

Evacuation drill tests high-risk villages in Agoncillo on Taal preparedness

CALAMBA CITY (PIA)

— Evacuation plans for high risk villages in Agoncillo, Batangas were set up in a drill on Wednesday, July 12, 2023 should there be an escalation of the Taal Volcano from its ongoing low-level activity.

The Batangas Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRRMO) led the evacuation drill to assess the community's awareness and test the evacuation plans, including warning system, camp coordination and management mechanisms if Taal's current alert level 1 is raised from Level 2 to Level 3.

The drill, which was part of the annual National Disaster Resilience Month (NDRM) activities, gathered communities from Agoncillo's Barangays Bilibinwang, Banyaga, and Subic Ilaya.

Reyan Derrick Marquez, Office of Civil Defense (OCD) Calabarzon officer-in-charge, said a contingency plan is in place for the safe evacuation of affected areas in the provinces of Cavite, Laguna, and Batangas.

As of July 13, the Taal volcano remains under Alert Level 1 while the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) detected six (6) volcanic earthquakes including five (5) volcanic tremors lasting from two (2) to four (4) minutes.

According to the Department of Health (DOH), volcanic eruption poses various health risks such as eye, skin, and respiratory illnesses. Exposure to sulfur dioxide can also cause difficulty in breathing, irritation to the skin or eyes, mucus secretion, bronchitis, coughing, and asthma.

As a precaution, the Calabarzon RDRRMC distributed face masks in surrounding communities to protect the residents from inhaling the harmful volcanic gases.

"Kaya ang malalapit na mga eskwelahan at LGU sa Taal volcano ay binigyan natin ng mga face mask," Marquez said.

The OCD Calabarzon recommends using N95 masks which are effective in filtering ash and protecting respiratory health. Marquez also suggested double masking, or layering one mask on top of another, using surgical masks.

Last June 8, the Calabarzon RDRRMC also staged the 2nd quarter National Simultaneous Earthquake Drill (NSED) in Laurel, Batangas which is within Taal's 14-kilometer danger zone and would be one of the hardest hit areas in the event of a hazardous eruption.

"Dito nagkaroon ng evacuation plan at



ipinakita ng Laurel ang mga dapat gawin sa oras na magkaroon ng lindol. At the same time, tinulungan natin sila kung paano pa nila maisasaayos ang kanilang evacuation [plan]." Marquez explained. (PB)

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Examinee from NCR tops Civil Service Professional Examination

QUEZON CITY (PIA)

-- The Civil Service Commission (CSC) has announced the topnotchers for the Career Service Examination - Pen and Paper Test (CSE-PPT) held on 26 March 2023. Glenn C. Gonzales from the National Capital Region (NCR) emerged as the top scorer in the Professional level examination.

Mr. Gonzales obtained an impressive rating of 92.63, showcasing exceptional knowledge and aptitude in the examination. The topnotcher demonstrated his commitment,

competence, and dedication, making his success a source of inspiration for all aspiring civil servants.

The CSC has also released the complete list of top passers for the Professional levels exam, this included Elijah Denelle E. Manuel, Gerardo A. Golong, Duane Jasper S. Tenorio, Samantha Lorraine S. Jose, Bennyvic Joyce J. Esguerra, Julian Carlos A. Aliston, Kaye Berenice G. Barriga, Theo Victor A. Cavite, and Fatimah Lane P. Fungo.

CSC Chairperson Karlo Nograles congratulated not only

the top passers but all those who successfully cleared the Civil Service Exam in March. He commended their hard work, excellence, and dedication, emphasizing that these qualities are crucial for serving the nation.

According to the CSC Examination, Recruitment, and Placement Office (ERPO), the NCR achieved the highest passing rate among all regions. At the Professional level, the NCR recorded a passing rate of 21.39 percent, with 13,544 passers out of 63,313 examinees. Similarly, at the Subprofessional

level, the NCR attained a passing rate of 23.34 percent, with 3,138 passers out of 13,442 examinees.

The CSC advised examinees to visit the CSC website at www.csc.gov.ph to access the complete list of successful examinees for the 26 March 2023 Career Service Professional and Subprofessional Examinations.

Certifications of Eligibility are expected to be available by 11 July 2023, and passers are advised to verify the availability, requirements, and procedures for claiming their

Certification of Eligibility with the respective CSC Regional or Field Office.

Examinees, whether they passed or failed, have the option to generate their individual ratings using the Online Career Service Examination Result Generation System (OCSEGRS) accessible through the CSC website.

The CSC reminds everyone that eligibility alone does not guarantee government service appointment, as educational qualifications, experience, training, and other competency requirements specific to the positions must also be fulfilled. (CSC / PIA-NCR)

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DBM approves release of P48M for completion of Cavite Drug Rehabilitation Center

MANILA

— Department of Budget and Management (DBM) Secretary Amena F. Pangandaman approved on July 7 the release of over P48.8 million to the Department of Health (DOH) to complete the implementation of additional construction works of the Drug Abuse Treatment and Rehabilitation Center (DATRC) in Trece Martires, Cavite.

"Among the priorities of the administration of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. is to not just fully enforce the law when it comes to illegal drug use and abuse but also on rehabilitation of victims or drug users," Secretary Pangandaman said.

The fund will be chargeable against the Grant Proceeds from the Japan International Cooperation Agency - Program for Consolidated Rehabilitation of Illegal Drug Users (JICA - CARE), Automatic Appropriations under FY 2023 of the General Appropriations Act (GAA).

"The government will see to it that the upkeep of the country's existing facilities on drug abuse treatment and rehabilitation will continue by allotting necessary budget for that purpose," the Budget Secretary added. (DBM)



Metro Manila residents encouraged to promote rain water collection

QUEZON CITY, (PIA)

—Metro Manila residents are encouraged to promote rainwater collection for non-potable use of water, and to reuse laundry

and dishwashing wastewater for watering plants in an effort to avert massive water interruptions in the coming months.

This was embodied

in Water Resources Management Office (WRMO) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in the expanded

coverage of its water conservation directive that include all residents of the National Capital Region (NCR) and adjacent provinces.

In its Bulletin No. 2, the WRMO instructed all barangay officials and subdivision managers to advise residents to conserve water through reduction of activities that consume a large amount of water, such as watering the lawn and washing vehicles.

The WRMO also directed all local government units in NCR to fast track the approval of pipe repairs of water concessionaires Manila Water and Maynilad.

"As we prepare for even drier conditions due to El Niño, it is, more than ever, important to conserve water in order to prevent massive water interruptions later this year," the WRMO said.

Earlier, the WRMO issued its first ever bulletin containing the guidelines for effective implementation of water conservation measures by all government offices, through their building administrators.

WRMO's Bulletin No. 1 was issued pursuant to Memorandum Circular (MC) No. 22 in which President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. mandated all government agencies and instrumentalities to strictly implement water conservation measures

► METRO MANILA • 3



EDITORIAL

PLDT, SMART dominate as fastest internet provider in PH

PLDT and SMART is recognized, for the fifth time, as the fastest internet provider in the country. This was announced last month by Global benchmarking company Ookla®.

This is the result of PLDT's aggressive network expansion and drive to lift the quality of customer experience.

The PLDT Group has been supporting the country's digitalization by bringing the benefits of connectivity and other digital services to more areas in the Philippines.

PLDT President and CEO Al Panlilio said PLDT is committed to help build and empower the nation by setting the bar high in providing world-class digital services for Filipinos

PLDT delivers a fiber-optic speed of up to 10 Gbps, which was made available to the public as early as 2021. This move has placed the Philippines alongside first-world nations in terms of ultra-fast internet speeds including South Korea, Japan, Norway, Italy, New Zealand and USA.

As of end-2022, PLDT added 1.1 million new fiber subscribers, capturing 59 percent of fiber customer industry growth for 2022. This brought PLDT Home's total fiber subscribers to 2.9 million.

The company continue to get recognition from various international consulting organizations for its technical prowess and stable financial strength, affirming its dominance as the leading telco in the country against the competition.

This week, a London-based business valuation and strategy consulting firm, Brand Finance, feted PLDT with the distinction of the Most Valuable Filipino Brand for 2023.

Like the famous global brands, PLDT's proactive efforts in creating brand loyalty,

awareness, associations and maintaining international standard of their products and services among their stakeholders, have paid off.

The recognition is a true testament that over the years, PLDT has made a household name as one of the most trusted and credible telco companies in the country.

Since its inception, it unceasingly worked to help the nation push for digitalization by providing vital connectivity to help transform the Philippines into a globally competitive and digitally-empowered country.

Brand Finance adopted structured methodology to give the distinction to PLDT. In valuing the brand, it meticulously reviewed every brands' revenue and earnings before interest and taxes, and arrived at the decision that PLDT leads other brands surveyed.

As one of the main drivers in its improved year-on-year revenue, PLDT Group's investments in fiber technology was a key factor in receiving the prestigious award from Brand Finance, with a total fiber footprint of over 1.1 million kilometers as of end-March 2023.

With a 2 percent annual increase in brand value to USD2.6 billion, the performance of the country's largest integrated telco contributed to the brand capturing a higher market share of the fiber industry, which led to a 45 percent improvement in year-on-year revenue.

The Brand Finance report cited PLDT's consistent focus on innovation as a driver to improve customer service and propel the nation towards becoming a financial and technology hub.

Beside investing on fibre technology, Brand Finance also lauded PLDT's deployment of carbon fiber cell towers, an environmental initiative that seeks to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide produced by up to 70 percent, as compared to using traditional steel towers. Carbon fiber towers also use less land space, reducing the need for land repurposing.

"PLDT is a socially responsible corporation and seriously cares for our environment by deploying the country's first carbon fiber cell towers, as well as solar panels in our facilities across four cities to reduce over 137 tons of greenhouse gas emissions," Panlilio shared.

In support of the government's digitalization goals, the citation also reinforces PLDT and Smart's commitment to bridge the digital divide - a mandate of the Private Sector Advisory Council (PSAC) Digital Infrastructure group, where Panlilio sits as a founding member.

PLDT and Smart's efforts recognized by Brand Finance are among the broad range of initiatives undertaken by the Group in its continuing drive to elevate customer experience and become the region's leading ESG telco. These objectives are two of the five pillars of PLDT and Smart's multi-year transformation launched in 2022, in response to the rapidly shifting market conditions in the Philippines.

Editor's note: The opinions expressed in the foregoing article are solely the author's and do not reflect the opinions and beliefs of the Philippine News Agency (PNA) or any other office under the Presidential Communications Office. (By Joe Zaldarriaga)



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SEAG long jump champion eyes ticket to World Championships

MANILA - Southeast Asian Games (SEAG) long jump winner Janry Ubas tries to get decent finishes in three upcoming tournaments under the World Athletics Continental Tour his bid to qualify for the World Championships.

Ubas will first compete at the Motonet Grand Prix in Lappeenranta, Finland on July 19 and at the 16th Triveneto Meeting Internazionale in Trieste, Italy on July 22.

The qualification window for the World Championships, slated in Budapest, Hungary on Aug. 19 to 27, will end on July 29 at the International Stuttgarter Athletics Meeting in Germany.

"I really want to compete in the World Championships. I have to perform well in the three tournaments so I can get a slot in Budapest," said the 29-year-old native of Misamis Oriental province in an online interview before he left for Finland on Monday morning with coach Dario da Rosas.

Ubas and Da Rosas are members of the national team which participated in the 25th Asian Athletics Championships that concluded in Bangkok, Thailand on Sunday.

Ubas landed seventh with 7.98 meters, improving on the 7.95m he registered in bagging the silver

medal at the Taiwan Open on May 28.

He won the Cambodia SEAG gold medal in 7.85m in May.

So far, world No. 3 pole vaulter EJ Obiena and hurdles champion Robyn Brown have qualified for the prestigious Worlds.

Meanwhile, Obiena set a meet record of 5.91m in Bangkok, shattering his 5.71m set in 2019.

He eventually took the gold, Saudi Arabia's Hussain Assem Al-Hizam got the silver at 5.56m, and Japan's Tomoya Karasawa the bronze at 5.51m.

Obiena has already snared a ticket to the 2024 Paris Olympics. (PNA)



SEAG champion Janry Ubas (Contributed photo)

PH boxers eye Olympic berths at Hangzhou Asian Games

MANILA - The Association of Boxing Alliances in the Philippines (ABAP) hopes for the best for its athletes in the coming Asian Games, which also serves as qualifier for the 2024 Paris Olympics.

The Philippines will compete in six of seven categories in the men's division and three of six in the women's division in the Asiad scheduled Sept. 23 to Oct. 8 in Hangzhou, China.

The finalists in the men's division and semifinalists in the women's division will earn outright berths to the Olympics.

Among those in the training pool for the Asiad are Tokyo Olympics silver medalists Carlo Paalam and Nesthy Petecio, and bronze medalist Eumir Marcial; Rogen Ladon, Ian Clark Bautista, Mark Ashley Fajardo, Aaron Jude Bado, Ronald Chavez Jr., Marjon Pianar, and John Marvin;

and female fighters Ira Villegas and Irish Magno. Only Petecio will be fighting in the same weight class (featherweight) where she bagged a silver medal in the 2020 Tokyo Games as both Paalam and Marcial are moving up in weight.

"Our mandate to the boxers, let's qualify to the Asian Games. Let's finish here so we can get everything,"

print established by now chairperson Ricky Vargas when he initially served as head of the association in 2009.

Manalo revealed that except for Marcial, the Asian Games-bound boxers are training at the ABAP headquarters inside the RMSC.

The team will leave for India on July 28 for a two-part training -- first at the National Institute of Sports in Patiala, the academic wing of the Sports Authority of India and Asia's largest sports institute where the Filipinos will spar with boxers from six countries session, and the second in Karnataka where they will train until Aug. 20.

The boxers then return to Manila for a 10-day rest before flying to Canberra, Australia for a two-week training.

"After that, just one week here in Manila and then we fly to Hangzhou for the Asian Games. That is our schedule," Manalo said. (PNA)

Manalo said. (PNA)

Ronaldo earns Guinness Record as highest-paid athlete of 2023



MOSCOW - Portuguese football player Cristiano Ronaldo has earned a Guinness World Records title for the highest annual earnings for an athlete in 2023, according to a statement released on the organization's website.

"For the first time since 2017 (and third time overall), Cristiano Ronaldo has topped Forbes' list of the

world's highest-paid athletes, earning himself a Guinness World Records title for the highest annual earnings for an athlete in 2023," the statement reads.

Ronaldo's record earnings for the year are estimated at \$136 million, including \$46 million in on-field earnings and \$90 million in off-field earnings, according to Forbes.

Argentinian forward Lionel Messi came in second with \$130 million, split evenly between \$65 million in on-field earnings and \$65 million in off-field earnings.

In comparison with another football player, French player Kylian Mbappe's on-field earnings of \$100 million contribute heavily to his total of \$120 million. (TASS)



Calabarzon wage board sets pay hike public hearing

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna (PIA) — The wage board in Calabarzon will hold a series of public consultations across the region to discuss minimum wage adjustments for the formal sector.

Lawyer Rio Ariel Soriano, secretary of the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board (RTWPB) IV-A, told the Philippine Information Agency that the consultation seeks to gather insights from all stakeholders on the minimum wage.

"Ang ating public consultation po ay bahagi ng dayalogo on both labor and management sector, kasama na rin ang ating stakeholders gaya ng mga kasambahay at local government unit. Ang idea ay malaman natin o mapulsuhan kung ano ba talaga ang ninanais

DOST-X...

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Dr. Ligaya S. Gonzales, School Principal of Pangantucan National High School, expressed hope that this intervention from the DOST would be followed by further support for STEM education in Pangantucan, fostering a strong foundation for the high school learners' academic journey.

By providing accessible and up-to-date information, the project aims to empower students to pursue STEM courses and become valuable contributors to the S&T human capital of the country. With the collaborative efforts of the DOST, DepEd, and local educational institutions, the future of S&T education in Pangantucan is set to be brighter than ever before. **(Rashia Mae Deva Paano/DOST10)**

ng public pagdating sa usapin ng minimum wage," he said.

Soriano said they expect labor groups and local government units to attend the provincial consultations which will kick off in Batangas today, July 14.

"Inaasahan din natin na dumalo din ang ating mga workers na nais din malaman at nais din magkaroon ng updates dito sa hinihingi ng ating mga petitioners, ganon din yung ibang mga labor sector groups na baka meron din silang sariling version maliban doon sa hiningi ng petitioners."

Several labor groups in the region have earlier filed petitions for wage hike for minimum wage earners in the private sector.

The Metal Workers Alliance of the Philippines (MWAP) seeks a wage increase ranging from P280 to P400 while the Organisasyon ng mga Manggagawa sa EMI has been asking for a P100-wage increase.

MWAP President Mary Ann Castillo said they will attend the public consultation with other minimum wage earner workers in the region to reiterate their petition on the minimum wage increase.

"Ito yung hinihaintay namin. Dadalo kami at yung iba pang mga manggagawa na inimitahan namin lalo na yung mga minimum wage earner na nasa Batangas at sa iba pang mga public consultations," Castillo said.

She also appealed to RTWPB IV-A to approve their petition which would help workers meet their families' needs given the prevailing family living wage.

"Sana aprubahan na ng RTWPB ang aming petisyon dahil hindi lamang ito basta lang ginawa naming yung amount na ito, actually



Key officials from various government agencies in the Calabarzon Region, minimum wage workers, and other stakeholders convene on Friday, July 14, at the Department of Labor and Employment Batangas Provincial Office in Lipa City, Batangas for a public consultation on the minimum wage adjustment in the region. **(Photos by Leomar De Torres of DOLE Batangas)**

dapat nasa family living wage kasi kung talagang titingnan masyado nang mababa ang minimum wage," Castillo said.

She said the wage increase would help maintain vibrant economic opportunities in the region and generate more jobs as workers would not need to migrate to other areas to access better employment opportunities.

"Sana pakinggan ng RTWPB ang aming petisyon dahil nakikita naman na madaming manggagawa na nandito sa CALABARZON para hindi na pumupunta sa

ibang bayan o bansa para lang humanap nang trabaho kasi nandito na yung mga economic zones, so sana tingnan nila'yon," she added.

Meanwhile, Soriano said the Department of Agriculture, Department of Energy, and the Bureau of Internal Revenue will also join the wage hike consultations.

Other public consultations are set in Quezon on July 18; Cavite (July 21); Rizal (July 26); and Laguna (July 31).

Soriano said after the public consultations, the wage board would hold a deliberation and

decide on the wage hike adjustment.

"Pagkatapos ng ating mga consultation or sometimes between the consultation, inaasahan natin na magkakaroon din ng coalition on the part of labor secretariat dito sa ating (RTWPB) office," Soriano said.

Soriano called for active public participation during the series of consultations.

"Inaasahan po namin ang inyong active participation pagdating dito sa ating gagawing talakayan on minimum wage issue sapagakat ito naman po talaga ay dapat din nating pag-

usapan hindi lang po basta sa kapakanan ng ating workers para din naman po sa kapakanan ng ating employers," he added.

The last wage adjustment in the region was approved in 2022, which ranges from P350 to P470 depending on the workers' category.

The prevailing minimum wage is at P470 for non-agricultural workers; P429 for agricultural workers; and P350 in retail and service establishments with not more than 10 workers. **(AM, PIA4A)**

DOST-X PRESS RELEASE: DOST, LGU Pangantucan to improve science, tech info access in GIDA areas through STARBOOKS

In partnership with the Local Government Unit of Pangantucan and the Department of Education Division of Bukidnon, the Department of Science and Technology provides seven STARBOOKS units in seven public high schools in Pangantucan. STARBOOKS is the country's first digitized library.

The school beneficiaries are Pangantucan National High School, Bacusanon National High School, Bangahan Integrated School, Kimanait National High School, Langcataan National High School, San Isidro High School, and Pangantucan Bukidnon Community College.

The project holds immense potential for the 4,944 high school students, 1,389 college students, and 890 teachers who have long depended on limited books and unreliable internet access. These schools predominantly

serve Indigenous Peoples (IP) students belonging to the Manobotribe.

During the turnover ceremony, Dr. Lanila M. Palapar, Assistant Schools Division Superintendent, encouraged the attending teachers to embrace continuous learning and engage with new technologies.

"Let us not stop learning for ourselves and for our students," Palapar emphasized, highlighting the importance of keeping pace with the evolving educational landscape.

The significance of the STARBOOKS project was further highlighted by the Science Research Specialist of DOST Bukidnon, Grazelle Dela Cruz showcased its vast array of resources that will now be readily available to students and teachers alike. STARBOOKS is a digital library that offers free access to hundreds of thousands of theses, K-12 modules, DRRM



materials, research papers, theses, dissertations, and S&T news.

The Science and Technology Research-Based Openly Operated Kiosk (STARBOOKS) is an innovation of the DOST Science and Technology Information Institute.

Expressing gratitude for the initiative, Dr. Ellen A. Azuelo, Education Program Supervisor who is also the project leader, commended the

DOST for its efficient and comprehensive project implementation process. LGU Pangantucan's Executive Assistant, Rolando Franco, also

encouraged the other schools in the Municipality to avail the same project for inclusive education opportunities.

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METRO MANILA... from P1

as part of efforts to prevent a water crisis amid a looming El Niño phenomenon.

In its second bulletin, the WRMO said its team shall conduct spot inspections of office buildings for unwarranted use of water, leaks, and faulty bathroom fixtures. The team will ensure that WRMO Bulletin Nos. 1 and 2 are posted in offices accordingly.

The WRMO said that together with the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage System (MWSS), it will review the monthly water bills of all government facilities in accordance with MC 22. Notices on excessive use of water shall be issued, it added.

The office also advised the public to report leaks along

streets to the MWSS (8929-5691, 8922-2969, 0967-3197144, or cch@mwss.gov.ph), or to the water service providers Manila Water (1627) or Maynilad (1626). Leaks within compounds and which may need major repairs may be reported to the DENR-WRMO through wrmo@denr.gov.ph.

WMRO's Bulletin No. 2 was issued as the water level in Angat Dam, which supplies potable water to NCR and nearby provinces, continues to drop amid an impending El Niño dry spell.

As of July 8, 2023, the water level in Angat Dam was at 179.99 meters, which is below the 180-meter minimum operating level.

When below operating levels, the allocation for irrigation

will be reduced and supply for NCR and the provinces of Rizal, Cavite and Bulacan will be at the minimum volume. As such, residents could expect lower water pressures mainly during the night and possible interruptions in certain areas serviced by MWSS.

Under MC 22, President Marcos directed the WRMO to monitor the progress of all agencies towards conserving water through the analysis of their monthly water bills, with the aim of reducing their consumption by 10 percent.

Created last April by virtue of Executive Order No. 22, WRMO is mandated to ensure availability and sustainable management of water resources in the country. **(denr/pia-ncr)**



The dedicated team of medical professionals and volunteers from the provincial government of Cavite embarked on another medical mission, providing essential healthcare services to 177 residents of Barangay Sabutan in the municipality of Silang on July 15, 2023.

From basic check-ups to specialized treatments, the team tirelessly work to diagnose, treat, and educate the community about various health concerns. In addition to medical services, prescribed medicines and vitamins were provided for free. The provision of these essential resources will help bridge the gap in healthcare accessibility and contribute to the long-term well-being of the community.

PGC's health outreach program was made possible in partnership with Silang Cavite Eagles Club with Board Member Aidel Belamide.

Kape Dose: Brewing success from humble beginnings



Whether you prefer the intensity of espresso or the different varieties of brewed coffee, one cannot deny that the coffee industry has conquered the world.

In the Philippines, coffee has become one of the most sought after beverages of people from all walks of life.

Tracing coffee's humble beginnings

The Philippines came to know about coffee during the Spanish occupation in the 1800s, when a group of friars brought it to the country, planting it in Lipa, Batangas.

Lipa became the production hub for coffee at that time. By the turn of the 19th century, the Philippines had started exporting the commodity, making

coffee the second-largest traded good after tobacco.

Today, the Philippines produces high-grade coffee beans such as Robusta and Arabica, which are grown in various provinces of the country like Batangas, Cavite, Benguet, Bukidnon, and Sultan Kudarat, as they have the best climates and soils for better yield and flavor.

Aside from Robusta and Arabica, the country also produces Liberica and Excelsa. Coffee Liberica is locally known as "Kape Barako," a coffee bean that has "floral and spicy undertones" to it and, when tasted, exudes a distinct smoky taste and strong flavor. It is primarily grown in Batangas and Cavite.

The Philippine

Coffee Board, Incorporated, describes Liberica as "the world's rarest type of coffee and is now cultivated mainly in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia."

While sharing certain characteristics with Liberica, coffee Excelsa, on the other hand, has a strong flavor with a tangy, fruity, but dusky profile to its taste. It is more commonly used as a blending variety and as an extender due to its scarcity and potent flavor.

Also, Liberica coffee has an astonishingly low caffeine content compared to Arabica and Robusta coffees, despite its powerful flavor and aroma. For coffee aficionados and enthusiasts, Robusta

coffee has the highest caffeine content of the three, with Arabica coming in second.

The outcome of the



In Soccsksargen, coffee does not only represent some trendy status, but it also symbolizes identity and culture as a household staple of the indigenous people in the uplands.

Branding Soccsksargen's native coffee to Kape Dose

Before, people in Soccsksargen just simply called the local coffee in the area "native" coffee in general. But the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Region XII saw the need to give it a fresh, new brand dubbed "Kape



Dose." Joven Quiriones, information officer of DTI XII, recounts that in 2019, the agency conducted a study titled "Development of a Strategic Collective Brand for Soccsksargen Coffee," which aimed at creating a unique identity, enhancing marketability, and gaining the support of stakeholders.

The importance of branding the local coffee to give it a distinct identity that every individual from Soccsksargen can identify with.

Soccsksargen in general, she says, is positioned to be the coffee capital of the Philippines, being "now the number 1 coffee producer, contributing about 32.4% of the total domestic coffee

production." She also emphasizes the need for people to patronize and appreciate their own regional products, maintaining that "our very own region has the best coffee output to offer the world that everyone could be proud of."

"The utilization of the Kape Dose brand and adherence to the proposed quality standard led to an improved product quality and marketability of green coffee beans,"

production." She also emphasizes the need for people to patronize and appreciate their own regional products, maintaining that "our very own region has the best coffee output to offer the world that everyone could be proud of."

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Kape Dose... from page 4

Gabunales tells this writer.

Because of this, she points out that coffee certified as Kape Dose can now command a price 100% to 500% higher than commercial coffee.

The 1st Kape Dose Festival, which served as a venue to display the best coffee products of Region XII and showcase high-quality green coffee beans from smallholder farmers, also introduced

that is, for both dried coffee and green coffee beans.

Because of the more than 26,000 hectares of coffee production area, Sultan Kudarat contributes at least 20,437 hectares, or 78 percent of the total area dedicated to growing coffee.

Adrian Clave Lariba, regional project coordinator of the DTI XII RAPID Growth Project, says that with this huge production

Soccsksargen, Robusta has shown to be "the most produced type of coffee with 73.5 percent of the total production during the quarter."

PSA says that coffee Robusta grown in Sultan Kudarat posted 1,873.18 metric tons in the first quarter of 2023, which is 14% higher than 1,643.14 metric tons in the same period of 2022.

Soccsksargen, as PSA notes, remained the highest coffee producer with "3.15



the newly-elected officers of the Region XII Coffee Council that year.

As of now, says Quiriones, "the DTI has scheduled a meeting with its partner agencies next week to finalize the guidelines on the use of the Kape Dose seal quality so we can proceed with our next step, which is already the intensified promotions."

Positioning Sultan Kudarat as the coffee capital of the Philippines

Among the places in Soccsksargen Region, the province of Sultan Kudarat (SK) shares about 86 percent of the region's total coffee production,

area, Region XII has more than enough to supply the increasing demand of the entire country.

He is also confident that the region has a competitive advantage over other regions, citing a particular coffee variant that thrives in the area—Robusta.

In addition, data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) also showed that for the first quarter of 2023, the green coffee bean production was pegged at 9.42 thousand metric tons, inching up by 1.3% from 9.30 thousand metric tons in 2022.

Among the coffee products in

thousand metric tons, or 33.4 percent of the country's total coffee production for this quarter" followed by Northern Mindanao with a 13.7% share and Davao Region contributing about a 12.3% share.

The Sultan Kudarat Coffee Council and Soccsksargen Coffee Council chairperson, Ronan Eugene Garcia says that the local government of Sultan Kudarat is bent on pushing the designation of the province as the coffee capital of the Philippines.

He acknowledges that such an honor would spell out massive benefits for the province, especially for



the coffee growers of the entire Soccsksargen area.

Garcia believes that being declared the coffee capital will have an "impact and favorable" outcome for local businesses and will increase the revenue generation of the province. Aside from that, it would also boost tourism and create job opportunities in the area.

Supporting the roadmap to making SK the PH coffee capital

The Regional Development Council (RDC) XII expresses its support to the Provincial Government of Sultan Kudarat to be officially declared as the "coffee capital of the Philippines."

In March, the RDC XII unanimously approved Resolution

No. 38 series of 2023, "Requesting the Senate of the Philippines to Confer to the Province of Sultan Kudarat the Designation of Coffee Capital of the Philippines."

The move also reinforced the resolution earlier passed by the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of SK.

Recently, the Sultan Kudarat Coffee Council met for a two-day planning workshop for the crafting of the Sultan Kudarat Coffee Roadmap 2023–2027 in Koronadal City.

The roadmap translates "the vision, mission, goals, strategies, targets, and action plans" in order to further improve the growth of the coffee industry in the SK from this year onwards.

In a written note, Sultan Kudarat Governor Datu Pax Ali S. Mangudadatu spells out the importance of making the coffee industry "an effective instrument for poverty alleviation and lasting peace in the province."

Garcia insists that "with Governor Mangudadatu taking ownership...we will consolidate and process. Sultan Kudarat will be known as a source of fine Robusta in the Philippines."

He also believes that "we [SK] have long been the champion" when talking about coffee.

So whatever coffee you want, just name it; Soccsksargen has all the great coffee beans. (CTA – PIA SarGen)

