

SMC, KORAIL SIGN AGREEMENT TO MOVE MRT-7 CLOSER TO FULL OPERATIONS

SMC MRT-7 Corporation, a wholly owned subsidiary of San Miguel Corporation's (SMC) infrastructure unit, has signed an Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Services Agreement with Korea Railroad Corporation (KORAIL), South Korea's national railway operator, to support the next phase of MRT-7 as it moves closer to full operations.

Under the agreement, KORAIL will continue its advisory role — helping guide the setup of MRT-7's core operational systems, safety protocols, and maintenance programs. SMC MRT-7 Corp. holds the concession to build, operate, and maintain the MRT-7, which links Metro Manila to Bulacan via Commonwealth Avenue.

The signing ceremony was attended by SMC Chairman and CEO Ramon S. Ang, KORAIL President and CEO Han Moon Hee, Vice Minister Baek Won Kug of Korea's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, and His Excellency Lee Sang-hwa, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the Philippines. The Department of Transportation was represented by Undersecretaries Giovanni Lopez, Timothy John Batan, and Jonathan Ronulo.

With its extensive experience in running large-scale rail networks, KORAIL will provide technical expertise to ensure a smooth transition from construction to daily operations.

The engagement starts in July 2025, with the first six to 12 months focused on completing pre-operational requirements and stabilizing key systems. Over the long term, KORAIL will continue to provide technical support for operations and maintenance to help maintain continuity, support knowledge transfer, and apply global best practices



SMC Chairman and CEO Ramon S. Ang (seated, right) and KORAIL President and CEO Han Moon Hee seal their deal at the San Miguel Corp. head office in Mandaluyong City on Tuesday, April 22, 2025. Standing from left are: South Korea Ambassador Lee Sang-hwa, Korea Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport Vice Minister Baek Won Kug, DOTr Senior Undersecretary Giovanni Lopez, and DOTr Undersecretary for Railways Timothy John Batan.

throughout the system.

"This is a critical step as we move closer to delivering MRT-7 to the public," said Ang. "We have faced delays — mostly due to right-of-way issues — but we have stayed focused. With all trains expected to be running and tested by the end of this year, and full operations targeted for 2026, this partnership with KORAIL brings us closer to our goal."

KORAIL operates South Korea's extensive rail network, including the high-speed KTX system, metropolitan commuter lines, and intercity services. It is recognized globally for its strong track record in safety, technology integration, infrastructure management, and workforce development.

Ang acknowledged the DOTr's active, hands-on role in moving the project forward, led by Secretary Vince Dizon. He credited the department's leadership and coordination across agencies as

instrumental in keeping stakeholders aligned and maintaining steady progress.

"This agreement brings together strong public and private sector efforts," Ang added. "At San Miguel, we remain committed to building projects that not only improve everyday life for Filipinos, but also contribute to sustainable growth for our economy."

For the government's part, Sec. Dizon reiterated President Marcos' instruction to ease the burden of the commuting public by having reliable mass transport systems such as railways.

"We prioritize passengers, we focus on the plight of the commuters. We are ensuring that an infrastructure or a transport project such as a railway system is not only safe and efficient but will also provide comfort to commuters and lessen their travel time," Dizon said in remarks read by Undersecretary for Rail-

ways Timothy John Batan.

KORAIL officials described their renewed partnership with SMC as a "landmark of cooperation and mutual prosperity, enabling the Philippines' premiere corporation to excel in the new arena of rail."

"I am confident that the fusion of KORAIL's technical expertise

with San Miguel's managerial prowess will make MRT-7 the finest rail in the Philippines," said KORAIL's Han.

"I am certain that the success of MRT-7 will become a role model for Philippine railway projects and dramatically improve mobility and quality of life for the Filipino people," he added.

The MRT-7 project is a 22-kilometer elevated railway that will connect North Avenue in Quezon City to San Jose del Monte, Bulacan, with 14 stations. Once operational, it is expected to significantly cut travel time, decongest major road corridors, and improve mobility across Metro Manila and nearby provinces.



Why Calamba's Youth and Seniors Love Mayor Ross Rizal: A Mayor Who Cares for All





DERETSAHAN

WEEKLY PUBLISHING

The paper that stand for real values and gives you real value for money

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A STEP TOWARD PEACE: AMNESTY ORIENTATION AND FORMER REBEL ENGAGEMENT

Paggamit ng Hybrid Rice Seeds at Bio-Fertilizers isinulong ng DA-4A Rice Program

Aabot sa mahigit walong daang (800) magpapalay mula sa ibat-ibang bayan sa Laguna at Quezon ang dumalo sa isinagawang Hybrid Rice and Fertilizer Derby na pinangunahan ng Department of Agriculture IV-CALABARZON (DA-4A) Rice Program noong ika-2 hanggang ika-4 ng Abril, 2025 sa Pila, Laguna.

Dito ay isinulong ng DA-4A ang paggamit ng Hybrid Rice Seeds at Bio-Fertilizers sa mga magpapalay para sa mas mataas na ani na may mas mababang gastos sa produksyon habang napapanatili o napapaganda ang kondisyon ng lupa.

Tampok sa naturang derby ang pagpakilala at pagbibida sa apatnapung (40) produkto mula sa dalawampu't apat

cont. on page 5



PGCEA ELECTED OFFICERS SWORN INTO OFFICE



The Provincial Government of Cavite Employees Association (PGCEA) marked another milestone as the new set of officers for the year 2025-2026 vowed to their duties and responsibilities after being sworn into office at the Conference Room of the New Provincial Capitol on April 21, 2025. This underscored the continuity in leadership and commitment of one another for the advancement of the association and for the betterment of the government employees.

Atty. Rodolfo Uy III, Provincial Administrator, alongside Ms. Maria Fe Satsatin, Provincial Human Resource Management Officer, officiated the Oath Taking Ceremony. He, then, congratulated the elected officers and reminded them to adhere to their oath.

Afterward, Ms. Michelle Osorio, PGCEA President, imparted that the cooperation, support and trust of the members will solidify the association, "Ito ay parang walis tingting, kung isa hindi siya makakawalis, pero kung naka bind naka, sama-sama, magagawa natin nang maayos ang ating trabaho."--- J. Reyes

ATIN 'TO! AT YOUR SERVICE

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Editoryal Ano nga pa ang benepisyo ng Expanded Solo Parents Welfare Act

Hirap ka na ba sa pagiging nanay at tatay ? Isa ka bang magulang na mag-isang tinataguyod ang anak? Narito ang solo parent benefits in the Philip-pines na dapat mong makuha ayon sa batas ng Ex-panded Solo Parents' Welfare Act.

Matatandaang taong 2018, nais ibahin ng Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) ang batas sa Solo Parent upang madagda-gan ang karapatan at benepisyo ng mga magulang na mag-isang itinataguyod ang anak na wala pa sa legal na edad.

Dagdag nila na pwedeng mag-apply ng Solo Parent ID kabilang na ang mga: namatayan ng asa-wa; inabandona ng asawa; hiwalay sa asawa; naku-long ang asawa dahil sa krimen; naging biktima ng pang-aabuso; annulled man o hindi. Ngunit magkaiba pa rin ang benipisyo ng working at non-working solo parent.

Taong Enero 20, 2020 naglabas ng update ang Senado tungkol sa Expanded Solo Parents' Wel-fare Act or Senate Bill No. 164. Inutos din ni Akbayan Senator Risa Hontiveros sa mga pribadong kompanya na mayroong 100 employee na magtayo at gumawa ng Daycare Facilities. Ayon kay Hontiveros, and bill na ito ay sumasalamin sa paghihirap at mga balakid ng isang solo parent.

“Raising a child is daunting, but raising a child alone constitutes a specific set of challenges and difficulties,” dagdag nito.

Ang Expanded Solo Parents' Welfare Act or Senate Bill No. 164 ay naglalayong pahalagahan ang mga magulang na mag-isang itinataguyod ang kanil-

ang mga anak na wala pa sa tamang edad. Kasama na rin dito ang mga nilalapat na benepisyong makakatulog sa mga magulang.

Bininyang pansin rin ang mga Overseas Filipi-no Workers na matagal nang hindi nakasama ang pam-ilya dito sa Pilipinas.

“Parang mga solo parents na rin ang ilan sa mga asawa ng OFWs natin,” sabi ni Hontiveros. “Min-san, more than a year na nasa abroad ang asawa. Kailangang suportahan ang mga asawa ng ating mga OFWs. We need to extend the solo parents' benefits to them too,” dagdag nito.

Kasama rin sa Bill na ito ang pag-gawa ng 'Solo Parents Affairs Office'. At nagrequire sa bawat baran-gay na gumawa ng Solo Parents' Help Desk na maar-ing takbuhan ng mga solo parents kasama ang kanilang mga anak.Isa sa layunin ng Bill na ito ay ang tulungan ang mga Solo parents na nahihiparan sa pagpapalaki sa kanilang mga anak.

June 4, 2022 nang tuluyang maging batas ang Expanded Solo Parents Welfare Act. Inaamtyendahan ng batas na ito ang ilang mga probisyon ng Republic Acr 8792 at nagbibigay mandato sa enhanced solo parent benefits in the Philippines.

Ayon sa batas, napalawak na rin ang kahulu-gan ng solo parent. Kabilang na sa mga itinuturing na solo parent ang mga asawa at family member ng OFWs na nasa low o semi-skilled category na nanirahan sa la-bas ng bansa sa loob ng 12 buwan. Kabilang dito ang mga lolo o lola, guardian, o iba pang myembro ng pami-lya na mayroong full responsibility sa bata.

Sa Pilipinas mayroong mga benepisyong na-

INT'L PUBLIC PROCUREMENT SUMMIT: TO HIGHLIGHT IMPORTANCE OF PROCUREMENT REFORMS IN ADVANCING DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

The Philippines is set to host the East Asia and the Pacific Interna-tional Public Procurement Conference, with no less than President Ferdinand "Bongbong" R. Marcos Jr. leading the opening cere-mony in Manila.

The three-day event, happening from April 28 to 30, 2025, will bring together experts and practitioners from the East Asia and the Pacific region and beyond to ad-dress critical challenges and share transformative solutions on public pro-curement.

"Procurement is a major activity in govern-ment which is crucial for ensuring efficient and ef-fective service delivery to our citizens. And with the implementation of the New Government Procurement Act (NGPA), signed into law by President Bong-bong Marcos last year, we have introduced a progressive measure that promotes greater efficien-cy in the implementation of projects and purchase of goods and supplies," Department of Budget and Management (DBM) Sec-retary and Government Procurement Policy Board Chairperson Amenah "Mina" F. Pangandaman said.

"As I have em-phasized, we regard the NGPA as the biggest an-ti-corruption law in modern times, fostering enhanced transparency, accountabil-ity, and value for money. With that, we are excited to present the key accom-plishments and milestones of the country in terms of public procurement during this landmark event," the Budget Secretary added.

The event is co-organized by the DBM, GPPB-Technical Support Office (GPPB-TSO), and the World Bank, with sup-port from other develop-ment partners.

With the theme, "Procurement for the Peo-ple: Bridging Innovation,

Value for Money, and Ac-countability," the activities will involve plenary ses-sions, interactive panels, and country case studies.

It will cover cru-cial topics, such as how procurement mechanisms empower communities, examining strategic invest-ments aligned with gener-ational and societal pri-orities, professionalizing procurement, sustainable spending, fighting climate change through smart spending, transforming procurement through in-clusion, and enhancing participatory governance, among others.

At least 150 par-ticipants are expected to

take part in the interna-tional conference, composed of procuring authority heads and representatives from 15 countries.

The International Public Procurement Con-ference is seen to inspire transformative change and reinforce procure-ment's role in addressing societal challenges.

With a diverse lineup of experts, innova-tive topics, and spirit of collaboration among par-ticipants, the conference will help shape the future of procurement in the East Asia and Pacific region and beyond.



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SANTA ROSA CITY, Laguna — President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. led the grand inaugu-ration of the VITRO Santa Rosa (VSR) Data Center on April 23, 2025, mark-ing a historic leap in the country's digital infrastruc-ture with the launch of the Philippines' first artificial intelligence (AI)-ready and largest hyperscale data center.

Developed by VITRO Inc., a subsidiary of ePLDT under the PLDT Group, the VSR facility boasts an initial IT capac-ity of 50 megawatts and over 13,000 square me-ters of white space. This purpose-built, next-gener-ation facility is designed to serve global technology giants and AI-driven en-terprises, positioning the country as a digital gate-way in the Asia-Pacific re-gion.

"This milestone is not only a win for our econ-omy, but for our future," President Marcos said during the launch. "The VITRO Santa Rosa Data Center is a cornerstone of our 'Bagong Pilipinas' vi-sion — smart, sustainable, and globally connected."

Equipped with NVIDIA-powered GPU servers, the facility is built to meet the growing de-mands of AI workloads, enabling enterprises to scale AI adoption through real-time analytics, auto-mation, and high-perfor-mance computing. In line with sustainability goals, 35% of the center's ener-gy is sourced from renew-ables, with energy-efficient cooling and backup sys-tems further minimizing its environmental impact.

Strategically linked to other VITRO hubs in Makati, Parañaque, and Pasig through the VITRO Data Center Interconnect (DCI), and connected to PLDT's vast international subsea cable network, the facility guarantees robust global connectivity and seamless scalability.

VITRO envisions the Santa Rosa site as an icon of Philippine digital transformation and a cor-nerstone in its ambition to become the region's premier hyperscale and AI hub.

"This is not just a data center; this is the foundation of the Philip-pines' future in the glob-

Why Calamba...

Calamba City, Laguna – As the school year approaches, May-or Roseller "Ross" H. Rizal continues to win the hearts of Calambefios—especially the youth and seniors—with his sincere and consistent service. Many residents say it's no surprise that children warmly greet and adore the hardworking mayor, who has shown deep care for every Calambefio, from toddlers to senior citizens.

Critics from the camp of rival candidate Timmy Chipeco have tried to downplay this affection, accusing the Rizal camp of using children for polit-ical gain. But Calambefios quickly fired back, saying these were nothing but fake news and desperate attacks by trolls trying to discredit a well-loved lead-er.

For years—since the very start of his term—Mayor Ross has ensured that every student in pub-lic day care, elementary, junior and senior high school, the Alternative Learning System (ALS), and the City College of Calamba receives free school bags, complete school supplies, and three sets of uniforms every school year. This initiative, now on its third year under the formal city-wide pro-gram, is set to benefit over 120,000 students in 2025.

"These school kits reduce the financial burden on us parents and help ensure that students attend classes regularly and with pride."—Calam-befios.

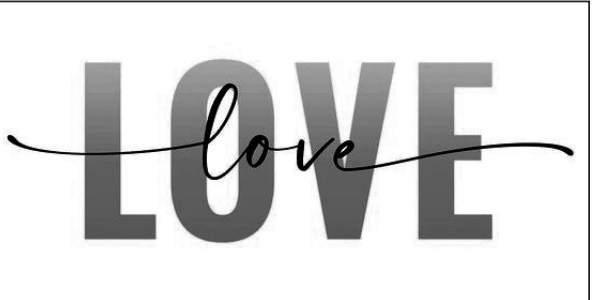
But Mayor Ross's care doesn't stop with the youth. He has also given priority to senior citizens, providing them with a local social pension on top of the national government's aid, and doubling the birth-day gift they receive each year—actions that have been praised widely in the community.

Even tricycle drivers, often overlooked in social programs, have received assistance under the "TULONG GULONG" program—helping them maintain their livelihood with dignity and stability.

Mayor Ross Rizal's leadership has consistently centered on inclusivity, compassion, and practical support for every sector of Calamba society.

As Calambefios put it, this is the kind of public servant who doesn't just lead—he uplifts.

(Edjun Mariposque)





Warm Welcome for Future Governor: Atty. Karen Agapay Dances Her Way Through Laguna's 2025 Campaign Trail



As the 2025 election season heats up, Vice Governor Atty. Karen Agapay, now running for Governor of Laguna, continues to receive a wave of warm support from residents across the province. From one town to another, Lagunenses eagerly gather to welcome her, creating an atmosphere of joy, energy, and unity.

In her recent visit to Biñan City, the crowd's enthusiasm was so infectious that even the gubernatorial candidate couldn't help but join the celebration.

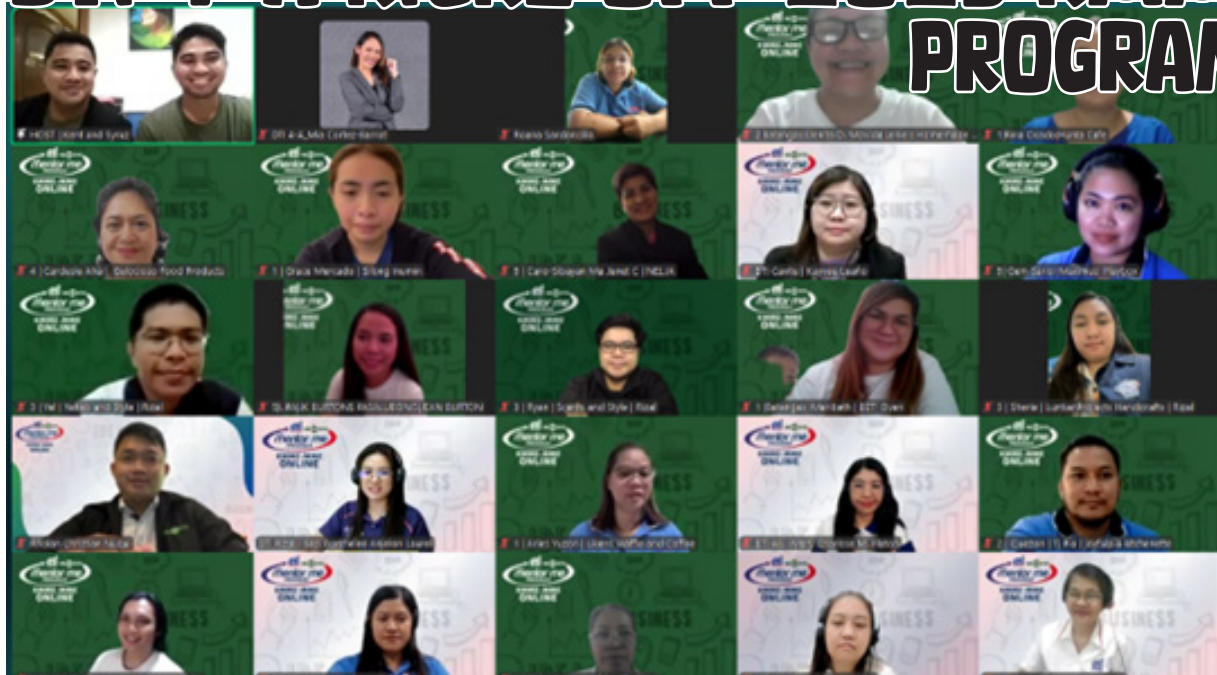
"Kasing-init ng panahon ang init ng yong pagsalubong! Mapapasayaw ka talaga sa saya! Maraming Salamat Biñanense!" Agapay exclaimed, expressing her heartfelt gratitude for the lively reception.

As the campaign trail unfolds, Atty. Karen Agapay's genuine connection with the people of Laguna continues to shine—promising not just leadership, but a future grounded in unity and community spirit.

(Edjun Mariposque)



DTI 4-A KICKS OFF 2025 KMME-MME ONLINE PROGRAM IN CALABARZON



The Department of Trade and Industry Region 4-A, in partnership with the Philippine Center for Entrepreneurship (PCE)-Go Negosyo,

kicked off the 1st batch of 2025 KAPATID Mentor ME-Money and Market

Encounter (KMME-MME) Online Multisectoral Launch and Orientation on

March 19, 2025 via Zoom. 50 CALABARZON mentees from different industry clusters and sectors were selected to participate in the program.

The event began with a pre-program video and official call time, followed by the opening remarks from DTI 4-A Regional Director Marissa C. Argente and welcome statements from DTI-Regional Operations Group Undersecretary Blesila A. Lantayona and PCE-Go Negosyo Adviser Merly M. Cruz. Participants were introduced to the Go Negosyo KMME-MME Program and briefed on the program's rules by Mr.

Rholan Christian S. Nuqui. A Q&A session and an AVP presentation of Region 4-A's selected mentees followed. The event concluded with breakout sessions and closing messages from Provincial Directors Cleotilde M. Duran (DTI-Rizal) and Christian Ted O. Tungohan (DTI-Laguna).

The KMME-MME Online platform supports existing and aspiring MSMEs by offering mentorship, business strategy guidance, and capacity-building resources through webinars and KMME modules, helping them adapt to the current trends and build resilience during crises.



Pointer

Pau Dela Cruz

Project L.A.N.G.I.S. (Laban ng Aktibo at Nagkakaisang Gurpo ng mga drayber kontra sa anumang ilegal at para sa Seguridad ng Tanayans)

Sa ilalim ng pamumuno ni PLTCOL GAYLOR F PAGALA Officer In-Charge ng TANAY MPS, Opisyal nang inilunsad ngayong ika-25 ng Abril 2025 ang Project L.A.N.G.I.S (Laban ng Aktibo at Nagkakaisang Grupo ng mga drayber kontra anumang ilegal at para sa Seguridad ng Tanayans) sa Bayan ng Tanay!

Dinaluhan ito ng mga mahalagang personalidad at katuwang sa adbokasiya ng kaligtasan at kaayusan sa kalsada, kabilang sina: PCOL Felipe Maraggun, Provincial Director ng Rizal, Mayor Manuel A. Tanjuatco, SFO1 Jerick Berdan (BFP Tanay), Dante Pontipedia, Jonep Quimpan (Chief, LTO), PLT Raymond C. Sevilla (HPG), Pastor Medel Mendez, Igmidio Hilao (Tanay TODA Federation President), Ms Anna Pauline Dela Cruz, Media/Municipal Advisory Council ng Tanay PNP.

Layunin ng proyektong ito na organisahin, paigtingin, at Kilusin ang sektor ng transportasyon, partikular na ang mga kasapi ng Tricycle Operators and Drivers Association (TODA), sa laban kontra kriminalidad, ilegal na droga at iba pang ilegal na gawain na mag-aambag sa pagpapanatili ng kapayapaan, kaayusan, at kaligtasan ng publiko sa buong bayan ng Tanay.

Sa pagpapatupad ng proyektong ito, ang mga kasapi ng TODA ay bibigyang-kapangyarihan sa pagtitipon at pag-uulat ng impormasyon kaugnay sa mga ilegal na aktibidad. Palalakasin rin ang kanilang partisipasyon sa mga programang pangkaalaman at mobilisasyon para sa pag-iwas sa krimen, katuwang ang Tanay PNP, Highway Patrol Group (HPG), Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), Land Transportation Office (LTO), Lokal na Pamahalaan ng Tanay sa pamamagitan ng Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (MDRRMO), Public Safety Office, at ang Tau Gamma Phi Fraternity - Tanay Municipal Council.

Ang proyektong ito ay hindi lamang pabor sa mga ahensyang katuwang, kundi malaking benepisyo rin sa mga kasapi ng TODA na magpapahayag ng kanilang suporta, dahil sila ay makakatanggap ng libreng change oil para sa kanilang mga motorsiklo. Bukod dito, magkakaroon din sila ng mga sticker "ISUMBONG MO KAY TOL CHIEF, na naglalaman ng hotline numbers ng Tanay PNP, HPG, BFP, LTO, MDRMO at PSO na ididikit sa kanilang mga traysikel.

Bilang parte ng paglulung-sad ay nagkaroon ng makabuluhang pag aaral ukol sa; Pagkilala sa mga Maaaring Kriminal, Pagkilala sa Fire Hazard o Panganib sa Sunog, Kaligtasan sa Kalsada, RA 4136-Land Transportation and Traffic Code of the Philippines at Paraan ng Pag-renew ng Driver's License na binalangkas ng mga tauhan mula sa Tanay PNP, BFP, Rizal HPG, LTO at Top Speed Driving Academy. Gayundin ay tumanggap ng bigas ang ilang membro ng TODA bunga ng kanilang aktibong partisipasyon.

Ang Tanay Municipal Police Station sa pamumuno ni PLT Col Pagala ay taos pusong nagpapasalamat na naging matagumpay ang paglulunsad ng proyekto ito sa tulong at suporta ng Tops Speed Driving Academy, BNK Café and Restaurant, Kabsat Restaurant, Tanay Treskillion Municipal Council, at Khalsa Aid (Indian Sikh Community), G.Bong Bati, sa Motoposh-Tanay, Motoposh-Siniloan, G. Jonard Jay S. Ramirez, Area Manager ng Exponent Motor Corp Inc., mga miembro ng TODA ng bawat pamunuan sa bayan ng Tanay na nakiisa at sa lahat ng nagpahayag ng kanilang suporta. Higit sa lahat kay Ginang Mildred Uy sa pagpapagamit ng LTO Compound and facility upang maging lugar na pinagdausan ng nasabing programa.

Isang makabuluhang hakbang tungo sa mas ligtas, disiplinado, at responsableng pamayanan dahil ang Gusto ng Pulis Ligtas Ka.

A STEP TOWARD PEACE...

Cavinti, Laguna – In partnership with the Office of the Presidential Assistant for Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (OPAPRU) and the National Amnesty Commission (NAC), the 202nd Infantry (Unifier) Brigade recently hosted a transformative Amnesty Orientation and Former Rebel Engagement Activity. Aimed at guiding former rebels

(FRs) through the Amnesty Program and supporting their reintegration into society, the inter-agency activity sought to jumpstart the Local Amnesty Board for Region 4A. Under the theme "Path to Amnesty: Orientation and Engagement for Former Rebels," the event marked a critical moment in national healing and unity.

The program

FROM PAGE 1

kicked off with an insightful opening by Ms. Justine Francia A. Lasheras from NAC, and MGen Rhoderick M. Parayno (Ret) of OPAPRU. Thirty FRs who have availed of the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (ECLIP) attended the event, which included an Oath-Taking Ceremony symbolizing their commitment to peace. The

PUBLISHER CORNER

THE NATIONAL TERRITORY OF THE PHILIPPINES IS MUCH BIGGER THAN MANY FILIPINOS ARE AWARE OF OR HAVE BEEN TAUGHT.



International law recognizes that each coastal State may claim a territorial sea (dagat, karagatan) that extends seaward (palaot) up to 12 nautical miles (nm) and an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) beyond its territorial sea that extends seaward up to 200 nm from its baselines, the low-water line along the coast or coastline (baybay-dagat).

As a coastal State, the Philippines can claim a 12 nm territorial sea where it has sovereignty and a 200 nm EEZ where it has sovereign rights. Foreign ships have right of innocent passage while transiting the 12 nm territorial sea subject to international law and regulations. Even if it is not shown or named on a map, the 12 nm territorial sea or the 200 nm EEZ of each coastal State is recognized under international law and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

A true map of the Philippines includes not only the Spratly Islands and Scarborough Shoal in the West Philippine Sea but also Sabah or North Borneo, Guam, the Mariana Islands, Palau, and the Caroline Islands.

The Mariana Islands, including Guam, and the Caroline Islands, including Palau, which are historically part of

the Philippines, are located in the Philippine Sea, the "Forgotten Sea".

The Philippine Sea, which is on the eastern side of the Philippine archipelago, is the world's largest sea (5.695 million sq km) and is much larger than the South China Sea (3.5 million sq km). The Luzon Sea refers to the waters off the western and northern coasts of Luzon.

The name West Philippine Sea has previously been used to refer to the western portion of the Philippine Sea. The Administrative Order No. 29 that was signed by President Benigno S. Aquino III on September 5, 2012 ordered that the maritime areas on the western side of the Philippine archipelago are hereby named as the West Philippine Sea. The West Philippine Sea label is now easier to see on Google Maps but not yet recognized or listed by major international maritime and hydrographic organizations. Sponsor legislation or issue an executive order establishing the Spratly Islands or Kailashan Island Group as a new province and congressional district of the Philippines.

The US grabbed Guam (Isla de Guajan) from the Philippines (Islas Filipinas) in 1898.

Guam or Guajan is shown in a map of the Philippine archipelago drawn by the Jesuit Father

Pedro Murillo Velarde and published in 1734. The Mariana Islands (Islas Marianas) and the Caroline Islands (Islas Carolinas), which were previously administered from Manila, were separated from the Philippines as a consequence of US imperialism and aggression against the Katipunan and the young Filipino republic. The US has prevented the reunification of the Mariana Islands (Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands) and Caroline Islands (Palau and the Federated States of Micronesia) with the Philippines. The UK handed over Sabah to Malaysia in 1963. The UK, Australia, and New Zealand have prevented the reunification of Sabah with the Philippines.

Assert and do not yield Philippine sovereignty and sovereign rights in the West Philippine Sea and the Philippine Sea. Return Sabah to the Philippines. End US occupation of Guam. Return Guam and Palau to the Philippines. The UK has returned Hong Kong to China. Portugal has returned Macau to China. Defend the rights of Filipino fishermen in the Philippine Sea.

discussions provided key insights into the amnesty process, eligibility, and the roles of the National Amnesty Commission (NAC) and Local Amnesty Boards (LAB), helping participants understand the path forward. Later, a representative of the FRs also expressed the heartfelt gratitude of the group to the government for helping them return to normal life.

He expressed their readiness to embrace peace and contrib-

ute as responsible citizens to their communities. The Closing ceremony was led by Atty. Leonel P. Cadiz, President of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines-Lucena City Chapter, and Atty. Jeremy Pales Montalbo, Assistant Provincial Prosecutor of Quezon. In his remarks, BGen Ronald Jess Alcudia, Commander, 202nd Brigade PA highlighted the significance of reconciliation: "Peace is built through reconciliation, compassion, and inclusivity. We embrace our

brothers and sisters back with hope and support as they chart a new chapter in their lives." This event underscores the government's Whole-of-Nation Approach to fostering lasting peace and inclusive development.

Through the Amnesty Program, the government reaches out to the remaining armed combatants to choose the path of peace, and denounce violence. National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict

7 WAYS SM SUPERMALLS IS MAKING EARTH DAY, EVERY DAY

SM Supermalls continues to champion the mindset that sustainability isn't just a one-day commitment—it's a lifestyle. In celebration of Earth Day 2025, SM invites everyone to be part of simple, everyday actions that make a big difference for the planet. Through innovative programs, eco-friendly infrastructure, and community engagement, SM's malls have become leading platforms for greener living.

"Our malls are more than shopping destinations—they're spaces where people and the planet can thrive together," said Engr. Liza Silerio, Vice President for Corporate Compliance and Program Director of SM Cares for Environment. "Through programs that are easy to join, SM makes it possible for every visitor to take part in a more sustainable future."

Here are 7 sustainable ways SM is turning its pledge into everyday impact—and how you can take part:

1. Plug in Your EV—for Free

With 123 EV charging stations across 69 malls, SM has disbursed over 14,500 kWh of clean electricity to electric vehicle users, with 50 more chargers planned in 2025. It's free, easy to access, and part of SM's commitment to low-emission mobility.

An electric vehicle charges at SM North EDSA's Electric Vehicle Charging Station—one of 123 across 69 SM Supermalls nationwide.



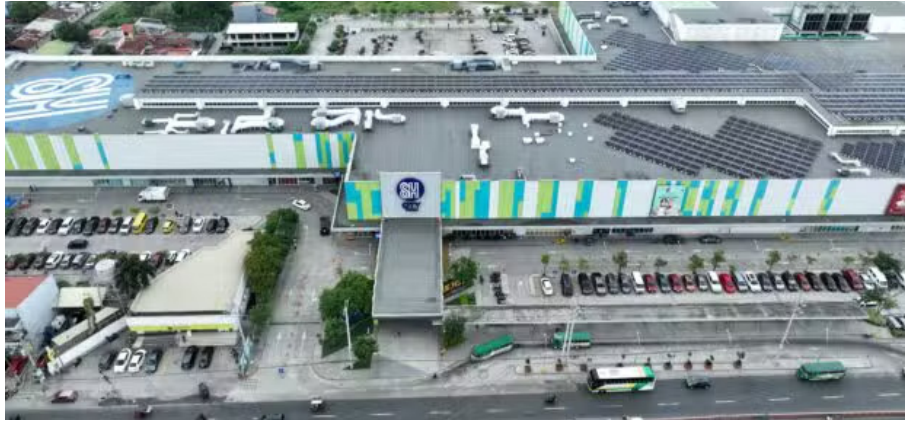
An electric vehicle charges at SM North EDSA's Electric Vehicle Charging Station—one of 123 across 69 SM Supermalls nationwide.

2. Walk into Solar-Powered Spaces

SM currently operates 47 malls and properties with solar installations, generating 27.6 GWh of clean energy in 2024 alone—the equivalent of removing over 4,100 cars off the road. With a goal of 100MWp rooftop solar capacity by 2027, more solar rollouts are planned for 2025.

SM City Tanza powers up with 2,286 solar panels, generating a peak capacity of 1,257.30 kW—part of SM

Supermalls' commitment to clean and sustainable energy.



SM City Tanza powers up with 2,286 solar panels, generating a peak capacity of 1,257.30 kW—part of SM

3. Experience Greener Malls with Natural Lighting

From Sky Gardens and skylights that allow natural light to brighten spaces and reduce electricity use, to LED lighting and motion sensor escalators, every corner of the mall is designed with energy efficiency in mind. SM also contributes 110 MW of capacity to the DOE's Interruptible Load Program.

Natural light streams through the skylights of SM Supermalls, helping reduce electricity consumption while creating a bright, welcoming space.

4. Support a Waste-Free Future

Launched in 2023, SM's #SMWasteFreeFuture campaign enforces proper waste seg-



Natural light streams through the skylights of SM Supermalls, helping reduce electricity consumption while creating a bright, welcoming space.

regation across all mall tenants through RDC (Recyclable, Disposable, Compostable) bin systems.

Internally, SM is also building a culture of sustainability among employees, proving that change starts from within.

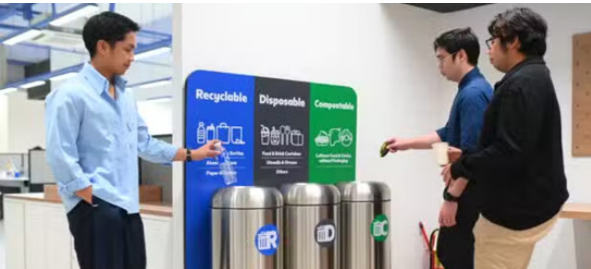
SM employees lead by example as they properly segregate waste using the RDC (Recyclable, Disposable, Compostable) bin system—showing that building a #SMWasteFreeFuture starts from within.

5. Turn Trash into Treasure at Trash-to-Cash

Held every first Friday and Saturday of the month, this recycling market has helped exchange over 1 million kilograms of recyclables annually across SM malls nationwide. Visitors can bring paper, plastic, metal, or even old appliances—and exchange them for cash.

Students weighs recyclables during SM Cares' Trash to Cash, showing that small actions can lead to a greener future.

SM employees lead by example as they properly segregate waste using the RDC (Recyclable, Disposable, Compostable) bin system—showing that building a #SMWasteFreeFuture starts from within.



6. Recycle Smarter with Plastic and E-Waste Collection

Drop off used plastics at 15 participating SM malls and e-waste bins at Cyberzone areas nationwide. So far, these programs have diverted 63,874 kg of plastics and over 11,000 kg of e-waste from landfills—thanks to partnerships with Friends of Hope and Smart/PLDT.

Mall customers drop off used plastic wastes at SM's Plastic Collection Program—proving that small actions can lead to a cleaner, greener future for all.

Unused and damaged electronic items are being let go through SM's E-Waste Collection located at Cyberzone.

Students weighs recyclables during SM Cares' Trash to Cash, showing that small actions can lead to a greener future.



7. Join Coastal Cleanups that Protect Our Seas

In 2024, over 27,000 volunteers across 15 SM malls helped col-

lect more than 157,000 kg of trash from coastlines and waterways. SM also initiates weekly and quarterly coastal cleanups, proving that when communities work together, the ripple effect reaches far and wide.

SM Bataan employee volunteers during the International Coastal Cleanup, working together to help protect our oceans.

From recycling programs to coastal cleanups, solar panels to EV charging stations, every small act adds up. And at SM, Earth Day isn't just April 22—it's every day.

Pope Francis Dies at 88, Leaving Legacy of Compassion, Reform, and Global Unity



The world is united in mourning following the death of Pope Francis, who passed away peacefully on Monday at the age of 88. The Vatican confirmed his passing, marking the end of a historic and transformative papacy that transcended borders, creeds, and cultures.

Born Jorge Mario Bergoglio in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Pope Francis was the first Latin American and first Jesuit pope — a symbol of change from the very beginning. Elected in 2013, his papacy became a beacon of humility, reform, and deep compassion in an era marked by division and uncertainty.

A Life of Service and Simplicity

Before rising to the papacy, Bergoglio was Archbishop of Buenos Aires, known for walking the streets, riding public transport, and caring for the city's poorest communities. His Jesuit background instilled in him a life of discipline and service, evident in every step of his journey.

As pope, Francis rejected the lavish papal apartments, choosing instead to live at Casa Santa Marta among fellow clergy. His gestures — from washing the feet of prisoners to embracing the homeless — were more than symbolic; they reflected his vision of a Church close to the people.

His papacy was marked by quiet reflection, prayer, and messages of gratitude to those who had walked with him throughout his papacy.

He also took bold steps to address longstanding issues within the Church, pursuing transparency and accountability in Vatican governance. While his reforms met resistance, they laid the groundwork for a more open and compassionate Catholic Church.

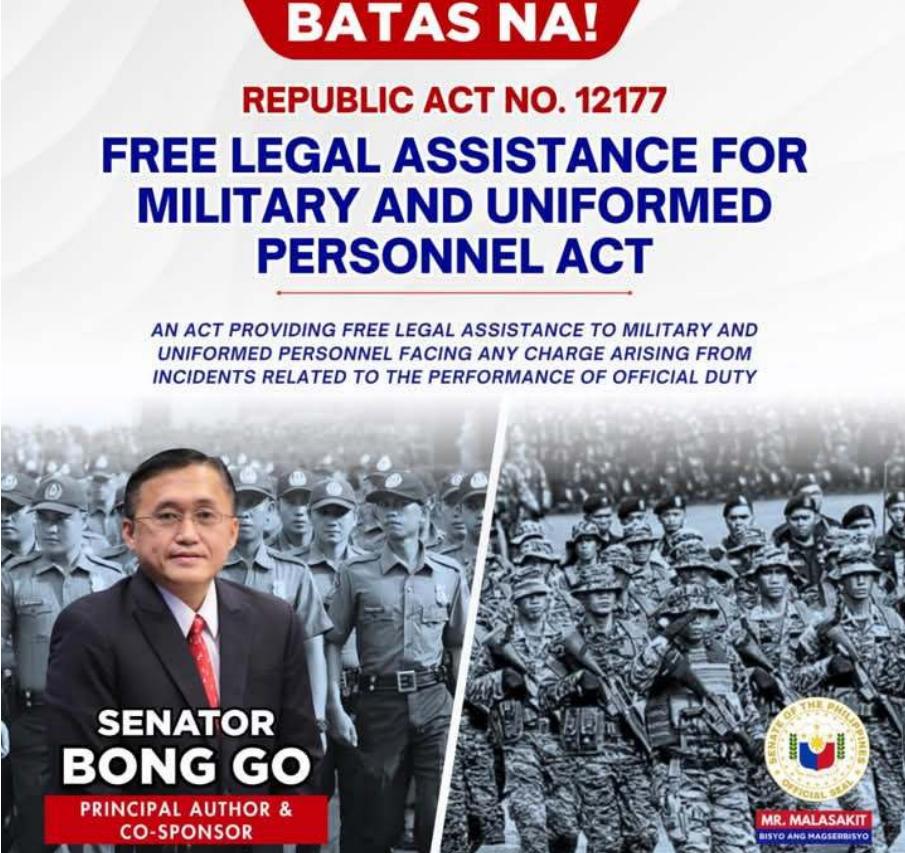
He was, truly, a shepherd of the world.

Final Days of Courage and Faith

In recent years, Pope Francis's health began to decline, with recurring respiratory issues, including bronchitis and pneumonia. Yet, even in frailty, he remained committed to his spiritual du-



SENATOR BONG GO CHAMPIONS RA 12177: FREE LEGAL AID NOW GUARANTEED FOR MILITARY AND UNIFORMED PERSONNEL



A Historic Day for the Nation's Frontliners, A move that underscores the government's deepening commitment to the welfare of the country's protectors, Republic Act No. 12177, or the Free Legal Assistance for Military and Uniformed Personnel Act, has officially been signed into law.

The announcement was made by Senator Bong Go, Vice Chairperson of the Senate Committee on National Defense and one of the principal authors and co-sponsors of the legislation. He proudly shared the news via social media, saying: "BATAS NA ANG FREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE PARA SA MGA MILITARY AT UNIFORMED PERSONNEL!"

The new law aims to provide free legal assistance to military and uniformed personnel (MUPs) facing legal challenges related to the performance of their official duties. This includes members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), Philippine National Police (PNP), Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), and other related services.

Senator Go emphasized that this is not just a legal milestone, but a moral one. "This is a testament that the government recognizes the unique and difficult challenges faced by our military and uniformed personnel. It is our duty to protect those who protect us," he said.

The new law ensures that MUPs are not left alone in the face of legal battles that may arise from fulfilling their roles in maintaining peace, order, and public safety. It affirms the government's commitment to safeguarding the rights and welfare of its uniformed heroes while they continue to serve with integrity and courage.

RA 12177 marks a significant step forward in institutionalizing support for the country's defenders—making it clear that their sacrifices are not only honored but protected by the law.

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