

DATELINE

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The Only Newspaper with Educational Timeliness

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LGU Imus City inoculates senior citizens thru house to house

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Duterte admin pushing more reforms to revive economy, expand financial inclusion

P.5 NPA's Top-Spy in Southern Tagalog Falls

Game-changing reforms in last 5 years prove 'expectations met, promises kept' by Duterte admin

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CONCEPCION: DOH, FDA DID THE RIGHT THING IN ALLOWING ASTRAZENECA FOR 60S BELOW

P.3



OPERATION TULONG EXPRESS FOR BACOOR FIRE VICTIMS

Distribution of DSWD's Social Amelioration Program kicks off in Carmena: The distribution of cash subsidy from the Social Amelioration Program (SAP) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) started on April 16, 2020. The first batch included 422 households of Barangay 1. The schedule and details for the following barangays will be announced soon.



SM CITY BACOOR, CAVITE – With the pandemic and the recent fire incidents within the City of Bacoor, residents were left wondering what worse life could bring them. Last April 13, 2021, hundreds of families were displaced by a fire that gutted 100 homes in Sitio Tibag, Barangay Panapaan III while some residents sustained minor injuries. The vic-



tims are currently taking shelter at Gov. P. F. Espiritu Elementary School, with more risk to be exposed with the virus.

SM Cares and SM City Bacoor gifted more than 300 residents Kalinga Packs containing essential goods their families can use during their stay as the City government aid them on their relocation. The Kalinga packs were distributed by SM City Bacoor employees headed by Assistant Mall Manager Mr. Ben Ali Tolention. The goods were picked up by representatives of the families and was delivered to their current evacuation site.

EDITORIAL: Bigger tables

We refer to the Maginhawa Community Pantry where donations are brought for those who need help. The donations arrive from people from all sectors of the social rung, with some, according to reports chipping in some amount so they could buy groceries for people in need.

People who need the supplies come and take just the amount that they could consume for the next meal.

The two-layer bamboo shelf at a corner of the busy street now contains rice, vegetables, canned goods, milk and even vitamins—and gets restocked fast.

Bayanihan—called tagnawa in the north and

pagtinabangay in the Visayas—is a fundamental aspect of Filipino culture, with people working together as a community to achieve a common goal.

This aspect of bayanihan during the coronavirus pandemic has different threads in different regions in the country. It is a spirit that defines the Filipino even if the Filipino speaks different tongues and professes a variety of religious beliefs.

The young woman who put up the pantry said: “Of course I’m happy to help, but it’s also a lesson for us. If it were just me, I wouldn’t be able to sustain the pantry. It can only be sustained if the community comes together.”

We are certain that many similar gestures across the country are making a dent even if they are not getting any media attention. May these simple deeds continue to make a difference—one family, one meal at a time—and escape the claws of opportunists with the instinct to turn the anonymous exercise into a popularity drive. Heaven forbid we see faces or names of politicians who want to build up their image at any cost.

expectations...

Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III said Monday the game-changing reforms carried out by the government over the last five years have cemented the country’s overall macroeconomic stability—and indicate that “expectations have been met and the promises kept” by President Duterte since he assumed office in 2016.

These reforms, which the administration owe in large part to legislators who saw the need to pass them on time, had enabled the government to respond decisively to the global health and economic crises spawned by the protracted COVID-19 pandemic while ensuring the fiscal sustainability of these initiatives, Dominguez said.

Dominguez said that in both the economic growth and pandemic response periods of the Duterte administration, the government demonstrated great political resolve in pursuing and delivering on its socioeconomic reform agenda, armed with its policy of fiscal prudence that has enabled it to accelerate investments in infrastructure and social services in record levels.

Such fiscal discipline and prudent spending has allowed the government to later on source funds here and abroad for the massive emergency spending needed to quickly and effectively respond to the corona-

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FROM PAGE 1

virus-induced pandemic, he said.

“Amid the extraordinary challenge we continue to face, we will not waver in our commitment to ensure that our macroeconomic fundamentals remain strong. We want to make sure that we can face the future with a deep war chest. We will continue to demonstrate our firm resolve of maintaining fiscal prudence while revitalizing the economy,” Dominguez said during the virtual Sulong Pilipinas 2021: Partners for Progress forum of the Cabinet’s Economic Development and Infrastructure Clusters this morning.

The event is part of the series of Pre-State of the Nation Address (SONA) forums this year by Cabinet officials in the runup to the President’s SONA on July 26.

Dominguez said the Philippines’ direct response to the COVID-19 crisis has so far amounted to P2.76 trillion, equivalent to 15.4 percent of the country’s gross domestic product (GDP).

These responses included safety nets and stimulus measures under the Bayanihan to Heal As One Act (Bayanihan 1) and the Bayanihan to Recover As One Act (Bayanihan 2) to assist pandemic-hit families and businesses; strengthen the health sector to fight COVID-19 and ensure the safety of medical frontliners; and keep the economy afloat and support its quick recovery.

Dominguez said that instead of throwing money at the crisis, the government adopted the more prudent strategy of expanding lending to pandemic-hit enterprises by infusing more capital into government financial institutions (GFIs) for them to lend more money to productive sectors of the economy.

While securing adequate funding for COVID-19 response was a challenge, the Philippines’ historic low debt-to-GDP ratio kept its budget deficit within controlled and manageable levels, he said.

Complemented by high investment-grade credit ratings, this low debt-to-GDP ratio enabled the country to pull down its borrowing costs, as shown by the ratio of debt interest payments to revenue significantly dropping to only 11.5 percent in 2019 from 14.7 percent in 2015.

Also, the ratio of interest payments to expenditure dropped to 9.5 percent in 2019 from 13.9 percent before President Duterte assumed office.

“This means that more of our fiscal resources are being funneled towards meaningful and productive spending rather than debt servicing. This also indicates that our additional debt is being beneficial to our development agenda rather than being a burden to growth,” Dominguez said.

Dominguez said the unplanned expenditures for the COVID-19 response and the drop in revenues as a result of the stringent lockdowns to curb the spread of the lethal virus led to an increase in the debt-to-GDP ratio to 54.5 percent, but which is still well within the prescribed bounds of fiscal viability and the experience of the Philippines’ rating peers.

He said the government’s strong fiscal position and its feat of maintaining its high credit ratings throughout the COVID-19 crisis are among the notable achievements of the Duterte administration over the last five years.

“We accomplished much in consolidating our economic growth during the first period of this admin-

istration. We grew at an average rate of 6.6 percent—making the Philippines among the fastest-growing economies in Asia,” Dominguez said.

“The expectations have been met and the promises kept,” he added.

Dominguez said that among the promises kept and achievements done by the Duterte administration are the following:

The passage of the Ease of Doing Business Act (EODB) and the National ID System that will bring the country closer to the goal of achieving e-governance;

The Rice Tariffication Law (RTL) that was finally passed and implemented after more than 30 years of failed attempts under previous administrations. The law opened the Philippine rice market, lowered the price of the country’s staple for the benefit of more than 100 million Filipino consumers, and earmarked at least P10-billion for the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) annually to help modernize the agriculture sector and increase farmers’ incomes. Since the law’s effectivity, the Bureau of Customs (BOC) has collected a total of P31.9 billion in rice import tariffs for the RCEF;

The Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) law, which significantly reduced personal income taxes (PIT) for 99 percent of taxpayers, imposed excise taxes on sweetened drinks from which the government collects almost P100 million a day, mandated the implementation of the first-ever nationwide fuel marking program to curb oil smuggling, and raised P305 billion in incremental revenues during the first three years of this law’s implementation;

“I would like to point out, however, that the success of the tax reform measures cannot be attributed exclusively to current efforts. In fact, this is a logical continuation of the decades of reforms arduously passed by previous administrations,” Dominguez said;

The congressional approval of the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises Act (CREATE), which is the largest fiscal stimulus for businesses in the country’s recent history. CREATE is estimated to provide private enterprises more than P1 trillion worth of tax relief over the next 10 years. Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) will be the biggest beneficiaries of CREATE through the grant of the largest ever corporate income tax rate reduction in the country, from 30 percent to 20 percent. The law introduces an enhanced incentives package that is performance-based, time-bound, targeted, and transparent.

The enactment of the Financial Institutions Strategic Transfer Act (FIST) to allow banks to efficiently offload their bad loans and non-performing assets during this economic downturn so that they can extend more credit to pandemic-hit enterprises.

The increase in the excise taxes on “sin” products by three times within President Duterte’s term, which has resulted to collections averaging P200 billion annually from tobacco and alcohol products.

These reforms improved funding for the Universal Health Care (UHC) Program, which is another landmark achievement of the Duterte administration;

Ridding the domestic cigarette business of tax cheats, which led to the biggest tax settlement in the country’s history amounting to P30 billion;

The aggressive digitalization efforts of the Bureaus of Internal Revenue (BIR) and of BOC, which enhanced the collection efficiency of these agencies;

Instilling fiscal discipline among government-owned or controlled corporations (GOCCs) to increase their dividend remittances to an average of P57 billion annually, which is more than double the average yearly collection of the past administration;

Raising the revenue effort from 15.1 percent in 2015 to 16.1 percent of GDP in 2019, which was the government’s best performance in more than two decades;

Increasing spending for infrastructure from only about 2 percent of GDP during the previous four administrations to an average of 5 percent of GDP. Since President Duterte took office, the government has sealed 22 highly concessional loan agreements for its flagship infrastructure projects, including its most ambitious undertaking, which is the Metro Manila Subway project.

Dominguez said spending for infrastructure under the “Build, Build, Build” program, which is the President’s main strategy to help lift Filipinos out of poverty, is a “perfect example of productive spending” funded by

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KAPANALIG

NI Nelson Dimapilis

Gatchalian blasts reported sexual harassment in FEU high school; bats for stronger child protection programs

Senator Win Gatchalian condemned reports of sexual harassment involving faculty members of the Far Eastern University High School which went viral on social media platforms. Some students recently shared via twitter their recollection of how they were sexually harassed by some of their male teachers before the pandemic.

While Gatchalian called on the FEU high school's administration to hold the perpetrators accountable for their misconduct, the senator also urged basic education institutions to ensure the strong enforcement of child protection programs to protect learners. According to the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Basic Education, Arts and Culture, schools should have zero tolerance for any form of abuse or predatory behavior.

Gatchalian pointed out that DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012 mandates both public and private elementary and secondary schools to create Child Protection Committees (CPCs), which give them mechanisms of addressing cases of exploitation and abuse.

Among the tasks of CPCs are the creation of child protection policies, identification of learners who may be experiencing abuse and exploitation, and reporting of cases involving child abuse. CPCs are also expected to coordinate with the Philippine National Police-Women and Children Protection Desk (PNP-WCPD), the Local Social Welfare and Development Office (LSWDO), other government agencies, and non-government organizations.

Last January, the Department of Education (DepEd) also announced the creation of a Child Protection Unit or Office in the Central Office with counterparts in regional offices and school division offices to support school CPCs.

"Walang lugar sa ating mga paaralan ang ano mang uri ng pang-aabuso sa ating mga kabataan. Hindi natin dapat hinahayaang patuloy na nakapambiktima ang mga nasa likod ng ganitong mga insidente ng pang-aabuso o karahasan sa ating mga mag-aaral na dapat sana ay pinananatili nilang ligtas," said Gatchalian.

Last year, students and alumni of Miriam College High School also went to social media to bare their experiences of sexual harassment and violence from teachers.

expectations...

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borrowings that are beneficial rather than a burden to the economy and the people;

Increased spending on human capital development, which includes housing, unconditional cash transfers for poor and low-income families, and free education at state universities and colleges (SUCs); and

The establishment of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), and the sustained campaign against criminality, particularly against the illegal drug trade.

As a result of these reforms, Dominguez said the Philippines entered 2020 with the prospects of becoming an upper middle-income country, with its poverty rate falling to 16.7 percent in 2018 from 23.5 percent in 2015, and lifting six million Filipinos out of poverty.

The unemployment rate also dropped to a low of 4.5 percent by the end of 2019 from 6.3 percent in 2015, he noted.

Dominguez said that "clearly, we had realized better economic and social outcomes for the Filipino people," until the once-in-a century pandemic of COVID-19 swept the globe and disrupted everything.

But even with this unprecedented crisis, Dominguez assured the Filipino people that the Duterte administration "will stay true to (its) promise of real change."

"We will make sure that the programs we have pursued will be irreversible and form the foundation of an inclusive, sustainable, and investment-driven economy for the Filipino people," Dominguez said. (PR)

LGU Imus ...

FROM PAGE 1

The city government here commenced the house-to-house inoculation of senior citizens who are not capable of being physically present in the city's vaccination site.

Mayor Emmanuel L. Maliksi together with Vice Mayor Ony Cantimbuhan, City Health Officer Dr. Randy Calingasan and the CHO staff personally visited the houses of identified senior citizens in Barangays Pasong Buaya 2 and Buhay na Tubig on April 22.

Dr. Calingasan administered the CoVID-19 vaccine jab to Danny Felomino and to his 65 year old wife who had been bedridden for four years now after suffering a stroke.

"Katulad kong may pasyente pang inaalagaan, mahirap na sa akin para lumabas kaya mas mabuti ngang magbahay-bahay na lang," Felomino said during his interview by ABS-CBN reporter Dennis Datu.

(Like me, I still have a patient being cared for, it's hard for me to get out so it's better to just go from house-to-house.)

Vice Mayor Ony Cantimbuhan explained, "As long as they are sick and it is difficult for them to go out and of course, it is safer that they do not go out. So, we will just go to their house and administer the vaccine."

The house-to-house vaccination is part of the four established measures of the city government under the #BidaAngMayBakuna campaign for its vaccination program aside from the onsite vaccination site at the Ospital ng Imus, the vaccine drive-thru site at Robinson's Place Imus, and the mobile vaccine bus that roams the remote places in the city.

Meanwhile, Mayor Maliksi said the shortage in the supply of the CoVID-19 vaccine from the national government is the main challenge for the continuous conduct of the vaccination program.

"We constantly follow-up with the Department of Health (DOH) for the allocation of CoVID-19 vaccines for our resident priority groups," Maliksi said.

Consequently, the vaccination activities are temporarily suspended due to the full usage of the last batch of the supply of the CoVID-19 vaccines to the city. (PIA)

CONCEPCION ...

FROM PAGE 1

Presidential Adviser for Entrepreneurship and Go Negosyo Founder Joey Concepcion announces that the Food And Drug Administration (FDA) had changed its position and recommended for the continuous use of the AstraZeneca vaccine for people under the age of 60, which the Department of Health (DOH) approved.

"This is good news for us, the private sector and the LGUs, who ordered a total of 17 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccines. We are glad that the FDA changed its position and allowed the AstraZeneca vaccine to be used by individuals 18 years old and above. This decision is vital for us because the majority of the economic frontliners both from the LGU and the private sector are within the formerly restricted age, below 60. It definitely has a significant impact for most of us, especially for our economy—having to allow the working population to be vaccinated," Concepcion forwarded.

"They were unanimous that for the use of the AstraZeneca vaccine, its overall benefit outweighs the known and potential risks," FDA Director General Eric Domingo stated.

"On the recommendation given by the Food and Drug Administration, the agency said we will continue the use [of the AstraZeneca vaccine]... since the benefits outweigh the risks," Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire posted.

Meanwhile, Go Negosyo is leading the im-

plementation of this vaccine effort from the private sector and the preparation is now in full swing as it expects the first arrival this first week of June.

"We have also signed recently an agreement with Zuellig Pharma Corporation as our official storage and distribution partner in different locations nationwide. The private sector will also pay for its administration fee including the ones we donated to the government for our frontliners," Concepcion noted.

"We need every help that we can get to combat this pandemic and I thank the FDA and the DOH for clarifying the confusion on this matter. Now, what we need is the help from our Filipino people. We need them to be vaccinated for their loved ones, community, workplace, and for our country. We need every qualified Filipino to be vaccinated as it is the only way that we can attain herd immunity. By attaining this, we could further open our economy, and make lives and livelihood prosper in the process," Concepcion added.

NPA's ...

FROM PAGE 1

CAMP CAPINPIN, Tanay, Rizal — The regional intelligence officer of the NPA's Southern Tagalog Regional Party Committee was apprehended in Brgy Bunducan of Nasugbu, Batangas by joint AFP-PNP forces who served a search warrant at around 9:30 a.m. Thursday. The suspect was identified by government forces as Lamberto Asinas alias Baste who will face charges for Illegal Possession of Firearms and Ammunition at Regional Trial Court Branch 27 of Sta Cruz, Laguna under Executive Judge Cynthia R Marino-Ricablanca.

The troops were able to recover from the suspect's possession a Caliber .45 pistol, numerous ammunition, one hand grenade, laptop, cellphone and enemy documents.

Colonel Alex Rillera, Commander of the 202nd Brigade which has operational jurisdiction over Region 4A, said that the combined security forces were able to locate the terrorists' safe house through reports from the neighborhood who observed suspicious activities over the past few weeks.

"We were able to confirm his identity through the help of several former rebels who worked with him before, one of whom was included in the mass surrender last March 29 during the NPA's 51st Anniversary," added Col Rillera.

He ended his statement by saying that following the mass declaration of the communist terrorists as Persona Non Grata in CALABARZON, "the NPAs no longer have a safe haven to stay in the region because the people are no longer afraid and no longer supportive of them as proven by this arrest" by virtue of legal document duly issued by a court of law.

Per the military's record, Batangas activated their Provincial Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict or PTF ELCAC on September 9 last year which, as of the moment, resulted to 625 localities in the province issuing resolutions banning the presence of the terrorists in their areas.

According to Major General Arnulfo Marcelo Burgos Jr, Commander of the Army's 2nd Infantry Division which covers Southern Tagalog, Asinas is the 11th NPA leader who is considered as high value target to be neutralized since 2019.

It can be recalled that 2ID was directly involved in the arrest of Jaime Padilla, alias Diego, the NPA's Southern Tagalog Regional Spokesman last November at the posh Cardinal Santos Medical Center as well as the killing of Armando Lazarte alias Pat Romano in Antipolo City last December.

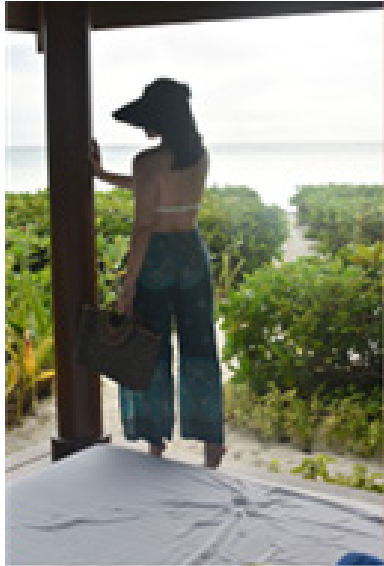
Major General Burgos lauded the involved soldiers and policemen for their "commitment and dedication to win the peace and ensure the safety and security of our constituents while performing frontline duties in the 340 Quarantine Control Points established in our area to contain the spread of the deadly COVID-19 virus."

He assured the people that "despite the prevailing health crisis, RTF-ELCAC 4A will never waver in our sworn duty of ending local communist armed conflict as well as in the delivery of basic services to the grassroots of our society not only to defeat the corona virus, but more importantly, the deadlier NPA virus."

"The NPA terrorists are now running out of space, they no longer enjoy mass base support, and they are no longer relevant to the communities, thus,

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THE SPIRIT OF SUMMER AT KULTURA



A sunburst of summer colors highlight this short smocked dress with tropical leaves designs and beaded halter tie strap.



Cool and casual white linen top with sea turtle print.



Get summer ready with comfy, breezy loungewear like this Tropiko wrap pants with exotic tropical prints.



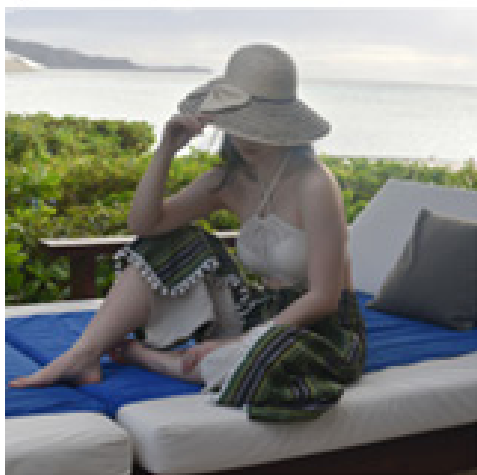
Fatigue short sleeved linen shirt with Aztec print.



Crisp white linen top with Aztec prints.



Smock dress with ethnic inspired blue and white prints.



The spirit of summer: wrap pants with pompom trimmings, crochet top.



Kultura's printed palazzo pants worn with a white tank top is perfect for lounging at home and running errands as well.



Black linen shirt with Aztec print.

While travelling to your dream destination is currently on hold, you can still add a bit of sunshine to your wardrobe with Kultura's summer collection.

Capture the spirit of summer with the perfect sundress –pretty smock dresses, breezy umbrella dresses – in exotic tropical prints and colors that highlight everything bright and beautiful. There are also ethnic inspired wrap pants worn with tank tops that make stylish statements.

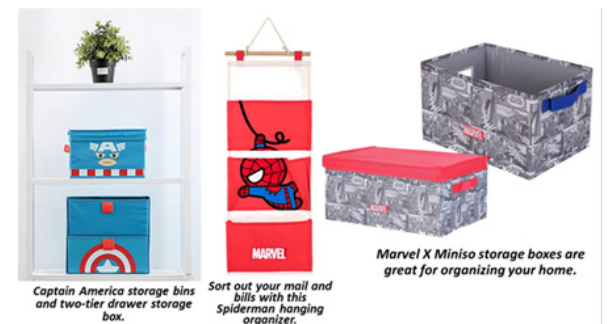
For men, there are linen tops in graphic prints and Aztec designs that will keep them cool and casual during sizzling summer days.



MARVEL X MINISO AT HOME AND LIVING SALE

Superhero fans will be happy to know that Japanese fast fashion brand Miniso has collaborated with Marvel, adding and bringing a touch of comic design and heroic style to everyday life. Better still, shoppers can enjoy up to 50% discounts on Marvel Home items at Miniso's Home and Living Sale, which is ongoing until May 02.

Organize your home with the latest Marvel x Miniso wardrobe and storage solutions- from large bins to store toys and clothes; to storage boxes that breathable, dust-proof, and foldable. Wardrobe organizers and storage drawers, on the other hand, are perfect space-saving solutions.



Captain America storage bins and two-tier drawer storage box.

Sort out your mail and bills with this Spiderman hanging organizer.

Marvel X Miniso storage boxes are great for organizing your home.



Marvel Avengers Assemble Wall Clock

Marvel x Miniso wardrobe organizer bags are made of premium fabrics that are sturdy and stackable.

Captain America foldable basket organizer.



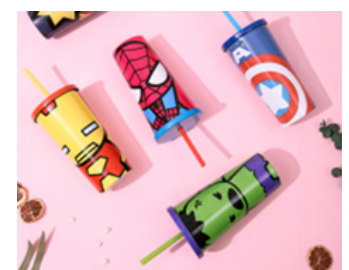
Let the Marvel Avengers light up your night with this rechargeable LED touch night light desk lamp.

Collect these Marvel "I AM A HERO" frames.



Stay healthy and snack like a hero with Round Bento Box with Anti-Scald Handles

Create your own Marvel Avengers nook at home by hanging stylish wall clocks and a collage of your Marvel superheroes. There are also fun tumblers and bento boxes for healthy snacking with your favorite hero.



Enjoy summer coolers with Stainless Steel Tumbler with Straw.

Shop in-store or online via shop.minisoph.com. For more updates, follow MinisoPhilippines in Facebook and Miniso PH in Instagram.

SM City San Pablo teams up with LGUs in Building Herd Immunity

Covid 19 is hitting way too close to everyone's home. Those numbers are turning into names and those names into people we know. To support public efforts in controlling the spread of COVID-19, SM Supermalls started its multi-mall vaccination drive in partnership with various local governments nationwide to be the venue for their vaccination program.

SM, together with the City of San Pablo, rolled out "All for Health towards Health for all" last Tuesday April 20, 2021 where in SM City San Pablo's cinema hallway was repurposed to hold the administration of vaccines to A3 or adults with controlled comorbidities.

"It's safety in numbers, in other words. Nevertheless, unless and until there is a widely available vaccine for the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, which causes the disease COVID-19 Everyone has to take all precautionary measures "said Mayor Amben Amante.

"Getting the Covid 19 vaccine adds one more layer of protection for you and the people around you" said Laguna Vice Governor Karen Agapay. "Here in Laguna the sooner we lower the number of active cases per day the better" the Vice Governor added.



San Pablo City Mayor Amben Amante (Center) with Laguna Vice Governor Karen Agapay, Assistant Mall Manager Ria Katigbak, PR Manager Nina Wong at SM City San Pablo, SM Cinema Lobby turned Covid 19 vaccination site. The program is part of the SM Supermall's community efforts to assist local governments in controlling the spread of COVID-19 and build a herd immunity.

SM City San Pablo PR Manager Ms. Nina Wong said that SM has been diligently following all the safety protocols set by the IATF. "From day one SM have been promoting #safemallingatSM to protect all those who visit the mall so as to limit the spread of the infection. Here in SM we make sure we keep the mall sanitized round the clock. All shoppers wears face shield and facemasks and maintain social distancing and now the mall continue to adapt as we transform our cinemas to inoculation hub.

Laguna, along with the provinces of Bulacan, Cavite and Rizal and Metro Manila are under modified enhanced community quarantine until April 30.

SM is closely coordinating with more LGUs as it is slated to roll out more vaccination centers nationwide to help expedite the administration of COVID-19 vaccines. For more information and up to date news on vaccination schedules at the SM malls in your LGU, visit www.smsupermalls.com or follow @smsupermalls on all social media platforms. (PR)



San Pablo City Mayor Amben Amante (Right) with Laguna Vice Governor Karen Agapay at SM City San Pablo, SM Cinema Lobby turned vaccination site as a residents line up to receive their first dose of Covid 19 Vaccine. The program is part of the SM Supermall's community efforts to assist local governments to curb the spread of COVID-19 and build a herd immunity.

Duterte...

The government is fully committed to restoring the pre-pandemic upward trajectory of the economy and achieving sustainable, inclusive growth by putting the country at the forefront of the global fight against climate change and pushing the congressional passage of its remaining tax packages plus other priority reforms measures in the homestretch of the Duterte presidency.

Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III said Monday these remaining reforms aim to raise additional funds for the Philippines' recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, broaden financial inclusion, and liberalize the economy to make it an investment-driven one.

"We are fully determined to restore the vigor of the Philippine economy at the soonest possible time. Even with the unprecedented crisis, the Duterte administration will continue to work hard until the last minute of its term to undertake the remaining reforms we had set out to do in our zero-to-ten-point socioeconomic agenda," Dominguez said during the virtual Sulong Pilipinas 2021: Partners for Progress forum of the Cabinet's Economic Development and Infrastructure Clusters held this morning.

To continuously develop "a truly broad-based and inclusive financial system fit for the 21st century," the Duterte administration will endorse the passage of a bill that seeks to deepen the domestic capital markets by building a sustainable corporate pension system, along with another measure that aims to save the Military and Uniformed Personnel (MUP) pension program by making it fiscally sustainable for the long term, Dominguez said.

As part of the measures to help strategically important businesses survive the economic shock of the pandemic, Dominguez said the Duterte administration has called on the Congress to pass the Government Financial Institutions Unified Initiatives to Distressed Enterprises for Economic Recovery (GUIDE) bill.

Dominguez said the Duterte administration will likewise push the passage of the two remaining packages of its Comprehensive Tax Reform Program (CTRP)—Package 3, which is designed to make the Philippines' property valuation system at par with international standards; and Package 4, which aims to simplify the taxation of passive income and financial services and transactions.

Fully liberalizing the economy would involve amending the Foreign Investments Act (FIA), Public Service Act (PSA) and the Retail Trade Liberalization Act (RTLA), which President Duterte has certified as urgent measures to help speed up their congressional approval within his term, Dominguez said.

To raise more funds for our economic recovery, the Department of Finance (DOF) is proposing to increase the mandated dividend remittances of government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs) to the National Treasury, from the current 50 percent to at least 75 percent of their net earnings, Dominguez said.

Dominguez said the government will keep intact its huge budget for infrastructure development under President Duterte's centerpiece program "Build, Build, Build" program as the high multiplier effect of infrastructure spending will make it the main driver of rebuilding the economy.

The government has programmed to increase infrastructure spending to more than 5 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) until the end of the Duterte administration, he said.

Dominguez said the government will also continue with its ongoing digital reforms at the Bureaus of Internal Revenue (BIR) and of Customs (BOC), to ensure that these agencies "match the efficiencies of the best comparable institutions worldwide."

Acknowledging the urgency of putting in place stronger climate adaptation and mitigation measures to protect the country's future economic gains, the national government will work hard with the Congress and local government units (LGUs) in achieving the Philippines' commitments to the Paris Agreement on climate change.

These commitments, outlined in its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), targets to reduce the Philippines' greenhouse gas emissions by 75 percent by 2030.

Dominguez said that as a concrete demonstration of its environment-friendly commitment, the government is now exploring a financing mechanism to enable it to improve the generating capacity of its Agus-Pulanghi hydropower plant in Mindanao and acquire all coal-fired power plants in the region to repurpose them.

This proposal

aims to shift most of Mindanao's energy requirements to hydropower, which will eventually spur more investments from companies seeking to expand their operations in areas powered by clean energy, Dominguez said.

He said the national government will also urge the Congress to swiftly approve a bill banning single-use plastics, to allow every Filipino to do his or her part on a daily basis in helping save the world's environment.

To safely reopen the economy and restore jobs and incomes, Dominguez said the government is fully rolling out its COVID-19 vaccination program to inoculate at least 70 million Filipinos or 100 percent of our adult population, hopefully within this year.

Despite supply challenges worldwide, the

government has arranged the delivery of more than 140 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines for this year, of which about 15 percent will be delivered in the first half and 85 percent in the second half, Dominguez said.

Dominguez said most of the financing needed for the vaccination program was sourced through loans from the World Bank (WB), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

This financing strategy was chosen to assure the public that the vaccines being bought are internationally accepted, and have passed the stringent criteria for safety and effectiveness; and that their procurement is totally transparent, Dominguez said. (PR)

FROM PAGE 1

NPA's...

expect that they will be decimated soon which will pave the way for the much coveted peace, prosperity and development that every Filipino citizen truly deserve," ended Major General Burgos as he called upon "the few remaining NPA terrorists to put down their arms, return to the folds of law and avail the benefits from E-CLIP because we will get them regardless whether they are dead or alive."

It can be recalled that three weeks ago, soldiers killed a certain Noel Levanta, a hardcore cadre of Metro Manila Regional Party Committee's Regional Education Bureau, during an encounter following an NPA ceasefire violation in Brgy Puray, Rodriguez, Rizal. (21D)

FROM PAGE 3

Order your favorite bread at BreadTalk via SM Community Riders



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WELVIC 0928855664	RICHARD 0927454164	LORENZ 0922819485
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BENEDICT 0928844534	ALVIN 09284445679	GERALD 0925853744
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Need something from the mall but don't want to get out of the house? SM City Trece Martires got you covered. Choose your favorite Food at BreadTalk and we deliver it right at your doorstep via SM Community Riders. Order now!

Bridgestone Philippines' Safer Road for All: Always in All Ways 2021 Campaign

A year later into the pandemic, we are still struggling from the ravages brought by the crisis of COVID-19. And just when we are getting back on our feet, cases rose rapidly again. Now, we are back to quarantine and many of us feel helpless. The pandemic has disrupted our economy, communities, and lives for the second time.

2021—a repeat of last year? Lockdown Déjà vu? Bridgestone Philippines refuses we are back to square one.

Recovery may seem far away from where we are standing, but we are persevering and racing towards the finish line. There may be times that we need to slow down and walk, but we are definitely moving forward together.

We have learned time and time again the importance of safety in all aspects of our lives. The pandemic has taught us to make it a priority and Bridgestone Philippines is embracing it.

“Safer Road For All: Always in All Ways” Bridgestone welcomes us with a campaign to look out for the remainder of 2021. This signifies the brand's leadership on road safety—as they take to greater heights last year's campaign on “A Safer Road For All.” Bridgestone Philippines aims to elevate the coverage and importance of road safety in the lives of Filipinos, hence, “Always in All Ways”. Serving society with superior quality tires has always been Bridgestone's mission since its foundation.

Shake the summer heat with Fruitas!

The STR EAT DINING

Enjoy a safe dining experience in our outdoor dining area!

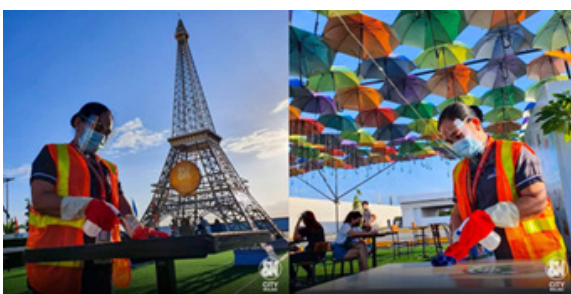
Fruitas OFFICIAL DRINK OF Summer

The STR EAT DINING

SM CAVITE COMMUNITY RIDERS

JOHN ANDREW 0923884094	ANGELITO 0924710090	DOMINIC 0924720088	JAYVEE 0924700000
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HANEL 0927041118	ACE 0924800100	MI 0924800000	MARL 0924800000
BO CHRIE 0924811000	WAGDY 0924800000	EDGER 0924800001	PAOLO 0924810004
RONALD V. 0924800000	MIRY 0924800100	EDUAR 0924810000	MAR 0924800000
MELVIN 0924800100	YOUNG 0924810001	MATSON 0924800000	MELCHOR 0924800000
DONDI 0927000007	WEN 0927400001	EDUAR 0924810001	ROY 0924800000
	JUAN MATHEW 0924800000	ROBALD 0924810000	BRANDON 0924800000

Enjoy your Fruitas take-outs at home or thru our Outdoor Dining Area near SM City Rosario Entrances! For home delivery, contact our SM Community Riders. Also, you can now conveniently pickup your orders at our designated CURBSIDE parking for a fast and easy shopping experience. Direct your order to stores or online shopping via Grocers. Always remember to follow our #SafeMallAtSM guidelines so you can always have an aweSM experience at SM City Rosario! □



SM CITY MOLINO, CAVITE - Enjoy your take-out meals at the Roof Deck as you enjoy instagramable sights at SM City Molino's AI Fresco dining! Colorful umbrellas as your shade and the stunning mini Eiffel Tower are waiting for you and your family!

Please be reminded to not forget to follow the safety protocols of the mall. For your safety also, our sanitation team works round the clock to clean the AI Fresco dining. We sanitize our tables and chairs before opening, during mall hours, and before closing.

Everyday celebration with Bacolod Chicken Inasal SM City Dasmariñas Celebrate every day with these delightful meals from Bacolod Chicken Inasal.



Visit them at the level 2 or order via SM Riders or SM Center Concierge.

Big savings at Hypermarket SM Marketmall

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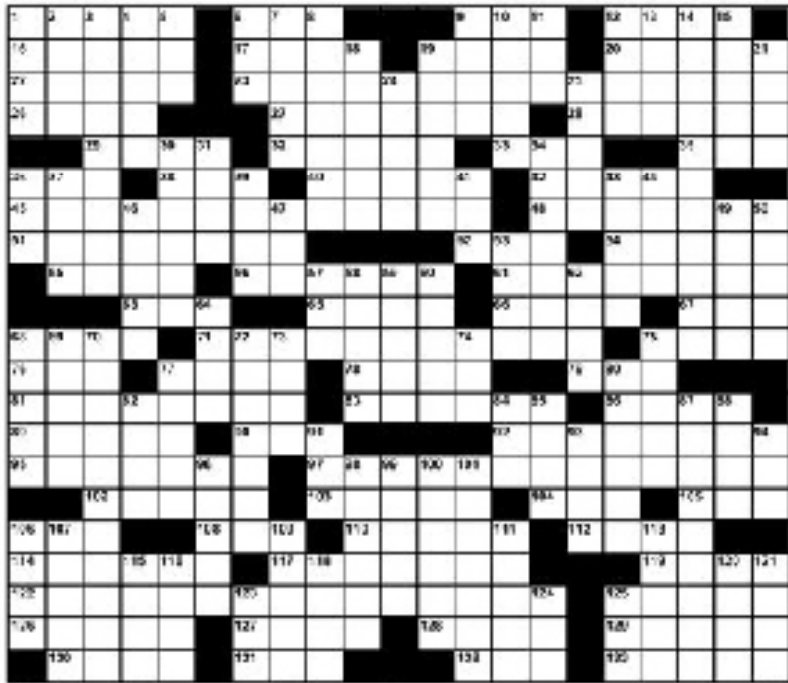
Shopping is more delicious with savings on your favorite brands only at SM Marketmall Hypermarket. All that you need at home are available. Everything is here! Visit SM Marketmall now!

HOTEL ホテル ソウゴ

ACROSS

- 1 Raises
- 6 Snack
- 9 Swich label
- 12 Pinnacle
- 16 Brilliance
- 17 Sports org.
- 19 Greek portico
- 20 Oslo's land, to the natives
- 22 Lamp cap
- 23 Dorothy Sayers detective
- 26 ___ Soit qui mal y pense
- 27 Put an end to
- 28 Pass
- 29 ___ monster
- 32 Mortise's partner
- 33 Catch
- 35 Mil. Coil.
- 36 Poerically above
- 38 Spanish gold
- 40 Adds alcohol to
- 42 Neighbor of tibet
- 45 P.D. James detective
- 48 Rumbled
- 51 Tricks
- 52 Not me
- 54 France's longest river
- 55 Novel ending
- 56 Skier's coverup
- 61 Forage plants
- 63 "Cats" author's monogram
- 65 Manitoba indian
- 66 Hair, in Heidelberg
- 67 Request
- 71 Martha Grimes detective
- 75 Cuts down
- 76 "___tu," Verdi aria
- 77 Distaff counterpart
- 78 Off the mark
- 79 Slip
- 81 Detoured
- 83 London suburb
- 86 Teen angst
- 89 Storms
- 90 Airport abbr.
- 92 Endures
- 95 Silly
- 97 Agatha Christie detective
- 102 Frequent stopper
- 103 "___ what I say"
- 104 ___ volenter; God willing
- 105 CIA predecessor
- 106 Wee dram
- 108 Satiric magazine
- 110 "... nor iron ___ cage...."
- 112 Skier's powder
- 114 Melodic

Crossword



- 117 City on the Po
- 119 Virginia politician
- 122 Harry Kemelman detective
- 125 Tree-lined walk
- 126 Facing the pitcher
- 127 Read my ___
- 128 Patner or polish
- 129 Devenports
- 130 Angilo-Saxon laborer
- 131 Prevarication
- 132 Comic Caesar
- 133 Concerning
- 7 ___ of many colors
- 8 Journalist Ida
- 9 Baseball's Mel et al.
- 10 Mountain wind
- 11 At a distance
- 12 Blue dye
- 13 Michael crichton film
- 14 Dorothy Gilman detective
- 15 Discharge
- 18 Hebrew name fo God
- 19 Fishing nets
- 21 Ogles
- 24 Thetorical repetition
- 25 "Oberon" composer
- 30 Resort hotels
- 31 ___ Sea (east of the caspian)
- 34 Bony
- 36 Doit
- 37 Entertainer Adams
- 39 Designer Cassini

DOWN

- 1 Hebrew letter
- 2 Iterative sound
- 3 Josephine Tey detective
- 4 Diameters' halves
- 5 Fr. holy woman
- 6 Not GI dratfee

- 41 Diffident
- 43 ___ bear
- 44 MP's problem
- 46 Gloss alternative
- 47 Brownie's org.
- 49 Rub out
- 50 Classroom furniture
- 53 Lei land
- 57 "___ bin ein Berliner"
- 58 Sweep the sea
- 59 Uncanny
- 60 "Ruby Red Dress" singer
- 62 Actress Dunaway
- 64 Part of QED
- 68 Father Juniper
- 69 Regions
- 70 John Ball detective
- 72 ___ Cite, Paris
- 73 Surrender
- 74 Intense black
- 75 Original: Prefix
- 77 "___ to my ears"
- 80 Sugarcane shoot
- 82 Wine : Prefix
- 84 Wise bird?
- 85 Should have
- 87 Rex Stout detective
- 88 Greek Cupid
- 91 Beta Kappa leader
- 93 Gibbons
- 94 Relatives of aves:
- 96 Titled
- 98 Envelops
- 99 Large quantities
- 100 Pool shots
- 101 Unfastens
- 106 Scarletf'd place
- 107 Sound off
- 109 MCX minus DIII
- 111 Hawaian hardwood
- 113 Synthetic fiber
- 115 Scottish resort
- 116 Locaion
- 118 Mature
- 120 Legume
- 121 Top quality
- 123 Without exception
- 124 Inc. , in the UK
- 125 "I wandered lonely ___ cloud"



Puzzles

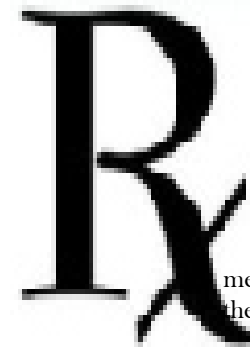
8	5	6		1	4	7	3	
	9							
2	4					1	6	
	8	2		5	9	3		
	3	1	8		2	4	5	
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	2	4				7	3	
						1		
	1	8	6	3		2	9	4

	4			7	6		
8		6		4			3
	2	7					8
			4	8			3
	9		7		6		4
2				1	3		
4						8	1
	5			3		2	4
		1	5				6

WORDHUNT

L B M Y S T E R I O U S M
 O E C Z P G M A G I C A L
 G A Y P E R F E C T R S G
 B S M Y T H U X J S C P H
 E T T A L E S Q S Q D A U
 A Q D A J T U N I C O R N
 U R A I N B O W R F T K Y
 T F M Y S T I C A L G L S
 I Z O N R K O B I I F E W
 F E L E G E N D A R Y Y I
 U V F A N T A S Y X V F L
 L F A I R Y T L E D D H D

- MYTH
- UNICORN
- FAIRY
- FANTASY
- MAGICAL
- PERFECT
- LEGENDARY
- MYSTICAL
- RAINBOW
- BEAUTIFUL
- WILD
- SPARKLE
- MYSTERIOUS
- BEAST
- REAL
- TALES



MOMENTS OF MEANING

The least of things with a meaning is worth more in life than the greatest of things without it.

THINK BACK TO A TIME that was meaningful for you. I didn't say pleasant or joyful, I said meaningful. More often the meaningful events are not pleasant ones, but painful or frightening. Other times they are sudden epiphanies that bring great insight. Initially the incident may seem insignificant, and the full impact of it will not come until later. The meaningful moments focus us on the significant of our lives and how we spend our time.

How have these events become our teachers and guides? What lessons have you learned that have led you to where you are and the person you have become? Many times we have no idea how the decisions and choices we make lead us to experiences that become life altering.

Today, ask yourself what motivates you, what gives your life meaning? Find the answer, and you will find yourself. Look back at meaningful events; think about what gave you joy as a child. When you combine the two things, you will be living the life intended for you.

Soulution of the Week

Today take the time to explore what is meaningful for you. Ponder past events and note the lessons that they brought you.

R&I affirms Philippines' BBB+ rating, 'stable' outlook Japanese debt watcher cites economy's favorable post-COVID growth prospects

In a vote of confidence on the Philippine economy's COVID-19 recovery and growth prospects over the medium term, Japanese debt watcher Rating and Investment Information Inc. (R&I) has kept the Philippines' investment grade credit rating of BBB+ with a "stable" outlook.

In a statement released Thursday, R&I recognized the role of fiscal and monetary actions in providing a favorable outlook for the Philippines in the post-COVID period.

"The Philippines' economy suffered a severe contraction due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 but is expected to recover primarily through aggressive public investment, which had driven the economy in the past several years. Fiscal and monetary policies will boost growth for some time," R&I said.

BBB+ is a notch away from the minimum rating within the A-territory ratings, while a "stable" outlook indicates absence of factors that may cause the rating to change over the short term.

In response to the latest rating decision by R&I on the Philippines, Department of Finance (DOF) Secretary Carlos G. Dominguez said that in keeping its "BBB+" credit rating with a "stable" outlook for the Philippines, R&I has "apparently taken notice that although the global fight against the pandemic has proven to be a costly one, the country's strong macroeconomic fundamentals ahead of the pandemic have enabled the government to accelerate spending on urgent and necessary programs to save lives and keep the economy afloat.

"With a manageable debt profile, a steady revenue stream brought about by tax reform, and the continued practice of fiscal prudence, the government is confident it will not run out of resources in waging the protracted battle against the COVID-19 crisis."

He said that as R&I itself has acknowledged, the government is committed to pursue the remaining reforms in its socioeconomic agenda even if it remains preoccupied with the challenges of the pandemic—and this resolve will let the Philippines return soon enough to its pre-pandemic path of high and inclusive growth.

For Dominguez, the Duterte administration's commitment to economic reform and recovery has been proven by, among others, the enactment of stimulus measures like CREATE (Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises) and FIST (Financial Institutions Strategic Transfer), as well as its push for investor-friendly bills pending in the Congress, such as the proposed amendments to the Public Service Act (PSA), Retail Trade Liberalization Act (RTLA), and Foreign Investments Act (FIA).

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Governor Benjamin E. Diokno also welcomed the rating decision by R&I, saying: "The Philippines once again earned an important vote of confidence on its ability to bounce back from the COVID-19 crisis, with R&I's affirmation of the country's BBB+ rating with a 'stable' outlook.

"With the recent surge in COVID-19 cases, the tail-end of the crisis is proving to be extra challenging. Nevertheless, we do not see a permanent dent on our macroeconomic fundamentals, and we can head back to our growth path post-COVID.

"Inflation, although seen to slightly breach the target range this year, will ease to within the 2.0 to 4.0 target band next year. Moreover, the banking sector, although not totally unscathed, has kept the impact of the crisis manageable and remains well capable of helping support economic recovery and growth through credit.

"The favorable inflation outlook and stable banking system, plus the speed of financial digitalization happening in the economy, are good reasons to be confident about the Philippines' medium and long-term growth prospects."

R&I positively viewed the increase in government spending and budget deficit in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, noting that the country's fiscal situation remains manageable.

Compared with the pre-pandemic fiscal program of a 3-percent budget deficit-to-GDP ratio, the budget gap of the National Government widened to 7.6 percent of GDP last year amid the

government's funding of COVID-response measures. Moreover, the government's debt is estimated to rise to 57 percent of GDP this year, up from 39 percent in 2019.

"R&I does not view this as a major issue at this juncture, because of a comfortable funding condition backed by ample domestic liquidity and the prospect of peaking-out of the debt ratio within one to two years," R&I said.

Earlier, the DOF Secretary said the government is keen to keep the debt ratio below 60 percent, thereby striking the right balance between supporting economic growth and maintaining fiscal discipline.

R&I also recognized strength of the country's external accounts, which serve as buffers against external shocks.

"The overall balance of payments is positive and foreign reserves are greater than external debt," it said. "R&I therefore considers the risk associated with the external position to be limited," it added.

The debt watcher lauded the Philippines' reform agenda. It cited the enactment of vital laws, which are seen to aid recovery and provide long-term benefits for the economy, and the push for bills seeking to liberalize many

business sectors of the country.

President Duterte last month signed into law CREATE, a landmark measure that cuts corporate income tax by as much as 10 percent and rationalizes the fiscal incentives system. It is meant to help enterprises recover from the impact of the pandemic and to boost the country's attractiveness as an investment destination.

Earlier this year, the President also signed into law the FIST bill, which will help banks dispose of bad assets via asset management companies and help ensure maintenance of banking system stability.

With R&I's latest rating decision on the Philippines, the country has so far been able to maintain all of its investment grade credit ratings with regional and international debt watchers—despite a wave of negative credit rating actions globally in light of the pandemic.

The favorable assessment from R&I and other credit rating agencies bodes well for the Philippines' ability to continue accessing financing at affordable cost. This is important more so at this time of crisis, as the government is able to raise funds for its COVID response programs at relatively low interest rates. (PR)

TWIN SPIN: A DOUBLE TREAT THIS SUMMER



The summer months are going to be magical with the opening of a brand-new major ride at the country's most loved theme park, Enchanted Kingdom. In its twenty-five year tradition of bringing only the finest world-class amusement to all its guests, EK unveils the much-awaited TWIN SPIN this May, a compact spinning coaster manufactured by world-renowned Mack Rides of Germany, the leading designer, manufacturer and supplier of rollercoasters, water rides and all kinds of leisure park attractions all over

the globe. Following the launch of the EKaleidoscope last October, the TWIN SPIN is EK's latest offering and third rollercoaster to boot, to celebrate its silver anniversary culminating in October this year.

This May, be one of the first to experience double the rush and double the adrenaline that can only come from EK's all-new TWIN SPIN—a totally innovative, spin-tastic attraction that will certainly be your ultimate double treat this summer!

For more information on promos and ticket reservations and bookings, please visit Enchanted Kingdom's official website www.enchantedkingdom.ph, Online store <https://shop.enchantedkingdom.ph/> or official Facebook page

www.facebook.com/enchantedkingdom.ph.

CARD MRI Founder talks about good governance in RIMANSI Lecture Series 2021

In celebration of the 16th Annual General Meeting of Microinsurance MBA Association of the Philippines Inc. (MiMAP/RIMANSI), a lecture series entitled "Promoting Good Governance through Strengthened MBA-MFI/Coop Partnership" was held via Zoom video-conferencing on March 22, 2021.

A total of 70 participants from the board managers and senior staff of the Mi-MBAs and its partner microfinance institutions and cooperatives attended the activity.

To discuss about the key elements, principles, challenges, and recommendations in strengthening and sustaining their partnerships towards the promotion and practice of good governance, MiMAP/RIMANSI invited CARD MRI Founder and Chairman Emeritus Dr. Jaime Aristotle B. Alip to share about CARD MRI's tested and proven model for a mutually beneficial partnership.

Dr. Alip spoke about the key principles of the CARD MRI model, "Since we established CARD MRI in 1986, our main focus is the poor women in the marginalized sector and hard-to-reach areas. Together with other development practitioners, we saw how these women needs our support especially in terms of financial access." He emphasized that since then, the institution implements a holistic development approach in serving clients.

In sustaining the CARD MRI model, Dr. Alip talked about how they faced the challenges through the years. "The idea back then was to establish a microfinance institution that provides financial services to clients. As

time goes by, we observed that many of our clients also needed security in times of uncertainties."

In 1999, CARD MRI established its microinsurance arm, the CARD Mutual Benefit Association (CARD MBA). "Even though we didn't have enough background about the microinsurance industry, we dealt with it and eventually gained sufficient knowledge from individuals who selflessly shared their expertise with us."

To ensure that products and services were responsive to the needs of clients, the CARD MRI management decided to give the leadership to the clients. "We, at CARD MRI, nurture and value the comments and suggestions from our clients. We listen and give them the opportunity to take a step forward to speak in behalf of their fellow clients. We also admire their sense of responsibility. Many of them already changed their lives."

As part of its strategy to promote good governance, CARD MRI and CARD MBA ensure financial transparency to its clients. Dr. Alip emphasized that sharing the financial status to clients is a good strategy to gain and see that the institution is on the right path. "We regularly report monthly financial status and internal audit. Annually, we conduct external audit from reputable audit firms to see if the procedures were strictly followed and implemented."

Dr. Alip concluded that CARD MBA together with other social development institutions under CARD MRI will push its charge is pursuing its mission to eradicate poverty in the county.