

CAVITE TOURISM PARTAKES IN THE INSPECTION OF FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS AND SALONS

page 2

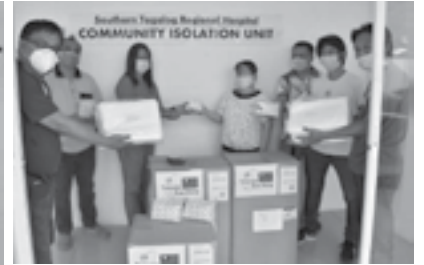
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galog Regional Hospital. Dinaluhan ito ng Chief of Staff Ms. Maiet Martinez-Banquil, STRH Chief of Hospital Dr. Ruby Ephraim M. Rubiano, at ilang punong barangay ng Lungsod ng Bacoor. Naisakatuparan ito sa kabutihang loob ng Taiwan Embassy (sa pamamagitan ni Ms. Sonya Lu) at sa pakikipagtulungan ni Senator Ping Lacson.

Kamakailan ay namahagi ang opisina ni Bacoor Congressman Strike B. Revilla ng mga PPE (personal protective equipment) suits and masks para sa mga frontliners sa Southern Ta-

Cavite launches Botika on Wheels

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MONITORING TO CONTROL SPREAD OF COVID-19 CONTINUES IN CAVITE TOP TOURIST DESTINATION

In order to ensure that health safety protocols are strictly implemented in one of the all-time favorite tourist destinations in Luzon, the monitoring team comprised of representatives from DTI, DOLE, PHO, PTCAO and the City Tourism Office visited food establishments and few operating hair salons at Ayala Mall Serin in Tagaytay City on July 15, 2020.

General Manager Jacky Chen commends the government's efforts in helping businesses adjust with the new normal guidelines, as the team did not just focus on spotting violations but were helpful enough to give recommendations on how they can improve their existing safety measures. Suggestions such as setting up of additional handwashing areas, provision of



separate bins for infectious wastes, and techniques on limiting the allowable walk-ins are among the few discussed during the post-audit monitoring.

The team will be roving in two more shopping malls in Tagaytay City, Fora Mall on July 16 and Summit Ridge Promenade on July 17. -Rochelle D. Bawalan (Tourism Operations Officer II)

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EDITORIAL:

Isolation centers

The spike in local COVID-19 cases is largely caused by poor monitoring and looser implementation of quarantine rules. Many local government units down to the barangay level have been remiss of their duty in preventing the spread of the virus. In Metro Manila, especially the nation's capital Manila, you can see people walking nonchalantly on the sidewalks without face masks. Many minors while away their time outside of their homes, oblivious to the dangers of getting infected with COVID-19. A child without face mask tags along with her parent on their way home or begging on the streets.

The police, meanwhile, are indifferent to the violation of the health rules spelled out in Republic Act No. 11469, or the Bayanihan Act. Some of these law enforcers manning Metro Manila's intersections are more interested in apprehending would-be traffic violators than arresting minors who violate curfew ordinances. The police can do their share in preventing the virus' spread by reminding people of the need to wear face masks and by bringing minors to the custody of their parents. The police, barangay tanods and health authorities are at the forefront of curbing the

COVID-19 spread. They, along with executives of local government units, should pursue a more aggressive approach in dealing with the disease. The police, for one, will have a major role in ensuring people, who test positive for COVID-19 and cannot self-isolate at home, are taken to government-run quarantine facilities. The government has built a number of quarantine centers within and outside the capital region to prevent hospitals from being overwhelmed by COVID-19 cases.

The Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases, amid the rapid rise in virus cases, finally deployed the police to accompany health workers to the homes of people who have tested positive and take them to government facilities if their residences are inadequate for self-isolation. "We prefer that the asymptomatics and the mild cases voluntarily surrender and confine themselves in isolation centers," said Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque.

Extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures. Science is teaching us that now.

CAVITE TOURISM ...



"Pagbabago 2020" the Pre-SONA forums are a three-part series that feature key government policies and programs in greater detail in preparation for the 5th SONA of President Duterte later on July 27. The second part of Pre-SONA series resumes today featuring the Human Development and Poverty Reduction Cluster (HD-PRC) and the Participatory Governance Cluster (PGC).

"The Pre-SONA forums are an annual series of events that the Duterte administration has been staging as part of its efforts to make governance more participatory and transparent to the public. While the SONA is the most important government speech every year, the pre-SONA events are a means for state agencies to report their respective accomplishments and plans in greater detail, and to provide broader context for the President's upcoming SONA," Finance Assistant Secretary Antonio Lambino II said.

"While organizing this year's pre-SONA presented

the government with challenges because of COVID-19 mobility restrictions, we also saw increased activity in digital spaces as an opportunity to reach out to more Filipinos in new ways." Lambino, who is also the Department of Finance (DOF) spokesman and head of its Strategy, Economics and Results Group (SERG), added.

More than 90 government agencies livestreamed the three-hour program on their respective Facebook pages, and another 14 media organizations shared the feed on their social media sites. The event was also simulcast on six television networks and two radio stations.

"Broad inter-agency cooperation to reach more people through their channels made the event the most widely-covered Pre-SONA forum in Philippine history so far, resulting to more than 30 unique online news stories of a single event," Lambino said.

Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez

Ill and Public Works and Highways Secretary Mark Villar headlined the forum as cluster chairs.

Top officials who were present at the forum included Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea, Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Governor Benjamin Diokno, Acting Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Karl Kendrick Chua, Trade and Industry Secretary Ramon Lopez, Science and Technology Secretary Fortunato dela Peña, Agriculture Secretary William Dar, Budget and Management Secretary Wendel Avisado, Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade, Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) Director-General Isidro Lapeña, Tourism Undersecretary Arturo Boncato, Education Undersecretary Alain Pascua and Information and Communications Technology Assistant Secretary Emmanuel Ray Caintic.

"Last year, the online coverage of the EDC-IC Pre-SONA forum garnered over 130,000 views. Last Wednesday (July 8), we reached more than 960,000 online viewers. In addition to online views, it is estimated that at least half a million Filipinos also watched the event on television via the live coverage of TV5, IBC 13, OneNews Channel, DZRH News TV, Central Luzon Television (CLTV), and PTV," Lambino said.

"We encourage all those who watched

FROM PAGE 1

the EDC-IC Pre-SONA to tune in to the other cabinet clusters' Pre-SONA events as well," he added.

"The government's efforts to make the pre-SONA more interactive this year was a practice that appears to have encouraged more people to participate in the event," Lambino said, citing that "leading up to the forum, we sent out a call for netizens to submit their questions on how the government can best help Filipinos recover from the effects of the COVID-19 crisis," he said.

Lambino said, "Citizens posted videos of themselves on Facebook directing questions to their Cabinet secretaries. We featured several of them, and the concerned agencies were present so that these questions were properly answered by them. Other questions that were not featured live because of the limited time have been answered on another platform."

Because of COVID-19 restrictions, he said that key government events, including Sulong Pilipinas--the Duterte administration's annual stakeholder consultation event to gather actionable policy recommendations--were held via teleconferencing platforms.

"Although we had to learn and adapt to these new platforms very quickly, the government also sees opportunities in these online events to make our consultative activities more inclusive," Lambino said. (DOF PR)



Senator Win Gatchalian raised the urgency of giving government aid to struggling private schools as enrollment in these institutions reached only 24.3 percent from last year's 4 million.

Out of 20,220,507 learners enrolled nationwide as of July 15, only 1,050,437 are enrolled in private schools. The Department of Education (DepEd) also reported that 323,524 learners from private schools, state universities and colleges (SUCs), and local universities and colleges (LUCs) have moved to public schools. DepEd clarified earlier that enrollment is still ongoing in some private institutions.

According to Gatchalian, ensuring the continued implementation of government subsidy programs, including the Senior High School Voucher Program (SHS VP) and the Education Service Contracting (ESC) will help learners to continue their education while giving relief to private schools, especially those who are struggling to sustain operations because of lockdown mea-

After enrollment dip, government aid needed for private schools

asures and postponed enrollment.

The SHS VP is a program of financial assistance wherein subsidies in the form of vouchers are provided to qualified SHS learners from private or non-DepEd schools. The ESC, on the other hand, utilizes the excess capacities of certified private junior high schools by allocating slots to students who would have gone to public schools. The slots come with subsidies called ESC grants.

Gatchalian added that there should be enough allocations for these programs under the 2021 budget so as not to reduce the number of beneficiaries as it could lead to a potential spike in dropouts.

To help private schools stay afloat, Gatchalian emphasized the need to give direct subsidies to teachers and personnel, some of whom are being paid so little since the imposition of quarantine measures.

According to the lawmaker, this adds urgency to passing the Bayanihan to Recover As One

Act (Senate Bill No. 1564) or Bayanihan 2.0, which has a provision to give one-time cash assistance to affected teaching and non-teaching personnel in private schools. Bayanihan 2.0 also aims to give tuition subsidies to learners who are not covered by government educational subsidies and voucher programs.

"Ang mga pribadong paaralan ay ating mga katuwang sa pagbibigay ng dekalidad na edukasyon sa ating mga kabataan. Upang hindi matigil ang kanilang pagbibigay ng edukasyon, kailangang ipagpatuloy natin ang pagbibigay ng tulong sa kanila habang nasa gitna tayo ng krisis na dulot ng COVID-19," said Gatchalian, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Basic Education, Arts and Culture.

Gatchalian concluded that with the help of the government and other sectors, private schools should ramp up their re-enrollment campaigns so they can reach learners who are at risk of dropping out and ensure that no child will be left behind including children in private schools.

Beyond the Outbreak

Dr. Jaime Aristotle B. Alip
CARD MRI Founder and Chair Emeritus

It is around this time of the year when our farmers would harvest the produce they have tirelessly worked hard on for months. Instead of a full table and an income that would support their family until the next harvest season, they are left with uncertainty and instability due to the COVID-19 outbreak that none of us expected.

Focusing on protecting people from COVID-19, the local and national government declared lockdowns and community quarantines in many cities and municipalities across the nation. This severely curtailed movement and public gatherings that made the operations of microfinance institutions untenable. In response, microfinance institutions, declared a suspension of operations in their covered areas, including moratorium on loan payments while the community quarantine is in effect. Many of these institutions are members of APPEND and MCPI whose combined outreach is 9 million poor and low-income families served by more than 50,000 staff and an estimated 70B loan portfolio.

With the expected decrease in business activities, the reprieve will allow clients to channel their budget to basic needs. Even so, an unsettling voice still lingers: is the delay in the collection of loan payments ever enough to sustain their needs after all of this is over?

The bigger picture

With significant experience in community development, microfinance institutions (MFIs) have seen poverty-stricken families rise above poverty through access to and ownership of financial and non-financial services. Because of the COVID-19 outbreak, all of this could potentially go down the drain. The low-income sector, who are mostly clients of MFIs, are greatly distressed by the effects of the pandemic and the necessary measures imposed by the government.

Since main bank branches of CARD Mutually Reinforcing Institutions (CARD MRI) nationwide are still open for services like withdrawals and remittances, our skeleton workforce still has interactions with our clients. Field staff have also remained connected with clients through cell phones and/or social media that enabled them to communicate to management what was happening to their communities. Our Regional Directors have reported that many of the clients are experiencing devastating effects on their livelihoods. Most of them have products to sell but are restricted by the physical barriers of community quarantine, severely affecting their income to support their own families. For example, in the National Capital Region and elsewhere, in order to implement social distancing, marketing hours were imposed, compelling many small eateries and stalls in the public markets to close.

Botika ...

FROM PAGE 1

The provincial government of Cavite in coordination with local government units has launched Botika on Wheels in seven cities and 16 towns of the province to give essential medicines to senior citizens. The mobile drug store aims to visit all barangay (villages) of Cavite and reach out to the elderly who are not allowed to leave their homes as they are said to be more vulnerable to coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19). The Botika on Wheels team visited the 27 villages of the municipality of Maragondon on June 5-11 and distributed free maintenance medicines to a total of 2,260 senior citizens as well as vitamins to help them boost their immune system. The mobile drug store dispensed medicines to 4,364 elderly folk of Cavite City on June 16-23, and on June 25-26, a total of 1,516 senior citizens of the town of Naic also received their prescription medicines. As of June 29, a total of 8,140 individuals had benefitted from the Botika on Wheels program. The activity was made possible with the assistance of the Provincial Health Office, Maragondon Mayor Reynaldo Rillo, Cavite City Mayor Bernardo Paredes and Naic Mayor Jun Dualan as well as municipal and city health officers, Dr. Aldous Angeles (satellite hospitals chief) and barangay captains and barangay health workers who helped the team distribute the medicines. During the activity, the Botika on Wheels team observed physical distancing and wore face masks to ensure the safety of everyone. (manilatimes.net)

EXTRA JUDICIAL

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Dateline Weekly Newspapers:
July 20, 27 & August 3, 2020

Cont. on Page 6

WEEKLY REPORT
on the Activities & Programs of
Carmona



Carmona Mayor Roy Loyola conducts online meeting with industrial companies: Municipal Mayor Roy Loyola held a videoconference meeting with industrial estates administrators, locators' association president, Carmona Business Club, and Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) on July 15, 2020 to discuss about the ongoing implementation of the minimum public health standards in their respective companies as well as reminding them on the immediate reporting of cases or incidents in relation to coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

COVID-19 UPDATES

New confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 in Carmona as of July 15, 2020

CASE NO.	AGE	SEX	ADDRESS	CO-MORBIDITY	STATUS
CP-68	43	M	CABILANG BAYBAY (SAN MIGUEL ST)	NONE	SYMPTOMATIC
CP-69	39	M	MILAGROSA (PHASE 1)	NONE	SYMPTOMATIC
CP-70	41	F	MILAGROSA (PHASE 1)	DIABETES MELLITUS	SYMPTOMATIC
CP-71	12	F	LANTIC (CEDAR 3)	NONE	ASYMPTOMATIC

Dapat Alerto! Handa Lagi! Iwas Aksidente!

AttyRoyMLoyola carmonaig

Carmona LGU reports 4 new cases of COVID-19: The local government of Carmona, through the Municipal Health Office (MHO), confirmed on July 15, 2020 the 4 new positive cases of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in the municipality. Currently, there are 71 cases in total with 22 recoveries and 49 active cases.

REDEFINING THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AT SM CENTER IMUS

You can now have your much needed beauty products and essential merchandises with a curbside drive through, or stay home and have your essentials delivered at your doorstep by a personal shopper as SM CENTER IMUS redefines customer service during these challenging times through SM Center Imus's official messenger and contact numbers, SM Center Imus Center Concierge, Get and Go, and SM Cavite Community Rider services.

Chat with us by simply contacting us through messenger, @SMCenterImus or call our mall admin to find out the availability of essentials and answers to any mall queries that you may have. It's a system designed for your convenience and tailored to your preference.



Center Concierge can also provide you with Fast and Easy Shopping experience with your own personal shopper. Smart Malling has never been this easy! Drop by SM Center Imus Event Center or call their hotlines and ask the Concierge to do the shopping for you, have your items listed and pick them up on a curbside parking, or have them delivered on your doorsteps!

Get and Go a curbside walk and drive-through. Simply choose from the list of open establishments posted on SM Center Imus's official social media page; contact the store directly to order, and arrange for payment. Your order will be waiting for you when you walk or drive through the mall.



SIP, SLURP, SMILE AT SM CITY BACOR!



SM CITY BACOR, CAVITE – Enjoy quick bites with your companions as you rest for a while and dine after grabbing all your essentials at SM City Bacoor. Dining is now safe and possible at our designated dining area at the Ground Level near Entrance 2. Enjoy store-bought food from your favorite restaurants through you or the Center Concierge located just on the other side, with our cute Smiley friends!

SO MANY MARKDOWNS AT THE SM STORE

After being homebound for some time, this is the best time to re-visit The SM Store and enjoy its So Many Markdowns.

You'll love our great bargains and finds. Get as much as 50% OFF on selected items from July 1 to 31, 2020, whether it be fashion must-haves, baby needs, home essentials and so much more.

Rediscover how much fun it is to shop for the home and for the kids, for whom there are Mickey Medium Foldable Trikes and Pico Polo Pinkstripe Strollers. You can also make distance learning fun for tweens with SM Stationery Unicorn Sequins Notebooks and SM Accessories Earphones.

And for yourself, run errands in style with our selection of comfy sneakers and fashion must-haves, and pack your own drinks with the Aqua Vacuum Flask.

And since your safety is our priority, The SM Store has everything to make shopping safe and secure for everyone - conducting temperature checks at entrances, regular disinfection of counters and other in-store areas, and implementation of social distancing protocols.

Put your face mask and get your list ready! Catch the best of So Many Markdowns at The SM Store today!

Check out other marked down items which you can have delivered straight to your doorstep at The SM Store.com, and join The SM Store group on Viber today so you're up-to-date on the latest promos at The SM Store!

About: The SM Store is the Philippines' largest department store chain with 64 branches nationwide. Since our first store opened in 1958, The SM Store has been a long-time favorite one-stop-shop with the best product variety, shopping convenience, and value for money. We offer a great selection of menswear, womenswear, childrenswear, all kinds of beauty products, and things for the home. You can also find stationery, electronic gadgets, snacks, toys, hardware, and fun Philippine souvenirs here.

Get organized with this set of 3 tropical Mini Box. Original Price: 399.00 MarkDown Price: 280.00



Keep your kids active with this Mickey Foldable Trike. Original Price: 2, 299.75 MarkDown Price: 1,999.75



Whether it's for organizing the home or planning for a future trip this Samsonite Popsoda Suitcase is a great bargain. Original Price: 14,250.00 MarkDown Price: 8,550.00



Take your little one for short morning walks in your place safely and securely with this Pico Polo Pinkstripe Stroller. Original Price 2,999.75 MarkDown Price: 2,100.00



Have all the little one's needs in one place for every important trip with this Ollin Taryn Sling Diaper Bag. Original Price 899.75 MarkDown Price: 719.80



Relieve the pain on your neck and shoulders with this portable Neck Massager. Original Price: 1,999.75 MarkDown Price: 999.75



Bring your own coffee, juice or tea with this double wall Aqua Vacuum Flask that will help keep your drinks hot or cold from sunrise to sundown. Original Price: 299.75 MarkDown Price: 149.87

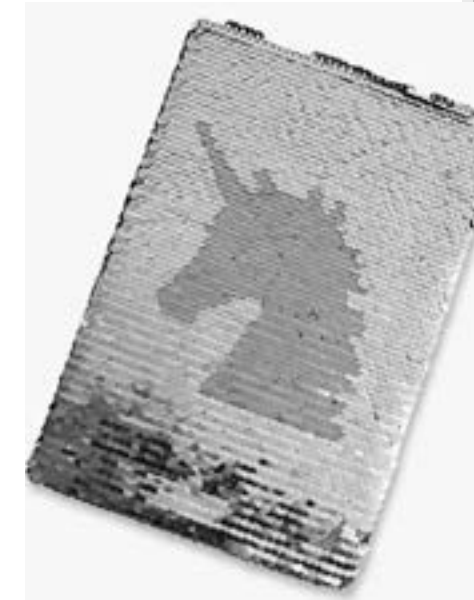


Add a pop of color to your kitchen with this retro Gene Elijah Bar Stool. Original Price: 2,495.00 MarkDown Price: 1,746.50

Neutralize noise with this noise-cancelling, Wireless Headset by SM Accessories. Original Price: 499.75 MarkDown Price: 19.00



Make your kids' days more upbeat with these cute, printed SM Accessories Kids' Earphones. *Sold separately. Original Price: 149.75 MarkDown Price: 74.00



Express your ideas and feelings in a notebook that is just as fabulous – Unicorn Sequins Notebook. Original Price: 249.75 MarkDown Price: 169.00

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CONCEPCION: MILLIONS OF FILIPINOS SHOULD BE TESTED TO WIN THIS WAR



In the Balik Kabuhayan webinar, PA Joey Concepcion, together with Rep. Joey Salceda, ARK-PCR Private Sector Chief Implementor Cong. Janette Garin, PAASE President Gisela Concepcion, PCMC COVID-19 Testing Laboratory Head Raymundo W. Lo, Filinvest Development Corp President & CEO Josephine Gotianun-Yap, Project ARK Medical Team Leader Dr. Minguita Padilla, and Karen Davila emphasized the importance of regular testing as a means to balance public health and the economy. (GO NEGOSY0)

Beyond...

helping people improve their lives while facing this global health emergency. We are also convening partners and industry leaders to discuss this pressing issue to mitigate the effect of the pandemic in the industry.

Most importantly, the support from the government is most crucial at this time. The Philippines has proven to be a conducive environment to implement microfinance. Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has repeatedly recognized MFIs as champions for financial inclusion. Further, laws such as RA 10693 or the Microfinance NGOs Act, which was signed on November 2015, enables Microfinance NGOs to expand outreach to greater number of poor people especially in the hard-to-reach areas and implement community development programs funded by tax incentives. These programs include medical missions, scholarships, and livelihood trainings, among others.

We encourage you to think about the low-income sector; the landless farm workers, the small farmers, the fisherfolks, the maglalako, the sari-sari store owners, and other microentrepreneurs. The lockdown and community quarantine may end soon but if we do

not act now, their sufferings will worsen even after the outbreak. Because health protection and financial inclusion goes hand in hand, may we not forget to balance the scale in favor of one over the other. Let's ensure no one gets left behind.

As a Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest blog concludes: "It seems likely that without significant support and concerted action, many MFIs are at risk in the coming storm. The question is: what steps can we take now to ensure the industry survives and can contribute to the eventual economic recovery? Without taking on hard questions and beginning to put plans in place for COVID-19, it won't be poverty that is in a museum, but potentially the modern microfinance movement."

About the Author

Dr. Jaime Aristotle B. Alip is the founder and chairman emeritus of CARD Mutually Reinforcing Institutions, a group of 23 institutions that envisions to eradicate poverty in the Philippines. He is the recipient of the 2019 Ramon V. del Rosario Award for Nation Building.

FROM PAGE 3

SM strengthens Safe Malling Measures



As for your safety and others', always wear a mask every time you shop and maintain physical distancing

SM Supermalls have been true to its commitment in reaching out to all Filipinos and providing the one-stop concept that SM has always been known for. Through its integrated approach towards mall management, SM has always been the top destination for Filipino families. Then Covid 19 happened, as countries come under quarantine orders and consumers around the world start to limit human contact, businesses also started to adapt. SM recognize the global response to the novel COVID-19 virus and its a significant impact on its community. SM understand the situation is changing daily and ensures the safety of its employees while trying to maintain business as usual activities.

With rising caseloads, physical isolation from loved ones, and, for many, a loss of routine, SM Supermalls, has been continuously servicing its community, being resilient in these trying times. SM has begun requiring its employees to wear facemasks since early March 2020. At the time, the company said it would also encourage shoppers to wear facemasks. In a blog post with Amazing Laguna blog explaining the new rule, SM City San Pablo PR Manager Nina Wong, described it as a "simple step to help keep you safe."

World health organization said that asymptomatic people could carry and spread COVID-19, "the choices you make about where you go can be the difference that is why here at SM implements all the precautionary guidelines for everyone's safety.

Action is the antidote to anxiety, and there is actually a lot individuals can do to protect themselves and their families. Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, wear a mask when you venture out, and keep your distance from people you do not live with can help manage the risk of being infected.

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Dateline Weeekly Newspapers: July 13, 20 & 27, 2020

ONLINE PRESENTATION OF TESDA PERFORMING ARTS ASSESSMENT PROPOSAL FOR THE NEW NORMAL



The Provincial Tourism and Cultural Affairs Office facilitated an online meeting regarding TESDA Performing Arts Assessment Proposal for the New Normal on July 15, 2020 via Google Meet. Said proposal was presented by Mr. Breshnev J. Larlar, founder of Teatro Baile de Cavite, recommending the addition of Performing Arts Training in the programs of TESDA under the new normal.

Present during the meeting were Ms. Elinia Imelda Rozelle S. Sangalang,

Provincial Tourism Officer, National Artist for Dance Ms. Alice M. Reyes, Ms. Rodesa Faustino of TESDA Central Office, Mr. Ramir Montoya of TESDA Cavite, Ms. Alice Parenas of DepEd Central Office, and proposal contributors Ms. Elena L. Alvarez (Contemporary), Mr. Rommel Serano (Folk Dance), Ms. Lani Ligot (Musical Theater), Ms. Citas Abihay Yson (Musical Instrument), Ms. Malou Bugayong (Ballet), Ms. Nimfa Ursabia (Visual Arts), Mr. Joseph Pimentel (Media Arts), and Mr. Terence Guillermo the overall coordinator. — Armin G. Arañas, Tourist Receptionist |

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To make your Shopee shopping spree exciting, the brand has awesome promos in store for you! Shop from July 13 – 17, 2020, and enjoy up to 50% discount on selected styles and free shipping nationwide for a minimum purchase of P1,000.00.

With over 1,000 products to choose from and great selections of clothes and accessories, from casual pieces for women to trendy dresses, stylish tops, and bottoms from the Plus line, cool clothing for men and adorable garments for girls, shopping in Forever 21 just got better.

Get connected with Forever 21 through facebook.com/Forever21PH and via Twitter: @Forever21PH and Instagram: @f21philippines. #ForeverTogether

ABOUT FOREVER 21

Forever 21, Inc., headquartered in Los Angeles, California, is a fashion retailer of women's, men's and kids clothing and accessories and is known for offering the hottest, most current fashion trends at a great value to consumers.

This model operates by keeping the store exciting with new merchandise brought in daily. Founded in 1984, Forever 21 operates more than 800 stores in 56 countries with retailers in the United States, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Israel, Japan, Korea, Latin America, Mexico, Philippines and United Kingdom.

Wide selection of casual tops and pants from Forever 21 +



Fun plaid rolled up long-sleeves button down top matched with a pink skirt for girls

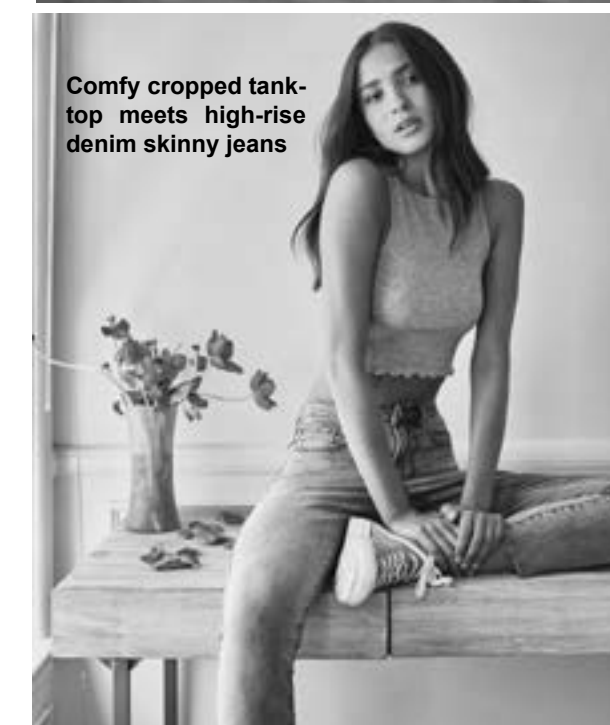
Your go-to brand for the latest trends, must-have styles, and hottest deals is now on Shopee



Over 1,000 styles to choose from as Forever 21 officially launches its online store on Shopee <https://shopee.ph/forever21>



Pretty women's top with sheer puff sleeves paired with distressed skinny jeans



Comfy cropped tank-top meets high-rise denim skinny jeans



Shop for your favorite Forever 21 items at the comforts of your home from Shopee. Visit <https://shop.ee.ph/forever21>

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Dateline Weeekly Newspapers: July 6, 13 & 20, 2020

EXTRA JUDICIAL

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Moody's affirms Philippines' 'Baa2' rating, 'stable' outlook

Debt watcher recognizes country's buffers against COVID-19

Moody's Investors Service has affirmed the Philippines' credit rating of "Baa2" with a "stable" outlook—a vote of confidence on the ability of the economy to cushion the effects of COVID-19 and to post a solid recovery over the near term.

The affirmation of the Philippines' "Baa2" rating with a "stable" outlook (the outlook indicates absence of factors that could trigger rating adjustment in the near term) comes amid a series of credit rating downgrades and negative outlook revisions by Moody's worldwide. As of end June 2020, Moody's has downgraded the credit ratings of 18 sovereigns and revised to "negative" the outlook on the ratings of 27 sovereigns.

"The rating affirmation and stable outlook reflect Moody's view that the fortification of the government's fiscal position in recent years provides a buffer against a rise in public indebtedness due to shocks such as the ongoing global coronavirus outbreak. Relatedly, the track record of prudent economic and fiscal management, and a robust banking system, contribute to the stable access to funding at moderate costs and support prospects for fiscal consolidation and debt stabilization after the shock subsides," the debt watcher said.

Two of the country's top economic officials welcomed the latest rating decision of Moody's.

Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III said: "The COVID-19 pandemic is a black swan that has shoved countries, including the Philippines, into what is shaping up to be the world's worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. But what separates our country from most virus-hit economies is that we were caught up in this global health crisis with ample buffers to cushion its fallout while keeping our debt level manageable and without compromising our fiscal health.

"Given the prudent management of the economy under the leadership of President Dute-

arte, along with the bold initiatives such as tax reform that he has carried out since he assumed office in 2016, the Philippines has wielded enough fiscal space ahead of the deepening coronavirus crisis," Dominguez said. "Such fiscal space has let the Duterte administration to spend big on its Four-Pillar Strategy to beat the COVID-19 pandemic, which is anchored on providing relief to the poor and other badly hit sectors, beefing up our healthcare capacity, and stimulating the domestic economy to an early and strong recovery."

The strategy has a combined value of Php1.7 trillion, equivalent to 9.1 percent of GDP as of May 2020.

"We thank Moody's for recognizing our country's strengths in the face of this unprecedented global crisis," he said. "We also thank the two chambers of the Congress for their close working relationship with the Executive Department as manifested by their continuous support for presidential policies and timely action on our priority legislative measures that have become our shield in protecting the country's sterling credit standing before the international and domestic investor community."

"On the back of such strong fundamentals, the Duterte administration is committed to a calibrated reopening of the domestic economy in order to quickly restore business and consumer confidence while holding on to certain mobility restrictions and strict health protocols meant to further slow COVID-19 spread, save lives and protect communities," he added.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Governor Benjamin E. Diokno said: "The Philippines entered this crisis in a position of strength characterized in part by healthy external accounts, sound and stable banking system, and manageable inflation.

"Complementing these buffers are the prompt, decisive, and

extraordinary measures implemented by the BSP and the National Government to save lives and livelihoods, and to make sure we emerge from this crisis stronger than before. The BSP has already done a long list of relief measures, and we stand ready to do more if needed, especially as our policy space and tool kit are far from being exhausted.

"The affirmation of our credit rating by Moody's—together with the recent favorable actions on the Philippines by other credit rating agencies (CRAs)—show that important stakeholders from the international community recognize that the Philippines is on the right track as far as managing the effects of the COVID-19 crisis is concerned."

In May, Fitch Ratings and S&P Global affirmed the country's BBB and BBB+ ratings, respectively, with both ratings being assigned a "stable" outlook. In June, Japan Credit Rating Agency (JCR) upgraded the country's credit rating by a notch from BBB+ to A-. Earlier in February, another Japanese CRA, Rating and Investment Information Inc., upgraded the Philippines' rating to BBB+. All debt watchers cited the country's strong fundamentals going into the crisis, the projected solid economic recovery, and gradual return to fiscal consolidation over the near term.

Favorable credit rating developments have allowed the Philippines to access funding at relatively low interest rates at this difficult time. These free up resources to fund other important programs and projects, such as the provision of assistance to those whose incomes had been affected by the community quarantine as well as for the economic recovery initiatives.

For its part, the BSP has done a wide range of policy measures, including a cumulative 175-basis-point cut in the policy rate and a 200-bps reduction in the reserve requirement ratio, a P300-billion repurchase

agreement with the National Government, and a long list of regulatory relief measures. The regulatory relief measures are meant to help ensure banks stay healthy amid the crisis, and that they are able to appropriately serve clients as well, more so micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and large businesses that have been hit hard by the crisis.

Both the BSP and the DOF are proposing vital legislative measures that will help accelerate and sustain the country's economy recovery. The BSP and DOF are both pushing for the Financial Institutions Strategic Transfer (FIST) Act, which will allow a bank to transfer distressed assets, including bad loans, to a separate corporate entity; as well as a law that will allow infusion of additional capital to government financial institutions for them to be able to act as wholesale banks and fund substantial portions of loans that other commercial banks will provide to micro, small, and medium enterprises affected by the pandemic.

The BSP is also proposing the amendment of the New Central Bank Act (R.A. No. 7653) for purposes of strengthening the BSP's supervision over financial conglomerates, particularly by allowing it to look more closely into how affiliates affect operations of banks; as well as a proposed law on strengthening recovery and resolutions planning for banks to align the country's legal framework with international standards.

The DOF is also pushing for the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises Act (CREATE), which will reduce corporate income taxes for the majority of MSMEs by 5 percentage points immediately and will further cut the tax by one percentage point every year from 2023 to 2027.

In its report, Moody's cited the trend of improving fiscal metrics that the Philippines registered consistently prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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For instance, the national government's debt as a percent of GDP has fallen from 50.2 percent in 2010 to 39.6 percent in 2019.

It also acknowledged the country's strong external accounts and healthy banking sector.

"Reserve coverage of external debt and external debt servicing will remain ample and continue to be much stronger than similarly rated emerging market peers, while providing insulation from sudden shifts in global liquidity conditions and capital flow volatility. Combined with a robust banking system, this results in low government liquidity risks, reflected in stable access to funding at moderate cost," the debt watcher said.

Moody's projects the Philippine economy to contract by 4.5 percent this year, taking into account the disruptions to economic activities caused by the health crisis. But it expects the Philippines to bounce back with a robust growth of 6.5 percent in 2021, to be followed by a solid growth of around 6 percent in the succeeding years.

Moody's said the recovery projection comes on the back of favorable demographics and improving investment climate.

The debt watcher's recovery projection is consistent with early indicators of recovery as the Philippine economy reopens. In the manufacturing sector, the Philippines Statistics Authority stated in its Monthly Integrated Survey of Selected Industries that the capacity utilization of factories as a whole increased to 73.4 percent in May compared to 71.2 percent in April.

The Bureau of Customs, on the other hand, exceeded its June collection target by 4.4 percent due to higher import volume, which is another indicator of rising economic activity.

In addition, the Board of Investments (BOI) reported that it has approved P645.3 billion worth of investments in the first six months of the year, up 112 percent from P304.4 billion in the same period last year.

On top of investments from the private sector, the government has also started to accelerate the construction of various massive infrastructure projects under the "Build, Build, Build" program following the lifting of the enhanced community quarantine in Luzon. This will help boost employment and economic activities moving forward. (DOF PR)

