

PBBM INSPECTS CALAX GOVERNOR'S DRIVE CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS



President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. leads the inspection of CALAX Gov's Drive interchange



President Marcos with other government officials and MPTC executives

March 21, 2025 – President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. led an inspection of the ongoing construction of the Cavite-Laguna Expressway (CALAX) Governor's Drive Interchange, reaffirming the administration's commitment to enhancing the country's road infrastructure.

The President assessed the progress of this vital expressway project alongside Department of Public Works and High-

ways (DPWH) Secretary Manuel M. Bonoan, Department of Transportation (DOT) Secretary Vivencio B. Dizon, Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) Secretary Jonvic C. Remulla, Cavite Governor Hon. Athena D. Tolentino, General Trias Mayor Hon. Luis "Jonjon" A. Ferrer, Metro Pacific Tollways Corporation (MPTC) Chairman Manuel V. Pangilinan, MPTC President and CEO Jose Ma. K. Lim, and MPT South Of-

ficer-in-Charge Ms. Elnora D. Rumawak. CALAX, a 44.6-kilometer four-lane expressway, aims to improve connectivity between Cavite and Laguna, home to the country's key economic zones. During the inspection, particular focus was given to the Governor's Drive Interchange, which is currently 44% complete and targeted for full operation by the third quarter of 2025. Once



MPTC President and CEO Jose Ma. Lim briefs President Marcos and other key government official on the status of CALAX

operational, this segment will decongest Governor's Drive and provide seamless access to major economic hubs in the region. Upon full completion, CALAX will ease traffic on major thoroughfares such as Governor's Drive, Aguinaldo Highway, and Santa Rosa-Tagaytay Road, further boosting trade, tourism, and economic activity in the region. It is also expected to significantly reduce travel time between CAVI-

TEX and SLEX by about 45 minutes, benefiting up to 95,000 motorists daily. Additionally, it will connect to the Manila-Cavite Expressway (CAVITEX), providing a seamless link between Metro Manila and Region IV-A (CALABARZON). Currently, operational segments of CALAX include entry at Mamplasan and interchanges at Laguna Boulevard, Laguna Technopark, Santa Rosa-Tagaytay Road, Silang

East, and Silang Aguinaldo. Aside from CALAX, Metro Pacific Tollways Corporation (MPTC) holds concession rights for the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX), Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEX), NLEX Connector Road, and Cebu-Cordova Link Expressway (CCLEX). For inquiries about this press release please email us at: corpcomm@mptsouth.com

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THOUSANDS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN CAVITE RECEIVE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE



The Provincial Government of Cavite continues its commitment to supporting students in their pursuit of higher education through the distribution of educational assistance to deserving beneficiaries across several municipalities. On March 25, 2025, a total of 698 college students from the Municipality of Magallanes received financial aid to help cover their academic expenses. The following day, March 26, 573 college stu-

dents from Ternate were granted the same support, ensuring that they have the necessary resources to continue their education without financial burden. Meanwhile, on March 27, educational assistance was extended to 269 students from Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo and 834 qualified students from Maragondon, further demonstrating the provincial government's dedication to fostering educational growth and development.

This initiative underscores the provincial government's unwavering commitment to empowering Cavite's youth by alleviating financial constraints and promoting academic excellence. Local officials expressed their gratitude to Governor Athena Bryana Tolentino and the entire provincial administration for prioritizing education and providing much-needed support to students in the province. Beneficiaries and their families also ex-

DSWD IV-A, CAVITE STRENGTHEN SUPPLEMENTARY FEEDING PROGRAM THROUGH REVIEW AND EVALUATION WORKSHOP

Puro Kalusugan launches in Barangay P2 Cabuco

pressed appreciation for the assistance, noting that it will significantly aid them in covering tuition fees, school supplies, and other academic-related expenses. The program continues to be a beacon of hope for many students striving to achieve their educational dreams despite financial challenges. – OPIO

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT: PHILHEALTH ANIMAL BITE PACKAGE COVERS PHP 5,850 FOR SERVICES AGAINST HIGHLY FATAL RABIES

PhilHealth Encourages Early Treatment of Rabies with Enhanced Animal Bite Package

The Department of Health announced that for the year 2024, all 426 recorded rabies cases resulted in deaths. Forty-five percent (193) of these were bites from domestic pets, and of that percentage, more than half were of unknown vaccination status. "Hinihikayat natin ang ating mga miyembro na huwag mag-atubiling magpatingin kung sila ay kinagat o di kaya'y kinalmot ng hayop, alaga man o hindi. Ang rabies ay isang lubhang nakamamatay na sakit ngunit maaari itong maiwasan kung agarang ma-



10 practical health tips to help you start off towards healthy living in 2025.

1. Eat a healthy diet

Eat a combination of different foods, including fruit, vegetables, legumes, nuts and whole grains. Adults should eat at least five portions (400g) of fruit and vegetables per day. You can improve your intake of fruits and vegetables by always including veggies in your meal; eating fresh fruit and vegetables as snacks; eating a variety of fruits and vegetables; and eating them in season. By eating healthy, you will reduce your risk of malnutrition and noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke and cancer.

2. Consume less salt and sugar

Reduce your salt intake to 5g per day, equivalent to about one teaspoon. It's easier to do this by limiting the amount of salt, soy sauce, fish sauce and other high-sodium condiments when preparing meals; removing salt, seasonings and condiments from your meal table; avoiding salty snacks; and choosing low-sodium products.

On the other hand, consuming excessive amounts of sugars increases the risk of tooth decay and unhealthy weight gain. In both adults and children, the intake of free sugars should be reduced. WHO recommends consuming less than 5% of total energy intake for additional health benefits. You can reduce your sugar intake by limiting the consumption of sugary snacks, candies and sugar-sweetened beverages.

3. Reduce intake of harmful fats



Fats consumed should be less than 30% of your total energy intake. This will help prevent unhealthy weight gain and NCDs. There are different types of fats, but unsaturated fats are preferable over saturated fats and trans-fats. WHO recommends reducing saturated fats to less than 10% of total energy intake; reducing trans-fats to less than 1% of total energy intake; and replacing both saturated fats and trans-fats with unsaturated fats.

The preferable unsaturated fats are found in fish, avocado and nuts, and in sunflower, soybean, canola and olive oils; saturated fats are found in fatty meat, butter, palm and coconut oil, cream, cheese, ghee and lard; and trans-fats are found in baked and fried foods, and pre-packaged snacks and foods, such as frozen pizza, cookies, biscuits, and cooking oils and spreads.

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PURO...

On March 18, 2025, the Department of Health IV-A, in collaboration with the Office of the Provincial Health Officer (OPHO) and the Trece Martires City Health Office (TMCHO), officially launched the PuroKalusugan program in Barangay Cabuco, Trece Martires City. The initiative aims to provide essential healthcare services directly to residents of barangays or "puroks" throughout the country.

The PuroKalusugan program is part of the Department of Health's broader effort to improve access to vital healthcare services for communities that may otherwise have limited access to these resources. A key component of the department's Eight-Point Action Agenda, the program prioritizes several critical areas of health including vaccination, nutrition, water sanitation, maternal health, tuberculosis (TB) prevention, HIV screening, and non-communicable disease prevention.

By addressing these eight focal points, the program strives to reduce health disparities and foster the well-being of underserved communities across the Philippines. One of the core goals is to ensure that essential health services are brought directly to the people, particularly in remote or hard-to-reach areas.

During the health event, a variety of essential healthcare services were provided to the community. Services include chest X-ray screenings to detect potential respiratory issues such as tuberculosis, and skin consultations under the "Kilatis Kutis" program, which addressed various dermatological concerns. Residents received deworming treatments and oral rehydration salts (ORS) to promote better health, particularly for children. HIV counseling and testing were offered to raise awareness and provide support for HIV prevention, while purified protein derivative (PPD) testing was conducted to identify exposure to tuberculosis.

Additionally, anti-rabies vaccinations were given to pets to protect the community from rabies.

In addition to these health services, the event also included a Rabies Awareness Lecture to educate the public on the risks and prevention of rabies. Furthermore, a poster-making contest was organized in celebration of World Tuberculosis (TB) Day, with students from Feliciano Cabuco Elementary School participating actively. The contest not only engaged the youth but also raised awareness about the ongoing fight against TB.

Local officials, including Mayor Gemma B. Lubigan and Vice Mayor Bobby Montehermoso together with some members of the Sangguniang Panlungsod and some barangay captains of the city were present at the event. They expressed their deep appreciation for the program and emphasized the importance of such health initiatives for the residents of Trece Martires City. Their support highlights the local government's commitment to enhancing public health services and ensuring that the people of the city receive the care they need.

The successful launch of the PuroKalusugan program is an important milestone in the Department of Health's ongoing efforts to provide comprehensive healthcare services at the grassroots level. By focusing on accessible and preventive healthcare, the program is playing a crucial role in improving the health and well-being of Filipinos across the country, especially in marginalized and underserved communities.

As part of its expansion, the PuroKalusugan program will continue to roll out to other barangays, bringing essential health services directly to more residents. Through collaboration with local government units and health offices, this initiative is expected to make a lasting impact on the overall health outcomes of communities nationwide. — OPIO

DSWD IV-A...

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Field Office IV-A, in partnership with the Provincial Government of Cavite through the Office of the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Officer, successfully conducted a three-day Review and Evaluation Workshop from March 12 to 14, 2025 to strengthen the implementation of the Supplementary Feeding Program (SFP) across the region.

The initiative brought together nutritionists, social workers, and child development officers from various local government units (LGUs) to enhance transparency and efficiency in the Enhanced Partnership Against Hunger and Poverty (EPAHP) and the SFP.

The workshop focused on procurement processes, program management, and nutritional impact, providing a platform for sharing best practices and innovative strategies to improve feeding programs in local communities.

Ms. Myrna A. Maglahus-Lamug (EPAHP Regional Program Coordinator, DSWD IV-A) and Ms. Carol Mae P. Martinez (SFP Nutritionist-Dietician III, DSWD IV-A) shared insights on hunger alleviation strategies and program implementation.

Mr. Diego M. Salas (Budget Officer, Quezon Province / TSO GPPB Recognized Train-

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er) provided key insights into community-driven procurement processes for greater transparency and efficiency.

Best practices in local fund utilization and program monitoring were highlighted by Ms. Emilia Tiasim (MSWDO, Ibaan, Batangas), Ms. Daisy Garcia (SFP Focal, Batangas City), and Ms. Lerma M. Laylo (CSWDO, Lipa City).

On the final day, participants explored the SFP Case Management Model (SFP-CM), led by Mr. Ser August Perpetua (Social Welfare Officer II, DSWD IV-A), and received an orientation on the Harmonized Electronic License and Permits System (HELPS), presented by Ms. Jill Bernice Sta. Ana (Social Welfare Officer III, DSWD Central Office). The event concluded with a strategic planning session facilitated by Mr. John Paul Garrido (Project Evaluation Officer II, DSWD IV-A), ensuring that insights gained during the workshop translate into tangible program improvements.

This initiative underscores DSWD's commitment to food security, child nutrition, and efficient resource management. By strengthening inter-agency collaboration and enhancing procurement transparency, the department aims to sustainably combat hunger and improve the well-being of children across communities. - W. Batuampo

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11 DOST-ITDI...

technologies evaluated for Fairness Opinion, this initiative is part of the transaction to license these technologies to Swisspharma Research Laboratories Inc. (SPRLI).

Following the Guidelines on the Issuance of Fairness Opinion, Report, a group of experts were convened to serve as a Fairness Opinion Board (FOB), which was created through a Special Order signed by the DOST Secretary in November 2024. The FOB was currently evaluating the transactions, ensuring that all aspects of the licensing transaction meet

the required standards of fairness and transparency. This effort highlights DOST's commitment to foster innovation and facilitate technology transfer for the benefit of the industry and the public.

At DOST, we continue to support technology transfer and commercialization, ensuring that science and technology innovations drive economic and social progress.

DOST remains committed to deliver science and technology interventions that drive innovation, ensuring economic and social benefits for the community. PR

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PRESIDENT IN ACTION: ACTING EDWIN MERCADO CONVENES THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COUNCIL TO REFINE DISEASE COVERAGE SELECTION PROCESS



Council Members consist of Dr. Tessa Tan-Torres Edejer, health economist who served as the Coordinator of the Unit on Costs, Effectiveness, Expenditure and Priority Setting in the Department of Health Financing and Governance (HGF), WHO in Geneva; Dr. Carlo Irwin A. Pano, health systems, policy and financing expert; Honesto A. Nuqui, Jr., actuary, mathematician, and seasoned insurance executive; Dr. Michael L. Tee, university professor, scientist, and chancellor; Dr. Valerie Gilbert T. Ulep, health economist and well-published senior research fellow; Dr. Vivencio Jose Villaflo, a practicing surgeon and seasoned hospital administrator; and Henry Aguda, information technology and digital transformation expert.

ABS-CBN FOUNDATION HONORS PARTNERSHIP WITH ABOITIZPOWER



Aligned with a shared mission and purpose of being a good neighbor, Aboitiz Power Corporation (Aboitiz-Power) was recognized by ABS-CBN Foundation - Sagip Kapamilya for supporting its advocacy on disaster management in an event held in Quezon City. Recently, AboitizPower and the Aboitiz Foundation donated water filtration buckets to ABS-CBN Foundation's for its relief operations in communities hit by Typhoon Kristine. Developed by non-profit organization Waves for Water, the filtration system attached in the buckets can filter up to 1,117 liters of water per day from existing freshwater sources and remove bacteria and protozoan, immediately addressing the need for clean and potable water in disaster-hit communities. Receiving the recognition for AboitizPower is VP for Corporate Affairs Sulee Suarez (2nd from left) from ABS-CBN Foundation executives (L-R) Marcel R. Riñon, Program Head for Sagip Kapamilya; Claro Bonilla, Consultant for Finance; and Roberta Lopez-Feliciano, Managing Director.

PRESIDENT AND CEO DR. EDWIN MERCADO CONVENES THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COUNCIL TO REFINE DISEASE COVERAGE SELECTION PROCESS

The PCEO Mercado convened the Technical Advisory Council (TAC) for its second meeting on March 10, 2025. The session focused on improving actuarial assumptions and refining the disease coverage selection process.

During the meeting, experts discussed practical ways to strengthen actuarial projections that will directly benefit PhilHealth members. The council emphasized the need for more detailed, market-based assumptions that assess whether current healthcare providers can actually deliver the covered services.

"By improving our actuarial assumptions, we can better predict healthcare costs and utilization patterns," explained the PCEO Mercado. "This means we can expand benefits in a sustainable way while ensuring members can actually access the care we're promising."

The TAC supported the President and CEO's direction to expand coverage for high-cost, high-burden diseases to increase access to critical services. For members, this translates to greater financial

protection against catastrophic health expenses that previously caused significant hardship for many Filipino families.

"Going granular means understanding if our current healthcare infrastructure can deliver the services we're covering, and developing strategies to create robust markets where they don't exist. Ang ibig sabihin po nito, alam natin hindi lang kung nasaan ang mga doktor at iba pang mga propesyonal, ngunit alam din natin kung ilang pasyente ang kaya nilang tingnan sa isang araw nang hindi bumababa ang kalidad ng serbisyong pang-medikal," added the PhilHealth President and CEO.

"When we promise coverage for a condition, we want to ensure our members can find qualified providers to deliver that care without excessive out-of-pocket expenses or long travel times."

Council members committed to developing a practical framework that will guide this expansion while ensuring service delivery capability. PR



A JOURNEY TO HEALTH AND HOPE

Good health is often considered one of life's greatest gifts, which made Buena Bariring's diagnosis at 18 all the more devastating. The 42-year-old from Cabuyao, Laguna, learned she had Hepatitis B while undergoing a medical exam for a job. The news shattered her hopes—not only did it prevent her from securing the job, but it also exposed her to stigma and discrimination.

Hepatitis B, a liver infection often transmitted from mother to child at birth, infected blood, and sexual activities, is a condition that many live with in silence. While some show no symptoms, others experience fatigue, yellowing of the skin, and abdominal pain. Buena suspects she inherited the illness from her mother, as several of her siblings were also later diagnosed.

Despite the emotional toll, Buena found comfort in an online support group. There, she met people who shared her experiences and challenges, one of whom was Rowena Jordan, who would later become her close friend and business partner. This connection helped her regain her strength and courage to start over.

In 2013, drawing on a skill she learned from her mother, Buena decided to start a weaving business. She initially obtained a PHP 3,000 loan from CARD SME Bank to start crafting products using dried water lilies.

Inspired by her newfound purpose, she poured herself into her



Based in Laguna, Buena Bariring and Rowena Jordan decided to restart their lives and focus on their weaving business, which specializes in crafting slippers and bags.

work, and by 2014, Rowena joined her as a business partner. Rowena handled the designs, while Buena brought them to life. Together, they decided to create unique slippers made from water lilies, setting themselves apart from other businesses that used the same material.

Their initial venture into trade fairs was a success. They sold out their products and were motivated to continue investing in their business. However, the pandemic in 2020 dealt a severe blow to their momentum.

The trade fair in March 2020 coincided with the lockdown, leading to significant losses and making it difficult for them to recover their funds. To make matters worse, both of them tested positive for COVID-19, further slowing their recovery.

Despite these setbacks, they pushed forward. At present, they employ five workers assisting them in the process of braiding water lilies. They considered CARD SME Bank to be their lifesaver, especially when they needed extra capital

for bulk orders. Rowena has also become a CARD SME Bank client in 2017, solidifying their partnership with the bank.

Their products have become popular among Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), who buy them as unique souvenirs to bring abroad.

“Back then, I had no job; now, I am the one employing others. We used to search for opportunities, but now we are the ones creating opportunities for others,” she said.

Her life has completely turned around. What began as a story of rejection and illness has turned into one of triumph and success. Buena turned the challenges of living with Hepatitis B into steppingstones toward a brighter future.

Her advice to others who live with and have overcome Hepatitis B just like them is to keep fighting and dreaming. “If you want to pursue something, just go for it. What truly matters is the resilience in facing challenges and your commitment to dream big, knowing that better days will come,” she concluded.

PHILHEALTH...

bibigyan ng bakuna,” said Dr. Edwin M. Mercado, PhilHealth President and CEO.

Rabies remains to be a significant global health threat, causing 60,000 to 70,000 reported deaths annually. The Philippines ranks sixth among countries with the highest rabies incidence. In fact, from January 1 to March 1 of this year, 55

rabies cases have been tallied.

In recognition of the burden of rabies in the country this National Rabies Awareness Month, PhilHealth reiterates that there is a benefit package that members could avail to cover for services against rabies.

The Animal Bite Treatment (ABT) package, which has been

increased to P5,850 from the previous P3,000, covers essential post-exposure prophylaxis including rabies vaccine and rabies immune globulin for immediate protection, local wound care, tetanus toxoid and anti-tetanus serum, antibiotics, and supplies which include syringes, alcohol and antiseptics.

“Kami sa Phil-

COMMEMORATION OF THE 156TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF EMILIO AGUINALDO



On March 22, 2025, the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP), in collaboration with the Municipality of Kawit, Cavite, and the Provincial Government of Cavite, commemorated the 156th birth anniversary of General Emilio Aguinaldo, the first President of the Philippines. The significant event took place at the Emilio Aguinaldo Shrine in Kawit, Cavite, a historic site that holds great importance in the country's struggle for independence.

Before the program started, a lively karakol, a traditional Filipino dance, took place outside the shrine. The dance brought everyone together to celebrate President Emilio Aguinaldo's life and legacy. It was a joyful reminder of Filipino traditions and pride, showing

that Aguinaldo's role in the country's independence will always be remembered.

Representative Bryan B. Revilla served as Guest of Honor at the flag-raising and wreath-laying ceremony at President Emilio Aguinaldo's tomb. Alongside Representative Revilla was Mr. Alvin R. Alcide, the Deputy Executive Director of the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP), who played a key role in organizing the event. Kawit Councilor Cynthia Armi G. Aguinaldo was also in attendance. Additionally, Mrs. Emilie Aguinaldo-Pulido, a member of the Aguinaldo family, was present.

On behalf of Cavite Governor Athena Bryana D. Tolentino, Provincial Tourism Officer Elinia Imelda Rozelle S.

For more details on anti-rabies benefits and other packages, members may call PhilHealth's 24/7 touch points at **(02) 866-**



Health ay nakikiisa sa National Rabies Prevention and Control Committee sa kanilang kampanyang rabies-free na pusa't aso, kaligtasan ng pamilyang Pilipino. Ang ABT Package ay maaaring makuha sa higit 700 accredited ABT Package Providers sa bansa, at patuloy pa natin itong dinadagdagan. Gayunpaman, pinaaalalahanan natin ang publiko na ang unang hakbang sa pag-iwas sa rabies ay ang pagpapabakuna ng ating mga alagang hayop. Let us all be responsible pet owners,” added Dr. Mercado.

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EDITORIAL:

IF WE had a program called 'Doctor to the Barrios' successfully implemented by the Department of Health in the 1990s to address the shortage in doctors serving in impoverished and remote areas nationwide, why not a similar initiative in the field of education at this time?

House Bill 11195, also known as the Teacher to the Barrios Act, seeks to deploy teachers to remote areas nationwide who will receive the necessary support and adequate compensation for their efforts.

What's the rationale for this proposed measure? Its author, Eastern Samar Rep. Maria Fe Abunda explained she had come across many stories of school-aged children crossing mountains and rivers just to reach school and teachers who volunteer to travel to far-flung barrios at great risk to their safety and health without the benefit of career security, career progress nor just compensation.

'Teacher to the Barrios'

Under the Teacher to the Barrios program, educators would be entitled to receive their “long overdue and much-deserved recompense” while encouraging more colleagues to follow in their footsteps.

The lawmaker hopes the measure would assist in government's effort to formalize and standardize instruction brought to students in remote areas and address the issue of inaccessibility of education. The bill, however, would be only one of the steps in continuing efforts to close the gaps in Philippine education.

The key objective of the bill is for DepEd to maintain a pool of teachers who will commit themselves to serve by conducting study sessions and formal basic education for residents in geographically isolated and/or generally hard-to-reach areas.

Under HB 11195, residents will be taught with a module or system parallel to that of a formal basic education in the form of study sessions, which may be conducted in a public community hall or private hall.

New Regional Trial Courts in Bacoar City Inaugurated, Including Deaf-Friendly Court



Supreme Court (SC) Associate Justices Rodil V. Zalameda (fourth from left) and Jose Midas P. Marquez (second from

right) attend the inauguration of new courtrooms for Branches 114 to 119 of the Regional Trial Court (RTC), City of Bacoar,

at the Main Square Mall, Bacoar City, Cavite, on March 13, 2025. They are joined by (from left) Deputy Court Administrator Leo Tolentino Madrazo, Court Administrator Raul B. Villanueva, RTC Bacoar Executive Judge Amalia Gumapos-Ricablanca, and SC Spokesperson Atty.

Camille Sue Mae L. Ting. Also in photo are Bacoar City Mayor Strike B. Revilla and judges of the City of Bacoar courts. (Photo courtesy of the SC Communications Office)

Supreme Court (SC) Associate Justices Rodil V. Zalameda and Jose Midas P. Marquez led the inauguration of new courtrooms for Branches 114 to 119 of the Regional Trial Court (RTC), City of Bacoar, on March 13, 2025, at the Main Square Mall in Barangay Bayanan, Bacoar City, Cavite.

In his remarks, Justice Zalameda emphasized that the inauguration reflects a shared vision for a fair and efficient justice system, reinforcing the Judiciary's commitment to accessibility and excellence.

ence.

“Accessibility ensures that justice is truly available. Having the proper facility for our trial court improves court efficiency and prevents delayed proceedings... Greater efficiency means better service to our people,” Justice Zalameda said.

This includes ensuring persons with disability have access to the court. Thus, Branch 115 of the RTC, City of Bacoar, presided by Judge Charisma I. Nolasco, took the initiative to be a “deaf-friendly” court to contribute to the SC's goal of attaining equal and inclusive justice under the Strategic Plan for Judicial Innovations 2022-2027 (SPJI). Its court staff studied ba-

sic sign language and can now communicate with deaf litigants.

The inauguration was also attended by Court Administrator Raul B. Villanueva, Deputy Court Administrator Leo Tolentino Madrazo, SC Spokesperson Atty. Camille Sue Mae L. Ting, RTC Bacoar Executive Judge Amalia Gumapos-Ricablanca, and other judges and court personnel of the RTC and Municipal Trial Courts in Cities, City of Bacoar.

They were joined by Bacoar City Mayor Strike B. Revilla, Department of Justice Senior Deputy State Prosecutor Miguel Gudio, Jr., prosecutors, and other local government officials. (Press release courtesy of the SC Office of the Spokesperson)

CITY GOVERNMENT OF BACOR AND GOLDEN ARCHES DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION PARTNER TO PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

Bacoar City, March 31, 2025 - The City Government of Bacoar, through the Public Employment Service Office (PESO) led by Dr. Abraham “BOB” de Castro, took a significant step towards inclusivity today by signing a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Golden Arches Development Corporation, including Mr. Timothy Bernardino (HR Business Partner), Ms. Josephine Mendoza (HR Business Partner), Ms. Marie Shie-la Abril (HR Manager for

employment opportunities for senior citizens in the city.

The MOA was signed by Mayor Strike B. Revilla, Dr. Abraham “BOB” de Castro, Atty. Venus de Castro (OSCA Head), and representatives from Golden Arches Development Corporation, including Mr. Timothy Bernardino (HR Business Partner), Ms. Josephine Mendoza (HR Business Partner), Ms. Marie Shie-la Abril (HR Manager for

the South Region), Ms. Jen Narvadez (Operations Manager), Mr. Edwin Abril (Operations Manager), Mr. Austin Torres (Public Affairs Senior Manager), and Ms. Meryl Adiel T. Hernandez (Assistant Vice President - Corporate Relations & Impact). The signing ceremony was also attended by Sangguniang Panglungsod members led by Vice Mayor Rowena Bautista Mendiola and Team Revilla.

This partnership is a testament to the shared commitment of the City Government of Bacoar and Golden Arches Development Corporation to promoting inclusivity and providing opportunities for all members of the community. Through this initiative, senior citizens will have access to meaningful employment opportunities, contributing to their economic well-being and overall quality of life.



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UNITING FOR A CLEANER COAST: SM CITY TANZA JOINS COASTAL CLEANUP IN BARANGAY JULUGAN



SM City Tanza employees, security, and utility personnel teamed up for a coastal cleanup at Barangay Julugan 1 to 8, Tanza, Cavite, led by the Philippine Coast Guard in partnership with SM Cares, on March 21, 2025. This initiative highlights the Philippine Coast Guard's commitment to environmental sustainability, emphasizing the power of collective action in preserving marine life and maintaining clean shorelines. With the participation of Tanza Cavite PNP, MENRO, and Barangay Julugan officials, the effort contributed to a cleaner and greener community, reinforcing the spirit of social responsibility.

SM SUPERMALLS BRINGS THE MAGIC OF CINEMA TO THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED WITH 'MOVIES FOR THE BLIND'

SM Supermalls continues to champion inclusivity with 'Movies for the Blind,' a special screening series designed for individuals with visual impairments. In collaboration with Project ADAM (Audio Description Awareness Movement), this initiative features audio-descriptive technology to ensure an immersive cinematic experience.

Held across multiple SM malls nationwide, the initiative aligns with SM's continuing commitment to making entertainment accessible to all. The culminating event will take place on August 2 at SM Megamall in celebration of White Cane Safety Day.

A More Inclusive Movie Experience

Through audio-descriptive screenings, visually impaired guests can follow the story with narration of key visual elements. The featured film, *Firefly* (2023), was chosen for its heartwarming fantasy storytelling and inspiring message perfect for all families.

"Everyone deserves to enjoy the magic of cinema. Through 'Movies for the Blind,' we are not just screening films—we are creating meaningful experiences where individuals with visual impairments feel valued and included," said Earth Olazo, Assistant Mall Manager SM City Calamba.

Nationwide Reach and Impact

Screenings have been held at SM City Davao, SM City Legazpi, and SM City Calamba (March 22), with upcoming events at SM City Cebu and SM City Baguio (April 26).

By partnering with Project Adam, GMA Network, and local communities, SM Supermalls reinforces its ongoing mission to create inclusive and welcoming spaces for all.

For updates on SM Cares' accessibility programs, visit <https://www.smsupermalls.com/smcares> or follow @SMCaresOfficial on social media.

About SM Cares

SM Cares is the corporate social responsibility arm of SM Supermalls, championing inclusivity, sustainability, and community engagement.

SMC completes Biñan River cleanup; nearly 88,000 tons of silt and waste removed



A total of 87,899 tons of silt and solid waste have been removed from 3.2 kilometers of Biñan River, restoring the depth, width and natural flow of this waterway draining out to Laguna Lake.

San Miguel Corporation (SMC) has successfully delivered on its promise to clean up Laguna's Biñan River in less than a year, freeing up the clogged waterway of nearly 88,000 tons of silt and solid waste that had long worsened flooding in the city of Biñan.

Completing the massive task in less than seven months, SMC's Better Rivers PH initiative covered a 3.2-kilometer stretch of the river from the mouth of Laguna Lake near Barangay Dela Paz to downtown Barangay Poblacion — where hundreds of families had long been tormented by lingering floodwaters during the typhoon season.

"Dati po matagal bago humupa ang baha. Nitong Pasko (December 2024), may malakas na ulan pero hindi na umaakyat ang tubig dito. Yung ilang lugar na binaha, mabilis nang bumababa ang tubig," recalled Herminigildo Aguilar, 64, a councilman or kagawad in Barangay Poblacion. "Maluwag na ang ilog, mas mabilis nang umaagos ang tubig."

[Floodwater used to linger for days. But after a heavy downpour last Christmas, water from the river did not swell into the coastal village and floodwater from the rain drained faster to the river.]

Since 2020, SMC's Better Rivers PH program has been moving from one river system to another, restoring the natural depth and breadth of river channels in Metro Manila and Luzon at zero-cost to government. By clearing silt and garbage, the initiative has helped mitigate flooding, ease water flow, and improve water quality.

This voluntary effort by SMC reached Biñan River in August last year through close coordination with Mayor Walfredo "Arman" Dimaguila, Jr., who also identified an area in Barangay Malaban as the LGU's collection point for the extracted wastes and silt from the river.

George Total, 49, SMC's team leader for the Biñan river cleanup, said four teams equipped with backhoes and barges were deployed to do the job. "Grabe ang basuranung dumating kami dito. Nagpulo-pulo na. Hindi kami makakain sa tabi kasi talagang mabaho. Ngayon wala ka nang maamoy," Total said.

[When we arrived, the garbage was unimaginable — mounds of them above water. We could not eat our meals because of the stink. Now, you won't smell anything.]

As a challenge for the cleanup crews were narrow sections of the river in the city proper where barges carrying the backhoes could not maneuver, so cranes had to make a tight entry through the city to reach the riverbanks, Total said.

Upon completion last February 28, the SMC initiative removed a total of 87,899 tons of silt and garbage from the Biñan River through a winding stretch of 3.2 km. The largest volume removed was at the mouth of the river in Laguna Lake, where the natural river channel was practically blocked going out to the lake.

"I am very happy that our river cleanup initiative marked another achievement in Laguna, through the help and cooperation of the local government and our other partners," said SMC Chairman and CEO Ramon S. Ang.

"I ask all our kabalabayans to please help take care of our rivers because they are critical to our health and the health of our environment, economy, and communities. The job of making our rivers better is not just the government's or the private sector's responsibility. What happens to our rivers affects us all, so we all have a role to play," he said.

Before reaching Biñan, the Luzon-wide program's first stop in Laguna was at San Isidro River in San Pedro. The cleanup began August 2023 and was concluded a year later, after the extraction of 417,044 tons of silt and waste from a 5.3-kilometer stretch of the river.

As a result, communities near San Isidro River were spared from severe flooding episodes brought about by consecutive typhoons late last year, including Typhoon Kristine. SMC's river cleanup is now back in San Pedro, Laguna to clean up its Tunasan and Landayan Rivers.

As with its previous river cleanup operations, SMC conducted aerial, topographic and bathymetric surveys of the rivers, before plotting their course of action. This ensured prioritization of critical areas and an environmentally sound extraction of waste and silt — something SMC applies in every river rehabilitation effort.

Overall, Better Rivers PH has covered a total of 157.29 km of waterways, removing a total of 8,248,254 metric tons of silt and solid waste as of March 12, 2025.

This includes 1.12 tons from 10.9 km of Tullahan River; 1.18 tons from 26 km of Pasig River; 322,739 tons from 7.61 km of San Juan River; 694,372 tons from 26.3 km of Pampanga River; and 4.13 tons from 74.75 km of the Bulacan River System.

Meanwhile, its ongoing efforts to rehabilitate rivers in Paranaque City and clear flood drains around the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) have so far covered 2.58 km and removed 129,862 tons of silt and solid waste.

Ang stressed that all these efforts would be for naught if coastal communities and other stakeholders do not refrain from throwing their trash into the rivers and on roads where they are washed away to the storm drains leading to the creeks and rivers. "Hopefully, we Filipinos adhere to strict rules in the disposal of our garbage. Let us help one another so that our trash no longer ends up in our rivers." PR

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