

BPI, Mapúa Malayan Colleges Laguna partner to empower communities through financial education



MMCL students and faculty members attend BPIF's financial literacy activity on budgeting, saving, and responsible money management.



(L-R): BPIF's Manolo Nava, Senior Program Manager, and Carmina Marquez, Executive Director, with MMCL's Dr. Dodjie Maestrecampo, President and CEO; Maria Eloisa Gan, Senior Vice President for Administration and Legal; and Prof. James Ronald Mesina, Vice President for External Linkages, Internationalization, and Transnational Education.

The Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI), through its social development arm, BPI Foundation (BPIF), has formalized a partnership with Mapúa Malayan Colleges Laguna (MMCL) through the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for its FinEd Unboxed Program.

The program is designed to elevate the financial literacy of various groups, including farmers, fisherfolk, low-income families, migrant domestic workers, young learners, financially excluded sectors, teachers, and uniformed personnel by teaching practical skills in saving, budgeting, credit management, investing, insurance, retirement planning, and fraud prevention. The collaboration seeks to expand access to quality education and strengthen financial empowerment in underserved communities, underscoring both institutions' shared commitment to inclusive and sustainable development.

Under the partnership, BPIF and MMCL will also implement the "Train the Trainers" initiative, equipping students and volunteer faculty members to become effective financial education resource speakers. Once trained by BPIF, members of the Mapúa community will, in turn, conduct financial wellness sessions for partner communities. This approach ensures that financial literacy knowledge is cascaded widely and sustainably.

Key activities include:

- Training sessions for students and faculty on financial concepts
- Use of FinEd Unboxed materials and toolkits to support community-based workshops
- Organization of financial wellness sessions led by trained participants, who conduct their own financial education workshops
- Ongoing mentorship and monitoring to ensure effective delivery and engagement

"For BPI Foundation, financial education is a critical enabler of inclusive growth," said Carmina Marquez, Executive Director of BPIF.

"As we celebrate BPI's 175th Anniversary this year, we are committed to scaling access to practical and relevant financial education. By partnering with institutions like Mapúa Malayan Colleges Laguna, we bring these opportunities closer to communities, empowering individuals to make informed decisions and build a more secure future for themselves and their families," she added.

in underserved areas. Through this partnership, support will be extended to adopted communities in Brgy. Banay-Banay, Brgy. Bigaa, Brgy. Marinig, Brgy. Banlic, and Stia. Maria in Laguna; Sitio Cuyucot and Sitio Liplip in Pampanga; Dapdap East in Tagaytay; and Southville 5, Timbao, Biñan, with the shared goal of uplifting marginalized sectors through education.

In the next two years, the program is projected to benefit over 10,000 individuals from MMCL's adopted communities in Laguna, Cavite, and Pampanga.

The collaboration builds on the success of a similar implementation at Mapúa Malayan Colleges Mindanao (MMCM) in Davao City early last year. To date, MMCM has reached over 2,000 beneficiaries and continues to expand access to quality education across Davao City and nearby areas.

"The FinEd Unboxed Program aligns strongly with Mapúa's mission to serve communities beyond the classroom," said Dr. Dodjie Maestrecampo, President of Mapúa Malayan Colleges Laguna. "Through this partnership with BPI Foundation, we are able to mobilize our academic resources, faculty, and students to help address real-world challenges, particularly in communities with limited access to education and financial literacy."

As BPI celebrates 175 years of service, the Bank reaffirms its enduring commitment to financial inclusion—a cornerstone of its mission since 1851. Guided by its purpose to build a better Philippines, BPI continues to expand access to secure, convenient, and affordable financial solutions for every Filipino, wherever they may be.

To learn more about BPIF's financial education programs, visit www.bpifoundation.org or follow BPI Foundation on Facebook (@BPIFoundation) and Instagram (@bpifoundationinc).



With this collaboration, Mapúa Malayan Colleges Laguna becomes the first educational institution in 2026 to partner with BPI Foundation, reflecting its strong alignment with the Foundation's mission and vision of promoting inclusive and sustainable development. The partnership supports three United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

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PGC marks graduation of Contract Center Services NC II trainees

CARD-PCPD Medical Center opens BestHealth Clinic; Offers loanable healthcare services for CARD clients

Kauna-unahang Corn Derby Field Walk sa CALABARZON, idinaos Health services brought closer to home for 600+Imuseños

Pambansang Botika at Bakuna Para sa Mamamayan



The Social Security System (SSS) Diliman Branch hosted the soft launch of the Pambansang Botika at Bakuna Para sa Mamamayan last 26 January 2026, in partnership with the Philippine Pharma Procurement Inc. (PPPI). The Pambansang Botika aims to provide affordable medicines and vaccines to SSS members, their dependents, and the general public, supporting the national goal of accessible healthcare.

The event was graced by SSS President and CEO Robert Joseph Montes de Claro, PPPI President and CEO Maria

PhilHealth: 21 Essential Medicines Under YAKAP Remain Available

PhilHealth YAKAP



Cayetano lauds nationwide digital plan, says it gives direction to Konektadong Pinoy Act

Silang Livestock Agriculture Cooperative, Inilunsad Bilang Bagong Learning Site for Agriculture ng ATI CALABARZON



Opisyal na inilunsad ang Silang Livestock Agriculture Cooperative (SLAC) bilang pinakabagong Learning Site for Agriculture I (LSA I) ng DA-ATI CALABARZON na matatagpuan sa Brgy. Lilit, Silang, Cavite.

Ang SLAC, na nag-umpisa bilang isang tricycle operators and drivers association (TODA) noong pandemya, ay benepisaryo ng 30-sow level multiplier and technology demonstration farm sa DA-ATI CALABARZON na bahagi ng Integrated

National Swine Production Initiatives for Recovery and Expansion (INSPIRE) Program.

Bukod dito, benepisaryo rin ang samahan ng iba't ibang pagsasanay mula sa DA-ATI CALABARZON, International Training Center on Pig Husbandry (ITCPH), at DA-Regional Field Office CALABARZON.

Mahalagang hakbang ang paglulunsad sa pagpapalakas ng kaalaman, teknolohiya, at praktikal na kasanayan sa industriya ng pagbababuy-

KWF at ISU lumagda sa MOU

Silang Livestock Agriculture Cooperative, Inilunsad Bilang Bagong Learning Site for Agriculture ng ATI CALABARZON

an sa bayan ng Silang at buong rehiyon.

Pinangunahan ang aktibidad ng DA-ATI CALABARZON sa pangunguna ni Center Director Dr. Rolando V. Maningas, RAgr.

Ayon kay Dr. Maningas, "Masaya sa aming pakiramdam na isa na namang achievement ang napagtagumpayan ng Silang Livestock Agriculture Cooperative bilang LSA I, kasunod ng pagkilala sa kanila bilang Best Implementer Awardee para sa

Over 13K C ALABARZON households benefit from DSWD Sustainable Livelihood Program 2025

DepEd's ECP system assures teachers' promotion beyond entry level position



POINT OF VIEW

Solving a problem like education

EDCOM II, the Second Congressional Commission on Education, last week released its final report called Turning Point: A Decade of Necessary Reform (2026-2035). The 634-page report centers on the commission's findings and recommendations on several aspects of Philippine education. It is an established fact that the sector is problematic, plagued with numerous problems on all fronts.

EDCOM 2 was established in January 2023. It has undertaken a "rigorous journey of diagnosis, supported by at least 95 studies from 13 research partners, representing one of the largest bodies of work ever assembled to understand Philippine education."

This recently released final report is the third such publication. The first, called Miseducation: The Failed System of Philippine Education, cited the deep defects of underinvestment, disappointed governance, and inequitable access as the reasons for the continuing dismal state of the educational system. Last year, Fixing the Foundations: A Matter of National Survival, expounded on the persistent impediments to learning.

The voluminous final report tackles issues on the aspects of early childhood care and development, basic education, teacher education, technical vocational education and training, governance and finance. It also touched on education and reform in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Each section is in itself rich in insight and evidence-based discussions. Each facet of education dissected gives one an overwhelming feeling of helplessness amid the wide ranging and deeply rooted problems. One begins to grasp the tragedy of how our learners have not been given their due, and why our country has not taken off despite education mandatorily getting the biggest allocation in the annual budget.

But whereas the two earlier reports looked into the past and analyzed the roots of the issues and the continuing failure to address them, this final installment offers a forward looking approach. Rightly so.

Amid the multitude of concerns that must be taken up, EDCOM II picked out 20 key priority areas that must be acted upon with urgency. These priorities fall under the headings supporting early childhood development, developing the functional literacy of early learners, developing critical thinking, digital skills, and graduates' readiness for employment, education, and TVET, promoting inclusive learning, equitable access to quality tertiary education, and enhancing governance and resource allocation.

The next 10 years will be crucial.

Inasmuch as the conduct of study and provision of recommendations are concerned, the commission has done its job, and successfully so. It has pooled together experts in the sector and compelled politicians from differing persuasions to work together. Education is indeed a universal concern that affects young Filipinos from all geographic areas, all socio-economic classes – even as the more affluent have a built-in advantage. The inequity as a significant part of the problem.

But the work is far from over. The next decade will determine whether we are consigned to remain in an educational rut or break out of it. The latter can only happen if those with the power to make decisions heed the recommendations of the commission and commit to initiatives with results that would take years to be perceptible.

This is not the sector for immediate gains. Those looking for short-term credit or rewards will not find these if they think in terms of administrative terms or political windfall. Our leaders should then ask themselves if they believe long-term educational reform is a worthy undertaking. Are they prepared to spend the next few years building on the work of others instead of negating them, ensuring that these comprehensive analyses and detailed solutions do not stay in the realm of theory?

PGC...

The Provincial Government of Cavite successfully conducted the Commencement Exercises for the Community-Based Training on Contact Center Services NC II on January 23, at the Function Hall of the New Provincial Government Center, Trece Martires City.

The program was spearheaded by the Office of the Provincial Public Employment and Services Manager (OPPEM) in partnership with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), highlighting the province's continued commitment to strengthening workforce readiness and employment opportunities for Caviteños.

Ms. Rizalie Pinpin-Enero, Provincial PESO Manager, delivered the welcome remarks, congratulating the graduates and encouraging them to confidently apply the skills they gained during the training.

An inspirational message was delivered by 7th District Board Member Jhon Kester Aldrin R. Anacan, Chairperson of the Committee on Education, together with Provincial Administrator Engr. Gilbert V. Gandia. Both emphasized the importance of technical skills develop-

SILANG...

2023 Swine Multiplier and Techno-Demo Farm Project as ginanap na 2025 INSPIRE Program Congress."

Bilang isang LSA, magsisilbing sentro ang kooperatiba ng aktuwal na pagkatuto, pagbabahagi ng teknolohiya, at pagpapal-akas ng kakayahang ng mga magsasaka at livestock raisers sa komunidad.

Dumalo sa paglulunsad ang mga kinatawan mula sa pambansa at lokal na pamahalaan at iba't ibang katuwang na ahen-sya, kabilang sina Assistant Secretary for Swine and Poultry Michael Jay Garcia; G. Mark Jacob Espineli, kinatawan ng Provincial Veterinary Office ng Cavite; Agricultural Program Coordinating Office ng Cavite na si Bb. Lorena Jimeno; G. Romeo Toledo,

ment as a pathway to sustainable employment and economic growth.

Mr. John Ray B. Malaca, Contact Center Services NC II Trainer, formally presented the candidates for graduation, followed by the acceptance of candidates by Ms. Mary Katherine L. Casauran, TESD Specialist II of TES-DA Cavite.

A total of fifteen successful graduates proudly completed the community-based training program. A message was delivered by Mr. Jerwin Pague, representative from iQor, who highlighted employment opportunities in the contact center industry and reaffirmed the private sector's support for skilled graduates.

The ceremony was further enriched by messages from three graduate representatives, who shared their experiences, expressed gratitude, and conveyed their aspirations as they prepare to enter the workforce.

The activity underscored the Provincial Government of Cavite's sustained efforts to provide accessible, industry-relevant, and community-based skills training through strong partnerships with national agencies and private sector stakeholders. — R. Dones

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Konsehal at Chairperson ng Silang Committee on Agriculture; Municipal Agriculturist Shirley Villela; at Municipal Administrator Audie Madrideo.

Ipinakita ng kanilang presensya ang matibay na suporta ng iba't ibang ahensya sa kooperatiba at sa patuloy na pagpapaunlad ng sektor ng paghahayupan sa lalawigan.

Ang paglagda sa Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) at ang pormal na sertipikasyon ng SLAC bilang LSA ay nagpapatibay sa papel nito bilang katuwang ng DA-ATI CALABARZON sa paghahatid ng makabuluhan at praktikal na serbisyong pang-ekstensyon—tungo sa mas matatag na industriya ng paghahayupan at kabuhayan ng mga magsasaka sa rehiyon.

CAYETANO...

Senate Minority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano on Monday welcomed the approval of the country's first nationwide digital connectivity master plan, saying it gives clearer direction to reforms under the Konektadong Pinoy Act which he authored.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. had approved the nationwide digital connectivity master plan on January 26, 2026, which lays out the government's long-term strategy to expand reliable and secure internet access across the country, particularly in unserved and underserved areas.

This came five months after Cayetano's Konektadong Pinoy Act lapsed into law in August 2025, which primarily aims to make it easier for service providers to enter the market, foster competition, and offer consumers more affordable and varied internet service options.

The senator had earlier said the Konektadong Pinoy Act was intended to modernize the country's digital framework and expand access to internet services nationwide, noting that its full impact de-

CORN DERBY...

Idinaos sa Sariaya, Quezon ang kauna-unahang Corn Derby Field Walk ng Department of Agriculture IV-CALABARZON (DA-4A) Corn Program katuwang ang Office of the Provincial Agriculturist (OPA) ng Quezon at Quezon Provincial Corn Producers Federation noong ika-23 ng Enero. Dito ay sinuri ng mga magsasaka mula sa iba't ibang bayan ng lalawigan ang mga mais na itinanim noong Disyembre 2025 sa anim na ektaryang taniman. Ang nasabing binhi ng mais na naipamalas ay mula sa 11 kumpanya kung saan lima ang lumahok para sa mga binhi at anim naman para sa abono. Ang mga kumpanya para sa binhi ay kinabilangan ng Dekalb Philippines/Bayer Crop Science Inc., Syngenta Phils Inc., Advanta Seeds Phil's Inc, Corteva Agriscience, at Cornworld. Sa mga abono naman ay ang ALDIZ Incorporated, Enviro Scope Synergy Inc., JCV Worldwide

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Traders Corp., Gemini Agri Farm Solutions Corp., Allied Botanical Corporation, at SAGREX Corporation. Layon ng derby na matukoy ang mga barayti ng binhi at klase ng abono na mas magpapataas ng ani at kita ng mga magmamais. Tinalakay din ang mga teknolohiya na maari nilang isagawa sa kani-kanilang mga sakahan. Ayon kay Raquel Sauquillo, pangulo ng Corn Growers Association of Tayabas, natuwa siya sa mga natutunan sa derby lalo na sa mga pamamaraan ng paglalagay ng abono. Aniywa, maaari rin nilang maibahagi sa iba pang kapwa magmamais ito para sa ikagaganda ng pagpapalago ng kanilang tanim. Inaasahan na sa darating na buwan ng Abril ay gaganapin naman dito ang harvest festival kung saan paparangalan na ang mga nagkamit ng panalo sa nasabing derby. Ang resulta nito ay magsisilbing batayan ng Kagawaran sa mga pagsasanay at seminar na isasagawa pa.

pends on the existence of a long-term connectivity plan.

"(This law) modernizes our digital infrastructure, ensuring that all Filipinos have access to, and the use of, affordable, quality, and up-to-date information and communication technologies," he said.

"[Pero] kahit anong ganda ng plano mo for ICT (Information and Communications Technology), kung 'di ka rin connected, wala ring mangyayari," he added.

Cayetano said the country needs to develop modern technology to streamline government services, promote transparency, and improve service delivery.

"If all of these different laws work, we also hope to have free WiFi in the schools to help the students," he added.

Cayetano said with the nationwide digital connectivity master plan now approved by the President, implementation would determine whether existing laws translate into improved internet access for public services and education.

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More than 600 residents of Barangay Malagasang II-C, City of Imus, Cavite benefited from free medical and dental services during a one-day Medical and Dental Mission on January 23. The activity was organized by the Provincial Government of Cavite's Medical Mission Team in partnership with the Office of the Provincial Health Officer, the City Health Office, and the office of Board Member Chelsea Sarno.

February 04-10, 2026 OVER 13K...

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna (PIA) — More than 13,000 households across the CALABARZON Region gained new and sustainable sources of income in 2025 as the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) IV-A rolled out expanded livelihood opportunities under its Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP).

DSWD IV-A reported that a total of 13,792 households received P257.81 million in livelihood assistance to support the establishment of micro-enterprises. These ventures include community stores, hog-raising, vegetable farming, duck raising, rice retailing, and other small-scale businesses aimed at strengthening local economies and promoting self-sufficiency. Of the total beneficiaries, 13,720 households have already started operating their livelihood projects.

The livelihood support covered five provinces, with Batangas recording the highest number of beneficiaries at 4,683, followed by Quezon at 3,514, Laguna at 2,718, Rizal at 1,878, and Cavite at 999, reflecting the program's wide reach across the region

Beyond financial assistance, the SLP em-

HEALTH...

A total of 659 individuals availed of general medical services, including X-rays, fasting blood sugar (FBS) tests, and electrocardiograms (ECGs). In addition, 47 patients received dental extractions during the mission. The event was also graced by Mayor Alex "AA" Advincula along with city councilors, who expressed their support for the program.

KWF...

Pinagtibay ng Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF) at Isabela State University (ISU) ang kanilang ugnayan tungo sa pagtataguyod ng kapakanang pangwika at pangkultura sa pamamagitan ng paglagda ng Memorandum of Unawaan (MOU), noong 16 Enero 2026 sa Bulwagang Romaldez, tanggapan ng KWF.

Layunin ng kasun-

phasized capacity development and collective enterprise management, as beneficiaries were organized into associations and trained in basic entrepreneurship, financial management, and cooperative operations. This approach aims to enhance not only income generation but also social cohesion and long-term enterprise sustainability.

For community leaders like Vilma Madridejos, president of the Golden Harvest Cupang SLP Association in Bauan, Batangas, the program has created shared economic opportunities at the barangay level. Their 30-member association received P450,000 in start-up capital, which they invested in a duck-raising and salted egg production enterprise launched in November 2025.

According to Madridejos, "Napakalak-ing tulong nito sa aming mga miyembro dahil nagbibigay ito ng bagong pagkakakitaan para sa amin at sa buong barangay."

In Mabini, Batangas, Ruby Serafin, president of the Majuben's Leading Light SLP Association, highlighted the program's dual impact on income and personal development. "Maliban sa tulong

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pangkabuhayan, natuto akong makisalamuha sa aking mga kagrupa at lalong nahahasa ang aking kakayahang sa pag-nenegosyo," said Serafin. Their 16-member group established a community store in early 2025, generating dividends for members while strengthening their skills in teamwork and small-scale business management. Serafin reported receiving P4,500 in dividends by September 2025, reflecting early gains from the enterprise.

To safeguard the continuity of these livelihood projects, DSWD Field Office IV-A continues to conduct regular monitoring, mentoring, and technical assistance through its SLP project development officers. This post-implementation support is crucial in addressing operational challenges and ensuring that enterprises remain viable beyond the initial funding period.

The SLP remains a key government strategy in poverty reduction and inclusive growth, shifting households from short-term aid to self-sustaining sources of income, while empowering communities to participate actively in local economic development.

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of bringing essential health services directly to communities, particularly to those with limited access to healthcare. As added assistance, each patient also received five kilos of rice.

The Provincial Government of Cavite continues to roll out similar health outreach programs across the province as part of its efforts to address gaps in healthcare access, especially in rural and underserved areas. — A. Sarte

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bong ugnayan ng KWF at mga institusyong akademiko sa mga programang pananaliksik, pagsasanay, at adbokasiyong pangwika, dahil ito ay hindi lámang tungkulin ng iilan.

"Ang kasunduang ito ay buong sinusuportahan ng Komisyon," pahayag ni Dr. Benjamin M. Mendillo Jr., Komisyoner sa Pangasiwaan at Pananalapi ng KWF.

Ipinaabot ng Pangu-



PHILHEALTH...

The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) assures the public that the 21 essential medicines under the Yaman ng Kalusugan Program (YAKAP) continues to be available this year in YAKAP-accredited primary care facilities nationwide.

"Makakaasa po ang lahat ng Pilipino na patuloy silang makakakuha nitong 21 na mga gamot sa kanilang napiling YAKAP Clinic, habang mas lalo naming pinagbubuti ang mga benepisyo ng PhilHealth YAKAP at GAMOT," stated Dr. Edwin M. Mercado, PhilHealth President and CEO.

The list includes Amoxicillin, Co-amoxiclav, Cotrimoxazole, Nitrofu-

DEPED...

With a promise to provide career advancement and additional benefits for teachers, the Department of Education (DepEd) has launched the Expanded Career Progression (ECP) system to address long-standing challenges in teacher wages and career opportunities.

One of the teachers who benefited was Carmen Zorilla of Tropical Village Elementary School. For over 20 years, generations of Gentriseños have gone under her care.

Zorilla held the position of Teacher I for over two decades, an entry-level teaching position that earns her around P30,000 monthly.

Normally, teachers stay in service up to their 60s or after serving for 34 years, whichever comes first. But for some, the vocation does not stop when they clock out for their last day. They become educators for the rest of their lives.

"Basta makatulong ako na matuto sa aking mga estudyante na makapagtapos sila ay masayang masaya na ako."

P. Angeles, Pangalawang Pangulo pára sa Planning and Development; Prof. Dr. Orlando F. Balderama, Pangalawang Pangulo pára sa Research and Development, Extension and Training; at Prof. Dr. Hilda A. Manzolin, Pangalawang Pangulo pára sa Academic Affairs; Prof. Dr. Isagani

rantoin, Ciprofloxacin, Clarithromycin, Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS), Prednisone, Salbutamol, Fluticasone + Salmeterol, Paracetamol, Glizclazide, Metformin, Simvastatin, Enalapril, Metoprolol, Amlodipine, Hydrochlorothiazide, Losartan, Aspirin, and Chlorphenamine.

Members can continue to access these medicines through the YAKAP-accredited clinics they are empaneled to, ensuring timely treatment and continuity of care.

PhilHealth also reminds partner YAKAP providers to keep sufficient stocks of the covered medicines and maintain service standards under the program.

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"Patuloy po ang aming pagsisikap na pagbutihin pa ang paghahatid ng aming serbisyo sa pamamagitan ng patuloy na pakikipag-ugnayan sa mga YAKAP providers upang patuloy pang magkaroon ng kapanagatagan ang lahat ng Pilipinong umaasa sa PhilHealth," Dr. Mercado added.

For further inquiries, members may contact their nearest PhilHealth Regional Office or call the Corporate Action Center at (02) 866-225-88. Mobile hotlines are also available: 0998-857-2957 / 0968-865-4670 (Smart) and 0917-127-5987 / 0917-110-9812 (Globe).

#MyPhilHealth #SagotKaNgPhilHealth

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Clad in her finest Filipiniana, teacher Carmen was one of the 524 Caviteño educators under the helm of DepEd's General Trias Schools Division Office (SDO) during the mass oath-taking ceremony officiated by Secretary Sonny Angara last January 20.

Teacher Carmen recalled the moment she was called by Ivan Brian Indicutivo, Schools Division Superintendent, to his office at the SDO General Trias.

Like any employee, being called into the boss's office can go two ways: either a reprimand or an assignment for her to carry out.

"Nang ako'y pina-tawag ng aking Division Superintendent ay kinabahan po talaga ako kasi po tinanong ko po sa aking sarili kung may kasalanan po akong nagawa."

To her surprise, Teacher Carmen was told to submit her documents required for promotion.

"Kasi ang mga kasamahan ko po ay nag-aayos na ng kanilang papers kaya sinabihan na po ako ni Sir [Inductivo] na mag-

Kasabay ng pasasalamat sa mga dumalo, binigyang-diin din ni Dr. Carmelita C. Abdurahman, Komisyoner sa Programa at Proyekto, na ang kasunduan ay hindi lámang magpapatibay sa pagkakaisa ng dalawang panig, kundi magpapatatag din sa diwa ng pagiging Filipino.

Enchanted Kingdom, two other Filipino companies win ASEAN tourism awards



AGILA The EKsperience SARIBUHAY Façade

The first and only world-class theme park in the Philippines enters 2026 as one of the three Filipino companies that were recognized by ASEAN's most esteemed honors in tourism!

Now on its 30th year, Enchanted Kingdom (EK) was hailed as the Best ASEAN New Tourism Attraction for its unique flying theater, AGILA The EKsperience: SARIBUHAY as awarded by the ASEAN Tourism Association (ASEANTA).

The award was received by EK Chairman and President Mr. Cesar Mario O. Mamon together with Chief Operating Officer Dr. Cynthia R. Mamon during the 35th ASEANTA Excellence Awards held this January 27, Tuesday at JPark Island Resorts and Waterpark in Mactan, Cebu.

As part of the 45th ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF), the ASEANTA Excellence Awards 2026 honored "creativity, innovation, and dedication that drive the tourism industry forward" in the Southeast Asia region.

"We are deeply honored and humbled to represent Filipino excellence in tourism and entertainment in this prestigious platform in the ASEAN

community. This award fuels our commitment to continuously provide magical experiences like AGILA The EKsperience: SARIBUHAY that also contributes towards our shared mission of sustainable tourism," shared Dr. Mamon.

As the first and only flying theater in the Philippines that's also a part of EK's Education Program, AGILA The EKsperience: SARIBUHAY has been going above and beyond its core mission to drive educational tourism and national pride by showcasing the natural beauty of the country ever since it was first introduced in 2016.

EK relaunched this attraction last October as part of the theme park's 30th anniversary celebration, now serving as a powerful call to action — reminding everyone of the urgent need to conserve and protect the environment.

With its enhanced film and overall thematic experience, the flying theater now also takes guests on a magical journey underwater as it features various local marine ecosystems along with some of its diverse yet endangered wildlife.

Aside from EK, two

other Filipino companies were also awarded, namely the Muntinlupa-based destination management agency Shroff Travel as the Best Asean Travel Article, and the premier event space SMX Convention Center as the Best ASEAN Convention Centre.

Shroff Travel was represented by its Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Arjun Shroff, while Mr. Walid Wafik, Senior Vice President—Operations of SM Hotels and Conventions Corp. (SMHCC), received the award for SMX Convention Center during the award ceremony.

Guests can experience EK's award-winning attraction along with its other rides and offerings from Wednesdays to Sundays, 11AM to 8PM.* *Park and ride schedules are subject to change without prior notice.

For more information and updates regarding AGILA The EKsperience: SARIBUHAY and EK's other forever enchanting events and offers, visit <https://www.enchantedkingdom.ph> and EK's official social media accounts @enchantedkingdom.ph for Facebook and TikTok, and @ek_philippines for Instagram.



Awarding at 35th ASEANTA Excellence Awards



AGILA The EKsperience SARIBUHAY

EDITORIAL: Improving public transportation accessibility

The Department of Transportation (DOTr) recently announced that it would adopt the Accessible Travel Policy (ATP) guidelines for all railways, including those under construction, offering a glimmer of hope for commuting senior citizens, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and pregnant women.

Over the years, I have watched with both hope and frustration how our public transportation and infrastructure systems have evolved, and for seniors like me, who remember the simpler days when walking a few short blocks seemed effortless and traffic was more bearable, I see how everyday commuting has now evolved into a stressful (if not degrading) undertaking.

But in the past few months, we have seen encouraging signs from the DOTr to make public transportation and infrastructure more inclusive and accessible to vulnerable sectors who are part of the commuting public.

We see the struggles of the commuting public almost every day on the news, but we often overlook how these challenges are felt more deeply by senior citizens and PWDs, whose commutes are marked by disheartening accounts of broken elevators or escalators, and inaccessible or uneven walkways, among others.

The adoption of the ATP guidelines is a welcome development—introducing long-needed uniform standards for accessibility in our railway systems that are not mere conveniences, but rather necessities for vulnerable commuters. But achieving a truly accessible public transport system should not be limited to railways alone—it requires a holistic approach.

Railways are just one part of the country's public transport ecosystem, and thousands—if not millions—of Filipinos depend daily on other modes of transportation such as buses, jeepneys, UV Express vans, and transport network vehicle services, including motorcycle taxis.

Consider what a typical commute looks like for a PWD or an elderly commuter. Even if a train station becomes fully accessible, the journey to and from that station often involves

walking on uneven or obstructed sidewalks, boarding jeepneys or buses with steep steps, or riding tricycles that drop passengers off at the roadside without any regard for loading and unloading areas. For someone with mobility challenges, these gaps do not just create inconvenience—they create barriers.

This is why we need parallel reforms across all public transportation modes and infrastructure, starting with those used by the majority of commuters—from terminals to the actual transport vehicles. Even basic infrastructure like pedestrian crossings and sidewalks must be designed mindful of our vulnerable commuters.

Beyond infrastructure, maintenance is equally important. A broken elevator at a train station can shut out seniors and PWDs who rely on it. Investing in the maintenance of public transport facilities ensures accessibility for all commuters.

We also need to strengthen both technical and sensitivity training for transport personnel to better transport commuters and create a more inviting environment for traveling senior citizens and PWDs.

Of course, this is not just the responsibility of the national government. We all play a part too.

Commuters should practice inclusivity in public transport by giving way and offering seats to PWDs, pregnant women, and senior citizens. It all starts with recognition that some among us travel at a different pace. As a society that prides itself on "malasakit", now is the time to really live this value through public transport.

Progress doesn't happen overnight. To make our public transport system truly inclusive and accessible, we need commitment to reform, a strong political will, and collective responsibility.

The goal is to enhance our public transport system so that accessibility is visibly a fundamental right for all. I am confident that under the able stewardship of Acting Transportation Secretary Giovanni Lopez, this can be done.



teachers and acknowledge their contributions to better learning outcomes."

Citing the chief executive's previous State of the Nation Addresses (SONA), Angara underscored the administration's goal of providing teachers with benefits they rightfully deserve.

"If you recall, he said, let us take care of teachers because they are the heart of our educational system. He knows that many promotions have been long deserved, long delayed. Number 1 po sa agenda at sa usapin ng budget ang edukasyon."

Teaching was once regarded as a vocation due to low pay and minimal career advancement

opportunities. Their only reward for a job well done is seeing their former students become successful professionals and nation-builders.

Teacher Carmen admitted she was no different.

"Masaya na po ako sa aking ginagawa. Basta matuto ang ating mga bata ay okay na po ako. Nagpapasalamat ako sa lahat ng aking mga ka-guro [at] sana ipagpatuloy natin ang ating adhikain na tulongan ang ating mga bata na matuto at makapagatumpay sa kanilang mga hangarin."

Assured by the promise of the ECP, Teacher Carmen is hopeful that the next generation

of teachers will have more opportunities to grow as educators and as professionals.

"Bilang isang teacher Ang Expanded Career progression ay patunay ng pamahalaan na ang Kagawaran ng Edukasyon ay patuloy na naghahanap ng paraan upang suportahan ang mga guro, lalo na kaming mga matagal nang naglilingkod, sa pamamagitan ng pabibigay ng oportunidad para sa pag-angat."

The Mass Oath-taking ceremony saw a total of 542 Cavite teachers take their oath in their promoted positions, with almost 50 percent coming from SDO General Trias. (PB-PIA CALABARZON)

CARD-PCPD Medical Center opens BestHealth Clinic; Offers loanable healthcare services for CARD clients



CARD-PCPD Medical Center Inc. President Dr. Roderick Belen (top line, right) with the nurses and staff of BestHealth Clinics and Diagnostic Center inside the newly opened clinic.



The newly opened BestHealth Clinics and Diagnostic Center of CARD-PCPD Medical Center Inc., along with its emergency ambulance in Brgy. San Antonio 1, San Pablo City, Laguna.



From left to right: Barangay Chairman Rexon Banaag; CARD-PCPD Medical Center Inc. President Dr. Roderick Belen, St. Francis Parish Lector, Father Rizaldy Urgena, CARD Bank Senior Management Adviser Dr. Dolores M. Torres, CARD Pioneer Member Paz Arazena, PCPD Executive Director Arcatomy Guarin, CARD MRI Managing Director Aristeo Dequito, CARD Care Network Inc. CEO Dr. Mike Llanto, and CARD MRI Founder and Chairman Emeritus Dr. Jaime Aristotle B. Alip in the ribbon-cutting and building blessing to officially open the BestHealth Clinics and Diagnostic Center.



CARD MRI Founder and Chairman Emeritus Dr. Jaime Aristotle B. Alip expresses the dedication of the new clinic to the community while sharing CARD's future plans for expanding its health services.

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STRAIGHT NEWS PUBLISHING
 Jan. 28, Feb. 04 & 10, 2026

LRC Case No. 8843-2025-363

NORBERTO M. LEE
 Petitioner,
 X-----X
ORDER

This is a petition for the issuance of another owner's duplicate copy of **Transfer Certificate of Title (TCT) No. T-1325907** of the Registry of Deeds for the Province of Cavite filed by petitioner.

Petitioner alleges that he is the registered owner of a parcel of land situated in Barangay Habay, Bacoor City, Cavite covered by **TCT No. T-1325907**. Petitioner further alleges that the owner's duplicate copy of said title was lost or missing in his house sometime in 2016. Consequently, petitioner executed an affidavit of loss which was annotated on the title on file with the Registry of Deeds. He prays that judgment be rendered directing the Register of Deeds to issue a new owner's duplicate copy of title.

Finding the petition to be sufficient in form and substance, the same is hereby set for **initial hearing on May 4, 2026** at 9:00 in the morning at which date, place and hour, any interested person may appear and show cause why said petition should not be granted.

Petitioner is directed to cause the PUBLICATION of the copy of this Order at his expense once a week for three (3) consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation in the Province of Cavite. Likewise, petitioner is directed to FURNISH with copies of the petition with annexes the Office of the Registry of Deeds, Bacoor City, the Registry of Deeds for the Province of Cavite and the Land Registration Authority within fifteen (15) days from receipt of this Order and thereafter to submit compliance to this Court.

Let copies of this Order be POSTED in three (3) conspicuous places in the City of Bacoor where the property is situated at least thirty (30) days prior to the aforesaid date of hearing, more particularly at the bulletin boards of the following:

1. Regional Trial Court, City of Bacoor Cavite
2. Registry of Deeds, Bacoor City, Cavite
3. Main Entrance, City Hall of Bacoor City, Cavite

SO, ORDERED.
 GIVEN IN CHAMBERS, this 5th day of January 2026 in the City of Bacoor, Cavite

(SGD)ROMANO M. DIAZ
 Presiding Judge

Copy Furnished:
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 Counsel for the Petitioner
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 Email: atty.nicolas@yahoo.com

NORBERTO M. LEE
 Petitioner
 2033 Bautista Subd., Major Samala St.,
 Binakayan, Kawit, Cavite

Philippine International Pyromusical Competition 2026 delivers a bigger, maxed out experience at SM Mall Of Asia

MANILA, Philippines, 21st January 2026 - The Philippine International Pyromusical Competition 2026 is back and it is bigger than last year. Set at the Seaside Boulevard of SM Mall of Asia, the country's biggest fireworks competition levels up into a fully maxed out experience built for how Gen Z shows up, hangs out, and shares moments.

This year's edition is a maxed-out experience, bringing an all-out global showdown of world-class pyrotechnics, music, and color. Each competing country lights up the night sky with high-impact visuals, perfectly synced to sound, designed to stop scrolls. Bigger bursts. Cleaner timing. Stronger crowd reactions. Every show competes for the title of Best Pyromusical Display, and every night delivers main-character energy.

The 2026 experience goes beyond fireworks. It is about the full vibe. Friends meet early, eat out, walk the strip, shoot content, and stay late. The fireworks are the peak moment but the night is the story. It is social, loud, and built for repeat weekends. This is not a one and done event. It is a weekly reset.

SM Mall of Asia continues to be the venue of choice for Gen Z, families, and friend groups. The open waterfront, easy access, and mix of food, entertainment, and hang-out spots make it the go to place for shared experiences. Families turn it into a tradition. Friends turn it into plans. Gen Z turns it into content.

Adding to the fully maxed out experience is SM Mall of Asia's wide dining lineup, giving guests plenty of options before and after the show. These include RICO'S LECHON, HAILILAO, RACKS, ITALIANIS, WATAMI, CBTL, MODERN SHANG, OLIVE GARDEN, BULGOGI BROTHERS, LECHONERIA, YAKINIKU LIKE, PEPPER LUNCH, DOHTONBORI, JATUJAK, PAIK'S COFFEE, KIWAMI, YAKINIKU KING, MAPLE TREE, DU HSHAO YUE, ROSSOPOMODORO, GERRY'S GRILL, TGI FRIDAYS, MESA, DONG WON, FELY J'S, BBQ CHICKEN, HOSHINO, CELADON, TAJIMAYA, CRAZY GARLIC, LONGHORN, and DESERT 39.

The Philippine International Pyromusical Competition 2026 features top pyrotechnic teams from across the globe: February 21. Opening Exhibition with the Philippines and Hermanos Caballer of Spain.

February 28. Fireworks Spectaculars of Canada versus Steffes Olig Feuerwerke of Germany.

March 7. LUX Factory of France against Mar-



tarello SRL of Italy.

March 14. Pirotecna Minhota of Portugal facing the Pyrotex Fireworx of the United Kingdom.

March 21. Polaris Fireworks of China followed by the Closing Exhibition from the Philippines.

More than just a fireworks competition, this event shows why the Philippines is a destination for big, world-class lifestyle experiences. Bigger crowds. Bigger moments. Bigger energy. Your most loved mall, SM, brings it All for You with a fully maxed-out experience at SM Mall of Asia.

About SM Super-

Kaingen residents receive free medical and dental services

On January 22, the Provincial Government of Cavite's Medical and Dental Mission Team conducted a health outreach program in Brgy. Kaingen, Kawit, benefiting more than 400 residents.

First District Board Member Jygs Gandia showed support for the activity, reflecting the strong commitment of the province's leaders to promoting the health and well-being of their constituents. — J. Reyes

NAIA flood mitigation, Oplan Kontra-Baha efforts: SMC removes over 330,000 tons of silt and wastes from Parañaque rivers



San Dionisio-Balihatar-Madulas Creek Highlights (Before and After Photo)

San Miguel Corporation (SMC) is making good on its commitment to support government's "Oplan Kontra-Baha" program, as its long-running Better Rivers PH river rehabilitation advocacy continued to expand its cleanup of the Parañaque river system — reporting the removal of over 330,000 metric tons of silt and waste from a total of 8 kilometers of river channels since September 2024.

SMC Chairman

and CEO Ramon S. Ang said that for the last 16 months, its river cleanup crews have been working non-stop to desilt, clean, and rehabilitate waterways around the airport and other critical areas of the river system.

The program, undertaken in coordination with the City Government under Mayor Edwin Olivarez, aims to improve the drainage of floodwaters from Parañaque out to Manila Bay. This is seen to mitigate flood-

ing not just at the country's primary international gateway, but also its neighboring communities.

The initiative also aligns with, and supports government's Oplan Kontra Baha, led by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA), together with local government units, and other government agencies.

"We're determined to continue delivering on

our promise to our kababayans in southern Metro Manila — from all the way in Laguna to Muntinlupa, Las Piñas, and Parañaque — that we will improve the flow of water in their rivers to help address their long-standing flooding problems. From the launch of government's Oplan Kontra-Baha program last November in Parañaque, I'm happy to report that we continue to make steady progress, and solid gains," he said.



San Dionisio-Balihatar-Madulas Creek Dredging Operation

At the Balihatar-San Dionisio Creek, where the multi-agency, multi-stakeholder initiative was launched, Ang said the company has now removed over 21,918 tons of silt and waste from a 1.57 kilometers of the waterway.

Work is progressing simultaneously downstream, toward Parañaque, and upstream, toward Las Piñas, Ang said.

Meanwhile, along the main channel of the Parañaque River, SMC's river cleanup operations have already reached the Pasay area, removing a total of 152,365 tons of silt and wastes from a 3.65-kilometer stretch of the river.

SMC also continues to do cleanup operations at the critical junction of Don Galo River and the San Dionisio and Villanueva creeks — aimed at

deepening the channel to increase carrying capacity and outflow to Manila Bay.

These efforts comprise but a small part of SMC's wider Better Rivers PH initiative, which has been ongoing for six years now. Throughout this time, SMC has been quietly working to clean up major river systems in and around Metro Manila — at no cost to government and taxpayers.

Thus far, it has removed over 8.7 million tons of silt and wastes from the Pasig River, Tulahan River, San Juan River, rivers all over Bulacan province, the Pamanga River, and rivers in Alabang, Laguna, and Navotas.

The total river length it has covered to date is now 176.44 kilometers—making SMC's efforts evidently the largest of its kind in the country, by far.

OPPO marks 25th Founding Anniversary with tribute program for retirees

On January 23, the Office of the Provincial Population Officer (OPPO) celebrated its 25th Founding Anniversary with a meaningful Tribute Program for Retirees, themed "Silver Year of Service: Building Healthy Families, Building a Stronger Province" at the New Provincial Government Center, Trece Martires City.

The program opened with a welcome message from Ms. Eloisa L. Comia, OPPO Department Head.

In her message, Ms. Comia acknowledged the presence of the retirees, and OPPO personnel, commending their unwavering dedication in providing quality public service. She also expressed her heartfelt gratitude for being part of OPPO, sharing her personal career journey as an inspiring testament to commitment and growth within public service.

A video presentation honoring the retirees followed, highlighting their

years of service and significant contributions to OPPO's mission of building healthy families and communities. Messages to the retirees were delivered by current OPPO staff, expressing appreciation and gratitude for the retirees' dedication and legacy.

Retirees were awarded with certificates in recognition and respect for their years of dedicated service with a serenade which further added warmth to the celebration. In return, the retirees also shared their appreciation, reflecting on their experiences and years of service.

The 25th founding anniversary celebration served not only as a tribute to OPPO's retirees but also as a reaffirmation of the office's continuing commitment to public service, honoring the past while strengthening its resolve to build healthier families and a stronger province. — R. Tanael

DILG welcomes full release of FY 2026 National Tax Allotment to LGUs

The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) welcomes the full and upfront release of the ₱1.19 trillion National Tax Allotment (NTA) to local government units (LGUs) for Fiscal Year 2026, in line with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s directive to ensure that public funds translate into immediate and meaningful services for the people.

The DILG said the timely release of the NTA strengthens the capacity of LGUs to deliver essential services and respond effectively to the needs of their constituents, consistent with the people-centric thrust of the 2026 General Appropriations Act.

"The early and full release of the FY 2026 NTA gives our LGUs the fiscal space to plan ahead, act decisively, and sustain vital local services," the

DILG said. "This directly supports stronger local governance and faster delivery of services to the public," the DILG added.

The Department emphasized that the prompt release of funds reinforces fiscal decentralization and empowers LGUs to fully perform their devolved functions under the Constitution and the Local Government Code.

The DILG also reminded LGUs to ensure the judicious, transparent, and accountable utilization of their NTA, strictly for authorized purposes and in compliance with existing budgeting, accounting, and auditing rules.

"As partners in governance, the DILG will continue to support and guide LGUs in translating these resources into concrete outcomes that improve the daily lives of our citizens," the Department added.