

# POPE Francis' 2015 visit to Tacloban recalled following death

MANILA — House Speaker Martin Romualdez on Monday paid tribute to Pope Francis following the pontiff's death, remembering him as a compassionate leader who served as a "guiding light in times of darkness" for many Filipinos.

"It is with a heavy heart that I join the world in mourning the passing of Pope Francis, whom we in Leyte — and across the Philippines — lovingly called 'Lolo Kiko'," Romualdez said in a statement.

Romualdez recalled the Pope's visit to Tacloban in 2015, just over a year after Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) devastated Eastern Visayas region, saying it showed the pontiff's compassion and solidarity with those suffering.

"I will never forget how he came to Tacloban in the aftermath of Typhoon Yolanda,

when our people were suffering beyond words," he said. "He braved the storm, stood with us in the rain, and spoke not just as a leader of the Church, but as someone who truly felt our pain."

Romualdez said the Pope's visit gave strength and hope to the survivors of one of the strongest typhoons ever recorded.

"His presence alone gave us strength. His words reminded us that even in loss, we were not alone. That God had not abandoned us," he said.

He said the beloved pontiff is a profound loss not just for Catholics, but for people of all faiths who found strength and solace in his words and deeds.

"The world has lost a great man. But the kindness, the wisdom, and the deep compassion he shared with us will never fade. Lolo Kiko may have left

this earth, but his spirit will live on in every heart he touched," Romualdez said.

Tingog Party-list Representative Jude Acidre, for his part, described the Pope's passing as a deeply emotional loss.

"It feels like we've

lost not just a pope, not just the head of the Catholic Church, but a father, a shepherd. Someone who made faith feel personal again. And now, in this moment of loss, we feel orphaned," Acidre said.

(Turn to p. 2)

## DOST starts mapping grassroots innovators in Laguna

STA. CRUZ, Laguna (PIA) — The Department of Science and Technology (DOST)-Calabarzon is seeking to empower community leaders and local innovators in forming science-based solutions to address community problems through a grassroots-focused program.

The Grassroots Innovation for Inclusive Development (GRIND) Program is an ongoing initiative of the DOST designed

to empower marginalized communities by identifying, mapping, and strengthening grassroots innovations.

DOST Regional Director Emelita Bagsit emphasized the significance of the program in fostering inclusive and sustainable growth

at the community level, noting that it serves as a platform to uncover, support, and scale up local innovations (Turn to p. 2)

## NFA assures adequate funds for 'palay' procurement

MANILA — The National Food Authority (NFA) on Tuesday assured adequate funds to buy more palay (unhusked rice) from local farmers amid the harvest season.

"So far this year, we've spent only PHP2.6 billion of the

PHP14.6 billion available to us for palay procurement," NFA Administrator Larry Lacson said in a statement.

He said the available budget includes around PHP5.6 billion in carryover from 2024 unspent funds.

The remaining funds would be sufficient to buy 500,000 metric tons (MT) of palay, equivalent to 6.3 million bags of milled rice, Lacson added.

To date, the NFA is conducting infrastructure upgrades, (Turn to p. 2)



Pope Francis (Anadolu)



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Acidre noted the timing of the pope's passing on Easter Monday as a symbol of spiritual significance.

"He died on Easter Monday — the very day we remember how the Risen Christ first appeared to the women at the tomb. A day that speaks of life overcoming death, of sorrow turning into joy," Acidre said.

He described Pope Francis as a leader who "reformed the Church not with grand declarations, but with quiet conviction."

Acidre also recalled the 2015 Tacloban visit as a defining moment.

"That grey, stormy day in January 2015... the skies were dark, the winds fierce, the

pain still fresh. And yet, he came," Acidre said. "Soaked by the rain, unbothered by the storm, he stood with us in the middle of our suffering."

"He didn't give a long speech. He didn't need to. His presence alone was the message. His tears were a prayer. His embrace, a blessing," he added.

Pope Francis died early Monday at the age of 88 at his residence in the Vatican's Casa Santa Marta.

Cardinal Kevin Farrell, Camerlengo of the Apostolic Chamber, said the pope had "returned to the house of the Father" and praised his "example as a true disciple of the Lord Jesus." (PNA)

## Hitting tax collection target a shared duty among Filipinos –BIR

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna (PIA) — The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) Region 9B which covers Laguna-Quezon-Marinduque (LaQueMar) has emphasized that meeting the country's tax collection target is not solely the responsibility of the bureau, but a shared duty of every Filipino.

"The tax collection target this year is not just BIR's goal, it's every Filipino's goal because we are all the ones paying the tax, and we in BIR are just making sure that the tax paid is correct, and we believe that we can get that target by all of us working together," BIR LaQueMar director lawyer Michael Remir Macatangay said during the Usapan PIA radio program.

For 2025, BIR has been tasked with col-

lecting ₱3.23 trillion in revenue, a significant goal aimed at supporting the government's ongoing economic efforts.

The target is critical to funding a wide range of programs designed to drive national development, including essential infrastructure projects, social services, and key sectors like healthcare, education, and social welfare.

To make tax filing more accessible and efficient for taxpayers, the bureau has rolled out several digitization efforts under Revenue Memorandum Circular (RMC) No. 034-2025 which provides updated guidelines on the filing of annual income tax returns and payment of taxes for Calendar Year 2024, and reinforces the shift towards digital services.

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rooted in the daily lives and practices of grassroots communities.

"Normally, when there are innovations, we are the ones who bring innovation to people, this GRIND, we are the ones who approach people to discover the innovations and it is not really about changing because it is grassroots but more about how can science improve and maybe if there are cultural dimensions,

how can we preserve that and ensure that it continues from generation to generation," Bagsit said.

A key component of GRIND is the SalikLakbay Solutions Mapping, a research activity conducted across all DOST regional offices to explore indigenous knowledge, community-based innovations, and practical solutions addressing local challenges.

During the immer-

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including improvement of warehouses and handling facilities to ensure adequate capacity for its 15-day increased target national rice buffer stock.

The agency earlier disclosed plans to procure 880,000 metric tons (MT) of palay, equivalent to 555,000 MT of milled rice this year.

As of April 11, the NFA has 7.17 million bags of total rice inventory, including 9 million bags of palay

and 1.2 million sacks of milled rice.

The latest inventory level was the NFA's highest since the end of 2020, achieved under the higher palay buying scheme of PHP23 per kg. to PHP30 per kg. for clean and dry palay; and PHP17 per kg. to PHP23 per kg. of fresh and wet palay.

The palay buying price of dry palay averaged PHP27 per kg. last year, and PHP24 per kg. this year, according to the NFA. (PNA)

In the same interview, BIR Revenue District Office 56 Calamba City Central Laguna head Kay Templo-nuevo said taxpayers are encouraged to use platforms such as the Electronic Filing and Payment System (eFPS), eBIRForms, and other accredited online payment channels, which allow for more convenient, contactless transactions.

"The most important thing to note here in the revenue memorandum is that the income tax return shall be filed electronically to ensure timely compliance, accurate re-

porting, and improved efficiency in processing," Templo-nuevo explained.

She added: "And the e-Lounge facility in our offices is also open for electronic filing by our taxpayers, as an added option to help ease their transactions."

As the April 15 income tax deadline approaches, BIR reminds taxpayers to avoid last-minute filing to make sure that their returns are submitted on time, technical issues are minimized, and penalties for late filing are avoided. (AM/PIA-4A)

sion in Laguna on April 7, participants from various sectors, including youth groups, educators, businesses, national government agencies, local government units, non-government organizations (NGOs), indigenous communities, and media, including the Philippine Information Agency, were brought together to integrate all their efforts to a holistic and science-based approach to tackle challenges.

Training participants visited Cavinti, a town known for its sam-balilo or woven pandan hats, to map and identify grassroots innovations being practiced by local pandan weavers. The activity is a crucial step toward preserving traditional crafts while exploring ways to modernize

and improve livelihood opportunities for local artisans.

Among the participants was Jemilyn Blaza, a pandan weaver from Laguna and vice president of Cavinti Weavers Agriculture Cooperative, who expressed hope that the DOST's initiative will uplift traditional industries like hers.

"I hope this program helps broaden our knowledge, and that you can support us in expanding our cooperative. That way, we can also extend help to others in our community," she said.

The SalikLakbay immersion is set to be rolled-out in other provinces across Calabarzon within the year to document and map additional grassroots innovations. (AM,CH/PIA-4A)

## CAVITE NEWS PUBLISHING WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

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## Shakey's eyes double-digit growth despite market uncertainties

MANILA – Confident with the local market despite prevailing uncertainties, Shakey's Pizza Asia Ventures, Inc. (SPAVI) is targeting to sustain its double-digit growth this year.

"While we remain cognizant of uncertainties the market presents, we're aiming for continued double-digit growth, driven by new store openings and same store sales," SPAVI president and chief executive officer Vic Gregorio said in a statement Tuesday.

The listed firm reported that it closed 2024 with 11 percent increase in net income following a robust fourth quarter performance while system-wide sales grew 17 percent to PHP21.7 billion.

Gregorio attributed the growth to foot traffic increases during the holiday season in Q4 2024, alongside the ongoing product innovations, value-driven offerings, and enhanced customer experience across its store network.

"Navigating through 2024 wasn't easy -- from a strained con-



**OPTIMISTIC.** Shakey's Pizza Asia Ventures, Inc. president and chief executive officer Vic Gregorio in this undated photo. On Tuesday (April 22, 2025), Gregorio expressed optimism that the company will sustain its double-digit growth this year due in part to expansion programs, product innovations and value-driven offerings. (PNA file photo)

sumer environment to inclement weather in the final quarter. Be that as it may, we focused on execution and on our guests. Holidays hold a prime space in the consumer wallet, and we wanted to make sure we have a compelling reason for families to choose our brands during this time," he said.

Last year, SPAVI spent PHP953 million for the opening of 478 new stores and outlets, 136 of which were launched in the fourth quarter alone, and more than 100 units were established overseas, particularly

in Thailand, Singapore and China.

"We are grateful for SPAVI's performance in 2024 and the momentum we carry into 2025. We believe this will be a better year for us, given the investments that have begun to pay off, Shakey's 50th golden year programs, and international opportunities opening up for us organically," Gregorio said.

SPAVI's multi-brand portfolio include Shakey's Pizza, Peri Peri Charcoal Chicken, R&B Milk Tea, Potato Corner and Project Pie. (PNA)

## Livestock data analytics group to protect producers, consumers

MANILA – The Department of Agriculture (DA) on Monday said it has revived the inter-agency Livestock Data Analytics Group (LDAG) to help protect both producers and consumers amid "market volatility and supply fluctuations."

In a statement, DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said the LDAG's function will be crucial for data-driven planning,

forecasting, and creation of policies under DA Special Order (SO) 599, in line with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s directives to ensure food security, accessibility, and affordability.

"We need up-to-date data on market trends and behavior to ensure that the policies we formulate and the actions we take safeguard and promote the growth of the indus-

try, even as we protect consumers," he said.

Under SO 599, the LDAG is expected to come up with supply and demand outlooks, trend analyses, and regular Livestock and Poultry Situationer covering reports on pork, chicken, egg, dairy, carabao, and milk.

The data analytics group, likewise, will collect and consolidate information on



**Healthcare provided to the constituents of the City of Imus.** On April 16, 2025, a total of 285 Imuseños accessed the basic healthcare services, free of cost, in the medical mission program delivered by the dedicated professionals from the Provincial Government of Cavite at Brgy Alapan I-B, City of Imus.

This initiative continues to roll its wheels to serve and deliver healthcare services, ensuring healthy lives of the constituents across the province.--- OPIO



**PGC's medical and dental mission benefits Poblacion 12, Amadeo residents**

The Provincial Government of Cavite, once again, showcased its commitment to provide community care to the constituents as its team rolled to Brgy. Poblacion 12, Amadeo for another medical and dental mission, on April 15, 2025.

Despite the intense heat, a total of 118 patients lined up to access the health services extended by the Office of the Provincial Governor and Office of the Provincial Health Officer which include medical check-ups, dental services including tooth extraction, and medicines.

The program wrapped up with warmth and gratitude for the PGC's medical and dental mission team that fosters healthcare for a healthier Cavite.--- OPIO

volume production, animal inventory, cold storage inventory, farmgate prices, and production costs.

"The market is dynamic, hence the need for better and more reliable information for accurate forecasts and timely decisions," Tiu Laurel said.

The LDAG must coordinate with the Philippine Statistics Authority, commodity focal persons, as well as industry stakeholders and participants through regular consultation meetings, according to the SO.

Agriculture Undersecretary for Live-

stock Constante Palabrica and Assistant Secretary for Ruminant Livestock Benjamin Albarece will be LDAG co-chairpersons while National Livestock Program Deputy Director Noverlee Calub will be vice chairperson. (PNA)



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
FOURTH JUDICIAL REGION  
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT  
OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF COURT  
DASMARIÑAS CITY, CAVITE

File No. FC-DC-1590-24  
EXTRA JUDICIAL FORECLOSURE  
OF REAL ESTATE MORTGAGE  
UNDER ACT 3135, AS AMENDED  
BY ACT 4118

NATIONAL HOME MORTGAGE FINANCE  
CORPORATION (NHMFC),

Petitioner/Mortgagee,

-versus-

JOSE DELIO C. TALAÑA, married to  
ELIZABETH L. TALAÑA,  
Respondent/Mortgagor,

x-----x

NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE

Upon extra-judicial petition for sale under Act 3135, as amended by Act 4118 filed by the petitioner/mortgagee, **NATIONAL HOME MORTGAGE FINANCE CORPORATION (NHMFC)**, a government owned and controlled corporation created under P.D. No. 1267, with postal address at 104 Amorsolo St., Legaspi Village, Makati City against respondent/mortgagor **JOSE DELIO C. TALAÑA, married to ELIZABETH L. TALAÑA** with postal addresses at Lot 10 Blk. 26, CityHomes Dasmariñas, Ph II, Brgy. BuroI, Dasmariñas City, Cavite and 61 Tolentino St., Pasay City and for the satisfaction of the mortgaged debt which as of October 31, 2024 amounts to **SIX HUNDRED SIXTEEN THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED FORTY TWO PESOS & 39/100 (Php616,542.39)**, exclusive of all legal fees and expenses incidental to this foreclosure and sale, the undersigned Sheriff will sell at public auction on **May 15, 2025** at 10:00 o'clock in the morning or soon thereafter in the Ground Floor Lobby of Dasmariñas Community Affairs (DASCA) Building, Congressional Road, BuroI II, Dasmariñas City, Province of Cavite to the highest bidder and for **CASH** or **CERTIFIED CHECK**, in Philippine Currency, the following described real property together with all the buildings and other improvements existing thereon, to wit:

Transfer Certificate of Title No.T-376870

IT IS HEREBY CERTIFIED that certain land situated in the Municipality of Dasmariñas Province of Cavite bounded and described as follows:

A parcel of land (Lot 10, Blk 26 of the subd. plan Psd-04-053094, being a portion Lot 6191, Imus Estate, L.R.C. Rec. No. ) situated in the Bo. of BuroI, Mun. of Dasmariñas, Prov. of Cavite, Is. of Luzon. Bounded on the SE., along line 1-2 by Lot 12, Blk.26; on the SW., along line 2-3 by Rd. Lot 16; on the NW., along line 3-4 by Lot 8 & on the NE., along line 4-1 by Lot 9, both Blk. 86, all of the subd. plan. Beginning of a pt. marked "1" on plan, being W 41 deg. 20'E., 2602.55 m. from Mon. 153, Imus Estate; thence S. 15 deg. 17'W., 9.50 E. to pt. 2; thence N. 74 deg. 43'W., 4.00 m. to pt. 3 thence N. 15. deg. is registered in accordance with the provisions of the Property Registration, Decree in the name of JOSE DELIO C. TALAÑA, married to ELIZABETH L. TALAÑA, both of legal ages, Filipino. 17'E., 9.50 m. to pt. 4; thence S. 74 deg. 43'E., 4.00 m. to the pt. of; beginning, containing an area of THIRTY EIGHT (38) SQUARE METERS. All pts. referred to are indicated on the plan and are marked on the ground by P.S. cyl. conc. mons. 15x60 cm; bearings true date of original survey, July 27, 1905-June 11, 1908 and that of the subd. survey, Sept. 10, 1991-Jan. 10, 1992 and was approved on Feb. 10, 1992.

Prospective buyers and/or bidders are hereby enjoined to investigate for themselves the title of the said real property and the encumbrance thereon, if there be any.

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 and time, it shall be held on **May 29, 2025** at the same time and place without further notice.

04 April 2025, Dasmariñas City, Province of Cavite.

RODRIGO C. ESTOGERO, JR.  
Sheriff IV

ATTY. MARCELA L. BAYBAY  
Clerk of Court VI & Ex-Officio Sheriff

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NATIONAL HOME MORTGAGE FINANCE  
CORPORATION(NHMFC)

104 Amorsolo St., Legaspi Village, Makati City

# BI records over 800K passenger arrivals, departures during Holy Week

MANILA – Over 800,000 inbound and outbound passengers were recorded during the Holy Week, the Bureau of Immigration (BI) reported on Tuesday.

There were 371,092 arrivals and 432,763 departures in the country's international airports during the period, according to a news release.

At Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) alone, daily arrivals peaked at 51,000 while daily departures reached 61,000.

BI Commissioner Joel Anthony Viado said the smooth flow

of passengers was due to the deployment of more than 40 additional immigration officers at the NAIA, ensuring that all counters remained fully manned throughout the holiday period.

He also highlighted the positive impact of the newly operational overseas Filipino workers' wing at NAIA Terminal 3 in Pasay City, which helped decongest immigration queues and provided more convenient processing.

"In line with our Bagong (New) Immigration vision, we continue to modernize our



VACATION OVER. The Holy Week vacation ends as passengers arrive at Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 1 in Parañaque City before dawn on Easter Sunday (April 20, 2025). The Bureau of Immigration said it recorded 371,092 arrivals and 432,763 departures in the country's international airports during the Holy Week. (PNA photos by Avito Dalan)

systems, enhance our manpower capacity and improve frontline service delivery," Viado said. "These improvements are part of our ongoing efforts to contribute to the President's vision of a Bagong Pilipinas (New Philippines)." (PNA)

# PhilHealth tells public of benefit packages for heat-related illnesses

MANILA – The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) on Monday reminded Filipinos anew of the in-patient benefits for heat-related illnesses in accredited hospitals nationwide.

In a statement, the PhilHealth cited that Filipinos are at risk for such illnesses since summer officially started on April 16, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services

Administration.

From Jan. 1 to April 29, 2024, the Department of Health (DOH) reported 77 cases of heat-related illnesses with seven resulting in deaths.

The in-patient benefit packages for common illnesses during summer include:

- \* Heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat collapse, heat cramp and sunstroke at PHP12,675;
- \* Heat fatigue and other effects of heat and light at PHP18,135;



Moderate to severe dehydration at PHP7,800;

- \* Varicella/chickenpox without complication, PHP7,800;
- \* Typhoid fever, PHP19,500;
- \* Sore eyes/conjunctivitis at PHP16,575;
- \* Infectious diarrhea/acute gastroenteritis at PHP11, 700;
- \* and Toxic effect of contact with fish and other marine animals such as jellyfish, sea anemone, shellfish, and starfish at PHP11,115.

Meanwhile, the Out-patient Emergency Care Benefit Package covers members for acute health care needs and heat-related illnesses. It can be availed at accredited Level 1 to 3 hospitals. Members are also reminded to observe preventive measures -- drinking lots of water, staying indoors when sun is at its peak, proper and regular washing of hands, and taking a bath regularly -- to avoid such illnesses. (PNA)



## PBBM: All LGUs to get patient transport vehicles within year

MANILA – President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. on Tuesday expressed confidence that all local government units (LGUs) in the country will receive patient transport vehicles (PTVs) within the year.

Marcos made the remark after announcing that about 985 newly procured PTVs would be distributed nationwide this year, in line with the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office's (PCSO) goal of donating the vehicle units to all LGUs.

"Ngayong taong ito, inaasahan namin, ako'y nakakasiguro na makakakumpleto na tayo. Lahat ng munisipyo ng ating kabuuang bansa ay mabibigyan na (This year, we expect and I am sure that we will be able to complete it. All the municipalities in our entire country will receive it)," he said during the ceremonial turnover of 91 PTVs for Mindanao beneficiaries in a ceremony at the Pelaez Sports Center in Cagayan de Oro City.

"Kapag nangyari ito, sa kauna-unahang pagkakataon, masasabing natin 100 percent coverage na ang lahat ng munisipalidad sa loob lamang ng tatlong taon (When this happens, for the first time, we can say that we have 100 percent coverage for all municipalities in just three years)."

The President noted that about 567 PTVs were distributed in 2025 alone.

He said some LGUs would receive their second PTV unit from the PCSO.

"We have been able to give this year, this year lang ito (only), 567. Naipamigay na natin this year (We were able to distribute all of it). Ang ibibigay pa na tatapusin natin



(Screenshot from Radio Television Malacañang)

by the year 2025, 985 na dagdag. Lahat-lahat, 1,552 ang ipapamigay natin (What we will give and finish by the year 2025 is the additional 985. In total, we will give 1,552)," he said.

Marcos told the LGUs to take care of the PTVs, emphasizing the importance of safe and immediate transportation of Filipinos who need medical attention to health facilities.

"Batid naman nating lahat na kapag kalusugan ang pinag-uusapan, ang bawat segundo ay mahalaga. Kaya ang tunay na hamon dito ay kung papaano tayo makarating kaagad sa ospital o kung anong health facility (We all know that when it comes to health, every second counts. The real challenge here is how to get to the hospital or any health facility quickly)," he said.

"Basta't titiyakin natin lahat ng LGU (We

will make sure that all LGUs), all of the 1,493 LGUs of the Philippines will receive at least one of these transport vehicles."

As part of the 2025 rollout under the PCSO's Medical Transport Vehicle Donation Program (MTVDP), about 91 PTV units were donated to LGUs from Northern Mindanao and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao during the event.

The activity marks the beginning of PCSO's continuous release of 956 PTVs that will be distributed to LGUs nationwide, especially to municipalities that have not received PTVs in the past three years.

The MTVDP underscores PCSO's commitment to universal healthcare access and responsive emergency medical services across the country. (PNA)

## 80K Filipinos abroad have so far enrolled for online voting – Comelec

MANILA – The Commission on Elections (Comelec) on Monday said some 80,000 Filipinos abroad have already enrolled for overseas voting for the upcoming midterm elections in May.

Comelec Chairperson George Garcia said they are hoping for a 50-percent turn-

out or 600,000 of the 1.241 million registered voters overseas. Some have cast their votes using automated counting machines in 16 posts.

"We can't say the exact number but the results are interesting. Currently, more or less 80,000 are enrolled in our online voting,"

MANILA – Domestic consumption remains the main driver of the Philippine economy amid the impact of external developments and uncertainties, according to the revised outlook of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Based on the IMF's updated World Economic Outlook (WEO) released Tuesday, the multilateral lender cut its 2025 growth forecast for the Philippines to 5.5 percent from 6.1 percent in the WEO released last January.

"Despite a more difficult environment, growth in the Philippines is expected to remain relatively robust in 2025," an IMF spokesperson said in an e-mail.

Domestic growth, as measured by gross domestic product (GDP), barely moved after a 5.23 percent expansion in the last quarter of 2024 from 5.24 percent in the previous quarter.

Full-year growth stood at 5.7 percent, lower than economic manager's 6 percent to 6.5 percent target and IMF's forecast of 5.8 percent.

The IMF spokesperson traced the



*ECONOMIC RESILIENCY. The skyline of Makati City's central business district in this undated photo. The International Monetary Fund, based on its updated World Economic Outlook released Tuesday (April 22, 2025), cut its growth forecast for the Philippines this year from 6.1 percent to 5.5 percent due in part to the weaker-than-expected 2024 domestic output and the external uncertainties, but expects domestic consumption to remain robust and boost growth. (PNA file photo)*

downward revision in the growth forecast for the Philippines this year to "the lower-than-expected 2024 Q4 growth outturn, and external developments, including the direct impact of higher tariffs on the Philippines' goods exports to the US, downward revisions to trading partners' growth, and impact of higher uncertainty and financial tightening."

However, the e-mail reply said the change in the growth forecast is not unique to the Philippines as was "observed throughout the region and globally, reflecting the recent external developments."

"It is important to note that this forecast is what we call in the WEO the 'reference point' forecast based on information available as of April 4,

voter turnout during midterm elections than in presidential elections.

"That has been the trend every midterm

2025 (including the April 2 tariffs and initial responses), in lieu of the usual baseline. It therefore does not include policy measures announced after April 4, 2025. It is also important to note that the forecast is subject to significant uncertainty," the IMF said.

The email reply further said "on the upside, recent legislative reforms could facilitate an accelerated implementation of domestic infrastructure projects, including through public-private partnerships, and lead to higher FDI (foreign direct investment) and investment."

"In terms of growth drivers, domestic consumption remains the key driver for growth and is expected to be supported by lower inflation and low unemployment." (PNA)

elections. The turnout is usually low since they are not electing the President and Vice President," said Garcia. (PNA)



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## TESDA eyes more int'l partnerships

MANILA – The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) announced Monday that it seeks to establish more international partnerships.

The announcement came as TESDA recently concluded a series of international engagements in China, Germany, and Canada as part of the commitment to advancing technical vocational education and training (TVET).

Last month, TESDA participated in the 2025 Philippine Nuclear Energy Mission to Canada, aiming to explore opportunities within Canada's nuclear industry and gain insights from its extensive experience in nuclear technology.

"We should be ready with the human resources necessary to support nuclear power plant operations," TESDA Secretary Francisco Benitez was quoted in a news release.

Last month, a TESDA delegation also visited the Quanzhou Vocational and Technical University, Yalong Intelligent Equipment Group, Zhejiang Future Construction Center, and Zhejiang College of Education to engage with Chinese counterparts on industry-led



(PNA file photo by Cristina Arayata)

curriculum development, dual training systems, digital platforms for skills training, and national qualification frameworks.

From March 25 to April 2, TESDA officials participated in the Hannover Messe 2025, an annual technology fair in Hannover, Germany. TESDA said the insights gained in this endeavor will support its preparations for the 14th WorldSkills ASEAN Competition in August 2025.

"As we continue to reposition TVET in the Philippines, our global partnerships are crucial in ensuring that our training programs remain relevant, responsive, and future-ready," Benitez said.

TESDA's Public Information and Assistance Division (PIAD) told the Philippine News Agency that they have an ongoing partnership on vocational education and training (VET) with the Ministry for Inno-

vation and Technology of Hungary.

Areas of cooperation include VET systems, challenges and best practices; competency standards development, assessment and certification in VET; research and development in VET; dual VET programs, strengthening businesses participation in VET; mobility programs in VET; human resources development programs in VET; increasing the attractiveness of VET; and joint implementation of collaborative projects.

TESDA recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

Their collaboration will include hosting joint conferences, symposia, workshops and exhibitions for trainees, employees, trainers, and TVET institute administrators; conducting joint researches and technical

## UST forces decider vs. Pilipinas Aguilas in WMPBL finals



*TO THE RESCUE.* Nigerian center Oma Onianwa of University of Santo Tomas tries to get past two Pilipinas Aguila defenders in Game 2 of the Women's Maharlika Pilipinas Basketball League Invitational best-of-three finals at Ninoy Aquino Stadium in Manila on Easter Sunday night (April 21, 2025). Onianwa scored 17 points in leading UST to a series-tying victory, 69-64. (WMPBL photo)

MANILA – University of Santo Tomas banked on Oma Onianwa to prevail over Pilipinas Aguila, 69-64, Sunday night in Game 2 of the Women's Maharlika Pilipinas Basketball League (WMPBL) Invitational best-of-three finals at Ninoy Aquino Stadium in Manila.

The Tigresses' Nigerian center sank a floater for the final score with 17 seconds remaining, as she blocked Aguila's Melody Cac's three-point attempt to seal the victory.

Onianwa finished with 17 points, eight rebounds, three blocks

and two steals. She was limited to six points in their 86-95 double-overtime loss in Game 1 on April 16.

Rachell Ambos also performed well, scoring 13 points on 71-percent shooting.

The rubber match will be played 6 p.m. Wednesday at the same venue.

"Of course we're proud to come back. Actually, our effort and energy were there in the first game. We know that Game 1 was a very heartbreaking loss because it could have gone either way," UST coach Ged Austria said.

"So proud to have won, but of course even though we won this game, there's still a lot more work to do. Things to improve on, many. We'll see, which we'll study tomorrow," he added.

Karylle Sierba had 12 points while CJ Maglupay chipped in eight points and 12 rebounds for the Tigresses.

Alexis Pana led Pilipinas Aguila with 17 points, eight rebounds, five assists, four steals, and a block. Elaine Etang and Mar Prado contributed 14 and 12 points, respectively. (PNA)

studies that would help in enhancing TVET; providing joint training programs for employees, trainers, and TVET institute managers; professional exchanges in technical areas to allow implementation of the training programs, conduct studies and consultations; exchanging of professionals; exchanging and disseminating researches,

studies, and other related information materials; providing assistance to trainees and trainers in the form of scholarships/fellowships as per available opportunities; and encouraging exchange of technology programs between private enterprises and TVET institutes including all necessary assistance for the implementation of the said technical pro-

grams.

"We also have ongoing partnerships with multinational companies such as FESTO, Siemens, Yalong, and Doosan, among others, most of which involve equipment lease and sharing of expertise. This is for the upcoming conduct of WorldSkills ASEAN Manila 2025," the PIAD said. (PNA)