

CAVITE NEWS PUBLISHING

A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER THAT'S NATIONAL IN SCOPE

VOL. XXIII NO. 43 FEBRUARY 9-15, 2023 P 10.00



Aéropostale is now open at SM City Tanza
New Store Alert!! Aéropostale is now open, located at the Ground Level of SM City Tanza. Be ready with these amazing opening offers: **BUY 2 GET 1 on all items and a Free Aeropostale Planner for every purchase worth ±75,000.**



#ManokngBayan is now open at SM City Dasmariñas

The new chicken craze is now at SM City Dasmariñas. Chooks recently opened its new store at SM City Dasmariñas. Joining the grand opening were chooks ambassadors and endorsers Dr. Krizzle Luna (4th from the right) and Benjie Paras (3rd from the right). Chooks serves chooks-to-go signature roasted chicken, friend chicken, crispy chicken neck, inihaw na liempo and more! Experience chicken at another level. Visit its new branch on the lower ground floor of SM City Dasmariñas.

Marcos vows to work harder after 'very good' satisfaction rating

MANILA – President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has vowed to work even harder following his “very good” net satisfaction rating in the latest Social Weather Stations (SWS) survey.

Based on the December 2022 survey, Marcos received a very good net satisfaction rating of +68, which is five points higher than the October 2022 rating of +63.

Vice President and Department of Education (DepEd) Secretary Sara Z. Duterte got an excellent net satisfaction rating of +77, four points higher than her +73 rating in October last year.

“Nagpapasalamat ang buong Marcos-Duterte administration sa tiwala ng ating mga



Vice President Sara Z. Duterte and President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. (File photo)

kababayan sa ating pamumuno (The entire Marcos-Duterte administration is grateful for the trust of our countrymen in our leadership,)” he said on his official Facebook page.

“Lalo pa nating pag-iigihin ang ating trabaho para sa magandang buhay ng bawat pamilyang Pilipino (We will work even harder for the good life of every Filipino family),” he added.

Marcos and Duterte overwhelmingly won in the May 9, 2022 presidential and vice presidential elections, respectively, under the UniTeam ticket.

UniTeam is a play on their platform of unity, as they promised to pursue economic recovery from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Dr. Froilan Calilung, who teaches political science at the University of Santo Tomas, earlier said Marcos’ high rating could be attributed to among others, his efforts to attract more foreign direct investments from his foreign trips.

“I think this is a testament also to the

fact that our countrymen are seeing also the efforts of the President,” Calilung said in a Laging Handa public briefing on Wednesday.

“Ito nga pong mga pagbibiyaheng ating Pangulo, siguro kung titingnan natin eh isang paraan talaga hindi lamang para ipakilala ang Pilipinas kung hindi manghikayat talaga ng mga foreign direct investments (These trips of our President, maybe if we look at it is a way not only to introduce the Philippines but also to really encourage foreign direct investments),” he added.

Despite obtaining high satisfaction ratings, Calilung said Marcos “should not have a sense of complacency” and intensify efforts to address the needs of the nation and people.

SWS terminology for net satisfaction ratings are: +70 and above (excellent); +50 to +69 (very good); +30 to +49 (good); +10 to +29 (moderate); +9 to -9 (neutral); -10 to -29 (poor); -30 to -49 (bad); -50 to -69 (very bad); and -70 and below (execrable). (PNA)

CAVITE NEWS PUBLISHING

A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER THAT'S NATIONAL IN SCOPE

VOL. XXIII NO. 43 FEBRUARY 9-15, 2023 P10.00

ISSN: 2651-7450 Entered as Second Class Mail at the Imus Post Office under Permit No. 2003-11 dated August 29, 2003

More gains eyed for PH economy from PBBM trip to Japan

MANILA – The Philippine delegation to Japan headed by President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. is expected to bring home many significant gains when they return to the country on Feb. 12, House Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez announced on Thursday afternoon.

According to the House leader, at the rate it is going, the 5-day stretch working visit of the President’s team to Japan would be more fruitful in terms of investments and other economic boosters that will come in, as manifested during his earlier meeting with the Japanese business

sector representatives. On just the second day of the visit, Romualdez, who is part of the delegation, noted that the President has already cornered billions of pesos during the round table meeting on Thursday morning with top executives of Japan-based Japanese business (Turn to p.3)

‘Bayanihan’ among ASEAN leaders urged to ensure quality education

MANILA – The Department of Education (DepEd) on Thursday urged leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to embrace the spirit of “bayanihan” (cooperation) to improve the quality of education in the region.

DFA assures aid to quake-affected Filipinos in Türkiye, Syria

MANILA – The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) on Wednesday said assistance will be provided to the earthquake-affected Filipinos in both Türkiye and Syria.

Foreign Affairs spokesperson Ma.

Teressita Daza said both the Philippine Embassy in Ankara and Damascus have activated the so-called “crisis control management” as soon as the earthquake rattled south Türkiye.

“They will do what needs to be done and

During the conference, Duterte highlighted how helpful bayanihan can be, especially in addressing issues in accessibility to quality education.

“In the Philippines, the term bayanihan is used to describe the acts of coming together to work for a common goal... I urged everyone to embrace the spirit of bayanihan keeping in mind who is at the heart of the work that we do. Our ASEAN learners and the future leader of our

bring what needs to be brought to actually be able to address the needs that have been raised by different (Filipino communities),” she told reporters in a briefing.

Daza said both embassies have a contingency plan to secure necessary



BAYANIHAN SPIRIT. Vice President and Education Secretary Sara Duterte delivers her speech before the Southeast Asian Education Ministers for the 52nd SEAMEO Council Conference last Wednesday (Feb. 2, 2023). Duterte urged the ASEAN education leaders to work together to address the learning challenges in the region using the “bayanihan spirit”. (Photo courtesy of DepEd)

countries. Like the act of the bayanihan, let us continue to value

assistance for distressed Filipinos and ensure there is representation with the host government if repatriation is needed.

As of this writing, none of the 248 Filipinos in affected provinces in Türkiye and the 60 others in Syria have requested to be repatriated, she said.

education as a shared duty,” Duterte said. “We need to act

Both embassies, she added, are in contact with the Filipino communities in their jurisdiction.

Weng Timoteo, vice president of the Filipino community in Türkiye, said several Filipinos were among the displaced, some of (Turn to p. 3)

now. We cannot afford to waste more time. As (Turn to p. 2)

actually happened and is continuing, because it's not an easy task, especially if there's a national disaster,” she said.

Weng Timoteo, vice president of the Filipino community in Türkiye, said several Filipinos were among the displaced, some of (Turn to p. 3)



PLEASE CHECK PLATES, COMPARE TO ORIGINAL BEFORE RUNNING



BAYANHAN... Fr. p 1

education leaders, we cannot allow ASEAN children to miss out on the beauty and benefits of learning and the wonders of being able to use it to positively impact ASEAN and the world," she added.

The education chief made the call following assessments of the impacts of the pandemic, including the learning gaps due to the halt in in-person classes.

"Data from UNICEF indicates that more than half of 10-year-olds in low- and middle-income countries were unable to read or comprehend a simple story even before the pandemic. In addition, learning poverty, or the inability to read and comprehend a basic text by the age of 10, has gotten worse because of the disruption in schooling and is currently thought to be close to 70 percent," she said.

For the part of the Philippines, the DepEd vowed to intensify its efforts to realize its MATATAG (resilient) agenda, which stands for "MAking the curriculum relevant to produce job-ready, active and responsible citizens; TAKing steps to accelerate the delivery of basic education facilities and provision of services; TAKing good care of learners by promoting learner well-being,

inclusive education, and a positive learning environment; and Giving support for teachers to teach better."

"The Philippine government, under the leadership of our President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr., has committed to the MATATAG education agenda and has made a national commitment to increase investments in education... The President has emphasized that we cannot fail our children. We need to help them so that they become great," Duterte said.

The DepEd earlier disclosed priority reforms to be pushed in the education sector during its Basic Education Report (BER) 2023.

Included on the key aspects vowed to be addressed are problems on infrastructures, including lack of adequate spaces and disaster-incurred loss; the need for revision in several parts of the curriculum; the need to intensify the protection of children's rights and welfare; corruption; as well as lack of support to teachers, among others.

Despite these, Duterte said the administration's initiative puts the country on-track to achieve inclusive and quality education. (PNA)

MORE GAIN... FR. P. 1

semiconductor, electronics, and wiring harness firms.

The Speaker also believed that President Marcos' trip to Japan will further improve the overall trade and economic relations between the two countries.

"The President is really working hard to promote the Philippines to Japanese investors and businesses. And with the warm reception he is receiving, I am confident that he would achieve more significant gains in the few remaining days of his working visit to Japan," Romualdez said.

In another development, the House Speaker likewise noted that tourism stakeholders in Japan have shown keen interest in the President's presentation during a separate meeting outlining the Philippine government's initiatives meant to lure more Japanese tourists to come and visit the Philippines.

At present, Japan ranks sixth among the country's foreign visitors.

"These are encouraging developments that would eventually redound to the benefit of tens of thousands of Filipinos, in terms of new jobs and business opportunities that would further drive our economic growth," Romualdez said.

The Speaker was among the Philippine government officials present during the two meetings, and also at the dinner Wednesday night hosted for the

Philippine delegation by Mitsui & Co. and Metro Pacific Investments Corporation.

During dinner, Romualdez noticed that many Japanese businessmen and executives were so inquisitive about business and investment opportunities in the Philippines and also about the country's strong economic performance, despite the pandemic.

President Marcos earlier said the participation of lawmakers in his foreign trips is crucial in his effort to attract more foreign direct investments to the country since they could immediately address concerns prospective investors may have on existing rules as well on pending legislation that may impact the country's business climate.

Among the pending matters in Congress that may be of interest to Japanese businessmen include the House-approved Maharlika Investment Fund, which is currently under deliberation in the Senate.

There are also several bills under consideration of the House which are proposing amendments to the 1987 Constitution to remove restrictive economic provisions and open up the country to the entry of foreign direct investments, thereby creating more job opportunities and spur economic growth.

President Marcos' remaining activities before heading home

DFA... Fr. p 1

whom are left with no choice but to stay in their cars in the middle of the winter.

Timoteo, in an ANC interview on Wednesday, said one Filipina wanted to travel from Hatay all the way to Istanbul but said it would be "impossible" to do so given that most roads have been damaged and are impassable.

"We are in touch with the Philippine Consulate General in Istanbul as well, we've been passing information about what

we know so far about our affected fellow Filipinos," she said.

The death toll in Türkiye and Syria has already climbed to over 7,200 as of Feb. 8, according to latest local reports.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip, declaring a state of emergency in the 10 most affected provinces, said at least 13 million people in Türkiye were affected by the earthquake and the massive aftershocks that followed. (PNA)

CAVITE NEWS PUBLISHING WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

raquel.caviteneews@gmail.com
09974094932/09329770888

RAQUEL M. MAGTIBAY
Publisher

JOMAR MENES
Editor-In-Chief

JOHN JEPREE MAGTIBAY
Layout-Artist

LAURO M. MAGTIBAY
Circulation Manager

ATTY. RAQUEL C. LARA
Legal Counsel



THIS NEWSPAPER IS EDITED, PUBLISHED AND CIRCULATED IN THE PROVINCE OF CAVITE AT BLK. 8 LOT 19 SAINT FRANCIS ST. CARDINAL VILLAGE SALITRAN 3 DASMARIÑAS CITY OF CAVITE

Commercial Advertising Rate: P200.00/col.cm
Legal Rate P160.00/col.cm.

on Feb. 12 include a one-on-one meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, wherein the two leaders are set to sign key deals in the areas of humanitarian assistance and disaster

relief, infrastructure, agriculture, and digital cooperation.

The First Couple is also scheduled to have a short meeting with Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako. (PNA)

PGCEA officers formally sworn into office

In a solemn but historic induction ceremony, the first set of elected officers of the Provincial Government of Cavite Employees Association (PGCEA) for 2023 to 2025 formally took their oath officiated by Provincial Administrator for Internal Affairs, Mr. Renato A. Abutan, last January 31, 2023 at the Ceremonial Hall, Provincial Capitol Building, Trece Martires City.

PGCEA officers are composed of Ms. Michelle S. Osorio – President, Mr. Joseph M. Avevilla – Vice President, Ms. Angelica Joy A. Balanquit – Secretary, Mr. Paul Mark M. Feranil – Assistant Secretary, Ms. Myrachel P. Cuadra – Treasurer, Ms. Karen Dela Cruz – Assistant Treasurer, Ms. Josefina M. Ayon – Auditor, and Mr. Walter M. Pereña and Ms. Genevieve B. Rogado – Public Relations Officers.

The historic event was attended by Atty. Annaliza Mercene-Pulmones, Provincial Legal Officer who also served as one of the advisers of the organization during its inception. In her welcome message, she expressed her appreciation to everyone who has been instrumental in the successful creation of PGCEA for the benefit and welfare of PGC employees, especially to PA Renato Abutan who has been very supportive of the organization.

After administering the oath of office of the elected officers, Provincial Administrator Abutan then thanked all the interim officers for their hard work and dedication in ensuring that all the tasks are carried out, from employee orientation up to the conduct of an orderly election. He also congratulated the newly-elected officers and challenged them to take the responsibility to heart as the oath-taking is only the beginning of more work ahead. He reiterated his full support to the organization saying that he was immensely delighted as it was his dream to organize an employee association in the Provincial Government of Cavite.

Ms. Maribel S. Bernal, PGCEA Interim President, led the turnover activity to the new officers by handing over the ceremonial key, which symbolizes the opening of new roles and responsibility, the gavel, which connotes authority and order, and the constitutional by-laws that serves as the guide of PGCEA. She also extended her heartfelt gratitude to her co-interim officers



and the members of the ELECOM including the volunteers for their unparalleled support and commitment.

PGCEA President-elect Michelle S. Osorio, delivered her acceptance speech wherein she affirmed their gratefulness for the opportunity entrusted to them by their fellow PGC employees. She then asked for their continued support and guidance as the new PGCEA officers embark on their journey. She left the message "Simulan natin itong challenge na ito, itong trabahong ito at kakayanin natin ito sa tulong ng ating mga co-member," as she ended her speech.

In closing, Ms. Maria Fe Satsatin, head of Human Resource and Management Office, and also one of PGCEA's advisers, wished that the establishment of the employees' organization serves as guide and bond to unite the PGC employees.

Thereupon, PA Abutan extended his generosity by donating seed fund for the operation of the Provincial Government of Cavite Employees Association (PGCEA).

SC 76 operator finds prospective oil, gas deposits in Palawan

MANILA – The Department of Energy (DOE) bared Thursday that Israeli firm Ratio Petroleum, the operator of Service Contract (SC) 76, has found prospective oil and gas deposits in the north part of East Palawan Basin as a result of its exploration within the block.

"Ratio Petroleum, the operator of SC No. 76, has identified two possible petroleum plays with over 20 leads delineated within their contract block following the completion of the first phase of their work program in October 2020," DOE said in a statement.

A play pertains to a group of oil fields while a lead is a subsurface with the potential to have entrapped oil or natural gas.

"Ratio Petroleum's initial work program has resulted in the

Energy firm ramps up solar power targets

MANILA – As the government turns aggressive in luring renewable energy investments, Citicore Renewable Energy Corp. (CREC) is ramping up its solar energy targets for the next five years.

The firm plans to launch 5,000 megawatts (MW) of solar power projects in the next five years from its initial target of 1,500 MW for the same period because of the country's growing power requirement.

"We are upgrading our pipeline projects from originally 1.5 gigawatts, or 1,500 MW, and the target is to break ground 1 GW of new projects this year. So, meaning, by early next year, we will have almost 1.25 GW of

identification of numerous leads that emphasize the prospectiveness of the basin. Several leads show clear anomalies, which supports the concept of the basin being gas-prone," DOE Undersecretary Alessandro Sales said.

The DOE awarded SC 76 to the Israeli petroleum exploration and development firm in October 2018, with an initial investment of USD34.35 million for its studies, data gathering and drilling within its seven-year contract.

Ratio Petroleum's work program in the SC 76 will be in three phases, which include the acquisition of 2D seismic data, the acquisition of 3D seismic data and drilling of one of the wells.

"As the company is seeking a partner to participate in

unlocking the basin's potential at the early stages of exploration, this would be an opportunity for interested parties to take part in the next phase of planning and acquiring 3D seismic data, which will further define the full potential of SC 76," Sales said.

He said that with the depleting gas reserves in Malampaya natural gas field, the country should reinvigorate petroleum exploration activities.

"While it is capital-intensive to carry out exploration programs, with the depletion of the Malampaya reservoir and the continuing volatility of fossil fuel prices in the past years, we need an aggressive push to explore for new oil and gas fields for the furtherance of our energy security," he added. (PNA)

energy storage system this year. He added that investments in energy storage system are critical to accelerate and smoothen the transmission of output coming from renewable energy projects.

"We have a good policy in supporting our renewable energy," Tan said. "What the government needs to support will be the development of energy storage technology." With its new targets for the medium term, CREC is expected to invest USD4 billion to fund its 5,000-MW solar power projects in five years. To fund these projects, CREC will go public this year but Tan declined to divulge other details yet. (PNA)

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL POLICE



PLEASE CHECK PLATES. COMPARE TO ORIGINAL BEFORE RUNNING

PBBM's 'Pambansang Pabahay' empowers LGUs to address housing gaps

MANILA – The Department of Human Settlement and Urban Development (DHSUD) has issued a department circular granting authority to agency's partner local government units (LGUs) to execute and implement measures to bridge their respective housing gaps under the Pambansang Pabahay Para sa Pilipino Housing (4PH) program.

DHSUD Department Circular 2023-004, in effect, empowers LGUs in addressing housing problems within the jurisdiction of their separate localities.

The circular provides that each partner LGU will act as the lead proponent in the implementation of the housing projects under the 4PH program. It also stated that LGUs must formulate local policies and programs to support and facilitate project financing, construction and property management.

DHSUD Secretary Jose Rizalino Acuzar said this provision will expedite the agency's plan to provide housing units and develop livable communities for informal settler families, low-income earners and underprivileged Filipinos.

"In our discussions with LGUs, we have developed this housing program with flexibility particularly on financing aspect, following the applicable laws, government rules and guidelines," Acuzar said in a statement on Tuesday.

Tasks and responsibilities of LGUs include identification of sites suitable for housing and mixed-use development processing

developmental loans for housing projects, identification of beneficiaries and development of project concept.

As of Jan. 31, DHSUD has already sealed 63 memorandums of understanding with LGUs and led 15 groundbreaking activities in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

He reminded LGUs to begin enrolling in "Pambansang Pabahay" as President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. recently urged Congress to include the requested budget for housing interest support in the General Appropriations for the succeeding years.

"With our help, local leaders must deliver their commitments as we aim for the sustainability of this massive housing project. If DHSUD, LGUs, government

Energy firm ramps up solar power targets

MANILA – As the government turns aggressive in luring renewable energy investments, Citicore Renewable Energy Corp. (CREC) is ramping up its solar energy targets for the next five years.

The firm plans to launch 5,000 megawatts (MW) of solar power projects in the next five years from its initial target of 1,500 MW for the same period because of the country's growing power requirement.

"We are upgrading our pipeline projects from originally 1.5 gigawatts, or 1,500 MW, and the target is to break ground 1 GW of new projects this year. So, meaning, by early next year, we will have

financial institutions and private partners will work together, we can progressively address or even put an end to the country's housing backlog," Acuzar pointed out.

For its part, the DHSUD shall provide technical assistance and capacitate LGUs officials and personnel in facilitating the processes, particularly in providing access to funds and estate management.

In the recent engagements of DHSUD officials, some local chief executives have pledged to donate land resources for the administration's flagship housing program.

The DHSUD is seeking PHP36 billion in interest support annually for 1 million housing units. Under 4PH, DHSUD is tasked to build 6 million units until 2028. (PNA)

almost 1.25 GW of installed capacity," CREC president and chief executive officer Oliver Tan said in an interview over the weekend.

He said the projects will generate between PHP7 billion and PHP8 billion on the company's top line.

Tan added that CREC is allocating USD800 million in capital expenditure (capex) this year to fund the new projects, which are expected to be completed by early 2024.

Majority of the capex this year will be spent on its 600-MW solar project in Batangas, he added.

Aside from expanding its solar power portfolio, Tan

China's warming economy new impetus to global growth

BEIJING – Well begun is half done. Off to a good start in 2023, China's economy is seeing a faster-than-expected recovery, which is boosting confidence and nurturing new impetus both domestically and abroad.

The robust tourism and consumption boom during the Spring Festival, as well as other indicators, serve as evidence suggesting a promising year.

During the seven-day holiday, China saw nearly 2.9 million cross-border trips, up 120.5 percent year on year, and 308 million domestic trips, up 23.1 percent compared with 2022.

In January, the purchasing managers' index for China's manufacturing sector came in at 50.1, returning to expansion territory after three consecutive months of contraction.

With eased epidemic controls and the start of a new policy cycle, China's economy is expected to open new horizons in 2023, while pragmatic policies to stabilize growth and boost development will further shore up confidence, said Yu Xiangrong, China chief economist of Citigroup.

Encouraging figures are the result of coordinated central and local planning, which echoed a Chinese saying that a year's plan starts with spring.

Promoting consumption and expanding domestic demand is a priority task

government needs to support will be the development of energy storage technology."

With its new targets for the medium term, CREC is expected to invest USD4 billion to fund its 5,000-MW solar power projects in five years.

To fund these projects, CREC will go public this year but Tan declined to divulge other details yet. (PNA)

with Merchants Union Consumer Finance Company Limited.

The Ministry of Commerce recently said it will focus on areas, such as automobiles and household supplies, and coordinate national promotional activities, aimed at boosting consumption.

The ministry will also continue with the construction of international consumption center cities, and maintain emphasis on developing county-level businesses.

The National Development and Reform Commission, China's top economic planner, said multiple measures will be implemented to increase confidence in consumption.

The Ministry of Finance will coordinate policy tools to exert more efforts on attracting special bond investment and improving preferential policies concerning taxes and fees.

China's central bank will guide financial institutions to increase support for green development, and will continue to apply monetary policy tools to ensure carbon emission reductions, clean and efficient use of coal, and efficient logistics.

Meanwhile, China's local governments recently held featured activities and adopted measures to rev up economic development and consolidate market confidence, said Dong Ximiao, chief researcher

of the Institute of Finance under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, believes that as the effects of various policies continue to emerge, China's economy will pick up steam and again become an important "locomotive" driving global economic growth. (Xinhua)

The global economy will see slow growth, high inflation and high risks in the next three to five years, and the monetary policies in major developed economies will bring uncertainty to the global economy, said Liang Guoyong, a senior economist for the UN Conference on Trade and Development.

Therefore, the positive development of China's economy will undoubtedly play an important role in stabilizing the world economy, he added.

Zhang Ming, deputy director of the Institute of Finance under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, believes that as the effects of various policies continue to emerge, China's economy will pick up steam and again become an important "locomotive" driving global economic growth. (Xinhua)

PH to receive add'l 300K doses of bivalent Covid-19 vaccines

MANILA – The country is expected to receive over 300,000 doses of bivalent Covid-19 vaccines apart from the COVAX Facility's donation of one million doses.

"Meron pang isang bansa (There is another country) which we could not name for now because the agreements are being finalized but they will give additional 300,000 plus doses," Department of Health officer-in-charge Maria Rosario Vergeire said in a media forum on Tuesday.

The DOH has secured an initial donation of 1,002,000 million doses of bivalent Covid-19 Pfizer vaccines from the COVAX Facility, the worldwide

DOH studies data collection, management of 'long Covid' cases

MANILA -- The Department of Health (DOH) is studying how it can manage cases and collect data about patients who experience "long Covid", a health official said Tuesday.

In a media briefing, DOH officer-in-charge Maria Rosario Vergeire said the agency recognizes the presence of long Covid -- described by the World Health Organization as the continuation or development of new symptoms three months after the initial SARS-CoV-2 infection which may last for at least two months with no other explanation.

initiative aimed at equitable access to Covid-19 vaccines.

The donation is expected to arrive in the country before the end of March.

"So, in all meron na tayong concrete na plano sa almost 1.4 million doses na bivalent (we already have concrete plan for the almost 1.4 million bivalent doses). So, guidelines will be issued soon so our local governments can be able to prepare already," Vergeire said.

Globally, bivalent Covid-19 vaccines still do not have certificate of product registration which is a requirement for selling jabs in the market.

Currently, these vaccines only have

emergency use authorization (EUA) for them to be administered as primary or booster doses.

"Kapag dumating po iyan dito sa ating bansa, kelangan pa rin po ng EUA galing sa ating (When these bivalents arrive, they still need EUA from our) Philippine Food and Drug Administration," she added.

For the first batch of donated jabs from the COVAX Facility, the A1 (health care workers), A2 (senior citizens) and A3 (individuals with comorbidities) will be prioritized in line with the conditions that have been agreed upon. (PNA)

MANILA – The XBB.1.5 subvariant of Omicron, which is a mutation of the BA.2, could be a dominant variant in the country, a health official said Thursday.

"I think it will be especially now that during the first month of January, the WHO [World Health Organization] reports that the top three fast rising variants or subvariant of Omicron one of that is XBB.1.5," said infectious disease expert, Dr. Rontgene Solante, in a televised public briefing.

Last Tuesday, the Department of Health (DOH) reported the first case of XBB.1.5 and three cases of CH.1.1 which were part of the 1,078 samples sequenced by the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine and the University of the Philippines-Philippine Genome Center on Jan. 28 to Feb. 3.

The DOH has noted that the definition of long Covid must be established primarily as "it could be any symptom an individual feels after Covid-19" which may also be a symptom of the disease a patient may already have prior to Covid-19 infection.

It can be prevented

XBB.1.5 possible to become dominant variant in PH: expert

MANILA – The XBB.1.5 subvariant of Omicron, which is a mutation of the BA.2, could be a dominant variant in the country, a health official said Thursday.

"I think it will be especially now that during the first month of January, the WHO [World Health Organization] reports that the top three fast rising variants or subvariant of Omicron one of that is XBB.1.5," said infectious disease expert, Dr. Rontgene Solante, in a televised public briefing.

Last Tuesday, the Department of Health (DOH) reported the first case of XBB.1.5 and three cases of CH.1.1 which were part of the 1,078 samples sequenced by the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine and the University of the Philippines-Philippine Genome Center on Jan. 28 to Feb. 3.

The DOH has noted that the definition of long Covid must be established primarily as "it could be any symptom an individual feels after Covid-19" which may also be a symptom of the disease a patient may already have prior to Covid-19 infection.

It can be prevented through vaccination, wearing of well-fitted masks, frequent handwashing, social distancing and ensuring proper ventilation of indoor spaces.

"So, pag-aaralan ito ng ating Department of Health, kasalukuyan nagkon-sulta na tayo sa mga eksperto para 'yung definition ang unang-una nating pagtatrabahuan so that we can be able to collect the data and we

can be able to manage these individuals," Vergeire said.

The country has logged a total of 4,073,826 cases and 65,851 deaths so far.

A total of 73,960,026 individuals have been fully vaccinated against the disease and 21,390,548 have received their booster doses. (PNA)

The DOH is yet to disclose any definite information if the cases are local transmission or from an exposure abroad.

However, the XBB.1.5 is less likely to cause "a significant spike of the increase in cases", Solante said.

"But, I think mas masapawan na niya 'yung BA.2 or BA.5 which incidentally, the XBB.1.5 is also coming from BA.2, so nanganak 'yung BA.2 and nag-mutate to a more transmissible itong tinatawag na XBB.1.5 (it will overwhelm the BA.2 or BA.5 which incidentally, the XBB.1.5 is also coming from BA.2, so the BA.2 mutated to a more transmissible subvariant XBB.1.5)," he added.

The CH.1.1 subvariant has mutation similar to the Philippines-Philippine Genome Center on Jan. 28 to Feb. 3.

"We need to monitor this subvariant of the Omicron because of those, it may cause severe cases, but we don't know yet, that would be possible, but it is

important that we monitor the cases that we will be having," Solante said.

When asked about the best vaccine that could protect the public against XBB.1.1 and CH.1.1, Solante said bivalent vaccines which were developed specifically for the Omicron variant would be more effective.

"Meron na tayong nakikita sa US and Israel na nung ginamit na nila itong bivalent vaccine dun sa mga high risk population gaya ng mga matanda at may mga vulnerabilities o comorbidities, mataas-taas ang protection nito (We've seen reports from the US and Israel that when they used these bivalent vaccines on high-risk populations like the elderly, those with vulnerabilities or comorbidities, they get higher protection) against getting the infection," he said.

The country is set to receive over one million doses of bivalent Covid-19 vaccines from the COVAX Facility, the worldwide initiative aimed at equitable access to Covid-19 vaccines, by end of March.

The DOH has planned the rollout of the jabs and the A1 (health care workers), A2 (senior citizens) and A3 (individuals with comorbidities) will be prioritized in line with the conditions that have been agreed upon. (PNA)

