

ASIM NA MAY TAMIS NG TAGUMPAY



Ipinagmamalaki ni Jennifer Llanera ang kanyang tamarind jam na ngayon ay mabibili na sa iba't ibang lungsod at munisipalidad sa Negros Occidental.

Sa hangaring mabigyan ng mas komportableng pamumuhay ang pamilya, sinimulan ni Jennifer, mula sa Cadiz City, Negros Occidental, kasama ang kanyang asawa ang negosyong paggawa ng tamarind jam noong 1994.

Hindi na bago sa kanila ang ganitong hanapbuhay dahil ito rin ang linya ng negosyo ng kapamilya ng kaniyang asawa, kaya't mas naging magaan ang kanilang pagsisimula.

Mula sa labas ng eskwelahan

Sa umpisa, nagtitinda lamang sila sa labas ng paaralan. Mga estudyante ang kanilang unang naging suki.

Maganda ang naging takbo sa simula, ngunit tuwing bakasyon ay bumababa ang benta.

Dahil dito, naghanap si Jennifer ng ibang paraan upang mapalawak ang merkado.

Personal niyang nilibot ang mga karatig-lungsod at munisipalidad upang ialok ang kanyang produkto sa iba't ibang tindahan.

Upang mapanatili ang kalidad at mas mapaganda ang packaging, dumalo siya sa serye ng mga workshop at training. Mula rito, unti-unting nakilala at tinangkili ang kanyang

tamarind jam.

Mga pagsubok sa gitna ng paglago

Ngunit kasabay ng pag-unlad ay ang mga hindi inaasahang pagsubok.

Noong 2016, dumaan siya sa isa sa mga pinakamabigat na yugto ng kanyang buhay nang pumanaw ang isa niyang anak dahil sa komplikasyon sa kalusugan. Lalong bumigat ang sitwasyon dahil sa mataas na gastusing medikal.

Hindi na sapat ang kita ng negosyo upang matustusan ang kanilang pangangailangan.

Noong 2017, sa kabila ng matinding dalamhati, nagtrabaho siya sa ibang bansa upang masuportahan ang pamilya.

Makalipas ang dalawang taon, nagtanto niyang hindi iyon ang buhay na nais niya—ang sumasahod lamang para sa pang-araw-araw. Kaya noong 2019, bumalik siya sa Pilipinas at muling itinuloy ang negosyong kanyang iniwan.

Ang mga sampalok na ginagamit niya ay nagmumula sa San Carlos City, Negros Occidental.

Dahil namumunga lamang ang mga puno nito sa unang kalahati ng taon, karani-

wan siyang bumibili ng humigit-kumulang 100 hanggang 300 kilo tuwing peak season upang masiguro ang tuloy-tuloy na produksyon.

Kapag kapos ang puhunan para sa raw materials, kumukuhang siya ng karagdagang kapital mula sa CARD, Inc. (A Microfinance NGO). Naging kliyente siya nito noong 2019.

Sa pamamagitan ng kanyang mga loan, nakabibili siya nang sapat na suplay ng sampalok kahit off-season.

Sa kasalukuyan, mayroon siyang aktibong loan na PHP 80,000.00 mula sa institusyon.

Panibagong dagok, panibagong laban

Hindi pa man tuluyang nakababangon, isa na namang dagok ang dumating.

Sa kasagsagan ng pandemya, pumanaw ang kanyang asawa. Bukod sa sakit ng pagkawala, naging mahigpit din ang lockdown na naging dahilan upang pansamantalang matigil ang kanilang produksyon ng jam.

Upang may maipangtustos sa araw-araw, nagtanim siya ng mga gulay at ibinenta ang mga ito upang may pambili ng bigas at iba pang pangangailangan.

Sa mga sumunod na taon, naapektuhan din ang kanilang alagang baboy dahil sa African Swine Fever (ASF).

May mga sandaling nais na niyang sumuko, ngunit hindi niya magawa dahil alam niyang umaasa sa kanya ang kanyang mga anak, lalo na ang mga nag-aaral pa.

Sa halip na magpatinag, mas pinili niyang maging matatag at patuloy na bumangon sa bawat pagsubok.

Patuloy na pag-asenso

Sa ngayon, malinaw ang bunga ng kanyang tiyaga at determinasyon.

Umaabot na sa 500 packs ng tamarind jam ang kanilang napoproduce araw-araw at naipamamahagi na ito sa 12 lungsod sa Negros.

Isa sa kanyang mga susunod na layunin ang makabili ng delivery van upang mapabilis ang distribusyon ng kanyang produkto.

Sa kasalukuyan, umaasa lamang sila sa pagko-commute at pagrenta ng traysikel sa pagbiyahe ng mga order mula Sagay hanggang Bacolod.

Nais din niyang madagdagan ang halaga ng kanyang maaaring malloan sa CARD, Inc. upang mas makabili ng mas maraming sampalok sa hinaharap.

“Nakaka-proud lang na makita ang aking mga tamarind jam na dati ay mabibili lamang sa labas ng eskwelahan, ngayon ay nakadisplay na rin sa malls,” ani Jennifer, habang inaalala kung gaano na kalayo ang kanyang narating.

Ang kuwento ni Jennifer ay patunay na ang sipag, dedikasyon, at walang sawang pagpupursige ay may asim man sa simula, ngunit nagbubunga ng tamis ng tagumpay sa huli.

PHILHEALTH INTENSIFIES MEMBER PROTECTION EFFORTS; WELCOMES OMBUDSMAN SUPPORT



PhilHealth thanks the Ombudsman Remulla for amplifying the concerns of Filipino patients. His voice adds to a conversation PhilHealth has long been committed to—ensuring every member receives the full benefit they deserve.

Our support for Filipino families continue to grow.

PhilHealth paid out ₱300.45 billion in benefits this past year, an 81.72% increase from the previous year. Every peso represents a family we were able to stand beside as their partners in health and the Corporation will continue to provide expanded benefits to every Filipino family.

We are continuing to strengthen billing transparency.

As part of our ongoing monitoring efforts, PhilHealth is looking into reported discrepancies between what patients are told about their coverage and what providers submit in their claims. We are reinforcing our auditing systems, deepening coordination with oversight bodies and healthcare providers, and ensuring that our members always receive accurate, transparent information about their benefits.

Know your benefits that you have every right to.

Every Filipino has the right to claim Phil-

Health benefits as part of the implementation of Universal Healthcare and our benefit packages cover primary, emergency outpatient, and inpatient care.

Patients and their family can ask the hospital care team how much PhilHealth covers for your case.

Android users can also download the PhilHealth Search ACR app to find the Case Rate for the patient.

You can reach out to the PhilHealth Cares (PCARES) representatives in the hospital if you have questions or concerns and they can also help you get the care that is appropriate for you. You may request an itemized bill and check for your PhilHealth coverage before settling your account.

Your voice matters. Member reports directly support our ongoing reviews and help us improve the system for everyone.

PhilHealth remains committed to working with all partners, government, providers, and patients, toward a healthcare system that is transparent, responsive, and truly protective of every Filipino.

For inquiries and reports, contact your hospital's PCARES representative or reach us through official PhilHealth channels (02) 8662-2588 or actioncenter@philhealth.gov.ph.



DERETSAHAN WEEKLY NEWS PUBLISHING

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

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Calamba Strengthens Inclusive Governance Through Gender-Responsive Planning Workshop



CALAMBA BOOSTS DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AS MAYOR ROSS RIZAL COMPLETES EOC EXECUTIVE TRAINING



CALAMBA CITY, Laguna — Disaster readiness efforts in the city received a significant push as Mayor Roseller “Ross” H. Rizal

successfully completed the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Executive Course Training conducted by the Office of Civil Defense held at

Pansol, Calamba City, Laguna.

The program focused on strengthening leadership capability

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SSS responds to economic challenges with expanded relief programs, Php 60B in support for members and pensioners

DOF EXTENDS IMPORTER ACCREDITATION FROM 1 YEAR TO 3 YEARS, CUTS TOTAL FEES TO BOOST TRADE

PGC Strengthens Quality Standards Ahead of SOCOTEC Recertification Audit

DOTR URGED TO INCLUDE PRIVATE VEHICLES IN TOLL DISCOUNT



EDITORIAL:-

CHIZ SAYS SMALL FARMERS, FISHERFOLK SHOULD NOT BE LEFT OUT OF GOV'T. FUEL AID

Senator Francis “Chiz” Escudero said the fuel assistance being extended to tricycle and jeepney drivers in various parts of the country should also cover small farmers and fisherfolk who are equally burdened by rising fuel prices and are essential to maintaining the country’s food supply.

Escudero made the statement after the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) confirmed that nearly half of the fishers in Luzon have stopped going out to sea due to soaring fuel prices. “Sana ay mabigyan ng karagdagang tulong ang ating mga magsasaka at mangingisda bukod sa nailaan na ng pamahalaan para sa kanila sapagkat hindi naman talaga sapat ang subsidiyang binibigay,” the veteran legislator said. “Hindi sila dapat maiwan sa anumang ayuda ng pamahalaan.”

To this end, Escudero said both the national and local governments must exert every effort to ensure that fishing communities in various parts of the country receive help the soonest. He noted that several localities have already rolled out fuel assistance to affected sectors. In Eastern Visayas, more than 900 municipal fisherfolk in Biliran province recently received P3,000 fuel discount cards under BFAR’s Fuel Discount Program for Farmers and Fisherfolk. In Tacloban City, transport groups have also begun receiving fuel aid as rising costs strain operations.

In Bacolod City, Lone District Rep. Alfredo Abelardo Benitez led the distribution of free biodiesel to fisherfolk in several barangays, an initiative meant to help small-scale fishers reduce operational costs as petroleum prices remain elevated. Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (SINAG) executive director Jayson Cainglet has also reported that up to 50 percent of fisherfolk in Cavite, Bataan, Zambales, and Pangasinan have stopped going out to sea because of rising fuel costs.

Pangisda Pilipinas, through its president Pablo Rosales, likewise appealed for immediate government aid, saying small fishers are “earning almost nothing” as fuel prices climb week after week. “Araw-araw silang lumalabas para magbigay ng pagkain sa ating hapag, pero sila mismo ay apektado sa pagtaas ng presyo ng krudo.

Kailangan nila ng agarang tulong at suportamula sa pamahalaang nasyonal at lokal,” Escudero said.

CALAMBA BOOSTS...

ities in crisis situations, with emphasis on incident management, inter-agency coordination, and the application of the Incident Command System (ICS).

These components are essential in ensuring organized and efficient emergency response operations at the local level.

Mayor Rizal underscored the value of the training in improving the city’s ability to respond swiftly and effectively during disasters.

“Bilang bahagi ng patuloy nating pagsisikap na mapahusay ang kahan- daan at mabilis na pagtugon sa anumang sakuna,

Cayetano...

Senate Minority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano on Monday welcomed President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.’s directive to create a government crisis committee amid tensions in the Middle East, saying the move aligns with earlier calls from the Senate to strengthen the country’s preparedness for major disruptions.

Earlier this month, the chamber adopted Senate Resolution No. 343, introduced by Cayetano, urging the Executive Branch to establish a National Con-

DOF...

Under the leadership of Finance Secretary Frederick D. Go, the Bureau of Customs (BOC) has extended the validity of importer accreditation from one (1) year to three (3) years and reduced accreditation costs – simplifying the process, cutting red tape and supporting the continuous flow of goods into the country.

“By extending the validity of importer accreditation, we are reducing red tape and enabling a more efficient trade system that can meet growing consumer demand and support local industries,” Secretary Frederick Go said. “This reform allows businesses to focus more on operations and growth rather than administrative requirements.”

Under a Customs Administrative Order (CAO) signed by Secretary Frederick Go, the accreditation fee has also been reduced from PHP2,000 per year (or PHP6,000 over 3 years)

na ito ay hindi lamang dagdag kaalaman, kundi konkretong hakbang tungo sa mas organisado, mas mabilis, at mas ligtas na pagtugon para sa bawat Calambeño.”

“Patuloy tayong maghahanda. Patuloy tayong maglilingkod. Walang maiwan sa oras ng sakuna.”

City officials said the completion of the course enhances Calamba’s institutional capacity

tendency Framework and develop a comprehensive plan to guide the country’s response to large-scale crises.

The resolution pushed for urgent action, highlighting how global conflicts, particularly those affecting oil supply, can quickly translate into higher fuel prices, transport costs, and overall inflation in the Philippines.

With the need for a more coordinated approach becoming increasingly evident, senators subsequently adopted Senate Resolution No.

to a one-time payment of PHP5,000 for a 3-year period, lowering overall cost for importers.

To ensure continued compliance and up-to-date records, importers are required to submit an Annual Reportorial Compliance (ARC) within 30 days of their accreditation anniversary.

The CAO also clarifies the criteria and guidelines for automatic renewal. Importers with six (6) consecutive years of uninterrupted and compliant accreditation may qualify for automatic renewal. The policy likewise covers Authorized Economic Operators (AEO) and Super Green Lane (SGL) Accredited Importers.

This reform supports President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr.’s directive to foster a more business-friendly environment, enabling enterprises to thrive and strengthening the country’s trade competitiveness. DOF

to manage emergencies, paving the way for faster coordination, clearer communication, and more strategic deployment of resources.

Efforts to strengthen disaster resilience remain a priority of the local government, aligning with its commitment to safeguard lives and ensure that no Calambeño is left behind in times of crisis.

(Edjun Mariposque)

350, co-authored by Cayetano along with Senate President Vicente Sotto III and Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri, proposing the creation of a Senate-led ad hoc committee to help advance the development of the national contingency plan.

The proposed body, to be known as the Proactive Response and Oversight for Timely and Effective Crisis sStrategy (PROTECT), will be led by the Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Finance and composed of the chairpersons of all standing committees of the Senate, and tasked to bring together inputs from various sectors while ensuring coordination across government.

The initiative is intended to complement efforts from the Executive Branch by taking an active role in the development of the national contingency plan, oversight, and ensuring that the framework moves forward in a coordinated and timely manner.

Cayetano emphasized that while government agencies often implement individual measures during crises, the

absence of a single guiding framework can lead to gaps in coordination and timing.

“Nasusubukan ang ating pundasyon ‘pag merong kalamidad o sakuna... I don’t think there’s a problem that we expect the worst or prepare for the worst. Kung hindi, nandiyan y’ung contingency plan [to implement],” he said.

The creation of a Senate-led body is expected to help align national agencies, local governments, and the private sector, while ensuring that preparations for potential disruptions do not lose direction over time.

With Malacañang now moving to establish its own crisis committee, Cayetano said the effort reinforces the need to build stronger and more coordinated foundations across institutions so the country is better prepared when crises arise.

“Ang pundasyon ng isang bansa, ng isang bayan, ng isang senado, ng isang pamilya o ang pundasyon ng mga Pilipino ay napakahalaga,” he said. PR



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EDITORIAL OFFICE

Business Office : #025 Coastal Green St., P. F. 1
Espiritu, Bacoar City Cavite
Mobile No. ----- 09365035056
Email ad: deretsahan2024@gmail.com

EDITORIAL BOARD

Publisher : Nelson A. Dimapilis
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SSS...

QUEZON CITY (April 16, 2026) – Following the directive of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. and under the guidance of Social Security Commission (SSC) Chair Secretary Frederick D. Go, the Social Security System (SSS) is strengthening access to its existing programs in response to rising energy costs, inflationary pressures, and the broader economic impact of ongoing geopolitical tensions in the Middle East. These initiatives include policy enhancements to improve accessibility, and the early implementation of this year’s pension increase to provide timely financial relief to members, pensioners, and employers.

The program will be delivered through digital platforms and partner financial institutions, enabling faster and more convenient access to funds. It aims to provide immediate liquidity support while promoting financial inclusion, with a target loan portfolio of up to ₱40 billion within the next two (2) years.

SSS President and Chief Executive Officer Robert Joseph M. de Claro said, “We recognize that rising prices and economic uncertainty continue to place pressure on Filipino families and businesses. Through these enhanced programs, SSS is ensuring that our members and pensioners have access to timely, affordable and reliable financial support when they need it most.”

Collectively, these programs are expected to provide up to approximately ₱60 billion in financial assistance and benefit support.

Emergency Loan Program

Members facing urgent financial needs may apply for the enhanced Emergency Loan Program, which offers up to ₱20,000 at a reduced interest rate of 7% per annum, with a six-month repayment moratorium.

To improve accessibility, SSS has relaxed the eligibility requirements from 36 to 18 months of posted contributions, with at least six (6) contributions posted within the last 12 months. The program now also covers members with minimal past-due loans of up to three (3) monthly amortizations, as well as overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) through simplified eligibility requirements.

Around ₱27 billion has been allocated for this program, which is expected to benefit an estimated 2.24 million eligible members, providing a safe and affordable alternative to informal lenders and helping them cover essential expenses such as medical needs, education and daily household requirements.

Micro-Loan Program

SSS is set to roll out short-term loans ranging from ₱1,000 to ₱20,000 with repayment terms of 15 to 90 days and an affordable rate of 8% per annum.

The program will be delivered through digital platforms and partner financial institutions, enabling faster and more convenient access to funds. It aims to provide immediate liquidity support while promoting financial inclusion, with a target loan portfolio of up to ₱40 billion within the next two (2) years.

Loan penalty condonation For members with past-due loans, SSS continues to implement the Consolidation of Past Due Short-Term Member Loans with Condonation of Penalty Program.

Under this program, penalties of unpaid loans are fully waived upon settlement of the principal and interest. Members may choose flexible payment options: one-time settlement or installment terms up to 60 months with a minimum down payment of 10%.

Applications may be conveniently filed online via My.SSS portal.

Employer contribution delinquency reliefs SSS is also providing relief to delinquent employers through penalty condonation and restructuring programs.

These include the Contribution Penalty Condonation, Delinquency Management, and Restructuring Program (CPCoDe MRP) for businesses and the Contribution Penalty Condonation and Restructuring Pro-

FROM PAGE 1

gram (CPCR-P) for household employers.

These measures allow employers to settle contribution obligations through structured payment arrangements without additional penalties, ensuring continued social security coverage and protection for their employees.

Early implementation of pension increase

In support of pensioners, SSS is advancing the implementation of the scheduled 2026 pension increase under the SSS Pension Reform Program, from September to June 2026, providing earlier financial relief. Retirement and disability pensions will increase by 10%, while death and survivor benefits will increase by 5%.

SSS is expected to release approximately ₱6.5 billion for the early implementation of pension increase from June to August 2026, directly supporting millions of pensioners and their families.

In fulfilling its mandate, SSS remains committed to responding to the needs of its members while ensuring the prudent management and long-term sustainability of the social security fund for present and future generations. PR

BACOOOR...

Patuloy ang Lungsod ng Bacoar, sa pamumuno ni Mayor Strike B. Revilla, sa pagbibigay ng tulong sa mga Bacooreño sa pamamagitan ng lingguhang financial assistance distribution na isinagawa ng City Social Welfare and Development (CSWD) Office sa pangunguna ni Ms. Emiliana Ugalede.

Sa ginanap na aktibidad sa S.T.R.I.K.E. Gymnasium, dinaluhan nina Mayor Strike B. Revilla at LnB Vice President Randy Francisco, kung saan 800 benepisaryo ang nakatanggap ng tulong pinansyal.

Karamihan sa mga ito ay gagamitin para sa mga pangangailangang medikal tulad ng pagbili ng maintenance medicines, pagbabayad ng laboratory fees, at iba pang mahahal-

BIR...

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna (PIA) — The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) is urging taxpayers to file their income tax returns (ITRs) early as the April 15 deadline approaches, stressing that penalties can be avoided amid economic hardships.

In an interview with the Philippine Information Agency, BIR Revenue District Office (RDO) 056 Calamba City, Laguna Assistant Revenue District Officer Marlon Cabance stressed the importance of early filing to avoid penalties imposed on late submissions, noting that delays result in additional financial burden for taxpayers.

“Income Tax Return is a requirement for our business establishments and owners. Whether small, micro, or large taxpayers, they are all required to file every year.

Aside from ITR, there are also other taxes that need to be filed,” he said.

Cabance stressed the importance of early filing to avoid penalties imposed on late submissions, noting that

delays result in additional financial burden for taxpayers.

“We encourage our taxpayers to pay early because if you are late, there will be penalties.

And honestly, we also feel saddened as BIR employees when taxpayers incur penalties because every centavo is important,” he said.

Under Revenue Memorandum Order No. 7-2015, late filing of tax returns is subject to a 25 percent surcharge based on the amount due.

In addition, taxpayers are charged a 12 percent annual interest on the unpaid tax, computed from the date of the deadline until full payment is made.

The order also states about compromise penalties, which vary depending on the amount of tax due and the nature of the violation.

These charges can significantly increase a taxpayer’s total liability if left unsettled, making early and accurate filing crucial to avoid unnecessary financial burden.

Cabance acknowledged that many

taxpayers continue to face financial difficulties due to prevailing economic conditions, but assured that the bureau is working to balance enforcement with understanding.

“We recognize that we are in a time of crisis that cannot be avoided. However, the BIR continues to find ways to fulfill its mandate while also helping taxpayers comply,” he said.

He emphasized that taxes collected from both small and large businesses play a crucial role in funding government programs and national development.

“The taxes paid by every citizen and every business benefit the entire country.

That is why, despite the challenges, the BIR continues its efforts to collect revenues and even develop new initiatives to meet its goals,” Cabance added.

The BIR reiterated its call for voluntary compliance, reminding taxpayers that filing early not only prevents penalties but also contributes to the country’s economic stability.

hanggang 10 kilo.

- Jeepney at Tricycle Drivers ay kailangan magpakita ng kopya ng kanilang permit o prangkisa (ang tricycle drivers ay kailangan din ng driver’s license).

- 4Ps Members
- Farmers
- Fisherfolks
- Jeepney Drivers

- Tricycle Drivers
- Mga Paalala:
- Ang Senior Citizens, PWDs, at 4Ps members ay maaaring makabili ng hanggang 30 kilo kada buwan.

- Ang ibang kwalipikadong sektor ay maaaring makabili ng

- Jeepney at Tricycle Drivers ay kailangan magpakita ng kopya ng kanilang permit o prangkisa (ang tricycle drivers ay kailangan din ng driver’s license).

- Magdala ng valid ID sa pagbili ng bigas.

Samantala, patuloy ding nagbibigay ang lungsod ng LGU IDs para sa mga kasambahay sa pamamagitan ng PESO.

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

MANDY HALE



Debate Intensifies Over Credit and Delays in Laguna Medical Center Project



A wave of mixed reactions has followed statements made by Board Member Lorenzo Zuniga on social media, where he alleged that Governor Sol Aragon was discrediting former Laguna Governor, now Congressman Ramil Hernandez, in connection with the long-delayed Laguna Medical Center project.

The controversy comes amid renewed attention on the province's healthcare infrastructure after the announcement titled, "DPWH Chief Orders Urgent Fix for Laguna Hospitals, Vows Completion of Long-Stalled Medical Center." The development highlighted the government's push to address long-standing deficiencies in Laguna's hospital facilities.

Accompanied by Laguna Governor Sol Aragon, Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) Secretary Vince Dizon personally inspected the unfinished Laguna Medical Center building, which has remained incomplete for over five years, along with the deteriorating conditions of the Luisiana District Hospital.

The inspection aimed to confront persistent infrastructure gaps in the province's healthcare system, including inadequate hospital buildings, limited treatment facilities, and insufficient services that have long burdened residents.

During the visit, Governor Aragon, together with Mayor Jomapher Uy Alvarez, also brought the DPWH chief to the Luisiana District Hospital to directly assess its worsening condition—emphasizing the urgency of immediate government intervention.

Secretary Dizon assured the public that rehabilitation efforts and construction activities, including the long-overdue completion of the Laguna Medical Center, are set to begin within the year.

However, Zuniga criticized the narrative, claiming that the project should be attributed not to former Governor Hernandez but to Congressman Agara, an ally of Governor Aragon. The issue quickly gained traction online, with several netizens weighing in:

1. "bakit kasi nakatiwang-wang yan..haha Kung di pa napalitan di pa maayos..."
2. "Wala naman binanggit na pangalan Tumilaok agad eh"
3. "Bat parang nagagalit kayo wala namang binanggit si Gob Sol na pangalan ni Cong Ramil, Defensive yarn"
4. "Sa halip na makipagtutulongan na lamang bakit panay paninira ang ginagawa mo Zuniga"
5. "Bakit po BOKAL Zuniga hindi nyo man lang nakita o isa sa kumilos para maayos ang Laguna Medical Hospital, kayo po naman ang mas matagal ng nakaupo, ano po ba ang ginawa niyang hakbang?"

Despite the criticisms, Governor Aragon has chosen to remain unfazed, focusing instead on strengthening healthcare initiatives across the province.

The provincial government reaffirmed its commitment to expanding medical services and infrastructure, particularly the Laguna Medical Center project, in coordination with the DPWH.

During Secretary Dizon's visit, plans for a four-story hospital building were reinforced, aligned with the directive of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to improve public health infrastructure nationwide.

Among the flagship health programs being intensified is the expansion of the "Akay ni Gob Botika," now reaching 24 municipalities and 6 cities, aimed at improving access to maintenance medicines through community-based distribution points.

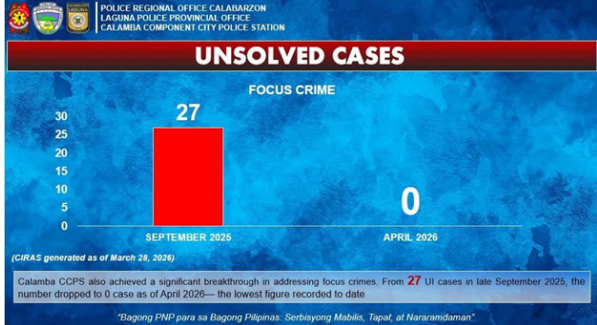
The province also continues its free anti-rabies vaccination program at the barangay level, in partnership with local government units, to strengthen public health protection against rabies.

Meanwhile, the "Doctor sa Barangay" program remains active, delivering medical consultations and basic healthcare services directly to communities—helping reduce congestion in major hospitals and ensuring early access to treatment.

According to the provincial government, these initiatives form part of a broader strategy to expand healthcare access, strengthen preventive care, and modernize medical facilities—ensuring more sustainable and responsive health services for the people of Laguna.

(Edjun Mariposque)

Calamba Police Achieve 'Zero Backlog' in Index Crimes, Marking Rare Milestone



CALAMBA CITY, Laguna — The Calamba City Police Station has successfully cleared all backlogged index crimes, reaching what officials describe as a rare and noteworthy milestone for a fast-growing urban center.

PLTCOL Dennis De Guzman, Chief of Police of Calamba, shared the development with a mix of pride and optimism: "We reached ZERO—and yes, naka-katuwa din pala mag-ka-bokya."

"As of 5:00 PM today, April 16, Calamba City Police Station has solved/cleared all backlogged Index Crimes—a rare milestone for a bustling city like ours."

"This reflects the teamwork, persistence,

CALAMBA STRENGTHENS...

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna — A major step toward inclusive and equitable governance was undertaken under the leadership of Mayor Roseller "Ross" H. Rizal, as officials of the Calamba People's Council participated in a Gender-Responsive Strategic Planning Seminar Workshop held in Monte Vista, Pansol.

Mayor Rizal emphasized the importance of the initiative, highlighting that the Gender-Responsive Strategic Planning Seminar Workshop was conducted for officials of the Calamba People's

and investigation system works."

"Awooh, Team Calamba CCPSI!"

The achievement underscores a coordinated strategy within the police force, emphasizing both proactive patrol operations and deeper investigative involvement at the ground level. By integrating patrolers into the investigative process, authorities say they have improved response time, case familiarity, and overall efficiency in solving crimes.

Officials acknowledged that maintaining a zero backlog may be challenging given Calamba's rapid urban growth and increasing population. However, they expressed confidence that the systems and reforms currently in place will sustain low crime rates and faster case resolution moving forward.

The milestone is expected to boost public confidence in local law enforcement while setting a benchmark for other police units across the region.

(Edjun Mariposque)

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en, men, youth, senior citizens, and other marginalized groups.

Through strategic and inclusive planning, the city government continues to build a framework where policies and projects reflect equity and compassion, reinforcing its commitment to participatory governance.

Mayor Rizal emphasized that these efforts are part of the broader vision to foster a just and inclusive Calamba, where every citizen is heard, valued, and empowered.

(Edjun Mariposque)

PUBLISHER CORNER

CHIZ: USE 14B WINDFALL FROM VAT ON FUEL FOR AYUDA

Senator Francis "Chiz" Escudero wants the government to tap the unexpected windfall from value-added tax (VAT) collections on petroleum products for direct financial assistance to sectors affected by the rising fuel costs since the Middle East war erupted last February.

According to Escudero, the surge in VAT revenues should not be treated as additional income, but should be set aside as funds to help ordinary Filipinos cope.

"Windfall" lang ang tawag diyan dahil hindi naman planado o pinaghirapan ng gobyerno ang dagdag na koleksyon. Tumaas lang ang presyo ng langis kaya mas mataas din ang VAT na pumapasok. Mas tama na ibalik ito sa mga pinakaapektadong sektor bilang tulong," he said.

By doing so, the senator added, it blunts perception of profiting from the crisis like some unscrupulous business owners. "It's like a businessman profiteering from high prices. Government is not a businessman, and



it should not engage in profiteering," he pointed out.

"Kung hindi naman tatanggalin ang VAT, ibalik na lang sa tumbayan ang dagdag o windfall na kita mula rito bilang ayuda," he said.

The veteran legislator's proposal comes after President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. stated that the administration would retain VAT on petroleum products, citing the "windfall" revenue as a source of funding for crisis response. Marcos said suspending VAT would primarily benefit oil firms rather than consumers.

Finance Undersecretary Karlo Fernan Adriano earlier estimated that higher fuel prices could generate an additional P13 to P14 billion in VAT collections, even with the suspension of excise taxes on liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and kerosene, which are more widely used by households and small businesses.

DoTr...

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna (PIA) — Following the implementation of toll discounts for public vehicles and freight services, a lawmaker is urging authorities to expand these privileges to private vehicles as the country reels from rising fuel costs.

Jolo Revilla of Cavite's First District, in a Legislative Energy and Development (LEAD) Joint Committee hearing, suggested to the Department of Transportation (DoTr) to include private vehicles in the discounted toll fees.

In a statement released on April 13, Revilla underscored that the oil crisis affects everyone and is greatly felt among the middle class. "Ang krisis sa mataas na presyo ng langis ay walang pinipili—lahat ay apektado.

FROM PAGE 1

Damang-dama lalo na ang ating kababayang nabibilang sa middle class ang bigay ng mga gastusin bunsod nito."

(The high oil price crisis chooses no one—everyone is affected. Our countrymen in the middle class especially feel the weight of the expenses caused by this.)

Acting Secretary Giovanni Lopez assured that he will discuss with toll operators the possible inclusion of private vehicles in the toll discount program.

Last March, the DoTr announced that toll operators volunteered to grant a two-month discount for essential transport services, including Public Utility Vehicles (PUV), Public Utility Buses (PUB), and freight vehicles.

EXPLICIT

Madelaine Go NRN FAIR TUMULONG SA PAGBABALIK NG MGA OFW SA PROPESYON NG PAGTUTURO.



Pinagtutulungan ng Department of Education (DepEd) at Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) na matulungan ang mga Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) na muling makabalik sa kanilang karera bilang guro sa Pilipinas.

Nitong Abril 13, 2026 lamang ay inilunsad ng DMW at DepEd sa CALABARZON ang Balik-bayang Manggagawa National Reintegration Network (NRN) Fair, na naglalayong ipakita ang iba't ibang tulong at programa para sa mga gurong nais muling makapagturo sa bansa.

Ayon kay Karen Quilao, Assistant Regional Director ng DMW CALABARZON, ang mga programang tulad ng "Sa Pinas, Ikaw ang Ma'am/Sir" (SPIMS) ay nagbibigay ng malinaw na landas para sa mga lisensyadong guro na makabalik sa serbisyo matapos ang ilang taong pagtatrabaho sa ibang bansa.

"The program has provided Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) who are LET passers with a clear pathway to return to the Philippines and practice their profession. At the Department of Migrant Workers, we recognize your journey abroad is fueled by noble dreams of providing a better life for your families," ani Quilao.

Matapos magturo sa Saudi Arabia sa loob ng 11 taon, matagumpay na nakabalik sa pagtuturo si Marky Batrina sa tulong ng SPIMS program.

"Silang po 'yung tumulong sa akin hanggang sa pumasok ako sa DepEd. Nagpapasalamat ako dahil hindi na ako nahirapan, unlike sa regular applicants," aniya.

Ayon sa patakaran, ang mga lisensyadong guro na hindi nakapagturo sa loob ng limang taon ay kailangang sumailalim sa refresher courses. Upang mapadali ito, tinutulungan ng SPIMS ang mga aplikante sa pagsusumite at pagproseso ng kinakailangang dokumento.

Samantala, si Annabelle Nicolas, na nagturo sa Brunei sa loob ng 18 taon, ay walang planong umuwi sa bansa noon. Ngunit dahil sa paghikayat ng kaniyang mga dating kasamahan na nakabalik na sa pagtuturo sa pamamagitan ng SPIMS, napagpasyahan niyang bumalik at muling magturo sa Pilipinas.

"Masarap po kasi 'yung feeling na mag-serve dito sa ating Filipino learners na kailangan po talaga ang mga guro na katulad namin," saad ni Nicolas.

Sang-ayon naman si Batrina, na nagsabing nananatili ang pagmamahal sa pagtuturo kahit matagal nawala sa bansa.

"Kapag passion mo, babalik at babalik ka rin sa kung ano ang gusto mo," dagdag niya.

Bilang pinagsanib na inisyatiba ng DMW at DepEd, layunin ng NRN Fair na tulungan ang mga nagbabalik na OFW sa pamamagitan ng iba't ibang programang pang-edukasyon tulad ng SPIMS, Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E) Test, Senior High School (SHS) Voucher Program, at Teacher Education Scholarship Program, upang muli silang makapagturo sa Pilipinas.

Pointer

Pau Dela Cruz

Para Kanino ang Ingay: Sa Bayan o sa Sarili?



Isang Pananaw sa Isyu ng Nakatenggang Proyekto at Pulitikang Maingay

Umani ng iba't ibang reaksiyon sa Lalawigan ng Laguna ang sunod-sunod na pahayag sa social media ni Bokal Lorenzo Zuniga Jr., partikular kamagulang sa umano'y nakatiwangwang na proyekto na kanyang iniuugnay sa pamahalaang panlalawigan.

Ngunit sa gitna ng ingay, may mga opisyal at tagamasid na nagsasabing tila may maling naratibo na naipapalaganap tungkol sa naturang usapin.

Sa mga naging talakayan, malinaw na walang partikular na pangalan na binanggit ang pamahalaang panlalawigan hinggil sa proyekto. Sa katunayan, si Department of Transportation Secretary Jaime Dizon umano ang nagbanggit ng isyu at nilinaw na ito ay isang proyektong pinondohan ng pambansang pamahalaan—isang detalye na mahalagang tandaan, lalo na kung ang sisi ay ibinabato sa lokal na pamahalaan.

Kung gayon, ang tanong: tama ba ang naging interpretasyon at pagbibigay-diin sa isyu, o sadyang pinalalakas lamang ang usapin para makalikha ng kontrobersiya?

Kasabay nito, muling nabuksan ang tanong kung may sapat bang hakbang na isinagawa noon upang maisulong ang proyekto.

Kung matagal na itong nakatiwangwang, sino ang dapat managot sa pagkaantala? At bakit tila ngayon lamang naging mainit ang isyu kung kailan may konkretong hakbang nang ginagawa upang ito ay matapos?

Dito pumapasok ang mas malalim na usapin—ang pagpapatuloy ng hindi natapos na gusali sa Laguna Medical Center. Ano nga ba ang mali kung pinupursige ng kasalukuyang administrasyon na tapusin ito sa tulong ng pambansang pamahalaan? Hindi ba't ang layunin ay malinaw: mas maayos na serbisyong medikal para sa mga mamamayan ng Laguna?

Kung tutuusin, kapag natapos ang proyektong ito, sino ba ang tunay na makikinabang? Hindi ba ang mismong mga kababayan—ang mga pasyenteng nangangailangan ng agarang lunas, ang mga pamilyang naghahanap ng mas abot-kayang gamutan, at ang mga komunidad na matagal nang umaasa sa mas maayos na serbisyong pangkalusugan?

May ilan ding nagtataka kung bakit tila mas matindi ang kritisismo ni Bokal Zuniga sa kasalukuyang administrasyon ni Governor Sol Aragon. Para sa ilan, ang patuloy na pagbabatikos ay maaring bunga ng hindi pagkakasundo sa direksyon ng pamamalakad ng pamahalaan.

May mga political observers din na binabalikan ang kanyang kasaysayan sa pulitika—kabilang ang ilang beses na pagtakbo sa lokal na halalan na hindi nagtagumpay, at ang pagkakatanggal noon sa isang committee chairmanship sa Sangguniang Panlalawigan. Bagama't bahagi ito ng kanyang political journey, nananatiling mahalaga na ang diskurso ay manatiling nakatuon sa kapakanan ng publiko, hindi sa personal na hidwaan.

Sa social media ngayon umiikot ang laban ng opinyon. Dito nagiging mabilis ang pagkalat ng impormasyon—at maging ng maling impormasyon. Kaya naman hinihikayat ng ilang sektor na gamitin ang parehong platforma hindi para sa walang tigil na batikos, kundi para maglatag ng malinaw na datos, magpaliwanag ng mga plano, at magbigay ng solusyon.

Kapansin-pansin din ang mga tanong ng publiko: Para kanino nga ba ang ingay—sa bayan o sa sarili? Ano ang tunay na motibo sa likod ng paulit-ulit na banat?

Sa panahon ngayon, mas kailangan ang pagkakaibang kaysa bangayan. Mas mahalaga ang trabaho kaysa intriga. Ang mamamayan ay hindi naghihintay ng drama—naghihintay sila ng serbisyo.

Naghihintay sila ng resulta. Dahil ang tunay na sukatang ng liderato ay hindi nasusukat sa dami ng puna o lakas ng boses. Nasusukat ito sa konkretong nagagawa para sa kapakanan ng mamamayan.

Sapagkat sa pamahalaan, hindi sapat ang mag-ingay—ang mahalaga ay maglingkod.



PD Barber, Nagsagawa ng Courtesy Call sa Kinatawan ng Ikalawang Distrito ng Antipolo City



Nagsagawa ng courtesy call si Police Colonel Atty. Eleazar R. Barber Jr., Provincial Director ng Rizal Police Provincial Office (Rizal PPO), kay Honorable Congressman Philip Conrad "Dok Bong" M. Acop, Kinatawan ng Ikalawang Distrito ng Antipolo City, noong Abril 17, 2026.

Kasama ni Police Colonel Barber sa naturang pagbisita si Police

Major Ronnie R. Ariola, Chief ng Plans and Program Unit ng Rizal PPO.

Layunin ng nasabing courtesy call na higit pang palakasin ang ugayan at koordinasyon ng pagitan ng kapulisan at ng tanggapan ng kinatawan ng distrito, lalo na sa pagsusulong ng mga programang naglalayong mapanatili ang kapayapaan, kaayusan, at kaligtasan ng mamamayan sa

lungsod ng Antipolo.

Sa isinagawang pagpupulong, napag-usapan ang iba't ibang hakbang at inisyatiba upang higit pang mapaigting ang kampanya laban sa kriminalidad, gayundin ang pagpapalakas ng pakikipagtulungan sa komunidad at pagpapatibay ng mga hakbang sa pampublikong kaligtasan.

(Madelaine Go)

2ID, Nagpaabot ng Pakikiramay; Nanawagan sa mga Natitirang NPA na Sumuko Kasunod ng Sagupaan sa Occidental Mindoro



CAMP CAPIN-PIN, Rizal — Nagpaabot ng pakikiramay ang 2nd Infantry Division sa pami-

lya ng isang nasawing miyembro ng New People's Army kasunod ng naganap na armadong engku-

wentro noong Marso 24 sa Sitio Danlog, Barangay Monteclaro, sa San Jose. Kinilala ng militar

Rizal PNP, Nilinaw ang Umano'y Dispersal sa Rally ng MANIBELA sa Angono



Nilinaw ng Rizal Police Provincial Office (Rizal PPO) na hindi tumpak ang alegasyon ng grupong MANIBELA, na inilulat sa 24 Oras noong Abril 16, 2026, alas-6:41 ng gabi, na sila umano ay dinispers at dinala sa himpilan ng pulisya habang nagsasagawa ng rally sa Angono, Rizal. Mariing ipinapahayag ng Rizal PPO na walang naganap na dispersal sa nasabing insidente.

Sa katunayan, dalawang tauhan lamang mula sa Angono Municipal Police Station ang lumapit sa grupo upang tiyakin ang kanilang pagsunod sa umiiral na batas at lokal na ordinansa, partikular ang kinakailangang permit para sa pagsasagawa ng

pampublikong pagtitipon.

Nang hindi makapagpakita ng kaukulang permit ang grupo, sila ay pinayuhan ng aming mga tauhan na magtungo sa Municipal Office ng Angono upang maisaayos ang pagkuha ng kinakailangang pahintulot, alinsunod sa mga probisyon ng Batas Pambansa Blg. 880.

Pagkaraan nito, pinagkalooban ng permit ang grupo ng kinauukulang lokal na pamahalaan, na nagbigay-daan upang maipagpatuloy ang kanilang aktibidad.

Binibigyang-diin ng Philippine National Police na walang intensyon ang kapulisan na pigilan o supilin ang karapatan ng sinuman sa mapayapang pagtitipon.

rang miyembro ng armadong grupo na isuko ang kanilang mga armas at bumalik sa ilalim ng batas. Ayon kay Aquino,

ipinapakita ng mga pangyayaring ito kung paano umano nalalagay sa panganiyabuhay ng mga indibidwal na nahihikayat na sumama sa armadong kilusan.

Binigyang-diin din niya na hindi ipinagdiriwang ng militar ang pagkamatay ng kapwa Pilipino, subalit tungkulin

Ang lahat ng hakbang na isinagawa ay ginawa nang may mabuting layunin at alinsunod sa batas, upang matiyak na ang mga gawain ay nananatiling maayos, ligtas, at maayos na naiuugnay sa mga kinauukulang awtoridad.

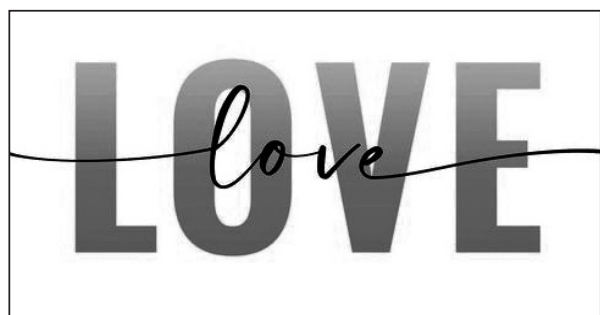
Muling pinagtibay ng Rizal PPO ang kanilang buong paggalang sa karapatang konstitusyonal sa mapayapang pagtitipon, kasabay ng pagpapatupad ng umiiral na mga batas, alituntunin, at regulasyon na sumasaklaw sa mga pampublikong pagtitipon. Hinihikayat din ang publiko na maging mapanuri at umasa sa beripikado at tamang impormasyon.

(Pau Dela Cruz)

nilang ipatupad ang batas at tiyakin ang kaligtasan ng mga komunidad laban sa banta ng armadong grupo.

Muling iginiit ng 2nd Infantry Division ang kanilang pangako na protektahan ang mga mamamayan, itaguyod ang rule of law, at suportahan ang mga inisyatibang naglalayong makamit ang pangmatagalang kapayapaan sa lalawigan ng Mindoro.

(Pau Mojar)



Liliw Public Market, Hudyat ng Mas Pinalakas na Kabuhayan sa Bayan



LILIW, LAGUNA — Pormal na pinasinayaan at binasbasan ang bagong Liliw Public Market na inasaahang magiging pangunahing sentro ng kalakalan, kabuhayan, at aktibidad pang-ekonomiya sa bayan ng Liliw.

Sa nasabing programa, naging panauhing pandangal si Cong. Raneo Abu bilang kinatawan ni Alan Peter Cayetano, kung saan kanyang ipinahayag ang patuloy na suporta sa mga programang naglalayong mapaunlad ang bayan ng Liliw at ang lalawigan ng Laguna.

Ayon sa kanya, mahalagang maipagpatuloy ang mga proyektong may direktang benepisyo sa mga mamamayan, partikular sa sektor ng kabuhayan at lokal na negosyo.

Sa pamamagitan ng inisyatibo ni Laguna 3rd District Representative Loreto "Amben" S. Amante, na naiparating sa national government ang pangangailangan ng bayan, natupad ang

matagal nang pangarap ng lokal na pamahalaan na magkaroon ng bago, maayos, at malinis na palengke.

Sa kanyang pahayag, binigyang-diin ni Amante ang patuloy na pagtupad sa tiwalang ipinagkaloob sa kanya ng mga mamamayan at ang pagpapaigting pa ng mga proyektong pangkaunlaran sa bayan.

Aniya, layunin nitong mas mapalakas ang kabuhayan at serbisyong pampubliko sa pamamagitan ng mga konkretong proyektong

Kabilang din sa mga naitulong na inisyatiba ang sunod-sunod na pagpapasinaya ng mga multipurpose building sa nakalipas na mga linggo bilang bahagi ng pinalawak na imprastruktura at serbisyong pampubliko sa distrito.

Samantala, inihayag din ni Liliw Mayor Ide Monleon ang nalalapit ang pagbubukas ng Laguna State Polytechnic Univer-

sity sa susunod na buwan, na inasaahang magdadala ng mas maraming oportunidad sa edukasyon para sa mga kabataan sa bayan at mga karatig na lugar.

Matapos ang pormal na programa, isinagawa ang isang community pantry kung saan ang mga residente o Liliwenses ay nakatanggap ng libreng gulay.

Layunin ng aktibidad na maipakita ang patuloy na malasakit at agarang tulong sa mga mamamayan, lalo na sa mga sektor na higit na nangangailangan.

Bukod dito, inilulat din na may karagdang pondong dumating mula sa PAGCOR na nakatangkang gamitin para sa mga proyektong lokal na pamahalaan tulad ng pagpapatayo ng bagong munisipyo, na inasaahang magpapalakas pa ng mga programang pangkaunlaran at serbisyong panlipunan sa bayan ng Liliw.

(Shekinah Esteban)

Mas Pinalakas na Police Visibility at Serbisyong May Puso sa Komunidad



STA. CRUZ, LAGUNA - Nagsagawa ang mga tauhan ng Sta Cruz MPS-Laguna sa ilalim ng pangangasiwa ni PLTCOL Josh Sab-Chief of Police, ng Police Assistance at pamamahagi ng mga flyers na may kaugnayan sa Anti-Criminality Prevention sa kanilang nasasakupan.

Layunin ng aktibidad na ito na mapalakas ang presensya ng kapulisan sa komunidad at higit na mapataas ang ka-

malayan ng publiko hinggil sa mga paraan upang maiwasan ang iba't ibang uri ng krimen.

Sa pamamagitan ng direktang pakikipag-ugnayan sa mga mamamayan, naiparating ang mahahalagang impormasyon ukol sa kaligtasan, pag-iingat, at pakikiisa sa pagpapanatili ng kaayusan sa lugar.

Patuloy na hinihikayat ng kapulisan ang aktibong partisipasyon ng komunidad sa pagsugpo

sa kriminalidad, sa paniniwalang ang pagkakaisa ng mamamayan at kapulisan ay susi sa isang ligtas at maayos na pamayanan.

Kasabay nito, nagbahagi rin si Ms. Mercy M. Fulo ng food packs at mga Bibliya sa mga jeepney at tricycle drivers bilang bahagi ng community outreach at public service initiative upang suportahan ang masisipag na public transport drivers.

(Shekinah Esteban)

PGC...

The Provincial Government of Cavite (PGC), through its ISO Core Team, convened a crucial meeting on April 6, 2026, at the New Provincial Government Center in Trece Martires City to intensify preparations for the upcoming SOCO-TEC Recertification audit scheduled on April 27-29, 2026.

The meeting centered on ensuring the readiness of all concerned offices and personnel in maintaining the province's compliance with international quality management standards. It served as a platform to align strategies, clarify responsibilities, and reinforce the importance of adherence to established ISO processes across all departments.

Ms. Michelle F. Alcud, Quality Management Representative, led the discussion by outlining

the key requirements and preparations necessary for the audit.

She emphasized the importance of organizing and updating documented information, including quality manuals, procedures, and records that demonstrate compliance with ISO standards. She also highlighted the need for offices to ensure that all processes are properly implemented, monitored, and supported by accurate and verifiable records.

Furthermore, Ms. Alcud stressed the significance of employee awareness and participation during the audit. She encouraged all personnel to be familiar with their respective roles within the Quality Management System (QMS), as well as the policies and objectives of the organization. She also discussed possible

audit scenarios, including interviews and validation of processes, reminding everyone to respond confidently and truthfully based on actual practices.

The ISO Core Team also reviewed previous audit findings and identified areas for improvement to ensure that corrective actions have been effectively implemented. This proactive approach aims to strengthen internal systems and sustain the province's commitment to delivering efficient and quality public service.

With the upcoming SOCOTEC recertification audit, the Provincial Government of Cavite reaffirms its dedication to continuous improvement and excellence in governance, ensuring that its services remain responsive, reliable, and aligned with global standards. — OPIO

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