

Rizal at 165: Leaders Honor National Hero’s Legacy, Senator JV Ejercito Commits P100M para sa Laguna Mega Clinic

Ang mga pinuno ng gobyerno, lokal na opisyal, at residente ay nagtipon sa Rizal Shrine sa Calamba City noong Hunyo 19 upang gunitain ang ika-165 anibersaryo ng kapanganakan ng bansang Rizal at pagdiriwang ng pambansang bayani ni Dr. Jose. Pilipino upang itaguyod ang kanyang mga mithiin ng katapangan, pagkamakabayan, at paglilingkod.

Ang selebrasyon ay dinaluhan nina Senador JV Ejercito, Laguna Gobernador Sol Aragones, Congresswoman Charisse Hernandez, Calamba City Mayor Ross Rizal, mga miyembro ng Sangguniang Panlungsod, mga miyembro ng lupong probinsiya, mga pinuno ng departamento, at iba pang mga lokal na opisyal ng pamahalaan na pina-rangalan ang mga opisyal ng lokal na pamahalaan na pinarangalan ang mga Pilipinong opisyal ng mga kapanganakan na sumama sa isang simbolo ng mga Pilipinong kapanganakan. pagkakakilanlan.

Sa kanyang mensahe, binigyang-diin ni Gobernador Sol Aragones ang mga katangiang nagpapanatili kay Rizal ng inspirasyon sa mga henerasyon ng mga Pilipino. Inilarawan niya ang pambansang bayani bilang



isang taong may katalinuhan, habag, at tapang na ang buhay ay nagpakita ng malalim na pangako sa paglilingkod sa iba at pagpapabuti ng lipunan. Napansin ng gobernador na ang makataong gawain ni Rizal bilang isang manggagamot at ang kanyang kakayahang magsalita ng ilang wika ay sumasalin sa kanyang wellrounded character at dedikasyon sa pagbuo ng bansa.

Binigyang-diin din ni Aragones na ang katapangan ay hindi lamang sa pagharap sa panganib kundi sa paninindigan sa tama. “Ang pagiging matapang

ay ang pagpili ng dapat na laban, paglaban sa katotohanan at kahirapan,” she said. She further underscored the significance of commemorating Rizal's birthday in his hometown, reminding attendees that “Nandito mismo sa Calamba ang dugong bayani.” Senator JV Ejercito stressed the importance of preserving the nation's heritage and learning from the sacrifices of past heroes. “Lover din po ako ng history,” ibinahagi niya, na binibigyang-diin na ang pag-unawa sa kasaysayan ng bansa ay nagpapatibay ng pambansang pagkakakilanlan

at pananagutang sibiko. Bilang bahagi ng kanyang patuloy na suporta para sa Laguna, inihayag din ni Ejercito ang ₱100million na pangako na tumulong sa pagpapalakas ng mga serbisyo sa pangangalagang pangkalusugan sa lalawigan, kabilang ang suporta para sa planong Laguna Mega Clinic, isang flagship healthcare project ng Pamahalaang Panlalawigan na naglalayong palawakin ang access sa de-kalidad at abot-kayang serbisyong medikal para sa mga Lagunense. pagnanais ng mga tao para sa kalayaan at reporma. He encouraged citizens to remain active partici-

pants in nationbuilding, saying, “Kung pwede tayong kumilos, kung pwede tayong may magawa para sa ating bayan, tayo po ay kumilos,” and urged Filipinos to “tindigan ang tama, tindigan ang prinsipyo” amid today's challenges. Meanwhile, Congresswoman Charisse Hernandez reminded the public that Rizal's individual action remains a valuable lessons on the individual action. Hinikayat niya ang mga Pilipino na mag-ambag sa positibong pagbabago sa kanilang mga komunidad, na binibigyang-diin na “Walang sinuman ang napakaliit para gumawa ng mga dakilang

bagay.” Ayon kay Hernandez, ang halimbawa ni Rizal ay nagpapakita kung paano ang dedikasyon, integridad, at paglilingkod ay maaaring mag-iwan ng pangmatagalang epekto sa lipunan.

Hinihikayat din ni Mayor Ross Rizal ang mga residente na pagnilayan ang buhay at mga turo ng pambansang bayani, na binanggit na ang pamana ni Rizal ay patuloy na nagbibigay-inspirasyon sa mga Pilipino na maging responsableng mamamayan at aktibong tagapag-ambag sa pambansang kaunlaran. Binigyang-diin niya na ang kuwento ni Rizal ay nagsisilbing paalala na ang makabuluhang pagbabago ay nagsisimula sa isang tunay na pangako sa paglilingkod sa kapwa at paggawa ng tama.

Ang paggunita ay nagsilbing pagpupugay hindi lamang sa pinakapangunahing bayani ng bansa kundi bilang panawagan din sa mga Pilipino na patuloy na isama ang mga pagpapahalagang ipinagtanggol ni Rizal. Sa pamamagitan ng mga mensahe ng katapangan, paglilingkod, pamumuno, at pagkamakabayan, muling pinatunayan ng kaganapan na ang pamana ni Rizal ay nananatiling gabay sa pagbuo ng bansa mahigit isang siglo pagkatapos ng kanyang kapanganakan.

Maragondon LGU fast tracks education infra construction

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Gov. Sol Aragones Pushes for Five-Story Mega Clinic to Transform Healthcare in Laguna



LAGUNA, Philippines — In a move aimed at transforming healthcare services across the province, Sol Aragones is proposing the construction of a five-story Mega Clinic that will bring specialized medical services closer to thousands of Lagunenses.

The project, which is planned to be financed through a bank loan, is envisioned as a comprehensive healthcare hub where residents can access a wide range of medical services under one roof. The proposed facility seeks to address the growing need for specialized healthcare within the province, reducing the need for patients to travel outside Laguna for treatment.

According to the provincial government's proposal, the Mega Clinic will feature dedicated facilities for maternal and new-

born care, cancer treatment, kidney care, mental health services, eye care, and rehabilitation.

The first floor will be devoted to maternal and newborn healthcare, housing a birthing clinic, labor and delivery rooms, postnatal care rooms, neonatal surgery facilities, and a family lounge. The second floor will focus on cancer and kidney care, featuring a chemotherapy center, dialysis center, infusion bays, oncology clinics, a pharmacy, and supportive care facilities.

Meanwhile, the third floor will serve as a specialized eye care center offering general ophthalmology services, optometry clinics, procedure

rooms, and optical shops. Mental health services will occupy the fourth floor, which will include psychiatry clinics, counseling rooms, group therapy rooms, and a mindfulness room.

The fifth floor will be dedicated to rehabilitation services, providing physical therapy, occupational therapy, hydrotherapy facilities, and a wellness lounge designed to help patients recover and regain independence.

Despite concerns raised regarding the planned bank financing, Governor Sol Aragones assured residents that the provincial government has the financial capacity to

Chavit Singson Vows to Continue Exposing Alleged Flood Control Fund Anomalies Amid Cyber Libel Case



Redcross Chairperson Mayora Susan Barairo Rizal ang programa, katuwang ang iba't ibang tanggapan ng lokal na pamahalaan at mga boluntaryong donor na nag-alay ng dugo upang makatulong sa kapwa.

Ayon kay Rizal, malaking tulong ang mga blood donation drive upang mapanatiling sapat ang supply ng

cont. on page 2

Cavite Service Caravan holds 4th leg in Cavite City, expends access to government service



The Provincial Government of Cavite continued its commitment to bringing accessible and responsive public service closer to communities as the Cavite Service Caravan rolled out its fourth leg today, June 18, at the Montano Hall in Cavite City.

Led by Governor Abeng Remulla, the service caravan further strengthened 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 pro-

cont. on page 3

Thousands of Job Opportunities Offered at Buhayani Job Fair 2026 in Calamba

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna — Thousands of employment opportunities were made available to job seekers during the Buhayani Job Fair 2026, held at SM City Calamba as part of the city's continuing efforts to bring livelihood and career opportunities closer to residents.

The job fair gathered various companies and government agencies, offering a wide range of vacancies for skilled workers, fresh graduates, and job seekers from different sectors. The initiative aimed to help more Calambenos secure stable employment and improve their quality of life.

Mayor Roseller “Ross” H. Rizal emphasized the importance of

making job opportunities accessible to local residents and strengthening partnerships with the private sector and government agencies.

“Patuloy nating inilalapit ang oportunidad sa ating mga kababayan sa pamamagitan ng Buhayani Job Fair 2026 na ginanap sa SM City Calamba,” Mayor Rizal said.

He noted that the collaboration among participating companies and agencies opened doors for thousands of available positions.

“Sa pakikipagtulungan ng iba’t ibang kumpanya at ahensya, libu-libong bakanateng trabaho ang inihandog upang mabigyan ng pagkakataon



ang ating mga Calambeno na makahanap ng hanapbuhay at mas mapabuti ang kanilang kabuhayan,” he added.

Mayor Rizal also highlighted the crucial role of employment in building strong families and communities.

“Ang pagkakaron ng disentang trabaho ay isa sa mga susi tungo sa mas maunlad na pamilya at komunidad. Kaya naman patuloy nating susuportahan ang mga programang nagbubukas ng mas maraming oportunidad para sa bawat isa,” he

said.

The city government reaffirmed its commitment to expanding employment programs and creating more pathways to economic growth for residents.

“Sama-sama nating itaguyod ang mas maraming trabaho, mas maraming oportunidad, at mas maunlad na Calamba,” Mayor Rizal said.

The Buhayani Job Fair 2026 forms part of the local government's ongoing initiatives to promote employment, support workforce development, and strengthen the city's economic progress by connecting Calambenos with meaningful career opportunities. (Edjun Mariposque)

EDITORIAL: THE ILLUSION OF DE-ESCALATION: BEIJING’S TACTICAL PIVOT AT BAJO DE MASINLOC

The rapid sequence of events unfolding at Bajo de Masinloc over the last forty-eight hours shatters any optimistic conclusions regarding a diplomatic de-escalation by the People’s Republic of China in the West Philippine Sea. On Wednesday, June 17, 2026, verification flights by the Philippine Coast Guard confirmed that Chinese personnel had dismantled and towed away a movable floating platform from the shoal’s vital lagoon.

Yet, less than twenty-four hours later, a morning maritime domain awareness flight on June 18 exposed the arrival of the Tong Ji, an 82-meter Chinese comprehensive research vessel, operating deep within the Philippines’ 200-nautical-mile Exclusive Economic Zone. This immediate transition demonstrates that Beijing is not retreating, but rather rotating its strategic assets to maintain continuous, unlawful administrative control.

This swift operational pivot reveals a calculated strategy designed to manipulate international perception and exhaust Philippine resources. By removing the conspicuous floating platform, Beijing sought to temporarily lower diplomatic friction and blunt Manila’s international transparency campaign. However, replacing a stationary structure with an ocean-class comprehensive scientific research vessel proves that China’s overarching blueprint for the region remains entirely unchanged. Security analysts must recognize this maneuver for what it is: a tactical substitution where visible physical barriers are traded for mobile maritime surveillance assets.

The deployment of the Tong Ji marks a distinct shift from crude, physical blockades toward highly technical, undersea espionage under an academic guise. Constructed as China’s first intelligent comprehensive scientific research vessel for Tongji University, this ship possesses advanced sensory arrays capable of mapping seabed topography, measuring thermal layers, and gathering critical hydrographic data.

While Beijing shields the deployment under the banner of civilian Marine Scientific Research, the strategic utility of this data is undeniably military. Mapping these deep-water approaches around Scarborough Shoal provides the People’s Liberation Army Navy with the precise sub-surface intelligence required to secure submarine pathways and track regional naval movements.

Operating a mere 0.6 to 1.2 kilometers southeast of the shoal, the Tong Ji does not sail alone; it anchors an integrated paramilitary flotilla. Aerial documentation by the Philippine Coast Guard logs a dedicated research support vessel, two heavily armed China Coast Guard patrol ships, and seven Chinese Maritime Militia vessels forming an outer protective cordon.

Furthermore, two permanent militia boats remain stationed directly inside the lagoon entrance, while a People’s Liberation Army Navy warship maintains a watchful posture 50 nautical miles away. This layered deployment highlights how China systematically integrates academic, law enforcement, and naval components to enforce its unlawful claims.

This high-tech infiltration directly violates international legal frameworks, most notably the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the historic 2016 Arbitral Tribunal ruling. The 2016 award explicitly invalidated China’s expansive “nine-dash line” and declared Bajo de Masinloc a traditional fishing ground where no single

state holds exclusive sovereignty over the waters, while reaffirming the surrounding area as part of the Philippine Exclusive Economic Zone. Under UNCLOS, any foreign state wishing to conduct marine research within another nation’s zone must secure explicit prior consent. Because the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs never granted such authorization, the operations of the Tong Ji constitute an unambiguous breach of international law. The timing of this deployment also serves as a calculated psychological test directed at Manila’s posture and sovereign resolve. The intrusion comes directly on the heels of Beijing’s aggressive domestic maritime regulations, which purport to authorize the China Coast Guard to detain foreign nationals suspected of “trespassing” in contested waters.

By placing a premium research asset alongside an aggressive security escort just hours after a minor concession, Beijing is sending a clear signal to Manila: temporary infrastructure may change, but the Chinese blockade is permanent, and any attempts by Filipino fishermen or patrols to reassert access will be met with overwhelming, state-backed resistance.

In response to this unlawful maritime encroachment, the Philippine government has successfully utilized its most potent asymmetrical counter-weapon, the maritime transparency strategy. By embedding journalists from major local networks on the morning flight of June 18, the Philippine Coast Guard stripped away the veil of secrecy that Beijing relies upon to alter the regional status quo. When the People’s Liberation Army Air Force issued hostile radio challenges demanding the Philippine aircraft withdraw, the patrol pilots stood their ground, formally asserted Philippine sovereign jurisdiction, and documented the Tong Ji’s precise coordinates. This immediate public disclosure prevents Beijing from quietly normalizing its presence or spinning a false narrative of peaceful academic exploration.

To safeguard its maritime rights against future incursions, Manila must prepare for a prolonged legal and operational battle that moves beyond reactionary diplomatic protests. While filing complaints with the Department of Foreign Affairs remains a necessary step to maintain a legal paper trail, these measures alone do not deter a superpower committed to revisionist history.

The Philippines must continue to reinforce its operational presence, as seen with the deployment of the BRP Malapascua and BRP Sindangan stationed thirty miles off the shoal to shield local fishing fleets. Furthermore, Manila must deepen its intelligence-sharing and joint patrol mechanisms with traditional allies like the United States, Japan, and Australia to transform bilateral defense treaties into tangible deterrents.

The Tong Ji incident makes clear that Beijing’s goal remains full, lasting control over the West Philippine Sea. Taking away the floating platform was never a gesture of goodwill or a response to international calls; it was a deliberate shift to advance a more discreet, technology-driven form of encroachment. As China continues to frame its moves as scientific work or domestic law enforcement, the Philippines and its partners must stay watchful. Maintaining transparency, strengthening maritime defense, and standing firmly by international law are the best ways to challenge attempts to change the status quo and protect Philippine rights at Bajo de Masinloc.

Cavite ... FROM PAGE 1

grams and assistance aimed at addressing the immediate needs of residents, particularly those with limited access to government services.

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 likewise made available to ensure prompt response to health-related concerns.

Employment and livelihood opportunities were also highlighted through job matching activities, career coaching sessions, and assistance from participating agencies including PhilHealth, TESDA, PSA, DTI, Pag-ibig Fund and Land Bank of the Philippines. Entrepreneurship support, cooperative assistance, and the promotion of local products through a trade fair formed part of the caravan.

Agricultural support services, including the distribution of vegetable seeds and seedlings, educational materials, and technical assistance for farmers and fisherfolk, were likewise 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 also provided.

Digital literacy programs, internet connectivity services, and information dissemination booths further promoted awareness and accessibility of government programs among participants.

Joining Governor Remulla in the fourth leg of the caravan were Vice Governor Ram Revilla Bautista, and Board Members Jygs Gandia and Romel Enriquez. They were warmly welcomed by Cavite City officials headed by Mayor Denver Chua, Vice Mayor Raleigh Rusit and members of the Sangguniang Panglungsod.

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. — OPIO

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From Lens to Limelight

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

Flordeliza C. Taña, a CARD Bank client from Bankerohan, Davao City, began her journey with a small business and a dream for her family. Through years of perseverance and dedication, that dream grew beyond entrepreneurship and eventually led her to the world of arts and filmmaking.

Today, Flordeliza inspires the CARD MRI community not only as a client but also as a storyteller. This is proof that dreams nurtured with passion and determination can grow beyond imagination.

A journey built on family and business

Flordeliza has been running a photography business since 1998. Together with her husband, she worked tirelessly to sustain their livelihood while raising their children and supporting their education.

In 2006, she became a client of CARD, Inc. (A Microfinance NGO), with an initial loan of PHP 3,000. As her business gradually expanded, she later transitioned to CARD Bank, Inc., a microfinance-oriented rural bank, where she now manages a PHP 80,000 loan to sustain and further grow her photography business.

Over the years, the support she received from CARD Bank helped strengthen her livelihood and enabled her to send her two children to college through educational loans. For more than two decades, CARD Bank has remained part of her journey toward stability and growth.

Rediscovering a childhood dream

Beyond entrepreneurship, Flordeliza has always carried a childhood dream of becoming an actor. Through CARD MRI's cultural and creative programs, she found the opportunity to pursue this passion.

DEPED ... FROM PAGE 3

gailangan ng repair o restoration,” ani Rolloque.

Binigyang-diin din niya na inaatasan ang mga Schools Division Office na magsagawa ng Conservation Management Plans at maglaan ng pondo para sa mga gawaing restorasyon bilang bahagi ng pangmatalagalang pangangalaga sa mga makasaysayang gusali.

Dagdag pa niya, regular na mino-monitor ng mga tanggapan ng DepEd sa pambansa, rehiyonal, at dibisyong antas ang kalagayan ng mga Gusaling Gabaldon. Sumasailalim din sa pagsasanay ang mga tagapagpatupad ng programa upang matiyak ang wastong konserbasyon ng mga ito.

Sa kasalukuyan, nagsisilbi rin ang mga Gusaling Gabaldon bilang karagdang learning spaces habang nagpapatuloy ang pagpapatayo at pagsasaayos ng iba pang pasilidad sa mga paaralan. Sa pamamagitan ng patuloy na konserbasyon, inaasahang mapananatili ang mga gusaling ito bilang buhay na saksi sa kasaysayan ng edukasyon sa Pilipinas at magagamit pa ng mga susunod na henerasyon ng mga mag-aaral.

Gov. Sol FROM PAGE 1

fund the project.

“Huwag po kayo mag-alala dahil kaya po itong bayaran ng probinsya,” said Governor Sol Aragonese.

The governor also expressed confidence that the Mega Clinic would eventually generate revenue through PhilHealth reimbursements, helping

Flordeliza C. Taña, 55, a mother of two and CARD client from Bankerohan, Davao City, during the 2022 SineMaya Community Film Festival of CARD MRI, where community stories take the spotlight.

As an active member of the CARD Bank Waling-Waling Center in Davao City, she regularly participates in CARD MRI events and programs. Her involvement eventually opened doors to filmmaking and performing arts.

In 2022, she joined the SineMaya: CARD MRI Community Film Festival as the director and scriptwriter of their film “Ngiti sa Likod ng Lente”. The film received several recognitions, including Best Actress, Best Actor, Second Best Film, and the Founder’s Choice Award.

She later joined the fourth edition of SineMaya with their film “Huling Handog”, which was one of the nominees in the festival.

Growing in the Creative Field

Maragondon... FROM PAGE 1

MARAGONDON, Cavite (PIA) — Construction works for improving school facilities in the Municipality of Maragondon are in full swing to continue providing quality education to its growing student population.

Last June 16, Mayor Lawrence Arca led the inspection of the new access road that will connect Gulod, Barangay Garita B and Barangay San Miguel B.

Arca said the road construction project aims to help ease traffic especially, benefiting commuting students with a shorter and safer travel time.

“Layunin ng proyektong ito na mabawasan ang mabigat na daloy ng trapiko lalo na sa ras ng pasukan at uwian ng ating mga mag-aaral, upang mas maging ligtas at maginhawa ang kanilang pagbiyahe araw-araw.”

Accompanied by Mhigs Mangoba and Leo Cargullo of the Department of Education (DepEd) District office, the local chief executive also led the inspection of the 5,000 m2 lot the municipal government will donate for the construction of the new Maragondon National High School building.

In a statement, Arca assured that the municipal government will continue to improve school facilities crucial to the delivery of education services for the youth.

While acknowledging that the project will require time to complete, Aragonese emphasized that the Mega Clinic represents a long-term investment in the health and well-being of Lagunenses.

Once realized, the proposed Mega Clinic

Flordeliza continues to explore her talents beyond filmmaking. In 2025, she joined the TAN-AWA, CARD MRI's singing and songwriting competition, where she became one of the Top 7 finalists during its first edition.

Moreover, she is now part of the cast of the second film of BENTE Productions, CARD MRI's multimedia company. The film production is ongoing in Iloilo, where she will portray “Tita Matudz,” one of the supporting characters.

Aside from acting, Flordeliza is also set to direct another CARD MRI film titled “Pangandoy”. She is also collaborating with fellow TAN-AWA Season 1 finalists to compose and perform an original song that TAN-AWA Season 2 participants will perform.

From a small business owner seeking financial support, Flordeliza has grown into an artist who now contributes to storytelling, music, and film within the CARD MRI community.

Her journey shows that opportunities, when paired with determination and passion, can open new paths in life. Through CARD MRI's programs and community, she was able to strengthen her livelihood, support her family, and rediscover a dream she has carried since childhood.

For Flordeliza, the experience is a reminder that it is never too late to pursue one's passion. “Sa tulong ng CARD, hindi lang ako naging mas matatag sa negosyo at sa buhay. Nabuksan din ang pintuan para matupad ko ang pangarap kong maging bahagi ng sinining at pelikula. Pinatunayan ng aking karanasan na hindi kailanman huli ang lahat para sundan at abutin ang ating mga pangarap,” (With the help of CARD, I did not only become stronger in business and in life. It also opened doors for me to fulfill my dream of becoming part of the arts and film industry. My experience proves that it is never too late to pursue and achieve our dreams, she shared.)

MASS... FROM PAGE 1

dugo para sa mga emergency at mga pasyenteng nangangailangan ng agarang pagsasalin ng dugo.

Ipinaliwanag din niya na ang mga nangangailangan ng dugo ay maaaring magtungo sa tanggapan ng Philippine Red Cross sa JP Hospital kung saan maaari itong makuha sa halagang P2,300 bilang kabayaran sa proseso at screening ng dugo. Aniya, mas mataas ang halaga nito kapag sa ospital direktang kinukuha, na umaabot sa humigit-kumulang P4,000.

Sa kanyang mensahe, nagpahayag ng taos-pusong pasasalamat si Rizal sa lahat ng nakiisa at sumuporta sa blood donation activity.

“Isang malaking pasasalamat po mula kina Mayor Ross Rizal at sa inyong lingkod bilang Red Cross Chairperson sa lahat ng nagbigay ng kanilang dugo at sa mga departamento at tanggapan na tumulong upang maging matagumpay ang gawaing ito. Salamat din sa mga lider ng bawat opisina na naghatid ng impormasyon sa kanilang mga kawani upang mas marami ang makilahok,” ani Rizal.

Binigyang-diin din niya ang kahalagahan ng pagkakaisa at pagtutulongan sa pagsusulong ng mga programang may pakinabang sa mamamayan.

“Para sa Bagong Reporma ng Calamba, basta sama-sama at tulong-tulong para sa kabutihan ng kapwa Calambeno,” dagdag niya.

Patuloy namang hinihikayat ng Philippine Red Cross at ng Pamahalaang Lungsod ng Calamba ang publiko na maging regular na blood donor upang makatulong sa pagligligtas ng buhay at matiyak na may sapat na suplay ng dugo para sa mga nangangailangan nito sa oras ng pangangailangan. (Edjun Mariposque)



SMC brings river cleanup program to Cebu to help ease flooding

San Miguel Corporation (SMC) launched its Butuanon River clean-up in Mandaue City, Cebu, expanding the company's long-running Better Rivers PH program in support of the government's Oplan Kontra Baha initiative.

The project will cover a four-kilometer section of the river from its mouth, where heavy siltation and waste buildup have restricted water flow to the Mactan Channel.

The Butuanon River was among the waterways that overflowed in November 2025 during Typhoon Tino, which brought more than a month's worth of rain and caused widespread flooding in Mandaue.

SMC Chairman and CEO Ramon S. Ang said the company will undertake the cleanup at no cost to the government, following the flooding experienced by residents.

"Mandaue has long been home to San Miguel and to generations of our employees, and we are glad to support the government in this effort to help reduce flooding and protect communities," Ang said.

SMC, which operates several major facilities in Mandaue, is



implementing the project in partnership with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), which leads Oplan Kontra Baha, and the Mandaue City government.

The project was launched at the Eco Learning Center inside the San Miguel Eco Park in Mandaue. Those in attendance included Mandaue Mayor Thadeo Jovito "Jonkie" Ouano, Rep. Emmarie Ouano-Dizon, DPWH Undersecretary Charles Calima, other officials of DPWH and the Mandaue City govern-

ment, and representatives from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. SMC was represented

by Jimmy O. Lu, vice president and overall project manager of Better Rivers PH, San Miguel Brewery Inc. (SMBI) Plant Manager Villamor Tuazon, and representatives of other SMC businesses operating in the city.

SMBI, which operates the SMB Mandaue Brewery, will provide at least six excavators and several barges for the project. The equipment will be used to remove silt, waste and soil deposits that have reduced

the river's capacity, based on initial assessments by SMC. The company said the Butuanon River has conditions similar to several heavily silted rivers it has previously cleaned. Its mouth has been blocked by silt and waste, limiting outflow to the Mactan Channel, while upstream soil deposits could eventually contribute to renewed blockage downstream if not removed.

Since 2020, SMC has removed nearly 9.2 million metric tons of silt and waste from more than 190 kilometers of river channels at no cost to government and taxpayers.

The work has covered the Tullahan, Pasig, San Juan, Pampanga and Meycauayan rivers, as

well as waterways in Bulacan, Laguna, Muntinlupa, Las Piñas and Parañaque. SMC has also continued maintenance cleanups in previously cleared waterways to help sustain their flood-carrying capacity.

"Our work in other rivers has shown that cleanup has to go beyond what people see on the surface. The important part is removing the buildup that has made the river narrower and shallower over time, so it can carry more water during heavy rains," Ang said. "With our facilities, people and equipment already in Mandaue, we wanted to put that experience to work in support of the city and its communities." PR



FROM PAGE 1

Trabaho ...

As part of the program, beneficiaries received assistance through various DOLE initiatives, including the Government Internship Program (GIP), DOLE Integrated Livelihood Program (DILP), and Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers (TUPAD). Partner organizations were likewise recognized for their invaluable contributions and continued support in advancing employment and livelihood programs within the province.

The ceremonial ribbon-cutting formally marked the opening of the job fair, symbolizing the shared commitment of government agencies and partners in creating

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more opportunities for Caviteños.

The event drew an impressive 1,318 registered job applicants, with 397 applicants hired on the spot, highlighting the effectiveness of the job fair in providing immediate employment opportunities and bridging the gap between employers and job seekers.

Through programs such as the Trabaho Agad Job Fair, DOLE and its partners continue to strengthen workforce development initiatives, providing accessible employment opportunities and supporting the government's goal of fostering inclusive growth, sustainable livelihoods, and economic empowerment for Filipino workers. — OPIO

Chavit...

Former Ilocos Sur Governor Luis 'Chavit' Singson has issued a strongly worded statement following his recent arrest in connection with a cyber libel complaint, insisting that the case goes beyond a private legal dispute and is linked to his calls for a full investigation into alleged irregularities involving flood control funds.

In his statement, Singson said he would not be intimidated by the charges filed against him, declaring that he considers the arrest a "badge of honor." He maintained that he respected the legal process and voluntarily sought to post bail through the courts.

Singson also disputed reports regarding the circumstances of his arrest, saying he was not

arrested at his residence. He claimed that a Quezon City judge refused to immediately accept his bail and required him to undergo police processing first. According to him, what should have been a routine legal procedure turned into an effort to publicly embarrass him.

The former governor further questioned how his booking photograph was quickly circulated to the public, suggesting that such a release would not have occurred without authorization. He called for accountability and transparency regarding who ordered the dissemination of the image and the reasons behind it.

Singson likewise raised concerns about what he described as unusual developments

surrounding the case, including the designation of a new judge from Manila and the speed at which the proceedings moved forward.

He linked the filing of the case to his recent calls for an investigation into the country's flood control program and the use of public funds intended to protect communities from flooding. According to Singson, efforts to discredit and intimidate him intensified after he publicly sought answers regarding the allocation and management of those funds.

In his statement, Singson urged Filipinos to focus on what he described as the larger issue of accountability in the use of government resources. He argued that the real concern is not the cyber

libel case itself but determining where public funds were spent, who benefited from them, and who should be held responsible.

Despite the legal challenges he faces, Singson said he remains committed to pursuing what he believes is the truth behind the controversy. He stressed that neither arrest, court cases, nor political pressure would stop him from continuing his efforts to uncover those he claims are responsible for the alleged scandal.

"I will not be silenced," Singson said, adding that attempts to suppress his voice only strengthen his determination to continue speaking out. (Edjun Mariposque)



PUBLISHER CORNER

CHIZ PREFERS NON-TAX REVENUE OPTIONS OVER NEW TAXES TO BOOST GOV'T. COFFERS



Senator Francis "Chiz" Escudero has maintained that the national government should consider non-tax revenue options, including the bidding out of exploration and production agreements over the country's indigenous coal resources.

The veteran legislator made the statement as economic managers continue to study ways to strengthen revenue generation to sustain social protection programs, energy transition efforts, and long-term fiscal stability. He said this approach on indigenous resources could help generate additional funds while supporting ongoing fiscal and development priorities.

To date, several tax proposals remain under review as part of the government's broader fiscal strategy.

Among the measures being examined are adjustments to excise taxes on sweetened beverages and certain food products, the Motor Vehicle Road User's Tax (MVRUT), and the proposed excise tax on single-use plastics (SUPs).

Escudero has consistently maintained that new taxes should be a last resort, emphasizing the importance of efficient revenue collection and the full utilization of existing non-tax opportunities.

The senator noted that the Philippines has long-identified coal-bearing areas in Cagayan, Isabela, and parts of South Cotabato and Sarangani, which can be offered

to the private sector through transparent and competitive bidding, since these areas remain underdeveloped despite their potential to contribute to national revenues.

"In lieu of new taxes, the government should maximize the resources it already owns," Escudero said. "Bidding out exploration and sharing agreements over our indigenous coal reserves is a practical way to raise revenues without imposing additional burdens on the public."

He explained that properly structured agreements can provide substantial upfront payments and steady annual income for the government through work program commitments and the state's share from future production.

Escudero said his own economic estimates show the scale of the opportunity. "If done correctly and competitively, these agreements can yield up to one trillion pesos upfront, and around seventy to one hundred billion pesos every year in non-tax revenues," he pointed out.

The Bicolano senator added that tapping indigenous energy resources can complement the country's long-term energy and development goals.

He expressed hopes the government will continue to explore non-tax options alongside existing revenue measures to help support national priorities while being mindful of the public's capacity to absorb new taxes.

A P950-Million Question: Can Laguna Afford Not to Invest in Healthcare?

When the Laguna Provincial Board authorized Governor Sol Aragonos to negotiate a proposed P950-million loan for the construction of the Laguna Mega Clinic, the decision immediately sparked debate. For some, the word "loan" raises understandable concerns about debt, public spending, and fiscal responsibility. For others, it represents an opportunity to finally address long-standing healthcare gaps affecting thousands of Lagunenses.

The question now confronting the province is not simply whether borrowing money is good or bad. The more important question is this: Can Laguna afford to ignore a major investment in healthcare at a time when the demand for quality medical services continues to grow?

It is worth emphasizing that the Provincial Board did not approve the release of P950 million. What was approved was the authority for Governor Sol Aragonos to negotiate with the Land Bank of the Philippines and explore the terms of a possible financing arrangement. In other words, the province has merely opened the door to discussions. Yet even this initial step has become a subject of political and public scrutiny.

Such scrutiny is healthy.

Public borrowing should never be treated lightly. Every peso borrowed today will eventually be paid by taxpayers tomorrow. The concerns raised by Board Members Karla Monica Adjar-Lajara and Lorenzo Zuñiga Jr., who voted against the resolution, deserve respect and careful consideration. Their opposition reflects a legitimate duty to ensure that any debt undertaken by the province is justified, sustainable, and beneficial to future generations.

However, fiscal caution should not automatically translate into resistance to investment.

For decades, local governments across the country have struggled with a recurring dilemma: infrastructure projects are often criticized for being expensive, yet the absence of those projects imposes even greater costs on communities. Healthcare is perhaps the clearest example.

Every day, many Lagunenses travel long distances, spend substantial amounts on consultations, diagnostics, and laboratory services, or endure long waiting times in overcrowded hospitals. For low-income families, delayed diagnosis often means delayed treatment, resulting in more severe illnesses and higher medical expenses. These hidden costs rarely appear in government budgets, but they are borne by ordinary citizens.

Viewed from this perspective, the proposed Mega Clinic is not merely a building project. It is a social investment.

The vision behind the facility is ambitious: a cen-



Pointer Pau Dela Cruz

tralized healthcare hub equipped with modern diagnostic equipment, specialized medical services, digital health systems, and outpatient care. If implemented effectively, it could help decongest hospitals, improve access to early diagnosis, and make healthcare more accessible to residents who currently face significant barriers to medical services.

Critics may ask whether a P950-million investment is too large. Yet the reality is that modern healthcare infrastructure is expensive. Advanced diagnostic machines, digital healthcare systems, laboratory equipment, and specialized facilities require substantial capital. The real measure should not be the size of the price tag alone, but whether the benefits justify the cost.

That is where transparency becomes essential.

The provincial government must provide the public with detailed feasibility studies, repayment projections, operational plans, and measurable targets. Citizens deserve to know how the clinic will be managed, how many patients it is expected to serve, how revenues and operating costs will be balanced, and how the loan will affect the province's long-term financial position.

Supporters of the project must also recognize that public trust cannot be won through slogans alone. It must be earned through facts, accountability, and consistent communication.

Still, leadership often requires making decisions that look beyond the next election cycle. Roads, bridges, schools, and hospitals are rarely judged by their cost years later. They are judged by the lives they improve.

The authorization granted to Governor Sol Aragonos is only the first step in a long process. Negotiations may continue, terms may change, and additional reviews will likely follow. But one thing is clear: Laguna now faces a defining conversation about its future.

The debate should not revolve solely around whether the province will borrow money. It should focus on what kind of healthcare system Lagunenses want to build for the next generation.

Because while debt can be measured in pesos and centavos, the value of accessible healthcare is measured in healthier families, saved lives, and opportunities that would otherwise be lost.

And perhaps that is the P950-million question Laguna must answer.

DEPED CALABARZON PINAIGTING ANG PANGANGALAGA SA 186 GUSALING GABALDON SA REHIYON

Patuloy na pinaigting ng Department of Education (DepEd) CALABARZON ang pangangalaga, rehabilitasyon, at konserbasyon ng 186 na Gusaling Gabaldon sa rehiyon bilang bahagi ng pagsisikap na mapanatili ang mahahalagang pamanang pang- edukasyon ng bansa.

Ayon sa DepEd CALABARZON, kabilang sa mga prayoridad ng ahensya ang pagkukumpuni at pagpapanumbalik ng mga Gusaling Gabaldon sa ilalim ng Gabaldon School Buildings Restoration and Conservation Program.

Ang mga Gusaling Gabaldon ay itinayo noong panahon ng mga Amerikano kasabay ng pagtatatag ng sistemang pampublikong edukasyon sa Pilipinas.

Kilala ang mga ito sa disenyong hinango sa tradisyunal na bahay kubo, kabilang ang mataas na sahig na yari sa kahoy at malalawak na bintanang nagbibigay ng natural na bentilasyon sa loob ng silid-aralan.

Bukod sa pagiging bahagi ng kasaysayan ng edukasyon, idinisenyarin ang mga gusaling ito upang umangkop sa klima ng bansa. Itinataas ang mga ito nang humigit-kumulang 1.2 hanggang 1.35 metro mula sa lupa upang maiwasan ang pinsala mula sa pagbaha. Karaniwan ding gumagamit ng mga bintanang may kapis na nakatutu-

long sa pagkontrol ng halumigmig at pagpasok ng sariwang hangin sa mga silid-aralan.

Sinabi ni Rolloque na suportado ng Republic Act No. 11194 o Gabaldon School Buildings Conservation Act ang mga hakbang ng DepEd upang matukoy, maitala, mapangalagaan, at maprotektahan ang mga natitirang Gusaling Gabaldon sa bansa.

Kinikilala rin ng National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) at ng National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) ang mga Gusaling Gabaldon bilang mahahalagang estrukturang pangkasaysayan. Dahil dito, patuloy na

naglalaan ng pondo ang DepEd para sa regular na konserbasyon at pagkukumpuni ng mga ito.

Ayon pa kay Rolloque, nananatiling ginagamit ang mga Gusaling Gabaldon sa mga pampublikong paaralan sa CALABARZON at regular na sinusuri ang kanilang kondisyon sa pamamagitan ng National School Building Inventory.

"Sa kasalukuyan ay functional pa ang mga Gabaldon School Building sa mga pampublikong paaralan sa CALABARZON. Taun-taon ay kasama sa National School Building Inventory ang pag-assess sa mga Gabaldon school building kung ito ay nasa maayos na kondisyon o nangan-

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MPTC PROMOTES RESPONSIBLE DRIVING THROUGH MISSION ROAD SAFETY BIYAHERO CARAVAN

MPTC NLEX SCTEX CALAX CAVITEX

Metro Pacific Tollways Corporation (MPTC), together with its subsidiaries NLEX Corporation and MPT South, reinforced its commitment to safer roads by bringing together national government agencies, local government units, transport groups, and private sector partners for the "Mission Road Safety BiyaHero Caravan." The program aims to enhance the practical skills, safety alertness, and responsible driving culture of drivers and operators.

Held at One Ayala in Makati City and Victory Plaza in Caloocan City, the caravan brought together 284 jeepney, UV express, and bus drivers from 42 transport organizations and companies for learning sessions and interactive activities focused on road safety.

"At MPTC, safety remains at the core of everything we do. Through programs like the BiyaHero Road Safety Caravan, we aim to further equip drivers with the knowledge they need to make safer decisions on the road. While protocols and systems are in place to enhance road safety, achieving safer journeys requires the shared respon-



sibility and cooperation of all road users," said MPTC Chief Operations and Maintenance Officer West Dionisio.

Participants also benefited from free eye screenings and prescription eyeglasses, while Easytrip representatives provided on-site assistance for RFID installation and transaction concerns.

The road safety caravan was conducted in partnership with the Toll Regulatory Board (TRB), the Department of Health (DOH), the Road Safety Division of the Provincial Government of Cavite, the Public Safety and Traffic Management Department of the City Government of Caloocan, One Ayala, and Victory Plaza.

"Kami po sa government ay kaisa ninyo sa pag-maintain ng disiplina at kaligtasan sa kalsada. Bilang mga professional drivers po, palagi po nating isipin na aalis tayo para maghanapbuhay para sa ating mga pam-

ilya, kaya palagi nating siguraduhing ligtas tayong uuwi sa kanila. Para po masiguro ito, kailangan natin ng disiplina, pasensya, at awareness sa kalsada," said TRB Regulation Division Chief Joz Carlos Ordillano.

A key session facilitated by TRB Regulation Division Chief Joz Carlos Ordillano tackled common traffic violations among buses, trucks, public utility vehicles (PUVs), and motorcycles — these include speeding, improper lane use, unsafe overtaking, tailgating, distracted driving, and overloading. He also highlighted how some driving habits, while often considered routine, can create safety risks for motorists and commuters alike.

To make learning more engaging, participants took part in a driving simulator experience, drunk goggles challenge, and an interactive road safety quiz.

"M a r a m i n g

salamat po sa pamunuan ng MPTC sa pag-oorganisa ng BiyaHero Caravan. Marami po kaming mga bagong natutunan at napaka-lively ng mga activities. Marami kaming natutunan sa mga lectures ng mga resource speakers," said transport company United Twelve Corporation President Rizalino Villaraza.

Beyond the caravan, MPTC continues to promote road safety through its year-round Mission Road Safety program, which includes the Usapang Driver seminar for partner companies and transport groups, Kaligtasan sa Daan (KaiSaDa) initiative for partner communities and neighboring barangays, and Cebu Cordova Link Expressway Corporation's (CCLEC) Istorya Ta Bai! advocacy program, which encourages safe driving habits and awareness of CCLEX's safety features.

MPTC also continues to amplify road



safety messages through the digital platforms of NLEX Corp., MPT South, and CCLEC, reaching motorists with information on proper expressway driving, traffic regulations, vehicle roadworthiness, and travel preparedness.

Through the years, MPTC has institutionalized its multi-stakeholder road safety initiatives across its expressways network in Luzon and Visayas— NLEX, SCTEX, NLEX Connector,



CALAX, CAVITEX, CAVITEX C5 Link, and CCLEX — earning recognition from both local and international organizations. PR



Enchanted Kingdom continues to champion education and sustainability in its 12th year of supporting Brigada Eskwela



Enchanted Kingdom (EK), the first and only world-class theme park in the Philippines, reaffirmed its long-standing partnership with the Department of Education (DepEd) in its 12th year of supporting Brigada Eskwela through the turnover of its 15th adopted kindergarten classroom to Sinalhan Elementary School in Santa Rosa, Laguna on June 5.

Brigada Eskwela is an annual nationwide school maintenance program that mobilizes stakeholders to contribute their time, efforts, and resources in ensuring all public schools are

prepared for the opening of classes. This year's theme is "Bayanihan Para sa Paaralan: Nagkakaisa Para sa Kaayusan at Kaalaman," which also aligns with EK's Education Program that aims to provide a fun, safe, and magical learning environment for students.

As part of this initiative, EK tapped its maintenance team to repair and upgrade the adopted classroom's fixtures, while artists turned the walls into a vibrant mural featuring its Storyverse characters and the rich biodiversity of Philippines, including some of the endemic species highlighted in its

award-winning attraction, AGILA The EKsperience: SARIBUHAY. The mural also highlighted EK's five core values and ways to promote environmental responsibility among young learners.

In addition to this, the Santa Rosa-based theme park revitalized the school garden, Taniman Para sa Paaralan, where they cultivated a variety of vegetables and ornamental plants.

EK Chairman and President Cesar Mario O. Mamon expressed EK's push to expand their reach in Brigada Eswela and deliver more enchanting and educational experiences



through sustained partnerships and community engagement.

"As Enchanted Kingdom celebrates its 30th year, we continue to uphold our commitment to nurturing young minds as we extend our active participation in Brigada Eskwela in the years to come. We also look forward to

further strengthening our partnership with DepEd and the City of Santa Rosa across their programs," Mr. Mamon said.

The turnover ceremony was graced by Santa Rosa City Mayor Arlene Arcillas and Vice Mayor Arnold Arcillas, along with Schools Division Superintendent

(SDS) for Santa Rosa, Hereberto Jose Miranda, CESO VI; Barangay Sinalhan Chairman Ladislao Alicbusan; Sinalhan Elementary School Principal II Benjamin Ongteco Jr.; teachers; parents; and students.

Beyond this, EK further enriches its in-park experiences through ex-



periential learning under its Education Program, which guests can enjoy alongside its signature rides and attractions during the Park's operating hours from Friday to Sunday, 1PM to 8PM. Starting June 29, EK will also return its magical park hours from 11AM to 8PM every Friday to Sunday.

For more information and updates on this and EK's other events and offerings, visit <https://www.enchantedkingdom.ph> and EK's official social media accounts @enchantedkingdom.ph for Facebook and TikTok, and @ek_philippines for Instagram.

Trabaho Agad Job Fair opens doors to employment opportunities on Independence Day



In line with the celebration of the 128th Philippine Independence Day, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), in collaboration with the Office of the Provincial Public Employment Service Manager (OPPESM) and the City Government of Dasmariñas, and various government and private sector partners, successfully conducted the Trabaho Agad Job Fair at SM City Dasmariñas on June 12.

The activity served as a platform to connect job seekers with prospective employers while bringing government services closer to the public. A total of 11,312 job vacancies were made available by 56 local companies and 4 overseas employers, offering diverse employment opportunities to job seekers across various

industries.

The opening program was attended by City of Dasmariñas Mayor Jennifer Austria-Barzaga, Vice Mayor Third Barzaga, DOLE CALABARZON Regional Director Atty. Erwin Aquino, DOLE Executive Assistant for External Affairs Gerald Deguina representing DOLE Secretary Francis Tolentino, 4th District Board Member Nickol Austria representing Governor Abeng Remulla, SM City Dasmariñas Mall Manager Editha Tayko, Provincial PESO Manager Rizalie P. Enero, City PESO Manager Jesuzaine B. Partoza, together with local officials, partner agencies, and stakeholders.

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