

Pasasalamat: Mekení Celebrates 40 Years by Honoring the People Behind Every Flavor

Mekení Food Corporation celebrated four decades of success with a grand employee Thanksgiving on February 28, 2026, gathering more than 1,400 employees at the Laus Group Event Centre, City of San Fernando, Pampanga in a heartfelt tribute to the people who have built the company over the past 40 years.

With the theme "Pasasalamat: Apat na Dekadang Kwento sa Bawat Timpla," the celebration honored the dedication, resilience, and shared stories of the Mekení workforce, recognizing that behind every product and milestone is the commitment of its employees.

"Our 40-year journey is a testament to the hard work and passion of our people," said Mekení President Mr. Pruds Garcia. "Every product we make carries the story of the individuals behind it. This Thanksgiving celebration is our way of expressing our deepest gratitude to the employees who have helped build Mekení and continue to move it forward."

The event featured a festive evening of appreciation and entertainment, with special guest artists invited to perform and entertain employees, creating a lively atmosphere of celebration and camaraderie.

One of the highlights of the evening was the Service Awards, recognizing long-serving employees whose years of dedication, loyalty, and hard work have played a vital role in Mekení's journey and continued success.

The evening also marked the launch of Mekení's renewed Vision, Mission, and Values, which will guide the organization as it enters its next chapter of growth.

"Our new vision, mission, and values will serve as our compass as we move forward," said Ms. Kat Gomez-Schultz, Assistant Vice President for Marketing. "As Mekení expands and evolves, these guiding principles will ensure that we continue to stay true to the values that have shaped our company for the past 40 years."

Adding to the celebration was a back-to-back employee appreciation initiative recognizing key individuals who were entrusted with challenging targets and successfully delivered despite the obstacles in Fiscal Year 2025. In recognition of their contributions to the company's achievements, they were rewarded with a celebratory Asian cruise from March 3 to 9, 2026, visiting Nagasaki, Japan, and Keelung, Taiwan.

According to Assistant Vice President for Human Resources and Exports Ms. Marilou Uy, the initiatives reflect Mekení's commitment to recognizing both loyalty and excellence among its employees. "At Mekení, we believe that our greatest strength lies in our people," Uy said. "Through initiatives like our Thanksgiving celebration and the celebratory cruise, we aim to show our appreciation for the dedication, talent, and commitment of our employees who continue to drive our success."

As Mekení celebrates its 40th anniversary, the Thanksgiving initiatives served as powerful reminders that the company's success is built not only on quality products, but on the dedication of the people behind them.

With renewed purpose and unity, the Mekení family looks ahead to the next chapter of its journey, continuing to create stories of excellence, innovation, and shared success for the next 40 years and beyond.



SMC CORE NET INCOME RISES 52% TO P79.6 BILLION IN 2025

San Miguel Corporation (SMC) grew core net income by 52% to P79.6 billion in 2025, driven by stronger profitability across its businesses, improved margins, and continued cost discipline.

Reported net income reached P94.7 billion, supported by gains from the fair valuation of investments and foreign exchange movements.

Operating income rose 13% to P181.6 billion while EBITDA increased 16% to P262.0 billion, reflecting better operating performance, lower input costs, pricing initiatives, and sustained efficiency measures across the group.

Consolidated revenues reached P1.5 trillion, with steady contributions from its Food, Spirits and Infrastructure businesses helping cushion the impact of softer crude prices and the de-consolidation of



the Ilijan and EERI power facilities.

"Our 2025 performance shows the value of having a diversified portfolio and a clear focus on execution," said SMC Chairman and CEO Ramon S. Ang. "The strength of our businesses allowed us to navigate market changes, improve profitability, and remain disciplined in how we invest. Moving forward, we will continue to strengthen our businesses and pursue opportunities that create long-term value."

FOOD AND BEVERAGE
San Miguel Foods reported P196.3 billion in revenues, up 6%,

(SMFB) reported a 13% increase in consolidated net income to P46.3 billion in 2025, driven by a record performance from its Food business, continued growth in Spirits, and higher international Beer sales. Consolidated revenues reached P419.1 billion, up 5% from the previous year. Operating income and EBITDA grew 9% and 10% to P61.0 billion and P80.6 billion, respectively. This was on the back of margin improvements in both GSMI and the Food Group.

San Miguel Ginebra San Miguel Inc. sustained P196.3 billion in revenues, up 6%,

driven by improved performance in feeds and strong demand for poultry. Operating income surged 30% to P17.3 billion, while net income rose 38% to P11.6 billion.

San Miguel Brewery Inc. posted P155.4 billion in consolidated revenues reflecting a stable performance from the previous year. International operations continued to contribute positively, with revenues rising 3% to US\$285 million on higher sales volumes. Domestic beer revenues reached P139.1 billion despite pressure on subdued consumer spending. The beer business maintained operating income at P32.9 billion and net income at P26.5 billion, through disciplined cost management, portfolio optimization and targeted investments in consumer engagement.

Ginebra San Miguel Inc. sustained P196.3 billion in revenues, up 6%,

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Angeles University Foundation Sets its Sights on Imus

ARMY, it's time to go ALL OUT for BTS!



Head over to your most loved SM malls in South Luzon and be part of the Maxed Out ARMY Celebrations, where every corner turns a little more purple. From fan gatherings and photo spots to moments made just for ARMY, it's time to celebrate the boys and the music that brought ARMYs together.

Show up, sing along, and fill the mall with the energy only ARMYs can bring. Borahae!
#BorahaeWithSM, #GalaToTheMax, #SMFandom

DILG urges LGUs to cut power, fuel use by up to 20% **P6**

Himok ng mga Cayetano: Palawakin ang impormasyon tungkol sa Estate Tax Amnesty para mas maraming makinabang na Pilipino

PHILHEALTH ASSURES UNINTERRUPTED FRONTLINE SERVICES AMID GOV'T-WIDE ENERGY CONSERVATION MEASURES

P20 BBM RICE PROGRAM NOW SERVING MORE GROUPS IN BACOR CITY

CITY OF BACOR, Cavite (PIA) — More residents in Bacoor City are set to benefit from the government's P20 rice program as the Department of Agriculture (DA) Calabarzon and the Bacoor City government rolled out the expanded "Benteng Bigas, Meron Na!" initiative.

Around 2,500 Bacooreños were able to purchase P20-per-kilo



rice during the ceremonial selling held on March 6, which also signaled the start of regular rice distribution by the Bacoor local government unit for qualified residents.

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Kasalan 2026: Cavite Wedding Tourism Expo

An intimate meetup with Kasal.com partners event suppliers and other invited media/bloggers/vloggers happened last March 17, Tues 1:30 pm at Sañez Farm Events Place, Imus City, Cavite. Kasal.com is an online wedding community providing FREE information and resources to Pinoy couples and families here and abroad a staunch advocate of wedding tourism. With this they would like to invite everyone to #Kasalan2026 Expo in Imus this coming April 11-12 at Ayala Malla Vermosa. This event is presented by Kasal.com in partnership with: Cavite Tourism Imus City Tourism Alfonso Turismo Hortic Hotels and Resorts Tagaytay Jhossa Event Management - We Make Every Event Unforgettable Wilfred Chow Weddings SoundLuxe Lights and Sounds Estrella's House of Flowers Strings of Beginning



EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT 15TH MOVING UP CEREMONY 2026



The Moving-Up Ceremony of the Early Childhood Care and Development Program with the theme "Munting Hakbang Tungo sa Maunlad na Kinabukasan" was successfully held today, March 18, 2026 at the City of Dasmariñas Arena. The ceremony was graced by the presence of Mayor Jenny Austria-Barzaga, Vice Mayor Third Barzaga, and the Sanguniang Panlungsod Members.

EDITORIAL:

Fear and greed

THERE is a special place in hell for those who profit off their fellow citizens during the most unsettling times.

We have seen this in the past. During the pandemic, precious taxpayers' money was squandered on items procured through a company with neither financial muscle nor track record in undertaking COVID-related transactions with the government. The goods were found to be either of shoddy quality or downright unnecessary. These were grossly insulting to the healthcare professionals who risked their own safety in order to serve the public.

Another example is the widespread and deeply rooted flood-control scandal, which erupted last year but has likely been happening for many years. While a few people have gone to jail, only a formerly jailed former senator is the biggest name among those facing charges. The Senate Blue Ribbon Committee has yet to get all committee members to sign the report's draft.

Meanwhile, the lives and livelihoods of millions of Filipinos in flood-prone areas remain threatened every time there is a typhoon or even an erratic weather pattern. Contrasting these deplorable conditions with the opulent lifestyles and unapologetic behavior of those who raked in billions would make one wonder: where is the conscience, the humanity?

These days, the raging war in the Middle East has yet another consequence aside from the death, destruction, and displacement of ordinary citizens including our overseas workers there. Uncertainty is spooking the oil markets, with a crucial passageway for the global supply figuring in the conflict. Prices have started shooting up. It is difficult to tell whether the figures being cited are sound approximations or frantic estimates.

Fear and greed are also making themselves felt in more tangible ways. Fearing significant increases in the price of gas, motorists lined up to fill up, as some retailers jacked up their prices in anticipation of the higher demand and uncertain supply.

But they did so before they were authorized to hike prices. As a result, the Energy Department issued show cause orders to 55 retailers out of the 87 inspected. Adjustments could only be made beginning Tuesday, March 10, even as increases should be made on a staggered basis over succeeding days.

Measures to curb fuel demand are in place, as the world faces the consequences of a war that only a handful of individuals started. The next few days will determine whether the war will end soon, bringing things – and the prices of oil – back to normal. If it does, it will have taught us a lesson of being prepared to deal with the fallout of things we did not even have a hand on.

And if it does not end soon – then we will have to take in yet another crisis in our country's already-difficult condition. The prolonged effects of war will certainly negate all the gains we have managed to eke out in the past few years. The government should prepare to protect the people over the long term, from the logical consequences of a disrupted supply chain, and from those who feel they must take advantage of others just to survive.

SMC...

its strong momentum, with revenues increasing 8% to P67.4 billion, driven mainly by effective pricing and stable volumes. Operating income rose 21% to P10.4 billion, while net income increased 20% to P8.7 billion.

POWER

San Miguel Global Power's revenues fell 23% to P157.2 billion, with offtake volumes declining 20% to 29.2 million MWh, primarily due to the divestment and resulting decon-

P 20...

Residents were also registered in the P20 Benteng Bigas Masterlist Registry System (PBB-MRS), a web-based application developed by the Information and Communications Technology Service of the Department of Agriculture (DA-ICTS) to facilitate the registration of program beneficiaries.

According to the city government, around 200,000 Bacoreños are expected to benefit from the P20 rice program, which prioritizes vulnerable sectors such as senior citizens, persons with disabilities (PWDs), 4Ps beneficiaries, solo parents, farmers, fisherfolk, public transport drivers, minimum wage earners, and public school teachers and non-teaching staff.

Other groups, including teachers, jeepney drivers, students, house helpers, and the city government's job order workers, will also be included among the beneficiaries as endorsed by Bacoor City Mayor Strike Revilla.

Cavite's SMEs Step Boldly into the AI Era at Biz iCreate Finale

Small and medium entrepreneurs from across Cavite took center stage on March 11, 2026, as they concluded the fourth and final day of the Biz iCreate "AI-Enabled Entrepreneur Retooling Program" at the 2nd Flr. Function Hall of the New Provincial Government Center in Trece Martires City. Spanning four sessions on March 3, 4, 10, and 11, the program provided participants with practical strategies to integrate artificial intelligence (AI) into their businesses, boosting productivity, operational efficiency, and

solidation of the Ilijan and EERI power plants.

Excluding this impact, volumes remained stable. Strong output from the Masinloc plant, higher generation from San Roque, and the full-year contribution of the 600MW Mariveles power plant and BESS facilities supported overall performance.

Operating income rose 8% to P43.8 billion, with margins expanding to 28% from 20% on the back of higher

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According to Assistant Secretary for Agribusiness, Marketing, and Consumer Affairs Atty. Genevieve E. Velicaria-Guevarra, the program's scope has been expanded in its second rollout in Bacoor City to allow more residents to benefit. Meanwhile, Efrén Capacite, a resident of Barangay Niog III, expressed gratitude after purchasing 10 kilograms of rice at the subsidized price.

He said that as a senior citizen whose wife is currently ill, the program greatly helps reduce their household expenses.

Farmers' groups in Cavite were also allowed to sell their products through KADIWA, which was part of the activity.

DA Calabarzon reaffirmed its commitment to assist local government units in the region in rolling out the Benteng Bigas, Meron Na! program to benefit more residents and help ensure food affordability for vulnerable sectors.

competitiveness in today's digital economy.

The final day began with a program recap, setting the tone for Session 4: AI Application Presentation, aptly titled "Show, Don't Explain". Entrepreneurs took to the floor to showcase their AI-enabled business plans and workflows, receiving hands-on guidance from a panel of experts to refine and elevate their strategies. Mr. Noah Banagan, CEO of Dynamic Int'l Precision Technology Tooling Inc. shared actionable insights on improving business oper-

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blended margins across the portfolio, with the full year contribution of new plants and facilities. EBITDA grew 27% year-on-year to P70.5 billion.

Net income surged 290% to P48.3 billion, supported by a P21.9 billion gain from the Chromite transaction. Excluding this one-off gain, net income improved by 113% to P26.4 billion.

FUEL AND OIL

Petron Corporation ended 2025 with its strongest financial performance to date, delivering record net income of P15.6 billion, up 84% year-on-year.

This was driven by sustained domestic volume growth, improved productivity at its Philippine and Malaysian refineries, and savings on financial cost alongside effective working capital management.

Total volumes in the Philippines and Malaysia reached 113.4 million barrels, up 3% from 110.0 million barrels in the previous year.

While revenues fell 7% to P809.8 billion, primarily reflecting the 13% decline in Dubai crude prices to an average of USD69.44 per barrel, operating income surged 28% to P37.3 billion from P29.2 billion in 2024. Meanwhile, EBITDA rose 22% to P52.4 billion, reflecting stronger operating

leverage across the business.

INFRASTRUCTURE

SMC Infrastructure sustained its growth trajectory, with revenues rising 7% to P40.2 billion, driven by higher traffic volumes across all toll roads. Combined average daily traffic reached 1.08 million vehicles, up 5% from the same period last year.

Operating income increased 9% to P22.1 billion, supported by robust revenues and effective operational and management cost control. EBITDA grew 8% to P32.0 billion, while net income rose 5% to P14.8 billion.

CEMENT

SMC's Cement business, which includes Eagle Cement Corporation, Northern Cement Corporation, and Southern Concrete Industries, Inc., reported consolidated revenues of P33.2 billion in 2025, down 5% year-on-year due to softer demand and lower average selling prices amid the continuous influx of traded imports.

This was partially offset by stable sales volume.

Despite lower EBITDA and operating income of P9.3 billion and P6.3 billion, respectively, margins were held steady through ongoing operational efficiencies and cost management initiatives.

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Philhealth...

The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) assured members that all front-line and hospital-based services will continue operating on a regular five-day schedule even as the agency implements adjusted work arrangements for select administrative and back-office personnel beginning March 9, 2026.

Under the arrangement, administrative and back-office personnel will observe a compressed onsite schedule from Monday to Thursday, with a 10-hour workday.

Meanwhile, frontline offices and critical operational units will maintain their regular Monday-to-Friday operations to ensure uninterrupted service to members.

PhilHealth guaranteed members that the following services will remain fully operational throughout the five-day workweek:

- 1. PhilHealth CARES Nurses and P-Malasakit personnel in hospitals
2. Local Health Insurance Offices (LHIOs), PhilHealth Business Centers, Satellite Offices, and Hospital Desks
3. Claims Processing (Benefit Adminis-

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tration Section) and Information Technology (IT) Field Operations

While administrative personnel will observe a compressed on-site schedule, PhilHealth emphasized that personnel will remain reachable and responsive on Fridays for urgent operational requirements and member concerns.

The adjusted work arrangement forms part of the government's nationwide energy conservation efforts in response to rising global oil prices and is in compliance with Malacañang Memorandum Circular No. 114, which directs government agencies to adopt flexible work arrangements to reduce fuel consumption and electricity use by 10 to 20 percent.

Dr. Mercado underscored that the agency's commitment to public service remains constant despite the adjustments.

"The efficiency offered by this arrangement must translate into better, more focused service delivery," added Dr. Mercado.

"Our digital portals and frontline desks remain your reliable partners in health, every day of the business week."

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DOE...

ed current transformer, the wind facility, together with its BESS support, is now able to deliver the full available wind generation to the Mindoro grid.

The improvement is expected to bring several benefits to electricity consumers in Oriental Mindoro, including:

Full utilization of available wind energy, reducing unnecessary curtailment of renewable generation.

More reliable electricity supply for consumers served by ORMECO.

Reduced reliance on higher-cost conventional generation, particularly during periods of strong wind availability.

The DOE continues to work closely with TransCo, NPC/NAPO-

Angeles...

A delegation from Angeles University Foundation (AUF), headed by its president, Dr. Joseph Angeles, recently toured the proposed site of its first campus outside its base in Angeles City, Pampanga. This is in preparation for the launch of AUF's Cavite Campus within four years.

Through a collaboration with the Maplecrest Group, Inc. (MGI), the parent company of Profriends, and Rivermoor Holdings Inc. (RHI), AUF will build on a 3-hectare site in Imus, Cavite, right across the Imus Government Center and will be a landmark structure near the Imus segment of the Cavite Laguna Expressway.

AUF is a world-class higher education institution committed to excellence in instruction, research, and community service.

It is the premier university in Central Luzon, and is among the best universities in the Philippines.

AUF alumni have obtained excellent results in professional licensure exams, including Accountancy, Criminology, Education, Law, Medicine, Nursing, and the Allied Medical professions.

AUF education remains affordable even as it maintains its high standards, in accord with the philosophy of its founder, Dr. Barbara Y. Angeles, "No one should be deprived of education due to poverty.

Recognizing their shared values, Maplecrest Group, Inc. and Rivermoor Holdings, Inc. invited AUF to establish its campus in Imus City.

The AUF campus will be situated in a Central Business District which will also host the Terminal 1 of the Cavite Busway (BRT System).

how open communication and strong collaboration among government agencies, transmission operators, electric cooperatives, and private sector partners can produce practical solutions that benefit electricity consumers and support the country's clean

energy goals. The DOE remains committed to working with stakeholders to strengthen the reliability of island grids while advancing the country's transition toward a more sustainable and secure energy future. PR

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As an anchor educational institution in the central business district, AUF will have the opportunity to integrate with the business community, enabling them to offer curriculum suited to what businesses need.

The Cavite Busway, and its feeder transport network, will give unparalleled accessibility to AUF linking the University to a significant part of Western Cavite.

MGI and RHI are committed to creating a center of education excellence. AUF is the first of several institutions that will help develop future-ready graduates, serving the common man and contributing to the emerging Cavite Metropolis.

Maplecrest Group Inc. (MGI) is an investment company focused on innovative ventures that create enduring social value, particularly in housing, education, and inclusive urban development, to uplift the lives of the common man. www.maplecrestgroupinc.com

Rivermoor Inc. (RMI), is a diversified investment company, participates in various sectors and select projects with high social relevance and direct impact to the community. Centered on long-term sustainable development, RMI envisions for a well-planned environment that offers and enables its stakeholders a more valued use of their time and resources in meeting their life objectives.

Established in 1962, Angeles University Foundation (AUF) is a leading Catholic educational institution known for academic rigor and service-driven leadership. Its expansion into Cavite marks a milestone in its continued growth and mission outreach. www.auf.edu.ph

Unang ipinasa bilang batas ang Estate Tax Amnesty noong 2018 at ipinatupad mula 2019 hanggang 2020. Pinalawig din ito noong 2022. Mismong si Senador Pia ang pangunahing may-akda at sponsor ng batas, na tinutulak niya ngayong 20th Congress upang tulungan ang mga Pilipino na bayaran ang mga natitirang pananagutan sa buwis.

Sa pagdinig, sinuri ng komite ang data sa mga nakinabang sa programa at tinalakay ang mga panukala para sa pangalawang extension. Nabatid na mula 2019 hanggang June 2025, nakakolekta ang gobyerno ng P15.7 bilyon mula sa

Himok...

Hinimok nina Senador Pia Cayetano at Senate Minority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano ang mga ahensya ng gobyerno na namamahala sa Estate Tax Amnesty na palawakin ang pagpapalaganap ng impormasyon tungkol sa programa upang mas maraming Pilipino ang makinabang dito kapag naipasa ito bilang batas.

Sa pamumuno ni Senador Pia, tinalakay ng Senate Committee on Ways and Means ang batas nitong Martes, March 10, 2026, at ang mga panukalang gustong palawigin pa ito.

Kadalasang natalakay ang isyu sa public service television program ng magkapatid na 'Cayetano in Action with Boy Abunda' (CIA with BA). Sa mga konsultasyon kasama ang mga kababayan, napag-uusapan dito ang mga problema sa ari-arian.

"This issue was brought to my attention as a lawyer, not so much as a lawmaker. They (show participants) ask us questions in our show where we often encounter the layers of generations that did not settle the Estate Tax," wika ni Senador Pia.

"At the end of the day, you have to market this Amnesty that you're giving to the people so that they will know and avail this because this is how you can save. And we have to emphasize its benefit," sabi niya sa government agency panel.

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humigit kumulang 322,000 taxpayers na nakinabang nito.

Ang panukala ay nagpapahintulot sa mga tagapagmana na bayaran ang mga hindi nabayaran ng buwis sa ari-arian nang hindi nagbabayad ng interes, mga surcharge, at mga penalty. Inilalapat din nito ang kasalukuyang 6% na rate ng buwis sa ari-arian, na mas mababa kaysa sa mga rate na dating ipinataw.

Ngunit maraming Pilipino ang nananatiling hindi alam ang batas at ang mga benepisyo nito. Binanggit ni Senador Pia ang mga karaniwang kaso na tinalakay sa 'CIA with BA' kung saan ang mga buwis sa ari-arian ay nananatiling hindi naaayon ng ilang henerasyon, na kadalasang nauuwi sa hindi pagkakaunawaan sa pamilya at mga napag-iwanan na pag-aari.

"Let's say Mr. X died, and he has a wife and he has kids. So he and his wife have property. They didn't do anything about it when he died. Then his wife died. Then among kids, one child lived on the property, the others didn't. Then the one who lived in the property also died. Then his children and the cousins want to get the property. Mga kababayan, iyan ang nagiging problema," sabi ng senador.

"They can settle it on their own, but the legal documents, the ownership will never be transferred unless they settle the taxes properly. This becomes the issue kasi nasa pangalan pa ng lolo, eh matagal nang patay si lolo. Away na talaga iyan. That's why it is important to settle the estate taxes," dagdag pa niya.

Udyok naman ni Senador Alan sa lahat na pakinabangan ang Estate Tax Amnesty. Aniya, mahalaga ang pagbabayad ng buwis dahil iyon ay "lifeline of government."

Sinuspinde ni Senador Pia ang pagdinig sabay sabi na malapit nang talakayin ang panukala sa plenaryo.

"Mag-avail tayo ng tax amnesty. That's why we're having this hearing," sabi ng senador.

DILG...

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Local government units (LGUs) nationwide are being urged to cut their electricity and fuel consumption by 10 to 20 percent, as the national government pushes stricter energy conservation measures to help manage rising global energy pressures.

The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) issued the call through Memorandum Circular (MC) No. 2026-023, reinforcing President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s directive for government offices to adopt energy-saving practices amid geopolitical tensions affecting global energy markets.

According to the DILG, local governments play a crucial role in promoting energy efficiency across the country. "LGUs can lead by example by adopting simple but effective measures that reduce electricity and fuel consumption. Even small adjustments in daily operations can make a significant difference in achieving our goal of cutting energy use by as much as 20 percent."

Among the measures encouraged is the adoption of a four-day

onsite work arrangement, either through a compressed workweek or by designating a common work-from-home day to reduce electricity consumption in government offices.

LGUs are also urged to maximize virtual meetings, seminars, and workshops through secure digital platforms, except in cases where physical presence is legally required or operationally necessary.

The circular likewise calls for limiting official travel to essential functions and strengthening fleet-efficiency measures to reduce fuel consumption and improve the fuel economy of government vehicles.

Government offices are also encouraged to adopt energy-efficient workplace practices, including setting air-conditioning thermostats at 24°C and ensuring lights and equipment are turned off when not in use.

The DILG emphasized that implementing these measures must not disrupt the continuous delivery of essential government services, particularly those related to health, public safety, and emergency response.

DOE Facilitates Grid Upgrade in Mindoro, Enabling Full Dispatch of 16 MW Wind Power

The Department of Energy (DOE), together with key power sector stakeholders, successfully facilitated the installation of three Current Transformer (CT) at Bay 1 of the Calangatan Switching Station in Oriental Mindoro. The completed works now enable the full dispatch of wind power from the island's largest renewable energy facility.

The installation and commissioning were carried out in collaboration with the National Transmission Corporation (TransCo), led by President and Chief Executive Officer Fortunato "Atoy" C. Leynes, the National Power Corporation (NPC/NAPOCOR), led by President and Chief Executive Officer Jericho Jonas B. Nograles, PHESI, Ormin

Power Inc., and the Oriental Mindoro Electric Cooperative (ORMECO).

The upgrade addressed a key limitation at the Calangatan Switching Station, which had previously restricted the amount of electricity that could be delivered to the Mindoro grid.

The issue was identified through the DOE's continuous monitoring and site visits in Mindoro, where renewable energy generation was observed to be curtailed during periods of strong wind due to equipment limitations at the switching station.

This constraint affected the dispatch of the 16.530 MW Wind Energy Power Facility (WEPF) operated by PHESI, where a portion of available wind

Limang samahan ng mga magkakape sa CALABARZON, binisita ng Teofilo Coffee Company mula sa US

Binisita ng Teofilo Coffee Company ang limang samahan ng mga magkakape mula sa lalawigan ng Cavite, Laguna, at Batangas kasama ang Department of Agriculture IV-CALABARZON (DA-4A) Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD) at High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP) simula noong ika-18 hanggang ika-19 ng Pebrero.

Ang Teofilo Coffee Company ay isang Filipino-American coffee brand na nagpapamalas ng kulturang kape ng Pilipinas sa United States (US).

Dito ay direkta silang kumukuha ng mga coffee beans mula sa mga samahan ng mga magsasaka sa Pilipinas habang ipinagmamalaki ang paggamit nila ng apat na uri



ng kape na makikita sa bansa— ang Arabica, Robusta, Excelsa, at Liberica.

Dito ay nakapanayam ng kumpanya ang Juan Santiago Agriculture Cooperative (JSA Coop) at Mabato High Value Agriculture Cooperative mula sa Laguna, Minantok East Coffee Growers Association at Barangay Tua Farmers Agriculture Cooperative mula sa Cavite,

at Aga Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative mula sa Batangas.

Ayon kay Teofilo Coffee Company Chief Executive Officer Ron Dizon, bukod sa potensyal na pakikipagsosyo ng kumpanya sa mga magsasaka ay hangad nilang obserbahan, masuri, at ipabatid sa buong mundo ang mga kwento at pagsubok na pinagdaraan ng mga magkakape bago

magkaroon ng inumin ang mga mamimili.

Ikinatuwa naman ni Ronnie Villanueva, pangulo ng Mabato High Value Agriculture Cooperative, ang pagbisita dahil aniya isa itong malaking oportunidad at patunay na ang kanilang kape ay pang-ibang bansa rin.

Kaya naman mas pagbubutihin pa nila ito para sa pangarap at hanapbuhay. PR

SSS partners with EastWest Rural Bank to bring MySSS Card services closer to rural areas

QUEZON CITY - The Social Security System (SSS) today announced that its MySSS Card will soon reach members in unbanked areas after EastWest Rural

Bank (EWRB) became its first rural bank card issuer, a move to expand financial inclusion in underserved communities.

SSS President and Chief Executive Officer Robert Joseph M. de Claro (right) and EWRB President Shiela Marasigan-Bajado (left) led the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement, authorizing the bank to issue MySSS Cards, primarily for members in rural areas while remaining accessible to qualified members nationwide.

De Claro praised the partnership as a significant project that will simplify disbursement account enrollment and improve convenience for members, highlighting the card's dual role as an official SSS ID and debit card.

"The MySSS card also allows SSS to provide digital payment facilities for our registrants, members, pensioners and beneficiaries," De Claro added.

The SSS uses National ID database checks to confirm that applicants are registered



SSS members, ensuring secure card issuance by its partner bank and accurate benefit disbursement through the linked account. The card also enables members to manage their daily financial transactions with ease.

Bajado said that a streamlined MySSS Card application process will be available at EWRB's 112 branches and branch-lites nationwide this year, most of which are in the provinces, particularly in Mindanao and the Visayas. The card may also be offered at Cross-Selling Desks inside EastWest Bank branches, their parent bank, through a digital channel.

"We will waive maintaining balance requirements for MySSS cardholders, who may also earn interest once their balance reaches at least P500, allowing them to grow their savings while enjoying flexible account features," Bajado said.

De Claro said that SSS has maintained a decade-long collaboration with EWRB, which began in 2017 when the bank was recognized as the Best Collecting and Best Paying Partner in the rural category of the SSS Balik at ng Bayan Awards. "We hope our collaboration will help SSS better serve members wherever they are," he said. PR

Calaca MSMEs beef up market competitiveness through packaging, labeling, and branding seminar

Selected micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Calaca City strengthened their market competitiveness and improved their product presentation through a seminar on packaging technology, labeling requirements, and branding organized by the City Government of Calaca in partnership with the Department of Science and Technology (DOST)-Batangas held at the Conference Room of the City Hall, Calaca, Batangas, March 6, 2026.

The seminar aimed to guide MSMEs in packaging their products effectively, complying with labeling standards, and developing brand identities that align with market requirements. Members of the Lumbang na Matanda Farmers Association, Nagkakaisang Samahan ng mga Kababaihan ng Quinzumbing (NASAKA), Pantay Women's Association, and staff of the City Government of Calaca took part in the activity, which also supported the celebration of National Women's Month by empowering women-led enterprises



in the city.

Mr. John Maico M. Hernandez, Senior Science Research Specialist at DOST-Batangas, delivered technical inputs and practical examples during the session. He discussed packaging technology by defining its functions, explaining criteria for selecting materials, identifying types of packaging used in food processing, and presenting testing methods and techniques that extend shelf life and improve product presentation. He emphasized that packaging must be understood not only as an art of product presentation but also as a science and technology grounded in compatibility between products and

packaging materials.

He also explained labeling requirements by outlining mandatory information based on Philippine regulations and Codex Alimentarius standards. He covered product name, brand or trade name, ingredient list, net content declaration, manufacturer and distributor details, country of origin, lot identification, storage conditions, expiration date, allergen information, usage instructions, and nutrition facts. He also clarified additional requirements for specific product categories such as alcoholic beverages and irradiated foods.

To further equip the participants, Mr. Hernandez introduced branding concepts and guided them in developing brand names, logos, taglines, and visual identities. He emphasized that branding appeals to consumer emotions and that customers define and shape brands.

Mr. Hernandez also facilitated one-on-one consultation sessions during the activity.

He provided participants with recommendations on packaging and labeling to support compliance with standards and offered scientific explanations to help them understand the principles behind product-package compatibility and the technologies that ensure product safety and quality. PR

KWF at Limay Polytechnic College, lumagda para sa pagtatatag ng SWK



Formal nang nilagdaan ang isang makasaysayang Memorandum ng Unawaan (MOU) sa pagitan ng Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF) at Limay Polytechnic College (LPC) noong 27 Pebrero 2026 upang itatag ang Sentro ng Wika at Kultura (SWK) sa loob ng institusyon.

Ang naturang pagtitipon ay itinuturing na kauna-unahang lagdaan ng MOU na isinagawa sa isang opisina ng KWF na matatagpuan sa Harvest-er, Cubao, Lungsod Quezon.

Pinangunahan ni Atty. Marites A. Barrios-Taran, Tagapangulo ng KWF, ang seremonya kasama ang Pangulo ng

Limay Polytechnic College na si Dr. Elmer B. De Leon. Layunin ng kasunduan na paigtingin ang pagpapalaganap, pagpapaulad, at preserbasyon ng wikang Filipino at mga katutubong wika sa lalawigan ng Bataan sa pamamagitan ng akademikong pagtutulungan.

Bilang bahagi ng implementasyon ng kasunduan, itinalaga si Bb. April R. Cruz bilang direktor o tagapanguna ng bagong tatag na Sentro ng Wika at Kultura sa loob ng LPC.

In a a s a h a n g magsisilbi ang SWK bilang katuwang ng KWF sa mga pananaliksik, seminar, at mga gawaing pangwika sa rehiyon. Ang pagpili

Cavite's...

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erations and leveraging AI to drive innovation, while Ms. Anna Lissa Abello, Assistant Professor from National University Dasmariñas, highlighted the power of AI in enabling data-driven decisions, optimizing workflows, and fueling growth for small and medium enterprises.

Inspiring the participants further were Biz iCreate alumni who returned to share their success stories. Ms. Rinna Castillo, CEO of Tun-Amazing World Fish Processing, a 2024 Biz iCreate graduate, described how the program helped her strengthen her entrepreneurial strategies and scale her fish processing venture, while Mr. Alfredo Villocino Jr., CEO of Wilford Food Products Manufacturing, a 2021

sa Harvester, Cubao bilang luman ng pirmahan ay hudyat ng mas malawak na pag-abot ng serbisyo ng KWF sa publiko at mga katuwang na ahensiya.

Biz iCreate graduate, encouraged the group to embrace innovation and persistence as essential ingredients for business growth. Dr. Aldrin Antivola Business Efficiency Advisor and Organizational Therapist of Dr. Aldrin Consulting, also engaged the entrepreneurs, demonstrating how combining human creativity with AI tools can enhance productivity, sharpen strategic planning, and foster organizational development skills crucial for SMEs aiming to remain competitive in a rapidly evolving market.

The program concluded with a graduation ceremony where participants proudly received certificates recognizing their successful completion of the training. Special recognition was given to Ms. Rosario Peliño of Hidden Tummy Food Products and Ms. Rachell Anacan of Kabutihan Inc. for their exemplary AI adop-

GSIS LAUNCHES 21ST NATIONAL ART COMPETITION HONORING FILIPINO PUBLIC SERVANTS

GSIS opens the 21st edition of its art competition dedicated to Filipino public servants. Present at the launch at the GSIS Head Office in Pasay City are GSIS Chief of Staff Kristine Jane Ejercito (6th from right), Vice President for Corporate Communications Margie Jorillo (5th from right), Art Association of the Philippines (AAP) President Fidel Sarmiento (7th from right), Corporate Social Advocacies-Public Relations Facilities Department Officer-in-Charge Leslie Fagonil (2nd from left), and GSIS KMG President Jun Bains (4th from left).

The Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) has officially launched the 2026 GSIS National Art Competition, marking its 21st year as one of the country's most respected platforms for Filipino visual artists and cultural expression.

The competition continues to draw strong participation nationwide. In 2025, the contest received 1,041 entries from across the Philippines, including submissions from Filipinos overseas, reflecting the competition's enduring national presence and relevance.

This year's edition will feature representational art as its sole category, with the theme: "The Filipino Public Servant" ("Ang Mga Pilipinong Lingkod Bayan"). The theme pays tribute to Filipinos who dedicate their lives to government service.

President and General Manager Wick Veloso highlighted the vital role of everyday government workers. "As we celebrate the 89th anniversary of the GSIS and begin our countdown to our 90th milestone, we dedicate this year's art competition to our true heroes, the Fili-

pino public servants. From our dedicated teachers to the tireless nurses and barangay health workers, they are the unsung heroes who keep our nation running every single day," Veloso said.

He further challenged the participating artists to capture the raw reality of government service, "We challenge our artists to go beyond the uniforms and the offices. Show us the true essence of public service. Capture the quiet sacrifices, the unyielding resilience even when resources are scarce, and the selfless compassion of our everyday heroes."

Art Association of the Philippines (AAP) President Fidel Sarmiento also reflected on the enduring partnership between GSIS and the art community, emphasizing the civic duty of artists. "Since we began this partnership in 2004, the GSIS Annual Art Competition has become a highly anticipated event where simply participating is already considered a victory for many artists," Sarmiento shared. "Tayo bilang mga alagad ng sining ay mga lingkod-bayan din. Tungkulin nating magturo at isalamin ang mga kaganapan sa ating lipunan sa pamamagitan ng ating pintura. Sa pagpinta sa blankong canvas, pinatunayan natin na tayo ay naglilingkod din sa bayan."

Interested Filipino artists may view the complete guidelines on the GSIS website. Physical artwork submissions will be accepted on 25 April 2026 (Saturday) at the GSIS Gymnasium in Pasay City.

Winning entries will automatically become part of the GSIS Art Collection.

ogy, strategy, and practical business solutions.

Through initiatives like Biz iCreate, Cavite's SMEs are not merely learning to adopt AI, they are preparing to thrive in an increasingly digital economy, proving that creativity, adaptability, and innovation remain the cornerstones of entrepreneurial success. — OPIO

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