

Mayor Ross Rizal Leads Major Water System Project Bringing Clean, Reliable Supply to Brgy. Palo Alto



Calamba City, Laguna — The City Government of Calamba continues to strengthen basic services for its residents with the construction of two (2) new water systems equipped with overhead tanks, each with a capacity of 5,000 gallons, in Barangay Palo Alto.

Mayor Roseller “Ross” H. Rizal underscored the importance of the project, describing it as a significant milestone in improving the daily lives of Calambeños.

Mayor Ross Rizal—“Isang malaking hakbang tungo sa mas maayos na pamumuhay ng ating mga kababayan ang pagpapatayo ng dalawang (2) water system na may overhead tank na may kapasidad na 5,000 gallons sa Brgy. Palo Alto.”

Once completed, the project is expected to benefit more than 700 households in Purok 3, 4, and 5, ensuring a safer, more adequate, and continuous supply of clean water. Access to reliable water service is seen as a vital component of public health, family welfare, and sustainable community development.

City officials emphasized that the initiative goes beyond infrastructure, reflecting the local government’s commitment to inclusive growth and people-centered governance.

“Ang serbisyon patubig ay hindi lamang tungkol sa imprastraktura, kundi tungkol sa pagbibigay-ginhawa sa araw-araw na buhay ng mamamayan. Patunay ito ng patuloy na pagsisikap ng lokal na pamahalaan na ilapit ang serbisyo sa tao at tiyaking walang maiwan sa kaunlaran.”

The project aligns with the city’s broader vision of delivering essential services directly to communities, especially in growing barangays that require expanded utility support.

Reaffirming this commitment, the city government highlighted water access as both a necessity and a symbol of good governance.

“Sa Calamba, ang malinaw at malinis na tubig ay simbolo ng malinis na hangarin sa paglilingkod—serbisyon ramdam, serbisyon may malasakit, at serbisyon para sa lahat.”

Through initiatives like this, the City Government of Calamba continues to demonstrate its dedication to improving quality of life and ensuring that progress reaches every household. (Edjun Mariposque)

Camp Vicente Lim Press Corps Inducts New Officers in Calamba City

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna — The Camp Vicente Lim Press Corps formally inducted its newly elected officers during an oath-taking ceremony held at Camp Vicente Lim in Calamba City, Laguna, marking a new chapter for the media organization covering police, military, and public affairs in the region.

Leading the new set of officers is Toribio “Turing” D. Crisostomo, Publisher of The Morning Chronicle, who was sworn in as Chairman of the Board. Daniel Castro, Head of News and Public Affairs of DZJV 1458 Radyo Calabarzon, assumed the post of President, while Joel Cabactulan leads the Grievance and Ethics Committee, joined by Rommel Madrigal and Gil Aman.

Edjun Mariposque was designated as Public Relations Officer (PRO), while Sheila Florentino was named Pro-itor of DWBC Radyo Biñan and NSTV, took oath as Treasurer.

Joining the Board of Directors are Edjun Mariposque, Publisher and Word Owner of NSTV and GMA7, and Sheila J. Florentino of Laguna Patrol, who is also the owner of Lense Marketing & Media Production.

In addition to the elected officers, several committee and functional positions were designated by the Board of Directors. Mhadz Marasigan was appointed Assistant Secretary, while Daniel Castro also heads Membership, with Shekinah Esteban and Pau Dela Cruz as members. Joel Cabactulan leads the Grievance and Ethics Committee, joined by Rommel Madrigal and Gil Aman.

Edjun Mariposque was designated as Public Relations Officer (PRO), while Sheila Florentino was named Pro-



gram Manager, with Joy Escovidal, Shekinah Esteban, and Mhadz Marasigan as members. Rommel Madrigal and Ace Paginag were appointed as Internal Auditors.

The oath-taking ceremony underscored the Press Corps’ commitment to responsible journalism, ethical reporting, and strengthened cooperation among media practitioners covering Camp Vicente Lim and the wider CALABARZON region. The new leadership is expected to further enhance professional collaboration and uphold press freedom while maintaining constructive engagement with public institutions. (Edjun Mariposque)

Gov. Sol Aragones, Pinangunahan ang Groundbreaking ng 5-Storey Extension ng J.P. Rizal Hospital sa Calamba

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Bagong Patakaran ng LTO: Hindi na Kinukumpiska ang Lisensy, 15 Working Days ang Settlement

ATI CALABARZON Trains Over 7,000 Farmers, Agri Stakeholders in 2025

Mayor Ross Rizal Champions Inclusive at Special Screening of Award-Winning Film I’m Perfect in Calamba



CALAMBA CITY, Laguna — Calamba City Mayor Roseller “Ross” H. Rizal personally supported the meaningful block screening of I’m Perfect at SM Calamba, underscoring the city government’s strong commitment to inclusivity, equal opportunity, and the empowerment of persons with disabilities (PWDs).

I’m Perfect is a 2025 Philippine romance

film written and directed by acclaimed filmmaker Sigrid Andrea Bernardo. The film tells a sincere and heartfelt love story between two adults with Down syndrome—portrayed by Krystel Go, a proud Calambeña from Barangay Banlic, and Earl Amaba. Both lead actors also have Down syndrome in real life, making the film a powerful and authentic representation of love beyond labels and limitations.

The movie has earned widespread recognition, winning Best Picture, Best Ensemble, and Best Actress for Krystel Go at the Metro Manila Film Festival 2025. These accolades highlight not only the film’s artistic excellence but also its social impact in reshaping narratives around disability and inclusion.

More than a cinematic achievement, I’m Perfect stands as a testament to the importance of inclusive art and storytelling. Mayor Ross Rizal’s presence at the screen-



Pres. Marcos nakatakdang bumiyahe sa UAE sa Enero 12

UAE ay gaganapin sa Enero 12.

Makikilahok aniya ang pangulo sa Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week.

Makakasama ng Pangulo ang ilang head of state at gobyerno mula sa ibang bansa para talakayin ang mga isyu gaya ng enerhiya, tubig, usaping pinansyal, pagkain at kalikasan.

reaffirmed the local government’s continued support for programs and initiatives that uplift PWDs and individuals with special needs.

In Calamba City, the belief remains firm: talent, dreams, and love know no boundaries. As the city continues to strive toward genuine progress, it upholds the principle that in a truly inclusive and compassionate community, no one is left behind. (Edjun Mariposque)

Bangkay ng Napatay na Miyembro ng NPA, Isinuko sa Pamilya



EDITORIAL:

SA GITNA NG PARATANG AT PANANAHIMIK NG KATOTOHANAN

Ang pahayag ng isang ina na nawalan ng anak ay hindi dapat minamaliit, lalo na kung ito'y sinasamahan ng pagdadalamhati at pagkalito sa gitna ng naglalabang naratibo.

Ang maring pagtangg ng ni Merlinda Doydora, ina ng nasawing si Jerlyn Rose Doydora, sa umano'y pagkakasangkot ng kanyang anak sa Kabataan Partlylist ay hindi lamang isang personal na depensa—ito ay panawagan para sa paggalang, katotohanan, at pananagutan sa gitna ng isang sensitibong isyu.

Sa panahon ngayon, mabilis ang pagkalat ng impormasyon—maging ito man ay beripikado o hindi. Ang kaso ni Jerlyn ay nagpapakita kung paanong ang isang indibidwal, lalo na ang isang kabataan, ay maaaring agad na ikahon sa isang identidad o paninindigan nang walang malinaw na ebidensiya.

Ang pakiusap ng ina na itigil ang pag-uug-nay sa kanyang anak sa mga grupong hindi naman umano nila kilala o sinuportahan ay paalala na ang dignidad ng mga nasawi ay hindi dapat yurakan ng espekulasyon.

Hindi maikakaila na ang engkwentro sa Abra de Ilog ay bahagi ng mas malawak at masalimuot na usapin ng armadong tunggalian sa bansa. Subalit sa likod ng mga terminong militar at pulitikal ay mga pamilyang naiiwan—mga magulang na naghahanap ng kasagutan, at mga kapatid na nabubuhay sa tanong kung saan nagkulang ang lipunan.

Ang sinapit ni Jerlyn, batay sa salaysay ng kanyang ina, ay nagbubukas ng mas masakit na tanong: paano napupunta ang mga kabataan sa ganitong sitwasyon, at sino ang tunay na may pananagutan?

Ang detalye tungkol sa mga sugat sa paa at umano'y pag-iwan sa kanya sa bundok ay lalong nagpapabigat sa trahedya. Ito'y hindi na usapin ng ideolohiya, kundi ng pagkatao. Sa puntong ito, higit kailanman, kinakailangan ang maingat, makatao, at patas na pagtalakay sa mga ganitong insidente—hindi upang magturo ng sisi, kundi upang tyakin na ang katotohanan ay hindi natatabunan ng ingay ng propaganda at haka-haka.

Sa huli, ang panawagan ng isang ina ay panawagan din ng sambayanan: iginalang ang mga nasawi, pakinggan ang mga naulila, at hanapin ang katotohanan nang may konsensiya. Sapagkat sa bawat buhay na nawawala, may aral na dapat pagnilayan—at may pananagutang hindi dapat takasan.

Gov. Sol ...

lahat ng sektor.

“Ang equalizer nating lahat, ng iba’t ibang sektor, ay health program,” aniya.

Ayon sa mga opisyal ng lalawigan, ang itatayong extension ay tutugon sa kasalukuyang kakulangan sa pasilidad ng ospital at magpapabilis sa pagtanggap at pangangalaga sa mga pasyente,

gayundin sa pagbibigay ng mas maayos na kondisyon sa mga health worker.

Sa pamamagitan ng proyekto, ipinakita ng pamahalaang panlalawigan ang agarang aksyon at pamumunong nakatuon sa pagpapabuti ng serbisyon pangkalusugan sa Laguna.(Pau Dela Cruz)

ATI ...

In 2025, the Department of Agriculture (DA) capacity builder, the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) in CALABARZON, equipped a total of 7,084 individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to help steer a competitive and prosperous agriculture and fisheries sectors towards a vibrant economy.

As the catalyst and knowledge bank of the Philippine agriculture and fishery extension (AFE) system, the DA-ATI CALABARZON trained 4,783 farmers; 1,209 agricultural extension workers (AEWs) from various local government units; 555 DA staff; and 537 students, agri-enthusiasts, and individuals from the general public.

Training and other extension initiatives by the DA-ATI CALABARZON primarily focused on good agricultural practices, farm mechanization, climate-resilient agriculture, smart farming, and integrated nutrient and pest management.

These programs were not limited to the production aspect, as the agency also equipped

the aforementioned individuals with technologies along the agricultural value chain, including post-harvest technologies, processing, and marketing—across different banner programs like rice, corn, livestock, Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Plan (CFIDP), High Value Crops Development Program (HVC-DP), organic agriculture, and National Urban and Peri-urban Agriculture Program (NUPAP), and additional extension services.

"Sobra po ang pasasalamat ko sa ATI CALABARZON dahil ine-ensure po nila na may bago silang kaalamang naihahatid at nakakaratong po ita sa aming mga farmers. Sa training na ito, privilege po para sa akin na matuto at ma-experience 'yung mga hands-on kung paano ba bumuo ng cacao-coconut fusion products, na totoo pong helpful para mas ma-maximize pa 'yung gamit ng raw materials and ma-improve 'yung pwedeng pagkakitaan ng mga farmers," said Carla Pante, one of the farmer participants who shared her impression of

the Training on Coconut and Cacao Fusion: Value Chain-based Product Development and Market Integration last July.

John Mark Sto. Domingo, an agricultural and biosystems engineer from Teresa, Rizal, also shared how the DA-ATI CALABARZON helps extension workers like him in performing their duties at the grassroots level.

In his impression of the Training on Testing and Evaluation of Agricultural and Fisheries Machinery held last June, he said: "This training is a great help for me to understand how procurement and acceptance testing work in acquiring farm machinery. That's why every one of us ay sobrang eager ding pumasa – 'cause it will give us a chance to evaluate the machinery that we're acquiring more thoroughly. Because in the end, we want our farmers to receive those interventions na up-to-standards and fit talaga sa kung ano ang needs nila."

Moreover, social technologies, including training facilitation and management, and extension communication, were also imparted to participants, especially AEWs, farmer-leaders, and farm cooperators.

These accomplishments reflect the unwavering dedication of the DA-ATI CALABARZON in empowering its stakeholders through a resilient and responsive agriculture and fisheries extension system in the region.

Meanwhile, Dr. Rolando Maningas, Center Director of the DA-ATI CALABARZON, shared a glimpse of the agency's plans as it gears towards 2026.

"For 2026, we will solidify our efforts to modernize and mechanize the agri-fishery sector by reinforcing technologies, innovations, quality extension services, inclusivity, and skills-based trainings that respond to the evolving needs of our farmers and fishers," said Dr. Maningas.

He added, "At the same time, we will strengthen our role as a nexus in empowering and catalyzing our extension workers as key change agents in the region, ensuring that our services and their impacts are met on the ground and will truly lead to 'masaganang agrikultura at maunlad na ekonomiya.'" PR



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Learners, teachers laud AI integration in PH basic education

MANILA – Some learners and teachers expressed optimism on the assistive benefits of the artificial intelligence (AI) within the education system as the Department of Education (DepEd) officially launched Project AGAP.AI on Friday.

Project AGAP.AI or Accelerating Governance and Adaptive Pedagogy through Artificial Intelligence aims to benefit 1.5 million learners and teachers nationwide for its initial launch.

Hannah Ysabelle Lualhati, a Grade 12 STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) student from the Quezon City Science High School, expressed hopes that they can maximize the AI tool to their advantage in terms of gathering and verifying sources for their basic education research.

"Since our school is very integrated in research, I believe siguro po sa pag-fact check ng mga Review of Related Literature (RRL) and sa paggamit po ng RRLs in general, matutulungan po talaga kami ng AI (in fact-checking RRL and the utilization of RRL in general, the AI can really help us)," she said.

Milanie Cayanana, Master Teacher I, also said Project AGAP.AI can help them improve teaching strategies into a more interactive approach for students

"It can give us more opportunities when it comes to our strategies, like gamification, when it comes to our lessons. Because this also entertains the students, so that it is more interactive," she said.

Both of them, however, stressed that AI integration in the DepEd must have limitations and ethical boundaries to prevent mere dependence.

"We really hope that it can be implemented wisely. It will serve as a big change that would be helpful for us students. I wouldn't be too dependent on it since AI nga po. It's only there to help us, not replace us," Lualhati said.

Cayanana, likewise, added that teachers are constantly monitoring and checking to ensure that learners are not fully dependent on the use of AI.

"When it comes to the output ng mga estudyante, we make sure na it's not more of the AI, mayroon silang input — aided lang ng AI (When it comes to the output of the students, we make sure that it's not more of the AI, that they should have an input on it – only aided by the AI)," she said.

For his part, Education Secretary Sonny Angara agreed that AI should neither replace actual efforts nor advance cheating or any disadvantageous use within the sector.

"Sabi nga ni Pangulo sa kanyang (Like what President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. said in his) speech, it's not a replacement for hard work, for actual study, and for actual training," he said.

Among the key features of AGAP.AI are assistive technology for teachers' learning pedagogy, research support, and gamified activities for learners, among others.

The ethical use of AI will also be an integral part of the implementation of Project AGAP.AI, Angara said. "Kailangan may rules tay, hindi porket nandiyan na, gagamitin natin (We need to have rules, it's not because it's there, we will use it) to replace traditional thinking," he said.

The free AI tool, meanwhile, may be expanded to more schools in the country once the curriculum ends during the second quarter in coordination with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

also assured close collaboration with the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) to ensure AI integration through stable connectivity in all public schools. (PNA)

TRUST IN HOUSE RISES OVER REFORMS – PULSE ASIA

MANILA – Public trust in the House of Representatives recorded a marked improvement in the final quarter of 2025, reflecting growing public recognition of the Chamber's oversight and accountability efforts, according to the latest nationwide survey conducted by Pulse Asia Research.

Results of the Ulat ng Bayan survey conducted from December 12 to 15, 2025 and released Monday, showed that trust in the House rose by six percentage points, from 25 percent in September 2025 to 31 percent in December 2025, while distrust fell by nine percentage points, from 36 percent to 27 percent over the same period.

Pulse Asia data indicate that the House registered one of the strongest positive trust movements among major national institutions assessed in relation to the flood control issue.

A plurality of respondents, or 41 percent, said they are undecided on whether to trust or distrust the House — an indicator, Pulse Asia noted, of a public that is closely watching outcomes and remains open to institutional credibility gains as reforms continue.

The chairperson of the House Committee on Public Accounts said the survey results validate the chamber's push for sustained, evidence-based oversight.

"These numbers show that the public recognizes the House's serious and continuing work to strengthen accountability," Bicol Saro Party-list Rep. Terry Ridon said in a statement on Monday.

"The increase in trust and the drop in distrust reflect growing confidence that congressional oversight is being conducted professionally, transparently, and without shortcuts," he said.

Ridon emphasized that the Committee on Public Accounts remains focused on ensuring that public funds are scrutinized through proper institutional processes.

"Oversight is not about noise or spectacle. It is about following the evidence, respecting due process, and making sure that reforms lead to real consequences and better systems," he said.

The Pulse Asia survey also found that 59 percent of Filipinos believe that government officials found guilty in corruption-related cases will be punished, reinforcing public confidence in constitutional accountability mechanisms

— processes in which the House plays a central role through legislation, budget scrutiny, and oversight.

Pulse Asia researchers noted that the data reflect a public preference for results-driven governance, with trust increasing where institutions demonstrate seriousness, consistency, and reform follow-through.

The December 2025 Ulat ng Bayan survey was conducted nationwide through

face-to-face interviews with 1,200 adult respondents and has a ±2.8 percent margin of error. The study forms part of Pulse Asia Research's independent and non-partisan research program.



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CHIZ: LIFTING OF 12% VAT ON POWER TO HELP HOUSEHOLDS, BUSINESSES WITHOUT HARMING FISCAL STABILITY

Senator Francis “Chiz” Escudero said electricity sales should be exempt from the 12-percent value-added tax (VAT), saying this targeted relief in the power sector under his proposed bill would have immediate impact and ease household and industrial burdens without undermining fiscal stability.

Escudero acknowledged the recent remarks of Executive Secretary Ralph Recto, who cautioned against proposals to revert the expanded VAT to 10 percent owing to the government’s P1.6 trillion debt, and emphasized that his measure differs fundamentally as it does not reduce VAT across the board but instead zeroes in on electricity, a sector where relief is most urgently needed.

“While broad tax cuts may strain government revenues, lifting the tax on electricity is a fiscally responsible choice. It balances social equity with economic necessity,

ensuring that families and industries feel relief without compromising our ability to service debt, among others,” Escudero said.

The veteran legislator noted that electricity costs in the Philippines remain among the highest in Asia, inflating the prices of goods and services. He urged his colleagues to hasten the deliberation of Senate Bill No. 476, which he filed last year and now pending before the Committees on Ways and Means and Energy.

Under the Escudero measure, the following transactions shall also be exempt from VAT: sale of electricity by generation, transmission and distribution companies and electric cooperatives; and services of franchise grantees of electric utilities.

“SB 476 seeks to address the high electricity cost by exempting electricity sale from value-added tax. Such tax relief can

lower operating costs of industries and businesses, temper inflation, and increase disposable household income while generating revenue through increased economic activity and consumption,” he pointed out.

The senator from Sorsogon also said that removing VAT on electricity is a direct anti-inflationary measure. “Every peso saved on power bills translates to more affordable goods and stronger competitiveness. This is a targeted strike against inflation, not a blanket reduction that risks fiscal imbalance.”

Escudero further clarified that his proposal should not be conflated with calls to revert EVAT to 10 percent, saying: “Secretary Recto is right to be cautious about across-the-board cuts. My measure is different. It is surgical, not sweeping. It addresses one of the most pressing pain points of our economy while respecting fiscal realities.”

Ina ng Napatay sa Abra de Ilog: Wala Kaming Kaalaman sa Umano’y Pagkakasangkot ng Aking Anak sa Kabataan Partylist

Mariing itinanggi ni Merlinda Doydora, isang overseas Filipino worker (OFW) at ina ng nasawing si Jerlyn Rose Doydora, na may alam o pahintulot ang kanilang pamilya sa umano’y pagkakasangkot ng kanyang anak sa Kabataan Partylist.

Ginawa ni Doydora ang pahayag sa isang media forum na ginanap , Enero 9, 2026 sa Pranjette Hills Resort, Tanay, Rizal, na tumalakay sa naganap na engkwentro sa Abra de Ilog, Occidental Mindoro at sa kalagayan ng mga kabataang nasawi o naapektuhan ng insidente.

Ipinadala ng isang source ang video ng naturang media forum sa Mindoro Today.

Ayon sa ina, huling nakausap nila si Jerlyn noong Disyembre 24, at nagkita pa umano ito at ang kanyang kuya noong Disyembre 25. Inakala ng pamilya na bumalik lamang ang biktima sa

kanyang dormitoryo matapos ang naturang pagkikita.

Gayunman, lumipas ang mga sumunod na araw na walang balita ang pamilya tungkol kay Jerlyn.

Noong Enero 1, nakatanggap ang pamilya ng importasyon kaugnay sa ATM card ng biktima at isang tawag sa kanyang kuya. Sa kabila nito, umasa pa rin umano ang pamilya na maaaring biktima lamang ng holdap ang kanilang anak.

Kalaunan ay kinumpirma na si Jerlyn Rose Doydora nga ang nasawi sa naganap na engkwentro sa Abra de Ilog. Dali-daling umuwi si Merlinda Doydora mula sa abroad matapos

ang insidente. Sa media forum, nanawagan siya na itigil ang pagkalat ng mga larawan at pahayag na inuugnay ang kanyang anak sa mga grupong hindi umano nila kilala o sinuportahan.

Iginiit din ng ina na pinalaki nila ang kanilang anak nang maayos at hindi sanay sa mga aktibidad na ngayo’y ikinakabit sa kanyang pangalan.

Bilang pagtatapos ng kanyang pahayag, sinabi ni Doydora na may mga sugat umano sa paa ang kanyang anak at na iniwan ito ng mga kasamang kasama niya sa bundok, isang detalye na, ayon sa ina, lalo pang nagpapabigat sa kanilang dinaranas na pagdadalamhati.



GCASH REPRESENTS PH AT MASTERCARD GLOBAL FINANCIAL HEALTH COALITION, SHOWCASES FINTECH EXPERTISE IN INTERNATIONAL ARENA

Leading finance super app GCash is bringing its financial technology expertise as the sole Philippine founding partner in the Mastercard Global Financial Health Coalition, an international network of industry innovators focused on advancing financial health and resilience.

Represented by GCash lending arm Fuse Financing Inc., its president and CEO, Tony Isidro, is sharing his knowledge on how to further financial inclusion on a larger scale through technology.

This perspective sets the stage for the participation of GCash in the Coalition, which aims to strengthen financial resilience in emerging markets by connecting people to the right tools — harnessing technology for protection and empowering long-term financial habits. Other members of the Coalition include DANA, TrueMoney, MTN Group Fintech, Airtel Africa, MOCO, Axian, Daviplata, and The Center for Financial Inclusion.

“GCash has transformed how millions of Filipinos manage their money—bringing secure, digital financial services into everyday life. Through its lending arm, Fuse Financing Inc., it has democratized lending in the Philippines, making credit fair and more accessible to millions, especially the unbanked and underserved segments,” Isidro said.

“By joining this coalition, we aim to extend that impact beyond our borders, sharing our mobile-first innovation and insights to help strengthen financial resilience across emerging markets,” he added.

More than account openings For Isidro, the industry must confront a hard truth: opening an account is not enough to improve financial well-being. Real progress depends on whether people trust financial tools, understand them and use them regularly. Technology is central to building these behaviors. It strengthens security, simplifies transactions and enables users to take control of their financial decisions.

According to Isidro, however, many Filipinos remain outside the formal financial system despite the rapid expansion of digital adoption in the country. This gap is evident in a study by Mastercard showing that 49.8% of adults still do not have a formal financial account. This limits access to savings, credit, and insurance that are key to long-term financial stability.

Fuse Financing addressed this gap by offering credit products that are simple, secure and accessible through the GCash app. This accessibility led to a growth in lending activities, reflecting a shift in behavior as more users integrate

borrowing into their daily financial routines. This pattern aligns with Mastercard’s findings that deeper usage of financial tools is closely associated with financial progression.

The Philippines illustrates how fintech platforms can reach communities that traditional banking has not fully served. Mastercard’s analysis also shows that when digital and physical tools complement each other, people are more likely to build consistent financial habits. This reinforces the role of technology as a driver of trust and adoption.

Isidro, as such said, the coalition strengthens the opportunity to bring this approach to more markets. “We look forward to learning from fellow coalition members whose diverse experiences and best practices can help us further elevate our solutions. Together, we can accelerate progress toward a truly inclusive digital economy,” he said.

As the Coalition moves forward, the experience and expertise of GCash in driving adoption and responsible borrowing will contribute to a broader, regional effort to improve financial health. The goal is to build a digital economy where more people have the tools and confidence to advance financially.

For more information, please visit www.gcash.com.

Fuel prices up Tuesday

MANILA – Fuel prices will rise by up to PHP0.30 per liter on Tuesday, oil firms announced Monday.

separate advisories, Seaoil and PTT Philippines said gasoline prices would go up by PHP0.30 per liter and diesel by PHP0.20 per liter effective 6 a.m.

The uptick in gasoline prices is a reversal of the PHP0.10 per liter decline last week, while the rise in diesel prices is the third week in a row, which authorities trace partly to geopolitical developments overseas.

Seaoil said price of its kerosene would also rise by PHP0.30 per liter at the same time.

Authorities earlier said geopolitical concerns continue to remain among the major upside risk on fuel prices, amidst the expected decline of prices in Asia due to expected oversupply. (PNA)



PUBLISHER CORNER

2026 NATIONAL BUDGET, PIPIRMAHAN NI PBBM NA MAY MAS MALAKING PONDONG NAKA-SENTRO SA HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT, AT TUNAY NA PANGANGAILANGAN NG MGA PILIPINO



Nakatakdang pirmahan ni Pangulong Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. ang panukalang national budget para sa fiscal year (FY) 2026 sa Lunes, Enero 5, sa Malacañang Palace.

Ang FY 2026 General Appropriations Act (GAA), na nagkakahalaga ng PHP6.793 trillion, ay malinaw na nagpapakita ng layunin ng administrasyong Marcos Jr. na ilagay ang kapakanan ng mga Pilipino sa sentro ng pag-unlad ng bansa. Prayoridad dito ang mga sektor na mahalaga para sa pantay at inklusibong kaunlaran. Ibig sabihin, mas tutok ang budget sa tao, sa human capital, at sa pangangailangan ng susunod na henerasyon.

Pinuri ni Department of Budget and Management (DBM) Acting Secretary Rolando U. Toledo ang Pangulo sa kanyang matatag na pamumuno at sa patuloy na pagtupad sa pangakong palawakin ang mga oportunidad para sa mga Pilipino.

“Maraming maraming salamat sa ating Pangulong Bongbong Marcos sa kanyang walang-patid na suporta at pagsigurong prayoridad ng pambansang pondo ang ating mamamayan. With the signing of the 2026 GAA into law, we are guaranteeing investments that will turn into tangible results and ultimately uplift the lives of our people. Sa atin pong mga kababayan, budget natin ito. You can be assured that the Filipino people are at the core of this budget,” saad ni Secretary Toledo.

Edukasyon bilang pangunahing prayoridad

Sa 2026, ang Education sector ang may pinakamalaking bahagi ng national budget na aabot sa PHP1.345 trillion. Katumbas ito ng 4.36 percent ng GDP ng bansa at sapat para maabot ng Pilipinas ang benchmark sa ilalim ng UNESCO Education 2030 Framework.

Kasama rin sa budget ang pondo para sa paglikha ng 32,916 teaching at 32,268 non-teaching plantilla positions sa mga pampublikong paaralan, pati na rin ang pagpapagawa ng 24,964 classrooms sa buong bansa.

Kalusugan

Bilang bahagi ng layunin ng administrasyon na matiyak ang universal health care para sa bawat Pilipino, makakatanggap ang health sector ng pinakamalaking budget nito sa kasaysayan na PHP448.125 billion.

Magagamit ito para palakasin ang Universal Health Care Fund ng Department of Health (DOH), lalo na para sa Zero Balance Billing (ZBB), maagap na pagtugon sa communicable at non-communicable diseases, disease surveillance, mabilis na response mechanisms, sustainable health financing, at pagkuha ng karagdagang doctors at nurses sa buong bansa.

Inaasahan ding lalo nitong mapalakas ang Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth).

Agrikultura

May kabuuang PHP297.102 billion na ilalaan para sa Agriculture sector upang

matiyak ang food security, gawing mas moderno ang supply systems, at palakasin ang kakayahan ng mga magsasaka at mangingisda.

Kasama rin dito ang mga investment sa Farm-to-Market Roads para mas gumanda ang kabuhayan ng mga magsasaka, bumaba ang gastos sa produksyon, at mapalakas ang ekonomiya sa mga rural na lugar.

Social Services

Upang mapabuti ang kalidad ng buhay ng mga Pilipino, mabawasan ang kahinaan ng iba’t ibang sektor, at maprotektahan ang kanilang kapakanan, maglalaan ang pamahalaan ng PHP270.189 billion para sa social services sector sa 2026.

Local Governance

May malaking dagdag din sa pondo para sa Local Government Units (LGUs) sa 2026 national budget upang mas matugunan ang mga pangangailangan sa lokal na antas at mapabuti ang buhay sa bawat komunidad.

Palalakasin ang Local Government Support Fund (LGSF) para sa pagpapatuloy ng mga programang naglalayong bumuo ng ligtas at matatag na mga komunidad. Bukod dito, may PHP15.33 billion ding inilaan para sa Disaster Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Assistance Program sa ilalim ng National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund (NDRRMF).

Military and Uniformed Personnel

Patuloy ring bibigyang-halaga ng 2026 national budget ang kapakanan ng military at uniformed personnel (MUP). Sa bisa ng Executive Order No. 107, s. 2025, tataas ang base pay at subsistence allowance ng MUP simula 2026.

Direct Veto

Samantala, may ilang items sa ilalim ng Unprogrammed Appropriations na tinanggal sa 2026 national budget matapos gamitin ng Pangulo ang kanyang veto powers. Bahagi ito ng paninindigan ng administrasyon sa fiscal responsibility at accountability.

“The Executive received the en-rolled bill on December 29, 2025 and conducted a thorough and careful review of the proposed budget to ensure consistency with the administration’s priorities and taking into consideration valuable recommendations from stakeholders,” ani DBM Secretary Toledo.

Malinis, disiplinado, at budget na tumugon sa tunay na pangangailangan ng mga Pilipino

Ipinapakita rin ng pagpasa ng 2026 national budget ang pagsulong ng transparency sa proseso ng budgeting. Sa kauna-unahang pagkakataon, na-lives-tream ang mga proceedings ng Bicameral Conference Committee upang mapataas ang tiwala ng publiko at mapalakas ang pananagutan sa paggastos .



Pointer

Pau Dela Cruz

Sa Gitna ng Laban, Nanaig ang Pagiging Tao

Sa gitna ng umiinit na usaping pangseguridad sa bansa, may mga sandaling nagpapaalala na kahit sa gitna ng armadong tunggalian, nananatili ang obligasyong maging makatao.

Isa rito ang pormal na pagliipat ng labi ng isang babaeng kasapi ng New People’s Army (NPA) sa kanyang pamilya—isang pangyayaring higit pa sa balita; ito’y paalala ng bigat ng bawat buhay na nawawala sa digmaan.

Natagpuan ang nasabing NPA na wala nang buhay noong Enero 2 sa Barangay Cabacao, Abra de Ilog, Occidental Mindoro, matapos ang engkuwentro at clearing operations.

Iniwang siya ng kanyang mga kasamahan sa gitna ng mahirap na terrain at patuloy na operasyong panseguridad. Gayunman, sa kabila ng panganib at hamon, tiniyak ng mga sundalo na maayos at may dignidad na ma-secure ang kanyang mga labi—isang hakbang na sumasalamain sa paninindigan ng Hukbong Katihan na igalang ang pagkatao, kaaway man o hindi.

Ang paglipat ng mga labi sa pamamagitan ng military helicopter patungong Batangas ay hindi lamang usapin ng logistik. Ito’y malinaw na mensahe: na ang Estado, sa kabila ng tungkulin nitong ipagtanggol ang mamamayan, ay hindi nagagalak sa

pagkawala ng buhay.

Gaya ng binigyang-diin ni Col. Michael Aquino ng 2nd Infantry (Jungle Fighter) Division, ang layunin ay tapusin ang karahasan—hindi paramihin ang mga bangkay.

Mahalagang igalang din ang kailangan ng pamilya para sa pribasiya. Sa panahon ng social media at mabilis na balitaan, ang paggalang sa pagdadalamhati ay nagiging bihira. Ang koordinasyon at kooperasyon na naganap ay patunay na posible ang mahinahong pagharap kahit sa masalimuot na sitwasyon.

Higit sa lahat, ang pangyayaring ito ay paanyaya sa pagninilay. Ilan pa bang kabataan ang kailangang mamatay para sa adhikaing nauuwi lamang sa paghihirap ng mga pamilya at komunidad? Kung may aral man dito, iyon ay ang panawagan sa kapayapaan—ang pagtalikod sa dahas at ang pagbabalik-loob sa mga programang reintegrasyon na nag-aalok ng pag-asa at bagong simula.

Habang nagpapatuloy ang mga operasyong panseguridad sa Occidental Mindoro upang tiyakin ang kaligtasan ng mga residente, nawa’y manatiling sentro ng ating diskurso ang halaga ng buhay.

Sapagkat sa dulo ng bawat balita ng engkuwentro, may pamilyang nagluksa—at isang lipunang may pananagutan humanap ng landas tungo sa kapayapaan.

Gov. Sol ...

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna — Pinangunahan ni Laguna Governor Sol Aragones ang groundbreaking ceremony ng itatayong limang-palapag na extension ng J.P. Rizal Hospital nitong Enero 5, 2026, bilang bahagi ng patuloy na pagpapalakas ng serbisiyong pangkalusugan sa lalawigan ng Laguna.

Layunin ng proyekto na palawakin ang kapasidad ng ospital at mapabuti ang serbisiyong medikal para sa mga Lagunense. Dumalo sa aktibidad ang ilang matataas na opisyal ng lalawigan, kabilang sina Provincial

Engineer Engr. Gil Agarr, OIC ng Provincial Health Office Dr. Odilion Inoncillo, dating DOH Undersecretary Dr. Eric Tayag, Provincial Administrator Atty. Nathalie Velasquez, at Dr. Petersan U., Chief of Hospital ng J.P. Rizal Hospital. Ayon sa plano, magkakaroon ng emergency room sa unang palapag, mga ward sa ikalawa at ikatlong palapag, at dormitoryo para sa mga health worker sa ika-apat na palapag ang bagong gusali.

Binigyang-diin ni Governor Aragones na layunin ng proyekto ang maibsan ang pagsisikip sa ospital at mapabuti ang

FROM PAGE 1

kalagayan ng mga pasyente. “Ang gusto po talaga natin ay hindi siksikan,” ani ng gobernador.

Ipinaliwanag din niya na ang proyekto ay pinondohan mula sa buwis ng mamamayan at katuparan ng kanyang ipinangako sa publiko.

“Ito ay buwis ng mamamayan. Tinupad ko yung pangako, pero ang nagpatayo nito ay buwis ng mamamayan,” dagdag pa niya.

Binigyang-diin ni Aragones na ang kalusugan ay pantay-pantay na pangangailangan ng *cont. on page 2*

Sailing forward



Joel Lumangcas, a skilled boat operator, expertly navigates his boat across the crystal-clear waters of Bohol.

Bound to the sea for most of his life, Joel Lumangcas from Panglao Island, Bohol, moves with the waves.

From a young age, he had already helped his father with fishing, a livelihood that sustained their family.

In 2008, Joel found himself working at a dive shop, where he served as a speedboat operator for divers. One day, his boss offered him the chance to become a dive-master, just like his colleagues, which he readily accepted.

As a dive master, he ensured that tourists were fully briefed on all the underwater rules and knew what to expect during their tours. He guided them underwater, carefully overseeing their safety at all times.

Unfortunately, around 2010, he suffered a serious accident when an old tank he was using exploded, leaving his hands and feet severely injured. He spent two and a half months in the hospital, unable to walk. During this challenging period of his life, his wife, Cherry, stepped up as the family's breadwinner. Cherry went to their neighborhood selling banana cue to make

ends meet, while Joel focused on his healing.

After three years of recovery, Joel began helping his mother sell fish in the market. Five years later, when his injury had fully healed, someone offered him a job at sea again. At first, he was hesitant, still haunted by the trauma of his past accident, but his desire to provide for his family gave him the courage to confront his fears.

When he returned to work, Joel became a snorkeling guide for a tour agency owned by his Korean employ-

er. Meanwhile, his wife worked as a dishwasher in a restaurant owned by the same employer.

During the low season, when there were no tourists, Joel would go fishing in the sea, selling the fish at his mother's stall in the market.

In 2018, Joel and his wife, Cherry, learned about CARD, Inc. (A Microfinance NGO) from a friend. With the institution's loan, Joel was able to purchase a boat. Currently, both of them have a loan of PHP 40,000.00 each, which they use to maintain their boat, renovate their

house, and support their children's education.

"Malaki ang naitulong sa akin ng CARD, Inc., kagaya ngayon yung tourist boat na ginagamit ko sa paghahanapbuhay ay mula sa loan na kinuha ko sa kanila (CARD, Inc. has helped me a lot. For instance, the tourist boat I now use to earn a living was made possible through the loan I received from them)," Joel stated.

Looking ahead, Joel hopes to acquire his second boat, a venture that will not only increase their family's income but also provide for their children's education and evolving needs. PR

Cavite sees drop in New Year-related incidents

CITY OF IMUS, Cavite (PIA) — The province of Cavite recorded a decline in holiday-related incidents during the New Year celebrations, according to data from the Cavite Police Provincial Office (PPO).

Acting Provincial Director Col. Ariel Red reported a sharp drop in firecracker- and pyrotechnics-related injuries. Data from the Ligas Paskuhan campaign showed a 75-percent decrease in incidents, from 36 cases in 2024 to just eight in 2025.

All recorded cases involved firecracker- and pyrotechnics-related injuries. The Cavite PPO reported no incidents of indiscriminate firing, stray bullets, road crashes, or fires linked to fireworks and pyrotechnic devices.

Col. Red attributed the peaceful celebration to the combined

efforts of law enforcers, local government units, and the public.

"The remarkable decrease in incidents during the New Year's celebration is proof of the effective implementation of the laws and the cooperation of the people," he said, adding that public discipline played a crucial role in ensuring safety across the province.

The Cavite PPO also cited intensified operations against illegal firecrackers and loose firearms, heightened police visibility, and close coordination with local government units and the Caviteño community as key factors behind the positive outcome.

The provincial police force extended its gratitude to partner agencies, LGUs, and residents for their continued support in maintaining peace and order.



Gatchalian: P9-B allocated for ARAL program under 2026 budget



MANILA – Nearly PHP9 billion under the 2026 national budget will expand the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) program to accelerate learning recovery, Senator Sherwin Gatchalian assured.

According to the Department of Education's (DepEd) Middle of School Year Assessments, Grade 3 to 6 learners improved their reading readiness by an average of five points, while Grades 7 to 10 learners had improvements of between six to nine points. Gatchalian said these gains translate to 3.42 million Grades 3 to

(Part of the historic funding we have allocated to the education sector this year is full support for the implementation of the) ARAL program," Gatchalian said in a news release on Sunday.

Gatchalian, sponsor of the ARAL Program Act, said the PHP9 billion allocation "is an important step to help us curb the education crisis we have been facing for a long time."

Under the 2026 national budget, PHP8.96 billion is allocated for the ARAL program to engage 440,000 tutors and reach 6.7 million learners for school year 2026-2027. (PR)

DOTr acquires 90% right-of-way for subway, 56% for NSCR North

MANILA – Right-of-way (ROW) acquisition for the Metro Manila Subway Project (MMSP) has reached 90.76 percent, with at least 56 percent for the North-South Commuter Railway (NSCR) North Segment done by the end of 2025.

The acquisition is in line with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s directive to expedite land acquisition for the thousands of commuters who will benefit from both transport projects.

In a statement on Friday, Department of Transportation (DOTr) acting Secretary Giovanni Lopez said the ROW acquisition for the MMSP was only 51 percent complete as of February last year. On the other hand, the number of acquired properties for the

NSCR North Segment increased from 38 parcels in February to 1,143 in December 2025.

"Noong 2025, tagalang banner year para sa right-of-way natin dahil mas binilisan pa natin ang land acquisition para agad na mapakinabangan ng mga kompyuter itong subway at NSCR (In 2025, it was a banner year for ROW because we accelerated land acquisition for the benefit of commuters of the subway and NSCR)," Lopez said.

The accelerated acquisitions were accomplished under the leadership of former DOTr Secretary Vince Dizon and incumbent acting Secretary Lopez through addressing major bottlenecks in the MMSP, including Varilla Properties, properties in White Plains, Corinthian

Gardens, and Metrowalk.

In addition, the ROW and site acquisition (ROWSA) project is being implemented through key initiatives such as the appointment of DOTr Assistant Secretary for ROWSA IC Calaguas, who oversees land acquisition for these projects.

ROWSA personnel were also increased from 200 to 900, while capacity building and training projects were also held to enhance their knowledge and skills.

ROWSA for the NSCR North Segment is expected to be completed by mid-2026.

For the NSCR South Segment, four of the 19 stations' ROW have been cleared —namely EDSA, Cabuyao, Santa Rosa, and the Banlic Depot. (PNA)

Iran Erupts in Deadliest Uprising Since 1979 as Economic Collapse Fuels Nationwide Revolt

January 13, 2026 — Iran is facing its most severe anti-government uprising since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, as a catastrophic economic collapse has ignited nationwide protests that have evolved into a direct challenge to the country's clerical leadership.

Human rights organizations report that at least 648 protesters have been killed, including nine children, since demonstrations intensified late last month. Activist networks, citing information from isolated provinces cut off from communications, warn that the actual death toll could range from 2,000 to as many as 6,000, amid an aggressive and largely unseen state crackdown. Digital Darkness and Nationwide Unrest

The crisis has been compounded by a near-total internet blackout, now in its fifth consecutive day, with connectivity reportedly reduced to about 1% of normal traffic. Rights groups describe the blackout as a deliberate attempt by authorities to conceal mass arrests and killings while preventing protesters from organizing or sharing evidence with the outside world.

Despite these restrictions, unrest has spread rapidly. Demonstrations have been recorded in 186 cities across all 31 provinces, making the movement one of the most geographically extensive in Iran's modern history. What began on December 28, 2025, as protests by shopkeepers and traders in Tehran's bazaars over soaring prices has since expanded into a broad-based uprising involving workers, students, professionals, and families openly calling for an end to the Islamic Republic.

ROWSA personnel were also increased from 200 to 900, while capacity building and training projects were also held to enhance their knowledge and skills.

ROWSA for the NSCR North Segment is expected to be completed by mid-2026. For the NSCR South Segment, four of the 19 stations' ROW have been cleared —namely EDSA, Cabuyao, Santa Rosa, and the Banlic Depot. (PNA)

Heavy-Handed State Response

The Iranian government has responded with force, deploying the Islamic Revolutionary



security units that have reportedly used live ammunition against crowds. At the same time, state media has broadcast large, organized pro-government "loyalty rallies", portraying an image of control and stability amid the turmoil.

Iranian officials have accused foreign powers of fomenting the unrest. Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Tehran is "ready for war but also for dialogue," while blaming the United States and Israel for allegedly orchestrating the protests.

Rising International Tensions

The unrest has triggered sharp international reactions. U.S. President Donald Trump announced a 25% tariff on all countries doing business with Iran, targeting major trading partners such as China, and warned of "very strong" military options should the killing of protesters continue.

In Europe, diplomatic tensions escalated after several governments voiced support for Iranian protesters. Tehran responded by summoning multiple European ambassadors on Tuesday, accusing their countries of interference in Iran's internal affairs.

Economic Freefall at the Core

At the heart of the uprising is Iran's deepening economic crisis. The Iranian rial plunged to a record low of over 1.4 million to the U.S. dollar, wiping out savings and driving



basic goods beyond the reach of millions. The collapse follows a 12-day war with Israel in mid-2025 and the reimposition of United Nations nuclear sanctions in September 2025, which together devastated infrastructure, trade, and investor confidence.

As protests con-

tinue despite deadly repression and a communications blackout, analysts warn that Iran is entering a critical and unpredictable phase—one that could reshape not only its political future but also the balance of power across the Middle East. (Edjun Mariposque)

Bagong Patakaran ng LTO: Hindi na Kinukumpiska ang Lisensy, 15 Working Days ang Settlement

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Hindi na maaaring gawing "hostage" ang driver's license ng mga motorista tuwing may traffic violation. Ito ang naging malinaw na mensahe ng Department of Transportation (DOTr) at LTO matapos ipatigil ang aktuwal na pagkumpiska ng lisensya sa buong bansa.

Sa isang memorandum na inilabas noong Enero 9, inatasan ni Transportation Secretary Giovanni Lopez ang Land Transportation Office (LTO) na agad suspendihin ang pagkumpiska ng driver's license sa mga nahuhuling motorista habang nire-review at inaayos ang aktuwal na pagkumpiska sa traffic apprehension.

Ang direktiba ay bahagi ng utos ni Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr. na linawin, gawing pare-pareho, at gawing mas makatarungan ang proseso ng pag-apprehend ng mga motorista, matapos ang mga rekla-

mo ukol sa magulo at hindi malinaw na sistema ng confiscation at settlement ng violations.

Kasabay nito, binago rin ng DOTr ang palugit para sa pag-aayos ng traffic violations. Mula sa dating 15 calendar days, ginawa na itong 15 working days, ibig sabihin ay hindi na bibilangin ang mga holiday at long weekend.

"Ibig sabihin po nito, hindi kasama ang mga holiday at long weekend sa bilang ng araw kapag magse-settle ng violation ang driver," paliwanag ni Lopez.

Bagama't hindi na kukunin ng enforcers ang pisikal na lisensya, ilalagay pa rin ng LTO sa alert status ang rekord ng motorista na may violation. Kapag hindi naayos ang kaso sa loob ng 15 working days, saka pa lamang ipatutupad ang awtomatikong suspensyon o pagbawi ng lisensya.

Agad nang ipinatutupad ang bagong patakaran sa lahat ng kalsada at rehiyon sa bansa. (Nelson Dimapilis)

Bangkay ng Napatay na Miyembro ng NPA, Isinuko sa Pamilya

CAMP CAPIN-PIN, Rizal — Pormal na isinuko sa kanyang pamilya ang mga labi ng isang babaeng miyembro ng New People's Army (NPA) na nasawi sa nagdaang engkwentro sa Abra de Ilog, Occidental Mindoro, matapos ang koordinasyong pinangasiwaan ng 2nd Infantry (Jungle Fighter) Division noong Binyernes, Enero 3.

Natagpuan ng mga tropa ng pamahalaan ang nasabing miyembro ng NPA na wala nang buhay noong Enero 2, sa isinagawang clearing operations kasundong ng guided close air support operation sa Barangay Cabacao. Ayon sa militar, iniwan umano ang nasabing rebelde ng kanyang mga kasamahan matapos tumakas ang mga ito mula sa lugar ng engkwentro.

Sa kabila ng mahirap na kalupaan at patuloy na security operations sa lugar, siniguro ng mga sundalo ang maayos at ligtas na pagkuha sa mga labi ng nasawi. Inilipad ang bangkay mula Occidental Mindoro patungong Batangas sakay ng isang military helicopter ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) upang maihatid sa pamilya at mabigyan ng marangal na paglilibing.

Ayon sa pahayag ni Colonel Michael Aquino, tagapagsalita ng 2nd Infantry Division at hepe ng Division Public Affairs Office, naging mahalaga ang kooperasyon ng pamilya upang maisakatuparan ang maayos na turnover ng mga labi. Iginagalang din umano ng hukbo ang kahilingan ng pamilya na igalang ang kanilang privacy.

"Ito lamang ang

impormasyong maaari naming ibahagi sa ngayon. Kami ay nagpapasalamat sa kooperasyon ng pamilya at sa kanilang pakikipag-ugnayan sa 2nd Infantry Division. Humiling din sila ng pribasiya hanggang sa mailibing ang kanilang mahal sa buhay, at lubos namin itong iginagalang," ani Col. Aquino. Dagdag pa niya, nananatiling matatag ang Philippine Army sa pagtupad sa tungkulin nitong protektahan ang mga komunidad, subalit hindi nito binabalewala ang halagang pantao ng armadong tunggalian.

"Hindi ikinatutua ng Philippine Army ang pagkawala ng buhay. Ang aming misyon ay hindi pu-matay, kundi tapusin ang karahasan at piligan ang mas marami pang Pilipino—lalo na ang mga nailigaw sa armadong pakikibaka—na mamatay para sa adhikaing nagdudulot lamang ng pagdurusa," pahayag ni Aquino.

Muling nanawagan ang 2nd Infantry Division sa mga kasapi ng armadong grupo na talikuran ang karahasan at piliin ang landas ng kapayapaan, habang binibigyang-diin na patuloy na nag-aalok ang pamahalaan ng mga programa sa reintegrasyon at tulong para sa mga nais bumalik sa kanilang pamilya at komunidad.

Samantala, patuloy ang security operations sa Occidental Mindoro upang matiyak ang kaligtasan ng mga residente, lalo na sa mga liblib na lugar na apektado ng presensya ng armadong grupo. Patuloy rin ang koordinasyon ng militar sa mga lokal na komunidad bilang mahalagang bahagi ng pagpapanatili ng kapayapaan at kaayusan sa rehiyon. (Pau Mojar)

