

Cavite LGUs roll out BOSS for FY 2021 amid COVID-19 pandemic

The local government units of the cities and municipalities in the province commenced the processing of the application of new and renewal of business permits and other transactions of government services thru their Business One Stop Shop (BOSS).



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As directed by the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) the BOSS established by the LGUs aims to provide frontline services and assist those who wish to apply for building permits and certificates of occupancy thereby easing bureaucratic red tape. Starting their operations on Monday, January 4, 2021, the

>> P2

LGU GenTri to provide free vaccines to transport groups

General Trias, Cavite Jan. 7 (PIA) -- The City Government here assured the members of the Jeepney Operators and Drivers Association (JODA) and Tricycle Operators and Drivers Association (TODA) that they will be included in the Free inoculation of the COVID-19 once vaccines are available.

This was the promise of Mayor Antonio 'Ony' Ferrer to the 30 leaders of the transport organizations that attended the meeting held Monday, December 28, 2020.

"The City Government plans to buy the vaccine kung hindi kayo i-consider as frontliners. We the LGU will provide to about 4,000 members of jeepney and tricycle drivers for them to continue transporting passengers safely," the local chief ex-

>> P2

"PATULOY ANG LIWANAG NG BUHAY SA 2021"

HONTIVEROS URGES EXTENSION OF INSTALLMENT PAYMENT SCHEME FOR MERALCO CONSUMERS

Senator Risa Hontiveros on Tuesday urged power distributor giant Manila Electric Company (MERALCO) to extend its installment-based payment scheme for consumers, warning that stricter payment pol-

>> P3

MacroAsia must prove capability to fund Sangley airport project

By Richmond Mercurio



© STAR/File MacroAsia must prove capability to fund Sangley airport project

Lucio Tan's MacroAsia Corp. has to prove to the Cavite government that it still has the financial muscle to fund the first phase of the massive Sangley Point International Airport (SPIA) project before it can proceed with the development together with its Chinese partner.

Cavite Gov. Jonvic Remulla said they are assessing the financial capacity of MacroAsia amid the impact of the pandemic on businesses. "We are still evaluating the financial capacity of MacroAsia considering the economic climate everyone is facing," Remulla told The STAR.

Based on its latest financial statement, MacroAsia has felt the impact of the pandemic on the aviation industry as it incurred a net loss of P856.7 million in the nine months ending September last year, a reversal of the P932.7 million net income recorded in the same period in 2019.

>> P3

Gatchalian: vaccine hesitancy to prolong pandemic woes, prevent safe schools reopening

Following the release of surveys that showed public hesitancy on receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, Senator Win Gatchalian urged the government to build public confidence on its vaccination program, which is key to putting an end to the pandemic and allowing the safe reopening of schools. The senator called this hesitancy a result of the "Dengvaxia damage,"

which eroded the public's trust in vaccinations.

Gatchalian flagged that if half of the country would refuse to be vaccinated, the transmission of the virus will not be suppressed. For the basic education sector, this means a prolonged delay in the resumption of in-person classes for more than 22 mil-

>> P2



Sen. Go aids families displaced by fire in Bacoor City



One of the structures that caught fire in Bacoor City. (OSBG Photo)

In an effort to help affected residents recover from a fire incident at Barangay Salinas 1 in Bacoor City, Cavite, an outreach team from the Office of Senator Christopher "Bong" Go visited the area to provide immediate aid in a distribution activity held at the Salinas 1 Elementary School on Friday, January 8.

His team distributed meals, food packs, financial assistance, and gift cards to a total of fifteen families composed of 51 members. They also provided vitamins, masks, and face shields to help ensure

the health and safety of each beneficiary.

Furthermore, selected beneficiaries from the indigent sector were given new shoes. Others were provided bicycles so they can commute to work given limited public transportation options. Others also received tablets to help their children stay on track with their studies under the blended learning set-up. "Happy New Year sa inyong mga taga-Bacoor. Bagama't hindi maganda ang ating bagong

>> P2

Sen Go aids << P1

taon, mayroong pandemya at nasunugan pa kayo... ang importante ay buhay tayo," Go said in a video call.

"Ang pera pwedeng kitain. Ang gamit pwedeng mabibili, subalit hindi mabibili ng pera ang buhay natin. Kaya magtulungan sana tayo dahil malalampasan rin natin itong mga pagsubok," he continued.

The activity was conducted while strictly complying with health and safety protocols to avoid further spread of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases.

As chair of the Senate Committee on Health, Go offered to assist those in need of medical attention. He also informed the survivors that they can conveniently avail of medical assistance from the government through the Malasakit Center nearest them, located at the General Emilio Aguinaldo Memorial Hospital in Trece Martires City.

The Malasakit Center is a one-stop shop pioneered by Go which brings together the offices of the government agencies from which poor and indigent patients may seek aid from existing medical assistance programs handled by the Department of Health, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Philippine Health Insurance Corporation, and Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office. Meanwhile, as part of the holistic approach of the national government to help families in crisis situations such as those affected by fire incidents, various agencies also reached out to the community to extend aid. The DSWD provided the beneficiaries with separate financial assistance. Meanwhile, the Department of Trade and Industry and National Housing Authority committed to

extend livelihood and housing assistance, respectively, upon completing the beneficiaries' assessments.

The Senator went on to recognize the barangay officials for their continuing efforts to assist and support their community. Among those present during the activity were Punong Barangay Ferdinand R. Garduque; Kagawad Michael Miranda, Michael Evaristo, Lyndon Santos, Pepito Santos, Milanio Santos, Donn Crisostomo, and Ferdinand Bellon; Brgy. Secretary Edhea Cansino; Brgy. Treasurer Myla Liwanag; and Sangguniang Kabataan Chair Peter Joshua Ocampo.

"Magtulungan at magbayanihan tayo. Huwag po kayo mawalan ng pag-asa dahil patuloy kami ni Presidente Duterte na magseserbisyo sa inyong lahat. Hindi namin kayo pababayaang lalo na sa panahon ng krisis," vowed Go.

Go also reminded the public to continue to adhere to government-imposed health protocols to put a stop to the spread of COVID-19. He also assured them that once a safe and effective vaccine is approved and made available, the poor and vulnerable sectors, as well as frontliners, shall be prioritized.

"Sumunod lang po tayo sa patakaran ng gobyerno dahil para rin ito sa kaligtasan ng lahat. Magsuot ng masks at face shield, magsocial distancing, palaging maghugas ng kamay, at huwag nang lumabas pa ng bahay kung hindi naman kailangan," Go said.

"Kapag mayroon nang safe at epektibong bakuna na aprubado na ng FDA, uunahin po namin kayong mga mahihirap para makabalik na kayo sa normal na pamumuhay," he assured. (OSBG)

Bacoor LGU allots P100M to vaccinate 70% of its population against COVID-19

by Carla Bauto Deña

BACOOR CITY, Cavite – The city government allotted a budget of P100 million for its coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccination program, Mayor Lani M. Revilla announced on Tuesday (January 12).

The program aims to vaccinate 707,604 individuals or 70 percent of the city's population against the disease.

Priority populations include frontline healthcare workers, uniformed personnel, social workers, senior citizens, persons with disability, persons deprived of liberty, other frontline government workers, teachers, students, and the indigent population.

The LGU's preferred vaccines are AstraZeneca, Janssen, Novovax, Pfizer, and Moderna.

According to the City Information Office, the initial budget may still change, depending on the number of vaccines to be provided by the national government.



Gatchalian: vaccine hesitancy << P1

lion public school learners nationwide. In Metro Manila alone, which is considered a virus hotspot, there are 2 million learners enrolled in public schools.

A recent nationwide Pulse Asia survey of 2,400 adults revealed that 47 percent of Filipinos would not get themselves vaccinated, 32 percent would get vaccinated, and 21 percent are undecided. Of the 2,400 adults

who joined the survey, 84 percent are worried about the safety of the vaccine. According to a survey by the University of the Philippines-OCTA Research Group, where 600 participants from Metro Manila aged 18 and above participated, only 25 percent are willing to be vaccinated against COVID-19. The same survey revealed that 28 percent would not get the vaccine, while 47 percent

are undecided. "Magiging malaki ang problema natin kung walang magpapabakuna laban sa COVID. Hindi tayo makakabalik sa normal na pamumuhay," Gatchalian said. "Dapat nating tugunan ang pangamba ng ating mga mamamayan pagdating sa pagpapabakuna upang matuldukan na natin ang krisis na ito," the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Basic Education Arts and

Culture added. Gatchalian emphasized the need to be transparent on the potential side effects of COVID-19 vaccine shots and how these can be managed.

Gatchalian also reiterated his call to include teachers in the priority groups for the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out. The government is eyeing to inoculate 60 million Filipinos to achieve "herd immunity."

LGU GenTri to provide free << P1

ecutive said. "Para makalabas agad, para makapasada agad, hindi po kayo kayang sustentuhan ng pamahalaang lokal. Ang priority po natin ay kumita ang bawat isa para mabuhay at para umusang ekonomiya."

(To be able to get out immediately, to get back to work immediately, the local government cannot support you. Our priority is for everyone to earn to live and for the economy to move forward.)

During the meeting, Department of Interior and

Local Government (DILG)-Cavite Provincial Director Lionel Dalope elaborated about the COVID-19 situation in the country with news of a new variant of the virus discovered in the United Kingdom.

"Based on the study, there is a new variant of COVID. Huaag po tayo pakampante or relax sa panahon ngayon. Ugaliin po natin sumunod sa guidelines, hindi po solusyon ang puro reklamo," Dalope said. (We need not let our guards down or relax during this time. We

should make it a habit to follow the guidelines, and complaining is not a solution.)

"Let us not abuse the loosening of the quarantine protocols, as President Rodrigo Duterte announced that Cavite will remain under Modified General Community Quarantine (MGCQ) until January 31, 2021," PD Dalope added.

The DILG recently recognized the LGU as Best LGU in the Conduct of Contact Tracing in the Province for the diligent work and commendable performance

in protecting its citizenry with the control of the transmission of the virus, and prevent the spread of the pandemic. Meanwhile, Congressman Luis 'Jonjon' Ferrer IV of the Lone District of General Trias continues to support the LGU through infrastructure projects particularly with the opening of new access roads or streets to help ease traffic flow in the area and the establishment of a decent jeepney and tricycle terminals in the city. (Ruel Francisco with reports from Dennis Abrina)

Cavite LGUs roll out BOSS << P1

City Government of Trece Martires and the municipalities of Carmona, Indang, and Mendez-Nuñez started facilitating these services for a period of three weeks until January 20.

Other municipalities like the Gen. Mariano Alvarez (GMA), Alfonso, Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo-Bailen started later on January 5 & 6 while the LGU Noveleta starts January 11 with applications accepted until February 15, 2021.

Doing business in this time of pandemic, the number of applications accepted

are limited to as many as 150 persons per day for the BPLO (Business Permits and Licensing Office) - Trece Martires, while the satellite BOSS of the Gen. Trias only accepts up to 180 persons on a first come first served basis with the venue located at the 3rd floor of Robinson's Place in the city that is big and comfortable enough to allow the observance of physical distancing. Meanwhile, the City Government of Imus started as early as Sunday, January 3, 2021 and requires an online assessment for the renewal of business permits with the

Imus BOSS located at the Imus Sports Complex. The City Government of Bacoor's online registration starts with the creation of an account in the boss.bacoor.gov.ph website to be able to set an appointment.

Also, to help the Bacoreños, the LGU extended the granting of 20% discount on the payment of current Real Property Taxes (RPT) with payment accepted until March 31, 2021, and had also announced the granting of amnesty to owners of real property for payment of interests and penalties for

delinquent payees of RPT for taxable year 2019 and prior years. The officials of the LGUs encourage all their resident constituents to be prompt with their payments to avoid incurring penalties and to avail of the discounts extended by the LGU as incentive for their cooperation, as well as for the processing of business permits and licenses to legalize their business operations to contribute to the economic recovery of the province and the whole country as well. (Ruel Francisco with reports from respective LGU FB pages)

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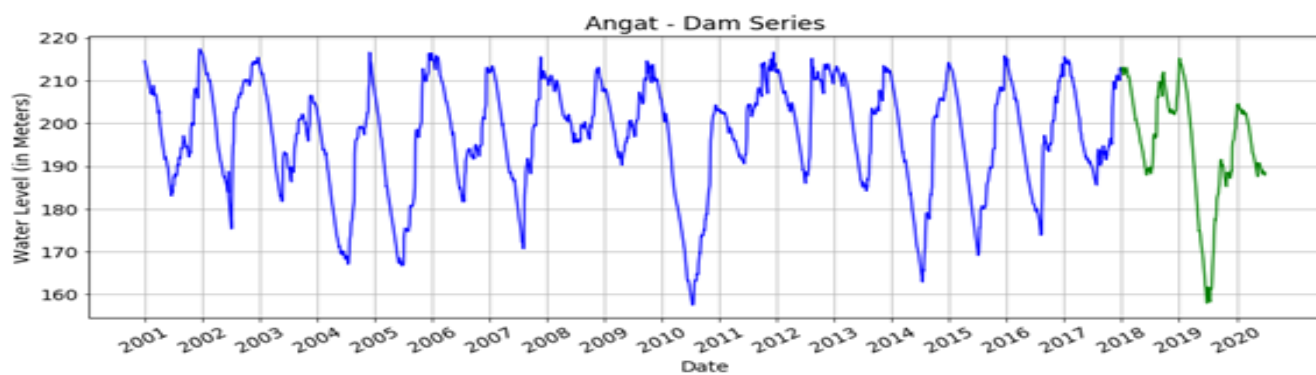
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AIM harnesses AI to curb water shortage in Metro Manila



Sample data from the research team: daily historical water levels for Angat Dam, covering a 20-year period from 2001 to 2020. Observations in blue denote the training set, green denote the test set.

Researchers from the Asian Institute of Management (AIM) are harnessing the power of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning to help curb water shortages in the east service area of Metro Manila. The research team, led by Dr. Christopher Monterola, under the AIM-Analytics, Computing, and Complex Systems Laboratory (ACCeSs), developed a simulation modeling software to enhance Manila Water Company's (MWC) capability in forecasting the water supply system of Angat-Ipo-La Mesa Dams and its treatment plants and storage reservoir.

"The forecast models will serve as a tool in day-to-day operations of the MWC for the enhanced distribution of water supply in the Manila East Zone to cater the needs of its

consumers—household, business, and industries," said Monterola. The team shared that they integrated different statistical, machine learning models, and input parameters in the development of reliable forecast models from the water source to the MWC treatment plants. They have already completed the development of forecasting models for each dam. Currently, the project team is continuously retraining and redesigning the simulation model software by adding more input parameters relevant to the improvement of their methodology and model architectures. The team is proud to share that their modeling software can also be used to forecast the water supply of other dams in the Philippines, providing more opportunities for other agencies to get the benefit of this tool.

MacroAsia must prove capability << P1

MacroAsia said the management teams of its aviation services companies have instituted cash conservation and cost-control measures to cope with the ensuing crisis and business downturn.

The firm has expertise in developing and operating key operating functions in an airport as part of the Lucio Tan conglomerate and as an affiliate of flag carrier Philippine Airlines.

MacroAsia president and chief operating officer Joseph Chua earlier said the company may bring in other members of the Lucio Tan empire onboard the airport project to provide additional financial muscle. The first

phase of the SPIA project was awarded by the provincial government of Cavite in February last year to the team of MacroAsia and state-owned China Communications Construction Co. Ltd. (CCCC). MacroAsia has a 40 percent stake in the consortium, while CCCC holds the remaining 60 percent.

The consortium submitted in December 2019 the sole bid for the project, which will be implemented as a local government public-private partnership joint venture by the provincial government of Cavite. Phase one of the project amounting to \$4 billion involves the development of an interim

first runway with an annual design capacity for 25 million passengers and the new Sangley connector road and bridge.

The consortium has been completing the qualification documents for the award, but the COVID-19 pandemic has delayed its processes, including the completion of joint venture documents prior to any signing of legal or financial contracts.

Following a series of extensions given by the Cavite government for its post qualification requirements submission, the consortium was able to submit in late November main documents such as their consortium agreement.

Jesse Grepo, legal officer of the Cavite government's public-private partnership selection committee, told The STAR that there is currently no concrete timeline as to when the ongoing evaluation will be completed.

"Review is being conducted thoroughly. The documents are voluminous and tedious. These things take time," Grepo said.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said last year the airport project would continue despite the blacklisting by the US of CCCC subsidiaries for their involvement in reclamation activities in disputed waters in the West Philippine Sea.

Patuloy ang liwanag ng buhay << P1

icies might lead to a "disconnected nation" that will make life harder for poor families and derail efforts to revive the economy.

"Hindi maganda na ngayong 2021, maliban sa COVID-19 ay magkaroon din ng epidemiya ng tangalan ng kuryente sa ating bansa. Mas mahihirapan umahon ang bansa mula sa pandemya at sa bagsak na ekonomiya kung mas maraming Pilipino ang mapuputulan ng kuryente sa kanilang mga kabahayan dahil sa mga polisiya ng Meralco," she said.

The senator made the call as Meralco announced that it has begun sending out notices of disconnection to consumers using 201 kilowatt-hours and more who are behind in their monthly payments. The power giant also said that it will be hiking power rates up to P8.7497 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) this year, which means that an average household consuming 200 kWh per month will be charged

around an additional 55 in their bill. The disconnection policy combined with new rate adjustment in the generation charge, according to Hontiveros, is on top of the already high regular monthly electricity bills consumers must pay. "Itong anunsyo ng Meralco ay mistulang one-two-three punch sa ating mga kawawang consumer, na marami ngayon ay knock-out na sa mga utang, mahal na bilingin at kakulangan ng hanapbuhay dahil sa pandemya. Mas malaki na ang singil ng kuryente, andiyan pa ang panganib na matanggalan ng kuryente kapag hindi nakabayad ng buo. Baka maulit o mas malala ito sa "bill shock" last year na inalmahan ng ating mga kababayan noong 2020," she said.

Hontiveros then called on Meralco to work with the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) and explore the possibility of extending its debt restructuring program, which offers flexible or staggered payment op-

tions for consumers who are having difficulties paying their monthly power bills so that they could avoid disconnection. In 2020, Hontiveros noted, Meralco, complying with directives from the ERC, implemented such a six-month installment scheme for households consuming 200 kWh and below, and a four-month installment scheme plan for households consuming 201 kWh and above.

"Meralco's earnings in the past decade have reach P10B annually, and remained profitable even amid pandemic with P21B total profit in 2020. Siguro naman, hindi hamak na may kapasidad ang Meralco, ang mga power suppliers at kanilang mga bangko na i-manage ang problema sa utang kumpara sa pinapasan ng mga consumers ngayon. Accommodating this installment-based payment scheme will also ensure that more Filipinos will not get disconnected and will remain as Meralco's customers, which will be benefi-

cial in the long run," she said. Hontiveros said that she hopes Meralco will stick to its corporate motto of "May liwanag ang buhay," and work with the government towards programs that will prevent the denial of power services to many Filipinos who are struggling amid the pandemic.

"Electricity is an essential need lalo na ngayong may pandemya. Hindi siguro kalabisan na humiling pa ng makatwirang palugit. Bago ang lahat, kapakanan muna ng ating mga kababayan ang pangunahin na mas dapat inuuna, bago ang kita," she concluded. In 2020, Hontiveros, as part of the Senate investigation into the "bill shocks" or the overly-high bills made to power consumers, had successfully secured the commitment of the Meralco and the ERC to address power consumer's concerns amid the pandemic, which led to the extension of 'no disconnection policy' for consumers from 2020 to January 2021.

The AIM-ACCeSs team, with MWC, started this project in February 2020 with support from the Department of Science and Technology's Collaborative Research and Development to Leverage Philippine Economy (CRADLE) Program and monitoring efforts from DOST-Philippine Council for Industry, Energy and Emerging Technology Research and Development (PCIEERD). "With much data that is already out there, it is high time that we maximize the power of emerging technologies like AI and machine learning to improve and affect the daily lives of Filipinos. AIM's forecast modeling fulfills this by seamlessly providing apt agencies with helpful data as basis for decision and policy making on water supply to avoid shortages," said DOST-PCIEERD Executive Director Dr. Enrico C. Paringit. (30)

**REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
FOURTH JUDICIAL REGION
BRANCH 4-FC
CITY OF IMUS, CAVITE**

HOME DEVELOPMENT MUTUAL FUND (PAG-IBIG FUND), represented by Maria Victoria D. Capiral c/o Nicolina C. Madrid
Mortgagee,

EXTRA-JUDICIAL FORECLOSURE OF
REAL ESTATE MORTGAGE UNDER
ACT 3135 AS AMENDED BY ACT 4118
F.C. No. 17004-20

-versus-

GENE R. DELA CRUZ married to MARIVIC T. DELA CRUZ
Mortgagors.
x-----x

NOTICE OF EXTRA-JUDICIAL SALE

Upon extra-judicial petition for sale under Act 3135 as amended by Act 4118 filed by **HOME DEVELOPMENT MUTUAL FUND (PAG-IBIG FUND), represented by Maria Victoria D. Capiral c/o Nicolina C. Madrid**, mortgagee, with principal place of business at S.P. Madrid & Associates, Unit 1911, 19/F Herrera Tower, V.A. Rufino cor. Valero Streets, Makati City against **GENE R. DELA CRUZ married to MARIVIC T. DELA CRUZ**, mortgagors, with residence and postal address at Lot 38, Blk. 6, ACM Homes, Anabu II-B, Imus, Cavite and/or Lot 41, Blk. 26, Ph 2, Greengate Homes II, Malagasang-2, Imus, Cavite, to satisfy the mortgage indebtedness which as of December 27, 2019 amounts to FIVE HUNDRED NINETY THREE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED EIGHTY NINE PESOS AND 28/100 (Php 593,889.28), Philippine Currency including interest and penalties, but excluding attorney's fees, sheriff's fees and all other charges incidental to this foreclosure and sale, the undersigned will sell at public auction on **February 2, 2021** at 10:00 o'clock in the morning or soon thereafter at the main entrance of the Office of the Clerk of Court, RTC Imus City Hall of Justice, Aguinaldo Highway, Imus City, Cavite to the highest bidder, for CASH and in Philippine Currency, the following property with all improvements therein, to wit:

TRANSFER CERTIFICATE OF TITLE NO. 057-2013041257

"A parcel of land (Lot 41, Blk. 26 of the cons. and subd. Plan Pcs-04-023999, being a portion of the cons. of Lots 1846-B, Psd-28429; 1848-B-2, (LRC) Psd-358499; Lots 1847 & 1849, Imus Estate, L.R.C. Record No. 8843) situated in Bo. Of Malagasang 2, Mun. of Imus, Prov. Of Cavite, Island of Luzon. Bounded on the SW., along line 1-2 by Lot 42, Blk. 26 of the cons. and subd. Plan; on the NW., along line 2-3 by Lot 1850, Imus Estate; on the NE., along line 3-4 by Lot 40, Blk. 26 and on the SE., along line 4-1 by Road Lot 1 both of the cons. and subd. Plan x x x containing an area of FIFTY SIX (56) SQUARE METERS xxx"

All sealed bids must be submitted to the undersigned on the above stated time and date.

In the event the public auction should not take place on the said date, it shall be held on February 9, 2021 at 10:00 o'clock in the morning without further notice.

Prospective bidders/buyers are hereby enjoined to investigate for themselves the title to the said property and encumbrance therein if any there be.

City of Imus, Cavite, Philippines, October 28, 2020

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GENE R. DELA CRUZ married to MARIVIC T. DELA CRUZ
Lot 38, Blk. 6, ACM Homes, Anabu II-B, Imus, Cavite and/or Lot 41, Blk. 26, Ph 2, Greengate Homes II, Malagasang, Imus, Cavite

The Southern Tagalog Herald Cavite
January 10, 17 & 24, 2021



OPERASYON LABAN SA MGA IPINAGBABAWAL NA SUGAL SA IMUS, PATULOY NA ISINASAGAWA

Ibinahagi ni Imus City Mayor Emmanuel Maliksi sa kaniyang Facebook post, ang ilan sa mga larawan ng mga isinagawang operasyon ng pulisya kontra iligal na sugal sa kanilang lungsod.

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SM scholarship applications open for 2021 freshmen

The SM Foundation is now accepting college scholarship applications for incoming college freshmen of school year 2021-2022. Applications will be coursed through an online system through the education page of the SM Foundation website: <https://bit.ly/33040FV>

Grade 12 graduates from public and private (with DepEd voucher) high schools are eligible to apply. Applicants must have finished Grade 10 from public high schools.

A grade of at least 88% or its equivalent for Grade 12 – 1st semester is required of the applicants. To accommodate deserving students, the scholarship requires that the total household income of the applicant must not exceed P150,000 per year. Areas covered by the scholarship are NCR, Albay, Bataan, Batangas, Benguet, Bulacan, Cagayan, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Cavite, Isabela, Laguna, Nueva Ecija, Palawan, Pampanga, Pangasinan, Sorsogon, Quezon, Rizal, Tarlac, and Zambales in Luzon; Capiz, Cebu, Iloilo, Leyte, and Negros Occidental in Visayas; and Agusan del Norte, Davao del Sur, Misamis Oriental, South Cotabato, and Zamboanga del Sur in Mindanao.

Partner schools in Mindanao are Caraga State University and Father Saturnino Urios University in Butuan; Ateneo De Davao University, University of Immaculate Conception, University of Mindanao – Main, Tagum, University of Southeastern Philippines, and University of the Philippines Mindanao in Davao; Cagayan De Oro College, Liceo De Cagayan University, University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines, and Xavier University – Ateneo De Cagayan in Cagayan de Oro; Mindanao State University and Notre Dame of Dadiangas University in General Santos; and Ateneo de Zamboanga, Universidad de Zamboanga, and Western Mindanao State University in Zamboanga. SM Foundation scholars enjoy their choice of specialization in accounting, information technology, engineering and education. The scholarship cov-

ers full tuition. The scholars also receive monthly allowances and part-time job opportunities during semestral and Christmas breaks. Upon graduation of the scholars, they receive exclusive job offers with the SM group and engage in other fun-filled activities and enrichment programs throughout.

Fueled by Henry Sy, Sr.'s belief in education—that it is the key to lift families out of poverty—the SM Foundation provides college scholarships such as this and other programs: technical-vocational scholarship grants and access to primary education through school buildings to help the youth achieve their dreams. Application period is from January 1 – February 28, 2021. For more information, email education@sm-foundation.org; to apply, visit www.sm-foundation.org or follow [Facebook.com/SMFoundationInc](https://www.facebook.com/SMFoundationInc).

BE AN SM SCHOLAR! APPLY NOW!
FOR SY 2021-2022
APPLICATION PERIOD: JANUARY 1 - FEBRUARY 28, 2021
VISIT WWW.SM-FOUNDATION.ORG

Three minors used in child porn rescued in Cavite

by Jeffrey Damicog

Three female minors who were used in making child pornography materials have been rescued in Dasmariñas City, Cavite, the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) said on Tuesday.



(UNSPASH / MANILA BULLETIN)

NBI Officer-In-Charge Director Eric Distor said the three minors were rescued during an operation conducted last Friday, Jan. 8 by the NBI's Anti-Human Trafficking Division (NBI-AHTRAD), the Philippine National Police-Women and Children Protection Center (PNP-WCPC), and the Dasmariñas City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWD). "After the operation, the minor victims were turned-over to the care and custody of a shelter in Rizal," the NBI said. The mother of one of the victims evaded arrest but the NBI assured the a complaint is being prepared against her for allowing the online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC) through sex materials that feature her daughter and her friends. The NBI said the rescue operation was made based on a case referral of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). "Initial intelligence report revealed that an alleged Filipina communicated with a United States of America (USA)-based male citizen sending him Online Sexual Exploitation of Children (OSEC) materials of her minor daughter and two friends in exchange for money for the period of 2018 and early months of 2019," the NBI said. "In addition, it was also revealed that the Filipina received money transfers from the American citizen from April to August, 2019, for a total of USD 2,680.00," it added.

"TAXPAYERS DIN ANG MGA PROBINSYANO"

Hontiveros questions announcement that Pfizer will only be for NCR, mega cities

"Ngayon pa lang, nakikita na natin na yung mga big cities ay may kakayahan makipag-unahan at may mga kontrata na ang iilan para sa mga bakuna. Paano ang mga probinsya na nahihirapan? Tax-payers din ang mga taga-probinsya. Dapat all-in tayo sa pagsusuporta sa kanila."

This according to Senator Risa Hontiveros who questioned the announcement of Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque that the Pfizer vaccine, which has a 90% efficacy rate, is not an option for inoculation programs in the province. Roque said that because provinces lack ultracold storage facilities, a special requirement for Pfizer vaccines, the brand could only be reserved for mega cities such as Metro Manila, Cebu and Davao.

"Yang ganyang rason ay kung hindi trabahong tamad ay gross incompetence," the senator remarked. "Bakit ipapasa sa publiko ang burden ng kawalan ng pasilidad para sa bakuna? Bakit hindi naisama sa pagpapalano lalo't alam naman ng gobyerno na kailangan nitong mag-diversify ng vaccines dahil sa limited global supply?"

Hontiveros said she will bring up the issue during Round 2 of the Senate Committee of the Whole hearing on the vaccination plan on Friday. The senator also earlier brought up concerns about delivery of the COVID-19 vaccines to geographically-isolated areas (GIDAS), which she says the Department of Health (DOH) and the National Taskforce on COVID-19 (NTF) have yet to respond to.

"Give up na ba agad? It is worrisome that we are not even trying to consider or find solutions. I am especially worried because of the bad track record of the DOH in delivering vaccines to regions and areas far-flung from the NCR. This really brings into question just how committed we are to delivering the different options to all Filipinos. At dahil pinupush pa ng Palasyo ang "forfeit on first refusal", parang ginigipit ang pagpipilian ng mga indigent sa probinsya," she said. While most COVID-19 cases are in 'mega cities' like Metro Manila and Davao, Hontiveros highlighted that provinces are also experiencing a surge in cases and are struggling from the pandemic as well. The senator cited Bacolod City as an example, which she says became a COVID-19 hotspot after the 'Balik Probinsya' program of the government.

"Pinabalik ng gobyerno ang karamihan sa mga probinsya nila noong simula ng pandemya. Wag naman natin sila iwanan sa laylayan ng vaccination plan. Let's make sure they don't get the short end of the stick," she concluded.