

Pangilinan-led Luzon Tollways Steps Up Holiday Traffic Preparations, Offers Free Toll

Metro Pacific Corporation (MPTC), concessionaire of NLEX, SCTEX in cooperation with BCDA, NLEX Connector, Manila-Cavite Expressway (CAVITEX) in cooperation with PRA-PEATC, and Cavite-Laguna Expressway (CALAX), has intensified its holiday traffic and road safety preparations across its Luzon expressway network to ensure a smooth and safe journey for motorists during the Christmas and New Year peak travel period.

Through early preparations, full manpower deployment, and initiatives such as counterflow, barrier-up operations, free towing services, and toll-free passage, MPTC aims to provide safer and more convenient travel experience to its motorists. "Our goal this holiday season is to have motorists spend less time on the road and more time with their families," said MPIC



and MPTC Chairman Manuel V Pangilinan. "We've prepared early, deployed full manpower, and have initiated barrier-up operations, counterflow measures, free towing services, and toll-free passage. The toll-free initiative is our way of giving back to motorists. We hope it helps ease their travels during this holiday season," Pangilinan added.

To manage increased traffic volume, all roadworks and lane closures will be suspended from 6:00 AM on December 19, 2025, until 12 noon on January 5, 2026, except for emergency safety repairs. Additional traffic, toll, and emergency and medical response teams will be deployed, and all lanes in major toll plazas will remain open to accommodate peak traffic.

To further ease congestion along NLEX, Express Lane (counterflow lane) will be activated subject to traffic conditions. These lanes will be accessible to Class 1 RFID-only vehicles, with northbound operations on Fridays from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM (entry at Balintawak Expansion Plaza) and southbound operations on Sundays from

2:00 PM and early Mondays from 5:00 AM (entry at Bocaue Expansion Plaza). Free passage in the MPTC Luzon expressways Metro Pacific Tollways Corporation (MPTC) is pleased to announce a toll-free initiative for motorists during select hours over the Christmas and New Year celebrations. Motorists can enjoy free toll passages on NLEX, SCTEX, NLEX Connector, CAVITEX, and CALAX during the festive hours:

December 24, 10:00 PM to December 25 at 6:00 AM
December 31, 10:00 PM to January 1 at 6:00 AM

Trip planning is made easier with the MPT DriveHub app, which provides traffic updates, toll fee calculation, RFID reloading, and access to emergency roadside assistance.

(Shekinah Esteban)

Mayor Ross Rizal Leads Distribution of Special Development Fund and Incentives to Calamba Barangay Officials



CALAMBA CITY, Laguna — Under the leadership of Mayor Roseller "Ross" H. Rizal, the City Government of Calamba spearheaded the distribution of the Special Development Fund (SDF) and incentives for all Barangay Officials, held at the Jose Rizal Coliseum.

The activity underscored the city government's continuing commitment to strengthening grassroots governance by providing financial support and incentives to barangay officials, who play a vital role in delivering public services at the community level.

According to city officials, the distribution of the Special Development Fund, along with incentives, aims to further enhance the capacity of barangays to deliver effective, transparent, and efficient services to residents. The program also seeks to support development projects that promote long-term growth and sustainable progress within local communities.

Mayor Ross Rizal emphasized that the initiative goes beyond financial assistance, recognizing the hard work and dedication of barangay leaders across the city. "Higit sa lahat, ito ay isang taos-pusong pagkilala at pasasalamat sa dedikasyon, sakripisyo, at walang sawang paglilingkod ng ating mga Barangay Officials bilang mahalagang katuwang ng Pamahalaang Lungsod sa pagsusulong ng kaayusan, kaunlaran, at kapakanan ng bawat Calambeno."

"Bilang mayor, natutunan ko na ang tunay na serbisyo publiko ay hindi lang tungkol sa trabaho, kundi sa pagkilala at pagpapahalaga sa mga taong araw-araw na naglilingkod sa barangay. Kapag masya at pinahalalagahan ang kawani, mas ramdam ng mamamayan ang tapat at maayos na serbisyo."

The event reaffirmed the city administration's strong partnership with barangay officials, highlighting their shared mission to uphold good governance, strengthen public service delivery, and ensure inclusive development for all Calambenos.

(Edjun Mariposque)

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DERETSAHAN

WEEKLY PUBLISHING

The paper that stand for real values and gives you real value for money

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Remulla: PBBM Orders End to Corruption, Walang Kaibigan, Walang Kakampi

PamasCong Medical Mission ni Amante



PGC RELEASE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR CVSU ROSARIO STUDENTS



The Provincial Government of Cavite, under the leadership of Governor Abeng Remulla, distributed financial assistance to 5,475 student-beneficiaries under the Provincial Scholarship Program during the Iskolar ng Lalawigan educational assistance distribution held on December 16 at

Cavite State University–Rosario Campus. The activity aimed to help ease students' educational expenses while promoting academic excellence. Governor Remulla was joined by First District Board Members Romel Enriquez and Jygs Gandia, who expressed

their support and encouragement to the scholars. The Iskolar ng Lalawigan ng Cavite program continues to underscore the provincial government's strong commitment to investing in education and empowering the future of Caviteño youth.

- R. Tanael

FORGING SYNERGIES FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH: CAVITE ALIGNS MSME PROGRAMS WITH MSMED PLAN 2025-2028

Philippine Flag soars as Cavite's young innovators shine in World Robotics Games 2025

PAMILYA NI USEC. CABRAL, AYAW ISAILALIM SA AUTOPSY ANG LABI NG DATING OPISYAL –MAYOR MAGALONG

Cavite Career Caravan brings job opportunities to Bacoor during DOLE Anniversary Job Fair

BUY-BUST OPERATION NG ANTIPOLLO PNP, NAGBUNGA NG PAGKAKASAMSAM NG MAHIGIT PHP 200K HALAGA NG SHABU

BFP, PINAKA-KORAP NA AHENSIYA NG DILG – SEC. REMULLA



EDITORIAL: CHRISTMAS / PASKO

Marami ang nagsasabi na ang Christmas ay of the devil dahil daw may historical connections sa pagan festivals. Pero para maging patas at totoo, kailangan natin itong tingnan biblically at historically, hindi lang base sa sabi-sabi, haka-haka o kuro-kuro.

BIBLICAL SIDE

Hindi man binanggit sa Bible ang exact date ng kapanganakan ni Jesus, malinaw na malinaw sa Kasulatan na mahalaga ang Kanyang kapanganakan

“Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:11) Ang kapanganakan ni Cristo ay: Ipinahayag ng mga anghel Ipinagdiriwang ng mga pastol Ipinangaral bilang mabuting balita Hindi sinabi ng Diyos na bawal itong alalahanin. Sa katunayan, madalas utusan ng Diyos ang Kanyang bayan na alalahanin at ipagdiwang ang Kanyang mga gawa (Psalm 105:5).

Ayon kay Pablo: “One person esteems one day above another... Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.” (Romans 14:5-6) Ibig sabihin, ang araw ay neutral. Hindi masama ang isang petsa. Ang intensyon at laman ng pagdiriwang ang mahalaga. Bukod duon wala naman akong nakitang deed of sale na nabili na ng kadiliman ang Dec. 25.

HISTORICAL SIDE

Totoo na noong unang mga siglo, may mga pagan festivals tuwing December. Pero mahal-agang tandaan ito: Hindi kinuha ng mga Kristiyanang paganism; pinalitan nila ang mensahe. Ginamit ng early church ang panahon na iyon upang:

I-declare na si Jesus ang tunay na Liwan-ag, hindi ang araw (sun) Ipakilala na si Cristo ang tunay na Hari, hindi ang mga diyos-diyosan “The true Light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.” (John 1:9) Ito ay redemption, not imitation. Katulad ng:

Cross (instrument of death → symbol of salvation) Altar (place of judgment → place of worship)

Ginawa ng Diyos ang madilim na panahon bilang pagkakataon upang ipahayag ang Liwanag ni Cristo.

THEOLOGICAL REALITY

Kung ang Christmas ay: Pagpupuri kay Jesus Pagpapahayag ng Ebanghelyo Pag-alala na ang Diyos ay naging tao para iligtas tayo Hindi ito kailanman magiging sa demonyo. Ang demonyo ay hindi nagdiriwang kapag: -Itinataas si Cristo -Ipinapangaral ang kaligtasan -Ang mga puso ay lumalapit sa Diyos Ang tunay na problema ay hindi ang Christmas, kundi ang Christ-less Christmas, gaya ng maging Materialism, Santa centered at iba na tinanggal si Cristo, kahit anong araw ay mawawalan ng kabuluhan. Pero kapag si Cristo ang sentro, kahit anong araw ay nagiging makabuluhan at makalangit.

Kaya nga kapag may mga taong nagsasabing wag ipagdiwang ang Pasko respect nalang natin sila. Basta tayo mag celebrate tayo kasi si Kristo ang bida dito. Si Jesus ang dahilan ng Pasko. Christ-centered Christmas glorifies God.

PamasCong...

RIZAL, Laguna — Halos 1,000 residente ng Rizal, Laguna ang nakinabang sa isinagawang libreng medical at dental mission na pinangunahan sa pamamagitan ng inisyatibo ni 3rd District Representative Amben Amante, katuwang ang lokal na pamahalaan ng Rizal, ngayong Disyembre.

Layunin ng aktibidad na matugunan ang pangunahing pangangailang pangkalusugan ng mga mamamayan, partikular na ang mga kapus-palad at walang sapat na kakayahang magpagamot. Ayon sa mga residente, malaking ginhawa ang

hatid ng programa lalo na ngayong papalapit ang Kapaskuhan, kung kailan mas inuuna ng maraming pamilya ang iba pang gastusin.

Ayon kay Cong. Amante, tuloy-tuloy ang kanyang paghahatid ng serbisyo sa publiko may eleksyon man o wala at walang pinipiling lugar o bilang ng botante sa kanyang nasasakupan. “Malaki o maliit na bayan, maliit o malaking botante, pantay-pantay ang ating pagmamahal sa mga nasasakop ng Third District ng Laguna,” pahayag ni Amante.

Dagdag pa ng

kongresista, mahalagang maibsan ang pasanin ng mga pamilya pagdating sa gastusing medikal, lalo na sa panahong mataas ang presyo ng mga bilihin.

“Sa halip na magpacheck-up sa pribadong ospital o doktor, ay maaari na lamang itong ipangbili ng pang-Noche Buena at Media Noche,” ani Amante.

Kabilang sa mga serbisyong ibinigay sa medical at dental mission ang libreng konsultasyon at medical check-up, pamamahagi ng mga gamot, libreng bunot ng ngipin, ultrasound para sa mga

laboratory services. Marami sa mga benepisyaryo ang nagpahayag ng pasasalamat dahil bihira lamang silang magkaroon ng ganitong uri ng serbisyong abot-kamay at walang bayad.

Sa pagtatapos, tiniyak ni Cong. Amante na patuloy siyang tutugon sa mga pangangailangan ng kanyang mga kadistrito, at bukas ang kanyang tanggapan sa anumang tulong o hinaing ng mamamayan, bilang bahagi ng kanyang paninindigan sa tapat at makataong paglilingkod sa Third District ng Laguna.

(*Shekinah Esteban*)

FROM PAGE 1

Pamilya....

Ibinunyag ni Ba- guio City Mayor Benjamin Magalong na ayaw ng pamilya ni dating DPWH Undersecretary na si Maria Catalina Cabral na isailalim sa autopsy ang kaniyang mga labi.

Ayon sa alkalde, napagdesisyunan na ito ng magkakapamilya.

Ito ay taliwas sa naunang report ng Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) na sumasailalim na sa autopsy ang labi ng namayapang undersecretary.

Giit ni Magalong na dati ring nagsilbi bilang pinuno ng Criminal Investigation and Detection

Group, mas nakabubuti sanang isailalim sa autopsy ang katawan ng nasawing opisyal, lalo at kahi- na-hinala ang insidente ng kaniyang pagkamatay.

Hanggang sa ngayon, nananatiling palaisipan kung nagpakamatay ang dating opisyal o kung may foul play sa kaniyang pagkasawi matapos marecover ang kaniyang katawan sa isang bangin sa bayan ng Tuba, Benguet kagabi (Dec. 18).

Una na ring umapela ang Independent

Commission for Infrastructure na magkaroon ng malalimang imbestigasyon sa pagkamatay ng dating opisyal upang matukoy kung mayroong foul play na nangyari.

Nananatili naman sa kostudiya ng mga otoridad ang driver ni Cabral na si Ricardo Munos Hernandez.

Si Hernandez ang pinaniniwalaang hul- ing nakakita kay Cabral bago siya natagpuan patay

(*Nelson Dimapilis*)



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Buy-Bust...

ANTIPOLO CITY, Rizal — Arestado ang isang hinihinalang tulak ng ilegal na droga sa ikina- sang buy-bust operation ng City Drug Enforcement Team (CDET) ng Antipolo Component City Police Station madaling araw ng Disyembre 20, 2025 sa Brgy. San Roque, Antipolo City.

Nakumpiska mula sa suspek ang humigit-kumulang 30 gramo ng hinihinalang shabu na may tinatayang standard drug price na ₱204,000.00.

Kinilala ang naaresto na si “Alyas Mar,” 30 taong gulang, na itinuturing ng pulisya bilang street-level individual na sangkot umano sa bentahan ng ilegal na droga

sa lugar.

Ayon sa ulat ng pulisya, isinagawa ang operasyon sa koordinasyon ng Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), na nagresulta sa pagkakasamsam ng anim (6) na pakete ng hinihinalang shabu, isang coin purse, at buy-bust money na nagkakahalaga ng ₱500.00.

Matapos ang operasyon, ipinaalam sa suspek ang kanyang mga karapatang konstitusyonal alinsunod sa umiiral na batas.

Siya ay kasalukuyang nakapiit sa Antipolo Custodial Facility habang inihahanda ang mga dokumento para sa pagsasampa ng mga kasong paglabag sa Sec-

cancies covering various industries and positions.

Notably, 21 applicants were hired on the spot, highlighting the effectiveness of the initiative in directly linking employers with qualified jobseekers.

In addition to the participating companies, several national government agencies were present to extend on-site assistance and information to applicants.

These included Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), the Social Security System (SSS), and the Office

FROM...

Inclusive Service Award, and “Pamanaon” by Sho- tUp Productions, honored with the Young Filmmaker Award.

The success of the festival was made possible through the guidance and leadership of key figures who continue to champion community development through the arts. “SineMaya is more than a film festival. It is a shared journey of storytelling where every film becomes a mirror of our values and a bridge to the future we want to build together,” said Ms. Marilyn M. Manila, BENTE Productions President.

Before the awarding ceremony, all 18 SineMaya finalists were simultaneously screened at SM Cinemas in Iloilo City, Davao City, and Manila on November 22, 2025.

This nationwide screening allowed audiences from different regions to experience the stories firsthand and actively participated in determining the People's Choice Award.

SineMaya Community Film Festival is a platform dedicated to empowering grassroots and community filmmakers to tell stories that promote social development, inclu-

FROM PAGE 1

tions 5 (Illegal Sale of Dangerous Drugs) at 11 (Illegal Possession of Dangerous Drugs), Article II ng Republic Act 9165 o Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002.

Sa pahayag ni PCOL Feloteo A. Gonzalzo, Provincial Director ng Rizal Police Provincial Office, sinabi niyang ang pagkakaaresto sa nasabing street-level drug suspect ay bahagi ng tuloy-tuloy at pinaigting na kampanya laban sa ilegal na droga sa Antipolo City.

“Patuloy ang Rizal PPO sa pagsasagawa ng maayos at legal na operasyon upang maprotektahan ang ating mga komunidad at masugpo ang ilegal na droga sa lalawigan,” ani Gonzalzo. (*Pau Dela Cruz*)

FROM PAGE 1

Cavite...

The Cavite Career Caravan organized by the Office of the Provincial Public Employment Service Manager was successfully conducted at SM City Bacoor on December 11, in line with the celebration of the 92nd Anniversary of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).

The activity provided a valuable platform for jobseekers to explore employment opportunities and access government services in one convenient venue.

A total of 116 jobseekers tried their luck during the job fair, where 31 participating companies offered 5,913 job va-

FROM PAGE 5

canies covering various industries and positions. Notably, 21 applicants were hired on the spot, highlighting the effectiveness of the initiative in directly linking employers with qualified jobseekers.

As the festival concluded, the 2025 SineMaya Community Film Festival once again affirmed that storytelling—grounded in compassion, innovation, and service—remains a powerful force in strengthening communities and shaping a more inclusive, hopeful, and sustainable future.

Remulla...

Department of the Interior and Local Government Secretary Jonvic Remulla on Friday said President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has given clear and uncompromising instructions to ensure that no one will be spared in the government's intensified campaign against corruption, amid ongoing investigations into alleged flood control ghost projects and budget inser-

tions. Speaking during the 277th founding anniversary and 10th cityhood celebration of the City of General Trias in Cavite, Remulla stressed that the President's directive is firm and non-negotiable.

All individuals involved, regardless of position or affiliation, will be investigated and held accountable. “Kailangan pong ang korapsyon, ayon kay

PBBM, ay matapos na at matuldukan sa panahong ito. Ang utos sa amin, walang kaibigan, walang kakampi. Kung sino ang makasalanan ay siyang makukulong,” Remulla said.

The DILG Chief acknowledged that enforcing this mandate has come with personal costs, including strained friendships built over many years. However, he said these are sacrifices that come with choosing public service over personal comfort.

“Napakahirap na tatawag ang mga kaibigan na hindi mo puwedeng sagutin ang kanilang tawag at baka sabihin, ‘tumawag na ako, ayos na.’ Hindi po ganon ang utos ng Pangulo,” he said.

Remulla also addressed critics' direct-

ed at him and his brother, Ombudsman Jesus Crispin Remulla, emphasizing that their shared commitment to justice and public accountability remains unchanged.

He added that the coming week would be critical as developments in the investigation are expected to surface. “Abangan ninyo na lang,” he said.

The DILG Secretary underscored that the decisive reforms being implemented in Cavite, which have driven real progress on the ground, should serve as a model for governance nationwide.

He said the fight against corruption must be consistent, fearless, and felt across all levels of government, in line with the President's vision of a government that works for the people.

FROM PAGE 1

Philippine...

TRECE MARTIRES, Cavite (PIA) — Cavite's young tech talents once again took the global spotlight as the Salty Bots Club proudly waved the Philippine flag at the recently concluded World Robotics Games (WRG) 2025 in Taiwan, where more than 500 participants from around the world gathered to compete in this impressive event.

The Cavite-based student robotics team delivered an outstanding performance, bringing home an impressive collection of medals that underscored the capability, creativity, and determination of Filipino youth on the international stage. Organizers, coaches, and fellow competitors alike witnessed how these students—armed with courage, talent, and an unwavering fighting spirit—held their own in one of the world's most challenging robotics arenas.

Behind each vic-

tory were months of preparation marked by late-night debugging sessions, repeated trial runs, and meticulous strategy-building. Despite juggling academic responsibilities, the young innovators proved that age and circumstance are no barriers to achieving world-class excellence.

Carrying the banner of Caviteño brilliance, the team secured multiple honors: Gold Award: Kelvin Caisser D. Javier — iBeam SR; John Macklein D. Valdez — iBeam SR; Andrei Jiggerson Samaniego — iBeam SR, Silver Award: Bryzen Villanueva — iBeam SR; Kille Mathew M. Gaudi- el — iBeam SR; Claude Ron R. Abriol — iBeam SR, Bronze Award: Kelvin Caisser D. Javier — PLT SR; Kiesa Veras — iBeam JR, Copper Award: Solenn Quejado — iBeam SR; Kille Mathew M. Gaudi- el — Beam Battle; Fiona Nathalie J. Rosga — Beam Battle, and Mer- it Award: Sean Adrienne Santos

The victory of the Salty Bots Club extends beyond their school or province.

It echoes the aspirations of countless Filipino children who dream of building, competing, and innovating at a global scale.

Their achievement stands as a powerful reminder that with support, passion, and courage, excellence knows no age.

As they look toward future international challenges, the young robotics champions carry with them the proud message of a new generation of innovators: “Filipinos can do it. Youth can do it. We can do it anywhere in the world.”

“You don't always need a plan. Sometimes you just need to breathe, trust, let go, and see what happens.”

HANDY HALE

GSIS Opens Calamba Service Desk at City Hall, Bringing Government Services Closer to Calambeños



Government service delivery in Calamba City took a major step forward with the official opening of the GSIS Calamba Service Desk at the Calamba City Hall in Calamba City, Laguna. Through the support of the City Government of Calamba, a dedicated space within City Hall was provided to establish the GSIS office, reinforcing the shared goal of bringing essential government services closer to the people.

The inauguration was led by Calamba City Mayor Roseller “Ross” H. Rizal and was attended by key officials from the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), including Executive Vice President Atty. Jason C. Teng, Vice President for South Luzon Engr. Rosalinda G. Mendoza, Laguna

Branch Manager Levi S. Olivar Jr., and other GSIS representatives.

Mayor Rizal emphasized the importance of the newly opened service desk in improving access and convenience for government employees and pensioners in the city.

“Sa bagong serbisyong ito, mas mapapalati na ang mga transaksyon ng ating mga kawani ng pamahalaan at mga pensioner—hindi na kailangang lumayo para sa serbisyong nararapat sa inyo,” Mayor Rizal said.

He added that the initiative reflects the city’s commitment to people-centered governance, stating, “Isang hakbang patungo sa mas episyente, maagap, at makataong serbisyo para sa bawat Calambeño.”

The GSIS Calamba Service Desk is expected to streamline transactions, reduce travel time and expenses, and enhance overall efficiency in delivering government insurance and pension services, marking another milestone in Calamba City’s ongoing efforts to improve public service accessibility.

(Edjun Mariposque)



Mass Shooting at Bondi Beach During Hanukkah Celebration Leaves Dozens Dead and Injured



Dec. 14, 2025 — A mass shooting at Bondi Beach in Sydney, Australia on Sunday evening targeted a Hanukkah celebration, killing at least 15 people and wounding dozens more in what Australian authorities have described as an antisemitic terrorist attack.

The incident occurred at Archer Park beside Bondi Beach during a public gathering known as Chanukah by the Sea, where around a thousand people had assembled to celebrate the first night of Hanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights.

The Attack Police and emergency services responded shortly after shots were fired at about 6:47 p.m. local time, prompting chaos and panic as crowds tried to flee.

Investigators say the shooters were a father and son, aged about 50 and 24, who opened fire on the crowd with licensed firearms. The older sus-

pect was killed by police at the scene, while his son remains critically injured in hospital.

Authorities later found improvised explosive devices in the suspects’ vehicle that were safely disarmed.

Casualties and Response

At least 15 civilians died in the attack, with dozens more injured, including children and police officers. The victims ranged in age from young children to elderly adults, and among the dead was a respected community leader.

A courageous bystander, Ahmed al Ahmed, was widely praised after disarming one of the gunmen, an act that authorities said likely saved many lives.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese condemned the massacre as a deliberate attack on the Jewish community, labeling it terrorism driven by antisemitic motivations and influenced by extremist ideology.

National and International Reactions Leaders across Australia and abroad expressed shock and offered condolences to victims’ families.

Discussions have already begun at the federal level about tightening the country’s gun laws and firearms licensing systems to prevent similar

tragedies in the future.

What Is Hanukkah?

Hanukkah, also spelled Chanukah, is a Jewish holiday known as the Festival of Lights. It celebrates the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem more than 2,000 years ago after Jewish forces led by the Maccabees reclaimed it from Greek-Syrian rulers. According to tradition, a small amount of consecrated oil, enough to last for just one day, miraculously stayed lit for eight days, giving rise to the eight-night holiday.

The holiday typically involves lighting the menorah (a special nine-branched candelabra) each night, playing traditional games, enjoying foods fried in oil (like latkes and donuts), and spending time with family and community.

In 2025, Hanukkah began on Dec. 14, coinciding with the tragic event at Bondi Beach.

Community Impact

The Jewish community in Sydney and worldwide has been left reeling, holding vigils and calling for renewed efforts to combat hate crimes and antisemitism.

Law enforcement agencies in several major cities also increased security at Hanukkah celebrations in response to the attack.

(Edjun Mariposque)



Pointer

Pau Dela Cruz

Governor Sol Aragonos Naghatid ng Diwa ng Pasko sa mga Ospital ng Laguna sa Pamamagitan ng Libreng Ham at Gardenia Tasty

Sa gitna ng papalapit na Kapaskuhan, personal na pinangunahan ni Laguna Governor Sol Aragonos ang sabayang pamamahagi ng libreng ham at Gardenia Tasty bread sa mga pasyente ng siyam na district hospital na pinangangasiwaan ng Pamahalaang Panlalawigan ng Laguna noong umaga ng Disyembre 19, 2025. Layunin ng inisyatibo na maghatid ng saya, pag-asa, at ginhawa sa mga pasyenteng patuloy na lumalaban sa karamdaman habang nasa ospital sa panahon ng Pasko.

Isa sa mga personal na binisita ng gobernador ang Laguna Medical Center (LMC) kung saan tiniyak niyang lahat ng naka-confine na pasyente ay makatatanggap ng handog na pamasko. Mariin niyang iginiit na walang dapat maiwan, at inatasan ang mga kawani ng ospital na ipagpatuloy ang pamamahagi sa mga pasilidad na nauna na niyang napuntahan.

Isinagawa ang aktibidad sa pamamagitan ng Akay ni Gob Action Center at Tanggapan ng Gobernador, katuwang ang dating Luisiana Vice Mayor Luibic Jacob. Malaki rin ang naging bahagi ng Gardenia Philippines, na nagbigay ng Tasty bread para sa mga pasyente—patunay ng matibay na pagtutulungan ng pamahalaang panlalawigan at pribadong sektor sa paglilingkod sa mamamayan.

Sa kanyang pag-iikot sa LMC, napansin din ni Governor Aragonos ang mga positibong pagbabagong naisakatuparan sa ospital, kabilang ang pagdaragdag ng mga oxygen tank na makatutulong sa mas episyenteng pagbibigay ng serbisyong medikal sa mga pasyente.

Kasama ng gobernador sa pamamahagi si Dra. Leticia Hannah Minette Alcalá, Chief of Hospital ng LMC, na personal na nakibahagi sa pamimigay ng ham kasama ang mga doktor at kawani ng ospital.

Ipinakita nito ang aktibong pakikilahok ng pamunuan ng ospital sa pagbibigay ng malasakit at kalinga sa mga pasyente.

Nagpahayag naman ng taos-pusong pasasalamat ang mga pasyente at opisyal ng ospital. Ayon kay Dra. Mahal, Chief of Clinics ng LMC, “Nagpapasalamat po kami kasi ngayon lang po may dumating na gobernador na may dalang pagkain para sa mga pasyente. Maraming salamat po ang sinasabi ng ating mga pasyente.”

Sa pamamagitan ng simpleng handog ngunit taos-pusong malasakit, naghatid ng liwanag at init ng Pasko ang inisyatibong ito ni Governor Sol Aragonos—isang paalala na sa panahon ng kapaskuhan, ang tunay na diwa ng Pasko ay ang pagmamalasakit, pagbabahagi, at pag-asa para sa bawat Lagunense.

Forging...

The Office of the Provincial Cooperatives Development Officer (OP-CDO), brought key stakeholders to the same room during the event “Forging Synergies for Inclusive Growth: A Consultative Meeting on MSME Program Convergence with the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development (MSMED) Plan 2025–2028,” held on December 4, at the New Provincial Government Center in Trece Martires City.

The day-long engagement convened 48 participants representing 32 agencies, composed of local government units (LGUs), provincial offices, national government

agencies, and non-government organizations. The broad participation highlighted a shared commitment to strengthening collaboration and aligning programs toward a unified, inclusive, and future-ready MSME development agenda for the province.

In her welcome remarks, Ms. Myrachel P. Cuadra, Officer-in-Charge of OPCDO, emphasized that meaningful growth for micro, small, and medium enterprises is best achieved through strong inter-agency convergence. Messages of support followed from Ms. Sheryll S. Loyola, Chairperson of the Provincial Government of Cavite Employees and

FROM PAGE 1

Community Multi-purpose Cooperative (PGCE-CC) and Livelihood Division Head of OPCDO, and Ms. Lilibeth R. Chavez, OIC Provincial Director of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Cavite, both underscoring the importance of inclusive, sustainable, and resilient MSME development.

Setting the direction for the discussions, Ms. Liza C. Gabatan, Entrepreneurial Division Head of OPCDO, presented an overview of the activity, outlining its objectives and the critical role of coordination in translating policy into impact.

The morning session was highlighted

PUBLISHER CORNER

CHINA’S NINE AND THEN TEN-DASH LINE - A NAKED GRAB FOR REGIONAL HEGEMONY!



China’s expansion of the nine-dash line into a ten-dash line in 2023 is not a minor cartographic tweak. It is a blatant act of authoritarian expansionism, designed to coerce neighbours, ignore international law, and blunt the First Island Chain - the US anchored barrier from Japan through Taiwan and the Philippines. Far from defensive the dash-line is a blueprint for domination, asserting that might supercedes right.

Beijing’s approach is simple: law exists to serve power. Treaties, arbitrations and norms are observed only when convenient. The dash-line is deliberately vague, it has never been published with precise geographic coordinates, and that ambiguity is widely understood by scholars, governments and international courts as intentional. Different Chinese maps over the decades place the dashes in slightly different locations. The lack of precision allows China to adjust claims opportunistically- politically, legally, or militarily - without formally revising a boundary.

The addition of the tenth dash line near Taiwan is meant to reinforce China’s claim that Taiwan is part of China. The addition of the tenth dash makes

by the presentation of the MSMD Plan 2025–2028 by Ms. Susan Mae Salonga, Assistant Director of the Bureau of Small and Medium Enterprise Development (BSMED)—DTI. Her comprehensive discussion of national MSME priorities was followed by an interactive question-and-answer segment, allowing participants to clarify strategies and identify concrete opportunities for program alignment.

Existing MSME programs and services of LGUs and other stakeholders which were col-

the intent clear: China will expand until checked, regardless of law or precedent. China’s strategy is methodical: fishermen are driven off, energy exploration is blocked and smaller Southeast Asian states are stripped off their maritime rights. This is not diplomacy - it is coercion normalised as governance.

In 2016, an international arbitral tribunal constituted under the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas(UNCLOS), to which China is a signatory, ruled unequivocally that China’s nine dash-line was unlawful, finding it had no basis in international law and that China possessed no historic rights to the waters it claimed.

Beijing’s response was not legal rebuttal but outright contempt. China rejected the ruling in its entirety, refused compliance and proceeded to expand and enforce its claims as if the judgment did not exist. The ruling was treated as disposable toilet paper, demonstrating with brutal clarity that, in China’s worldview, might makes right.

The ten-dash line is therefore a transparent grab for regional hegemony and a decisive rebuttal to the claim that China has “never invaded another country.” Modern conquest no longer requires tanks crossing borders. China is invad-

ing space, sovereignty and rights incrementally, using coast guards, dredgers and militarised islands instead. China has sovereignty disputes with 5 South-east Asian countries, namely, Vietnam, Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Indonesia over the South China sea.

History offers stark parallels. Like Hitler’s annexation of Sudetenland or the Soviet absorption of the Baltic states, China uses incremental pressure and repeated norm violations to create faits accomplis. Each harrassment of fishermen, seizure of reefs, or militarisation of islands ratchets power further, making resistance increasingly costly.

China’s artificial islands - armed with runways, missiles and radar - are not defensive. They are instruments of coercion, transforming the South China Sea into a zone of intimidation and strategic leverage.

The ten-dash line is not just a challenge to Southeast Asia, but to the idea that law- not force- should govern international behaviour. Resist now, or allow our surrounding seas to become the water in China’s bathtub.

convergence opportunities, capped by a Pledge of Support and Commitment Setting. This collective affirmation reinforced the resolve of partner agencies and stakeholders to move forward not in silos, but in synergy.

Overall, activity marked a significant step toward institutionalizing program convergence in Cavite ensuring that MSME interventions are coordinated, inclusive, and responsive, and that economic growth across the province is not only sustained, but shared. — R. Dones



Bilang baha-
gi ng pagpapatuloy ng
pamimigay ng Pamaskong
Handog ng Pamaha-
laan sa mga Calambeño,
nagtungo ang buong
Sangguniang Panlungsod
sa Barangay Canlubang
upang personal na maki-
bahagi sa pamamahagi ng
tulong para sa mga resi-
dente ng barangay.

Ang gawaing ito
ay sumasalamin sa sa-
ma-samang pagkilos ng
pamahalaang lungsod
upang maipadama ang

diwa ng Pasko sa bawat
tahanan at mapalakas ang
ugnayan sa komunidad,
patunay ng tapat at mala-
sakit na paglingkod para
sa bawat Calambeño.

LOVE

Questions Raised on Fate of Ghost Project Controversy After Death of Ex-DPWH Usec Cathy Cabral



Philippines — The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) is mourning the death of former Undersecretary Maria Catalina “Cathy” Cabral, a career civil servant and engineer who dedicated more than four decades of her life to public service.

Cabral was found dead after an alleged fall along Kennon Road in Tuba, Benguet, where authorities later discovered her body in a ravine near the Bued River. She was declared dead in the early hours of December 19. Police and other concerned agencies have launched a joint investigation to determine the circumstances surrounding her death.

A licensed civil engineer, Cabral rose from the ranks of the DPWH and made history as one of the first women to serve as Undersecretary of the department. She was appointed as DPWH Undersecretary in November 2014 and later served as Undersecretary for Planning and Public-Private Partnership, a post she held until her resignation in September 2025.

During her tenure, Cabral played a key role in national infrastructure planning, program development, and inter-agency coordination. She also represented the DPWH in several government boards and committees, contributing to long-term infrastructure and development initiatives.

Beyond government service, Cabral was widely respected in the engineering profession. She served as President of the Philippine Institute of Civil Engineers, becoming the first woman to lead the organization, and later headed the Road Engineering Association of the Philippines. She was also a reserve officer of the Philippine Army, holding the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

In a statement, the DPWH expressed its condolences to Cabral’s family, recognizing her years of dedication, leadership, and contributions to public infrastructure and nation-building. Colleagues described her as a disciplined professional who believed in planning-driven development and public accountability.

Authorities have called for respect for the family’s privacy as investigations continue.

Cabral’s passing marks the loss of a seasoned public servant whose career left a lasting imprint on the country’s infrastructure sector and the engineering community.

(EDJUN MARIPOSQUE)

FROM SCREEN TO SPOTLIGHT: SOUTHEAST ASIAN COMMUNITY FILMMAKERS SHINE AT THE 2025 SINEMAYA COMMUNITY SHORT FILM FESTIVAL

BENTE Productions Chairman Mr. Hugo C. Yonzon III (leftmost) and CARD MRI Senior Adviser Ms. Aniceta R. Alip (second from left) pose with the Light by the Sea Productions team from Vietnam, recipients of the Best Film award in the Legacy Lens Category for their film “Light by the Sea”, a SineMaya film entry that tells the story of a woman struggling to care for her children and elderly mother after losing her



husband at sea, who receives help from her community so her son can stay in school.

cont. on page 5

Mayor Ross Rizal Brings Clean and Reliable Water to Calambeño Ville 1 After 20 Years of Waiting



Under the leadership of Calamba City Mayor Roseller “Ross” H. Rizal, residents of Calambeño Ville 1, Barangay Banlic, Calamba City, Laguna received an early Christmas gift as a



long-awaited water supply project was officially completed, ending decades of water hardship in the community.

The project was made possible through the partnership between



the City Government of Calamba and the Calamba Water District, led by General Manager Jhun Aguilar, providing a stable and dependable water connection to the entire neighborhood composed

FROM...

The 2025 SineMaya Community Film Festival, organized by BENTE Productions, the multimedia arm of CARD MRI, culminated in an awarding ceremony on December 15, 2025, at SM City San Pablo. The festival celebrated short films that embodied the official theme, “PAMANA-ON: Stewards of the Future,” highlighting the importance of legacy, responsibility, and collective action.

This year’s festival brought together filmmakers from diverse communities who used filmmaking as a platform to explore social realities, cultural heritage, and hope, while also embracing innovation through emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence. By combining storytelling with innovation, the event showcased how film can be both an artistic and transformative medium.

Reaffirming the festival’s vision, CARD MRI Founder and Chair Emeritus Dr. Jaime Aristotle B. Alip highlighted the transformative power of storytelling, saying, “Through SineMaya, filmmakers were encouraged to craft stories that reflect how the choices and actions of today shape the lives and opportunities of

FROM PAGE 4

future generations.” He also praised the participants for creating works that go beyond entertainment. “Their courage, creativity, and purposeful narratives demonstrate how art can help shape a more compassionate and responsible world,” he added.

Following a rigorous judging process of all 18 SineMaya finalists, where each entry was carefully assessed for storytelling, technical skill, creativity, and social relevance, the winning films emerged as works that inspired, moved, and touched the audience.

Top honors were awarded to “Alab” by Paroy Film Productions, which received Best Film for the AI-Powered Film category, and “Light by the Sea” by Light by the Sea Productions, which won Best Film for the Legacy Lens category. Both films also earned special recognition through the Legacy Awards, with “Alab” receiving the CARD MRI Managing Director’s Choice Award, and “Light by the Sea” being named one of the recipients of the CARD MRI Founder’s Excellence Award, alongside “Pamaon” by ShotUp Productions. These recognitions underscored the films’ ability to merge artistic excellence with strong

messages of service, resilience, and intergenerational responsibility—values closely aligned with the festival’s theme.

Outstanding achievements in performance, direction, and technical craft were also recognized. The Acting Awards honored Rosalie Castillo as Best Supporting Actor in a Female Role for her portrayal of Nanay Riya in “Pag-alala” of Balik-Tanaw Productions, and Ken Laurence Ante as Best Supporting Actor in a Male Role for his role as Arvin in “Liham” by Bikolanong Lagalag Productions. The Best Actor in a Female Role was bagged by Jorlyn Ledesma for her performance as Lira in “Binhi sa Kaugmaon” by Kanlaon Film Productions, while Nel Estuya received Best Actor in a Male Role for his portrayal of Tatay Fernando in “Saan Aabot Ang Singkwenta Ni Tatay?” filmed by Kisapmata Film Productions.

Technical excellence was likewise celebrated, with Best Editing awarded to Jhon Lorenz Jegillos for “Liham” and Best Cinematography to Jimuel Sohitado for “Binhi sa Kaugmaon”. Meanwhile, Dang Thi Hanh was named Best Director for the visually and emotionally compelling “Light by the Sea”.

He recalled that the need for water access was personally identified during the campaign period, noting the long struggle of residents who relied solely on hand pumps for over two decades.

“Noong nakaraang kampanyahan, personal nating nabisita ang lugar at doon natin nalaman na mahigit 20 taon nang poso lamang ang nagsisilbing tangting pinagkukunan nila ng tubig. Isang matagal nang pangangailangan na hindi dapat ipagwalang-bahala.”

“That is why we acted on it immediately. This is proof of our promise to listen to the people’s concerns and deliver projects that genuinely improve the quality of life of every Calambeño.”

The completion of the Calambeño Ville 1 water project stands as another concrete example of the Rizal administration’s focus on basic services, dignity, and sustainable community development, ensuring that no neighborhood is left behind in Calamba City’s progress.

(Edjun Mariposque).

Innovation took center stage in the Al-lamat Category, where “Alab” emerged as a dominant force, winning multiple awards, including Best AI-Powered Visual Effects, Editing, and Cinematography, as well as Excellence in AI-Enhanced Directing for Christian Laurence Jegillos. Meanwhile, “Damay: Mangagaway” by Dangshin Productions received Best Lifelike AI Characterization, highlighting how technology can be harnessed to deepen storytelling while maintaining emotional authenticity.

Special awards recognized creativity and audience impact, with “Ang Huling Punla” by Dos-T Productions winning Best Musical Scoring; “Saan Aabot Ang Singkwenta Ni Tatay?” by Kisapmata Film Productions earning both Best Screenplay and the People’s Choice Award; and “Damay: Mangagaway” by Dangshin Productions taking home Best Trailer.

The festival also underscored its commitment to social advocacies through the Community Development Awards. Honorees included “Hope

in the Rain” by Catalyst Productions for Agriculture; “The End of the Sky” by CanhDieuVanh Productions for Gender Equality; “Pamana” by Liwayway Films for Education; “Ang Huling Punla” by Dos-T Productions for Environmental Protection; “Hangarin” by Kumatha Productions for Disability Representation; and “Pag-alala” by Balik-Tanaw Productions for Youth Empowerment. Additional recognitions went to “Tao Rin Ako” by Panangaawat Productions, which received the

cont. on page 7