

RSA: New SLEX 6x6 lanes operational in December; full expansion completes by mid-2025

The new 6x6 lanes configuration of the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX) from Susana Heights, Muntinlupa to Calamba, Laguna — with two additional lanes on both southbound and northbound sides — will be opened in December, in time for Christmas, San Miguel Corporation (SMC) chairman and CEO Ramon S. Ang, said.

The at-grade expansion, undertaken by San Miguel unit and SLEX concession holder SMC SLEX Inc., is proceeding on schedule, with the said 29-kilometer stretch slated to open in the third week of December.

Meanwhile, construction on the section from Calamba to Sto. Tomas, Batangas, as well as the expansion of some

20 bridges connecting the SLEX main carriageway, will be completed by July 2025, Ang said.

"This December, as our countrymen prepare to celebrate Christmas and travel more to spend time with friends and family, they can look forward to a wider, better SLEX. This will help in significantly reducing traffic buildup during the Holiday rush," Ang said.

"The SLEX expansion is a major undertaking that entailed significant effort and investment, and a lot of patience and cooperation from motorists and stakeholders. We are very glad that motorists can soon enjoy faster trips to and from Southern Luzon," he added.

Ang said that ensuring that SLEX is fully

operational throughout the construction period has been a consistent priority of the company.

"Our contractors and project teams continue to do everything they can to minimize impact on vehicle traffic," Ang said. "We want to assure our motorists that we will continue to work as efficiently as possible, and minimize disruptions to their travel as we complete the expansion."

As the main expressway connecting Metro Manila to the CALABARZON region and beyond, SLEX serves an integral role in economic development in region.

The SLEX expansion program is seen to support the growth of Region 4A, which accounts for about 15% of the country's total Gross Domestic Product.

The company has also fully-decommis-

sioned the Calamba Main Toll Plaza, which used to be the terminus of SLEX, as well as the SLEX Greenfield Toll Plaza, the terminus of the SLEX-Toll Road 3 project that connected Calamba to Sto. Tomas, Batangas.

Structures have been dismantled, and the roads will be paved once the expansion work proceeds in that area.

In addition to the expansion of the entire carriageway, toll plazas at SLEX have been fitted with automatic license plate reading (ALPR) cameras as part of SMC Infra's efforts to comply with government mandates on barrier-less expressways.

With the help of ALPR cameras, the company said it was able to lift barriers at toll entry plazas across SLEX, to reduce the need for motorists to slow down or fully stop while passing through.



This slowdown increases the likelihood of traffic build-ups, which sometimes extend to public roads that are interconnected with SLEX.

In 2022, the company implemented

the Seamless Southern Tollways project which reduced the number of stops motorists had to do when traveling along the Skyway System, SLEX, and Star Tollway.



VOL. XXI > No. 40 > January 06-12, 2025 > P10.00

DILG closes over P12.98-M LBP Trust Fund

Filipinos deserve better! LEE DEMANDS IMPROVED PH HEALTHCARE SERVICES BY 2025

The first to expose the billions of available funds of the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) in 2023, Manoy Wilbert "Wise" Lee said that the recently approved benefit increases by the state health insurer's Board are still lacking.

The Bicolano lawmaker who has persistently fought for addi-



tional benefit increases for more than a year now pointed out that amid controversies surrounding the

"unused" funds of PhilHealth, the Department of Health (DOH) should waste no time in providing **cont. on page 3**

DSWD Beneficiaries Receive Go Negosyo Mentoring



Entrepreneurs from poor, vulnerable and marginalized households and communities received entrepreneurship mentoring from Go Negosyo's pool of veteran mentors as the non-profit lent its support to the Department of Social Welfare and Development's (DSWD) Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP).

cont. on page 3

AIMEE-SOLUSYON SA IMUS



Kasama ang Team AJAA sa pangunguna nina Mayor Alex L. Advincula at Vice Mayor Homer Saquilayan ay bumisita kamakailan si Senator Imee R. Marcos sa Imus Sports Complex upang personal na magpasalamat sa ating mga minamahal na Imuseño. Kasama rito ang isang masayang Zumba session, kung saan sabay-sabay nag-ehersisyo at nagbigay ng Zumba kits sa mga kalahok bilang bahagi ng supporta sa healthy lifestyle program. Bilang bahagi rin ng kanyang adbokasiya sa kalusugan at nutrisyon, naghatid din si Sen. Imee ng masusustansyang Nutribun para sa ating mga kababayan.

PhilHealth benefit for heart disease up by over fifteen-fold

Cavite PESO and TESDA Join Forces to Empower Job Seekers Through contact center services NC II Training



ty-Based Training on Contact Center Services NC II.

The program, held from November 27 to December 20, 2024, combined 13 days of online learning with 5 days of in-person training at the Cavite Provincial Capitol compound in Trece Martires City. Participants, including displaced POGO workers, OFWs, OFW dependents, and unem-

cont. on page 5

P32-M halaga ng tulong pinansyal sa unang batch ng indemnification

Nasa Php 32,095,000 milyong piso na ang kabuuang halaga na naipamahagi ng Department of Agriculture IV-CALABARZON (DA-4A) sa unang batch ng indemnification para sa mga magbababoy na apektado ng African Swine Fever (ASF) sa rehiyon.

Ang ASF ang sakit ng baboy na pangunahing kinakaharap ngayon ng sektor ng paghahayupan na nagiging dahilan ng pagbaba ng



produksyon nito habang tumataas ang demand sa mga konsyumer. Kaya naman patuloy ang suportang hatid

ng DA-4A Livestock Program sa pamamagitan ng indemnification program para sa mga magbababoy **cont. on page 5**

Steps Toward Achieving Dreams

Chita M. Tamayao, a CARD client and entrepreneur from Tuguegarao City achieved success despite life's challenges.

In Tuguegarao City, Chita M. Tamayao's story shows her grit and resilience shaped through unwavering determination and faith in God.

Her journey began in her hometown where she first studied and worked. She finished a 2-year college course and then worked as a Pharmacy Secretary for three years before starting a family.

Chita and her husband tried different businesses to support their growing family, including tricycle rentals, selling coffee, and running a small store. However, their Mikki noodle business became their main source of income.

In 2019, Chita's life took a turn when she was introduced to CARD,

Inc. (A Microfinance NGO). Encouraged by friends, she took a loan of PHP 5,000, eventually growing it to PHP 100,000, which helped expand her business.

"The financial support from CARD was crucial for our Mikki noodle business and my children's education," Chita says.

Life once tested Chita's faith and dedication when her husband passed away, leaving her as the sole provider for their four children. Despite this overwhelming challenge, Chita's spirit never wavered. Chita continued running their businesses to support their four children. Her resilience led her to diversify her offerings, and today her market stall includes various products, such as lumpia wrappers, sprouted mung beans and other seeds, garlic, onions, and other household essentials with daily sales reaching PHP



15,000.

Despite challenges and tough competition, Chita's hard work and friendly nature earned her loyal customers at Don Domingo Market.

Chita's path has also led to big personal wins. She has also renovated her home, supported her children's education, and bought a motorcycle for business deliveries.

Chita shows that with perseverance and the right support, success is possible. Her partnership with CARD played a key role in her business

growth, allowing her to overcome obstacles.

"To aspiring entrepreneurs, starting a business is not easy. It involves facing many challenges and making wise decisions. Stay focused, keep personal desires separate from business goals, and persevere through every challenge," Chita advises.

Her life and work continue to inspire others, proving that with determination and the right support system, the sky is the limit. PR



ePhilHealth Systems under the eGOVPH app

- New Membership System that provides Applicants to register in PhilHealth
- Digital National ID Integration making streamlining and secure verification of identity
- Website which makes users register to use Kinabala Package Provider (KPP)
- Contributions allowing users to check their payment history and status
- Health Insurance System where users can access and manage their health insurance details including policy information and coverage
- iClaims System to view member's claims history
- Integrated one-stop portal
- 100% expansion to include more comprehensive health records and data, improving accessibility and quality of healthcare services
- New website allowing users to experience improved PhilHealth website
- National Health Data Repository (NHDR) allowing users to view their personal information and beneficiaries

PhilHealth (02) 8662-2588

EDITORIAL:

Back to basics

WE BEGIN 2025 with a plea from the World Health Organization for China to share information on how exactly COVID-19 began five years ago.

COVID killed and sickened millions, while some patients continue to suffer the effects of a long-term affliction. It caused health systems to collapse and economies to slow down or contract.

Five years on, the world has recovered, and now many people remember those days of COVID as they would remember a war — a significant, life-changing event that left bad memories and numerous lessons.

Travel has resumed, business has picked up, schools have reopened, and people have gone back to their usual ways.

Health and economic lessons notwithstanding, it is good to recall the days of the pandemic as we mark the beginning of a new year today.

Often, wherever in the world, the answers tended to be the same: Being in the company of loved ones, virtually or otherwise.

COVID is still around but no longer at an alarming rate. Still, let us not lose touch with our realizations during those terrible years.



ERRATUM

This is to correct the error made in the publications of NOTICE OF EXTRA JUDICIAL SALE filed by HOME DEVELOPMENT MUTUAL FUND versus LIEZL M. ABRICO married to WILLY V. ABRICO published in DateLine Weekly Newspaper dated December 26, Jan. 2 & 9, 2023.

Dateline Weekly Newspapers: January 06, 2025

DILG...

Following the recommendations of the Commission on Audit (COA), the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) has closed its four trust fund accounts at the Landbank of the Philippines (LBP) with an aggregate amount of over P12.98 million.

Earlier, COA flagged the DILG for maintaining four unauthorized bank accounts, stating that their creation and retention as of yearend 2023 "have no legal basis".

PhilHealth...

As Filipinos celebrate the holiday season, the Department of Health (DOH) recently called on people to prioritize their well-being by practicing moderation in their food intake and maintaining an active lifestyle.

To provide expanded financial coverage associated with heart disease treatment, the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) significantly increased its benefits coverage for Ischemic Heart Disease-Acute Myocardial Infarction (IHD-AMI) or "heart attack" for all inpatient admissions effective December 21, 2024.

PhilHealth Circular No. 2024-0032 published on the same date provides coverage for (1) Percutaneous Coronary Intervention (PCI) at P524,000 from P30,300, an increase of 1,629 percent; (2) Fibrinolysis at P133,500 from P30,290 or a 900% increase; (3) Emergency Medical Services with Coordinated Referral and Interfacility Transfer at P21,900; and (4) Cardiac Rehabilitation after PCI at P66,140.

The expanded PhilHealth benefits packages for heart attack ensure that patients receive timely medical treatment

The Department used as depository accounts for funds from other national government agencies. The accounts were created to ensure the prompt release of funds to support the implementation of various programs and projects.

According to the DILG, it had earlier closed the P1.73-million RO IX Trust Regular Account and the DILG-NCR Local Government Academy Special Project Account with P111,009.42.

by including emergency medical transport services to a capable health facility and all the medical interventions needed to ensure survival and good patient outcomes.

"We understand the significant financial burden that heart disease can place on families," said PhilHealth President and Chief Executive Officer Emmanuel R. Ledesma, Jr. "We have listened to the patients and their families, and with the cooperation of our partner health facilities, we have been able to determine the prevailing costs that led us to adjust and substantially increase our financial support in these life-saving treatments," he added.

The enhanced heart packages support a comprehensive range of services that include emergency medical services, medicines, laboratory and diagnostic tests, medical supplies, use of equipment, and pertinent administrative fees. In the case of percutaneous coronary intervention, the procedure can be availed of at any of the 70 accredited Cath Labs nationwide.

The PhilHealth Chief reminded the members that there should be no co-payment for inpatient admissions in basic or ward accommodations in both public and private health facilities nationwide.

"But we should not forget, heart ailments

Meanwhile, the DILG is processing the closing of the P1.116-million DILG-NCR Special Project Account and the P10.025-million DILG Central Office Trust Account.

For the latter, the Department has returned the unutilized P2.363-million balance to the source agency; and has utilized the P5.834-million from the Department of Trade and Industry and the Bureau of Fire Protection - Interagency Task Force. As of today, the BFP-IATF

can be prevented. To support our members in their journey towards better health especially in the coming new year, we encourage everyone to avail of our primary care benefits under Konsulta," urged Ledesma, specifying consultations with primary care physician, laboratory tests for early detection as well as medicines to support those that already have heart conditions, all for free.

"Through the Konsulta, we can identify potential health risks early on, including family history of heart disease, allowing for timely interventions

Fund balance of only P199,627.90 shall be utilized for unpaid claims, after which any remaining balances shall be remitted to the Bureau of Treasury (BTr) at year-end.

The DILG is now coordinating with the BTr to open the Modified Disbursement System Trust Account under LBP. This account will be used for fund transfers granted or entrusted to the Department and may take effect in January 2025. DILG. GOV

such as medication for cholesterol management and lifestyle advice, to prevent or mitigate the development of heart disease," He asked Filipinos to register to their Konsulta provider of choice at any of the local health insurance offices nationwide or through their own account in the PhilHealth Member Portal.

By embracing a healthy lifestyle and by utilizing the Konsulta, Filipinos can better protect themselves from heart diseases for a healthier and productive future, he added. ###

DATELINE Weekly Newspapers has its principal business editorial office at 2F #025 Coastal Green St., P. F. 1 Espiritu, Bacoor City Cavite with all the required BIR, DTI (CR#01576397), Barangay and City business permits Tel Nos. (046)476-7611/(0955)1552764; datelineweekly@gmail.com / heidelitalat@yahoo.com



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Table with 2 columns: Category and Rate. Includes Commercial, Legal/Notices, and Font Size details.

From Page 1

From Page 1

Signs of Mental Health Issues

According to the World Health Organization, mental health disorders affect one in four people globally. Despite its prevalence, there is still a significant stigma surrounding mental health, making it difficult for individuals to seek help.

Mental health issues can manifest in various ways and can affect everyone differently. Some common signs to watch out for include:

- Persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, or worthlessness
Changes in appetite and sleep patterns
Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
Loss of interest in previously enjoyable activities
Feelings of fear, panic, or constant worry
Unexplained physical symptoms such as headaches or stomach aches

In this blog, we will look at some important aspects of mental health and how we can support those around us who may be struggling. Remember, you are not alone in this journey.

What is Mental Health?

Mental health refers to our psychological, emotional, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act in our daily lives. Mental health problems can range from mild to severe and can interfere with our ability to function in our relationships, work, and other aspects of life.

Common mental health disorders include depression, anxiety disorders, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and eating disorders. These conditions can be caused by a combination of genetic, environmental, and psychological factors.

Understanding the Stigma

Despite advancements in mental health awareness, many people still hold negative attitudes and beliefs towards those with mental health disorders. This stigma can lead to discrimination and isolation and even prevent individuals from seeking help.

It's essential to understand that mental illness is not a personal choice or weakness. It is a medical condition that requires treatment and support. We need to educate ourselves and others to reduce stigma and create a more empathetic and understanding society.

tionally draining. Make sure you take care of your own well-being by setting boundaries and seeking support when needed.

Minimize stigma:

Be mindful of your language and actions, and avoid perpetuating stereotypes or stigmatizing individuals with mental health disorders.

Mind your own mental health:

Supporting someone with a mental illness can also take a toll on your own well-being. Make sure you prioritize self-care and seek help if needed.

The Connection Between Physical Activity and Mental Health

Research has shown that physical activity can have a positive impact on our mental health. Exercise releases endorphins, which are chemicals in the brain that act as natural painkillers and improve mood. Regular exercise can also reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression and improve self-esteem.

The Impact of Social Media on Mental Health

Social media can be both a blessing and a curse for mental health. On the one hand, it allows people to connect and share their experiences, creating a sense of community. However, the pressure to present a perfect life online and the constant comparison to others' highlight reels can contribute to feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem.

The Importance of Physical Activity for Mental Health

According to the World Health Organization, mental health is "a state of well-being in which an individual real-

izes their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and is able to make a contribution to their community". Physical activity plays a crucial role in achieving this state of well-being.

Firstly, exercise has been proven to reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression. This is because it increases levels of serotonin and dopamine, two neurotransmitters that play a role in regulating mood. Exercise also helps to reduce levels of cortisol, the stress hormone, which can contribute to feelings of anxiety and depression.

Additionally, physical activity has been linked to improved self-esteem and cognitive function. When we exercise, our bodies release endorphins which not only improve our mood but also boost our confidence and self-worth. Furthermore, regular exercise has been shown to improve memory, focus and overall brain function.

The Impact of Social Media on Mental Health

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It's essential to have a healthy relationship with social media and take breaks when needed.

Remember, what you see on social media is not always an accurate representation of reality.

According to mental health experts, it's crucial to practice self-care and set boundaries while using social media. This can include limiting your time on certain platforms, unfollowing accounts that trigger negative emotions, and focusing on real-life connections.

The Role of Nutrition in Mental Well-Being

Nutrition plays a crucial role in our overall well-being, including mental health. Studies have shown that a healthy diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains can reduce the risk of developing depression and anxiety.

A diet high in processed foods, sugar, and unhealthy fats has been linked to an increased risk of mental health issues. It's important to prioritize a balanced diet and limit unhealthy food choices. Additionally, staying hydrated and limiting alcohol and caffeine intake can also positively impact our mental health.

The following are the benefits of a balanced diet for mental health:

- Promotes a healthy gut microbiome, which has been linked to improved mood and cognition.
Provides essential nutrients for optimal brain function and neurotransmitter production.
Helps regulate blood sugar levels, which can affect our mood and energy levels.
Promotes overall physical health, which

can also impact our mental well-being.

You Are Not Alone

If you are struggling with your mental health, know that you are not alone. Millions of people around the world face mental health challenges every day. Remember to reach out for help and support from loved ones and professionals.

Together, we can create a more understanding and empathetic society that supports and empowers those with mental health disorders. Let's break the stigma and remind ourselves that we are all in this together. So, we can say that Mental Health is something not to be ashamed of, but rather something to talk about and support each other through openly. After all, you are not alone.

Closing Thoughts

Taking care of our mental health is just as important as taking care of our physical health. It's essential to prioritize self-care, set boundaries, and seek support when needed. Remember to be mindful of your language and actions, minimize stigma, and practice healthy habits like regular exercise and a balanced diet. And most importantly, remember that you are not alone in your struggles.

Let's continue to support and uplift one another in our journey towards better mental well-being. Together, we can create a more understanding and empathetic society where mental health is given the importance it deserves.

ACROSS and DOWN crossword puzzle grid with clues. Includes clues like 'Geopeter on a cafe table, probably', 'Cambodia's coastline', 'Hunger twinge', etc.

Take Charge of Your Future: 5 Essential Tips to Thrive and 'Be More' In Your Career

In recent years, the growth of the business process outsourcing (BPO) industry in the Philippines has been unprecedented, boosting the country's economy and providing employment to around 1.7 million Filipinos in 2023. This is foreseen to carry on in the coming years as new technology and global demand for BPO services continue to rise.

With this, it's safe to say there's no better time to enter and explore the BPO industry than now! Aside from good salary and employee benefits, working in a BPO company also gives you the chance to advance your career path and reach your goals. Whether you're already a BPO employee or an aspiring one, here are some tips to help you make the most of this opportunity.

Assess yourself

Identifying your strengths and opportunities for improvement is the crucial first step in taking control of your career growth. What are your skills, interests, and passions? What motivates you? How do you deal with pressure and setbacks in the workplace? By knowing these, you'll be able to pinpoint the areas where you excel and those you need to work on to become an even better employee.

Set career goals

Once you're done with your self-assessment, it's time to set goals. Whether they're short-term, long-term, or both, having goals can help you effectively visualize what you want for your future and identify what actions to take to achieve them. Of course, you have to select the right employer that can best support your career goals and set

you up for success. **Learn and develop new skills**

To take a step up in your career, you must constantly improve and keep up with the demands and standards of the industry you're in. Search for webinars and workshops relevant to your line of work and interests that you can join to gain more knowledge.

Fortunately, a lot of BPO companies offer resources and training programs you can leverage to enhance both your technical and soft skills. Don't pass up on those! Global BPO company iQor, for example, provides leadership training and development programs to its employees to equip them with new skills and support their personal growth.

Be open to feedback and mentoring

This tip best ap-

plies to those who are currently working in BPO companies. Feedback from supervisors is important in career improvement, so always participate in performance evaluations. The insights you get from these can help you understand your strengths and address gaps if there are any, enabling you to take the necessary actions to improve yourself and enhance your career growth.

At the same time, don't be afraid to ask for support from your mentors and team leaders when faced with challenges. It's also good to build a strong relationship with them and your colleagues to ensure a harmonious and nurturing working environment. That's always a plus!

Choose the right employer

You'll be able to thrive better in your chosen career path if you're in a place that will freely let you do so. This is why it's important to do your

research before applying for a position in BPO companies. Make sure their vision for their employees aligns with the career goals you have set for yourself before signing on the dotted line.

If you're looking for a place to work and grow your career, iQor is the place to be! iQor is a Great Place to Work®-Certified™ value-driven global BPO organization committed to creating rewarding experiences and human connections. Their employees enjoy flexible work-in-office and work-at-home positions with 17 contact centers spread across the Philippine archipelago. Interested applicants receive equal opportunities during the hiring process, regardless of whether they're a senior high school graduate, a college degree holder, or have minimal or extensive BPO experience. Candidates are encouraged to visit <https://apply.iqor.com>.

Once hired, employees can take on a wide range of accounts in various large industries, including telecommunications, finance, healthcare, collections, and retail. iQor encourages employees to excel in their roles and acquire leadership skills through free training programs, ensuring growth throughout their career journey. Currently, in Davao, the company is set to hire close to 500 seasonal customer service representatives to support the year-end ramp, meeting the growing service demand for one of the world's largest retail companies. Meanwhile, iQor Clark and Iloilo need almost 1500 and 1300 new customer service representatives, respectively, to support ongoing growth as 2024 closes.

To learn more about what makes iQor a great place for careers, visit <https://www.iqor.com/> or follow their socials.

GSIS sets aside P8.6 B emergency loan for 364K members, pensioners in Luzon

The Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) has set aside nearly P8.6 billion in emergency loans for 363,547 active members and old-age and disability pensioners affected by various typhoons.

In the province of Isabela, the deadline for application is on 4 January.

Deadline for application in the provinces of Ifugao and Nueva Vizcaya, and the towns of Burgos and Bautista in Pangasinan province is on 5 January

The emergency loan window is also open in the provinces of Cagayan until 16 January; Albay on 23 January; Batangas, Camarines Norte, and Catanduanes, until 28 January.

Qualified borrowers in the provinces of Quezon (excluding Lucena City), Camarines Sur, and Laguna; city of Naga; municipalities of Juban, Bulan, Irosin, Barcelona, Donsol, Matnog, and Castilla in Sorsogon; and municipality of San Fernando in Masbate have until 30

January. Application for the following areas in Sorsogon has been extended until 5 February: Sorsogon City, Bacon, Casiguran, Bulusan, Magallanes, Santa Magdalena, Gubat, Prieto Diaz, and Pilar.

In the municipalities of Pio V. Corpuz and Uson in Masbate province, deadline for application are on 12 and 21 February, respectively.

Eligible to apply are active members who are working or residing in the calamity declared areas, have no due and demandable loan, not on unpaid leave, have paid premiums in the last six months prior to application, have no pending administrative or criminal case, and with a net monthly take-home pay of at least P5,000 after deductions.

Under the emergency loan facility, qualified members who have existing emergency loan may borrow up to P40,000 to pay off their previous emergency loan balance and enable them to receive a maximum net amount of

P20,000. Those without existing emergency loan may apply for P20,000.

Old-age and disability pensioners may also apply for a P20,000 emergency loan, provided they are residing in the calamity areas and their net basic monthly pension is at least 25% after loan deductions.

Members and pensioners may apply for the loan through the GSIS Touch mobile application, which may be downloaded from the Google Play and Apple App stores.

The loan proceeds are electronically credited to the borrowers' eCard or UMID card.

The loan comes with a 6% interest rate, no service fee, and payment period of three years. It includes a redemption insurance, which ensures that the balance will be deemed fully paid in the event of the borrower's death, as long as payments are up-to-date.

For more information, visit the GSIS website (www.gsis.gov.ph), or the official Facebook page (@gsis.ph), or

email gsiscares@gsis.gov.ph, or call the hotline at 8847-4747 (Metro Manila), 1-800-8-847-4747 (for Globe and TM users), or 1-800-10-847-4747 (for Smart, Sun, and Talk 'N Text subscribers).

Cayetano rings in 2025 with call for vision, purpose

As the nation welcomes the new year, Senator Alan Peter Cayetano shared his message of hope and urged Filipinos to begin 2025 with a clear vision, purpose, and a strong sense of direction.

In his Facebook live broadcast on January 1, 2025, Cayetano reminded the public that while New Year's resolutions are common, they should be backed by reflection and thoughtful planning.

"Napakaimportante na even before we make our New Year's resolutions, we think about plans, vision, and purpose," he said.

He also highlighted the importance of envisioning one's future, saying that a vision serves as the foundation for achieving goals.

"Kailangan na may vision tayo. Wala pong nagsasabi na may plano siya na walang vision. 'Pag sinabi ng bata na gusto niya maging doctor, ibig sabihin nakikita niya ang sarili niya sa role na iyon," he said.

"Kapag ang purpose ay klaro, napakaimportante na we should write down the vision then run with it. Ibig sabihin, i-pursue natin ang vision na 'yan," he added.

Cayetano also encouraged Filipinos to reflect on their personal goals and



the country's future, urging them to think about where they see themselves and the nation in the coming months and years.

"It's very important to demonstrate kung nasaan ako by June 30 ng taon na ito, nasaan ako 10 years from now. Ano ang mga nagawa ko para makamit ang mga vision ko?" he said.

As many are still recovering from the challenges of 2024, the senator also took time to remind Filipinos to trust in Divine guidance.

"May plano ang Panginoon para sa atin -- plano na pagpalain tayo at hindi saktan, at plano na bigyan tayo ng pag-asa at kinabukasan," he said.



Budget approval ensures push for rural electrification —Gatchalian

Senator Win Gatchalian said the approval of the General Appropriations Act (GAA) for next year ensures significant progress in the government's rural electrification program.

"We hope that the budget allocation for the National Electrification Administration for 2025 would help push the rural electrification program to its completion in the next couple of years," Gatchalian said in reaction to the signing by the President of the 2025 GAA which authorizes an expenditure program of P6.352 trillion.

Under the approved budget, NEA has been allotted a government subsidy of P1.87 billion to provide electricity for approximately 22,000 households through the implementation of its strategic rural electrification.

NEA had earlier claimed that inadequate government subsidy has been the biggest challenge to the attainment of 100% rural electrification.

According to Gatchalian, an estimated 4.214 million households throughout the country were still without electricity as of June 2023. The government's target is to reach total electrification in the country by 2028.

While the five-year plan to achieve 100% electrification by 2028 has been progressing, the government needs to ensure that such a target will be achieved through budgetary support, the senator emphasized.

According to him, economic development, particularly in rural areas, would be difficult to achieve without electricity as it is a major factor in attracting investments and in the operations even of micro and small business enterprises. "Ang kuryente ay isang pangunahing pangangailangan para sa iba't ibang negosyo na kailangan natin sa mga malalayong lugar para makapagbigay ng trabaho at para sa tuloy-tuloy na pag-unlad ng ekonomiya, he said.

As of 2023, electrification in the country stood at 89%, rising to 91% this year. Based on the five-year electrification plan, the government aims to increase coverage to 94% by 2025, 97% by 2026 and achieve 100% by 2027.

As of August 2024, NEA was able to energize 1,153 sitios through government subsidy provided the previous year.



LEE...

better medical care services that every Filipino deserve.

"Kahit para na tayong sirang plaka sa paulit-ulit na panawagan na gamitin ang pondo ng kalusugan para sa kalusugan, di tayo titigil dahil ito ang talagang makakabawas sa pangamba ng ating mga kababayan, lalo na sa pagkakasakit dahil sa mahal na gamot at pagpapagamot," Lee lamented.

"M a g a n d a sanang Pamasko sa ating mga kababayan kung sumunod lang ang DOH sa ipinaglaban at naikasan nating commitment na nilagdaan mismo ng pinuno nito para mapababa ang gastos ng bawat Pilipino sa pagpapa-ospital. Pero ang inaprubahan na mga dagdag benepisyo kamakailan ay kulang-kulang sa napagkasunduan," he added.

Last Dec. 16, the PhilHealth Board of Directors approved a 50% increase in selected case rates, in addition to emergency care benefit, glasses and optometric services for children, open-heart surgery benefits and pediatric cataract extractions.

Lee said that the DOH, which leads the PhilHealth Board and the Benefits Committee (BenCom) must put as its New Year's Resolution to be more proactive in increasing the health benefit packages of Filipinos, especially with its more than P500 billion or half a trillion available funds.

The solon from Bicol then reiterated his sentiment during the Dec. 17 House Committee on Good Government and Public Accountability hearing on zero subsidy for PhilHealth, saying "Nasaan ang hustiya kung milyong-milyong Pilipino pa rin ang papasan sa mga pagdurusa at mapagkaitan ng mga dagdag na benepisyo pangkalusugan dahil sa pagka-manhid at kapalakan ng ilang namumuno?"

"Napakalaking insulto at kalokohan na gamitin ang pondong kailangang-kailangan para

sa mga dagdag na serbisyong pangkalusugan sa mararangyang okasyon o ilipat ito sa mga proyekto na hindi naman ikamamata ng mga Pilipino kung hindi maipagawa," Lee reiterated.

"Paano naaatiin ng ilan na maging makupad sa pagtupad ng kanilang tungkulin at ipagkait ang mga dagdag na benepisyo sa gamot at pagpapagamot na pwedeng magligtas sa buhay ng milyon-milyon nating kababayan?"

"The focus should remain on addressing the gaps in the country's healthcare system. Napakalaking kasalanan na hindi ibigay ang pondo at suporta na kaya namang ibigay, at sa halip ay gamitin lang ito kung saan ilang lang ang makikibanang," he added.

A staunch health advocate, Lee successfully fought for the 30% increase in PhilHealth benefits implemented last February 2024, after more than a decade that PhilHealth case rates were not reviewed and adjusted, making its coverage no longer responsive to the hospitalization cost of beneficiaries.

The solon from Bicol constantly called on the DOH and PhilHealth leadership to implement more benefit increases, which resulted to securing their commitments during the House Budget Deliberations last September 25, to provide a comprehensive plan to lower the out-of-pocket medical expenses of Filipinos.

It can be recalled that the 2025 DOH budget deliberations ended in a mic scuffle as Lee would like to put on record the said health commitments he secured from DOH and PhilHealth.

He also recently filed a measure to investigate the P11 billion worth of expired medicines and vaccines in DOH warehouses and health facilities flagged by the Commission on Audit (COA), stressing that this kind of inefficiency is a big disservice to millions of Filipinos

who are dying because they cannot afford to buy medicines.

"Hinding-hindi natin titigilan ang paninigil sa mga ipinangako sa ating mga dagdag na benepisyo pangkalusugan. Hindi rin natin tatantanan ang pagpapangot sa mga manhid at walang pakialam, hanggang masiguro natin na ito na ang huli nilang Pasko at Bagong Taon sa posisyon

DSWD...

GoNegosyo conducted a mini version of its 3M on Wheels program to provide business guidance to SLP beneficiaries toward the overall objective of helping improve their socio-economic conditions through accessing and acquiring necessary assets to engage in and maintain thriving livelihoods. 3M on Wheels is Go Negosyo's free public entrepreneurship roadshow, usually conducted in shopping malls in major urban cities across the Philippines.

"Our efforts to promote entrepreneurship among Filipinos is amplified by collaborations such as this with the DSWD," said Go Negosyo founder Joey Concepcion. He explained that the mentoring was made possible through a Memorandum of Agreement with the DSWD to provide mentorship for the beneficiaries of their SLP program so that they can be guided as they work toward building their businesses.

Concepcion added that First Lady Liza Araneta Marcos's Lab For All was instrumental in expanding entrepreneurship mentoring as beneficiaries from areas where the medical and social services caravan is conducted undergo one-on-one mentoring with Go Negosyo before they are given the capital support.

Similar partnerships have been established through government agencies such as the Department of Education, Department of Tourism, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Department of Agrarian Reform, and the Department of Trade and Indus-

dahil wala silang malasakit at hindi nila ginagawa ang kanilang trabaho," Lee stressed.

"Hindi na dapat paabutin ng panibagong Pasko o Bagong Taon ang pagpapatupad ng mga dagdag na benepisyo pangkalusugan. Ang gamot at pagpapagamot, dapat libre na ng gobyerno. Ang layunin ko: Gamot Mo, Sagot Ko!" Lee said. PR

From Page 1

try.

The free mentoring was held in support of the program during the SustainEnablers Livelihood Congress 2024 of the DSWD National Capital Region, held last November 11 to 13 at the Great Eastern Hotel in Quezon City. Seventy-five participants from across the NCR received one-on-one coaching and consultation from the pool of entrepreneurship experts, consultants and veteran entrepreneurs, namely Marvin Adolfo, Roman Buysong, Perry Camba, Pat Ballecer, Rommel Villoria, Evelyn Breguera, Florlynn Dela Pena, Leah Ayeng, Max Yap, Senedith Delos Reyes, Jordan Patente, RC Flores, and Inday Almonte.

The event was to celebrate the SLP program's accomplishments and highlight the contributions of its partner stakeholders, staff, and participants. The SustainEnabler Awards Program is a platform to highlight the journey of program beneficiaries who have become self-resilient individuals and spread community-level prosperity.

The DSWD's Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) was started in 2011 and implemented through two tracks: Microenterprise Development and Employment Facilitation. Through the microenterprise track, beneficiaries are provided a one-time financial capital assistance from DSWD, given access skills enhancement, and building/re-building and developing physical and natural assets.

Ika-2 Pandaigdigang Kumperensiya sa Nanganganib na Wika, tagumpay!



Matagumpay na isinagawa ang Ika-2 Pandaigdigang Kumperensiya sa Nanganganib na Wika na ginanap noong 9–11 Oktubre 2024 sa Pamantasang Normal ng Pilipinas, Maynila katuwang ang Pamantasang Normal ng Pilipinas-Sentro sa Pag-aaral ng Wika (PNU-LSC), Departamento ng Filipino ng Pamantasang De La Salle (DLSU-Filipino), at Departamento ng Linggwistiks ng Unibersidad ng Pilipinas (UP-Lingg).

Nilahukan ito ng 267 na kalahok mula sa iba't ibang katutubong pamayanan, lider ng indigenus cultural communities (ICCs), Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representatives (IPMR), ahensiya, institusyon, mag-aaral, at mga organisasyon.

Sa unang araw ay nagtanggap ng ritwal ang Bugkalot. Nagbigay ng mainit na bating pagtanggap si Denmark L. Yonson, PhD, Vice President for Student Success and Stakeholders Services ng Pamantasang Normal ng Pilipinas. Nagbahagi rin ng mensahe si Secretary-General Ivan Henares, PhD sa pamamagitan ni Gng. Kaye S. Nagpala ng Philippine National Commission for UNESCO. Nagtanggap naman ng katutubong sayaw ang PNU Kislap Sining Dance Troupe bilang pampasiglang bilang. Matapos nito ay nagbigay ng panayam ang Pamak-sang Tagapanayam na si Victoria Tauli-Corpuz,

Direktor ng Tebtebba kaugnay ng karapatan na dapat tinatamasa ng mga katutubo. Sinimulan naman ni Tagapangulong Arthur P. Casanova, PhD, ang panayam sa plenaryong sesyon na tumatalakay sa "Estado ng mga Nanganganib na Wika sa Pilipinas at Programa sa Pagpapasigla ng Wika ng Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino." Sinundan ito ng paralel na sesyon tungkol sa dokumentasyon at mga pag-aaral sa wika mula sa iba't ibang institusyon. Sa ikalawang plenaryong panayam naman ay tinalakay ni Anna Belew, PhD, Direktor ng Endangered Languages Project ang "Lumalaking Network ng Pagpapasiglang Pang-wika sa Kabila ng mga Hanggahan."

Sa ikalawang araw ay nagbigay ng mensahe si Deborrah S. Anastacio, PhD, Tagapangulo ng Departamento ng De La Salle. Ibinahagi din ni Marites T. Gonzalo, Direktor, IP Education Ministry ang "Pagtuturo ng mga Katutubong Kaalaman" at ginagawa ng kanilang organisasyon para sa kanilang komunidad na Tagakawlo. Sinundan ito ng pagbabahagi ni Frederick Barcelo, Bugkalot, bilang Pangangalaga ng Wika" ng kanilang wika. Hinilawod Epic Chant Recording naman ang ibinahagi nina Felipe P. Jocano Jr., Unibersidad ng Pilipinas at Lord Jane Caballero-Dordas, PhD, Sugidanon. Nagkaroon din

ng bahagian sa sesyong parareal kaugnay ng mga papel-pananaliksik pang-wika. Ibinahagi naman ni Siripen Ungsitpoonporn, PhD, Mahidol University ang pag-a-archive ng mga wika (Language Archiving) at nagawang website at mga materyal.

Sa ikatlong araw, nagbigay ng mensahe si Maria Kristina Gallego, PhD, Tagapangulo ng Departamento ng Linggwistiks. Nagbahagi naman ng mga papel sa plenaryong sesyon ang mga tagapanayam mula sa katuwang na institusyon. Sinimulan ni John Amlalao, PhD, Pamantasang De La Salle ang "Ang Sampung Libong Salita ng Tuwali-lfugao sa Lente ni Padre Hubert Lambrecht: Repleksiyon sa Pagbubuo ng Identidad ng Araling Kordilyera." Sinundan ito ni Voltaire M. Villanueva, PhD Pamantasang Normal ng Pilipinas na "Pagtatampok sa mga Kalinangang Bayan sa Aralin at Pagsasanay tungo sa Preserbasyon ng Wika at Kultura (Bong-abong)." Nagkaroon din ng pagbahagi sa mga papel-pananaliksik sa parareal na sesyon. Huling nagbigay-panayam si Jesus Federico C. Hernandez, Unibersidad ng Pilipinas sa "Quo Vadis: Muling Pagsipat sa Diskurso ng Panganganib at Pagpapasigla ng mga Wika sa Pilipinas."

Pinangasiwaan naman ni Komisyoner Melchor E. Orpilla, PhD, Komisyoner ng Wikang Pangasinan, ang Res-



olusyon sa mga kalahok hinggil sa pagkakaisa ng mga ahensiya at institusyon sa pangangalaga ng mga nanganganib na wika sa bansa na nilagdaan ng mga kalahok. Sa huli, ay nagbigay ng pampinid na pananalita si Komisyoner Jose Kervin Cesar B. Calabias, PhD, Komisyoner ng mga Wika ng Kahilagaang Pamayanang Kultural kaugnay ng naganap na tatlong araw na kumperensiya. PR

DILG-R4A recognizes outstanding barangays, LGOOs in first-ever Juan Awards

As part of its commitment to recognize the tireless efforts and continuous dedication of barangays in the region, the Department of the Interior and Local Government-Region IVA (DILG-R4A) recognized 91 barangays in the first-ever "Juan Awards: Gawad Parangal para sa Natatanging Barangay"

In his message during the awarding ceremony held recently at Aquamarine Recreation

Center, Barangay Banay-Banay, Lipa City, Batangas, DILG-R4A Assistant Regional Director Darrell I. Dizon highlighted the importance of sustained excellence.

"Beyond the recognition and incentives, the fundamental objective of each assessment and audit is to ensure the continuous commitment of our local government units down to its grassroots level," he said.

The 91 outstanding barangays in CAL-ABARZON were recog-

nized for their exemplary performance in the DILG's flagship programs such as Barangay Trailblazers for Outstanding Performance (TOP) Tanod Awards; Lupong Tagapamayapa Incentives Awards (LTIA); Kalinga at Inisyatiba para sa Malinis na Bayan (KALINISAN); and Seal of Good Local Governance Barangay (SGLGB).

Concerned City and Municipal Local Government Operations Officers were also recognized for their invaluable support to the success of their respective barangays.

SUCCESS STORY | From Bar to Bistro: The Inspiring Journey of Alcoh Bistro

Antipolo City, 26 December 2024 – Nestled in the heart of Rizal, Alcoh Bistro stands as a testament to resilience, transformation, and family values. The brainchild of Florey Serrato, a mother of four and a Mass Communication. Alcoh Bistro is more than just a dining spot—it's a legacy in the making.

Florey's entrepreneurial journey began in 2009, alongside her husband, Arnel, with the opening of Alcoh Bar. The establishment became a local favorite for its lively atmosphere, cold beer, and videoke nights. However, like many businesses, the pandemic in 2019 forced its closure, putting a pause on their dreams.

In 2022, Florey and Arnel reopened their doors with a renewed purpose and a new name: Alcoh Bistro. Transitioning from a bar-centric identity, the couple envisioned a family-friendly restaurant where great food and exceptional customer experience would take center stage.

"When people hear 'Alcoh,' they often think of beer or videoke," Florey shared. "But as a mother watching my four boys grow, I began to reflect deeply on why I do what I do. I wanted Alcoh to be more than just a business—I wanted it to be something we could proudly pass on to our children."

With no formal education in Business Management, Florey faced challenges in running the bistro. Seeking to grow her knowledge, she turned to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Rizal Provincial Office. A social media post about the Kapatid Mentor ME (KMME) program caught her attention, sparking a journey that would rede-



fine her business.

Florey joined KMME, submitted her requirements, and went through a mentorship process. Presenting her Business Improvement Plan to a panel of experts, she not only gained invaluable insights but also earned the distinction of Best Presenter.

"The program taught me the importance of value in our business," she recalled. "Before, my focus was just on generating sales to cover expenses. But KMME gave me a bigger vision for Alcoh Bistro and for our family."

Since completing the KMME program, Florey and Arnel have made significant strides in improving Alcoh Bistro. The air-conditioned dining area has been transformed into a cozy, inviting space perfect for small events and celebrations. Their menu now boasts upgraded dishes and new recipes, reflecting their commit-

cavite...

ployed individuals, were trained to become certified customer service professionals, equipped with the skills to thrive in the fast-growing contact center industry.

Designed to address unemployment and skill gaps, the training program aimed to open doors to new career paths while fostering personal and professional growth. By empowering participants to meet industry standards, this initiative serves as a stepping stone for

ment to offering only the best to their patrons.

Alcoh Bistro still retains its videoke charm, inviting customers to sing their hearts out while enjoying Filipino favorites. But the Serratos' focus is clear: creating a dining experience where families can come together, enjoy great food, and make lasting memories.

Florey's journey is a testament to the power of determination and adaptability. With a renewed vision and the support of programs like KMME, she has not only redefined Alcoh Bistro but also inspired others in her community.

"Through KMME, we've dared to dream bigger for our business and our family," Florey said with pride.

Today, Alcoh Bistro isn't just a business—it's a symbol of resilience, reinvention, and a family's unwavering commitment to building a brighter future. PR



From Page 1

P32-M...

Corporation, and Mr. John Ray B. Malaca, President/TVI Head of IExcel School of Communication and Technical Skills, Inc., emphasizing the importance of education and perseverance in achieving success.

This collaborative initiative highlights the shared commitment of OPPEM and TESDA to uplift communities by providing life-changing opportunities through skill development and job placement. - R. Tanael

kung saan layon nitong bayaran ng tig- P5,000 ang bawat baboy na nailaba sa depopulation ng mga magsasakang nikipag-ugnayan sa Kagawaran.

Kabilang ito sa mga inihayag ni Regional Livestock Coordinator Dr. Jerome Cuasay sa isinagawang Livestock and Poultry Congress 2024 noong ika-4 ng Nobyembre. Aniya, umabot na sa 615 magsasaka

ang natulungan ng programa at inaasahan na may paparating pang ikalawa at ikatlong batch nito.

Si Mary Rose Hernandez mula sa Lipa City, Batangas na nakuha ng Php55,000 ay malaki ang pasasalamat na hindi siya nagdalawang isip na magreport kaagad nang mamataan ang sintomas ng ASF sa kanyang mga baboy dahil dito ay isa siya sa mga nabigyan sa indemnification. PR

From Page 1