

Enchanted Kingdom wraps 2024 with recognitions from DOT and DepEd



Gearing towards its 30th year of creating and providing magical experiences and memories that last a lifetime, Enchanted Kingdom — the first and only world class theme park in the Philippines — received the Filipino Brand of Service Excellence (FBSE) Champion Award for Tourism Enterprises from the Department of Tourism (DOT) - CALABARZON.

EK President and CEO Mario O. Mamon together with Head of Learning and Development Ms. Pauline Barreiro received the award during the Tourism Excellence Awards 2024 and the Philippine Tourism Awards Regional Recognition held at the Twin Lakes Hotel, Tagaytay City, December 3.

“Through this very relevant program, we

have been able to provide even more world-class, enchanting, educational and entertainment experiences to our guests of all ages - embodying the unique brand of Filipino service excellence,” Mr. Mamon shared.

As of 2024, EK has completed training 99% of its more than 800 Cast Members (employees) under the FBSE program. Additionally, the premier theme park is planning to extend the said training to its partner agencies and tenants this 2025.

“As we at Enchanted Kingdom prepare to celebrate our 30th anniversary, we shall endeavor to continue our mutual support, partnership and collaboration with DOT especially in CALABARZON to uplift Philippine tourism

service standards locally and globally in the years to come,” Mr. Mamon added.

Partner in Education
Meanwhile, EK has been recognized as one of the long-standing education partners who have shown unwavering support to the Department of Education (DepEd) during the Pasasalamat at Pagpupugay (Partners Appreciation and Recognition Event) on December 16.

The said event celebrates and acknowledges the support and collaborative effort of partners on the various DepEd priority programs in education. EK has been supporting Brigada Eskwela for 10 years now and has helped improve a total of 11 classrooms in various elementary schools in

Santa Rosa City, Laguna.

Magical Year of Tourism Excellence
Beyond creating magical experiences for guests of all generations, Enchanted Kingdom serves a higher purpose of contributing to the growth of the tourism sector and its immediate community.

In August, the Provincial Government of Laguna (PGL) recognized EK’s outstanding achievement and excellence in company operations and management during the 2nd Laguna Stakeholders Business Forum. The local government commended EK’s significant contribution to the economic development and competitiveness of the province.

Additionally, EK has also been recognized by the PGL as an Esteemed Industry Partner

for its valuable contribution to the tourism and industry development of the province during the Laguna Business Summit held in March. The said recognition highlighted EK’s dedication to excellence as proven by prestigious international awards it received such as the Best Retail Merchandise Display from the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) Brass Rings Award.

Good Corporate Citizenship and Fostering Inclusivity

In March, the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) Biñan-West Laguna District recognized EK as the Top 3 Taxpayer, acknowledging EK’s prompt and efficient payment of correct taxes which immensely contributed towards the achievement of the district collection goal for the calendar year 2023. EK was also awarded the Top Taxpayer Amusement Park Category in September during the prestigious Lion Awards for Business of the local government unit (LGU) of the City of Santa Rosa.

And lastly, EK strengthened its commit-

ment to inclusivity as a Mother and Baby Friendly Establishment certified by the LGU Santa Rosa. EK was also recognized as an Autism Friendly Working Environment for individuals with autism spectrum disorder in part of LGU Santa Rosa’s celebration of the National Autism Consciousness Week 2024 in January.

“As we gear towards our 30th Anniversary of creating magical experiences and memories that last a lifetime, all the more that we commit to embracing Diversity, Exclusivity and Inclusivity. Ultimately, we want every guest regardless of gender, religion, culture, disability, and race to enjoy the park and accommodate their special needs in ways we can,” said EK’s Chief Operating Officer Dr. Cynthia R. Mamon.

For more information about these awards and upcoming events and offerings, visit our Press Room at <https://www.enchantedkingdom.ph/ekpress-room> and EK’s official social media accounts @enchantedkingdom.ph for Facebook and Tiktok, and @ek_philippines for Twitter and Instagram.

Mayor Ross Rizal Leads Distribution of Educational Assistance to Students in Calamba City



Calamba City, Laguna — January 10, 2025 — Mayor Roseller “Ross” H. Rizal spearheaded the distribution of Educational Assistance to students from various private schools in a ceremony held at the Jose Rizal

Coliseum. Mayor Rizal emphasized the importance of education in building a brighter future: “Education is one of the top priorities of our CalambAGONG government. Through this program, we aim to help

our youth achieve their dreams and provide a better future for their families.”

The mayor also underscored the inclusivity of the initiative, noting that students from private schools are equally de-

serving of support:

“Just because they are enrolled in private schools does not mean they are financially well-off. Our local government ensures that no one is left behind, regardless of economic status. In Calamba,



everyone is treated equally and included in our journey toward progress.”

The program reflects the administration’s commitment to empowering the youth and fostering a God-centered and Rizal-inspired community, aligning with the city’s vision of equal opportunity and development for all.

(EdjunMariposque)



Vol. I - Series 26 - January 12-18, 2025

Mayor Ross Rizal Tops as Top Performing City Mayor in Laguna According to Social Pulse Philippines

DA-4A, top 1 ng PCAF sa pinakamahusay sa pagsuri ng mga proyektong imprastruktura



Pinarangalan na top 1 ang Constructors’ Performance Evaluation System (CPES) Team ng Department of Agriculture IV-CALABARZON (DA-4A) sa isinagawang Year-End Performance Review ng Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries

(PCAF) noong ikalawang linggo ng Disyembre sa Olongapo, Zambales.

Ang CPES Team ang sumisiguro sa kalidad ng mga proyektong imprastruktura ng Kagawaran kung saan sinusuri ang pagsunod ng mga konstruktur sa plano, disenyo,

at materyales na naaaprubahan.

Pinangungunahan ito ng Standards Regulations and Enforcement Section (SRES) ng Regional Agricultural Engineering Division (RAED).

Binangawan na “Outstanding CPES Im-

plementor” ang DA-4A CPES Team tampok ang sampung ebalwasyon sa pito na proyektong imprastruktura ng Kagawaran simula Hulyo hanggang Disyembre ng taong 2024.

Kabilang sa mga proyektong ito ay mga diversion dam, biosecured



and climate-controlled finisher operation facility, canal lining, agricultural trading center, at Small Water Impounding Project (SWIP), at iba't ibang pang-ig ng rehiyon.

Ayon kay PCAF OIC-Executive Director Julieta Opulencia, ang CPES ay hindi lamang paraan para tingnan ang performance ng mga konstruktur.

Ito ang nagpakita ng dedikasyon ng Kagawaran na magkaroon ng mga imprastruktura na matibay at magtatagal



Editorial

UPDATED TAX CLEARANCE, DAPAT ISUMITE NG MGA GOVERNMENT CONTRACTORS BAGO ANG FINAL SETTLEMENT

Dapat magsumite ng updated tax clearance ang mga government contractors bago ang final settlement ng mga ito.

Ayon kay Commissioner Romeo D. Lumagu Jr. "Part of our commitment to Excellent Taxpayer Service is ensuring that before Government Contractors are paid, they are cleared of any tax liabilities. In this way, the BIR will be able to protect the taxes collected from our hardworking taxpayers against Government Contractors who do not even pay their taxes"

Sa bisa ng Revenue Regulation No. 17-2024 (RR No. 17-2024) ay kailangan na ng mga government contractors na kumuha ng updated tax clearance mula sa BIR bilang katunayan na walang natitira o outstanding na tax liability ang contractor, alinsunod ang income and business tax returns, at bayad ng contractor ang mga karampatang buwis bago magkasundo o magkaroon ng final settlement ang kanilang government contract.

Bago ilabas ang RR No. 17-2024, ay kabilang na ang BIR tax clearance sa mga kailangang ipasa ng government contractor para maging kwalipikado sa proseso ng procurement.

Ang repormang ito ay bahagi ng excellent taxpayer service. Sa pamamagitan ng RR No. 17-2024 ay mas mapoprotektahan ang buwis laban sa mga mapagsamantalang government contractors na hindi nagbabayad ng buwis.

Nakasaad rin sa RR No. 17-2024 na kung masuspinde ang isang kontrata sa gobyerno dahil sa kawalan ng BIR tax clearance ay magkakaroon ito ng tax lien na pabor sa gobyerno.

Mayroon din na Revenue Memorandum Order No. 002-2025 (RMO No. 002-2025) kung saan makikita ang mga polisiya at patnubay sa pagproseso ng tax clearance certificate para sa mga final settlement of government contracts.

"Government Contractors have to show that they do not have any outstanding tax liabilities before the final settlement of a government contract. The BIR will require an updated tax clearance. Otherwise, the Government has the power to suspend the final settlement of the government contract" dagdag pa ni Commissioner Romeo D. Lumagu Jr.

Kung may katanungan maaaring sumangguni sa mga link na ito:

RR No. 17-2024: <https://bit.ly/4237zMU>

RMO No. 002-2025: <https://bit.ly/4fMT3fx>

LIGA NG MGA BARANGAY YEAR-END ASSEMBLY



Kanina ay ginanap ang Liga ng mga Barangay Year-End Assembly na ginanap sa Calauan, Laguna. Kasama ng mga Barangay Chairman si DILG City Director Jennifer Quirante, na nagpaabot ng mga natatanging pagkilala sa mga barangay na Top Performers sa Kalinisan, Barangay Clearing, at HAPAG Program.

Kinilala ang ating *lis*

Mayor Ross... FROM PAGE 1

Mayor Roseller "Ross" H. Rizal of Calamba City has been recognized as the Top Performing City Mayor in Laguna, based on the latest report by Social Pulse Philippines.

Mayor Rizal achieved an impressive 93.6% approval rating for December 2024, reflecting his exceptional leadership and overwhelming support from his constituents.

In his message of gratitude, Mayor Rizal said: "I am deeply honored to be recognized as the Top Performing City Mayor in Laguna. Thank you to the people of Calamba for your trust and support in our administration."

The high approval rating is attributed to several key initiatives, including:

Improved public services: Ensuring efficient and responsive services for Calambeños.

Youth-focused programs: Implementing initiatives that prioritize education, sports, and youth development.

Sustainable projects: Promoting long-term programs that contribute to the City's growth and development.

Moreover, the administration received praise for its proactive response to disaster-related challenges and its support for health, livelihood, and education programs that directly benefit marginalized sectors of society.

This recognition from Social Pulse Philippines reaffirms Mayor Rizal's commitment to improving the quality of life for every Calambeño and advancing Calamba City's economy.

For the full report, click the link: <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1ExfiCk7Ew/?mibextid=oFDknk>

Calamba City, Philippines — Three high-value drug personalities were apprehended during a buy-bust operation conducted by joint operatives of the PDEA Rizal Provincial Office and the Rizal Provincial Drug Enforcement Unit in Barangay San Roque, Antipolo City.

The operation, which took place at 1:45 AM on January 10, 2025,

led to the confiscation of more than 10 mL of marijuana oil, vape pens containing suspected marijuana oil, and marked buy-bust money.

The suspects, all residents of Antipolo City, now face charges for violating Section 5 (Sale of Dangerous Drugs), Section 13 (Possession of Dangerous Drugs During Parties, Social Gatherings or Meetings), and Section 14 (Possession of Drug

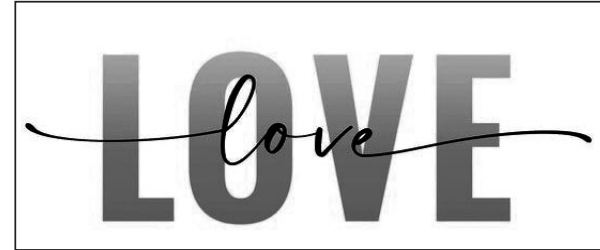
Paraphernalia) under Article II of Republic Act 9165, also known as the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002.

Authorities have intensified their anti-drug campaign in Rizal Province, vowing to pursue individuals involved in illegal drug activities.

The suspects remain in custody as investigations continue.

(Edjun Mari-posque)

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DOST CAVITE TRAINS PUREFOODS-HORNEL COMPANY, INC.



- Cavite Plant Employees on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP)

The Department of Science and Technology - CALABARZON (DOST-CALABARZON), through its Provincial Science and Technology Office in Cavite (DOST-PS-TO Cavite), conducted a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) training for 60 employees of Purefoods-Hornel Company, Inc. - Cavite Plant. The training, which consisted of both lectures and workshops, was led by DOST-CALABARZON Food Safety Team members Ms. Agnes G. Morales and Ms. Anna Marie S. Daigan. They provided the participants with insights on the HACCP process and shared best practices for preventing, controlling, and reducing hazards throughout all stages of food production— from purchasing and storage to handling, production, and packaging.

At the conclusion of the two-day training, one of the participants, Ms. Tan, expressed the value of the HACCP program, stating that the training has greatly contributed to their understanding of food safety. He highlighted the importance of the prevention and control measures they learned, which are essential for eliminating or minimizing food safety risks in their products. DOST, continues to offer programs and activities aimed at preventing, detecting, and managing foodborne risks. These initiatives contribute to food security, human health, economic growth, market opportunities, and sustainable development. By assisting SMEs, cooperatives, associations, and micro-enterprises in the food processing industry, DOST helps ensure the production of safe and high-quality food products. PR

203RD INFANTRY BRIGADE HONORS DR. JOSE RIZAL



Bansud, Oriental Mindoro – The 203rd Infantry Brigade (Bantay Kapayapaan) Brigade, Philippine Army, conducted a solemn wreath-laying ceremony to honor the Philippines' national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal, as part of the nationwide Rizal Day commemoration.

The event took place on 30 December 2024, at 7:00 AM at the Brigade Headquarters in Brgy. Pag-asa, Bansud, Oriental Mindoro.

The ceremony honoring Dr. Rizal's legacy was led by Colonel Eric D. Guevarra, Deputy Commander of the 203rd Infantry Brigade, alongside the 1st Infantry Battalion.



This commemorative event highlighted Rizal's enduring influence on patriotism, courage, and selflessness, emphasizing the importance of his ideals in fostering national unity and progress. This event reinforced his vision as a source of inspiration for peace and security in communities, calling upon all to uphold and embody his values in their endeavors.

The taps were played in remembrance of Dr. Rizal's passing, and his death has not been in vain; rather, they have served as a source of motivation, serving as a reminder of his sacrifices for the country and his steadfast dedication.



The commemoration reflects the 203rd Infantry Brigade's unwavering commitment to promoting national pride and unity, as well as its dedication to serving and protecting the people of Oriental Mindoro and beyond.

(Nelson Dimapilis)

Rising Above Life's Odds



Maria E. Luyun, 56, a CARD client and entrepreneur from Tuguegarao City, radiates with pride as she showcases their Miki Factory that represents not just a business, but a dream realized through hard work and perseverance.

Maria E. Luyun, a devoted wife and mother of four from Tuguegarao City, exemplifies perseverance and success. Her journey from humble beginnings to becoming a successful mompreneur showcases the power of hard work and dedication.

Maria was raised by her grandparents in Labrador, Pangasinan, where financial struggles prevented her from completing her studies. However, they instilled in her the values of faith, perseverance, and cour-

age. Seeking better opportunities, Maria moved to Manila and worked as a storekeeper. It was here she met her husband, Herminigildo Luyun, a tricycle driver from Cagayan. Together, they moved to Tuguegarao City and started a family and a business.

The Birth of Luyun's Factory

In Tuguegarao City, Maria's husband began working with his cousin at a local eatery that specialized in Miki, a popular regional noodle. As he gained experience

and honed his skills, he also took on extra part-time jobs to further perfect their craft.

Herminigildo Luyun worked at a local eatery specializing in Miki noodles. In 2008, they started their own Miki production business with just a quarter kilo of flour.

The noodles they made were introduced to nearby stores and eateries, and the positive response prompted them to expand and grow their business. Their ambition grew after attending a Department of

Trade and Industry (DTI) seminar, where they received a license and support to establish Luyun's Miki Factory.

They were also granted valuable support in the form of PHP10,000 worth of flour and baking soda. This assistance was more than just an assistance; it was a turning point that increased their production capacity and set them up for future success.

Empowerment Through Clientship

In 2012, Maria turned to CARD MRI Rizal Bank, Inc. (CARD RBI) for business loans, starting with PHP 3,000 and eventually receiving up to PHP100,000. This financial support helped expand their business, secure their children's education, and meet family needs. Her husband also became a client, starting with a PHP5,000 loan, later increasing to PHP10,000.

These financial boosts were essential in stabilizing their finances and supporting their shared vision for a successful business.

"Becoming a CARD RBI client is more than just receiving financial support; it's about unlocking opportunities.

CARD **RBI**
Ito ang bangko natin.

From our humble beginnings, I believe it was divine guidance that led us to an institution that not only provided financial assistance but also helped us nurture and grow our business," Maria said.

The journey to success has not been smooth for Maria and her family. They have encountered their share of hurdles, including tight finances, shortages of raw materials, distribution challenges, and fierce market competition.

Despite life's challenges, their determination, passion for their business, financial planning, and commitment to maintaining product quality have helped them push through. Even the pandemic, with all its difficulties, couldn't shake their spirit. Together, they have faced each trial head-on, emerging stronger and more resilient with every challenge they've overcome.

Maria and her family faced challenges such as financial struggles, material shortages, and market competition. However, their determination, passion, and financial prudence helped them overcome obstacles. To-

day, Luyun's Miki Factory supplies noodles to various stores and eateries in Tuguegarao and beyond, even reaching clients in Manila.

Their success has allowed them to employ six staff, support their children's education, and expand into new ventures like Zaza's Food Hub, specializing in Pancit Batil Patung made with their own Miki noodles.

The Luyun's Miki noodles are available at PHP45.00 per kilo for bulk orders and PHP50.00 for retail, with delivery options to meet customer needs. The Miki factory and Zaza's Food Hub are located at 36 Bangayan Street, Linao East, Tuguegarao City.

Maria's journey highlights the importance of perseverance, passion, and smart financial management. Her advice to aspiring entrepreneurs: "Treat your customers like family and show them kindness—it's the key to earning their lasting loyalty."

The Luyun family's story demonstrates how passion and determination can turn challenges into opportunities and lead to lasting success. PR

PBBM, FL Marcos, Go Negosyo Celebrate OFWs at Balik-Bayan Event

Over 400 Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and their families have more reasons to celebrate OFW Month and the holiday season this December as they share the Php2 million in cash given by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and First Lady Liza Araneta Marcos during Go Negosyo's Balik-Bayan 2024 event. The cash prize brought to Php3 million the total given away to OFWs and their families who attended the event, adding to the cash prizes given by Go Negosyo and its sponsors.

Go Negosyo founder Joey Concepcion thanked the President

and the First Lady for their generous donation, and invited the recipients to put their prizes to good use as entrepreneurs. "We are grateful for the support of the government and the private sector in our efforts to help our OFWs become successful entrepreneurs," he said.

The 400 were among the thousands who attended the Balik-Bayan 2024 last December 7; they were able to fulfill the documentary requirements needed to qualify for the cash prize. Most of those who came to collect their prize said they intend to use the money as additional capital for their small

businesses. The cash gift was announced during the event by Go Negosyo founder Joey Concepcion, together with the First Lady, who conveyed President Marcos Jr.'s awarding of Php2 million on top of the cash and prizes given out that day. RFM Corporation also added Php1 million in products, while additional cash prizes were awarded by Go Negosyo to early-bird attendees, some of whom were lined up as early as the day before the event. Organized by Go Negosyo, Balik-Bayan

2024 featured informative discussions with industry leaders, inspirational and learning sessions featuring successful entrepreneurs, and free onsite mentorship sessions where OFWs and their families can consult with Go Negosyo mentors about their current or planned businesses. During the event, Concepcion invited the attendees to learn from the sessions and seek guidance from mentors. "We don't want you to spend your savings without proper mentorship," he said.

"We are here to help you," as he thanked the OFW families for their sacrifice and support for family members who work overseas.

"Balik-Bayan 2024 is a platform to provide business opportunities and foster investment matches for OFWs, encouraging them toward entrepreneurship and ensuring that their hard work and resources are put to productive and profitable use," said Concepcion.

He explained that OFWs are ideally suited for entrepreneurship because

they already have capital to invest, and will need the mentorship and access to markets to succeed as entrepreneurs. Their success will also mean more jobs for other Filipinos as MSMEs are credited for generating more than half of the employment in the Philippines.

Joining Concepcion and the First Lady during the event were Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Sec. Cris Roque, Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) Sec. Hans Leo Cacdac, **cont. on page 3**



Pointer

Pau Dela Cruz

SSS OUTLINES PLANS FOR 2025 AND EXPLAINS THE 1% CONTRIBUTION RATE INCREASE.

In accordance with the terms of Republic Act (RA) No. 11199, also known as the Social Security Act of 2018, the Social Security System (SSS) declared that it will begin a 1% increase in the contribution rate in January 2025, raising it from 14% to 15%. Alongside this, the minimum Monthly Salary Credit (MSC) was raised from P4,000.00 to P5,000.00, and the maximum MSC was raised from P30,000.00 to P35,000.00. With these, SSS implemented the final round of MSC and contribution rate changes that began in 2019.

"The scheduled contribution rate and MSC increases are among the most important reforms under RA 11199 that aim to ensure the long-term viability of the SSS. With this last tranche of contribution rate and MSC increases, the SSS fund is projected to last until 2053 – doubling the fund life to 28 years (vs 2032 or 14 years when an actuarial valuation study was performed in 2018). This will allow us to fulfill our social security obligations to current and future members during times of contingencies," SSS President and Chief Executive Officer Robert Joseph M. De Claro explained.

According to him, P51.5 billion more will be collected in 2025 as a result of the contribution rate and MSC increases, of which P18.3 billion, or 35%, will

go straight to SSS members' Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) accounts.

"Such additional collection amount also enables SSS to support national government in times of difficulty, particularly as regards granting calamity loans," De Claro explained. In 2024, SSS released P9.7-B in calamity loans to more than 500,000 calamity-stricken members.

"Our top priority in 2025 is service excellence to SSS members. We aim to enhance our programs and systems to provide superior customer service to our members," De Claro said. SSS shall continue to work on universal inclusion to social security through its KaSSSangga Collect and E-Wheels Programs for coverage of self-employed workers all over the Philippines.

With the market outlook being positive in 2025, SSS also looks to improve investment income performance from various asset classes. "The favorable outlook should enable SSS to actively participate in the capital markets and contribute to jobs generation as companies build and expand their businesses," he said.

"Ultimately, our goal is to make SSS relevant in the life of every Filipino at every point in their lives by providing quality social protection and espousing the value of saving for the future," De Claro emphasized.

FROM PAGE 6

PBBM...

Commission on Filipinos Overseas Chairman Dante "Klink" Ang, and Pasay City Mayor Emi Calixto-Rubiano.

With the theme "Kabuhayan Para sa Kinabukasan", Balik-Bayan 2024 became a platform for creating opportunities for collaboration between the government and the private sector as they aim to uplift not only OFWs and their families but also help the Philippine economy.

The event featured several forums and discussions on topics that will help OFWs start or improve their small businesses. These include mentoring children in business, preparing for retirement, creating purpose-driven work, financial literacy, platforms for possible OFW businesses including franchising, agripreneurship, and storytelling and content creation as a tool in entrepreneurship.

The event also saw the awarding of the 2024 Inspiring Balik-Bayan Awards to OFWs who successfully founded businesses here in the Philippines. The Inspiring Balik-Bayan Awards is an annual award organized by Go Negosyo to recognize the success stories of OFWs-turned-entrepreneurs, celebrate their achievements, and foster entrepreneurial aspirations among current OFWs.

PUBLISHER CORNER

THE BLIND LEADING THE LOST: A NATION BETRAYED



The halls of Congress and the Senate reek of betrayal. This is no longer just a circus—it is a grand heist, a vicious mockery of the Filipino people's sacrifices. While we break our backs, bleed, and sacrifice for this nation, our so-called leaders are busy looting not just our wealth but our very dignity. Their spectacle of greed and indifference has condemned 119 million Filipinos to despair. They are no leaders—they are traitors. Blind to the needs of the nation, leading us to a chasm of hopelessness.

A RUTHLESS BETRAYAL
Let us not mince words—this is treason. When Congress butchered billions from education, they didn't just adjust a spreadsheet. They tore futures from the hands of Filipino children. They shattered the dreams of students who saw education as their only escape from the clutches of poverty. They sabotaged a nation's chance to rise, condemning generations to mediocrity and despair.

Article XIV of our Constitution mandates that education receive the highest budgetary priority. Yet these cowards violated the law with impunity. They robbed the classrooms, burned the books, and locked the gates of learning. Our dismal global ranking in Math, Science, and Reading is no accident. It is a crime. It is murder—the murder of our children's potential.

HEALTHCARE: THE FIRST CASUALTY
Zero funding for PhilHealth in 2025 is not just negligence—it's malice. It's as if Congress has declared war on the poor. How many parents will have to bury their children because they couldn't afford a doctor? How many breadwinners will be crippled by illness, left to rot because our healthcare system has been gutted?

PhilHealth is not a "reserve fund" for their thieving hands to dip into. It is the lifeblood of millions of Filipinos who cling to it in their most desperate hours. The Universal Health Care Act clearly mandates sin taxes to support PhilHealth. They violated that too. What do they call this? Mismanagement? No, this is state-sanctioned cruelty.

THE FARCE OF AKAP
And now, the "Ayuda sa Kapos ang Kita Program" (AKAP) comes along—a shameless election bribe dressed as charity. P26 billion stolen from education and healthcare, disguised as aid, but in reality, it's ammunition for the corrupt to cement their power. They will toss these scraps to the people during election season while millions of Filipinos starve, bleed, and suffer.

Do they think we are blind? Do they think we cannot see this brazen, cynical ploy for what it is? Every peso wasted on AKAP is another peso stolen from classrooms, hospitals, and roads. It's another dagger in the back of the Filipino people.

OUR SILENCE MAKES US COMPLICIT
But perhaps the greatest betrayal is our own. Our silence feeds their arrogance. Why are we not in the streets? Why do we allow these thieves to gut our nation while we watch from the sidelines? Is it fear? Apathy? Exhaustion? Whatever the reason, our passivity emboldens them. Every moment of silence is a betrayal of the nation we claim to love.

Even our Supreme Court, the supposed guardian of justice, stands paralyzed—too terrified of congressional wrath to do their duty. Where is the justice for the oppressed when even the judiciary cowers? When justice is silent, tyranny thrives.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH
This is no longer about politics—it's about survival. They are dismantling our nation, brick by brick, peso by stolen peso. And unless we fight back, they will leave nothing behind but ashes and despair.

But there is hope. We, the people, are the true power of this nation. We can end this betrayal. We can demand accountability. We can take back what is rightfully ours—a government that serves, not plunders.

THE TIME TO FIGHT IS NOW
If we remain silent, we deserve the ruin that follows. But if we rise—if we unite and act—we can reclaim this nation from the thieves and traitors who have hijacked it. Let our anger be our fuel. Let our indignation spark a revolution of accountability.

The question is not if we can fight back. The question is, will we fight back before it's too late? For every peso stolen, for every dream crushed, for every life lost—we must demand justice.

This betrayal must end. This theft must end. This silence must end. The time to act is now.

SPREADING SMILES THROUGH BEARS OF JOY



Your #SMBearsOfJoy2024 friends — Ace, Mikah, Ronnie, and Bree — went on a heartwarming journey with SM volunteers from SM City Calamba to bring smiles and joy to the kids at Brgy. Milagrosa and Brgy. Makiling, Calamba City, in partnership with the City Social Welfare Development of Calamba

A bear in hand, a smile on their face—Bears of Joy are lighting up the lives of children.

During the holiday season, SM mallgoers achieved something truly remarkable—donating 50,000 SM Bears of Joy to children in underserved communities. In partnership with Toy Kingdom, this milestone was part of a record-breaking campaign where 100,000 bears were sold, made possible by the collective generosity of mallgoers who came together to make the season brighter for those in need.

An annual initiative of SM Cares, the SM Bears of Joy campaign empowers shoppers to spread holiday cheer by purchasing a pair of specially designed plush bears—one to keep and another to share. This year's theme, "Hug-a-Mood," introduced four charming bears: Mikah, the curious explorer; Ash, the gentle and shy friend; Bree, the spirited adventurer; and Ronnie, the creative dreamer. Each bear

brought its own personality, symbolizing the warmth and joy of the season. SM Cares is the corporate social responsibility arm of SM Supermalls, supporting initiatives focused on communities and the environment. Its advocacies include Programs for the Environment, Persons with Disabilities, Women & Breastfeeding Mothers, Children & Youth, Senior Citizens, and the SM Bike-friendly initiative.

LALAKING MOST WANTED SA PANGGAGAHASA, ARESTADO SA RODRIGUEZ, RIZAL

Himas rehas ang isang 19-anyos na lalaking Most Wanted Person Regional Level sa ikinasang operasyon ng Rodriguez PNP kahapon ng January 8, 2025 bandang 4:30 ng hapon sa Brgy. San Jose, Rodriguez, Rizal. Base sa report na nakalap ni PCOL FELIPE B MARAGUN, Provincial Director, sa bisa ng warrant of arrest mula sa Regional Trial Court, National Capital Judicial Region, Branch 69, Taguig City

para sa kasong Rape na walang nirekomendang piyansa. Kinilala ang akusado na si Alyas Renskie, auto mechanic at nakatira sa Rodriguez, Rizal na matagumpay na naaresto ng mga otoridad. Base sa salaysay ng biktima, ang akusado ay kanyang step-brother at nangyare ang nasabing krimen noong Oktubre ng taong 2023 sa Taguig, City. Samantala, kasalukuyang nasa kustodiya ng Rodriguez Custodial

Facility ang akusado para sa tamang disposisyon at pagproseso ng kaso. Sa pahayag ni PCOL FELIPE MARAGUN, na ang Rizal Police Provincial Office ay magpapatuloy laban sa mga wanted person at hindi titigil ang kapulisan ng Rizal PNP sa pagsugong ng krimen na sumisira sa seguridad, kapayapaan at kaayusan sa probinsya. (Pau Dela Cruz)



Giving back this holiday season, SM Center San Pedro brings joy to children of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Unit - San Pedro City with Bears of Joy.

PGCS Medical and Dental Mission Brings Free Services to Residents of Brgy. San Mateo, Dasmariñas city



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In the opening salvo of the Provincial Government of Cavite's medical outreach on January 7, 2025, the residents of Brgy. San Mateo in the City of Dasmariñas were given access to free medical and dental services in a highly successful medical and mission. A total of 393 residents benefited from the initiative, with

343 individuals receiving medical consultations and 50 undergoing dental extractions. The mission was made possible through the collaborative efforts of the Office of the Provincial Governor, in partnership with the Office of the Provincial Health Officer. Medical and dental practitioners from the General

Emilio Aguinaldo Memorial Hospital (GEAMH) provided their expertise, ensuring the delivery of quality healthcare services. Brgy. Chairman Isaias C. Villanueva expressed his gratitude to the provincial government for extending much-needed services to his constituents. Barangay Health Workers (BHWs) played

a crucial role in facilitating the event and assisting residents. The mission demonstrates the commitment of bringing healthcare closer to the people, especially in communities that need it most. It underscores the provincial government's dedication to improving public health and enhancing the well-being of Caviteños.—R. Dones

NPA ARMS CACHE UNEARTHED IN CAMARINES NORTE AMID RENEWED SECURITY OPERATIONS



Calamba City, Laguna — A significant arms cache belonging to the New People's Army (NPA) was uncovered by combined forces of the Philippine Army's 2nd Infantry Division (2ID) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) in Barangay

Exciban, Labo, Camarines Norte, early morning on January 9. Acting on a tip from a local resident, the 16th Infantry Battalion (16IB) and Labo Municipal Police Office (LMPO) launched a targeted search operation that led

to the discovery. At around 9:00 AM, troops unearthed an arsenal that included two cal. 30 machine guns, four M16 rifles, two M14 rifles, two M203 grenade launchers, 200 rounds of ammunition, 22 hand grenades, one improvised anti-personnel explosive

device, a roll of detonating cord, and 10 magazines. Major General Cerilo Balaoro Jr., commander of the 2ID, commended the residents of Barangay Exciban for their vigilance and commitment to the government's peace efforts. "The trust and support of the people are critical to the success of our campaigns to achieve lasting peace," Balaoro said. He highlighted how recent operations, including this arms cache recovery, signify the declining operational capacity of the NPA in the Calabarzon and Mimaropa

regions. "This discovery disrupts the NPA's plans for violence and reflects the weakening of their grip on communities," he added. The discovery also underscores the effectiveness of the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC). Major General Balaoro noted the importance of continued collaboration between the military, police, and various stakeholders in addressing issues that have long fueled insurgency in rural areas. The 2ID vowed

to intensify operations in cooperation with government and non-government organizations to sustain the momentum against the remaining insurgents and ensure the safety of peace-loving communities. This success is part of the ongoing campaign to dismantle the remaining NPA strongholds and bolster security across affected regions. Authorities urge continued vigilance from the public, emphasizing the role of community support in achieving long-term peace and development. (Edjun Mariposque)

