

SMC brings assistance to 10,000 Cebu families as Typhoon Tino recovery continues

San Miguel Corp. (SMC) has deployed fresh relief assistance to Cebu, where thousands of families remain in evacuation centers more than a week after Typhoon Tino struck on November 4.

The distribution forms part of continuing efforts by government and private sector groups to support communities still grappling with the storm's impact and the flooding that followed.

Employee-volunteers from San Miguel's Cebu operations distributed food packs — made up of San Miguel-produced food items and other essentials — to evacuation sites in Mandaue and Cebu Cities, and in the northern towns of Consolacion, Liloan and Compostela.



The company also mobilized teams to provide clean drinking water amid disrupted supplies in affected areas. Local disaster officials say many families remain displaced as damaged homes and lost income have slowed recovery. The typhoon came a month after a magnitude-6.9 earthquake hit the province, compounding losses for households that have yet to rebuild.

"Cebu has gone

through challenges no community should experience in such quick succession. Our thoughts are with everyone there, including our own people, as they work to recover," SMC Chairman and CEO Ramon S. Ang said.

Meanwhile, employees across the San Miguel Group are also raising funds through the Tulong para sa Pagbangon initiative to assist families affected by typhoons Tino and Uwan in other parts of the country. PR



Employee-volunteers of San Miguel Corporation repack food products at the company's packaging plant in Mandaue City for deployment to Typhoon Tino victims in the hardest-hit areas of Cebu.



Mekeni Strengthens Culture of 'Malasakit' Through Annual Gift-Giving Tradition



Bahay Pag-ibig

Kindness, when shared consistently, creates lasting impact. This belief continues to guide Mekeni Food Corporation (Mekeni) as it carried out its annual gift-giving program on October 24, 2025, extending care and support to communities in need across Pampanga.

This yearly initiative, rooted in the company's core value of malasakit, once again brought together Mekeni employees who visited four local

institutions: Munting Tahanan ng Nazareth in Malabacat City, and Bahay Pag-ibig and Children's Home of Eucharistic Love and Kindness in San Fernando.

With heartfelt participation from volunteers, the company turned over essential goods such as food products and toiletries to residents of these care centers, sharing warmth and hope with children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.

"This program reminds us that compassion is most meaningful when it becomes part of who we are," said Mr. Prudencio S. Garcia, President of Mekeni. "Every year, our people come together not only to give, but to listen, connect, and show that the community can always count on us. That is the kind of malasakit we want to nurture at Mekeni."

More than a company initiative, the gift-giving has evolved into



Children's Home of Eucharistic Love and Kindness



Munting Tahanan ng Nazareth

a shared tradition, made possible through the collective efforts of Mekeni employees, who continue to contribute financially and in kind.

"Our employees have always been at the heart of this program," said Ms. Marilou Uy, Assistant Vice President for HR and Exports. "Their generosity

and volunteerism embody Mekeni's spirit of unity and service."

Echoing this, Ms. Apple Garcia, HR Head, emphasized the deeper purpose of the program: "What we do may seem simple, but the smiles we see and the hope we bring make a world of difference."

For over three decades, Mekeni has remained steadfast in its mission to uplift lives and nurture a culture of compassion. Through initiatives like this, the company continues to prove that true success is best measured by the positive change it inspires in others.

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Career P2 Caravan opens doors for jobseeker in Cavite City

DTI Cavite Joins Provincial Agri Fair cum Kadiwa ng Pangulo in Trece Martires City

TARA NA SA COCO FIESTA SA SM CITY TRECE



Celebrating the vibrant coconut industry, the DA-ATI CALABARZON opened its 2025 Coco Fiesta held at SM City Trece Martires.

From November 18 to 22, the festival of coco-based products and technologies features 12 exhibit booths brought by coconut farmers and MSMEs; as well as knowledge-filled forum on emerging and innovative practices for coconut.

Visit us at the 2nd Level of SM City Trece Martires from 10:00 AM to 9:00 PM — to support local, buy local! #TaraNaSaCocoFiesta2025#ATILEADS #ATICALABARZONCocoFiesta

BENTE Productions participates in the Asian Contents and Film Market 2025



BENTE Productions spearheaded by its President Marilyn Manila (leftmost) brought stories from the microfinance community to the Asian Contents and Film Market in Busan, South Korea.

From September 19 to 23, 2025, BENTE Productions Inc., the multimedia company of CARD Mutually Reinforcing Institutions (CARD MRI), took part in the

Asian Contents and Film Market (ACFM), held alongside the 30th Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) at the BEXCO Exhibition Center II in Busan, South Korea.

BENTE Productions President Marilyn Manila expresses her excitement towards the films, saying, "It is not just the stories of our communities that show courage and triumph despite challenges."

"The opportunity to participate in this event is not just for our institution. on page 2

3rd Imus City Franchise Expo, matagumpay na isinagawa ng Imus LGU

DA anticipates lower onion prices ahead of holiday season

Cayetano on DPWH mess: 'I don't want a revolution, I want a revival'





27 Natural Health and Nutrition Tips That Are Evidence-Based

25. Avoid restrictive diets

Diets are generally ineffective and rarely work well long term. In fact, past dieting is one of the strongest predictors for future weight gain (85Trusted Source).

This is because overly restrictive diets actually lower your metabolic rate, or the amount of calories you burn, making it more difficult to lose weight. At the same time, they also cause alterations to your hunger and satiety hormones, which make you hungrier and may cause strong food cravings for foods high in fat, calories, and sugar (86Trusted Source, 87Trusted Source).

All of this is a recipe for rebound weight gain, or “yo-yo” dieting.

Instead of dieting, try adopting a healthier lifestyle. Focus on nourishing your body instead of depriving it.

Weight loss should follow as you transition to more whole, nutritious foods — which are naturally more filling while containing fewer calories than processed foods (14Trusted Source).

26. Eat whole eggs

Despite the constant back and forth about eggs and health, it’s a myth that eggs are bad for you because of their cholesterol content. Studies show that they have minimal effect on blood cholesterol in the majority of people, and they’re a great source of protein and nutrients (87Trusted Source, 88Trusted Source).

Additionally, a review involving 263,938 people found that egg intake had no association with heart disease risk (88Trusted Source).

27. Meditate

Stress has a negative effect on your health. It can affect your blood sugar levels, food choices, susceptibility to sickness, weight, fat distribution, and more. For this reason, it’s important to find healthy ways to manage your stress (88aTrusted Source).

Meditation is one such way, and it has some scientific evidence to support its use for stress management and improving health (89Trusted Source, 90Trusted Source).

In one study involving 48 people with high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, or both, researchers found that meditation helped lower LDL (bad) cholesterol and inflammation compared with the control group. Additionally, the participants in the meditation group reported improved mental and physical wellness (91Trusted Source).

The bottom line

A few simple steps can go a long way toward improving your eating patterns and wellness.

Still, if you’re trying to live a healthier life, do not just focus on the foods you eat. Exercise, sleep, and social relationships are also important.

With the evidence-based tips above, it’s easy to introduce small changes that can have a big impact on your overall health.

Just one thing

Try this today: There are lots of suggestions on this list that can help you improve your health, but it’s best to put just one or two into practice at a time so you do not get burned out. As more of these healthy actions become habits, you can add more into your routine.

BENTE...



tion but for all Filipinos whose voices we strive to amplify. This recognition gives us the strength to continue creating meaningful stories of love and hope. For our community and partners, this is our shared success,” she added.

BENTE Productions’ participation in the ACFM also served as an opportunity to connect with several international streaming platforms to

CAYETANO...

Senate Minority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano on Monday urged the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) to take the lead not only in building infrastructure but also in restoring integrity and accountability within the agency, starting with a strong crackdown on ghost projects.

“I don’t want a revolution, I want a revival. Many revolutions did not bring the reforms that were promised. Do you agree with me na dapat yung low-lying fruit, y’ung obvious na obvious, iyon y’ung [dapat] unahin?” Cayetano asked DPWH Secretary Vivencio “Vince” Dizon during the DPWH budget briefing on October 20.

Cayetano described ghost projects as the clearest and most blatant form of corruption and said these should be the department’s top priority in investigating irregularities.

Career...

The Office of the Provincial Public Employment Service Manager (OPPEM), headed by Ms. Rizalie Pinpin Enero, in collaboration with the local government of Cavite City, under the leadership of Mayor Denver R. Chua, successfully organized the Cavite Career Caravan at the Montano Hall on November 13. The event provided valuable career opportunities and employment services to the residents of Cavite City.

Mayor Denver R. Chua, together with

explore the possibility of showcasing the Filipino films to a global audience.

A Major Debut for BENTE Productions
BENTE Productions made a market debut as one of the Filipino production outfits featured by the Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP) in the ACFM. It serves as an essential opportunity to feature stories about the communities and share

them with a broader audience.

Established on July 19, 2025, the institution focuses on producing meaningful films and stories inspired by the real-life experiences of microfinance communities. Its mission aims to spark inspiration to fight against poverty while promoting local talent in the film industry.

The institution’s first full-length film, I Re-

fied by a validation team. He gave assurance that those involved will be held accountable.

Hearing the figure, Cayetano urged the department to act quickly on these cases and use the documents already in its possession as evidence.

“Anything that’s also obvious, we would appreciate action on it. Whether you refer it to the ICI [Independent Commission for Infrastructure] or the Ombudsman. Ang point ko lang naman, nasa inyo ang papeles,” he said.

He also suggested a simple way to verify ongoing and completed projects by requiring district engineers (DEs) and local officials to take and



DTI...

DTI Cavite participated in the Provincial Agri Fair cum Kadiwa ng Pangulo, recently held at the OPA Compound in Trece Martires City, Cavite, showcasing the province’s diverse agricultural produce and locally made products. The event provided farmers, agri-entrepreneurs, and cooperatives an opportunity to directly promote their goods to consumers, strengthening linkages between producers and the market.

Visitors enjoyed a variety of fresh pro-

member You, was released this year and has received positive feedback from audiences for its storyline and the talent of community members.

For BENTE Productions, participating in BIFF and ACFM 2025 is more than just recognition; it is a significant step towards the global stage.

For more information, visit its official Facebook page at @BenteProdOfficial. PR

FROM PAGE 01

submit photos of project sites.

The senator said this would help ensure transparency and prevent ghost projects from slipping through the cracks.

“Is it possible that you ask your DEs or the lowest level whatever, kunan lang ng picture... para at least may reference ka,” Cayetano told Dizon.

Cayetano said the effort to clean up the DPWH should not be seen as a political purge but as a moral and institutional revival to rebuild public trust.

“Reform doesn’t come from tearing things down but from rebuilding them right,” he said. “That’s the kind of revival our country needs.” PR

FROM PAGE 01

duce, processed foods, and other local products while learning about sustainable farming practices and livelihood opportunities. The fair aimed to support local agriculture, increase farmers’ income, and promote community engagement in food security initiatives.

Through initiatives like this, Cavite continues to emphasize the vital role of agriculture in driving economic growth and providing sustainable opportunities for its communities.

Refresher seminar on Environment

To further strengthen environmental enforcement efforts in the province, the Provincial Government – Cavite Office of Public Safety conducted a Refresher Seminar on Environmental Laws for PG-COPS Environmental Protection Operations Division operatives on November 12–13, at the 2nd Floor Function Hall, New Provincial Government Center in Trece Martires City. The two-day activity aimed to enhance the knowledge and skills of operatives in implementing and upholding key environmental laws.

Ms. Cecil Miranda, PG-COPS head, delivered the opening message, emphasizing the

importance of continuous learning and strong inter-agency coordination in protecting Cavite’s natural resources.

The first day featured discussions on major environmental statutes that guide forest, wildlife, fisheries, and mining operations in the country. Forester Janeth R. Salazar, OIC – Enforcement Division, DENR 4A, provided an in-depth lecture on Presidential Decree 705 or the Revised Forestry Code of the Philippines and Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act, underscoring the need to safeguard forestlands and biodiversity.

This was fol-

lowed by Mr. Reynaldo Cuervo, Fishing Regulation Officer 1- BFAR 4A, who discussed Republic Act 8550 or the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998, as amended by RA 10554. His lecture highlighted the regulations on sustainable fisheries management and the protection of marine resources.

Completing the day’s sessions were Engr. Rea Mae L. De Austria, Research Specialist I, Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) 4A, and Engr. John Borris R. Mampusti, Mining Claims Examiner III – MGB 4A, who jointly discussed Republic Act 7942 or the Philippine Mining Act of 1995, focusing on responsible mining

Laws empowers PG-COPS EPOD operative

practices and regulatory enforcement.

On the second day, Ms. Josel Mae O. Amonelo, Environmental Management Specialist, Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) 4A, led the discussion on Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, emphasizing proper waste segregation, disposal, and the roles of LGUs and enforcement operatives.

An open forum was held after each lecture, giving participants the opportunity to raise

and restoring water quality in rivers, lakes, and other bodies of water.

To further localize the discussions, Atty. Annaliza Mercene-Pulmones, Cavite Provincial Legal Officer, presented Provincial Ordinance No. 2008-001 or the Cavite Environmental Code, reiterating the province’s policies and guidelines on environmental protection and management.

The seminar reinforced the commitment of PG-COPS EPOD operatives to uphold environmental laws and contribute to sustainable resource management in Cavite. Through continuous capacity-building efforts, the province ensures that its enforcement teams remain well-equipped to carry out their vital responsibilities in protecting the environment. - JDP

DOST-CALABARZON leads 2025 CEST Forum, charting pathways to smarter and sustainable communities

The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) - CALABARZON led the 2025 CEST Forum on November 19, 2025, at the Ilocos Norte Centennial Arena, gathering community leaders, development partners, and local champions. The forum aimed to highlight how science, technology, and innovation (STI) empower communities and provide a platform for sharing solutions that support this year’s NSTW theme, “Pathways to Sustainability: Building Smart and Sustainable Communities.”

Participants from CEST beneficiary communities, LGUs, NGOs, and partner institutions convened to exchange experiences and explore approaches for strengthening local systems through data-driven and science-based decision-making.

Moreover, Dr. Nancy A. Bantog, DOST-CAR Regional Director, discussed how LGUs can transition to smart and sustainable governance using the ILAW Framework. Dr. Bantog also outlined DOST’s Smart and Sustainable Communities Program (SSCP), emphasizing ongoing initiatives and the agency’s policy direction for synergistic and holistic implementation

concerns, seek clarifications, and share experiences related to field operations.

The seminar reinforced the commitment of PG-COPS EPOD operatives to uphold environmental laws and contribute to sustainable resource management in Cavite. Through continuous capacity-building efforts, the province ensures that its enforcement teams remain well-equipped to carry out their vital responsibilities in protecting the environment. - JDP

across regions. Her discussion underscored how integrated STI support can guide communities in decision-making, planning, and long-term development.

Following this, Punong Barangay Hon. Sheryl Nolasco and Kagawad Hon. Khate Nolasco of Barangay Potrero, Malabon City gave one of the most compelling contributions of the forum. They presented how their barangay has implemented zero-waste systems, community-driven circular practices, and sustained behavior-change initiatives to address long-standing waste challenges. Their work, which has earned various recognitions, showed how consistent local leadership and organized community participation can create measurable, lasting impact.

The Open Forum further enriched the discussions as participants raised questions. Speakers responded with practical insights, illustrating how local innovations and science-based tools can strengthen sustainability efforts.

The forum concluded with the awarding of certificates to resource speakers in recognition of their contributions to advancing community empowerment through STI.

Grab Powers Cavite’s Fast Rise as Digital Economy Hub, Accelerates Region’s MSME Digitalization

Cavite, Philippines, 12 November 2025 – Grab Philippines is fully geared to power Cavite’s fast rise as a digital economy hub as it brings its flagship public-private initiative Grab Asenso: Digital Diskarte program to the province.

The program covers a tech- and AI-first learning caravan aimed at equipping thousands of local small businesses with mobile-first marketing knowhow, artificial intelligence (AI) tools, and new digital payment solutions.

Grab Philippines Vice President for Cities CJ Lacsican shares, “True national progress is built on creating equitable growth beyond the capital. Cavite, strategically located adjacent to Metro Manila, exemplifies the high potential within our provincial economies. Our commitment, through Grab Asenso, is to co-build the digital tools and upskilling programs that connect these local MSMEs to the wider digital economy. This is a foundational step toward an inclusive digital Philippines, ensuring growth, progress, and opportunities are shared across all regions for all businesses regardless of size.”

A Hotbed for Digital Growth

Cavite is poised to be a dynamic digital economy powerhouse, fueled by a dense population and a booming landscape of diverse small businesses.

Grab’s own records reveal the bullish digital adoption in the province. The platform’s MSME community base in Cavite has grown at an average of 72% year-on-year from 2023 to 2025, fueling a staggering 152% jump in demand for Grab-Food deliveries this year versus last year. This growth is also marked by quality, as the province now accounts for 30% of all GrabFood 5-Star Eats merchants – a community of highly-rated MSME restaurants on the Grab platform – across the entire Greater Manila area, which includes Bulacan, Laguna, and Rizal

Local entrepreneurs are turning this digital adoption into tangible success by actively using the platform’s growth tools, like Spotlight Campaigns. GrabFood 5-Star Eats merchant-partner Sarios Restaurant, owned by Liz and Benjamin Rufino, shared how they leveraged Grab’s marketing

and promotion features to scale their business.

“I made it a point to study all the promotional tools Grab offered,” said Liz Rufino. “We started small with simple discounts, but once we saw how effective they were, we went all-in and fully utilized the marketing features. As a result, our sales doubled, and even tripled. It shows that Grab genuinely helps small merchants like us grow, not just the big brands.”

AI Co-Pilot for MSMEs

At the heart of the caravan is the introduction of the Merchant AI Assistant, a “co-pilot” integrated directly into the GrabMerchant app. This tool is designed to help small business owners who may lack the time or marketing expertise to manage their online presence. It can automate tasks like creating digital menus, writing marketing captions for promotions, and optimizing their online storefront.

Furthermore, Grab is introducing its “Tap & Scan To Pay” solution in the region. This feature turns any NFC-enabled smartphone into a device capable of accepting both credit cards and QR-PH payments. This is

seen as a breakthrough for MSMEs, as it removes the significant cost hurdle of renting or buying a separate, hardware-based payment terminal. Alongside this, Grab is also offering merchants on Tap & Scan to Pay the access to Income Protection Coverage, which ensures that during untoward force majeure, should merchants not be able to open, their supposed earnings for that day are cushioned

More than just Tech

The “Digital Diskarte” program aims to provide holistic support. Beyond the new AI and payment tools, Grab is also offering merchants access to the Merchant Quick Cash Loan, providing “dagdag-puhunan” (additional capital) for inventory and expansion, and Self-Serve Ads, which allow merchants to run their own “Spotlight Campaigns” to boost visibility within the Grab app. This initiative is backed by government partners and aligns with the national digitalization agenda, particularly the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT)’s drive to create more “digital livelihoods” for Filipinos.

Aboitiz Foundation, the corporate social responsibility arm of the Aboitiz Group, the Philippines' first techglomerate, has signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with ING Hubs Philippines to bring quality education through access to renewable energy and reliable internet connectivity to four last-mile public schools in Bulacan.

As part of the partnership, ING Hubs Philippines will donate solar power systems to Basyo Elementary School, Bato Elementary School, Kawit Elementary School, and Pinag-Anakan Integrated School in Doña Remedios Trinidad, Bulacan. Aboitiz Foundation, working closely with the Department of Education



Aboitiz Foundation and ING Hubs Philippines formalize their partnership to power four last-mile schools in Bulacan through AuroraPH, expanding learning opportunities in remote communities. In the photo are the signatories: Jaime T. Tugade of DepEd Bulacan; Ginggay Hontiveros-Malvar, President of Aboitiz Foundation; Hazel Zaide Delos Santos, Country Manager of ING Hubs Philippines; and Mary Grace Torralba, Head of Legal of ING Hubs Philippines.

(DepEd) and local officials, will provide internet connectivity and conduct training for teachers.

Aboitiz Foundation Impact Lead for Education Jowelle Ann

Cruz expressed gratitude for ING Hubs Philippines' support for AuroraPH, noting that access to power and connectivity is central to expanding learning opportunities.

"Energizing last-mile schools empowers teachers and learners by opening doors to countless learning opportunities. With the support of partners like ING Hubs

From Michelin to Terra Madre: Philippines Emerges as Asia's Rising Culinary Capital

Following the successful inaugural selection of the Michelin Guide in the Philippines, the Department of Tourism (DOT) is once again placing the country at the forefront of global gastronomy with the hosting of the first-ever Terra Madre Asia and the Pacific (TMAP)—the regional edition of the world's largest sustainable food gathering—set from November 19 to 23 at the Provincial Capitol Lagoon in Bacolod City.

The event, presented in partnership with Slow Food International, the Provincial Government of Negros Occidental, the City of Bacolod, and key national agencies, underscores the Philippines' rising stature as a premier gastronomy destination. Coming on the heels of Michelin's historic recognition of Filipino restaurants, Terra Madre Asia & Pacific further affirms the country's growing influence in the global culinary landscape.

Anchored on the nation's rich food heritage and agricultural abundance, the Philippines' hosting of Terra Madre marks a significant step in strengthening sustainable, inclusive, and community-rooted gastronomy—an approach that complements the momentum

generated by the Michelin Guide's recent entry. Together, these milestones advance the Philippines' pathway toward becoming a global culinary capital under the leadership of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.

Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco underscored the importance of the event in championing local communities, indigenous ingredients, and Filipino creativity.

"This partnership between the DOT and Slow Food for the hosting of the first-ever Terra Madre Asia & Pacific positions Bacolod City, the Negros Island Region, and the Philippines as a vibrant gateway to gastronomy tourism. This landmark event brings the world to our tables and into our communities—where every ingredient represents the industry of our people, every dish tells of our proud history, and every meal supports local livelihoods. We warmly welcome our guests to Bacolod as we invite travelers to discover the diversity of Philippine cuisine and the richness of our culture, served with the signature warmth and hospitality that is very Filipino," said the Tourism Chief.

"From the his-

toric arrival of the Michelin Guide to our country's hosting of the Terra Madre Asia and the Pacific, the Philippines is fast emerging as Asia's Rising Culinary Capital. With the partnership and support of our stakeholders, we are unlocking opportunities through gastronomy tourism while celebrating our traditions, empowering our food producers, and sharing Filipino culinary excellence with the world," added Secretary Frasco.

As one of the anticipated highlights of the event, the DOT organized the Slow Food Travel Pavilion, featuring immersive, community-based food experiences from various regions and provinces, including the Cordilleras (Pasil), National Capital Region (Manila), CALABARZON (Cavite), Central Visayas (Cebu), and Western Visayas (Bingawan, Capiz, Boracay).

Further, the DOT also organized street food booths offering a diverse selection of dishes, delicacies, and cooking experiences from across all regions of the Philippines, including the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao. The regional booths are composed of local concessionaires that present food items and beverages

that align mostly with Slow Food principles.

The global event is celebrated with the theme "From Soil to Sea: A Slow Food Journey Through Tastes & Traditions," bringing together local producers, farmers, fisherfolk, artisans, food communities, chefs, cooks, policymakers, and advocates from the Asia-Pacific region to exchange knowledge and advance the global call for a more sustainable food future.

A milestone for Philippine cuisine

A strategic venue for the global food gathering, Bacolod City is home to over 20,000 hectares of agricultural land dedicated to organic farming, local produce, and rare indigenous ingredients, emphasizing the importance of food sustainability efforts to tourism.

Similarly, Negros Occidental, with its 32,000-hectare marine reserve, offers a wide range of exquisite seafood, as well as its traditional fishing methods that ensure the conservation of the region's marine biodiversity. "It's very fitting that we celebrate this event in the City of Smiles, where local and foreign tourists will not only get

Philippines, we are able to bring meaningful and lasting change to the communities that need help the most," she said.

Country Manager of ING Hubs Philippines Hazel Zaide Delos Santos said the partnership with Aboitiz Foundation is an investment in the next generation.

"We equip our learners with the skills they need to become competitive through our shared effort in powering these schools. By providing reliable energy and access to connectivity, we help create a more comfortable space for both students and teachers," she said.

AuroraPH harnesses solar power, internet connectivity, digital

tools, and teacher training to reduce learning gaps in remote areas. After reaching 11 schools and 2,500 learners in its 2024 pilot, the program now targets 100 schools in 2025. The long-term goal is to energize 300 schools nationwide

Through meaningful collaborations with partners like ING Hubs Philippines, Aboitiz Foundation continues to build environments where learning can thrive. By bringing power, connectivity, and vital training into schools that need them most, AuroraPH seeks not only to improve classrooms but to expand what becomes possible for the young people who learn within them. PR

the chance to taste our amazing dishes but also experience the Filipino way of life and boundless hospitality," Secretary Frasco said.

Further, the gastronomy of Bacolod and Negros Occidental is complemented by its vibrant arts and cultural scene, empowered by the strong collaboration between government, private sector, farmers, chefs, and artisans in the region, offering a more unique and cohesive tourist experience.

Connecting food and tourism

Led by a talented line-up of local and foreign chefs, cooks, and mixologists, a series of events showcasing the food and beverage landscape in the Asia-Pacific region awaits tourists throughout the celebration.

Emphasizing the vital link between gastronomy and tourism, the global event will include a



EDITORIAL: The vice presidency after two years

IS IT a clear case of political harassment, as Vice President Sara Duterte claims it is?

Or is it simply because, as part of the Duterte political dynasty that has monopolized political power in Davao for decades, she believes she is inherently entitled to a huge security detail second only to the Presidential Security Group?

In other words, she believes she's not just a VIP or Very Important Person, but the next in line to the Chief Executive and Commander-in-Chief no less who deserves to be assigned a security detail numbering more than 400 or a battalion of policemen and soldiers armed to the teeth who will protect her from any harm.

After her election as Vice President, Duterte was appointed as Education Secretary rather than as Defense Secretary she had earlier said she wanted.

She headed the Department of Education or DepEd despite her utter lack of experience in the field of education.

And in her two-year stint in DepEd, did we hear her expound on her philosophy of education or the key reforms she wanted to implement to improve our basic education system?

We ask now: Did she leave the DepEd a better and more capable institution seriously implementing basic education that encourages respect for human rights, inculcates patriotism and nationalism, strengthens critical and creative thinking, develops moral character and personal discipline as the fundamental law mandates the DepEd to do?

Now that she is out of DepEd, Sara Duterte has all the time in the world to basically twiddle her thumbs and do nothing but wait to take over the presidency as the 1987 Constitution provides that the Vice President assumes the highest elective position in case of death, permanent disability, removal from office or resignation of the President.

Can the incumbent Vice President be relied upon to serve the public interest and welfare at all times good and bad?

That question has been raised after she decided to leave for a vacation abroad with her family while the country was being battered by a strong typhoon that spawned deep floods in many places and forced to flee their homes for safer ground.

Earlier, Duterte reaped public scorn for demanding confidential and intelligence funds for the DepEd, an agency without any mandate to undertake programs properly belonging to the police and the military.

No wonder therefore that the Vice-President's approval rating based on the latest surveys indicate a steep drop from 91 percent in 2022 to below 50 percent at present.

What's alarming and divisive is that the Vice President has declared open war and intensified tirades against the Marcos Jr. administration in what appears to be an effort to recover lost political ground and prettify her image with an eye toward a presidential bid in 2028.

But are Filipinos willing to reinstate a member of the Duterte dynasty in the Philippine presidency after her lackluster performance at DepEd and the bloody war on drugs of her father Rodrigo Duterte as Chief Executive from 2016 to 2022 that the International Criminal Court believes now merits prosecution for crimes against humanity?

Pag-IBIG Fund Offers Payment Moratorium, Housing Loan Insurance Following Recent Calamities

Pag-IBIG Fund is offering a one-month payment moratorium and reminding borrowers of their Housing Loan insurance coverage to help members recover from the devastation caused by recent typhoons and earthquakes, officials announced Tuesday, Nov. 18.

Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development Secretary and Pag-IBIG Fund Board Chairman Jose Ramon P. Aliling said the measures reflect Pag-IBIG Fund's continuing commitment to provide responsive support to Filipino workers affected by disasters, in line with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s directive to accelerate recovery efforts in calamity-hit areas.

"Guided by President Marcos's directive for a whole-of-government response to help those affected by calamities, we are offering Housing Loan borrowers a payment moratorium and insurance coverage for damaged homes under our Housing Loan program, as well as providing all our members with affordable loan options to help them recover and rebuild," Aliling said.

Pag-IBIG Fund Chief Executive Officer Marilene C. Acosta said that the agency's home loans include built-in insurance that provides protection and helps cover repair costs. She added that they are offering a one-month payment moratorium for Housing Loan borrowers in areas declared under a state of calamity due to typhoons Nando, Opung, Ramil, Tino and Uwan, as well as recent earthquakes in Cebu and Davao.

"We understand that our members need immediate help when disasters strike, and we at Pag-IBIG Fund are always ready to respond," Acosta said. "Housing Loan borrowers whose homes were damaged can take comfort in knowing that their homes are insured, and we are reaching out to help them avail of their benefits as soon as possi-

ble. We are likewise offering a one-month payment moratorium so they may prioritize the safety and recovery of their families. They may conveniently apply online through Virtual Pag-IBIG."

In addition to the insurance and moratorium, Pag-IBIG Fund is also offering Calamity Loans and Home Improvement Loans at affordable rates.

Under the Pag-IBIG Calamity Loan Program, eligible members residing in areas declared under a state of calamity may borrow up to 90

percent of their total Pag-IBIG Regular Savings at a low interest rate of 5.95 percent per annum, the lowest among comparable programs. The loan is payable for up to three years, with an automatic three-month grace period before the first payment.

Through the Pag-IBIG Home Improvement Loan, qualified members can borrow up to ₱300,000 for repairs or home upgrades. The loan is payable within five years and is currently offered at a promotional rate of 3 percent per annum for

the first 10,000 borrowers.

"We know that rebuilding after a disaster takes time and resources," Acosta said. "That is why we are providing multiple ways to help through our payment moratorium for financial relief, our Calamity Loan for immediate needs, the Housing Loan insurance for protection, and our Home Improvement Loan to help members restore their homes to safety and comfort. Pag-IBIG Fund is here to make recovery easier, faster and more affordable for our members." (END)

Senate approves P308.2-B DILG budget for 2026

MANILA – The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) on Friday said it had gotten the Senate's approval for its proposed PHP308.2-billion budget for 2026.

This took place during plenary debates on Thursday. DILG Secretary Jonvic Remulla, who was present during the budget hearing, thanked the Senate for its "steadfast commitment to strengthening public safety and local governance."

Sen. JV Ejercito, vice chairperson of Subcommittee F of the Senate Committee on Finance, sponsored the budget and emphasized that the chamber remains

fully committed to both the uniformed and civilian personnel of the DILG.

From the original PHP285.4-billion National Expenditure Program (NEP) proposal, the Senate Committee on Finance recommended increasing the DILG budget by nearly 8 percent or PHP22.6-billion to PHP308.2 billion.

The DILG said the increase aims to support its 283,000 uniformed personnel, strengthen the operational capabilities of the Philippine National Police (PNP), and bolster the programs and services of the department's attached agencies.

The budget also included funding for 65 new fire stations and the procurement of 65 addi-

tional fire trucks for the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), closing the remaining gap and equipping LGUs nationwide with adequate firefighting capability.

In the Senate version of the DILG's 2026 proposed budget, the PNP will receive the largest share at PHP225.8 billion, followed by the BFP with PHP36.2 billion, and the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) with PHP31.3 billion.

Other allocations include the DILG Office of the Secretary, PHP8.5 billion; National Police Commission, PHP2.5 billion; National Commission on Muslim Filipinos, PHP1.2

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DA...

MANILA – The prices of retail onions are expected to stabilize soon, just in time for the holiday season, the Department of Agriculture (DA) assured on Thursday.

In a press conference, DA spokesperson Assistant Secretary Amel De Mesa said upcoming import arrivals will help address the thinning supply in local markets.

"Enough 'yung volume na parating until the end of the year to cover 'yung requirements natin, especially pagpasok ng holiday season (The volume of the supply that is arriving is enough until the end of the year to cover our requirements, especially for the approaching holiday season)," he said.

"So, 'yung pre-

syo na nakikita natin ngayon, makikita natin anti-unting bababa doon sa presyo na (the price that we see will gradually drop to) between PHP120 to PHP150."

De Mesa made the remark as retail prices of red onions spiked to a maximum of PHP300 per kg. in the National Capital Region (NCR).

As of Nov. 18, the price per kg. of imported red onions in Metro Manila has ranged from PHP220 to PHP300, while that for local red onions has ranged from PHP230 to PHP300, according to the DA-Bantay Presyo (price watch).

The agri official, however, assured it would no longer hit PHP700 per kg. as in the past, due to

the "timely" approval of onion imports.

The DA has allowed the import of 59,594 metric tons (MT) of red onions from 1,045 approved sanitary and phytosanitary import clearance (SPSIC) until the end of December.

As of Nov. 13, the DA reported the arrival of 11,371 MT out of the 59,594 MT expected volume of imported red onions.

In terms of imported white or yellow onions, 23,596 MT out of the 37,819 MT expected volume have arrived in the country.

The price per kg. of imported white onions, meanwhile, remains low in local markets, ranging from PHP90 to PHP180. (PNA)

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SM Supermalls Rolls Out Nationwide Christmas Celebrations

SM Supermalls continues to bring Christmas cheer to communities across the Philippines with the launch of festive centerpiece displays and holiday activities in its provincial malls. Each installation highlights local character while delivering the timeless SM Christmas experience — joyful moments, engaging attractions, and memorable gatherings for families and friends.

SM LANANG: UNWRAP A JOYFUL SEASON



SM Lanang in Davao debuts Unwrap A Joyful Season, drawing inspiration from the vibrant holiday atmosphere of New York City. The highlight is a 55-foot Christmas tree adorned with more than 2,000 ornaments and framed by 13 cascading floating evergreens — a fusion of global holiday elegance with Davao's distinct local energy.

SM CDO DOWNTOWN PREMIER: CHRISTMAS IN BLOOM



SM CDO Downtown Premier presents Christmas in Bloom, a theme that blends Christmas splendor with the fantastical world of Oz. Featuring an Emerald City reimagined with vibrant red hues, the installation creates a striking backdrop for holiday photos and celebrations — perfectly timed with the release of Wicked: For Good.

SM Seaside City Cebu: The Grand Gift of Christmas



SM Seaside City Cebu unveils The Grand Gift of Christmas, part of the Unwrapping Magical Christmas Tales installation. From a ribbon that unfurls into an enchanted holiday book, visitors are invited to discover Christmas narratives inspired by SM malls across the Visayas — celebrating joy, nostalgia, and storytelling.

SM CITY BACOLOD: UNWRAPPING SWEET SURPRISES



SM City Bacolod's Unwrapping Sweet Surprises transforms its North Wing Main Atrium into a pastel dreamscape of confectionery-inspired décor. The 50-foot white Christmas tree features a luxury pastry shop motif, reflecting Bacolod's well-loved heritage of sweets and culinary delights.

SM City Baguio: The Magic of Giving



SM City Baguio introduces The Magic of Giving, anchored by a 35-foot Christmas tree surrounded by red-and-gold holiday décor, arches, gift boxes, and golden baubles. Inspired by the charm of the City of Pines, the display evokes warmth, generosity, and the signature Baguio holiday atmosphere.

SM City Lucena: Woodland Noel A Timeless Tale



SM City Lucena introduces Woodland Noel: A Timeless Tale, led by animated reindeer set in an enchanted forest. As a significant hub in Quezon Province and the CALABARZON region, the mall's holiday centerpiece attracts families from surrounding municipalities.

SM CITY EAST ORTIGAS: CHRISTMAS CARNIVAL WITH EYO AND FRIENDS



SM City East Ortigas launches its Christmas Carnival, starring Eyo and Friends. The activity center features a Giant Inflatable Hot Air Balloon and a 25-foot ribbon-crowned Christmas tree. Shoppers can enjoy character photo spots and musical performances, including a unicyclist juggler show.

SM City Fairview: The Holiday Studios



At SM City Fairview, The Holiday Studios transforms the mall into an immersive destination with multiple Christmas-themed backdrops and photo-ready installations. Designed to encourage interactive family moments, the display offers a variety of setups perfect for festive photos and videos.

SM City Clark: Holiday Surprises



SM City Clark unveils Holiday Surprises, featuring a 45-foot Christmas tree, two Interactive Gift Boxes, and the event's highlight — the Ames Room Illusion. This forced-perspective installation creates a mind-bending visual effect. The set-up also includes four-foot elves, giant ribbons, oversized gift boxes, and a dedicated gift-wrapping station.

3rd Imus City Franchise Expo, matagumpay na isinagawa ng Imus LGU

TIGNAN: Umabot sa 538 katanungan ang natanggap ng 24 na franchisors sa 3rd Imus City Franchise Expo ng Office of the Local Economic Development and Investment Promotions Officer (OLEDIPO) noong Biyernes, Nobyembre 14, 2025, sa Activity Center ng Ayala Malls Vermosa. Nagbigay pagkatakataon ito sa mga bago at matagal nang negosyante na tuklasin ang iba't ibang oportunidad sa franchising.

Kasabay ng expo, isinagawa ang "Learning Sessions: Franchise 101" at "Finding the Right Franchise" na nagbigay-kaalaman sa mga kalahok tungkol sa tamang pagpili ng negosyong akma sa kanilang layunin, kakayahan, at merkado. Dagdag inspirasyon naman ang hatid ng "Sumakses sa Franchise Forum," kung saan ibinahagi ng franchisers ang kanilang mga kuwentong tagumpay, mga estratehiyang ginamit, at mga hamong nalampasan upa-



ng maging gabay sa iba pang nais pumasok sa franchising. Pinangunahan ang nasabing expo ng mga kinatawan ng Pamahalaang Lungsod ng Imus, kabilang sina Konsehal Mark Villanueva, Acting City Administrator Laro Monzon, at OLEDIPO Head Jhett Vilbar-Lungcay.

Dumalo rin sina Officer-in-Charge Provincial Director Lilibeth Chavez ng Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Cavite, Operations Manager Michael Balane ng Ayala Malls Vermosa, at si Association of Filipino Franchisers Inc. Officer Irene Oloris.

Patuloy ang Pamahalaang Lungsod ng Imus sa pagsuporta sa mga lokal na negosyo, pagbibigay-lakas sa mga negosyante, at pagpapatag sa lumalawak na entrepreneurial industry ng lungsod.

Bacoor Population Office Recognized for POPDEV Excellence in CALABARZON during RMS Kaunlarang Pantao Award

The Office of the Population Development of Bacoor, headed by Ms. Emilie De Castro, joined the 2025 Rafael M. Salas Kaunlarang Pantao Award held at the People's Center in Biñan City, Laguna. Bacoor was one of the 11 nominees out of 147 local governments in CALABARZON. At the presentation of awards, the Commission on Population and Development CALABARZON recognized the city with the Excellence in POPDEV Localization, honoring the Bacoor Population Office for its longtime contributions to population development and its unwavering commitment as an active and dedicated office in the region.



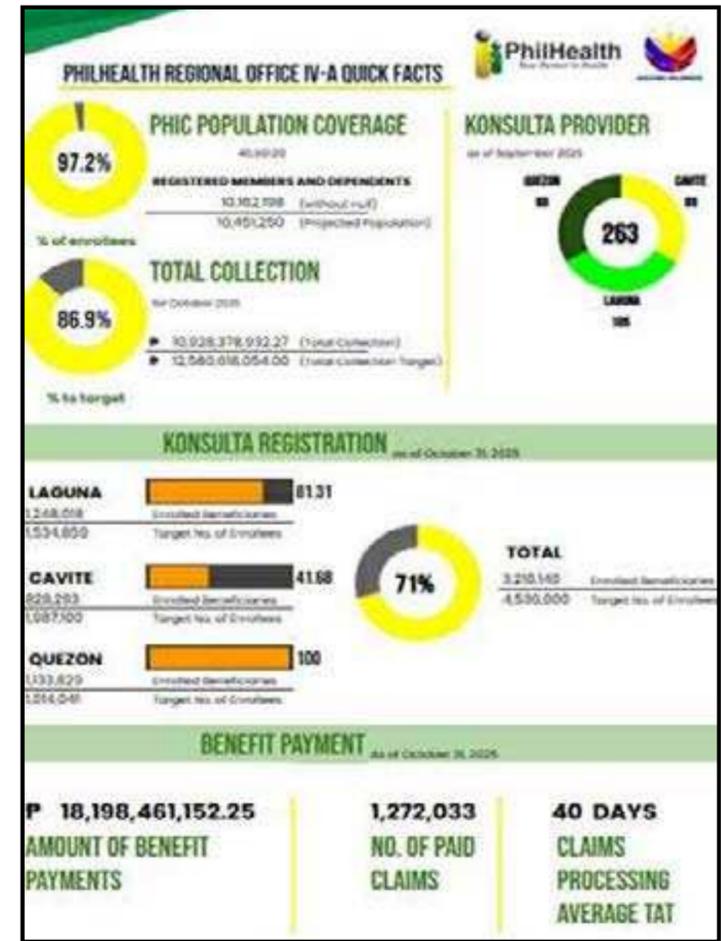
Senate ...

billion; Philippine Public Safety College, PHP1.2 billion; Local Government Academy, PHP544 million; Early Childhood Care and Development Center, PHP357 million; National Youth Commission, PHP315 million; and Philippine Commission on Women, PHP205 million. For his part, Napolcom Commissioner Rafael Vicente Calinisan, in a

statement also on Friday, thanked Senators Raffy Tulfo and JV Ejercito for acknowledging the commission's reforms and achievements, during the Senate budget deliberation. Ejercito highlighted Calinisan's long service in the Quezon City People's Law Enforcement Board (PLEB), adding that his leadership contributed

significantly to improving Napolcom's case disposition rate. Calinisan noted that with the support of the DILG, the Napolcom reduced its backlog from around 4,000 cases to about 200 pending cases. The Napolcom is expected to clear out its 25-year backlog for the first time by end December 2025. (PNA)

FROM PAGE 3



Dalawang Layunin, Isang Hangarin: 2-in-1, Event Isinagawa ng PhilHealth

Isang makabuluhang pagpipilian ang isinagawa ng PhilHealth Regional Office IV-A (PHO IV-A) sa Hotel Casiano tamang ang dalawang mahahalagang okasyon ang PhilHealth forward para sa sektor ng mga manggagawa at ang Media Pasasalamat bilang pagkilala sa mga katuturing sa pamamahala.

Mga 100 kumpanya mula sa employer sector ang dumalo sa PhilHealth Forward kung saan kinatay ang mga bagong programa, benepisyo, at kinatay ng iba't ibang paraan sa mga manggagawang Filipino kumpanya ng isinagawa ang pagpipilian ang ugat ng PhilHealth sa mga employer at employees, at isinagawa ang mga maraming na kalamayan para sa Universal Health Care (partikular ang PhilHealth YAKAP) sa tahanan ng kakaugan Program.

Tamang sa programa na may tanging, Empowering Workplaces, Protecting Workers, Strengthening Health Access through PhilHealth YAKAP, ang mangangay ng suporta, mga best practices ng LGU nang at 2022 na isang mangangay ng mga para sa kalamayan ng mga manggagawa upang pagkatapos ang implementasyon ng YAKAP sa kalamayan (LO) at kumpanya.

Ipinalwanag ng RCV, Inc. kung paano nila ipinatag ang PhilHealth YAKAP at kung paano isinagawa ng mga kumpanya ang kultura ng kalamayan at proteksiyon para sa kanilang mga manggagawa kabilang ang pagpipilian na tahanan ng manggagawa mula sa kalamayan sa Free Patient Encounter (FPE) at kinatay sa kalamayan ng PhilHealth YAKAP, pagbibigay ng tanging pamamahala, at isinagawa ang assistance para sa mga manggagawa. Tingnan rin rin ang kalamayan ng pagkatapos ng PhilHealth upang matutukang ang tahanan ng mga manggagawa sa kalamayan.

Bilang bahagi ng mga ginagamit na salakay para sa kalamayan, matagumpay na makabuhayan ng LGU nang. Cavite ang mga kumpanya ng kalamayan upang masama ang PhilHealth YAKAP sa mga kalamayan ng mga manggagawa.

- Pagtataguyod ng Mahahalagang Serbisyong Medikal (Purkatukugan) na isinabay sa PhilHealth Center sa iba't ibang barangay ng mga upang mapagpapakilala ang iba't ibang serbisyong pangkalamayan at PhilHealth enrollment.
- Pag-isa ng mga encoder upang suportahan ang mga manggagawa ng mga manggagawa ng mga dokumento at impormasyon kaugnay ng PhilHealth YAKAP.
- Pagpapalagan sa kalamayan ng mga barangay health workers (BHW) at barangay health station (BHS) sa pamamagitan ng house-to-house visits upang ipalagan ang kalamayan para sa mga kalamayan ng PhilHealth.
- Pagpapalagan ng mga barangay health stations (BHS) sa pamamagitan ng pagtataguyod ng mga barangay nurse at midwife upang magbigay ng direktang serbisyong medikal sa mga kalamayan. Samaritan, imon din ng PHO na ang mga practitioners mula sa iba't ibang bahagi ng kalamayan sa Media Pasasalamat para sa pagkilala at pagkatapos sa media na kalamayan sa pagkatapos ng kalamayan ng Universal Health Care (UHC) at sa pagtataguyod ng kalamayan ng mga manggagawa ng kalamayan ng kalamayan.

Sa katunayan, isang 2-in-1 event ay nagbigay ng pagkatapos, pamamahala, at pagkatapos ng mga serbisyong publiko. Ayon sa mga kalamayan, ang kalamayan ng kalamayan ay mangangay upang mapagpapakilala ang tahanan ng mga manggagawa sa PhilHealth (PHC).