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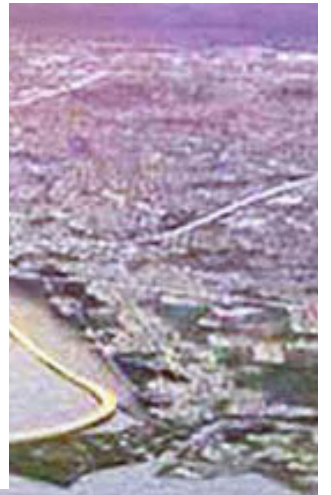
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WITH SANGLEY AIRPORT ON THE LINE, CAVITE AWAITS SOBER BIDEN

By: Miguel R. Camus - Reporter / @miguelrcamusINQ

Would a Biden-led White House be more pliable to China? As the final moments of the hotly contested elections come to a close, countries will next watch closely how the US government will deal with its global affairs, especially with China.

DOH-CALABARZON inaugurates Botika ng Bayan in Trece Martires City



CALAMBA CITY, Laguna, Nov 4 (PIA) --DOH-CALABARZON (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon) today inaugurated the fourth Botika ng Bayan (BnB) in the region located at the City of Trece Martires, Cavite.

“Sa tulong ng ating lokal na pamahalaan ay pananatilihin natin ito at bibigyan ng wastong pangangalaga upang hindi mapabayaan at ito ay ating palalakasin sa pamamagitan ng pakikipag-ugnayan sa mga pribadong pharmaceutical companies upang sila ay makapaglagay ng mga gamot na dito sa BNB upang ang mga pasyente ay hindi na maghanap kung-saan-saan pa para sa kailangan nilang gamot at ito rin ay makukuha ng libre,” Regional Director Eduardo C. Janairo stated in his message during the opening of the BnB at the city

health office. He added the collaboration with private multinational companies will provide the needed essential medicines and will ensure adequate supply for all BnB outlets.

Among the essential medicines that are available includes paracetamol, antibiotics, topical ointments, anti-thrombotic, anti-inflammatory, antihyperlipidemic, anthelmintic, oral hypoglycemic, vitamins, micronutrients, antacids and other essential drugs for asthma, hypertension, diabetes and dyslipidemia even for family planning.

The Trece Martires BnB was made possible through the effort and cooperation of the city government. The outlet will provide quality

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This especially holds true for the Cavite government, which is banking on a partnership with a controversial Chinese firm to secure economic opportunities and create jobs via a \$10-billion international air hub in Manila Bay.

Cavite Gov. Jonvic Remulla said they would have to wait and see whether the US government under Joseph Biden would take a more moderate approach to its dealings with China. “Biden has not

>> P2

Taiwan's Tainan City donates PPEs to Cavite City gov't

By: Gabriel Pabico Lulu - Reporter / @GabrielLuluINQ

The City of Tainan in Taiwan has donated assorted personal protective equipment (PPEs) that may be used by frontliners in Cavite City, the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) in the Philippines said.

In a statement on Friday, TECO said that they handed Tainan City's donations of 1,000 pieces of goggles and 500 pieces of face shields to help Cavite City's COVID-19 response.

Cavite and Tainan have been sister cities for some time now.

Aside from that, two Taiwan association groups have also made donations, including 10,000 pieces of medical-grade face

>> P3

Noveleta LCE extends financial aid to frontliners recovered from COVID-19

NOVELETA, Cavite Nov. 6 (PIA) --The local government of Noveleta extended financial assistance to frontliners that recovered from coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

In a simple ceremony recently held at the Sangguniang Bayan Session Hall, Mayor Dino Reyes-Chua



>> P2

LGU GenTri turns over printing equipment to public schools



GENERAL TRIAS, Cavite, Nov 9 (PIA) – The local government here recently turned over printing equipment to the Schools Division of General Trias in support to the New Normal in the education sector.

Mayor Antonio ‘Ony’ Ferrer handed over three (3) units of Riso Comcolor with high speed inkjet printer (1 unit with offset stapling) and

>> P3

Child warriors raped by NPA commander fear for their family

After filing rape charges against their former New People's Army (NPA) commander Leyte recently, two sisters who had abandoned the armed insurgency expressed fear for the lives of their four family members who are still under the NPA command.

Sisters "Shane," 17, and "Roselyn," 20, spoke in the radio program "Usapang Pangkapayapaan, Usapang Pangkaunlaran (UP, UP) Pilipinas" to confirm that their parents and two younger brothers were still in the hinterlands of Leyte and Biliran with the NPA's Eastern Visayas command.

Interviewed by "UP, UP Pilipinas!" host Col. Gerardo M. Zamudio via Zoom, Shane (not her real name) revealed her plight in the hands of Commander Paterno Opo, with aliases "Yoyo" and "Dodong" of the NPA's Sub-Regional Committee "Levox" that operates in the hinterlands of Biliran and Leyte.

She said she was 15 years old in February 2017 when she was taken from her hometown of Barangay Hampangan, Hilogos, Leyte to Biliran on the pretext that she would be given an education.

"Sabi nila paaralin daw nila ako ng ALS. Dinala nila ako sa Biliran para doon daw ako mag-aral, pero nagulat ako bakit sa bundok. Nakarating kami sa Calubian, isang taon ako naghintay sabi nila paaralin ako pero wala," she said.

"They said they would give me an education in ALS (Alternative Learning System). They took me to Biliran to study, but I was surprised it was in the mountain. We also reached Calubian (in Leyte), where I waited for a year for school, but there was none."

Shane said it was there in the mountain base in Calubian where she was left alone with Opo that she was allegedly raped and threatened with death if she told anyone about the abuse.

Her sister, Roselyn, who is now her guardian is now taking care of her.

The "amazons" or child warriors decided to surrender to the 14th Infantry (Avenger) Battalion of the 8ID on June 12, 2020; and on Oct. 29, 2020, filed the rape complaint against Opo in the sub-office of the Provincial Prosecutor's Office in Calubian, Leyte.

Asked by Col. Zamudio how they ended up joining the NPA, Shane said in Filipino: "My parents were the first to reach there (Calubian) in January. There are six of us in the NPA (because) my two younger brothers are also on the 'other side' (rebels). I'm very worried for them."

Roselyn said that when she was pregnant in the mountains of Biliran, she was forbidden to call up her parents.

"Bakit ganyan, hindi na kami pwede mag-usap? Nagwawala ako nung buntis ako. Six months na yung tiyan ko,

hindi nila ako pinapaalis doon. Finance ako doon sa taas. Bakit hindi nila ako pinalabas? Nung nagwawala na ako, pinadala nila ako sa Calubian, nakita ko si Shane," she said.

"Why couldn't we talk? I was hysterical when I was pregnant. I was six months on the way, they wouldn't let me leave. I was in the finance (committee). Why won't they let me leave? When I threw a tantrum, they sent me to Calubian, where I saw Shane."

It was in their reunion in Calubian that Roselyn said she learned about the sexual abuses against Shane.

Shane said that at the time, they did not know who else to turn to because when their parents learned about the rape, they were all disarmed.

She said that, like they were told by their NPA comrades, their parents still think that if they go down from the mountains, they would have no other option but be killed by soldiers even if they peacefully surrender.

Roselyn said she also worries for her family members. "Food was difficult to obtain in the mountains. Sleeping was difficult, too. And there's no way to let them know that they can surrender to the government," she said in Filipino.

Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO) Undersecretary Lorraine T. Badoy, who chairs the Strategic Communications Cluster of the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC), condemned the atrocities committed by the NPA against the sisters and for making child warriors out of them.

"My hope is that malampasan ninyo ito, mabuo kayo ulit at maghilom ang mga sugat ninyo. Ang gobyerno ninyo ay nangitong para mabigyan ng hustisya yung pinagdaanan ninyo [My hope is for you to get past this, become whole again and your wounds healed. Your government is here to give you justice for what you endured]," Badoy said.

She also took a swipe at Gabriela Women's Party for allegedly pretending to stand up for women's rights, but would not even lift a finger for the benefit of young girls like Shane and Roselyn who experience the worst kind of sexual abuse in the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP)-NPA.

"Ngayon ang anniversary ng Gabriela - 36 years na nagpapanggap ang mga prente ng CPP-NPA, ang Gabriela. Pero hindi nila ikokondena itong nangyari [Today is the anniversary of Gabriela - 36 years has it been pretending as a front (organization) of the CPP-NPA. But, they won't condemn what happened here]," Badoy said.

"This is the reason why government should really be speaking about things like this. Sexual crimes against women



Col. Gerry M. Zamudio Jr.

are very common in the CPP-NPA," she added. She defended recent statements issued by NTF-ELCAC officials about young women being recruited through advocacies of youth and women's organizations only to end up being killed or raped after joining the rebel movement.

"Justice must be attained by its victims, so that the deep wounds inflicted by the CPP-NPA on people like Shane and Roselyn could be healed," Badoy said.

For his part, Undersecretary Severo Catura, secretariat of the Presidential Human Rights Committee, said that from a human rights perspective, government communicators like Badoy and Lt. Gen. Antonio Parlade, Jr. who is the spokesman of the NTF-ELCAC have a duty to warn the public of these nuisances.

He said these officials are duty bound to perform their mandate of protecting citizens by giving out information about things that may pose harm or danger.

"Who is Sec. Lorraine Badoy? Who is Gen. Parlade? In human rights, they are what we call 'duty parents.' The protection of citizens' human rights is an obligation of government," Catura said.

"They are performing their role of protecting citizens because it is their mandate. If we in government stay silent, in the eyes of human rights advocates, we are responsible for what happens to these young victims whose rights were violated," he added.

Confronting criticisms hurled at the NTF-ELCAC such as red-tagging and calling out supporters of organizations that are allegedly infiltrated by communist-terrorists, Catura said NTF-ELCAC has also become the "platform for human rights victims of terrorism."

"Does Shane and Roselyn, with what have happened to them, have any other venue to air their grievances? Who will accept their perspective of what's been done to them inside the NPA, that they were raped?" he said.

"The government has provided them that venue, a place to turn to through the NTF-ELCAC. They don't need to be afraid," Catura added.

UP, UP Pilipinas! is a radio program produced by the Philippine Air Force (PAF) in Basa Air Base, Clark, Pampanga in fulfillment of the public affairs requirements of the NTF-ELCAC and NTF-COVID-19. (Emil Carreon)

Noveleta LCE extends financial << P1

and Vice Mayor Arlyn Torres led the distribution of the P10,000 financial aid to the 56 medical, municipal and barangay frontliners. "This

is the least that we can do to thank them for their sacrifices and dedication to help the municipality in the fight against the pandemic," May-

or Chua said. The frontliners, on the other hand, expressed gratitude to the local government for the financial aid that could somehow augment

their daily needs and expenses especially after surviving the COVID-19 disease. (Ruel Francisco, PIA-Cavite with report from Dennis Abrina)

With sangley airport on the line << P1

given his stand on the West Philippine Sea issue," Remulla told the Inquirer. "We will see what the stance is after the election."

The Cavite government is poised to seal a joint venture with billionaire Lucio Tan's MacroAsia Corp. and partner China Communications Construction Co. Ltd. (CCCC) to build the first phase of the P500-billion Sangley Point International Airport (SPIA).

The project was the subject of recent controversy after incumbent President Donald Trump's administration placed Chinese companies on a sanctions list for their role in building arti-

cial islands on disputed waters in the West Philippine Sea. The list includes subsidiaries of CCCC.

Nevertheless, the project is expected to proceed after Malacañang, which has embraced Beijing under the term of President Duterte, expressed support for the project. Remulla himself also stood by CCCC.

While his foreign policy approach in this region remained uncertain, Remulla said he was "for Biden."

"A sober America needs to lead the world," he said.

The finalization of the venture between the Cavite government and MacroAsia-CCCC has been delayed

because of the COVID-19 crisis. In September, MacroAsia said the submission of their remaining post-qualification requirements would happen within 90 days after commercial air travel opens between the Philippines and China.

Because of its national implications, critics also raised concerns on the risk posed to national security given Sangley's strategic location in Manila Bay.

MacroAsia and CCCC were awarded the project on February after other bidders backed out.

An Inquirer report previously detailed how the short auction timeframe and

bid terms favored a Chinese partner. The Cavite government defended the conduct of the bid and said the project would not turn into a debt trap.

The first phase of SPIA involved the construction of one runway and a terminal with a capacity of 25 million passengers per year. It would eventually expand into a four-runway airport with an annual capacity of 130 million passengers.

Along with San Miguel Corp.'s airport city in Bulacan province, the Sangley International Airport was meant to cut congestion in Manila's Ninoy Aquino International Airport. INQ

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Watch Our Very Own #TekNegoShow

Virgin Coconut Oil Processing: Wet and Dry Processes

People have suddenly taken quite a bit of interest in VCO or virgin coconut oil.

Described by beauty experts as a superfood, it is currently being advertised by some as the "miracle" supplement to the treatment of the COVID-19 disease.

Certainly, a lot of Filipinos are pinning their hope on it.

In 2000, DOST-ITDI developed two VCO production processes that target mass production.

Albeit enjoying slight changes in design in 20 years, the ITDI Modified Wet Process and the Dry Process may benefit processors from the expected new rush for VCO as current research tests may show its potentially therapeutic promise to the treatment of the COVID-19 disease.

A centrifuged process (also known as cream separator process), the wet processing method for VCO of ITDI is a modification of the "traditional boiling method." Here, coconut milk is passed through a centrifuge to separate the cream from the water. Centrifugation coagulates the proteins present in the milk paving for the natural process of separating cream from the water much faster.



To recover oil, the cream is mildly heated. Heating partly removes unpleasant/acidic odor or rancidity while destroying microbes in the oil.

Further, a pressure filter to make the oil-water clear and free of sediments is used. This removes as well both free and bound moisture from the oil resulting in the final moisture

content of less than 0.1% which leads to longer shelf-life. Together with vacuum drying, these improve oil quality.

As well, large volume processors will appreciate that the technology can process 500 nuts in eight hours.

Aside from the wet process, DOST-ITDI also established another method of producing VCO through the dry process. The dry process involves drying the coconut meat at low temperature, followed by expressing the coconut oil from the dry meat under high pressure and controlled temperature.

The ITDI VCO Modified Wet and Dry Processes is one of 13 episodes in DOST-ITDI's #TekNegoShow, an off-the-cuff television show on technology, which will air narratives and insights of technology generators, business people, and the consuming public on how they perceive a featured technology.

#TekNegoShow can be viewed through ITDI's Facebook account www.facebook.com/ITDIDOSTUpdates and YouTube with a weekly Thursday afternoon show date beginning October 22, 2020, until January of next year. (AMGuevarra\ITDI S&T Media Service)

'Staunch anti-communist' Remulla says red-tagging is 'unjust, downright cruel'

By: Katrina Hallare - Reporter / @KHallareINQ

While claiming that he was a "staunch anti-communist," Cavite Governor Jonvic Remulla insisted that "red-tagging people in a very public manner is unfair, unjust and downright cruel." "Nitong nakaraang linggo ay mariin akong tumutol sa isyu ng 'red-tagging' (This past week, I vehemently was against the issue of red-tagging)," Remulla said in a Facebook post on Tuesday, referring to his previous post where he slammed Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Southern Luzon Command chief Lt. Gen. Antonio Parlade Jr. "This is because I believe that red-tagging people in a very public manner is unfair, unjust and downright cruel," he added. Parlade recently made headlines for warning celebrities Liza Soberano and Catriona Gray against engaging with women's group Gabriela, which he labeled as part of a "terrorist organi-

zation." The senior military official also accused Manila Mayor Isko Moreno of being a "sympathizer of terrorists" after the latter ordered the removal of tarpaulins that read the Communist Party of the Philippines, New People's Army, and the National Democratic Front (CPP-NPA-NDF) were declared as "persona non grata" or unwelcome persons. Because of Parlade's controversial remarks, the Senate on Tuesday opened its probe into the alleged red-tagging of celebrities and groups by military officials. 'Peaceful dissent' For Remulla, meanwhile, he believes that public red-tagging put "people's lives and security at risk, not to mention the unthinkable damage to one's reputation." "Kailanman ay hindi magbabago ang aking pananaw at paninindigan na ipaglaban ang karapatang pantao," he said. "Hindi yata kakayanin ng konsensya ko ang manahimik habang ang mga taong walang kalaban laban ay tinatakot, pilit na ginigipit at pinagmamalupitan." (I will never change my belief to fight for human right. I think my conscience will not be silenced if I stay silent while other people are being harassed and threatened.) Despite his stand against red-tagging, the Cavite governor clarified that he is a "staunch anti-communist." "I believe in dissent as long as it is PEACEFUL. I always make it a point to listen and to reflect. I may seldom

agree but I always pick up INSIGHTS relative to what people believe in and/or are fighting for," he said. Remulla also set the record straight on some issues. "I believe in GENDER equality. I believe that empowering women will fundamentally drive better and more sustainable development outcomes for all, including placing the world back on a footing to achieve more," he said. 'Patriot Duterte' The governor further said he still considers President Rodrigo Duterte a "patriot," regardless of what his critics would say. "I believe he is sincere in his sworn duty to serve the people. Yes, marami siyang pagkukulang. Ngunit ako ay naniniwala na ang kanyang liderato ay itinakda ng tadhana," Remulla said of the Chief Executive. (Yes, he has a lot of misses, but I believe his leadership was by destiny.) With 18 months before the 2022 elections, Remulla said he is joining the people in "discerning and choosing the next crop of leaders who will point us in the direction to achieve collective action."

Recto to PITC: Waive commission in buying COVID-19 vaccine

If the DTI-attached Philippine International Trading Corporation (PITC) is the designated COVID-19 vaccine buyer, then it should waive its customary 1 percent to 4 percent service fee.

This is not the time to reap a pandemic windfall. When private corporations are waiving fees and writing off interests, a state agency should avoid being accused of disaster profiteering.

The PITC charges a commission of 4 percent for projects with a total contract price (TCP) of P25 million and below, and 1 percent for projects with a TCP of P700 million and above.

It could potentially earn hundreds of millions in commission for what is essentially an easy "pasabuy" gig. Our cash-strapped, debt-assisted government will be able to save money which can be used to save lives and livelihood if middleman charges will be removed. Saan aabot, halimbawa, ang P100 million na service fee? Libo-libong PPE para sa ospital, milyong-milyong modules para sa mga paaralan. The expectation that a government-to-government transaction will save money won't happen if the government agency on the Philippine side will be entitled to an add-on.

I have no doubt that the PITC will agree to this proposal, more so the four Cabinet members on its 11-person Board – the secretaries of DTI, DENR, DA and NEDA. They are good people.

If citizens and corporations alike are volunteering their services, equipment and facilities for free, a government corporation should do no less, and has no choice but to follow the bayanihan example.

The "no commission" rule can be written as a Special Provision in the General Appropriations Act for 2021, which I am sure will pass muster in the Senate, concurred by the House, and risks no veto from the President.

Taiwan's tainan city donates << P1

masks — both of which were personally received by Cavite Mayor Bernardo Paredes.

"Deputy Representative Joy Yen of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in the Philippines donated, on behalf of the Tainan City Government, 1,000 pieces of goggles and 500 pieces of face shields to Cavite City," TECO said in a statement. "The Philippines Cavite Taiwan

Association and the Taiwanese Compatriot Association in the Philippines also donated 10,000 pieces of medical masks, respectively," it added. This is not the first time an organization from Taiwan or with ties to the Philippines' northern neighbor has given donations to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. Different PPEs have been given to several institutions in the

Philippines — from hospitals nationwide to the police force, the members of the press, and the national government.

Taiwan has been one of the countries hailed as a model in fighting the coronavirus pandemic, topping 91 other countries in terms of being able to suppress COVID-19 transmissions. Just this October 31, crowds were allowed

to celebrate the Pride March as Taiwan has not registered a single COVID-19 case in more than 200 days. In contrast, the Philippines' case count is still growing, with 34,374 out of the 391,809 total confirmed COVID-19 patients still considered as active cases. Meanwhile, 52 new deaths in the country due to the virus as of Friday leads to a death toll of 7,461.

DOH CALABARZON inaugurates << P1

outpatient pharmacy services to the residents of the city, especially the underprivileged patients.

The three other BNBs are located in Sta. Maria, Laguna, Mauban, Quezon and in Magallanes, Cavite. "Sa

tulong ng ating mga lokal na pamahalaan sa CALABARZON, gagawin nating primary care pharmacy ang mga BNB na syang magbibigay ng pangunahing serbisyo sa pagbibigay ng mga libreng gamot sa ating mga mama-

mayan," Janairo reiterated. Director Janairo reminded that healthy living including proper diet and regular exercise is still the best way to prevent illness.

Among the other municipalities who also applied

for a BNB license to operate with the Food and Drug Administration namely San Luis and Tingloy in Batangas, Montalban in Rizal, San Narciso and Quezon in the province of Quezon. (PIA-4A/DOH-CALABARZON)

LGU GenTri turns over printing << P1

printing capacity of 120 pages per minute. The machine has a 24/7 printing operations capability, sorting function, and built-in standard hard disk used for printing modules, and activity sheets/worksheets. "Layunin ng LGU na patuloy na itaas ang antas ng edukasyon sa kabila ng pagsubok na kinakaharap ng ating bansa sa ngayon. Ang pamamahagi ng mga

kagamitang ito ay isa lamang sa mga hakbang ng Pamahalaang Panlungsod upang patatagin ang pundasyon ng pagkatuto ng mga batang Gentriseño," Mayor Ony said. (The Local Government aims to continue to raise the level of education despite the challenges facing our country today. The distribution of these machines is just one of the steps taken by the City

Government to strengthen the foundation of education of the Gentriseño children.)

Aside from the printing equipment, the LGU also provided more than 300 desktop computers including computer tables to the Schools Division. The LGU will also ensure the continuous supply of bond papers and printer inks to the schools for utilization of the

teachers in the preparation of Weekly Home Learning Plan (WHLP) and other teaching tools to monitor the learning progress of the students using the different learning modalities in education. For SY 2020-2021, about 73,000 students have been enrolled in the different public elementary and secondary schools in the City. (Ruel Francisco/General Trias PIO)



1,233 DRAYBERS MULA SA IBA'T IBANG TODA, PUJAC, BINIGYAN NG CASH ASSISTANCE NG CARMONA LGU

Nitong Nobyembre 10 ay muling namahagi ang Lokal na Pamahalaan ng Carmona ng tulong pinansyal sa mga tricycle at jeepney draybers mula sa iba't ibang TODA at PUJAC ng kanilang bayan.

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Remulla warns of power outage, weak internet signal due to Ulysses

By: Christia Marie Ramos - Reporter / @CMRamosINQ

Cavite Governor Jonvic Remulla on Wednesday alerted residents to brace for severe tropical storm Ulysses and ordered authorities to ready emergency measures.

Remulla told his constituents to expect a power outage and weak internet connectivity as Cavite will be directly hit by Ulysses. "Halos sigurado na direct hit ang Cavite dala ng bagyong #UlyssesPH simula hating gabi Nov 11 until the next day," Remulla said in a Facebook post. (It's almost certain that Cavite will be a direct hit of #UlyssesPH starting later tonight, Nov. 11, until the next day.) "I have advised all the Disaster Risk Councils to prepare emergency procedures," he added. According to Remulla, residents in high risk areas will be evacuated.

Halos sigurado na direct hit ang Cavite dala ng bagyong #UlyssesPH simula hating gabi Nov 11 until the next day, Nov...Posted by Jonvic Remulla on Tuesday, November 10, 2020 He also cautioned residents of a

high possibility of flooding in low-lying areas in Cavite. "Sigurado ang pagkawala ng kuryente. Mag ingat po sa pag-gamit ng kandila," he also said. (Power outages will be experienced. Please be careful in using candles.)

"Charge na agad ang mga rechargeables. Internet signal or mobile data may be weak or down," he added. (Charge all rechargeable gadgets. Internet signal or mobile data may be weak or down.) Further, Remulla said he will be making a "much-awaited" announcement later in the day. "Oo nga pala, may nakalimutan pa ako... mamaya na ang announcement na pinakahihintay ninyo," he said. (I forgot one more thing...I will make an announcement you have all been waiting for.) "Magco-compose muna ako. Kulang pa ako sa inspirasyon," he added in jest. (I'll just compose my announcement. I'm still lacking inspiration.) The state weather bureau said it may raise Tropical Cyclone Wind Signal (TCWS) No. 3 over



Metro Manila and portions of Central Luzon, Calabarzon, and Bicol Region once severe tropical storm Ulysses develops into a typhoon. Ulysses is forecast to intensify into a typhoon within

the next 12 hours and reach its peak of intensity of 130 to 155 kilometers per hour prior to landfall, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration.



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Gatchalian hails Senate nod of teaching supplies' allowance increase

Senator Win Gatchalian hailed the Senate's third reading approval of a measure that would increase teachers' allowance for teaching supplies.

Senate Bill No. 1092 or the Teaching Supplies Allowance Act of 2020, which Gatchalian co-authored and co-sponsored, aims to institutionalize and increase the annual teaching supplies allowance, previously known as the "chalk allowance," from the current P3,500 to P10,000 by S.Y. 2024-2025.

The increase, however, would be gradual considering the fiscal burden that the country faces because of the COVID-19 pandemic. For S.Y. 2021-2022 and S.Y. 2022-2023, the teaching supplies allowance would be P5,000 per teacher, which would increase to P7,500 for S.Y. 2023-2024. By 2024-2025 onwards, the amount would be P10,000.

While Gatchalian originally proposed an amount of P5,000 for the teaching supplies allowance before the pandemic, he welcomed the increases that he said would help teachers cope with challenges in the roll-out of distance learning.

Under the measure, this allowance can be used to purchase teaching supplies and materials for the implementation or conduct of various learning modalities. Once approved into law, the allocation for the teaching supplies allowance will be included in the General Appropriations Act (GAA) and charged against the budget of the Department of Education.

The Chairman of the Senate Committee on Basic Education, Arts and Culture pointed out that prior to the pandemic, teachers have been shelling out money from their own pockets to augment the teaching supplies' allowance they receive annually. The pandemic exacerbated this challenge as teachers face additional expenses related to distance learning, including the cost of internet connectivity, Gatchalian explained.

According to the senator, the measure is timely and essential to support teachers who have been serving as "frontliners" of learning continuity.

"Napapanahon nang taasan natin ang pondong ibinibigay sa mga guro para mabili nila ang kanilang mga pangangailangan sa pagtuturo. Sa ating pag-responde sa mga hamon ng pandemya at sa pagbangon ng sektor ng edukasyon, nararapat lang na ibigay natin ang lahat ng suporta para na rin sa kapaanan ng mga estudyanteng tinuturuan nila," said Gatchalian.

"Hindi na natin dapat hayaan ang mga gurong mag-abono ng malaking halaga upang magampanan nila ang kanilang tungkulin," he added.

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