

MPTC convenes multi-sectoral Flood Mitigation Forum to boost resilience in Southern Metro Manila and surrounding provinces



The Metro Pacific Tollways South (MPTS), the south arm of Metro Pacific Tollways Corporation, brought together stakeholders from national government agencies, local government units (LGUs), and host communities of CALAX and CAVITEX to strengthen collaboration in addressing perennial flooding concerns in Southern Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

This marks the first Flood Mitigation Forum conducted in the South, providing a platform for multi-sectoral dialogue, data sharing, and coordinated planning on flood mitigation efforts.

"This year's forum aims to solidify co-

operation among government agencies and LGUs in addressing recurring flooding challenges across Metro Manila and nearby provinces," said MPTC Chief Tollways Development and Engineering Officer Gil F. Amilbanga.

The MPTC Flood Mitigation Forum 2026 gathered key representatives from the Office of Civil Defense (OCD), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), and Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO).

Participants from the Toll Regulatory Board (TRB), Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA), and PEA Tollway Corporation (PEATC) also took part in the discussions and the sharing of initiatives.

LGU representatives from Las Piñas, Parañaque, Pasay, Taguig, Cavite, and Laguna provided valuable insights during the forum, along with key leaders including Cavite Governor Francisco Gabriel "Abeng" Diaz Remulla, Office of Civil Defense Director Jose Harry M. Barber, Bifan City Councilor Titus Bautista, and Former Senator Cynthia Villar of Villar SI-PAG Foundation.

Flood risk area data and assessments were provided by AMH Philippines, which was engaged by MPT South, to support evidence-based identification of critical flood-prone areas and inform mitigation planning.

Discussions highlighted the impact of improper waste disposal on flooding, particularly in low-lying communities. LGUs reiterated efforts to strengthen enforcement of anti-littering and solid waste management ordinances, alongside regular declogging of drainage systems and monitoring of critical waterways.

"Effective flood mitigation depends heavily on good governance,

which is a core principle in Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) implementation. Participation is essential, as community involvement strengthens ownership and improves the relevance of mitigation measures," said Office of Civil Defense Director Jose Harry M. Barber.

In partnership with barangays and volunteer groups, LGUs continue community-based environmental education campaigns in promoting proper waste segregation, infrastructure planning, and disaster risk reduction initiatives.

"We recognize that multi-sectoral collaboration creates a ripple of hope for communities in the South, especially during typhoon season.

We, at MPT South, will continue to work closely with LGUs and national government agencies to translate discussions into action," said MPT South President and General Manager Andrew B. Pangilinan.

The forum concluded with commitments from stakeholders to improve drainage systems, strengthen flood control management, enhance disaster resilience, and reinforce inter-agency coordination.

The Flood Mitigation Forum 2026 underscores the Metro Pacific Tollways Corporation Group's commitment to providing a platform for collaboration and sustained action to address flooding challenges in surrounding communities

Calamba City Ranks No. 1 in Laguna for Child Protection Council Functionality

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna — The City of Calamba has once again earned recognition from the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG)-CALABARZON after securing the Top 1 "Ideal Functionality" Rating for its Local Council for the Protection of Children (LCPC) among all cities and municipalities in Laguna Province.

The prestigious recognition highlights Calamba City's strong commitment to safeguarding the welfare, rights, and development of children through effective programs, policies, and com-

munity-based initiatives designed to create a safe and nurturing environment for young Calambeños.

Mayor Roseller 'Ross' H. Rizal welcomed the achievement, describing it as a testament to the city's unwavering dedication to prioritizing children and their future.

"Patunay ito na patuloy nating inuuna ang kapakanan, proteksyon, at mas maayos na kinabukasan ng bawat batang Calambeño. Sama-sama nating ipagpapatuloy ang mga programang tunay na nagmamalasakit sa kabataan."

("This is proof

that we continue to place the welfare, protection, and brighter future of every young Calambeño at the forefront of our governance.

Together, we will continue implementing programs that genuinely care for and empower our youth," Mayor Rizal said.

The recognition reinforces Calamba City's standing as a model local government unit in promoting child-friendly governance and ensuring that programs for children's protection, education, health, and overall well-being remain a top priority.



City officials emphasized that the award serves as both an honor and an inspiration to further strengthen initiatives that support the growth,

safety, and development of the next generation of Calambeños. Through collaborative efforts between the local government, schools, families, and

communities, Calamba aims to continue building a future where every child can thrive and reach their full potential.

(Edjun Mariposque)

ISSN NO. 3116-2509



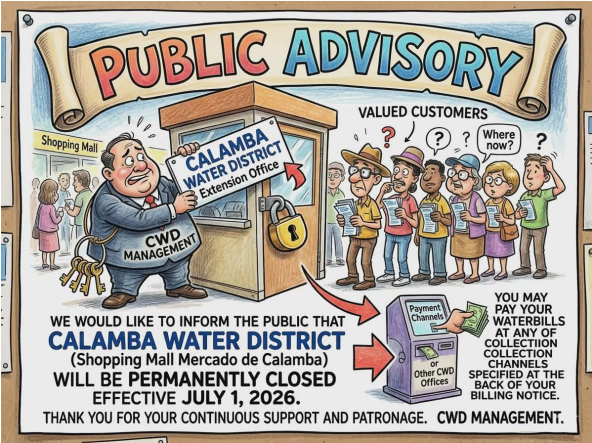
DERETSAHAN

WEEKLY NEWS PUBLISHING

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

VOL. II - SERIES 46 - MAY 31-JUNE 06, 2026 - P 20.00

Cavite Service Caravan reaches Indang for third leg, strengthens delivery of essential services



PNP, tiniyak ang kahandaan sa pagbubukas ng klase sa Hunyo 8

Sen. Estrada at ex-DPWH Sec. Bonoan nakapaglagak agad ng piyansa sa Sandiganbayan dahil sa kasong graft

CAYETANO REJECTS BEING A 'PUPPET SENATE PRESIDENT,' WARNS OF MOVES TO CONTROL SENATE

PBBM, itinalaga si Kim Robert De Leon bilang bagong Kalihim ng DBM; Palasyo, inanunsyo ang posisyon sa GSIS para kay outgoing Secretary Toledo

SSS rolls out nationwide Palengke Caravan to bring mobile services closer to grassroot communities



QUEZON CITY, 25 May 2026 – The Social Security System (SSS) has deployed its mobile e-Wheels to public markets and barangays across selected towns and cities na-

tionwide as part of week-long Palengke Caravan, aimed at reducing travel time, long queues, and transaction difficulties experienced by workers, pensioners, and beneficiaries.

The caravan

supports the directive of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. to bring public services faster and closer to the people, particularly in underserved and hard-to-reach communities.

"For many pensioners, informal workers,

and members in underserved communities, even a single branch visit can mean transportation expenses, lost income, and hours spent in line," SSS President and Chief Executive Officer Robert Joseph M. De Claro said.

"Through the SSS e-Wheels / Palengke Caravan, we are bringing government services directly to communities so people can access assistance and complete transactions closer to where they live and work," he added.

He explained

cont. on page 7

PHILHEALTH EXPANDS PRIMARY CARE ACCESS TO OVER 33 MILLION FILIPINOS THROUGH 4,287 YAKAP CLINICS

Rippling effect of turning dreams into progress



EDITORIAL:

PHOTO COURTESY: STA. MARIA BULACAN ADMIN AND NETIZEN ASSOCIATION FACEBOOK GROUP

PBBM, balik-Pilipinas na matapos ang produktibong state visit sa Japan

Nakabalik na sa bansa si Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr. matapos ang apat na araw na state visit sa Japan.

Eksakto 6:19 nang gabi kagabi dumating ang pangulo at Philippine delegation sa Villamor Airbase, Pasay City.

Ayon sa pangulo, “highly productive at constructive” ang kaniyang naging pagbisita sa Japan dahil sa mga naselyuhang kasunduan at investments.

Kabilang sa mga pangunahing naiuwi ng pangulo ang pag-angat ng relasyon ng Pilipinas at Japan sa Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, pagsisimula ng negosasyon para sa mas malawak na kasunduan sa depensa at seguridad, at suporta ng Japan sa kandidatura ng Pilipinas sa United Nations Security Council.

Nilagdaan din ng dalawang bansa ang mga kasunduan sa pag-iwas sa double taxation, agrikultura at pangangisda, kalusugan, at human resource development.

Nakapag-uwi rin ang pangulo ng humigit-kumulang US\$3.4 bilyong halaga ng investment pledges at business commitments, na inaasahang lilikha ng mahigit 10,000 trabaho para sa mga Pilipino.

Cayetano...

Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano on Monday rejected becoming a “puppet Senate President,” warning that recent attacks on the Senate were part of a “concerted effort” to weaken and control the institution amid critical debates on impeachment, the national budget, Charter change, and democracy.

“The Legislative, the Executive, and the Judiciary have to work together, but ‘young mag-surrender ka or maging puppet Senate President ka, sorry hindi ko style ‘yon,” Cayetano said in a press conference before the start of the plenary session on May 18, 2026.

He said the Senate is being targeted because it remains the country’s “last line of defense” on key national issues.

“The Senate is a target because we are the last line of defense pagdating sa hindi impartial na impeachment, sa budget, sa Charter change, sa kung merong gustong yumurak sa ating democracy,” he said.

Cayetano said attacks on the Senate began in 2023 when proposals were raised to “abolish” the chamber. He said recent events appeared to be connected to renewed moves to amend the Constitution.

“And I really believe that the events in the last few months were also intentional na ma-weaken ang Senate because bubuhayin ‘yung Constitutional change, except this time around, regional Senate ang gusto nila,” he added.

It can be remembered that Charter change proposals resurfaced in 2023, including a shift to a unicameral-parliamentary system and to restructure the Senate by adding regional senators.

The issue intensified in early 2024 during a People’s Initiative campaign, which senators warned would allow the House of Representatives and the Senate to vote jointly on constitutional amendments, effectively diluting the Senate’s vote and weakening its role as

PBBM...

Malugod ang naging pagtanggap ng Department of Budget and Management (DBM) sa pagkakatalaga ni Secretary Kim Robert C. De Leon bilang kalihim ng Department of Budget and Management, matapos pirmahan ni Pangulong Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. ang kanyang appointment papers noong ika-18 ng Mayo 2026, ayon sa inangunung ng Palace Press Officer Undersecretary Claire Castro sa ginanap na press briefing sa Malacañang ngayong araw.

“Kim Robert De Leon is the new Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), becoming the youngest member of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.’s Cabinet. Secretary De Leon is expected to take his oath of office tomorrow,” ayon kay Usec. Claire Castro.

“Secretary De Leon is recognized for his work in fiscal management, organizational reform, and digital transformation. He graduated magna cum laude and valedictorian from UP NCPAG. He also topped the 2016 Environmental Planning Licensure Examination and holds master’s degrees in urban and regional planning and public safety administration, with academic honors. Additionally, Secretary De Leon obtained a Certifi-

a separate chamber.

Cayetano said while he is not against political reforms, the government should first focus on the daily struggles of ordinary Filipinos.

“I don’t take it against anyone for thinking of political reforms. Pero naghihirap ang tao eh, whether you talk about electricity, prices of medicine, rice. Doon muna sana,” he said.

Asked about calls for him to resign, Cayetano said all the untoward incidents since he assumed office were part of a larger push to install someone easier to control.

“For me, it’s a concerted effort from day

cate in Business Process Management from the Queensland University of Technology in 2021,” dagdag pa ni Usec. Castro.

Inangunung rin ng tagapagsalita ng Palasyo na itatalaga si outgoing DBM Secretary Rolando U. Toledo bilang miyembro ng Board of Trustees ng Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), bilang kinatawan ng mga pangunahing organisasyon o samahan ng mga empleyado at retirado ng pamahalaan.

“DBM Acting Secretary Rolando ‘Rolly’ Toledo will be appointed to the Board of Trustees, representing the leading organizations or associations of government employees and retirees at the GSIS,” saad ni Usec. Castro.

Bago ang kanyang appointment, nagsilbi si Secretary De Leon bilang Undersecretary ng Organization and Systems Improvement Group at Information and Communications Technology Group ng DBM sa ilalim ni dating Secretary Wendel E. Avisado.

Matapos ang kanyang panunungkulan sa DBM, naupo siya sa ilang mahahalagang posisyon sa gobyerno, kabilang ang pagiging Undersecretary for Administration and Finance ng Department of Transportation at Secretary General ng

one to get me out because they want someone they can control,” he said.

But Cayetano said he would continue to protect the Senate’s independence while working with other branches of government.

“The only thing I promise is I follow God,” he said. “Collaboration is OK, pero ‘yung sunod-sunuran kami sa inyo at hawak niyo kami sa leeg, hindi pwede ‘yon.”

“Hindi niyo natibag ang Senado. Under Alan Cayetano, hindi niyo natibag ang Senado,” he said. “Now kung papalitan ako, sana hindi matibag ang Senado.” PR

Boy Scouts of the Philippines. Nakuha rin niya ang kanyang Career Executive Service Eligibility noong 2024.

Bago italaga bilang Kalihim ng DBM, nagsilbi siyang Assistant Professor sa University of the Philippines National College of Public Administration and Governance (UP NCPAG), kung saan nagturo siya ng mga asignatura tungkol sa governmental accounting, auditing, local government administration, at regional administration.

Ipinahayag naman ni outgoing DBM Secretary Toledo ang kanyang buong suporta sa bagong Kalihim ng institusyong kanyang pinaglingkuran sa loob ng hahalos apat na dekada.

“As I transition from this role, I extend my wholehearted support to the new DBM Secretary and remain confident in the Department’s continued pursuit of sound, transparent, and people-centered governance,” ayon kay outgoing Secretary Toledo.

Mula nang italaga bilang Acting Secretary noong Disyembre 2025, pinangunahan ni Toledo

ang ilang mahahalagang inisyatiba ng institusyon, kabilang ang matagumpay na pagsasagawa ng FY 2027 Budget Preparation Forums, pagbuo ng pinal na bersyon ng Philippine Budgeting Code ng administrasyon, at pagsasagawa ng Usapang Budget Natin Town Hall Meetings—na pawang naglalayong pabilisin ang mga reporma, palakasin ang pagkakaisa, at pagtibayin ang tiwala ng publiko.

“Rest assured that my commitment to serve our country and the Filipino people, which I have upheld for more than 38 years in public service, remains unchanged. That commitment will continue wherever I may be called to serve,” pagpapatuloy ni Secretary Toledo.

Ipinahayag naman ng Kagawaran ang kanilang kumpiyansa na higit pang mapapalakas ni Secretary De Leon ang reform agenda ng DBM sa pamamagitan ng pagpapatuloy sa mga nakamit ng institusyon habang isinusulong ang makabuluhang inobasyon sa fiscal governance, organizational excellence, at digital transformation.

(Nelson Dimapilis)



DERETSAHAN WEEKLY NEWS PUBLISHING is an ENGLISH/FILIPINO newspaper that is being regularly published weekly every Sunday.

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
Editor-In-chief : Edjun C. Mariposque
Editor : Kevin Pamatmat
Managing Editor : Sol Luzano
Marketing Manager : Pau Dela Cruz
Circulation Manager : Christina Mercado
Lay Out Artist : Danica Mae G. Cardifio

ADVERTISING RATES

COMMERCIAL ----- P200/col.cm
LEGAL/NOTICES ----- P160/col.cm
Font Size:
Heading : 10
Body Text : 08
Space : Single space



PNP...

Tiniyak ng Philippine National Police (PNP) na handa ang kanilang puwersa para sa seguridad ng mga mag-aaral, guro, at magulang sa nalalapit na pagbubukas ng klase sa Hunyo 8 sa mga pampubliko at pribadong paaralan sa buong bansa.

Ayon kay PNP chief PGen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr., sapat ang kanilang mga tauhan upang tumugon sa mga pangangailangan ng seguridad sa balik-eskuwela, sa kabila ng inaasahang pagdagsa ng mga estudyante sa mga paaralan.

Sa ilalim ng kanilang seguridad plan, tututok ang PNP sa presensya ng mga pulis sa mga paaralan at mga pangunahing ruta upang matiyak ang kaligtasan ng publiko,

lalo na ng mga kabataan. Ang pahayag ay ginawa sa gitna ng mas pinaigting na operasyon ng mga awtoridad kaugnay ng iba’t ibang high-profile na kaso sa bansa.

Giit pa ng PNP, patuloy din nilang isinasagawa ang kanilang mandato sa pagpapantili ng kaayusan at kapayapaan habang sabay na inihahanda ang mga hakbang para sa ligtas na pagbubukas ng klase.

Wala namang ibang detalye na inilabas ang PNP hinggil sa espesipikong deployment ng mga tauhan, ngunit sinabi ng ahensya na nakalatag na ang kanilang security preparations para sa buong bansa.

(Nelson Dimapilis)

Sen. Estrada...

Nakapaghain na ng piyansa sa Sandiganbayan sina Senator Jinggoy Estrada at dating Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) chief Manuel Bonoan dahil sa kasong graft na may kaugnayan sa anomalya sa mga proyekto ng DPWH.

Nitong hapon ng Biyernes ng magtungo si Estrada at Bonoan para maghain ng tig-P90,000 sa Sandiganbayan Second Division ilang orad matapos na maglabas ang Sandiganbayan ng warrant of arrest.

Sa pahayag ni Senador na kaya sila naghain ng piyansa ay bilang legal na hakbang para sa kaniya sa ilalim ng justice system.

Lahat aniya ng mga kaparaanan ay kaniyang gagawin para mai-pagtanggol ang kaniyang sarili.

Muling itinanggi rin ng Senador ang lahat ng mga alegasyon laban sa kaniya.

Wala namang

(Nelson Dimapilis)

be still
and know
PSALM 46:10

SSS...

that the SSS is holding a caravan in public markets to bring its services directly to market vendors and ambulant sellers who are unable to visit branch offices because they cannot leave their small businesses unattended.

The SSS e-Wheels will be deployed in Metro Manila starting on May 25, which targets to serve around 21,500 clients. It will be followed by caravan activities in Calapan, Oriental Mindoro; Legazpi, Albay; Silay City, Negros Occidental; and Siargao Island, Surigao del Norte on May 27.

The nationwide caravan will conclude on May 28 in Virac, Catanduanes.

The mobile caravan will offer services including employer registration, inquiries and verification, Annual Confirmation of Pensioners or ACOP, updating of member data records, issuance of SSS numbers and forms, and online-related transactions such as My.SSS registration,

Cavite...

The Provincial Government of Cavite continues its commitment to bringing accessible and responsive public service closer to communities as the Cavite Service Caravan rolled out its third leg in the Municipality of Indang

Led by Governor Abeng Remulla, the service caravan further reinforced the provincial government’s dedication to inclusive and people-centered governance through the delivery of various frontline services directly to Caviteños.

The one-stop caravan gathered provincial offices, national government agencies, and partner organizations to provide a comprehensive range of programs and assistance aimed at addressing the immediate needs of residents, particularly those with limited access to government services.

(Nelson Dimapilis)

password resetting, Payment Reference Number generation, pension loan applications, and benefit claim applications.

SSS will also deploy for the first time the newly launched facial authentication with liveness check for ACOP verification during mobile service operations, allowing eligible pensioners to complete verification faster and more conveniently without visiting branches.

From January to April 2026, the SSS conducted a total of 3,294 e-Wheels activities nationwide, serving 239,367 members and residents in last-mile communities. In 2024, the SSS e-Wheels Program received the ASEAN Social Security Association Recognition Award in the innovation category.

“By bringing services closer to the people, we are making SSS more accessible, more responsive and convenient for workers, pensioners, and their families,” De Claro said. PR

Among the key services offered were free medical consultations, dental and oral health care, laboratory services such as ECG and fasting blood sugar tests, pharmacy assistance, and fluoride varnish application for children.

Emergency medical support was also made available to ensure prompt response to health-related concerns.

Employment and livelihood opportunities were likewise highlighted through job matching activities, career coaching sessions, and assistance from agencies such as PhilHealth,

TESDA, BIR, PSA, DTI, and Landbank of the Philippines. Entrepreneurship support, cooperative assistance, and the promotion of local products through a trade fair also formed part of the caravan. Agricultural sup-

PHILHEALTH...

In line with the directive of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to make quality healthcare accessible to every

Filipino family, PhilHealth has significantly scaled its primary care program, Yaman ng Kalusugan Program (YAKAP), reaching 33.2 million Filipinos through 4,287 accredited YAKAP Clinics nationwide.

This remarkable expansion, launched by President Marcos Jr. in July 2025, now reflects a significant increase in primary care support

—bringing more meaningful healthcare services to Filipinos nationwide.

YAKAP enables PhilHealth members to maximize their contributions by registering with a preferred clinic and access a comprehensive package of benefits including free medical

consultations, essential laboratory and diagnostic services, medicines worth up to

₱20,000 annually under the Gamot benefit, and Outpatient cancer screening for early disease detection.

By being empaneled with a YAKAP Clinic,

port services, including the distribution of vegetable seeds and seedlings, educational

materials, and technical assistance for farmers and fisherfolk, were also extended during the activity.

Meanwhile, social welfare assistance, family planning counseling, legal aid services, and specialized support for persons with disabilities were made accessible to residents.

Veterinary services such as anti-rabies vaccination, deworming, and free consultations for pets were likewise provided.

Digital literacy programs, internet connectivity services, and information dissemination booths further promoted awareness and accessi-

members gain a consistent healthcare partner capable of monitoring their health, detecting conditions early, and providing timely interventions before illnesses become severe.

“Ang pagpili at pagpapa-empanel sa inyong YAKAP Clinic ay hindi lamang pagsunod sa proseso;

ito ay ang pagtitiyak na may sandigan ang inyong pamilya bago pa man dumating ang sakit. Sa YAKAP, layon nating protektahan ang kalusugan ng bawat Pilipino upang hindi na humantong sa malubhang karamdaman na mas mahirap at mas mahal gamutin,” said Dr. Edwin M. Mercado, Philhealth President and CE

This week, PhilHealth has conducted over 191 empanelment drives nationwide to connect more

communities to their chosen clinics through outreach missions and settings-based registration campaigns

Members who cannot attend on-site registration may select their YAKAP Clinic through the eGovPH Mobile App or the PhilHealth Member Portal. PR

bility of government programs among participants.

Joining Governor Remulla during the third leg of the caravan were Vice Governor Ram Revilla Bautista, Congressman Ping Remulla, and 7th District Board Member Aldrin Anacan.

They were warmly welcomed by the local officials of Indang headed by Mayor Vergel Fidel.

As the Cavite Service Caravan continues its province-wide rollout, the Provincial Government of

Cavite remains steadfast in its mission to make government services more accessible, efficient, and responsive to the needs of every Caviteño.

— Office of the Provincial Information Officer

Maligayang Araw ng Pagtatapos, City College of Calamba Class of 2026!



Ngayong araw ng inyong pagtatapos, dalangin ko ang inyong patuloy na tagumpay, mabuting kalusugan, at matatag na paninindigan habang kayo ay humaharap sa panibagong yugto ng inyong buhay.

Nawa'y magsilbing gabay ang inyong mga natutunan upang maabot ninyo ang inyong

mga pangarap at maging inspirasyon sa iba.

Kalakip ng aking panalangin ang inyong pagkakaroon ng magagandang oportunidad at matagumpay na landas na naaayon sa mga kursong inyong tinahak

—bilang bunga ng inyong sipag, tiyaga, pagpupuyat, at sakripisyong inyong

pinagdaanan.

Sa naging talumpati ni Senador Bam Aquino kanina, muli niyang isinulong ang adhikaring "Libreng Kolehiyo, Siguradong Trabaho para sa Lahat"

—isang panawagang nagbibigay pag-asa sa mga kabataang Pilipino, lalo na sa mga nagsipagtapos mula sa Dalub-

hasaan ng Lungsod ng Calamba.

Patuloy ninyong dalhin ang dangal ng pagiging isang Calambeno at gamitin ang inyong kaalaman upang makatulong sa ating komunidad at bayan.

Muli, taos-puso ang aking pagbati sa inyo, City College of Calamba Class of 2026!

(Nelson Dimapilis)

LGUS AT FOREFRONT OF PRESERVING CULTURAL TRADITIONS, TOURISM DEV'T - DOT

LUCBAN, Quezon (PIA) — The Department of Tourism (DOT) looks at the vital role of local government units in preserving cultural traditions and festivities, which form part of the Filipino heritage passed down from one generation to the next.

DOT Calabarzon Regional Director Marites Castro said LGUs play an important role in staging festivals and other significant celebrations that uphold long-standing, unique traditions.

"The local government plays a crucial role, not only in ensuring security during celebrations but also in extending support to the community. It is important for us to preserve our traditions and showcase our art and culture. Through these festivities, we are able to promote our heritage while at the same time contributing to economic growth," Castro said in an interview.

Amid the challenges posed by the global energy crisis, Castro calls on LGUs to just shorten, rather than cancel, festival celebrations, noting that these annual events are eagerly anticipated by many families and visitors as part of their traditions and can provide economic opportunities for numerous micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) that rely on them for livelihood.

She added that only essential activities should be prioritized and implemented, focusing on those that truly reflect culture and tradition, especially amid the current crisis.

According to Lucban, Quezon Mayor Agustin Villaverde, the Pahiyas Festival, celebrated every May, still pushed through this year as it reflects the community's gratitude for the blessings they have received and for the bountiful harvest enjoyed by farmers, making its celebration an important part of their culture and tradition.

Villaverde said, "Its importance lies in giving thanks for all the blessings we receive, especially for our farmers. It is our

way of expressing gratitude. Through the years, we have continued to receive blessings, and despite the challenges and crisis we are facing, we still pushed through with the celebration because it has long been a tradition and a form of thanksgiving."

Aside from the festivities, the celebration also serves as an important occasion to highlight the role of farmers in ensuring food security, which is essential to the economy and benefits not only their communities but also a broader population.

Quezon Governor Angelina Helen Tan also emphasized that these traditions have long been deeply rooted in parts of Quezon province, where communities observe May 15 as a day of thanksgiving to their patron saint, San Isidro Labrador, noting that these celebrations also significantly contribute to tourism and local economy.

Tan admitted that it was difficult to strike a balance, but stood firm that they took into account the inputs of MSMEs, farmers, and LGUs, and made adjustments by shortening the activities but still pushing through with the celebration.

Meanwhile, as an agricultural province, the governor ensured that farmers in Quezon province continue to receive government support amid the country's ongoing crisis, including the provision of agricultural inputs aimed at reducing production costs.

"Our strategy has been to help farmers who are having difficulty transporting their products by providing trucks, looking for buyers, and purchasing their goods. We are on the ground coordinating closely with our farmers, so whatever assistance they need, that is what we provide." For the Tourism department, preserving traditions and culture remains essential, alongside addressing the current needs of affected sectors to ensure that cultural heritage is taken care of while safeguarding the welfare of the people at present.

PUBLISHER CORNER

The diplomatic rift between China and the Philippines has widened further following a sharp rebuke from the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding statements made by Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. This cross-strait war of words highlights growing anxiety in Southeast Asia over a potential military conflict involving Taiwan.

The dispute ignited after President Marcos publicly noted that the Philippines' extreme geographic proximity to Taiwan makes it nearly impossible for Manila to remain unaffected by an armed conflict. Marcos specifically highlighted the urgent humanitarian necessity of protecting and potentially evacuating the estimated 200,000 Filipino migrant workers currently living and working in Taiwan.

Beijing's response was swift and uncompromising. Chinese Foreign Ministry officials pushed back against the Philippine rationale, explicitly stating that geographical proximity and citizens residing abroad cannot be used as pretexts to interfere in what China considers its strictly internal affairs. This latest diplomatic clash underscores a

broader geopolitical shift under the Marcos administration. Unlike his predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte, who favored closer ties with Beijing, President Marcos has aggressively reinvigorated Manila's decades-old mutual defense treaty with the United States.

A central point of friction is the expansion of the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA). Under this pact, the Philippines has granted the U.S. military expanded access to strategic domestic bases, several of which are located on the northern island of Luzon, positioning them directly facing the Taiwan Strait.

To Beijing, this base access is not viewed as a defensive measure, but rather as a direct threat to its national security. Chinese officials argue that Manila is allowing Western powers to establish a military staging ground on China's doorstep, effectively entangling the Philippines in a superpower competition.

Manila, conversely, views its actions as essential deterrence. The Philippine government faces daily maritime pressure in the South China Sea, where Chinese coast guard vessels routinely deploy water cannons and blocking maneuvers against Philippine resupply missions at contested features like Second Thomas Shoal.

Analysts note that Chi-

na's rhetorical strategy toward the Philippines has grown markedly harsher compared to its approach to other regional neighbors. While Beijing frequently seeks quiet, bilateral negotiations over maritime disputes with nations like Malaysia or Vietnam, it has adopted highly confrontational, public language to admonish Manila.

The harsh tone is designed to serve as a psychological deterrent. By warning that the Philippines is "playing with fire," Beijing aims to pressure Philippine policymakers into reconsidering their security alignment with Washington and to signal domestic resolve to the Chinese public.

As rhetoric intensifies on both sides, the risk of miscalculation in the region continues to climb. The diplomatic deadlock leaves little room for de-escalation, trapping the Philippines between its immediate geographical realities, its economic ties with China, and its foundational security alliance with the United States.

The sharp rhetoric tracking back and forth between Beijing and Manila is more than just standard diplomatic posturing. It marks a fundamental, dangerous realignment of power in Southeast Asia, where raw geography, the legal triggers of war, and quiet economic warfare are playing out behind the scenes.

By expanding the EDCA sites, Manila fundamental-

HOW 3 NORTHERN BASES PUT THE PHILIPPINES IN THE LINE OF FIRE

ly changed the military calculus of the Taiwan Strait. Three newly designated northern bases—including Camillo Osias Naval Base in Santa Ana, Cagayan, located under 200 miles from Taiwan's southern coastline—sit right at China's vulnerable southern periphery.

For Washington, these northern bases plug a critical geographic vulnerability, effectively bridging the distance between U.S. forces stationed in Okinawa, Japan, and the South China Sea. For Beijing, however, this setup is interpreted as a direct encirclement strategy, placing American rotational forces and surveillance hardware right along the vital Luzon Strait choke point.

This geographic footprint gains its legal muscle from the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT) between the U.S. and the Philippines. Long regarded as a dormant Cold War relic, the treaty has been aggressively modernized, with Washington explicitly clarifying that any armed attack on Philippine public vessels, aircraft, or its Coast Guard anywhere in the South China Sea will trigger a joint military response.

Manila's definitive pivot back toward Washington has not come without a severe economic price tag. Beijing has increasingly leaned into its playbook of economic statecraft, utilizing targeted trade disruptions, cus-

toms bottlenecks on perishable agricultural cash crops like bananas, and the freezing of infrastructure investments to signal its deep political displeasure.

Domestically, this massive geopolitical pivot has ignited a fierce debate within the Philippine political sphere, triggering mixed reactions among a scrutinized public. While recent national polling indicates robust and enduring public support for a firm stance against Beijing's maritime assertiveness, severe "EDCA jitters" have emerged alongside fears of becoming collateral damage. Pro-Duterte political factions and cautious lawmakers have aggressively questioned the arrangement, warning that housing American rotational forces effectively places a target on the archipelago if a broader superpower conflict erupts. In response, defense officials have scrambled to reassure anxious border communities, reinforcing that these sites remain under strictly sovereign Philippine control, designed fundamentally for regional deterrence and humanitarian disaster relief rather than offensive operations.

This strategic divergence is also causing noticeable ripples across the wider Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) landscape, where neighbors are walking a fine diplomatic tightrope. Unlike Manila's loud, direct alignment with the



West, heavyweight maritime neighbors like Indonesia and Vietnam have traditionally preferred "quiet diplomacy," opting to manage their overlapping territorial disputes with Beijing through private, bilateral communication to isolate maritime friction from their broader trade relationships. However, recognizing the severe threat that a Taiwan conflict poses to regional supply lines, a flexible, subtle "maritime security triangle" has quietly begun to take shape among Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines. This quiet defense cooperation allows these nations to align behind international frameworks like the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and secure regional stability, while strictly preserving their individual strategic autonomy

EXPLICIT Madelaine Go

LINGKOD NA TAPAT: CAVITE POLICE OFFICER KINILALA BILANG METROBANK FOUNDATION OUTSTANDING FILIPINO



Kinilala si Police Major Rosalino E. Panlaqui ng Tourist Police Unit ng Cavite Police Provincial Office, Police Regional Office CALABARZON, bilang isa sa mga Metrobank Foundation Outstanding Filipinos sa kategoryang Police Service dahil sa kanyang natatanging paglilingkod at adbokasiya para sa makatao at makabagong pagpapatupad ng batas.

Sa loob ng mahigit dalawang dekada sa serbisyo, naging instrumento si Panlaqui sa pagpapatupad ng mga makabagong programang pangkapulisan sa mga bayan ng Novleta, Cavite at Lalajala, Rizal. Sa pamamagitan ng kanyang pamumuno, pinalakas niya ang ugayan ng pulisya at komunidad at isinulong ang mga programang nakatuon sa pangangailangan ng mamamayan.

Ayon kay Panlaqui, hindi niya noon pinangarap na maging pulis. Ngunit sa paglipas ng panahon, nakita niya ang kanyang bokasyon sa paglilingkod sa kapwa at sa bayan. Naniniwala siyang ang kanyang landas ay ginabayan ng Diyos upang ialay ang kanyang buhay sa pagprotekta at paglilingkod sa mamamayan.

Makikita rin ang kanyang dedikasyon sa tulang "Sinumpaang Tungkulin," na sumasalamin sa kanyang paniniwalang ang paglilingkod sa tao ay isang paraan ng paglilingkod sa Diyos. Aniya, sa kanyang simpleng paraan ay nakatulong siya sa pagpapabuti ng pananaw ng publiko at pagpapatibay ng tiwala sa hanay ng kapulisan.

Sa kabila ng mga hamon at sakripisyong kaakibat ng kanyang propesyon, kabilang ang hindi pagdalo sa ilang mahahalagang okasyon ng pamilya, nananatili siyang tapat sa kanyang tungkulin. Para kay Panlaqui, ang

pinakamalaking gantimpala ay ang makita ang kasiyahan at pasasalamat ng mga mamamayang kanyang napaglilingkuran.

Binigyang-diin din niya ang kahalagahan ng matibay na ugnayan sa komunidad bilang pundasyon ng epektibong pagpapatupad ng batas. Aniya, walang lihim sa pagpapanumbalik ng tiwala ng publiko sa pulisya kundi ang tapat na serbisyo, integridad, at paninindigan sa sinumpaang tungkulin.

Sa pagkilala kay Police Major Rosalino E. Panlaqui bilang Metrobank Foundation Outstanding Filipino, pinarangalan hindi lamang ang kanyang mga nagawa bilang alagad ng batas kundi pati ang kanyang halimbawa ng pamumunong may integridad, malasakit sa komunidad, at tunay na diwa ng pampublikong paglilingkod.

Pointer Pau Dela Cruz



Gov. Sol Aragonese Brings Laguna Pantry to Santa Rosa; City Officials Boost Aid for Residents

Hundreds of families in Santa Rosa City received much-needed food assistance on Thursday, May 29, as the Provincial Government of Laguna rolled out the Laguna Pantry Program, bringing fresh fish and fresh vegetables directly to residents, while city officials expanded the support by adding rice and coffee packs.

Led by Governor Sol Aragonese, the initiative reached more households through the cooperation of the Santa Rosa local government, with Mayor Arlene Arcillas and Vice Mayor Arnold Arcillas complementing the provincial assistance to ensure families received more complete food provisions.

The food distribution benefited hundreds of residents and reflected a continuing effort by the provincial government to address food security concerns while extending support to local agricultural and fisheries sectors.

Governor Aragonese emphasized that the vegetables and fish distributed under the Laguna Pantry program were directly sourced from local farmers and tilapia growers in Laguna.

The strategy, she explained, allows the province to not only provide food assistance to communities but also create economic opportunities for local producers.

"Ibig sabihin ay kumpleto na ang tanghalian," Governor Aragonese remarked, expressing appreciation to the Santa Rosa City government for strengthening the assistance through additional food supplies.

Beyond immediate relief, the Laguna Pantry program continues to serve a dual purpose—helping ease the burden of struggling families while sustaining the livelihood of local farmers and fish growers.

By purchasing produce directly from local suppliers, the provincial government helps establish a stable market for agricultural and fishery products, contributing to the long-term growth of Laguna's local economy.

The initiative forms part of the provincial government's continuing efforts to bring accessible and practical assistance to communities across Laguna, while promoting inclusive support for the province's food producers.



Filipino Pride on Global Stage: Mekení Showcases Export Excellence at Tatak Pinoy Expo



Leading Filipino food manufacturer Mekení Food Corporation reinforced the strength and global competitiveness of Philippine manufacturing as it showcased its world-class food production capabilities during the prestigious DTI Tatak Pinoy Expo 2026 held at the SMX Convention Center Manila.

Organized by the Department of Trade and Industry, the expo highlights the nation's top industries and enterprises under the government's Tatak Pinoy Strategy — an initiative aimed at strengthening domestic industries, elevating local manufacturing, and positioning Filipino companies for greater global competitiveness.

More than simply participating in the national expo, Mekení utilized the platform to demonstrate how Filipino food

manufacturers can successfully meet international standards in quality, innovation, food safety, and large-scale production. As one of the country's leading food manufacturers and exporters, the company presented its extensive lineup of export-quality products already being distributed across Asia, the Middle East, North America, Europe, and Oceania.

During the opening day walkthrough, government officials visited various sector exhibits to personally witness the growing capabilities of Philippine industries, particularly the food and agro-processing sector identified by the administration as a major driver of economic growth and industrial development.

Prudencio 'Pruds' Garcia, president of Mekení, emphasized that the company's participation reflects its commitment to proving that Filipino manufacturing can compete confidently on the world stage.

"We are proud to showcase not only our products, but also the strength of Filipino food manufacturing.

From our roots in Pampanga, Mekení has grown into a globally recognized brand because of our commitment to quality, innovation, and world-class standards. Through Tatak Pinoy, we hope to demonstrate that Filipino companies have the capability to produce globally competitive products while creating meaningful opportunities for Filipino communities," Garcia said.

Mekení products are now available in more than 20 countries worldwide, further strengthening the company's expanding international footprint and reputation for adhering to globally recognized food manufacturing and safety standards.

Through its participation in this landmark national initiative, Mekení continues to reinforce its role not only as a proudly Filipino brand, but also as a key manufacturing company helping elevate the reputation of Philippine-made products in the global market.

(Edjun Mariposque)

Rippling effect of turning dreams into progress



Glaiza Velasco, together with her husband, has attended several international food exhibits featuring their products, with participation endorsed by DTI and supported by LGUs.

What started with just two small containers has now grown into about 500 drums, which Glaiza Velasco from Pangasinan now uses to store fermented sugarcane juices.

Glaiza began selling vinegar produced by the farmers when she was still a working student in 2008. As a working student, she balanced her studies with a job at a fast-food chain and selling vinegar at school and in public markets.

Later that year, she took the risk of creating her own vinegar, given the abundance of sugarcane in their area. Because of her hard work, she completed her education and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Commerce, Major in Management.

After graduation, she entered the corporate world but soon realized that running her own business suited her better. In 2016, she was determined to take her vinegar business seriously, so she resigned from her job and focused on marketing her product. Glaiza went to public markets to offer

samples to help customers distinguish her all-natural vinegar from other commercial brands. From then on, more people became her customers. Through consistency, she built a strong presence in the market.

In 2020, while the pandemic brought hardships to many, it became a blessing in disguise for their business. With the proper permits and operating requirements in place, most orders came to them, allowing their business to grow.

However, problems were inevitable. As sugarcane prices remained unstable, she rented land in 2021 to grow their own. Even so, they still buy sugarcane from farmers from time to time to meet all the growing demands of their products.

With their marketing strategy, they have been able to supply supermarkets, convenience stores, local government units, bus stops, and public markets. E-commerce platforms also help them reach customers nationwide.

To ensure consistent quality, their employees continue to undergo training, seminars, and workshops on food safety and manufacturing practices. As the number of customers increased, they were able to build their production facility and invest in assets.

Around 2018, she learned about CARD SME Bank, a thrift bank under CARD Mutually Reinforcing Institutions (CARD MRI). Her first loan of PHP 3,000.00 was used to buy sugarcane. She currently has an active loan with the bank, which she uses as additional capital for the business.

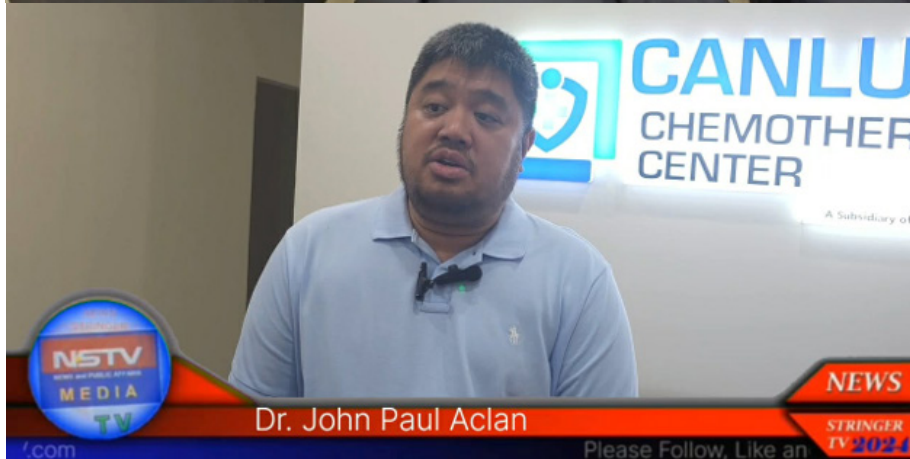
Because of her entrepreneurial skill, Glaiza was recognized as the Pagkilala sa Mga Likha ni Inay (PsMLNI) Gawad Maunlad 2025 winner. This award recognized people like her who, through hard work and responsible financing, grew their businesses from simple livelihoods into stable ventures. PsMLNI is conducted annually by CARD MRI to honor clients who, through hard work and institutional support, have achieved growth and success.

"Pangarap kong maging global company at brands ang aming negosyo, maging maganda ang kinabukasan ng mga empleyado at mga pamilya nila (It is my dream for my business to be recognized globally, and for my employees and their families to have a brighter future)," she stated.

It was a ripple effect; she was able to provide for her family, create employment for others, and help farmers earn income. Her journey may have been tough, but the fact that she can meet not only her family's needs but also help others is what drives her to do even more.

For orders and inquiries, those within the area may visit her at Zone 5, Imbalbalatong, Pozorubio, Pangasinan, or contact her at 0917-188-2541.

10th Free Chemotherapy Center by We Hope Medical Group, Expanding Lifesaving Care for Laguna Cancer Patients



The Canlubang Chemotherapy Center and Canlubang Laboratory and Diagnostic Center were formally inaugurated today at iMall in Calamba, marking another milestone in the expansion of free healthcare services for cancer patients in Laguna.

The newly opened facility is the 10th free chemotherapy center in Laguna established by We Hope Medical Group under the leadership of Dr. John Paul Aclan. Dr. Aclan said the organization now operates a total of 37 free chemotherapy centers across the Philippines, reflecting its continuing commitment to making cancer treatment accessible to underserved patients nationwide.

According to Dr. Aclan, the group aims to establish up to 15 free chemotherapy centers throughout Laguna to further expand access to quality and lifesaving cancer care in the province.

Dr. Aclan also expressed gratitude to Mayor Roseller "Ross" Rizal for supporting the initiative and helping provide cancer patients with access to free chemotherapy services. He said local government officials play a vital role in issuing endorsement letters for patients seeking treatment, although individual patients may also directly visit the center for assistance. He explained that patients only need to be PhilHealth members and

present a valid ID to avail themselves of free chemotherapy and laboratory services. For those who are not yet registered with PhilHealth, the center's medical staff will assist them with registration so they can immediately receive treatment without paying any fees.

Dr. Aclan likewise thanked Sol Aragones for her full support in advancing healthcare programs for cancer patients and prioritizing public health services in Laguna. The Canlubang Chemotherapy Center is open from Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., providing medical and laboratory services to patients requiring cancer care.

(Edjun Mariposque)

2 NURSING STUDENTS, ISINANTABI ANG EXAM REVIEW PARA ILIGTAS ANG DRIVER TINAMAAN NG HEATSTROKE

Sa halip na mag-review para sa kanilang final examination, mas pinili ng dalawang nursing student na unahin ang pagliligtas sa isang jeepney driver na hinihinalang inatake ng heatstroke habang bumibiyahe sa Bocaue, Bulacan.

Umani ng paghanga online sina Precious Jewel Pescador at Joana Mae Barquilla, kapwa freshman Nursing students ng Dr. Yanga's Colleges Inc., matapos agad na rumesponde nang mampansing hirap nang huminga at nanghihina ang driver ng pampasaherong jeep na may rutang Sta. Maria via Monumento habang bumabaybay sa MacArthur Highway.

Ayon sa salaysay ng paaralan, maaga sanang bumiyahe si Precious upang makapag-review para sa kanilang final exam. Ngunit habang nasa loob ng jeep, napanin niyang tila nanghihina at nahihirapang huminga ang tsiper.

Dahil sa kanilang kaalaman sa basic emergency response, agad nilang sinuri ang vital signs ng driver at nagbigay ng paunang lunas habang hinihintay ang pagdating ng ambulansya.

Tumagal umano ng halos dalawampung minuto bago dumating ang mga responder kaya't sinamahan pa ng dalawang estudyante ang driver hanggang sa pinakamalapit na ospital upang matiyak na ligtas ito.

Sa kabila ng nalalapit nilang pagsusulit, hindi na umano nagdalawang-isip ang dalawa na unahin ang kaligtasan ng pasyente kaysa sa kanilang exam review.

Sa kasalukuyan, nasa maayos nang kondisyon ang jeepney driver.

Sa viral post ng Dr. Yanga's Colleges Inc., sinabi ng paaralan na higit pa sa pagpasa sa pagsusulit ang nagawa ng kanilang mga estudyante dahil



isang buhay umano ang kanilang nailigtas.

Umani rin ng papuri mula sa netizens ang ipinakitang malasakit at mabilis na aksyon ng dalawang nursing student, kasabay ng panawagang maging handa ang publiko sa matinding epekto ng nararanasang init ng

panahon.

Patunay umano ang kanilang ginawa na sa panahon ng emergency, hindi lamang grado kundi malasakit, kahandaan, at dedikasyon sa paglilingkod ang tunay na sukatang pagiging future healthcare worker.

Via Ylou L Dagos

