in-Charge Voltaire P. Agas said that SSS took a proactive step by incorporating an authentication process whenever its members log in to their My.SSS account, adding, "It will enhance the security of the SSS online portal."

Agas said the passcode will be sent to the member's registered mobile numbers in the SSS records whenever they access their My.SSS accounts. He added that outdated or inactive contact information can be a hurdle when logging into

the portal. "Updating your contact info ensures you get the codes to verify your identity when you sign in to your online account." Hence, we are urging our members to update their contact information," Agas added.

Updating via online or branch offices Agas, who is also the SSS Executive Vice President for the Branch Operations Sector, said that members can update their contact information online or at any SSS branch offices.

"If you have an existing mobile number in the SSS database but no longer use that phone number, you can update your details online through your My.SSS account," he explained.

He said that members without a mobile number in the SSS records can update their

contact information. They must submit a Member Data Change Request form to any SSS branch office nationwide.

Furthermore, he noted that members who struggle with the My.SSS Portal should visit the e-centers in the SSS branch offices. "We have established e-centers manned by SSS personnel who are ready to assist and guide you in using the My.SSS Portal."

Authentication options

SSS Senior Vice President for Information Technology Management Maria Belinda S. San Jose said that SSS members have two options for multi-factor authentication to access their My.SSS account. These are SMS One-Time Password (SMS-OTP) and Time-based One-Time Password (TOTP).

cont. on page 6