Enchanted Kingdom, two other Filipino companies win ASEAN tourism awards

Sta Rosa, Laguna- The first and only world-class theme park in the Philippines enters 2026 as one of the three Filipino companies that were recognized by ASEAN's most esteemed honors in tourism!

Now on its 30th year, Enchanted Kingdom (EK) was hailed as the Best ASEAN New Tourism Attraction for its unique flying theater, AGILA The EKsperience: SARIBUHAY as awarded by the ASEAN Tourism Association (ASEANTA).

The award was received by EK Chairman and President Mr. Cesar Mario O. Mamon together with Chief Operating Officer Dr. Cynthia R. Mamon during the 35th ASEANTA Excellence Awards held this January 27, Tuesday at JPark Island Resorts and Waterpark in Mactan, Cebu.

As part of the 45th ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF), the ASEANTA Excellence Awards 2026 honored "creativity, innovation, and dedication that drive the tourism industry forward" in the Southeast Asia region.

“We are deeply honored and humbled to represent Filipino excellence in tourism and entertainment in this prestigious platform in the ASEAN community.

This award fuels our commitment to continuously provide magical experiences like AGILA The EKsperience: SARIBUHAY that also contributes towards our shared mission of sustainable tourism,” shared Dr. Mamon.

As the first and only flying theater in the Philippines that’s also a part of EK’s Education Program, AGILA The EKsperience: SARIBUHAY has been going above and beyond its core mission to drive educational tourism and national pride by showcasing the natural beauty of the country ever since it was first introduced in 2016.

EK relaunched this attraction last October as part of the theme park’s 30th anniversary celebration, now serving as a powerful call to action — reminding everyone of the urgent need to conserve and protect the environment.

With its enhanced film and overall thematic experience, the flying theater now also takes guests on a magical journey underwater as it features various local marine ecosystems along with some of its diverse yet endangered wildlife.

Aside from EK, two other Filipino companies were also awarded, namely the Muntinlupa-based destination management agency Shroff Travel as the Best Asean Travel Article, and the premier event space SMX Convention Center as the Best ASEAN Convention Centre Shroff Travel was represented by its Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Arjun Shroff, while Mr. Walid Wafik, Senior Vice President–Operations of SM Hotels and Conventions Corp. (SMHCC), received the award for SMX Convention Center during the award ceremony.

Guests can experience EK’s award-winning attraction along with its other rides and offerings from Wednesdays to Sundays, 11AM to 8PM.*

*Park and ride schedules are subject to change without prior notice.

For more information and updates regarding AGILA The EKsperience: SARIBUHAY and EK’s other forever enchanting events and offers, ***visit https://www.enchantedkingdom.ph*** and EK’s official social media accounts @enchantedkingdom.ph for Facebook and TikTok, and @ek_philippines for Instagram.

Bilang Committee Head ng Trade, Commerce, and Industry, mahalaga ang pagbibigay-trabaho sa ating mga kapwa Calambeño-- Dagdag-kita para sa kanilang mga tahanan.
Kaya't ating sinamahan ang ating Mayor Ross Rizal sa pamimigay ng Kabuhayan ni Rizal sa 900 pang dagdag na benepisyaryo ng Programang ito.
Isa itong pagpapatunay ng pagbibigay-tulong sa mga pinagkakakitaan ng mamamayang Calambeño, sa 54 barangays ng Calamba, na siyang suportadong lubos ng Pamahalaang Lungsod.

(Gara Wagan Capistrano)

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WEEKLY NEWS PUBLISHING

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

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Cayetano: Dinggin muna sa komite ang resolusyon laban sa China

5,000 Calambeños Empowered as Mayor Ross Rizal Expands “Kabuhayan ni Rizal” Livelihood Program”

Public Funds at Work: Mayor Ross Rizal Inspects Ongoing Infrastructure Projects in Calamba

Calamba City — A strong demonstration of transparency and accountability, Mayor Roseller “Ross” H. Rizal personally visited and inspected ongoing infrastructure projects in Barangay 4 and Barangay 3, emphasizing that these developments are funded by the hard-earned taxes of Calambeños and must deliver real value to the community.

During the inspection, Mayor Rizal underscored the importance of hands-on leadership in ensuring quality and proper use of public funds.

“Ako po ay bumisita at naginspeksyon sa mga ginagawang mga infrastructure projects sa Brgy. 4 at Brgy. 3 upang tiyakin ang maayos na implementasyon, kalidad ng trabaho, at tamang paggamit ng pondo.”

The inspection aimed to assess the progress of the projects, verify compliance with standards, and ensure that construction timelines are being followed. Mayor Rizal reiterated that his administration remains vigilant in monitoring all city-funded initiatives to

cont. on page 2

Kauna-unahang Laguna Pastors and Workers Summit, Isinagawa sa Laguna

LAGUNA- Isang maka-Diyos at makasaysayang pagtitipon ang naganap matapos magsama-sama ang mahigit isang libong pastor at church workers mula sa iba’t ibang bayan ng Laguna sa kauna-unahang Laguna Pastors and Workers Summit noong Enero 30, 2026, sa Laguna Sports Complex, bilang bahagi ng pagdiriwang ng National Bible Month.

Pinangunahan ang summit ng Pamahalaang Panlalawigan ng Laguna sa pamamagitan ng Moral Development Office, sa pamumuno ng focal person na si Pastor Gojo Cruz, at sa suporta ni Gobernador Sol Aragones. Panauhing pandangal sa pagtitipon si Senador Alan Peter Cayetano, na naghatid ng mensahe hinggil sa pananampalataya, layunin, at pamumunong nakaugat sa Salita ng Diyos.

Sa kanyang mensahe, ibinahagi ni Gobernador Aragones ang kanyang karanasan matapos ang pagkatalo sa gubernatorial elections noong 2022, na aniya’y naging panahon ng pagsubok sa kanyang pananampalataya. Ayon sa gobernador, ang mga salitang binitiwan ni Senador Cayetano na “May plano ang Panginoon para sa iyo” ang nagbigay sa kanya ng lakas ng loob at pag-asa.

Binigyang-diin ni

cont. on page 2

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EDITORYAL:

CHIZ URGES GOV'T TO ADVANCE TRIPARTITE DEAL TO EMPOWER LGUS

Senator Francis "Chiz" Escudero is calling on the national government to advance the proposed tripartite agreement among the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), the Department of Education (DepEd), and the Department of Agriculture (DA), saying the framework will empower qualified local government units (LGUs) to achieve accelerated growth through improved infrastructure, stronger rural connectivity, and better school facilities.

In his recent conversation with Public Works Secretary Vince Dizon, Escudero said he was informed that the proposed agreement identifies two key requirements for LGUs that will be prioritized: demonstrated capacity to implement and complete projects, and a stable peace-and-order environment that allows development programs to proceed without disruption.

"The national government should focus on LGUs that have shown they can plan well, execute well, and maintain order," Escudero said. "When local governments are capable, national-local partnerships become faster, more efficient, and more impactful."

"Our LGUs should also take advantage of this new business model by meeting these requirements so they can access more support, unlock bigger opportunities, and deliver development programs more quickly to their constituents," he added.

The Bicolano senator expressed his delight when he was told by Secretary Dizon that Sorsogon is among the provinces that meet the criteria and could serve as a top choice under the tripartite model, citing its strong governance performance and readiness to implement infrastructure programs.

From 2019 to 2022, during Escudero's term as governor, Sorsogon completed major infrastructure projects such as the Sorsogon Coastal Road, rehabilitated provincial and barangay roads during the pandemic, and strengthened peace and order through support for Barangay Development Projects under the Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (TF-ELCAC). These initiatives created a stable environment that enabled development programs to take root and succeed.

The veteran legislator said the tripartite model is applicable to all provinces nationwide, provided that LGUs meet the agreement's requirements on capacity and peace and order.

Replicating the approach in similarly capable LGUs, he said, can help spur growth across regions.

He added that the DPWH-DepEd-DA partnership can serve as a template for future collaborations aimed at improving infrastructure, enhancing education facilities, and supporting agricultural productivity.

"This is exactly how the Local Government Code envisioned development — strong national support matched with capable, empowered LGUs delivering results on the ground," Escudero pointed out.

"When we back LGUs that are ready and proven, progress becomes faster, fairer, and felt by more families," he concluded.

Public...

FROM PAGE 1

guarantee that every project directly benefits the people of Calamba.

"Patuloy po ang ating pagbabantay at pagkilos upang masiguro na ang bawat proyektong bayan ay tunay na napapakinabangan ng mamamayan at natatapos nang ayon sa plano."

Mayor Rizal also reminded the public that government funds are a shared responsibility and must be managed with integrity and prudence.

"Buwis po ito ng mamamayan na masinop na ginagastos ng ating pamahalaan."

Through regular inspections and transparent governance, the City Government of Calamba continues to reinforce its commitment to responsible public service—ensuring that every peso spent translates into meaningful progress and improved quality of life for all Calambeños.

(Edjun Mariposque)

Kauna-unahang...

FROM PAGE 1

Aragones na ang kanyang pamumuno ay iniaalay niya sa Diyos at sa paglilingkod sa lalawigan ng Laguna. Ibinahagi rin niya ang Juan 3:16 bilang paborito niyang talata sa Bibliya.

Samantala, tinalakay ni Senador Cayetano ang tinawag niyang "5 Ps ng Bibliya"—Power, Purpose, Potential, Principles, at People—bilang gabay sa pamumuno ng mga faith leaders.

Binigyang-diin din niya na ang bawat tagasunod ni Cristo ay tinatawag na maging "Ambassador of Christ."

Matapos ang mga mensahe, pinangunahan ng mga pastor mula sa iba't ibang bayan ng Laguna ang panalangin para kina Gobernador Aragones, Senador Cayetano, at sa lahat ng dumalo sa summit, sa pangunguna ni Pastor Garry Matias ng Laguna for Jesus Movement.

Bilang bahagi ng programa, tumanggap ang bawat pastor at church worker ng tulong na kalahating kaban ng bigas.

Ang kauna-unahang Laguna Pastors and Workers Summit ay nagsilbing plataporma upang pagtibayin ang pagkakaisa ng pamahalaan at faith communities sa lalawigan, na naglalayong palakasin ang pananampalataya at moral na pamumuno sa Laguna.

(Shekinah Esteban)

5,000...

FROM PAGE 1

Calamba City, Laguna — The City Government of Calamba, under the leadership of Mayor Roseller "Ross" H. Rizal, continues to strengthen its commitment to inclusive economic growth as the Kabuhayan ni Rizal: Puhunang Tapat, Serbisyong Ramdam program reached another milestone on January 30, 2026, at the Jose Rizal Coliseum.

A total of 900 new beneficiaries from 54 barangays received livelihood assistance during the payout, bringing the overall number of beneficiaries to 5,000 since the program's inception. The initiative is designed to provide start-up capital and additional funding to Calambeños who wish to establish small businesses or further develop their existing sources of income.

The program underscores the city government's principle that public funds must directly benefit the people. Through Kabuhayan ni Rizal, local taxes are transformed into concrete opportunities—empowering families, encouraging entrepreneurship, and fostering self-reliance across communities.

Mayor Roseller "Ross" H. Rizal emphasized that livelihood programs like this are vital in building a more resilient local economy, ensuring that progress is felt at the grassroots level. With continued support from the local government, Kabuhayan ni Rizal stands as a symbol of responsive governance, hope, and shared growth toward a more prosperous Calamba.

(Edjun Mariposque)

Buntis na NPA Medical Officer, Sumuko sa 83IB

Nanaig ang pagmamahal ng isang ina kaysa sa huwad na ideolohiya matapos boluntaryong sumuko sa 83rd Infantry Battalion (83IB) at Philippine National Police (PNP), sa bayan ng Presentacion, Camarines Sur nitong Martes, Enero 27.

Kinilala itong si Karen Ombao, alyas na "LYKA", pitong buwang buntis at Medical Officer ng Squad 1, Platoon 2, KLG1, SRC2, BRPC.

Sa ilalim umano ng Whole-of-Nation Approach, ang pagsuko ni alyas LYKA ay bunga ng matagumpay na Joint Inter-Agency Operation na pinangungunahan ng Lokal na Pamahalaan ng Presentacion, sa pamumuno ni Mayor Jimmy Deleña.

Sa kanyang pagbabalik-loob, ibinunyag ni @LYKA ang mapait na realidad sa loob ng armadong pakikibaka.

Sa kabila ng kanyang maselan na pagbubuntis, hindi siya nakaligtas sa pagmamalabis ng grupo. Ibinahagi niya na sa kabila ng kanyang kalagayan, patuloy pa rin siyang ginagamit ng grupo sa kanilang mga gawain na malinaw umanong paglabag sa karapatang pantao, lalo na sa proteksyon at kaligtasan ng kababaihan at mga ina.

Ayon sa 83IB, kasalukuyan nang tinatamasa ni @LYKA ang komprehensibong medical at psychosocial assistance mula sa pamahalaan.

Ang tulong na ito, kabilang ang mga programa para sa kanyang reintegrasyon, ay patunay umano ng makataong pagtanggap ng gobyerno sa mga kababayan nating piniling iwan ang karahasan at magsimulang muli.

Ang tagumpay na ito ayon sa 9ID, ay patunay na ang sama-samang aksyon ng pamahalaan at komunidad, mula sa Lokal na Pamahalaan, Armed Forces of the Philippines, Pulisya, at iba pang Ahensya ay epektibong paraan upang hikayatin ang mga nalinlang ng armadong pakikibaka na piliin ang kapayapaan at pagbabagong buhay.

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DTI Laguna...

FROM PAGE 4

roadmap for coordinated and harmonized development efforts, ultimately contributing to improved livelihoods, increased economic opportunities, and sustainable development outcomes for the people of Siniloan.

The launching ceremony was jointly convened by the Regional Convergence Initiative – Technical Working Group (RCI-TWG) and the Municipal Convergence Initiative – Technical Working Group (MCI-TWG) of Siniloan, Laguna, marking the formal start of the plan's implementation. The event underscored the shared commitment of national and local government institutions to advance sustainable rural development through convergence, coordination, and partnership.

The ceremony was graced by the presence of the National Convergence Initiative for Sustainable Rural Development (NCI-SRD) National Steering Committee, the NCI Secretariat, members of the RCI-TWG of CALABARZON, and other distinguished stakeholders. Their participation highlighted the importance of collective action and sustained collaboration in ensuring the successful implementation of the Siniloan CADP.

As host, the MCI-TWG of Siniloan, Laguna expressed its commitment to fostering strong partnerships and ensuring the effective rollout of convergence interventions that are responsive to local needs and development priorities (JCMDrueco, DTI Laguna).

NPA na may Kinakaharap na Kaso, Naaresto sa Laguna

Himas rehas ang isang miyembro ng New People's Army matapos na silbihan ng warrant of arrest ng pinagisang pwersa ng tropa ng 22IB,59IB at PNP sa Barangay Chrysanthemum, San Pedro City nitong Lunes, Enero 26.

Kinilala itong si Leo Gestole alyas Bhem, miyembro ng KLG2, SRC3, BRPC na naharap sa kasong Discharge of Firearms na nakunan pa ng hand grenade sa gitna ng operasyon.

Si Gestole ay isa lamang sa mga miyembro ng CPP-NPA-NDF na itinuturong sangkot sa mga insidente ng kaguluhan sa lalawigan ng Sorsogon.

Sa kasalukuyan ay nasa kustodiya na ng PNP para sa nararapat na disposiyon.

Samantala, kinilala naman ng pamunuan ng 9ID ang masigasig na pagtutulungan ng mga sundalo't pulis na nagbunga ng pagkakaaresto ng nasabing indibidwal at muling iginiit ang kanilang patuloy na pagsisikap na papanagutin ang mga miyembro ng CPP-NPA-NDF na patuloy na lumalabag sa batas at tumatangging magbalik-loob sa pamahalaan.

Kaingen residents receive free medical and dental services

On January 22, the Provincial Government of Cavite's Medical and Dental Mission Team conducted a health outreach program in Brgy. Kaingen, Kawit, benefiting more than 400 residents.

The mission provided medical consultations to 391 patients and dental services to 46 residents, along with diagnostic tests such as fasting blood sugar (FBS), electrocardiogram (ECG), and X-ray examinations. Free medicines and vitamin supplements were also distributed to further support the health needs of the beneficiaries.

First District Board Member Jygs Gandia showed support for the activity, reflecting the strong commitment of the province's leaders to promoting the health and well-being of their constituents. — J. Reyes

2 NPA, Sumuko sa LGU Libmanan

You're in good hand! ika nga ng 9IB sa dalawang NPA na boluntaryong sumuko sa pagsusumikap ng Local Government Unit ng Libmanan, Camarines Sur nitong Miyerkules, Enero 28.

Sa tulong ng Charlie Company ng 502nd Ready Reserve Infantry Battalion (502RRIB), 502nd Community Defense Center (502CDC), nakumbinsi sina alyas "Bruno" at alyas "Lucky" na kusang sumuko sa Local Peace Engagement Team (LPET) ng LGU Libmanan.

Agad namang isinailalim sa debriefing ang dalawang dating NPA at susundan ng pagpoproseso ng mga kinakailangang dokumento upang sila ay makinabang sa Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP) ng pamahalaan.

Kaugnay nito, kinilala ni Major General Adlwine Almase ang magandang bunga ng pagtutulungan ng kasundaluhan at lokal na pamahalaan, na aniya'y isang mahalagang hakbang sa pagsusulong ng pangmatagalang kapayapaan at kaunlaran sa komunidad.

NPA, Inatake sa Puso Habang Tumatakas sa Combat Operation ng 9ID

Pinaglalamayan na ngayon ang bangkay ng isang committee member ng NPA na umano'y inatake sa puso habang tinatangkang umiwas sa mga sundalong nagsasagawa ng mga combat operations sa Albay.

Kinilala ang nasawi na si Reynante Oli alyas Dante, Oli, Tikboy, Garapon at Arlie, Committee Member ng SRC5, BRPC.

Sa nakuhang impormasyon ng 49IB, palihim na ibiniyahe ng CTG at kanyang kamag-anak mula Barangay Bololo, Guinobatan, Albay patungo sa Nuestra Seniora de Salvacion, Barangay Ilawod, para sana ipa-cremate.

Binawian umano ng buhay si Oli habang kasama ang grupo nina alyas Speed at alyas Agmar sa boundary ng Barangay Catumag at Barangay Balolo.

Sinalubong na lamang aniya ito ng kanyang pamangkin na si alyas Dugong at inalalayan ng kanyang anak na maidala ang bangkay sa isang punerarya.

Sa kabila nito, agad na nagpaabot ng pakikiramay ang pamunuan ng 9ID, kasabay ng panawagan sa mga natitira pang miyembro ng grupo na magbalik-loob na lamang sa pamahalaan upang matiyak ang kanilang kaligtasan at kapanatagan.

Provincial Rank No. 4 Most Wanted, Timbog sa Taytay

TAYTAY, Rizal — Isang indibidwal na kabilang sa Provincial Level Most Wanted Persons at nasa Rank No. 4 ang nadakip ng mga operatiba ng Taytay Municipal Police Station (MPS), katuwang ang RIU 4A PIT Rizal, noong Enero 28, 2026, bandang 11:20 ng umaga sa Barangay Sta. Ana, bayang ito.

Kinilala ng pulisya ang suspek bilang alyas "Puroy," 60-anyos, at residente ng nasabing barangay.

Isinagawa ang pag-aresto sa bisa ng Warrant of Arrest na inisyu ng Regional Trial Court (RTC) ng Cainta, Rizal kaugnay ng kasong Acts of Lasciviousness, na may inirekomendang piyansa na Php 180,000 para sa pansamantalang kalayaan ng akusado.

Kasalukuyang nasa kustodiya ng Taytay MPS ang naarestong suspek para sa wastong dokumentasyon at kaukulang disposisyon bago tuluyang i-turn over ang warrant sa court of origin.

Ayon sa pulisya, mahigpit nilang ipinatutupad ang kampanya laban sa mga wanted persons upang matiyak ang kaayusan at kaligtasan ng komunidad.

(Madelaine Go)

3 NPA na Sumuko sa CamNorte, Itinuro ang Taguan ng Armas

Agad na nakipagtulungan sa mga tropa ng 81st Infantry Battalion katuwang ang 42nd Infantry Battalion at PNP ang tatlong miyembro ng NPA matapos na boluntaryong sumuko nitong Martes, Enero 27 sa Basud, Camarines Norte.

Alas-4 ng hapon ng sumuko sina alyas Esme, Larry, at Alen na pawang mga miyembro ng KLG2, SRC1, BRPC dala ang hangaring mabago ang buhay at makapiling ang pamilya.

Makalipas ang ilang oras, tinungo ng pinagsanib na pwersa ng mga sundalo't pulis ang Barangay Salvacion, Ragay, Camarines Sur matapos na ituro ni alyas Esme ang umano'y taguan ng kanilang armas kung saan nadiskubre ang apat na M16 bushmaster rifle, mga magazines at mga bala.

Sinundan pa ito ng pagkakadiskobre ng dalawa pang M16 rifle, mga magazines at iba pang mga bala sa katabi lamang nitong barangay sa Barangay Baya na itinuro naman ni alyas Larry.

Kaugnay nito, pinasalamatan ni Major General Aldwine Almase ang tiwalang ibinigay ng mga sumukong indibidwal na malaking tulong aniya upang mailayo sa kapahamakan ang mga komunidad.

Ang 81IB ay kasalukuyang nasa ilalim ng operation control ng902nd Infantry Battalion, na patuloy na pinaigting ang operasyon sa Camarines Norte at ibang pang bahagi ng Camarines Sur bilang bahagi ng focused military operations ng 9ID.

13 DEKALIBRENG ARMAS, NASAMSAM SA LAGONOY

Labing tatlong high-powered firearms ang narekober ng pinag-isang pwersa ng 83IB at 2IB sa bulubunduking bahagi ng Barangay Guibahoy, Lagonoy, Camarines Sur nitong araw ng Huwebes, Enero 29.

Alas-6:30 ng umaga nang tumambad sa mga sundalo ang 12 M16 rifles, isang M60 machine gun, dalawang anti-personnel mines, mga bala at magazine.

Ang nasabing mga armas at kagamitan ay nakabaon sa masukal na bahagi ng lugar na itinuro ng mga residenteng nakapansin sa mga kaduda-dudang mga indibidwal na pabalik-pabalik rito.

Ang nasabing lugar ay halos isang barangay lamang pagitan sa una ng nahukay ng mga tropa nooong December 20 ng nakaraang taon sa Sitio Benguet, Barangay Pinamihagan.

Malaki ang paniniwala ng pamunuan ng 9ID na sa mga susunod na araw ay mas marami pang armas ang madidiskobre ng Spear Troopers lalo pa't tuluy-tuloy aniya ang pagpapaabot ng impormasyon ng mamamayan.

Senador, pinaalalahan ang mga health authorities at publiko sa kahalagahan ng maagap na paghahanda sa sakit na Nipah virus.

Nagpaalala si Senator Christopher "Bong" Go sa mga health officials at sa publiko tungkol sa kahalagahan ng maagap na paghahanda sa napaulat na Nipah virus sa India. Kamakailan ay nagpatupad na ng paghihigpit sa health screenings sa mga bisitang mula sa apektadong bansa ang Thailand, Nepal, Taiwan, at Hong Kong dahil sa sakit.

Gayunman, binigyang-diin ni Go, Vice Chairman ng Committee on Health, na walang dahilan upang mag-panic subalit dapat mailatag ang preventive measures na siyang pinaka epektibong dimepensa laban sa anumang public health threat. Umapela si Go sa mga airport authorities, seaports, at iba pang points of entry na palakasin ang kanilang health screening at biosecurity measures katuwang ang Department of Health.

Dagdag pa ng mambabatas na marami nang natutunan ang bansa mula sa kinaharap na COVID-19 pandemic at dapat itong ipatupad sa panibagong banta ng sakit.

(Nelson Dimapilis)

CARD RBI opens 41st branch in Bago City

CARD RBI President and CEO Ms. Lyneth Derequito led the opening of the CARD RBI branch in Bago City together with CARD RBI Executive Vice President Juliana De Leon, CARD RBI Board Director Ms. Elma Valenzuela, CARD MRI Executive Committee members, senior advisers, konek2CARD ambassador Mr. JC Santos, CARD MRI officers, and staff.

CARD MRI Rizal Bank Inc. (CARD RBI) marks another milestone as it opened its 41st branch located in Bago City on January 26, 2026, to meet the growing needs of the micro-entrepreneurs in the area.

"This expansion is an opportunity to widen the bank's reach and extend our services to more clients. By opening new branches, we can serve a greater number of clients and help more Filipinos improve their businesses and uplift the quality of their lives," said CARD RBI President and CEO Lyneth Derequito.

CARD RBI management strategically positioned its new branch location near neighboring provinces where the bank already operates branches and branch-lite units (BLUs).

Its location near the center of Negros allows the bank to tap into existing market opportunities while strengthening its presence nationwide.

Establishing another branch in Visayas will allow the bank to manage the corresponding risk of geographical diversification.

The Bago branch is expected to serve more than 3,500 clients in the cities of Bago, Bacolod, Talisay, Silay, and Victoria and the municipalities of Murcia and Valladolid in Negros Occidental, further strengthening the bank's commitment to making financial services more accessible to the people it serves.

CARD RBI is one of the financial institutions of CARD Mutually Reinforcing Institutions (CARD MRI), established to widen financial services for underserved communities.

Founded in 1996, the bank has remained committed to empowering women and improving the well-being of their families while actively promoting the values of hard work and discipline. CARD RBI offers a wide range of services, including loans, savings, and remittances tailored to clients' needs.

The newest branch is located at Gen. Luna St., Brgy. Poblacion, Bago City, District 1.

As of December 31, 2025, CARD RBI has served a total of 907,259 clients.

For more information about CARD RBI, visit its official Facebook page @CMRBofficial or its website at https://www.cardmri.com/rbi.

No more shifting scheme at GenTri public school with new school building

GENERAL TRIAS CITY, Cavite (PIA) — Education Secretary Sonny Angara has underscored the vital role of local government units in addressing the country's classroom shortage during the inauguration of a new classroom building at Santiago Elementary School in General Trias City on Tuesday, January 20.

In his message, Angara highlighted the national government's commitment to collaborating with LGUs to build school facilities and solve the persistent classroom shortage in public schools.

"Ito ang innovative approach ni Presidente [Ferdinand Marcos Jr.]. Dati kasi, ang gumagawa ng classrooms ay either DepEd lang o DPWH (Department of Public Works and Highways) lang."

Angara also lauded the local government for its effort to build 100 classrooms, which significantly helped ease school congestion in the city.

The secretary added, "In partnership with the city, nakapagpatayo ng 100 classrooms in three years. Thank you for prioritizing building classrooms."

With the new classroom building, Santiago Elementary School can provide an improved learning environment to its students.

Principal Reinalyn Mutalla noted the importance of sufficient learning facilities in providing quality education, especially in public schools.

"It strengthens our capacity to deliver quality, inclusive, and future-ready education for every child entrusted to our care."

Catering to an estimated 2,443 learners, Santiago Elementary School adopts a shifting scheme due to the lack of classrooms. With the new building, Mutalla said that they will not need to adopt this scheme anymore.

"Hindi na po kami three days [with] two shifts para ma-accommodate silang lahat. We can now also provide a better learning environment to our learners, and inspire our teachers to achieve more."

The new building includes 16 classrooms that are fully-equipped with 50-inch smart TVs, armchairs, fire alarms, emergency lights, and proper signage. DepEd said each classroom was designed to address classroom shortages and enhance the learning environment for students and teachers.

EXPLICIT

Madelaine Go

KALAGAYAN NI CHANTAL ANICOCHE, PATULOY NA BINABANTAYAN NG PAMAHALAAN

Matagumpay nang na-medical discharge mula sa 2nd Infantry Division (2ID) Hospital ang rescued Filipina-American na si Chantal Anicoche matapos makumpleto ang kinakailangang gamutan sa Camp Capinpin, Tanay, Rizal nitong Huwebes, Enero 29.

Habang sumasailalim sa paggamot, personal na binisita si Anicoche sa ilang pagkakataon ni US Consul General Brendan Mullarkey, kasama ang iba pang opisyal ng US Embassy sa Maynila.

Pinahintulutan din siyang makausap ang kanyang ina sa pamamagitan ng tawag, at makipagpulong sa mga kinatawan ng International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Commission on Human Rights (CHR), at Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) bilang bahagi ng pagtitiyak sa kanyang karapatan at kalagayan.

Maaalalang noong Enero 8 ay nasagip si Anicoche ng mga tropa ng pamahalaan habang nagsasagawa ng clearing operations sa Barangay Cabacao, Abra de Ilog, Occidental Mindoro. Iniwan umano siya ng kanyang mga kasama matapos ang sunod-sunod na engkuwentro sa pagitan ng puwersa ng gobyerno at mga armadong elemento ng New People's Army (NPA) sa lugar. Agad siyang isinailalim sa seguridad at binigyan ng kinakailangang medical at humanitarian assistance.

Sa pahayag ni Colonel Michael Aquino, tagapagsalita at hepe ng Public Affairs Office ng 2nd Infantry (Jungle Fighter) Division, iginiit na ang pangunahing papel ng Hukbong Katihan ay tiyakin ang kalusugan at kapakanan ni Anicoche hanggang sa siya ay ganap na makarekober at ligtas na makabalik sa piling ng kanyang pamilya.

"Mula sa simula, malinaw na ang aming prayoridad ay ang kalusugan at kapakanan ni Chantal, alinsunod sa kanyang boluntaryong pananatili sa 2ID Hospital," ani Aquino.

Muling iginiit ng 2nd Infantry Division ang kanilang paninindigan sa makataong prinsipyo, due process, at paggalang sa dignidad ng tao, lalo na sa mga kasong kinasasangkutan ng mga sibilyang naaapektuhan ng armadong tunggalian—isang paalala na sa gitna ng sigalot, nananatiling mahalaga ang malasakit at paggalang sa buhay ng bawat isa.

PUBLISHER CORNER

CHIZ TO HEALTH, BORDER AUTHORITIES: KEEP PROTOCOLS AND PREPAREDNESS SYSTEMS FULLY ACTIVE VS NIPAH

Amid rising global concern over the Nipah virus, Senator Francis "Chiz" Escudero urged health and border authorities to maintain strict vigilance and ensure that preparedness systems remain fully operational.

Escudero said that although current health advisories place the Philippines at low risk, developments in neighboring regions underscore the need for sustained, proactive monitoring.

"Public safety depends not only on rapid response but on continuous readiness," he stressed, noting that several Asian countries have already tightened airport health checks following recent Nipah-related developments abroad.

The Philippines must match this level of alertness to safeguard travelers and communities, he pointed out.

Nipah virus, first detected in Malaysia in 1998, has resurfaced in India, where authorities are enforcing localized containment measures and expanded contact tracing. Outbreaks have also been recorded in Bangladesh, prompting heightened regional surveillance.

The veteran legislator called on the Department of Health and the Bureau of Quarantine to keep border health protocols fully activated, from thermal scanning and symptom monitoring to clear guidance for arriving passengers. These measures, he said, are critical to preventing the entry and spread of high-risk pathogens.

He also underscored the need for strong inter-agency coordination among health, transport, and local government units.

"Preparedness is never the work of a single office. It is a shared responsibility that requires synchronized systems, updated data, and timely communication," he stressed.

The Bicolano senator added that the government should have already internalized the lessons of past outbreaks.

"We should learn from the mistakes of the past, particularly during the COVID pandemic, and strive to do better. That means not repeating those missteps but instead collating and applying the best practices we developed and witnessed, especially from the healthcare professionals and LGUs who were on the frontlines during that time," he said.

"Early detection and transparent reporting remain the strongest defenses against emerging health threats.

I call on our authorities to continue refining surveillance tools and ensuring that frontline personnel are equipped with updated protocols," he added.

Escudero likewise emphasized the importance of clear and consistent public advisories to curb misinformation and maintain public confidence. Calm, factual communication, he noted, helps citizens understand risks without panic and reinforces trust in institutions.

"As global health landscapes shift, the Philippines must stay one step ahead," he concluded.

Pointer

Pau Dela Cruz

Pag-asa sa Gitna ng Laban: Kauna-unahang Chemotherapy Center sa Laguna

May mga balitang hindi lang basta inihahayag—kundi tumatagos sa puso. Isa na rito ang inanunsyo ni Gobernador Sol Aragones noong Enero 29, 2026: ang pagtatatag ng kauna-unahang Chemotherapy Center sa lalawigan ng Laguna.

Sa unang dinig, isa lamang itong proyekto ng pamahalaan. Ngunit kung sisipatin nang mas malalim, ito ay isang sinag ng pag-asa para sa libo-libong Lagunenseng matagal nang nakikipaglaban—hindi lamang sa sakit na cancer, kundi sa kahirapan, kawalan ng akses sa gamutan, at minsan, sa kawalan ng pag-asa.

Sa loob ng maraming taon, karaniwan nang kuwento sa mga pamilyang may kaanak na may cancer ang sapilitang pagbibiyahe sa ibang lalawigan para lamang makapagpa-chemotherapy. May ilan na nagkakautang, may mga napipilitang huminto sa gamutan, at sa mas masaklap na mga pagkakataon, may mga buhay na nauuwi sa tahimik na pamamaalam.

Hindi ito pinalampas ng gobernador.

Sa kanyang emosyonal na pahayag, inilahad niya ang reyalidad na matagal nang umiiral: "Maraming mga kababayan natin ang kinakailangan magpa-chemo therapy pero wala silang pambayad… ang masakit na ending, namamatay na lang ng walang kalaban-laban." Mga salitang hindi madaling pakinggan, ngunit kailangang marinig.

Ang itatayong Chemotherapy Center ay hindi lamang pasilidad—ito ay sagot sa matagal nang panawagan ng mga Lagunense para sa abot-kaya at agarang gamutan. Isa rin itong malinaw na pahayag na ang kalusugan ay hindi dapat maging pribilehiyo, kundi karapatan.

Binigyang-diin din ni Gobernador Aragones na ang proyektong ito ay bahagi ng mas malawak at pangmatagalang plano ng pamahalaang panlalawigan. Walang pangakong madalian, ngunit malinaw ang direksiyon.

"Dahan-dahan, isa-isa, matutupad din natin 'to… habang may paraan pa para marami tayong buhay na maisalba," aniya.

Sa kasalukuyan, puspusan na ang mga paghahanda sa pangunguna ng pamahalaang panlalawigan katuwang ang AKAY ni GOB Team. Habang patuloy ang mga hakbang, patuloy rin ang pag-usbong ng pag-asa sa puso ng mga mamamayan.

Ang anunsyong "Kauna-unahang Chemotherapy Center sa Laguna itatayo na!" ay hindi lamang balita—ito ay panata. Panatang sa gitna ng karamdaman at kahirapan, may pamahalaang handang umalalay, at may lalawigang patuloy na lumalaban para sa buhay ng kanyang mamamayan.

Sa huli, ang Chemotherapy Center ay magiging higit pa sa isang gusali. Ito ay magiging sagisag ng malasakit, katatagan, at panibagong pagkakataon sa buhay para sa bawat Lagunenseng nangangailangan.

Cayetano...

FROM PAGE 1

Sa gitna ng umiinit na palitan ng pahayag kaugnay ng West Philippine Sea, nanindigan si Senate Minority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano na dapat munang idaan sa pagdinig ng komite ang isang resolusyon na may kinalaman sa Chinese Embassy.

Ayon kay Cayetano, maselan ang isyu at may direktang epekto sa foreign policy ng bansa, kaya kailangan muna itong himayin sa isang committee hearing bago maglabas ng pormal na tindig ang Senado.

Sa liham na ipinadala niya nitong January 27, 2026 kay Senate President Vicente Sotto III, sinabi ng senador na hindi naisama ang resolusyon sa lingguhang agenda at una lamang itong naipasa sa hanay ng mayorya.

Dahil dito aniya, kulang ang oras ng minorya para pag-aralan ang panukala.

Bukod sa usapin ng proseso, binigyang diin ni Cayetano na mahalagang isaalang-alang ang kasalukuyang sitwasyon sa diplomasya, lalo na sa gitna ng umiinit na palitan ng pahayag sa publiko.

Para sa senador, mas magiging malinaw ang usapin kung maririnig muna ang paliwanag ng Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) at mga eksperto sa diplomasya sa isang pagdinig ng komite.

Aniya, sa ganitong pagdinig maaaring ilahad ang kabuuang konteksto ng isyu, ang estado ng ugnayan ng Pilipinas at China, at ang posibleng maging epekto ng anumang aksiyon ng Senado.

Tinukoy rin ni Cayetano na nagpaabot na ng alalahanin ang DFA sa Chinese Embassy kaugnay ng mga pahayag sa publiko, kasabay ng panawagan sa mas maingat at mahinahong pagtugon upang hindi na lumala ang tensiyon.

Iginiit ng senador na bagaman may karapatan ang mga mambabatas na maghayag ng kani-kanilang posisyon, ang mga usaping may kinalaman sa foreign policy ay dapat dumaan sa tamang proseso upang mapangalagaan ang interes ng bansa.

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

BPI foundation partners with Mapúa MCL to expand access to financial education

The BPI Foundation has formalized a partnership with Mapúa Malayan Colleges Laguna (Mapúa MCL) through the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) aimed at expanding access to financial education and promoting financial literacy, financial wellness, and community capacity-building.

The agreement strengthens the BPI Foundation's ongoing efforts to empower individuals and communities to make informed financial decisions through its FinEd Unboxed: Financial Wellness Journal and Train-the-Trainers Program, which translates financial concepts into practical, everyday knowledge and brings learning beyond the classroom and into underserved communities.

The ceremonial signing was attended by BPI Foundation Executive Director Carmina Marquez, Senior Program Manager for Financial Education and Art Management Manolo Roberto L. Nava, and Financial Manager for Financial Education Gladys A. Malapo.

Also present were officials from Mapúa MCL led by Dr. Dodjie S. Maestrecampo, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Mapúa Education Group; Atty. Maria Eloisa R. Gan, Senior Vice President for Administration and Legal; and Prof. James Ronald O. Mesina, Vice President for External Linkages, Internationalization, and Transnational Education.

The MOA signing was held in conjunction with the FinEd Unboxed training session at Mapúa MCL's Café Enrique and the E.T. Yuchengco Board Room, where faculty members and facilitators participated in the training proper to enhance their capacity to deliver financial education programs within the institution and partner communities.

Through this collaboration, the BPI Foundation and Mapúa MCL reaffirm their shared commitment to advancing inclusive financial education and capacity-building initiatives, supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

The partnership highlights the BPI Foundation's mission to build a more financially informed, resilient, and future-ready society through strategic collaborations with academic institutions

DTI Laguna Supports Launch of Siniloan Convergence Area Development Plan (CADP)

The activity formally marked the commencement of the Siniloan CADP's implementation, a strategic framework aimed at advancing inclusive and sustainable rural development through strengthened convergence and collaboration among national government agencies, the local government unit, and key stakeholders in the municipality.

During the program, a comprehensive presentation of the Siniloan Convergence Area Development Plan was presented, outlining its development objectives, priority sectors, and planned interventions. These initiatives are geared toward enhancing local economic development, promoting livelihood opportunities, and ensuring environmental sustainability within the convergence area.

The launching, led by the Local Government Unit of Siniloan, Laguna, was attended by various national government agencies, including the Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), among others. The strong presence of partner agencies highlighted the shared commitment of the national and local governments to a whole-of-government approach in addressing development challenges and accelerating socio-economic growth in the municipality.

The ceremonial launching symbolized the unified resolve of all stakeholders to work collaboratively in implementing the programs and projects identified under the CADP. DTI Laguna reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the plan through trade and industry-related interventions, including enterprise development, value chain enhancement, capacity building, and market access facilitation for local entrepreneurs and producers.

The Siniloan Convergence Area Development Plan, approved on October 14, 2025, is envisioned to serve as a

cont. on page 7

Siniloan, Laguna — The Department of Trade and Industry–Laguna (DTI Laguna), led by Provincial Director Christian Ted O. Tungohan, together with Assistant Regional Director Revelyn A. Cortez of DTI CALABARZON (DTI 4-A), participated in the launch of the Siniloan Convergence Area Development Plan (CADP) at the Siniloan Cultural Center in Siniloan, Laguna on January 22, 2026.

DERETSAHAN WEEKLY PUBLISHING

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

Private Citizen Turns Over Php. 312K worth of Marijuana Products to PDEA Laguna

Santa Rosa City, Laguna — Authorities received a significant boost in the fight against illegal drugs after a private citizen voluntarily turned over a large quantity of suspected marijuana products to the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) in Laguna on the evening of January 28, 2026.

According to PDEA Calabarzon, more or less 2.2 kilograms of vacuum-sealed dried marijuana leaves and seeds, with an estimated value of ₱264,000, along with approximately 554.4 grams of suspected marijuana oil worth ₱48,000, were surrendered to the PDEA Laguna Provincial Office.

The turnover was conducted in coordination with the PDEA Regional Office IV-A Investigation Section at Barangay Sinalhan, Santa Rosa City, at around 6:53 p.m.

The surrendered items are now set to undergo qualitative and quantitative examinations to confirm their composition and legality, in line with standard operating procedures.

PDEA Calabarzon lauded the courage, cooperation, and sense of responsibility shown by the concerned citizen, emphasizing that public participation plays a vital role in curbing the proliferation of illegal drugs in communities.

The agency continues to encourage the public to report similar incidents or provide information related to illegal drugs through its hotline 0917-842-2738 or via email at pdearoc4a@gmail.com, assuring confidentiality and prompt action.

(Edjun Mariposque)

PGC marks graduation of Contract Center Services NC II trainess

The Provincial Government of Cavite successfully conducted the Commencement Exercises for the Community-Based Training on Contact Center Services NC II on January 23, at the Function Hall of the New Provincial Government Center, Trece Martires City.

The program was spearheaded by the Office of the Provincial Public Employment and Services Manager (OPPESM) in partnership with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), highlighting the province's continued commitment to strengthening workforce readiness and employment opportunities for Caviteños.

Ms. Rizalie Pinpin-Enero, Provincial PESO Manager, delivered the welcome remarks, congratulating the graduates and encouraging them to confidently apply the skills they gained during the training.

An inspirational message was delivered by 7th District Board Member Jhon Kester Aldrin R. Anacan, Chairperson of the Committee on Education, together with Provincial Administrator Engr. Gilbert V. Gandia. Both emphasized the importance of technical skills development as a pathway to sustainable employment and economic growth.

Mr. John Ray B. Malaca, Contact Center Services NC II Trainer, formally presented the candidates for graduation, followed by the acceptance of candidates by Ms. Mary Katherine L. Casauran, TESD Specialist II of TESDA Cavite.

A total of fifteen successful graduates proudly completed the community-based training program. A message was delivered by Mr. Jerwin Pague, representative from iQor, who highlighted employment opportunities in the contact center industry and reaffirmed the private sector's support for skilled graduates.

The ceremony was further enriched by messages from three graduate representatives, who shared their experiences, expressed gratitude, and conveyed their aspirations as they prepare to enter the workforce.

The activity underscored the Provincial Government of Cavite's sustained efforts to provide accessible, industry-relevant, and community-based skills training through strong partnerships with national agencies and private sector stakeholders.

— R. Dones

FC Home Center Opens Second Branch in Calamba, Boosting Jobs and Shopping

Calamba City, Laguna — January 30, 2026 — FC Home Center officially marked the grand opening and ribbon-cutting of its second branch in the City of Calamba, signaling continued growth for the home retail giant and bringing new employment opportunities to Calambeños.

The milestone event was led by the company's top executives and shareholders, including Mr. Toni Sy, Chairman of the Board; Mr. James Cua, Shareholder; founders Mr. and Mrs. Isagani and Aracelli Dannug; Mr. Fernan Dulce, President and CEO; Mr. Rommel Bulos, Operations Vice-President; Ms. Mercy Jayne Torilla, Chief Finance and Commercial Officer; and Ms. Angelli Dannug-Rush, AVP for Marketing. Also present were key officers and managers from human resources, merchandising, finance, and operations.

Representing the local government was a delegate from the Office of Mayor Roseller "Ross" H. Rizal, underscoring the city's support for investments that generate jobs and stimulate economic activity.

With the opening of the new branch, FC Home Center has once again created employment for many Calambeños, reinforcing the city's reputation as a growing hub for business and retail in Laguna.

The store offers a wide range of home improvement and household products designed to meet the needs of modern Filipino homes.

To celebrate the opening, FC Home Center treated shoppers to massive sales and discounts, along with special freebies. Early customers also enjoyed complimentary taho and ice cream, adding to the festive atmosphere of the launch.

The new FC Home Center branch is expected to further strengthen Calamba's local economy while providing residents with more convenient access to quality home essentials at affordable prices.

(Edjun Mariposque)

LANDBANK opened 2026 with a meaningful milestone as it formalized a loan agreement with Kilambay Plantation Corporation (KPC) on 9 January 2026 in North Cotabato to support the development of a 1,000-hectare Giant Bamboo plantation—the first of its kind in the area.

More than a financing event, the partnership reflects a shared vision of advancing sustainable finance, peacebuilding, and inclusive rural development, transforming former conflict-affected communities into centers of productivity, opportunity, and environmental renewal.

Aligned with LANDBANK's HARVEST and ESG frameworks, the initiative promotes climate-responsive growth while creating sustainable livelihoods for Indigenous Peoples (IP) and strengthening the country's green agribusiness value chain.

The loan signing was led by LANDBANK Executive Vice President Charlotte I. Conde and Vice President Jimmy Arco, Atty. Christian Harvey Wong, Account Officer Edgar Alcordo, and Account Assistant Stephanie Apusen. Representing KPC were Mr. Jerry John M. Taray, Chief Executive Officer, and Jocelyn T. Taray, Chief Financial Officer.