

# RBEs to be served by dedicated BIR office

THE Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) said it expects to roll out a dedicated office servicing registered business enterprises (RBEs) by December, promising simplified filing, payment, and other processes.

In a statement on Nov. 28, BIR Commissioner Charlito Martin R. Mendoza said the agency has internally discussed the establishment of the Registered Business Enterprise Taxpayer Service (RBETS).

“Currently, there are 5,907 Registered Business Enterprises. The BIR anticipates rolling out RBETS by December,” it said. The BIR said RBETS will bring about a more efficient and streamlined experience for RBEs,

who are typically economic zone locators enjoying tax incentives. Their primary regulators are Investment Promotion Agencies and operate under the tax regime set by laws like the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for

Enterprises to Maximize Opportunities for Reinvigorating the Economy (CREATE MORE) Act. “Through RBETS, the BIR aims to formulate policies and guidelines that improve service delivery to RBEs, ultimately strengthening

the overall tax administration system,” the BIR said. In the first 10 months, BIR collections rose 745% to P3.47 trillion, equivalent to 82.35% of the agency’s P3.22-trillion full-year target. — **Aubrey Rose A. Inosante**

## ICT workers post top national average monthly wage

By Erika Mae P. Sinaking

THE Information and Communications Technology (ICT) industry posted the highest average monthly wage in 2024, according to the results of the Occupational Wages Survey reported by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

The PSA said the study defined wages as “the sum of basic pay and regular cash allowances.”

ICT basic pay averaged P40,931 with allowances of P2,745, resulting in an average wage of P43,676.

The professional, scientific, and technical activities occupations reported a total wage of P36,096, comprising basic pay of P32,553 and an allowance of P3,543.

Wages for the electricity, gas, steam, and air conditioning supply occupations had a wage of P35,188, with a basic pay of P31,062 as well as the highest monthly allowance of P4,127.

Geoffrey M. Ducanes, Director of the Ateneo de Manila Center for Economic Research and Development, said in an e-mail that the ICT wages reflect “stronger demand for ICT workers and other professionals relative to their supply.”

He cited the “implicit belief” among employers that ICT workers and other professionals will contribute value exceeding their compensation. He added that strong wages

represent a “signal that should attract more people to get the training to go into these fields.”

Meanwhile, the agriculture, forestry, and fishing sector recorded the lowest wage at P14,615, with basic pay of P14,191 and the lowest allowance of P424.

Mr. Ducanes said agricultural jobs typically require less formal training, while ICT and professional positions demand more specialized qualifications, which accounts for the differences in wages.

“This does not mean that what ICT workers and professionals do is more important or more valuable...than what agricultural workers or other working class people do, the market just prices it higher because of relative scarcity,” he said.

The average monthly full-time wage in the Philippines for 2024 was P21,544 for formal establishments with 10 or more workers, comprising P20,309 in basic pay and P1,235 in allowances.

Wages were highest in the National Capital Region at P29,310, Calabarzon P19,711, and the Central Visayas P19,084, while the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao had the lowest average at P11,495.

The P21,544 national average wage, even with nominal and real increases over time, is insufficient to secure a comfortable life for a typical Filipino family, according to Christopher James R. Cabuay, associate pro-

fessor at the De La Salle University School of Economics in Manila.

He said in a separate e-mail that these wages are “likely not going to lead to improvements in terms of comfort” and likely won’t be enough to retain skilled professionals, noting that the estimated monthly cost for a “decent basket” for a family of five — the lifestyle considered “middle income” — ranges from P61,000 to P99,000.

“Even if there are two income earners in the family, it will not be enough to help them reach the lower limit of our estimate,” he added.

Female workers nationwide earned an average of P22,236, exceeding the P21,009 pay of their male counterparts and resulting in a gender wage gap of 5.8% in favor of women.

The highest-paying jobs were aircraft pilots and air traffic safety electronics technicians, earning P137,999 and P131,536, respectively, compared with P13,506 for elementary occupations.

Despite high-paying roles in some sectors, Mr. Cabuay said that even skilled professionals can face “abysmally low” wages, as many firms are not engaged in high-skill activities and therefore cannot offer higher pay or fully utilize talent, leading professionals to emigrate to countries with significantly better pay and benefits.

“If our firms are not engaged in high-productivity activities, they will not be able to pay higher wages,” he said.

## Retail infra considered missing piece as e-commerce wave builds

By Justine Irish D. Tabile *Reporter*

IMPROVEMENTS in infrastructure are needed to help Philippine retailers and merchants meet the rise in demand through e-commerce channels, according to web development and integration agency Dev Team.

Ollie Hunt, co-founder of Dev Team and board director at Magento Association, an organization that supports the Magento Open Source ecosystem, said the Philippines is close to being ready for online shopping.

“The demand is absolutely there; Filipino consumers are some of the most digitally engaged in Southeast Asia. What’s missing is the infrastructure that makes it genuinely easy for merchants to run an online store,” he told *BusinessWorld*.

In particular, he cited the need for simpler, more localized, and more accessible payment methods, shipping integration, and operations tools.

“That requires movement from the government, but also from tech platforms, solution providers, and agencies like us,” he said.

“If the ecosystem steps up to give businesses the right foundations, merchants of all sizes will be able to own their online presence rather than relying purely on marketplaces. And we are getting there,” he added.

The Philippines’ high internet usage, online-first social behavior, and increas-

ing mobile adoption make it an important market for e-commerce.

“Marketplaces dominate today, but they’re incredibly saturated, which makes visibility hard for brands,” according to Mr. Hunt, citing smaller brands’ difficulty in standing out and getting repeat customers on known e-commerce platforms.

Chris Islan, co-founder of Dev Team, said the other challenges include lack of localized payment methods, rising operational costs due to inflation and unpredictable fees, limited industry forums, and siloed operational systems.

“But these are all solvable challenges; they just require some investment and the ecosystem to mature together,” he said.

To address these, Mr. Hunt said that global tech platforms, solutions providers, and agencies need to start taking the Philippines seriously.

“Right now, most small and medium enterprises don’t actually have viable options outside of marketplaces, as you need to be enterprise level to afford it,” he said.

“Shopify may be the dominant platform, but it doesn’t have a Philippine play. By that, I mean no local payment options, no native shipping integrations, and limited flexibility for growth,” he added.

As such, the Magento Association built Dev Team Accelerator, a ready-to-go Magento Open Source tech stack for the Philippine market.



### St. Luke's Unveils the Evelyn D. Ang/Dana Ward: A Legacy of Love, Compassion, Community Care



The newly inaugurated Evelyn D. Ang/Dāna Charity Ward at St. Luke’s Medical Center Quezon City, marks a significant milestone for the St. Luke’s Medical Center Foundation, Inc. (SLMCFI). This remarkable 40-bed facility stands as a testament to the profound impact that compassion and generosity can achieve. Made possible by the heartfelt donation of Mr. Philip Ang, along with the support of another foreign benefactor, the ward embodies the spirit of giving.

“Dāna,” a Sanskrit word signifying the practice of cultivating generosity and uplifting others through selfless giving, perfectly captures the essence of this initiative. More than just an expansion of medical care, the new charity ward reflects a powerful belief: healing is not solely a medical duty, but a shared human responsibility. Through this collective act of kindness, St. Luke’s continues its unwavering commitment to providing hope and healing.

#### A Legacy Born From Love

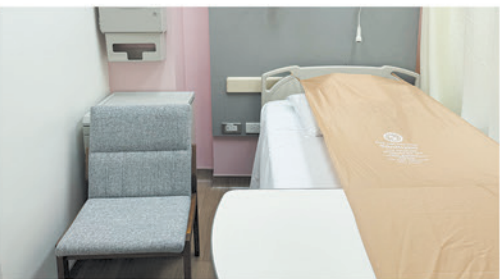
The ward was named in honor of Philip Ang’s beloved late wife, Evelyn Ang. Evelyn was renowned for her compassion and generosity—a spirit that now lives on in every patient cared for, every family given hope, and every life transformed within these walls.

Mr. Philip Ang’s remarkable donation stands as a testament to how a single act of kindness can spark generations of healing. His generosity set this transformation in motion, creating a ripple effect that the entire community can now nurture and expand.

This is more than just a space for healing—it is a lasting legacy of love and compassion, a tribute to Evelyn D. Ang’s extraordinary heart, and a beacon of hope for those in need.

#### A Sanctuary of Healing for Those Who Need It Most

The mission of the Evelyn D. Ang/Dāna Ward is clear: to ensure that quality healthcare is available to all, especially to patients who face financial hardship. Built under the vision and commitment of the St. Luke’s Foundation, the ward provides compassionate, world-class medical care without burdening families with overwhelming costs.



From the moment you enter the Dana ward, you feel its purpose. The environment is peaceful, thoughtfully designed, and centered on patient care. Each room offers comfort and privacy, while the dedicated team of doctors, nurses, and staff care for patients with kindness, respect, and unwavering commitment.



#### A Vision of Healing and Equity

The Evelyn D. Ang/Dāna Ward stands as a powerful testament to St. Luke’s unwavering dedication to closing the healthcare gap in the Philippines. By extending high-quality medical and surgical services to underserved patients, the ward delivers life-changing procedures, reinforcing the institution’s mission to ensure that no Filipino is left behind in receiving the care they deserve.



By seamlessly integrating with St. Luke’s renowned medical teams, advanced technologies, and established systems, the ward guarantees that indigent patients receive the same uninterrupted, world-class care as any other patient. This is more than just a charity initiative—it is a bold affirmation of St. Luke’s core mission: to make world-class healthcare accessible to every Filipino, regardless of circumstance.



The Evelyn D. Ang/Dāna Ward goes beyond simply providing access; it redefines what compassionate, equitable healthcare can look like, proving that excellence and empathy belong together at the heart of every healing journey.



( Dr. Benjamin S.A. Campomanes Jr., President of St. Luke's Medical Center Foundation, Inc.)

#### A Testament to Shared Compassion

For Dr. Benjamin S.A. Campomanes, Jr., President of the SLMCFI, the Evelyn D. Ang/Dāna Ward stands as a cornerstone of the Foundation’s broader efforts toward inclusive and sustainable healthcare.

“Evelyn D. Ang/Dāna Ward is more than a facility. It’s really a movement of collective generosity,” said Dr. Campomanes. “Each donation represents a life changed. It’s a model of how generosity can be institutionalized to create systemic impact, helping families find hope and healing when they need it most.”

#### Sustaining Compassion Through Community Giving

Although the Evelyn D. Ang/Dāna Ward was built through a profound act of philanthropy, its continued mission depends on ongoing support. Every donation—no matter how small—directly helps provide essential services.

When you contribute, you become part of Evelyn Ang’s legacy of compassion. You give a parent peace of mind, a child another chance to heal, and a struggling family the support they desperately need.

#### Be Part of This Legacy of Hope

The St. Luke’s Foundation invites the community to join in sustaining the Evelyn D. Ang/Dāna Ward’s mission. Together, we can ensure that this remarkable gift continues to shine as a beacon of hope—one that reaches every person in need, regardless of their circumstances.

Your generosity can keep this legacy alive.

Your kindness can help save a life.

Your support can carry Evelyn Ang’s spirit of love into the future.

Hope lives here—and with your help, it will thrive for generations.

**Contact Information:**  
**St. Luke’s Medical Center Foundation, Inc.**

<http://www.stlukesfoundation.org.ph/slmcfoundation@stlukes.com.ph>

BGC: (632) 8789 7000 ext. 5076  
Rizal Dr. cor. 32nd St., BGC, Taguig

QC: (632) 8723 0101 ext. 3823  
279 E. Rodriguez Sr. Blvd., Kalusugan, Quezon City