

ENCHANTED KINGDOM HYPES UP 30TH ANNIVERSARY WITH NEW RIDE; CEO, FIRST FILIPINO TO RECEIVE PRESTIGIOUS INTERNATIONAL AWARD



EK President and Chairman Cesar Mario O. Mamon

Enchanted Kingdom, the first and only world-class theme park in the Philippines, officially welcomed its newest family thrill ride, EKlipse, with an enchanting and immersive launch event this March 30.

As one of EK's inaugural gifts for their 30th anniversary this 2025, EKlipse offers an exciting new adventure for Filipinos, marking the first of its kind in Southeast Asia. Guests will enjoy the heart-pounding thrill aboard this ride with its unpredictable rotating movement and the visual illusion it creates every time its arms pass each other.

Catering even to pre-teens and teenagers, this newest attraction is sure to foster even more shared experiences and create enchanting memories for EK's multi-generational guests with their loved ones.

EKlipse Grand Launch

The EKlipse Grand Launch featured spectacular performances from rising P-pop group GAT, The Clash Season 6 grand champion Naya Ambi, and up-and-coming Filipino boy group AJAA.

EK's very own P-pop group, SMS, also captivated the audience with their newly released single, Meant 2 Shine, along with their latest music, the theme song of EKlipse. This song supplements the overall experience of the new ride, as it plays throughout its entire



EK Eclipse Marquee revealing

Adding a magical twist to EK's classic tradition, the night was topped off by the Sky Wizardry Fireworks Display featuring the vibrant colors of EKlipse.

As a special treat, Eldar the Wizard also extended the park's operating hours on Sunday to give the guests more chance to try the family thrill ride as well as EK's other attractions.

The introduction of EKlipse exemplifies the theme park's continuous pursuit in bringing new world-class and enchanting experiences for all Filipinos.

The Inspirational Man Behind EK's Magic

EK also announced that its president and chairman, Cesar Mario Mamon, won the highly-coveted Inspiration

Award in the Asia-Pacific (APAC) Region, as revealed by the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) last March 25. He is notably the first Filipino to ever receive this recognition from the premier global attractions trade association.

Through this prestigious award, IAAPA honors the visionary individuals who championed innovation in the amusement parks and attractions industry in their respective areas.

Currently in his third decade in the integrated attractions industry, Mr. Mamon has made a long-lasting mark not only in the country but also in Asia.

Aside from being the founder of the leading theme park in the Philippines, he served as the chairman of IAAPA in 2013, making him the first Asian to be elected for this



EK EKlipse Wide Shot



EK EKlipse SMS

esteemed role.

Later, he became the founding head of the Philippine Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (PhilAAPA).

Mr. Mamon is set to receive the Inspiration Award at the IAAPA Honors 2025 which will be held in Germany from April 28 to 30.

For more information and updates regarding these and EK's other upcoming events and offers, visit <https://www.enchantedkingdom.ph> and EK's official social media accounts @enchantedkingdom.ph for Facebook and Tiktok, and @ek_philippines for Instagram.

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Farmers in Cavite Empowered Through Leadership and Livelihood Seminar

PBBM, PINASINAYAAN ANG GRAINS TERMINAL AND TRADING PROJECT NG DA-PRDP AT SIDCSA BATANGAS CITY



Pinangunahan ni presidenteng Ferdinand Marcos Jr. ang inagurasyon ng Sorosoro Ibaba Development Cooperative Grains Terminal and Trading enterprise subproject sa Brgy. Simlong, Batangas City. Ang proyektong ito ay pinondohan sa ilalim ng Department of Agriculture – Philippine Rural Development Project ng gobyerno at ng World Bank.

Ang proyektong

itong nagkakahalaga ng Php 278,304,617.07, ay may kakayanang magimbak ng 12,000 metric tons ng yellow corn grains na gagamitin sa paggawa ng pakain sa mga baboy at manok. Magsisilbi itong pangunahing merkado ng mais na magpapalakas sa produksyon nito at magpapababa sa presyo ng pakain sa baboy at manok, maging karne at itlog.

Sa kanyang mensahe, binigyang papuri ni

presidente Marcos Jr. ang pagtutulungan ng SIDC, gobyerno, ng World Bank, at ng pribadong sektor na nagbunga ng isang malaking proyektong makakatu-long sa sektor ng agrikultura.

"Kung nagawa ng SIDC, magagawa din ito ng ibang cooperatives sa bansa. Ating patatagin ang ugnayan ng cooperatives, private sectors, at mga magsasaka. Dahil sa

VARIOUS GOVERNMENT AGENCIES WORK TOGETHER IN PROMOTING FILIPINO CULINARY TREASURES

Local farmers, fishermen, and workers in Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are celebrated during the national kickoff of Filipino Food Month for their crucial role in assuring high-quality and nutritious food is served anywhere in the country.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. along with Department of Ag-

riculture (DA) Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, and Quezon Governor Angelina "Helen" DL. Tan personally visited each booth at the Quezon Provincial Capitol Grounds, Lucena City on Friday, April 4 to witness the diverse culture, food delicacies, products that Quezon province offers.

The month of April every year is de-

clared as "Buwan ng Kalutong Pilipino" or "National Food Month" in line with the Presidential Proclamation No. 469.

On September 8, 2021, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was formalized between DA, NCCA, DOT and the Philippine Culinary Heritage Movement (PCHM) to spearhead the annual celebration of FFM.

STRIKE-A-PRIZE: MAYOR STRIKE B. REVILLA PERSONALLY HANDS OUT PRIZES TO WINNERS IN BIRTHDAY GIVEAWAY



Bacoor City, March 31, 2025 - Mayor Strike B. Revilla, the dynamic leader of Bacoor City, continued his birthday month celebrations today by personally handing out prizes to winners of his "Strike-A-Prize" raffle draw at the Strike Gymnasium.

The raffle, held as part of Mayor Strike B. Revilla's birthday month festivities, saw a wide range of prizes awarded, including E-Bikes, cellphones, a 55" Smart TV, bicycles, and other exciting gifts. Mayor Revilla, known for his personal touch and dedication to his constituents, made a point of personally presenting the prizes to the lucky winners. This follows the awarding of the grand prize, a brand new Toyota Vios 2025, which was also personally presented by Mayor Strike B. Revilla on March 24th.

Congratulations to all the winners of the "Strike-A-Prize" raffle! We especially congratulate Ms. Mary Grace Rentoria Salgan from Barangay Queens Row East, who won the second prize of a brand new E-Bike. The event was a testament to Mayor Strike B. Revilla's commitment to giving back to the community and celebrating his birthday with those he serves.



10 practical health tips to help you start off towards healthy living in 2025.

1. Eat a healthy diet

Eat a combination of different foods, including fruit, vegetables, legumes, nuts and whole grains. Adults should eat at least five portions (400g) of fruit and vegetables per day. You can improve your intake of fruits and vegetables by always including veggies in your meal; eating fresh fruit and vegetables as snacks; eating a variety of fruits and vegetables; and eating them in season. By eating healthy, you will reduce your risk of malnutrition and noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke and cancer.

2. Consume less salt and sugar

Reduce your salt intake to 5g per day, equivalent to about one teaspoon. It's easier to do this by limiting the amount of salt, soy sauce, fish sauce and other high-sodium condiments when preparing meals; removing salt, seasonings and condiments from your meal table; avoiding salty snacks; and choosing low-sodium products.

On the other hand, consuming excessive amounts of sugars increases the risk of tooth decay and unhealthy weight gain. In both adults and children, the intake of free sugars should be reduced. WHO recommends consuming less than 5% of total energy intake for additional health benefits. You can reduce your sugar intake by limiting the consumption of sugary snacks, candies and sugar-sweetened beverages.

3. Reduce intake of harmful fats



Fats consumed should be less than 30% of your total energy intake. This will help prevent unhealthy weight gain and NCDs. There are different types of fats, but unsaturated fats are preferable over saturated fats and trans-fats. WHO recommends reducing saturated fats to less than 10% of total energy intake; reducing trans-fats to less than 1% of total energy intake; and replacing both saturated fats and trans-fats with unsaturated fats.

The preferable unsaturated fats are found in fish, avocado and nuts, and in sunflower, soybean, canola and olive oils; saturated fats are found in fatty meat, butter, palm and coconut oil, cream, cheese, ghee and lard; and trans-fats are found in baked and fried foods, and pre-packaged snacks and foods, such as frozen pizza, cookies, biscuits, and cooking oils and spreads.

cont. on next issue

PBBM...

ating pagsasanib-pwersa, nakita natin na posible palang matupad ang ating hangarin na matulungan ang ating kababayan at kaya nating magbigay ng oportunidad sa ating mga magsasaka para maabot ang kanilang pangarap," aniya.

S a m a n t a l a , hinikayat naman ni DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. ang lahat na muling mamuhunan sa agrikultura upang makatulong sa seguridad ng pagkain sa bansa. Aniya, pinapalano ng DA na magpondo ng mga proyekto tulad ng sa SIDC at nanatiling bukas at handa ang DA sa pagtugon sa mga pangangailangan ng mga magsasaka at mangingisda sa bansa.

Kasama rin sa aktibidad si Mio Takada, World Bank Senior Agriculture Economist. Aniya, bukod sa pagpapataas ng produksyon ng mais, makakatulong rin ang proyekto sa pagpapalago ng potensyal ng mga komunidad upang maitaas ang antas ng kanilang pamumuhay.

"This project will create numerous job opportunities, providing stable employment for many individuals in the region. It will foster a sense of community and collaboration among local farmers, encouraging them to work together and share best practices. This collective effort will lead to the development of a more resilient and sustainable agricultural sector, capable of withstanding challenges and adapting to changing conditions," ani Takada.

Pinasalamatan naman ni SIDC Chairman Dr. Angelito Bagui ang gobyerno, World Bank, at iba pang mga naging katuwang nila sa proyekto. Nagpapasalamat rin ang Batangas City Corn Growers Association, isa sa mga suppliers ng SIDC dahil malaki ang magiging tulong ng proyektong ito sa kanila. Ani Grace Faraon, pangulo ng samahan, pinapalano na nilang dagdagan ang kanilang mga taniman upang mas marami silang maibentang mais sa SIDC.

Dumalo rin sa ak-



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Farmers...

In a joint effort to enhance leadership and entrepreneurial skills among farmers, the Office of the Provincial Cooperatives Development Officer (OPCDO) and the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist (OPA) successfully conducted a Community Capability Development Seminar themed "Empowering Leaders: Strengthening Leadership Skills for Key Officers of Farmers' Association in Cavite", held at the OPCDO training area on March 26, 2025.

As part of the provincial government's commitment to fostering livelihood and entrepreneurial growth, the seminar brought together 30 presidents and officers of Farmers' Association Federations from various cities and municipalities in Cavite. OPCDO Officer-In-Charge Ms. Rizalie Pinpin-Enero and OPA Of-

ficer-In-Charge Engr. Anna Pamela Nova warmly welcomed the participants, reaffirming the provincial government's unwavering support for the agricultural sector.

Ms. Sheryll H. Loyola, Livelihood Division Head of OPCDO, underscored the crucial role of strong and visionary leadership in driving the success of farmer organizations. She emphasized that by enhancing their leadership abilities, farmer leaders can inspire their communities, promote innovation, and create sustainable opportunities for agricultural growth.

Through lectures, workshops, and experience-sharing sessions, the participants gained valuable insights on leadership, personality development, and business strategies to enhance their organizational leadership skills. - R. Tanael

DSWD IV – A. CAVITE STRENGTHEN SUPPLEMENTARY FEEDING PROGRAM THROUGH REVIEW AND EVALUATION WORKSHOP

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Field Office IV-A, in partnership with the Provincial Government of Cavite through the Office of the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Officer, successfully conducted a three-day Review and Evaluation Workshop from March 12 to 14, 2025 to strengthen the implementation of the Supplementary Feeding Program (SFP) across the region.

The initiative brought together nutritionists, social workers, and child development officers from various local government units (LGUs) to enhance transparency and efficiency in the Enhanced Partnership Against Hunger and Poverty (EPAHP) and the SFP.

The workshop focused on procurement processes, program management, and nutritional impact, providing a platform for sharing best practices and innovative strategies to improve feeding programs in local communities.

Ms. Myrna A. Maglahus-Lamug (EPAHP Regional Program Coordinator, DSWD IV-A) and Ms. Carol Mae P. Martinez (SFP Nutritionist-Dietician III, DSWD IV-A) shared insights on hunger alleviation strategies and program implementation.

Mr. Diego M. Salas (Budget Officer, Quezon Province / TSO GPPB Recognized Trainer) provided key insights into community-driven procurement processes for greater transparency and efficiency.

Best practices in local fund utilization and program monitoring were highlighted by Ms. Emilia Tiasim (MSWDO, Ibaan, Batangas), Ms. Daisy Garcia (SFP Focal, Batangas City), and Ms. Lerma M. Laylo (CSWDO, Lipa City).

On the final day, participants explored the SFP Case Management Model (SFP-CM), led by Mr. Ser August Perpetua (Social Welfare Officer II, DSWD IV-A), and received an orientation on the Harmonized Electronic License and Permits Sys-

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COMMISSARY INSIDE LANCASTER NEW CITY, LAUNCHED



Profriends sister company, Macrest Consumer Goods, Inc. (MCGI), recently launched its commissary with the intent to become the leading supplier of fresh, high-quality, and affordable meals. The venture will initially provide essential services to various food businesses such as canteens and cafeterias.

"By handling the challenging tasks of sourcing, preparation, and cooking, Macrest allows entrepreneurs to focus on delivering top-notch service and growing their businesses," says Macrest Commercial Business Unit head Rocky Lapid. "Envisioned to be one of the largest commissary kitchens in the country, we are committed to source fresh, high-quality ingredients from trusted farms, prepare meals in full compliance with HACCP and FDA standards, implement a sustainable, cost-efficient logistics system, and continuously explore and apply the best industry practices," he added.

Recent studies show that food is the largest household expense and the opening of the commissary kitchen is a timely event to help reduce the cost of living for Filipino families. MCGI is poised to be able to sell to retail consumers in the coming months, and provide Lancaster New City residents and those in other Profriends projects with a viable and palatable alternative.

In photo during the commissary inspection are (from left to right) mother company Maplecrest Group Inc.'s head of Strategic Land Investment and Management Jocelyn Guzman, Chairman Guillermo Choa, President Aster Sotto, and Macrest Business Unit head Rafael Lapid.

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DTI, CMDC CONTINUE TO PROVIDE CAPACITY BUILDING SEMINARS ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Calamba City — The Department of Trade and Industry - Laguna Provincial Office (DTI-Laguna) collaborated with the Calamba Manpower Development Center (CMDC) and conducted a seminar tailored for the trainees of Bread and Pastry Production, Food and Beverages NC II, and Culinary Arts on February 20, 2025, held at the Sectoral Affairs Conference Room, Calamba City Hall, Laguna.

In the seminar conducted, DTI-Laguna Negosyo Center Business Counselors (NCBCs) from Calamba, Rizal, Cabuyao and Victoria served as the resource speakers to a total of 60 potential micro, small, and medium enterprises.

The seminar featured comprehensive dis-

cussions on the following topics: Food Safety, Pricing and Costing, Google My Business, Packaging and Labeling Requirements, Entrepreneurship and Consumer Education. All topics were able to provide the participants with the tools and knowledge necessary to thrive in their current field. As they are equipped with the essential skills, the training enhances and explores the entrepreneurial opportunities, which will contribute meaningfully to the respective industries.

The program was hosted by Ms. Karen Hazel R. Contreras followed by the introduction of the speakers by Mr. Tonymer Victor L. Castillo. Food Safety was discussed by Ms. Nicole Concejero (NCBC - Rizal), including the basic guide in handling

food that must be safe for human consumption and the hazards to look out during the preparations of their foods. It was followed by Mr. Syruz Reyes (NCBC – Cabuyao City), who then discussed Pricing and Costing. He gave ideas to the trainees on how would they manage their capitals, expenses and prices in the business. The discussion continued to Google My Business by Ms. Alma Arenal (NCBC – Calamba City). She shared tips on how to set-up their business profiles that will increase their online visibility. Afterwards, Concejero then discussed the fourth topic Basic Packaging and Labelling Requirements, wherein she tackled the necessary requirements a food packaging must have if the participants will manufacture



their food products. This topic was followed by the discussion of Mr. Rafael Yuan Gatdula on the topic, Entrepreneurship. He gave the participants what kind of mindset, attitude, and skills needed to succeed as entrepreneurs. The last topic, Consumer Education was discussed by Arenal to help the participants understand consumer laws more deeply, allowing them to protect themselves and their future customers in business transactions. During

the discussion, the participants showed their interest by asking questions to the speakers, which was then answered thoroughly by the speakers.

The program concluded with positive feedback from attendees, who expressed their satisfaction through the Client Satisfaction Form. The program was highly praised by the trainees, who appreciated the relevant and actionable information provided. The enthusiasm for the session was evident, with many

participants expressing a strong interest in future engagement. They specifically requested speakers for the next batches of trainees, highlighting the growing need for comprehensive business education and support from DTI-Laguna. This keen response has paved the way to a sign of a continued commitment to professional development and underscores the valuable role of DTI-Laguna's initiatives in fostering business growth and success (MNCConcejero, DTI-Laguna).

DOST UPSKILL UNIVERSITY OF BATANGAS' FACULTY MEMBERS, RESEARCHERS ON PROPOSAL WRITING



The Department of Science and Technology (DOST)-Batangas, in partnership with the National Research Council of the Philippines (NRCP), capacitated the faculty members and researchers of the University of Batangas (UB) – Batangas City and Lipa City Campuses on research proposal writing, focusing on DOST research priorities, proposal evaluation, NRCP membership procedures, funding development, and research and development (R&D) opportunities, during a seminar held at Tierred Hall, Building C, University of Batangas – Lipa Campus, March 21.

The seminar aimed to equip UB's faculty members and researchers with the necessary knowledge and skills to develop high-quality research proposals, enhance their understanding of DOST's funding opportunities, and encourage participation in national research initiatives. It also sought to foster a culture of innovation and scientific advancement within the university.

Engr. Francisco R. Barquilla III, Assistant Regional Director for Technical Operations of DOST-CALABARZON, discussed "R&D Opportunities and the Regional R&D Agenda," emphasizing the importance of aligning research initiatives with regional development priorities to maximize impact and funding potential.

Mr. Jesse M. Nicavera, Senior Science Research Specialist from the Research Develop-

ment and Management Division of the NRCP, presented "NRCP Research Priority Areas and the Proposal Evaluation Process." He outlined the criteria for proposal assessments and highlighted best practices for crafting successful research applications.

Meanwhile, Ms. Mary Charlotte O. Fresco, also a Senior Science Research Specialist from NRCP, provided an overview of "NRCP Membership and Application Procedures." She encouraged eligible researchers to apply for membership and leverage the benefits of being part of NRCP's research network.

Dr. Aileen H. Orbecido, a professor from the Gokongwei College of Engineering at De La Salle University Manila, conducted a session on "Developing Research Proposals for Funding." She guided participants on crafting competitive research proposals, outlining essential components and strategies to secure grants from various funding agencies.

Ms. Felina C. Malabanan, Provincial

Science and Technology Director of DOST- PSTO Batangas, concluded the seminar with an informative discussion on "DOST Scholarship Programs." She presented available scholarship opportunities, eligibility criteria, and the application process, aiming to encourage faculty and students to take advantage of these initiatives for academic and research advancement.

Hon. Lily Marlene J. Hernandez, University President of the University of Batangas; Dr. Ramon Christian Eusebio, Chair of the Division of Engineering and Industrial Research, NRCP; and Dr. Pastor Arguelles Jr., Director of the Research and Publication Office, University of Batangas – Lipa Campus also graced the activity.

The conduct of this seminar underscores DOST-Batangas, NRCP and the University of Batangas' commitment to strengthening research capabilities, fostering collaborations, and advancing scientific and technological development in the region. PR

GATCHALIAN URGES DOE: KEEP NATURAL GAS PLANT SHUTDOWN ON SCHEDULE

Senator Win Gatchalian urged the Department of Energy to ensure that the maintenance of natural gas plants is on track and a scheduled shutdown of such plants is not extended.

The vice chairman of the Senate Committee on Energy, Gatchalian made the call following the DOE's announcement that

the South Premiere Power Corp. and Excellent Energy Resources, Inc., jointly owned by Meralco PowerGen, San Miguel Global Power, and Aboitiz Power, will shut down the facilities over the weekend.

"We recognize that preventive maintenance is critical to deter unplanned downtime, which adversely affects

government programs, services, and accomplishments. Presenters included Ms. Emelita P. Bagsit, Regional Director of DOST-CALABARZON; Ms. Lyn Fernandez, Assistant Regional Director for Finance and Administrative Services; and Provincial Directors namely, Ms. Gilda de Jesus (DOST CAVITE), Ms. Agnes Mo-

GATCHALIAN URGES UNIFIED ACTION FROM DOJ, BOC, BIR VS. ILLICIT TOBACCO TRADE OFFENDERS

Senator Win Gatchalian urged the Department of Justice, the Bureau of Customs, and the Bureau of Internal Revenue to work together and take decisive action in prosecuting perpetrators of illicit tobacco trade, highlighting the alarmingly low conviction rate in cases filed in court.

"We are losing the fight against the illicit trade of tobacco and cigarettes because we are not prosecuting and not con-

victing enough. Sa prosecution pa lang, talo na tayo and less than 1 % of all seizures result in conviction. That's not positive news for us. Dahil walang natatakot, tuloy-tuloy ang ligaya," said Gatchalian, chairperson of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, at a recently held Senate hearing.

Gatchalian emphasized that the certainty of conviction is a deterrent and thus the need for prosecutors to secure a fa-

vorable decision from the courts. "May nahuhuli nga, pero walang nakukulong," he bewailed.

To increase the rate of conviction, Gatchalian said the DOJ, BOC, and BIR need to adopt capacity-building mechanisms and conduct specialized training for law enforcement personnel to ensure they are equipped with proper knowledge and training in implementing raids and seizures and avoid dismissal of cases due to technicality.

The three agencies should also enhance mechanisms for the preservation and collection of evidence and witness preparation; and strengthen coordination for the proper conduct of planned surveillance, entrapment, and search and seizure operations, he said.

"Itong mga seizures, parang pakitang tao lang. Ultimately, what we want is conviction but that's not happening," he added.

PIA CALABARZON, DOST-CALABARZON hold Kapihan sa Bagong Pilipinas to highlight STI services in the region



PIA CALABARZON, in partnership with DOST-CALABARZON, led the Kapihan sa Bagong Pilipinas on March 25, 2025, at the RD Guerrero Hall, DPITC Building, DOST-PCAARRD. This regional discussion is part of the nationwide "Kapihan" series, and aims to bring governance closer to the people by providing a platform to highlight

government programs, services, and accomplishments.

Presenters included Ms. Emelita P. Bagsit, Regional Director of DOST-CALABARZON; Ms. Lyn Fernandez, Assistant Regional Director for Finance and Administrative Services; and Provincial Directors namely, Ms. Gilda de Jesus (DOST CAVITE), Ms. Agnes Mo-

rales (DOST Laguna), Ms. Felina Malabanan (DOST Batangas), Mr. Fernando Ablaza (DOST Rizal), and Ms. Maria Esperanza Jawili (DOST Quezon).

They engaged with 10 media partners across the region to discuss DOST's efforts in driving innovation, delivering impactful programs, and fulfilling its mandate for regional development.

EDITORIAL: Hear ye, hear ye,

THE climate pattern La Niña, which started to exhale its impact on the Philippines in the latter part of 2024, is expected to persist during the first quarter of 2025. Meaning, this basically agricultural country will have extreme weather events that could cause extensive agricultural damage and worsen food security conditions.

In layman's term, the Philippines, which has been having rain showers every afternoon, may experience a higher chance of thunderstorms and tropical cyclone occurrence. This means La Niña may bring above normal rainfall over some parts of the country during the quarter, with adverse impacts like floods and landslides over vulnerable areas. Given these possibilities we look at the gross production value in the Agriculture market which is projected to amount to US\$29.42-b in 2025, with the annual growth rate of 0.34 percent expected in 2025-2029, resulting in gross production value of US\$29.82-b in

A JOURNEY TO HEALTH AND HOPE

Good health is often considered one of life's greatest gifts, which made Buena Bariring's diagnosis at 18 all the more devastating. The 42-year-old from Cabuyao, Laguna, learned she had Hepatitis B while undergoing a medical exam for a job. The news shattered her hopes—not only did it prevent her from securing the job, but it also exposed her to stigma and discrimination.

Hepatitis B, a liver infection often transmitted from mother to child at birth, infected blood, and sexual activities, is a condition that many live with in silence. While some show no symptoms, others experience fatigue, yellowing of the skin, and abdominal pain. Buena suspects she inherited the illness from her mother, as several of her siblings were also later diagnosed.

Despite the emotional toll, Buena found comfort in an online support group. There, she met people who shared her experiences and challenges, one of whom was Rowena Jordan, who would later become her close friend and business partner. This connection helped her regain her strength and courage to start over.

In 2013, drawing on a skill she learned from her mother, Buena decided to start a weaving

business. She initially obtained a PHP 3,000 loan from CARD SME Bank to start crafting products using dried water lilies.

Inspired by her newfound purpose, she poured herself into her work, and by 2014, Rowena joined her as a business partner. Rowena handled the designs, while Buena brought them to life. Together, they decided to create unique slippers made from water lilies, setting themselves apart from other businesses that used the same material.

Their initial venture into trade fairs was a success. They sold out their products and were motivated to continue investing in their business. However, the pandemic in 2020 dealt a severe blow to their momentum.

The trade fair in March 2020 coincided with the lockdown, leading to significant losses and making it difficult for them to recover their funds. To make matters worse, both of them tested positive for COVID-19, further slowing their recovery.

Despite these setbacks, they pushed forward. At present, they employ five workers assisting them in the process of braiding water lilies.

challenges the Philippines will face include soil degradation, deforestation, and natural disasters.

These are environmental and climate change issues that can harm the sustainability and quality of food products. As a result, fresh and healthy food options may become less available, which can impact consumers. Many have pointed out that farmers must meet the changing needs of our planet and the expectations of regulators, consumers, and food processors and retailers. There are increasing pressures from climate change, soil erosion and biodiversity loss and from consumers' changing tastes in food and concerns about how it is produced. We are glad the government, recognizing that climate change is essentially a global crisis, has enacted the Climate Change Act which provides the policy framework with which to systematically address the growing threats on community life and its impact on the environment as well as agriculture.



Based in Laguna, Buena Bariring and Rowena Jordas decided to restart their lives and focus on their weaving business, which specializes in crafting slippers and bags.

Their products have become popular among Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), who buy them as unique souvenirs to bring abroad.

"Back then, I had no job; now, I am the one employing others. We used to search for opportunities, but now we are the ones creating opportu-

nities for others," she said. Her life has completely turned around. What began as a story of rejection and illness has turned into one of triumph and success. Buena turned the challenges of living with Hepatitis B into stepping-stones toward a brighter future.

Her advice to

others who live with and have overcome Hepatitis B just like them is to keep fighting and dreaming.

"If you want to pursue something, just go for it. What truly matters is the resilience in facing challenges and your commitment to dream big, knowing that better days will come," she concluded.



SM SUPERMALLS HEATS UP

STRAIGHT NEWS PUBLISHING

SUMMER WITH SPORTS FUN!



Runners sprint forward the starting line at the SM Active Hub running activation at SM City Butuan

From sunrise to sunset, MOA Sky is the ultimate playground for everyone.

Sun's out, fun's in! SM Supermalls is turning up the heat with back-to-back festivities that will make this summer season the most unforgettable one yet.

From April 1 to May 31, SM Supermalls is bringing the thrill of sports to you with a lineup of adrenaline-pumping activities for all ages. So, lace up your sneakers and get into summer sports as SM Supermalls transforms into a vibrant hub of energy, non-stop fun, and surprises this summer.

Active Hub
Gather your family and friends and take them to the largest playground for sports enthusiasts – SM Active Hub! SM Supermalls' comprehensive sports program is open to all and features 44 pickleball courts across 21 malls and 14 malls with



Players enjoy an exciting game of pickleball at SM City Cabanatuan, showcasing skill, fun, and friendly competition.

pro-guided marathon clinics at select SM Malls offer a perfect opportunity to hone technique, while mall power walks and senior-friendly fitness sessions ensure fun and wellness for every generation.

Summer E-Games

Gaming enthusiasts, this one's for you! The Summer E-Games brings the thrill of competition to the digital battlefield, where rookie and pro gamers head-to-head in various tournaments. Experience heart-racing matches, score exclusive gaming merchandise, and show off your skills in front of a cheering crowd!

Summer Pet Olympics

For pet lovers, Summer Pet Olympics takes the spotlight with adorable and exciting competitions. A collaborative effort with SM Super Pets Club, this event



Gamers come together for an exciting and action-packed Valorant tournament at SM Megamall's Cyberzone.



Runners fuel their passion for the sport as they hit their stride at SM City Clark's running event



Cyclists enjoying a smooth ride at SM City Clark



[Collage] Let your furry friends dive into summer fun – join the exciting Pet Olympics at SM Supermalls!

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ABOITIZPOWER AIMS TO 2025

Aboitiz Power Corporation (AboitizPower) expects continued progress in 2025, bolstered by its business and operational achievements last year, which saw developments in its ambitious program to grow its renewable energy fleet by three times by 2030.

"AboitizPower remains focused on delivering operational excellence in its power plants, developing a pipeline of new energy capacity, and pursuing opportunities in its distribution and retail business," said AboitizPower Chief Finance Officer Sandro Aboitiz.

The Company cited the 159-MWp Laoag solar; the 17-MW Tiwi binary geothermal; the 45-MWp Armenia solar; and the 173-MWp Calatrava solar — all energy projects that went online in 2024 — as accomplishments in its 10-year growth strategy of adding approximately 3,700 MW of new renewable energy capacity by decade's end.

"The energization of the Armenia and Calatrava solar plants in the fourth quarter were the final touches to AboitizPower's strong performance in 2024," Aboitiz said. "AboitizPower intends to grow its momentum and we are excited to build the next wave of renewable energy projects in 2025 and beyond."

AboitizPower will help contribute to the power supply as the Philippine economy continues to grow in the near term. The Company will drive impact through its portfolio of thermal, renewable energy, energy storage systems, and distribution, as well as from its retail electricity services segment.

"Power plants and power networks are crucial components to powering the nation's development. With the completion of big-ticket transmission projects like the Mindanao-Visayas Interconnection and the Cebu-Negros-Panay Back-

bone, more generated power can be delivered to demand centers," Aboitiz said.

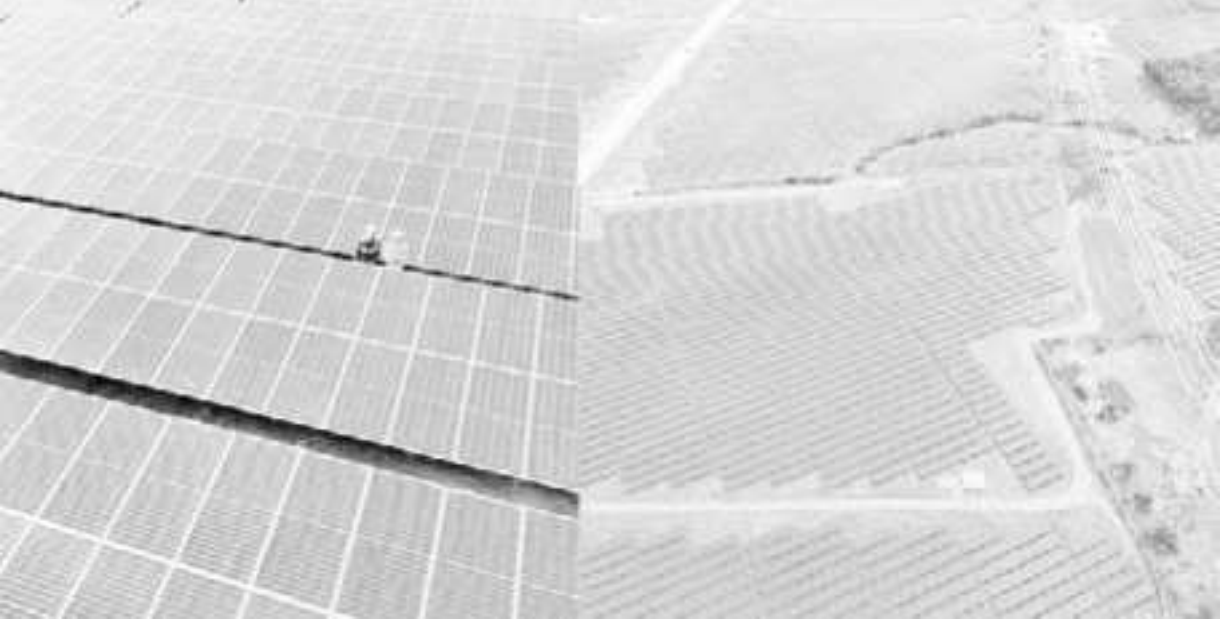
AboitizPower believes in a holistic approach to the Philippine energy transition, requiring all available and viable technologies on the table; from thermal, to renewable, to energy storage. Currently, the Company still has over 1,000 MW of disclosed projects from various indigenous energy sources, while constantly pursuing opportunities in solar, hydro, geothermal, wind, and energy storage systems.

Last year, AboitizPower's Transition Business Group sustained multi-year best-in-class availability and reliability. Through a digital transformation program called "Project Arkangel", which is in partnership with Thai company REPCO NEX Industrial Solutions, AboitizPower aims to transform its thermal power plants into smart power plants, integrating digital twin technologies and asset monitoring systems to predict equipment failures and minimize the number of plant outages.

"The energy transition will require thermal capacities to support variable renewable energy capacities and ensure the affordability and security of our energy system," Aboitiz explained.

In the first nine months of 2024, AboitizPower's distribution utilities observed an increase in energy sales from residential and commercial and industrial customers, growing by 14% and 5%, respectively, year-on-year. This reflects the anticipated increase in electricity demand, a trajectory that will continue on in the decades to come.

Collectively, AboitizPower's EBITDA saw a 12% increase year-on-year to P56.09 billion in the first nine months of 2024. This is attributed to higher generation portfolio margins and the integration of additional capacities, as well as the growth in retail volume and in-



AboitizPower's 45-MWp Armenia solar in Tarlac (left) and 173-MWp Calatrava solar in Negros Occidental (right) make up its fourth and fifth solar power plants in the country to date.

crease in energy sales from the distribution utility business.

For three years in a row, AboitizPower also received a Golden Arrow Award, which marks its compliance with corporate government standards and favorable standing with international best practices. For the 2023

ASEAN Corporate Governance Scorecard, the Company was accorded a 3-arrow recognition. PR

"This award acknowledges our efforts to maintain transparency, accountability, and ethical business standards and is a testament to our team's dedication in upholding the highest standards of

corporate governance," Aboitiz said. "We strive to Transform Energy for a Better World by delivering strong performances across business segments, generating a positive impact in host communities, and minimizing adverse effects to the environment."

AboitizPower

along with the rest of the Aboitiz Group has long upheld ESG strategies — or environmental, social, and governance — in its operations, spanning decades of aspiring and being recognized as role models of environmental stewardship, social responsibility, good governance, and corporate citizenship. PR

Go Negosyo's 3M On Wheels Brings Free Entrep Event to Bacoor



YES, CAVITE MSMES CAN! Cavite-based MSMEs were out in droves as Go Negosyo's popular 3M on Wheels free entrepreneurship mentoring event made its stop in Bacoor, Cavite last March 22, 2025. "There has always been a dynamic entrepreneurship scene in this part of the country," said Go Negosyo founder Joey Concepcion as he thanked the hundreds of active and aspiring entrepreneurs from this town south of the National Capital Region who flocked to the Event Center of SM City Molino.

Bacoor Mayor Strike Revilla sent his message of support through City Government Department Head Katrina Sanchez of the Local Economic Development and Investment Promotions Office. The Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI)—Bacoor was in all-out support, headed by its Vice President, Gloria Silva.

Leading the entrepreneurs in Go Negosyo's signature thumbs-up is Transform Philippines CEO and event host Jordan Patente. Also in photo is content creator and Petite Bakery owner Bianca Pauline Mina, who shared how entrepreneurs can become their brand influencers. Philippine Commission on Women's Rosemarie Rafael and PCCI's Yolly Dela Cruz joined 45 other volunteer-mentors to help advise the MSMEs on how to scale up their businesses.