

MAYOR ROSS RIZAL LEADS GROUNDBREAKING OF CALAMBA MANPOWER TRAINING CENTER, BOOSTING JOBS AND HOPE IN BARANGAY MILAGROSA



CALAMBA CITY, Laguna — A new chapter of opportunity and empowerment begins in Barangay Milagrosa as the City Government formally broke ground for the Calamba Manpower Training Center, a landmark project aimed at strengthening workforce development and expanding employment opportunities for thousands of Calambenos.

The groundbreaking ceremony marks more than the construction of a new facility—it symbolizes hope, progress, and a brighter future for families across the city.

Designed to provide high-quality training and industry-relevant skills development programs, the center will help equip residents with the competencies needed to meet evolving labor market demands.

Under the leadership of Roseller "Ross" H. Rizal, the project underscores the city's firm commitment to inclusive growth and sustainable economic development.

The mayor emphasized that investing in human capital is key to ensuring long-term prosperity.

The Calamba Manpower Training Center will serve as a hub for technical education, upskilling, and retooling programs aligned with the needs of local and national industries.

By strengthening the city's workforce, the initiative is expected to generate greater employment opportunities, attract investments, and stimulate economic activity in Calamba City.

City officials highlighted that the facility will not only enhance individual employability but also contribute to building a more resilient local economy.

With structured training programs and modern learning spaces, the center aims to empower workers, support entrepreneurs, and uplift families toward financial stability.

Mayor Rizal reaffirmed his administration's dedication to programs that directly benefit the people, noting that every infrastructure project is anchored on improving lives and creating meaningful impact.

As foundations are laid in Barangay Milagrosa, the future of Calamba is being built—one skill, one opportunity, and one empowered citizen at a time.

(Edjun Mariposque)



Patuloy nating sinisiguro na ang bawat polisiya at desisyon ay nakatuon sa kapakanan ng mga mag-aaral, komunidad, at sa pangmatagalang kaayusan at pag-unlad ng Calamba.

(ND)

Calamba Medical Center Earns Gold Accreditation from Accreditation Canada International

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LAGUNA FAES NAGDEPLOY NG DRONE TECHNOLOGY PARA SA MAS MABILIS AT MAS TUMPAK NA PAGTATANIM NG PALAY

LAGUNA — Nagpakilala ang Field Agricultural Extension Services—Office of the Provincial Agriculturist (FAES-OPAg) ng makabagong drone-assisted rice planting noong Pebrero 20, 2026 bilang bahagi ng Rice Technology Demonstration sa pakikipagtutungan sa International Rice Research Institute (IRRI).

Layunin ng inisyatiba na pataasin ang kahusayan sa produksyon ng palay, mabawasan ang kakulangan sa manggagawa, at mapahusay ang katumpakan sa pagtatanim sa iba't ibang sakahan sa lalawigan.

Ayon sa FAES-OPAg, kayang magdala ng drone ng hanggang 50 kilo ng mga materyales tulad ng binhi, pataba, at pestisidyo. Maaari rin itong gamitin para sa spraying applications.

Depende sa bilis at taas ng lipad, kayang masaklaw ng drone ang isang ektarya ng lupa sa loob lamang ng 10 hanggang 12 minuto, at sa mas



mabilis na setting ay maaaring matapos sa humigit-kumulang 10 minuto.

Bukod sa bilis, tampok din ang episyenteng

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Anti-political dynasty bill meets stiff opposition in Cavite

Farmer-scientists push for climate-smart agri communities

SK Chairman sa Laguna na hinawakan ang mga panindang pagkain tuluyan ng nagbitiw sa puwesto

ARTA logs nearly 1k complaints vs South Luzon gov't agencies in 2025; majority assisted

SSS RESERVE FUNDS SURPASS P1 TRILLION MARK SSS CHAIR GO: YOUR PENSIONS ARE SECURE; YOUR BENEFITS SUSTAINED

DILG's 'Anti-Epal' Drive Gains Traction in CALABARZON



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THE WALKING ANG ZUMBA LADIES, NAGPASALAMAT SA TAGUMPAY NG "TIBOK BUHAY: HEART MONTH 2026" SA CAYABU



EDITORIAL:

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.

Calamba...

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna — Calamba Medical Center (CMC) has achieved Gold Accreditation from Accreditation Canada International (ACI) for the period 2025 to 2028, making it the only ACI-accredited hospital in Southern Luzon. This prestigious recognition underscores CMC's strong commitment to meeting international standards in patient safety, quality healthcare, and service excellence.

The Gold Accreditation was awarded following CMC's successful ACI Survey conducted from December 8 to 12,

2025, under the Qmentum International Program, a globally recognized framework for evaluating healthcare quality and safety. For patients and their families, this accreditation provides greater assurance that every aspect of care at Calamba Medical Center adheres to internationally accepted standards.

From patient safety and service delivery to hospital management and continuous improvement, systems are firmly in place to ensure care that is safe, consistent, and centered on patient needs. The accreditation process involved an inde-

pendent and comprehensive assessment of CMC's daily operations—examining how patient safety is ensured, how healthcare services are delivered, and how the hospital continuously improves its processes.

As a result, patients receive care that is high-quality, compassionate, reliable, and aligned with global best practices. With the attainment of Gold Accreditation, Calamba Medical Center further strengthens its mission to deliver healthcare with excellence and compassion—faithful to its guiding principle, “Kalin-

gang may Husay at Puso.”

This milestone reflects the dedication and professionalism of the hospital's leadership and entire healthcare team in providing safe, effective, and patient-centered services.

The Gold Accreditation is valid from December 2025 to December 2028, highlighting CMC's sustained focus on quality, continuous improvement, and adherence to internationally recognized healthcare standards, while setting a benchmark for healthcare excellence in Southern Luzon.

(Pau Dela Cruz)

Laguna...

operasyon nito dahil maaaring ma-recharge ang drone gamit ang generator sa loob lamang ng 12 hanggang 15 minuto—isang mahalagang katangian para sa tuluy-tuloy na field operations.

Binibigyang-diin din ng FAES-OPAg ang kaligtasan sa paggamit ng naturang teknolohiya.

Ang drone ay may radar system na na-

kakatukoy ng mga hadlang mula 5 hanggang 10 metro ang layo, at may Real-Time Kinematics (RTK) technology na nagbibigay ng planting accuracy na hanggang 1 hanggang 2 sentimetro.

Kinakailangang may valid pilot license ang mga operator ng drone, at may karagdagang sertipikasyon para sa paggamit nito sa pag-aaplay ng pes-

tisidyo.

Sa kasalukuyan, maaari lamang gamitin ang drone para sa paglalagay ng binhi at pataba maliban na lamang kung kumpleto ang kinakailangang lisensya para sa pesticide application.

Itinuturing ang drone-assisted method bilang isang mahalagang hakbang tungo sa modernisasyon ng pagsasaka ng palay sa Laguna.

Bukod sa pagpapabilis ng proseso ng pagtatanim, nababawasan din ang manwal na pagga-

wa at napapahusay ang eksaktong paglalagay ng binhi at pataba—mga salik na maaaring magdulot ng mas mataas na ani at mas sustenableng produksyon.

Sa pamamagitan ng paggamit ng drone technology, muling pinatutunayan ng Laguna ang pangako nito sa pagsasama ng makabagong solusyon sa agrikultura, at nagsisilbing modelo para sa iba pang lalawigan sa bansa sa larangan ng episyente, ligtas, at makabagong pagsasaka.

(Pau Dela Cruz)



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ARTA...

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna (PIA) — The Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA) in Southern Luzon announced that it has received nearly 1,000 complaints on government agencies within the region in 2025.

“Here in Southern Luzon, specifically in CALABARZON, MIMAROPA, and Bicol Region, we have received almost 1,000 complaints in 2025. We are pleased because we were able to assist majority of them.

However, there were also several cases that did not proceed because the documents submitted to us were incomplete,” ARTA Southern Luzon Regional Head Dr. Karl Joseph Sanmocte said during an interview on the Philippine Information Agency's Sulong Calabarzon program on January 22.

Sanmocte emphasized that ARTA is pleased to have assisted those who filed complaints, as these efforts contribute to improving public service for Filipinos and help ensure that government agencies adhere to the Ease of Doing Business Act by streamlining their processes.

“That is the impact we are making in Anti-Red Tape Authority, the Filipino people are given the opportunity to raise their concerns to the government, and in turn, the government agencies listen and organize their services based on these concerns,” he added.

ARTA emphasized that all complaints

undergo further validation to determine whether they fall under their jurisdiction and to ensure that appropriate action is taken. In cases outside its mandate, ARTA endorses the complaints to the appropriate agencies for action and response.

If complaints are proven to be violations of Republic Act No. 11032, penalties may be imposed, including administrative liability, dismissal from government service, and imprisonment, depending on violations.

For this reason, ARTA urges government agencies to act properly, improve service delivery, and ensure that their processes are streamlined.

In a December 2025 statement, ARTA released the Top 10 Most Complained Government Agencies covering the period from January to October 2025. This includes the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Land Transportation Office (LTO), Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), and Land Registration Authority (LRA), among others.

ARTA reiterates that the said list does not reflect the overall performance of any government agency, and the complaint volume alone does not equate to poor service; rather highlights areas where ARTA and the concerned offices can work together to further streamline processes, implement their Citizen's Charter efficiently, and enhance public service delivery.

The Walking...

Higit sa lahat, nagpaabot ng pasasalamat ang grupo kay Chairman Antonio Bolaños ng Barangay Cayabu sa pagbibigay ng venue sa pamamagitan ni Kagawad Marissa. Nagpasalamat din sila kay Gng. Ciony Barroga sa pagpapagamit ng kanyang sasakyan para sa transportasyon ng grupo.

Kabilang din sa kinilala ang mga nagbigay ng pinansyal na tulong

Anti-political...

C A R M O N A , Cavite — The push for an anti-political dynasty bill met stiff resistance here, as residents who spoke during public consultations held by the House of Representatives' Committee on suffrage and electoral reforms urged lawmakers to address corruption first.

John dela Cruz from General Mariano Alvarez (GMA) said that Carmona was once a dumpsite for trash and dead bodies. However, despite the absence of political dynasties in GMA, dela Cruz said that Carmona has overtaken his town in terms of progress.

“If we will recall, I am from GMA, I have been here since 1982, and I am a witness to what has happened within the town of Carmona, it was a former dumpsite for garbage, dead bodies, but because of the couple interchanging positions — Congressman Roy (Loyola) at ni Mayor (Dahlia) Loyola — the area progressed,” he said in Filipino.

“Look at our town, people who are also from GMA are here with us, there is no political dynasty in our town, different people hold elective posts. But look, we do not know whether our town's direction is to move backward, forward, left, or diagonally,” he added.

According to dela Cruz, the Philippine General Hospital and the Carmona International City will be crafted despite the presence of a dynasty in the city.

“In 2010, I remember, Congressman Roy fought in Congress — 16 years in the making — for the cityhood of Carmona. And that happened because of what we described as a political dynasty, which means, Carmona is part of it,” he said in Filipino.

“Because of this political dynasty, a Philippine General Hospital would be built here in the City of Carmona. Because of a political dynasty, the Carmona International City will be developed here, which we from GMA

expect to bode well for us because we supply their workforce,” he added.

Instead of focusing on political dynasties, dela Cruz and Beth Biohon, another resident of GMA, urged lawmakers to fight corruption by lowering the monetary threshold for filing malversation and plunder cases.

“Much of the problems are not with local government, it's with the national government. Why don't we tighten provisions against corruption for all government agencies, from DPWH (Department of Public Works and Highways), DepEd (Department of Education), and DA (Department of Agriculture)?” dela Cruz said in Filipino.

“Why don't you craft a law that would make rules stricter, lower the threshold for malversation [of public] fund down to P500,000, plunder down to P1 million, and let's see if someone from the national government would steal. Political dynasties have no issue with the flood control projects, it's all about the national,” he added.

Biohon, meanwhile, said that the biggest problem of the country is corruption and not political dynasties, claiming that corrupt officials elected into office will engage in corruption whether or not they are part of political families.

“Political dynasties are not the problem of the Philippines; our main problem is corruption. Lawmakers should instead find ways to solve corruption in the country,” she said.

“Political dynasties are not the reason, as we voters pick who is worthy of being elected into posts. Even if they are not from political dynasties, if they want to engage in corruption, they will still do it,” he added.

Biohon also claimed that having been in GMA since 1968 allowed her to see how Carmona supposedly developed, which she believes can be attributed to politi-

cal families.

Several other speakers during the program echoed dela Cruz and Biochon's opinions.

Ending political dynasties key in fight against corruption

On the other hand, Christine Quillosa of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan's Cavite chapter said that ending political dynasties would be key to fighting corruption, joblessness, and other problems.

“To end corruption, hunger, demolition, joblessness, and other problems, what we should address is the root cause,” she said in Filipino.

“We should end the root cause. And a big reason is the political dynasties, because it is a machinery that enables the rotten system of blinding the people,” she added.

Quillosa also reminded the public that the 1987 Constitution mandates Congress to ban political dynasties, which means this is not an optional matter.

Article II, Section 26 of the Constitution explicitly prohibits political dynasties, but leaves it to Congress to define what a dynasty is.

“The Constitution's directive is clear: our state should ensure that there are equal opportunities for public service and band political dynasties according to law,” Quillosa said in Filipino.

The public consultation in Cavite is the first to be held by the Committee on Suffrage and

Electoral Reforms.

Earlier, House Speaker Faustino “Bojie” Dy III said he understands the importance of listening to the people, which is why consultations will be held in many areas.

Dy added that public consultations are crucial, as crafting the final version of the anti-political dynasty bill requires discussions and exchanges with the public, the primary stakeholders.

“These consultations are part of the House of Representatives' commitment that important bills should be crafted through an honest and true conversation,” Dy said in a video statement shown during the program.

Before the consultation, two committee hearings on the topic had already been held.

Last Tuesday, retired Supreme Court Senior Associate Justice Antonio Carpio and retired Associate Justice Adolfo Azcuna shared differing views on proposals to ban political dynasties.

Carpio said the ideal anti-dynasty law would prohibit relatives up to the fourth degree of consanguinity and affinity.

However, Azcuna said he consulted colleagues and his law students at San Beda to ensure that anti-dynasty proposals align with day-to-day realities. Their findings indicated that it might be difficult for the Commission on Elections to enforce a law limiting relatives in public office up to the fourth degree.

By: Gabriel Pabico Lal

SK Chairman...

Nagbitiw sa kaniyang puwesto bilang Sangguniang Kabataan Chairman ng Barangay Bubukal, Sta. Cruz, Laguna si Mark Andrian Napiza.

Kasunod ito sa kontrobersiya na kaniyang kinaharap noong Pebrero 15, 2026.

Umani kasi ng batikos ang pagkalat ng video nito na hinawak-hawakan ang mga panindang siopao at hotdog mula sa isang convenience store.

Sa kaniyang resignation letter ay pinasalaman niya ang mga ka-barangay na sinilbihan niya ng halos walong taon.

Bilang padidisciplina din aniya sa ginawa nito kaya nagpasya itong magbitiw sa puwesto.

Una rito ay sinampahan ni Sta. Cruz, Laguna Mayor Benjo Agarao ng administrative complaint si Napiza dahil sa ginawa nito

(Nelson Dimapilis)



CARD MRI CLIENTS WIN MICROENTREPRENEUR AWARDS FOR DIGITAL INNOVATION

Four clients from institutions under the CARD Mutually Reinforcing Institutions (CARD MRI) were honored as Digital Champions at the 4th Digital Financial Inclusion Awards (DFIA) held at the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Assembly Hall in Malate, Manila.

The awardees include two clients of CARD, Inc. (A Microfinance NGO), and one client each from CARD Bank, a microfinance-oriented rural bank, and CARD SME Bank, a thrift bank.

As a mutually reinforcing network, CARD MRI integrates financial and social development services with digital innovations to support client enterprises and improve quality of life. "It's such an honor for us to support these award-winning entrepreneurial journeys. Their success inspires us to keep our mission moving forward," said CARD MRI Managing Director Aristeo A. Dequito.

Inspiring stories of digital transformation

Among the awardees is Carmelita Dapanas, a CARD, Inc. client from Manticao, Misamis Oriental. She operates a hydroponic farm producing green bell peppers and salad tomatoes, alongside coconuts and cacao that she processes into tablea.

By leveraging Facebook, Messenger, and mobile cash services, she connects with customers nationwide and now supplies hotels, restaurants, and public markets in Iligan City and nearby areas.

Another CARD, Inc. awardee, Annalisa Monil from Bilar, Bohol, transformed the Bilar Stem Vegetable Farm into a thriving enterprise that supplies resorts and restaurants in Panglao Island, while also operating a retail store in Tagbilaran City. By accepting orders through Messenger and processing payments via mobile cash services and online banking, she has

significantly expanded her market reach—creating more livelihood opportunities within her community.

Raquel Lanaban, a CARD Bank, Inc. client from Bilusa, Davao City, was also recognized for her batik and handcrafted products business, which she established in 2010. By leveraging Facebook and Messenger, she increased her sales by 90%, adopted digital payment options, and now supports a network of resellers across five areas in Mindanao.

Meanwhile, Niel Danica Polong, a CARD SME Bank, Inc. client from Silang, Cavite, transformed her pancit business into an online favorite after launching a Facebook page during the pandemic. With the introduction of cashless payment options and an expanded menu, 60 to 70 percent of her orders now come from online customers.

Digital Financial Inclusion Awards

The Digital Financial Inclusion Awards (DFIA) is a financial inclusion initiative funded by the Citi Foundation, in partnership with Microfinance Council and supported by Citi Philippines and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP).

Now in its fourth year when it spun off from the previously known Citi Microentrepreneurship Awards (CMA), it recognizes outstanding micro-entrepreneurs and micro-finance institutions that effectively use digital solutions to conduct financial transactions, strengthen enterprises, and expand livelihood opportunities. BSP Governor Eli M. Remolona Jr. highlighted the shifting narrative around microentrepreneurs during the awarding ceremony, noting that digital tools were long perceived as too technical, costly, and complicated. He emphasized that the awardees have proven this notion outdated, demonstrating that with simple yet innovative solutions—such as online selling, QR payments, and



CARD, Inc. clients Carmelita Dapanas (second from left, left photo) and Annalisa Monil (third from left, right photo) receive the Digital Champion Microentrepreneurship Award during the 4th Digital Financial Inclusion Awards. (Photo from MCPI Facebook Page)



CARD Bank, Inc. client Raquel Lanaban (second from right) receives the Digital Financial Inclusion Award under the Microentrepreneur Category for maximizing her sales through digital platforms. (Photo from MCPI Facebook Page)

digital business systems—Filipino entrepreneurs are redefining what is possible in the digital economy.

The ceremony also recognized 13 other



CARD SME Bank, Inc. client Niel Danica Polong (second from right) receives the Microentrepreneur Award under the DFIA for expanding her customer base through digital platforms after making her signature pancit dishes an online favorite. (Photo from MCPI Facebook Page)

The recognition of CARD MRI clients at the DFIA highlights the growing role of digital innovation in inclusive finance. These awardees showed

how technology can empower communities, strengthen livelihoods, and pave the way for sustainable growth across the Philippines.

FROM PAGE 1

The Walking...

TA NAY, RIZAL — Taos-pusong nagpasalamat ang The Walking Ang Zumba Ladies sa lahat ng nakibahagi at sumuporta sa matagumpay na pagdaraos ng Ti-bok Buhay: Heart Month 2026 – Masiglang Puso, Masiglang Pamayanan na ginanap noong Pebrero 10, 2026 sa Barangay Cayabu, Tanay, Rizal.

Ayon kay Tess Garcia, malaking bahagi ng tagumpay ng aktibidad ang pakikisa ng iba't ibang sektor ng komunidad. Aniya, ang sama-samang suporta ay nagbigay-daan upang maisakatuparan ang layunin ng programa na palakasin ang kama-layan sa kalusugan ng puso at itaguyod ang isang masigla at aktibong pamayanan.

Lubos din ang pasasalamat ni Garcia sa Office of the Mayor sa pamumuno ni Mayor Rafael M. Tanjuatco sa patuloy na pagsuporta sa mga programang pangkalusugan.

Nagkaloob ang tanggapan ng alkalde ng meryenda at inuming tubig para sa mahigit isang daang organizers at participants ng aktibidad. Bukod dito, naglaan din ng sasakyan para sa mga dadalo mula sa bayan at Sampaloc patungong Cayabu—isang malaking tulong upang maging maayos at matagumpay ang pagtitipon.

Pinasalamatan din ng grupo ang Tanay PNP sa pamumuno ni Plt Col Arnel M. Tabag sa kanilang pakikipag-ug-

Malaki rin ang naging papel ni Gng. Pauline Dela Cruz Mojar sa pag-iinitiate ng kolab-

cont. on page 7



PUBLISHER CORNER

EKONOMIYA, BUMABAGSAK NA DAHIL SA PULITIKA AT IBA PANG PROBLEMA NG BANSA – ERICE

kinababahala ni Caloocan Rep. Edgar Erice ang pagbagsak ng ekonomiya ng Pilipinas dahil sa ingay ng pulitika at kaliwa't-kanang isyu ng korapsyon.

Tinukoy ng mambabatas ang hindi pagkaka-abot ng Pilipinas sa target nitong gross domestic product (GDP) noong 2025 na dapat sana ay 5.7%.

Sa halip, umabot lamang aniya sa 4.5% ang nakuha ng bansa, o mahigit isang porsyentong (1%) mas mababa.

Posible rin aniyang mas mababa pa rito ang maaabot na GDP ngayong unang quarter ng 2026 dahil hindi rin bumubuti ang sitwasyon sa bansa.

Inihalimbawa ng mambabatas ang epekto ng flood control scandal sa sektor ng



paggawa, construction, at mga kaugnay na industriya, na aniya'y unti-unting nakakaramdam ng direktang epekto ng korapsyon, kasama na ang pagtigil sa mga large scale infrastructure project habang nagpapatuloy ang imbestigasyon.

Sa usapin ng pulitika, unti-unti na rin aniyang nararamdaman ng pamahalaan ang pagkawala ng tiwala ng mga mamumuhunan, dahil sa tuloy-tuloy na away pulitika, lalo na sa pagitan ng administrasyong Marcos at ng kampo ni Vice President Sara Duterte.

DILG...

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna — The campaign of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) to eliminate political branding on government-funded projects is steadily gaining ground across the CALABARZON region, drawing positive response from local government units (LGUs) and the public.

Under DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2026-006, the "Anti-Epal" Drive directs all provincial, city, municipal, and barangay officials—as well as DILG central, regional, and field offices and attached agencies—to ensure that no public official's name, photograph, logo, initials, color motif, slogan, or any identifying symbol appears on project signages, markers, tarpaulins, and similar materials funded by public money.

In Cavite, Governor Francis Gabriel Remulla has ordered the immediate removal of all provincial government signages and materials that violate the directive.

Barangay officials have

FROM PAGE 1

likewise been mobilized to assist in the province-wide clearing operations.

Similarly, the City Government of Biñan in Laguna has initiated its own city-wide effort, dismantling tarpaulins and signages bearing the faces and names of local officials earlier this month. Other LGUs in the region have also expressed support, noting that some had already enacted similar local ordinances promoting non-personalized public signages even before the issuance of the DILG circular.

According to Ariel Iglesia, Regional Director of DILG Region IV-A, the Anti-Epal policy complements the department's environment-centered programs and reinforces responsible governance.

"The initiative underscores responsible governance by encouraging LGUs to focus on service delivery, sustainability, and community welfare rather than individual recognition," Iglesia said in an interview.

He emphasized

EXPLICIT

Madelaine Go
CARING FOR OUR LITTLE ONES, SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS

In a meaningful step toward strengthening support systems for military families, the 2nd Infantry (Jungle Fighter) Division officially inaugurated its Child Minding Facility at Camp Capinpin on Wednesday, February 18.

The ceremony was led by 2ID Commander Ramon Zagal, together with key officers of the Division, marking another milestone in the unit's continuing commitment to holistic troop welfare. The newly established facility is designed to provide a safe, nurturing, and child-friendly space where the children of soldiers and personnel can learn, play, and receive proper care while their parents carry out their daily duties in service to the nation.

More than just a physical structure, the Child Minding Facility symbolizes the Division's recognition that strong families are the backbone of a strong military force.

that the removal of personal posters and political branding from government properties strengthens transparency and accountability, particularly as the election season approaches.

By eliminating personalized branding from government projects, the policy helps curb premature campaigning and prevent the use of public resources for partisan purposes.

"By removing personalized branding from government projects, the policy helps curb premature campaigning and reduces the use of public resources for partisan purposes, fostering a more level political playing field," Iglesia added.

The Anti-Epal Drive also supports the DILG's environmental initiatives, including the Kalinisan convergence program, which promotes the bayanihan spirit by en-

By ensuring that soldiers have peace of mind knowing their children are in a secure and supportive environment, the initiative directly contributes to enhanced morale, focus, and operational readiness.

The program underscores the Division's broader vision of balancing mission accomplishment with compassionate leadership. While troops remain steadfast in safeguarding communities and upholding national security, the command likewise prioritizes the well-being of the families who stand behind every uniform.

Through initiatives like this, the 2nd Infantry Division demonstrates that caring for those who serve also means caring for the loved ones they leave at home—affirming that national service begins with a strong, supported family foundation.

couraging LGUs and communities to work together toward a cleaner, healthier, and safer environment.

Home to approximately 9.7 million registered voters—the highest in the country—CALABARZON has largely welcomed the policy, with public discussions reflecting broad understanding of its intent.

While isolated concerns have been raised in some sectors, many residents view the initiative as a reaffirmation that public projects are funded by taxpayers and should not serve as platforms for political promotion.

As implementation continues across the region, the DILG maintains that the Anti-Epal Drive reinforces the principle that public office is a public trust—placing governance and service above personal publicity.

(Madelaine Go)

Pointer
Pau Dela CruzPBGEN RANDY GLENN G. SILVIO:
Walang Pinagbago sa Integridad
Kahit Mas Lumalawak ang
Pananagutan sa Serbisyo

Sa kabila ng patuloy na paglawak ng responsibilidad ni PBGen Glenn Silvio, District Director ng Quezon City at nananatiling matatag ang kanyang paninindigan pagdating sa work ethics at tunay na diwa ng paglilingkod.

Walang pinagbago sa kanyang prinsipyo—bagkus, mas pinalalakas pa ito habang mas dumarami ang tungkulin at hamon na hinaharap.

Handa pa rin siyang makaisa at makiikot sa kanyang mga kapulisan upang personal na makita at mapatatag ang police visibility sa mga komunidad. Hindi lamang ito tungkol sa presensya sa lansangan, kundi sa pagbibigay ng tamang gabay, inspirasyon, at direksyon upang mas lalo magsilbi nang may mala-sakit, disiplina, at propesyonalismo ang kanyang mga pulis.

Kasama rin sa adhikaing ni PBGen Silvio ang mga katuwang sa pamayanan—ang mga barangay officials at iba pang stakeholders. Sa pamamagitan ng bukas na komunikasyon at sama-samang pag-uusap, mas napapadali ang pagtugon sa mga suliranin ng komunidad. Ang bawat hinaing at reklamo na dumaraming ay hindi niya pinipili. Para sa kanya, ang bawat complainant ay itinuturing na parang sariling kamag-anak.

Kapag may reklamo, tinatrato niya ito na tila galing sa isang ina, ama, o kapatid. Ibinibigay niya ang pinakamataas na antas ng serbisyo—walang pagmamataas, walang panunungit, at walang pagmamaliit. Sapagkat kung ang nagre-reklamo ay sarili pamilya, hindi natin hahayaang maramdaman nila ang bigat o pagpapabaya ng sistema.

Bahagi ng sa mekanismo na pinatutupad niya ang tinatawag na "red teaming" at "pre-checking survey," kung saan sinusuri mismo ang kalidad ng serbisyo ng kanyang mga pulis.. Tumatawag sila sa hotline ng mga estasyon, nagpapakilalang nangangailangan ng tulong upang masuri kung maayos at naaayon sa standard operating procedures ang pagsaglat at pag-aksyon. Kapag may kakulangan, agad itong itinatama at ipinapaliwanag upang hindi na mauli.

May mga pagkakataon ding nagpapadala siya ng tao upang magsampa ng reklamo at obserbahan ang aktwal na pagtugon ng mga tauhan. Layunin nitong tiyakin na hindi nawawala ang respeto, maayos na pakikitungo, at tamang interpersonal relationship sa pagitan ng kapulisan at mamamayan. Ang serbisyo ay hindi dapat nauuwi sa iringan o sigawan—kundi sa mahinahon, makatao, at makatarungang pagresolba ng problema.

Hanggang sa dulo, dapat na naihahatid ang reklamo sa tamang tanggapan. Kung kinakailangang iendorso sa ibang ahensya tulad ng DOJ o iba pang institusyon, dapat ay may gabay at kung maaari ay may aktwal na paghatid pa. May sasakyan, may kayakahan—kaya't gamitin ito upang masiguero na ang mamamayan ay hindi napapabaya sa proseso.

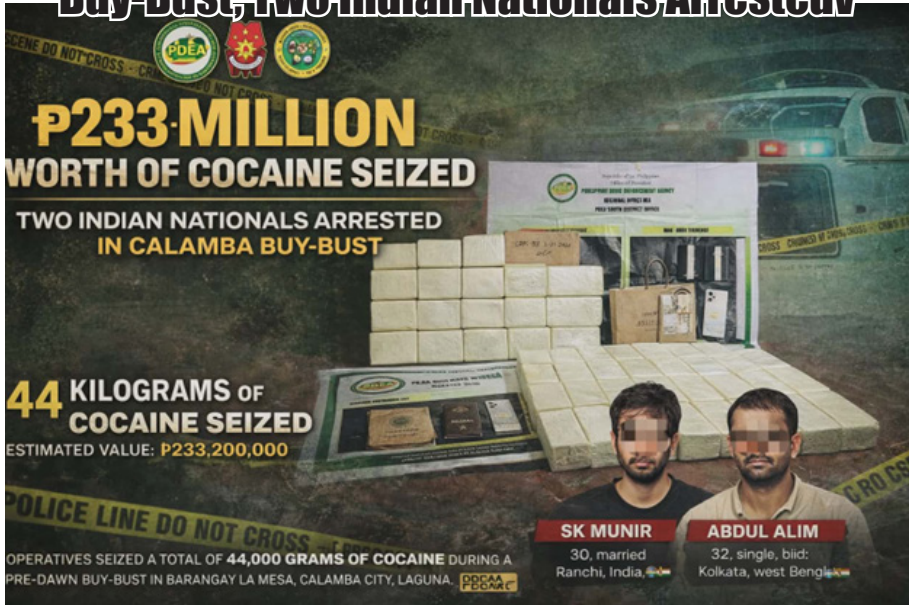
Iyan ang diwa ng serbisyong itinuturo at pinatutupad ni PBGen Silvio, walang pinagbago sa integridad at malasakit, ngunit mas tumitindi at mas tumatalas habang mas lumalawak ang kanilang responsibilidad.

Sa huli, ang tunay na sukatan ng pamumuno ay hindi sa posisyon, kundi sa kalidad ng serbisyong naibibigay sa bawat mamamayan.



Shoppers enjoyed a maxed out Valentine's experience at SM City Bacoor, SM City Molino, SM City Rosario, and SM Center Imus — from romantic dates and sweet café moments to thoughtful gifts and fun family and barkada hangouts.

Php 233-M Worth of Cocaine Seized in Calamba Buy-Bust; Two Indian Nationals Arrested



CALAMBA CITY, Laguna — Authorities seized approximately 44 kilograms of suspected cocaine valued at ₱233.2 million and arrested two Indian nationals during a buy-bust operation in Villa de Calamba, Barangay La Mesa, at around 2:30 a.m. on February 21, 2026.

The operation was led by the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) RO-NCR Southern District Office and conducted jointly with the

PDEA RO-4A Laguna Provincial Office, PDEA RO-4A Regional Special Enforcement Team, and the Philippine National Police (PNP) Calamba.

Confiscated during the operation were a total of 44,000 grams of suspected cocaine with a standard value of ₱233,200,000 and an estimated street value of ₱176,000,000.

Recovered drug evidence included two kilograms of suspected

cocaine wrapped in transparent plastic and placed inside a brown paper bag, which was the subject of sale, and 42 kilograms of suspected cocaine individually wrapped in transparent plastic and placed inside an open carton box, which was the subject of possession.

Authorities also seized non-drug evidence consisting of one genuine ₱500 bill placed on top of 16 bundles of boodle money used as buy-bust



Smiles, snapshots, and so much good fortune! Our God of Wealth brought luck and happiness to everyone here at your most loved SM City Molino, SM City Bacoor, SM City Rosario, and SM Center Imus!

Thank you for celebrating and sharing the festive spirit with us! Here's to a prosperous year ahead!

money, one brown paper bag used as container of the buy-bust money, one mobile phone, one Makah (Mecca) passport, and one Indian passport.

Arrested were Alyas Munir, also known as "FiveSix," 30, married, a businessman and resident of Ranchi, India; and alyas Abdul, 32, single, a businessman and resident of Kolkata, West Bengal, India.

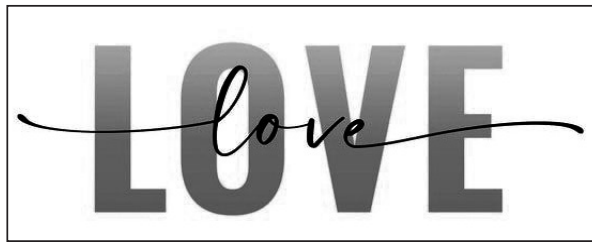
The suspects will

face charges for violations of Sections 5 and 11, Article II of Republic Act No. 9165, also known as the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002.

The seized sub-

stances will be submitted to the PDEA Laboratory Service for examination. Authorities reported that all operating personnel are safe and accounted for.

(Edjun Mariposque)



VP Sara Duterte, Personal na Binisita ang mga Sundalong Nakaligtas sa Paglubog ng MV Trisha Kerstin 3

Personal na binisita ni Sara Duterte ang dalawang sundalo na nakaligtas matapos lumubog ang MV Trisha Kerstin 3 noong Enero 26, 2026. Layunin ng pagbisita na personal na kumustahin ang kalagayan ng mga biktima at tiyaking patuloy ang kanilang paggaling matapos ang trahedyang sa karagatan.

Ayon sa Bise Presidente, ikinatuwa niyang makita na nasa maayos nang kondisyon ang mga sundalo at ligtas na sa anumang panganib. Nagpaabot din siya ng taos-pusong pasasalamat sa mga doktor, nurse, at iba pang medical staff na walang sawang nagbigay ng agarang lunas at pangangalaga sa mga nasa-glip.

Binigyang-diin din niya ang kahalagahan ng mabilis na pagtugon ng mga awtoridad at rescuers na naging susi



upang mailigtas ang mga biktima at maiwasan ang mas malalang trahedyang.

Patuloy naman ang kanilang rehabilitasyon. Ulat ni Salvacion Requirme

SSS...

Members of the Social Security System (SSS) can be assured that their pensions remain secure, Finance Secretary and Social Security Commission (SSC) Chair Frederick D. Go said, after the agency reported its strongest financial performance ever, reinforcing the stability, reliability, and long-term sustainability of benefits for generations of Filipinos.

In 2025, SSS posted a net income of PHP 142.97 billion, marking a 58.4% increase from the previous year. Total assets likewise grew to PHP 1.26 trillion, up 22.1% from PHP 1.03 trillion in 2024.

For the first time in its history, the SSS Reserve Fund surpassed the PHP 1 trillion mark — an important milestone that strengthens the institution's resilience against economic shocks, enhances its capacity to withstand demographic pressures, and ensures its ability to meet future benefit obligations.

"This record performance and over 1 trillion-peso reserve fund level send a clear message to SSS members: your pensions are secure; your benefits sustained," SSC Chair Go said.

"Guided by President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr.'s directive to enhance benefits and strengthen governance, we are building a social security system that is financially resilient and more responsive to the needs of every Filipino," he added.

SSS President and Chief Executive Officer Jay de Claro attributes the improved performance to sustained fiscal discipline, strengthened fund governance, and long-term reforms designed to safeguard members' contributions and preserve the fund's actuarial soundness.

"Surpassing the 1 trillion peso mark in our Reserve Fund is a historic milestone and a strong affirmation of our duty to every Filipino worker and

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pensioner who relies on SSS.

This performance reflects prudent stewardship of members' contributions, strengthened governance, and our continuing commitment to deliver secure and sustainable benefits—today and for generations to come," he said.

Beyond its financial gains, the SSS implemented its first-ever annual pension increase in 2025, granting yearly increases of 10% for retirement and disability pensions, and 5% for survivor pensions from 2025 to 2027.

The pension reform is expected to support household consumption among pensioners and contribute to overall economic growth.

Service delivery was likewise enhanced with the rollout of the MySSS Card—a fully functional debit card linked to a savings account—making benefit and loan disbursements more convenient for

Mayor Ross Rizal Empowers 23 Families with "Tindahan Ni Eva" Sari-Sari Store Packages in Calamba



CALAMBA CITY, Laguna — In a continuing push to strengthen grassroots entrepreneurship and uplift local families, the City Government of Calamba, under the leadership of Roseller "Ross" H. Rizal, successfully distributed sari-sari store packages to 23 beneficiaries through the "Tindahan Ni Eva" program.

More than a simple act of assistance, the initiative serves as a strategic livelihood investment designed to help families establish sustainable small businesses. Each sari-sari store package represents not just starter goods and supplies, but renewed hope, opportunity, and a concrete path toward financial independence.

Mayor Rizal emphasized that the program is anchored on long-term empowerment rather than temporary relief. By equipping beneficiaries with capital in the form of store packages, the city government aims to reduce poverty, promote self-reliance, and create steady sources of income for Calambeno households.

Under Mayor

members. In 2025, SSS disbursed PHP 304.94 billion in pensions and benefits to 5.66 million members nationwide. Loan releases reached PHP 61.11 billion, providing timely financial assistance to workers and their families.

To further ease borrowing costs, SSS re-

duced interest rates on key loan facilities from 10% to 8%. The Pension Loan Program was also expanded to cover survivor pensioners, extending benefits to an additional 1.2 million members. SSS continues to provide accessible credit support through programs such as the Calamity

The "Tindahan Ni Eva" program reflects the city's broader economic vision—strengthening community-based enterprises that stimulate neighborhood-level economic activity. Every small store opened contributes to local commerce, supports daily household needs, and fosters a culture of hard work and perseverance.

Through initiatives like this, the city reaffirms its commitment to building a more progressive, resilient, and hopeful community for every Calambeno family.

(Edjun Mariposque)

Ross Rizal's administration, Calamba continues to implement programs that go beyond traditional aid, focusing instead on sustainable solutions that create real economic opportunities.

Loan, Emergency Loan, and the upcoming Micro Loan Program.

"Patuloy na maghahatid ang SSS ng mga programang tulad ng Micro Loan at Calamity Loan upang makapagbigay ng sapat, abot-kaya at mas mabilis na suporta sa aming mga miyembro," SSC Chair Go said.